MAKE POVERTY HISTORY
MANITOBA

March 14, 2024

Make Poverty History Manitoba - City Working Group
Submission to Winnipeg City Council
Re: Multi-Year Budget 2024-2027

This submission is written in the spirit of collaboration and a desire to improve the health and well-being of all Winnipeggers. It has been endorsed by 50 organizations throughout Winnipeg who support the coalition's recommendations. The entire list is below.

Winnipeg's City Council formally acknowledged and outlined its role in addressing poverty by passing the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2021 and adopting a renewed Implementation Plan in November 2023. Council must now commit financial resources to execute the plan.

The City of Winnipeg's preliminary multi-year budget tabled in February includes virtually no new resources for its poverty reduction strategy. This move is inconsistent with Council's *Strategic Priorities Action Plan 2023-26,* which guides Council priorities and investments. Action 3.3 of the plan is to "accelerate implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy," but the draft budget allocates no new resources to do this. Council can address this before the final budget vote on March 20.

Winnipeg released its first-ever poverty reduction strategy in November 2021 using existing resources. Most of the actions in the first implementation plan (2021-23) were exploratory and introductory in nature with major highlights focused on managing the symptoms of poverty and preserving dignity.

Make Poverty History Manitoba urged the Mayor and Council to ensure its second implementation plan (2024-27) included stronger actions with financial resources that would actually prevent and end poverty. The second implementation plan approved in November 2023 included a limited resource request, pending approval in the 2024 multi-year budget. Apart from a reduced budget for mobile outreach services for unsheltered people, none of the resource requests made it into the preliminary budget.

We urge the City to revisit the draft budget and include the investments needed to at least follow through on its own poverty-reduction related priorities as well as those of the community.

We recommend the following amendments to the Multi-Year Budget 2024-2027, which are primarily taken from the Poverty Reduction Strategy resource request that Council passed in November 2023. These amendments would demonstrate Council's commitment to follow through on its own Strategic Priority to accelerate implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy:

1. Coordinator to project manage the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Special Project and Initiatives position to support the coordination and implementation of the Strategy.
2. Operating funds to support the implementation of projects and initiatives related to the PRS in Community Services and the Indigenous Relations Division.

3. Grant funds for the Transit Fares Pilot Project for At-Risk Women and the Youth Aging Out of Care Pilot (in TRN) to support vulnerable Indigenous children, youth, and at-risk women in accessing transportation.
4. Transit Project Coordinator to support implementation of priority actions related to increased access to Transit for low-income residents.
5. Additional funding, totalling $650,000 annually, to support the continuation of the Mobile Outreach Support Services grant program.
6. Operating funds for short-term transitional housing in support of the non-Emergent Encampment Support process.
7. Training funds for consultants, facilitators and trainers to deliver employee training for frontline and public-facing employees focused on poverty and related topics including harm reduction, trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and MMIWG2S+.
8. Reverse cuts to Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak (Indigenous Youth Strategy) and inner-city/youth recreation programs and facilities. You've heard so much about this today. Applying an equity-based lens to city decision-making is so important for helping to address the root causes of poverty
9. Extend City grants to community-based organizations that support the goals of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy for each year of the multi-year budget, including grants for the City's homelessness initiatives, 24-7 safe spaces, community safety hosts, and public washrooms.

We support the inclusion of all of these recommendations. We would be happy to work with councillors on amendments on any and all of these recommendations.

Further, we recommend adopting the following MPHM priorities to move from managing the symptoms of poverty to actually preventing and ending poverty. Investing in these measures will reduce costs on emergency services, responding to crime, and the consequences of poverty:

1. Increase the WINNpass subsidy to 80 per cent off the cost of a monthly transit pass and pilot fare free transit.
2. Invest in community-based organizations, with priority to Indigenous-led organizations, that enhance safety and address the root causes of crime, including resources for a safe consumption site.
3. Facilitate work focused on poverty reduction, social inclusion, cultural reclamation, and healing by hiring at least 3 more full-time staff in the City's Indigenous Relations Division.
4. Triple the Housing Rehabilitation and Investment Reserve budget (currently $1M) and prioritize its use for the development and preservation of RGI housing.
5. Support at least 7 full-time permanent staff dedicated to the development of 750 new social and affordable rental housing units annually.

All levels of government must contribute to ending poverty, and municipalities are no exception. The need is urgent. More than 1 in 12 Winnipeg residents experience poverty, including more than 1 in 6 Indigenous people. It is discouraging to see the preliminary budget scale back the City's already modest investments in poverty reduction.

The Mayor and Council must take this opportunity to demonstrate it is not giving up on its efforts to reduce poverty and is in fact acting on its strategic priority to accelerate the implementation of its plan.

Make Poverty History Manitoba is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending poverty through taking action for public policy change. Its advocacy focuses on the Province of Manitoba and City of Winnipeg. Over 100 organizations throughout the city are part of the coalition.

The following 50 organizations have endorsed this submission:

- Aboriginal Health and Wellness
- Acorn Family Place
- Association of United Ukrainian Canadians - Winnipeg Branch
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian Community Economic Development Network - Manitoba
- Canadian Homeless Resources Inc.
- Canadian Muslim Women's Institute
- Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Organization
- Community Education Development Association (CEDA)
- Communities 4 Families
- Harvest Manitoba
- Home Street Mennonite Church
- Inclusion Winnipeg Inc
- Indigenous Women's Healing Centre
- Intercivics Winnipeg
- John Howard Society of Manitoba
- Klinic Community Health
- Low Income Intermediary Project
- Main Street Project
- Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)
- Native Clan Organization
- New Directions
- Neil Hiebert Consultant
- North End Women's Centre
- North Point Douglas Women's Centre
- Poverty Awareness & Community Action
- Red Road Lodge
- Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY)
- SEED Winnipeg Inc.
- Siloam Mission
- Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
- Spence Neighbourhood Association
- St. Kateri Tekakwitha Indigenous Catholic Church
- St. Paul's Anglican Church in Fort Garry

- Thrive Community Support Circle
- UFCW Local 832
- University of Winnipeg Department of Urban and Inner City Studies
- University of Winnipeg Institute of Urban Studies
- Unlock Communications
- Villa Rosa
- Wahbung Abinoonjiiag
- Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle
- West Broadway Community Organization
- West Central Women's Resource Centre
- West End Resource Centre
- 1919 Workers Collective
- 1JustCity Inc.