

2023-12 Creating a Winnipeg Without Poverty

Mover: North End Women's Centre

The City of Winnipeg should play its part in addressing poverty, a root cause of the many challenge facing our city like homelessness, safety, and affordability, by fully implementing and resourcing its Poverty Reduction Strategy, plus the following priority areas:

- A. Increase the WINNpass subsidy to 80 per cent off the cost of a monthly transit pass and make it easier to access and commit to a timeline for piloting fare-free public transit.
- B. Commit to the development of 500 units of accessible, energy efficient, social housing annually over ten years owned by public, non-profit, co-op, or Indigenous-led housing providers, in partnership with the provincial and federal government and hire at least 7 full-time staff dedicated to the development of new social and affordable rental housing.
- C. Redirect at least 10% of police funding to community-based organizations, with priority to Indigenous-led organizations, that address the root causes of crime and expand support for 24-hour safe spaces, alternative community safety models, public washrooms, and safe consumption sites.
- D. Mandate and provide ongoing anti-racism and anti-oppression training to all City employees as well as targeted training for first responders around non-violent crisis intervention, de-escalation, mental health first aid, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction and 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 and ensuring the City's operating grant process prioritizes funding for Indigenous-led community-based organizations.

Because: Roughly 1 out of 8 Winnipeggers live in poverty, and this situation has been made worse during the pandemic. Far too many Winnipeggers continue to live with inadequate incomes and face multiple barriers, which impacts their health and wellbeing, and prevents their full participation in the community. Indigenous people, newcomers, people with a disability, people who experience mental illness, single parents, seniors, women, trans people, Two Spirit people, and gender non-conforming people are more likely to live in poverty.

Because: Recent polling from Probe Research shows Winnipeggers believe poverty and homelessness are among the most important issues facing our city today, ranked above the cost of living, crime, and roads/potholes. I am one of those Winnipeggers.

Because: The City of Winnipeg passed its first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy in November 2021. In 2018, Make Poverty History Manitoba called on the City to lead on addressing poverty by releasing the [Winnipeg Without Poverty](#) report. With a strong case for what the city's role can and should be, fifty recommendations for a comprehensive plan, and a powerful community campaign, the City responded and created its plan without any additional financial resources.

Because: While other levels of government need to play their part and act in areas they are primarily responsible for, the City of Winnipeg's poverty reduction strategy can demonstrate leadership by taking specific actions to reduce poverty using its own resources and governance tools.

Because: People living with low incomes often rely on public transit to get around the City, but at \$106 for a monthly pass or \$53 for a low-income pass, transit is out of reach for many. Social assistance gives only \$195 per month for all expenses outside of rent. Reducing the cost of a bus pass will support low-income people to access much-needed services and job opportunities.

Because: There is a desperate shortage of social housing in Manitoba with over 4,000 households on a waitlist. People experiencing homelessness need housing now but private market rents are unaffordable and don't come with needed supports. We will not end homelessness without government investments in housing and the City must do its part.

Because: Mental illness or unsafe substance use stemming from poverty, marginalization, and trauma can contribute to criminal or other harmful behaviours. We must look beyond police responses and invest in evidence-based poverty reduction initiatives led by community organizations that work most closely with people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Because: This resolution fits within the Ending Poverty theme, as it outlines what the City of Winnipeg can do directly to greatly address poverty and reduce inequality in Winnipeg. These measures accompanied with a community-led approach to implementation will be effective in greatly reducing poverty in Winnipeg.

How this Resolution will be Advanced: The Make Poverty History Manitoba coalition's City Working Group is actively working on a campaign for the next Winnipeg four-year budget that prioritizes these recommendations. CCEDNet Manitoba contributes significant staff time and resources to this working group, and CCEDNet members are encouraged to support the coalition.