

2024-1 Equitable Employment while Investing in Communities and the Environment

Mover: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - Manitoba

The Province of Manitoba should focus on equitable employment as a key aspect of its Economic Development strategy, seeking to achieve multiple social, economic, and environmental public policy goals simultaneously. This can be achieved through policies such as:

- A. Ensuring stimulus and procurement policies and practices support climate resilience, sustainable development, strengthen local economies, and support equitable hiring particularly for people facing multiple barriers to meaningful employment, including the use of social procurement and community benefits agreements/clauses.
- B. Fulfilling the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #92 by supporting equitable access to jobs, training, and educational opportunities for Indigenous peoples, through devoting multi-year resources to organizations, particularly Indigenous-led community groups, providing long-term supports to Indigenous job seekers facing multiple barriers to employment and supports to employers committed to inclusive hiring. Training should be community-led
- C. Prioritize green infrastructure projects and building retrofits while creating and supporting decent jobs, including in Indigenous communities.

Because: The economic recovery from COVID-19 lockdowns has proven to be highly unequal. The Statistics Canada 2022 Canadian Income Survey (released in April 2024) finds that 22.9% of Canadians experienced food insecurity in 2022, up from 18.4% the previous year. The same survey found that 9.9% of Canadians lived below the poverty line in 2022, a 3.5 percentage point increase from 2021. Poverty rates are now approaching pre-pandemic levels, with recent immigrants, racialized people, and female-led single-parent families experiencing poverty at higher rates.¹

Because: Manitoba is still reeling from the effects of provincial austerity both prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic analysis by Lynne Fernandez found that provincial spending cuts result in less stimulus in the local economy, resulting in a total loss of labour income to Manitobans of between \$981 million to \$1.179 billion, tax revenue losses to Manitoba from \$157 to \$189 million and a total drop of provincial GDP of between \$1.289 and \$1.525 billion.²

Because: 2023 marked a record-setting wildfire season in Canada. The extreme fire weather season in 2023 was driven by climate change created by carbon emissions. The effects of climate change continue to be disproportionately felt by marginalized communities in Canada. The events of 2023, along with predictions for another record setting fire season in 2024, underline the need to rapidly reduce carbon emissions to prevent runaway climate change.

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240426/dq240426a-eng.htm>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-government-economy-covid-19-1.5539666>

Because: We need to integrate priorities that maintain a habitable planet, support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, while providing stable, decent livings for working people, particularly as part of COVID-19 recovery. This systemic approach has been captured recently by policy proposals and plans for systemic change through a Green New Deal, Just Transition, and Just Recovery. Manitoba could implement a package of changes that emulates the call of these movements.

Because: Manitoba's road to recovery must prioritize employment for those economically impacted by COVID-19, those who were already vulnerable and excluded from the labour market prior to COVID-19, as well as supporting transitioning off fossil fuels. Of particular importance is supporting Indigenous-led green jobs.

Because: Retrofit projects are significant job creators and result in monetary savings from reduced fuel usage as well as environmental benefits. The government can play an important role in stimulating large scale projects to create economies of scale. Savings can be rolled into paying for more projects. Done right, retrofits can extend the life of a building.

Because: Manitoba has the oldest housing stock in the country which provides a massive opportunity for retrofit projects.

Because: Governments have a role to play to stimulate the local economy and help those in need. During an economic crisis such as COVID-19, borrowing money today will stimulate the economy, support employment, increase tax revenue, and save lives by providing life-sustaining services

Because: Manitoba's road to recovery should use a community economic development approach, which allows community members to democratically control development. Indigenous peoples, including many First Nations, are leading CED strategies through the social economy that demonstrates how a Green New Deal could roll out in Manitoba. Much of the Alternative Provincial Budget is rooted in CED principles and strategies. Training and investment is rooted in community economic development and environmental principles that support the Green New Deal strategy. This approach could see an increase in social economy enterprises and community-based organizations working towards a more inclusive economy, while supporting meaningful employment.

Because: This recommendation fits within the Local & Fair Economies and Tackling Climate Change theme areas of the Public Policy Road Map, supporting COVID-19 economic recovery through systemic approaches based in CED such as a Green New Deal, a just transition or just recovery.

How the Resolution will be Advanced: This resolution is advanced through a number of approaches, coalitions, and campaigns. The Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle's Community Plan includes recommendations for action on Education, Employment, and Training. The We Want to Work coalition is advocating for sustainable procurement, including community benefits agreements and social procurement. The Climate Action Team, as part of the Road to Resilience, includes calls for just transition for workers. Make Poverty History Manitoba has priorities on equitable employment and hiring as part of its campaign for provincial anti-poverty work. The Province of Manitoba is creating a new Economic Development Plan as well as a renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2024. CCEDNet members are encouraged to participate in government advocacy on these strategies to advocate for include employment approaches.