

2024-6 Expanding From the Ground Up to support targeted community-led development

Mover: Spence Neighbourhood Association

The Province of Manitoba should expand the From the Ground Up: Safe, Healthy Communities for All program to expand its focus on place-based, targeted, community-led development, particularly in communities in the greatest need of physical, social, and economic revitalization by:

- A. Increasing predictable, multi-year funding agreements for Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations as core ‘anchor institutions’ facilitating community-led development through 5-year plans, community engagement, and asset-based development.
- B. Increasing funding for program-focused community development accessed by community-based organizations including Indigenous-led groups, women’s centres, family resources centres, neighborhood groups, and non-profits who represent residents, including for existing programs that are showing impact.
- C. Increasing funding for capital projects that support neighbourhood renewal, with a particular emphasis on projects led by equity-seeking communities and ensuring the province is a primary funder.
- D. Expand the program’s focus on place-based opportunities for employment and labour market training in communities in the greatest need, including through the use of social enterprise, youth jobs programs, and employment skills programs at a community level. This work should be directly connected with a provincial Social Enterprise and Co-op Development Strategy.
- E. Establish a program review to determine the potential need for expanding focus in future years to additional neighbourhoods where circumstances are deemed promising for community-led development.
- F. Improve transparency of internal government decision-making to meaningfully share power with communities and promote effective communication channels.
- G. Fund sector development and ecosystem support to strengthen collaboration and capacity building among community development organizations in order to better leverage investments.

Because: Community-led development (CLD) is based on the understanding that local residents and organizations have the knowledge of local issues and have the best insight to find appropriate solutions that meet their needs. Using these principles, communities are encouraged to collaborate and cooperate to prioritize community needs and support local leaders as they take on various pieces of work to realize community goals

Because: An expanded provincial program should build on the strengths of community development work already happening, helping to improve community health, safety, and stability. Between 2000 and 2017, NRCs have collectively engaged nearly 560,000 community members - nearly half of the population of Manitoba. In that same time, they have helped create 1,226 jobs through direct employment, pre-employment volunteer opportunities and training, social enterprise development and local procurement practice. Through NRC coordination, nearly \$9 million has been invested in housing and nearly \$31 million

leveraged in affordable housing investment. Nearly \$900,000 has been strategically and effectively invested in community safety.

Because: Provincial support for CLD models and organizations is essential to growing Community Economic Development in Manitoba. While successful CLD programs position the government as an investor, exemplar, and enabler, communities are the ones who lead and plan. The Neighbourhoods Alive! model that was ended by the government of Manitoba in 2017 was in many respects a successful CLD model. While there are opportunities for growth, NA! exemplified many of the principles of CLD best practice that could serve as framework for an expanded From the Ground Up program.

Because: A \$12.5 million program called From the Ground Up: Safe, Healthy Communities for All was announced in Manitoba Budget 2024. This replaces the previous Building Sustainable Communities Program. While always relatively small-scale, financial support for CLD in Manitoba became even more constrained in 2016 under provincial government austerity with the broader Neighbourhoods Alive! Program being dissolved and its funding dispersed. The budget for community development peaked in 2011/12 at \$17 million. From the Ground Up must be expanded to address the impacts of austerity and account for inflationary challenges.

Because: Genuine community-led development programs not only align with respecting community self-determination, but it also achieves sustainable outcomes. An expanded program can contribute to provincial goals such as increasing affordability and addressing rising inequality, facilitating community connections and combatting polarization, reducing the negative consequences of poverty, increasing social inclusion. Neighbourhoods can be transformed through physical improvements, greening projects, recreational and cultural programming, and revitalized public spaces.

Because: Community-based organizations supported through an expanded provincial program can be leveraged to contribute to and help implement provincial social, economic, and climate strategies and goals, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Housing & Homelessness strategies, and more. An ecosystem approach that strengthens collaboration and connection among CBOs would help accomplish this goal.

Because: Community development funding for community-based organizations (CBOs) is housed in the Department of Municipal Relations, generally targeted at different regional, geographic, or population groups. However, many community-based organizations working toward poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and community renewal do not have access to multi-year funding that they require to take innovative, long-term, strategic, and comprehensive action. Evaluations have demonstrated that multi-year funding has helped community-based organizations to be more efficient and effective, helping leverage additional resources from non-government sources or different levels of government. Additionally, many CBOs are not able to maintain enough savings or retained earnings to adequately manage during a delay in funds flowing, thus highlighting the importance of adhering to an agreed upon payment schedule.

Because: Supporting Community-Led Development is a key theme area of the CCEDNet Manitoba Public Policy Road Map. From the Ground Up is a key funding program of the Province of Manitoba to support this kind of work. Expanding the program to support targeted, effective community development and CED work is needed for capturing the value of the sector.

How the Resolution will be Advanced: CCEDNet Manitoba and the Coalition of Manitoba Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations, which includes CCEDNet member NRC organizations, are leading advocacy and lobbying on this resolution. A forthcoming research report through the Manitoba Research Alliance, CCPA-Manitoba, and CCEDNet Manitoba will further detail proposed changes to the program.