



Transcript: Community Meeting on Poverty Reduction

**Burnaby/ New West
Minster, BC
January 29, 2018**

Introduction and Event Summary

On January 29, 2018, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction hosted a community meeting in Burnaby, BC to discuss poverty and poverty reduction with local residents. The event brought together approximately 80 to 90 participants including people with lived experience of poverty; poverty reduction front line workers and advocates; people from the non-profit and business sectors; and other community members from all walks of life.

The event began with a welcome from Elder Tom Oleman, followed by opening remarks from Shane Simpson (Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction).

Participants then engaged in round table discussions in groups of 8 to 10 people per table. Each table had a dedicated facilitator from a local community group or from SPARC BC who helped to guide the conversations. Each table also had a dedicated note taker who helped to record the discussion.

There were two rounds of discussion which focused on the following questions:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Following the discussions, participants were invited to put a sticky dot beside the strategies or solutions that were most important to them. Each participant received four (4) sticky dots. Following the individual priority setting exercise, participants were asked to determine as a table the top three (3) priorities from the evening and to report these priorities back to the room.

The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction shared some closing remarks.

Document Organization

This document contains the transcripts from the flip chart notes from those in attendance. The flip chart notes have been transcribed verbatim, correcting only for spelling and grammar as needed. The notes are organized according to the feedback received to the two questions beginning with:

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?
2. What would address these issues and help you and others out of poverty?

Question 1: What are the issues facing you and people in poverty right now?

- Affordability.
 - o Low wages.
 - o Low cost housing for low income people.
- Limited access to services.
 - o Age limitation for services
- Desperation.
 - o Hospitals to home transition.
 - o Homeless people check in ER for a night.
 - o When shelters are full people say they'll break the law to spend a night in prison
- Financial supports too low.
 - o Seniors keep working to supplement their low pensions.
 - o Low pensions.
 - o Low income/disability rates.
 - o Increase of minimum wages.
- Affordable/accessible services
 - o Day care - Expensive especially for single moms.
 - o Home help for seniors.
 - o Youth housing.
 - o High rent.
- Addiction/Mental Health Supports.
 - o Untreated mental health.
 - o Access to detox program.
 - o Safe injection sites.
- No shelters in Burnaby
 - o One only opens in extreme weather.
- Housing.
 - o Burnaby "demo-victions."
 - o Surrey, Vancouver, Burnaby, Maple Ridge migration pattern
 - o Challenges for people with mental health issues to communicate with landlords.
 - o Expensive buildings are built – where do low income people go?
 - o Working middle class people cannot find housing
 - o In North Van doctors, nurses, policemen can't afford to live there, commute from Maple Ridge
 - o Unfair evictions, no lawyers to help with RTB.
- Advocacy.
 - o Punitive welfare system – hard to apply for welfare, complicated application process, long wait times.
 - o Legal services and language barriers.
 - o Government funded advocates to help people to access various programs, services.
 - o Hundreds of ethnic groups in Burnaby – hard to communicate in English.

- Qualified people work various jobs (doctors) – credentials recognition.
- Access to services.
 - Preventive measures – a lack of them towards poverty.
 - Assess level for access to programs, healthcare, income/disabilities assistance.
 - Decline of number of services to seniors, low awareness of services.
 - Transit –Too expensive, criminalize fare evasion.
 - Storing possessions – bylaw in New Westminster, security → illegal to be homeless.
 - Not getting what you need from Income Assistance, denial.
 - Not getting housing info or help from Income Assistance – no info, homeless for 7+ months and no offer of help.
- Homelessness.
 - Shelter rules.
 - A battle to survive.
 - Hassle by security, police, city.
 - Stuff stolen, need a good hiding spot for tent.
 - Shelter safety, needles/drug use/stuff stolen.
 - No “on the way to detox” place.
- Housing.
 - No housing (3 votes).
 - High rents.
 - Can’t afford rent with IA money, \$375 is not enough.
 - Rent too high.
 - Info re: housing, subsidy, options.
 - Assistance rates too low
- Homelessness is a full time job.
 - No days off, time consuming, collecting bottles, competition, binning bottles, “garbage police”
 - Carry all your stuff – security of possessions.
 - Discrimination against homelessness by transit, city.
 - Transit too expensive
 - Prescription costs.
- Landlords.
 - Accusation, power is with the landlord, exploitation.
 - It’s work fighting an eviction.
- Income Assistance.
 - Answers from I.A. takes too long – response time too long, they say “48 hours” but it takes 7 days
 - Application takes a few weeks
 - “too many crisis” but it’s TRUE
 - Then threaten to administer money, “budgeting” is not the problem – my stuff was stolen again.
 - Not enough for dental, medical, prescription coverage.

- City awarded me a studio.
 - o My shelter benefits are less than the housing cost.
 - o S.A.F.E.R. would be available given housing cost vs. income BUT one program (SAFER) would make me ineligible for Disability Shelter amount (PWD shelter).
- Scarcity.
 - o Can only focus on the scarcity, makes it difficult to participate.
 - o In order to qualify from bed from furniture program (free bed) there is an excess of paperwork.
 - o Refugee after one year, exclusion.
- Ministry Culture.
 - o Mandate is to save the Ministry/government money.
 - o You have to know what you are eligible for or what is available.
 - o We have to change the thinking/culture of government/Ministry staff – change from saving money to opening up resources.
 - o General public too.
- Bed Bugs.
 - o Dehumanizing.
 - o Only those assaulted get a sanitized bed.
 - o Having to talk about personal trauma to qualify.
- Affordability.
 - o 4/10 people are \$200 away from not being able to meet essential bills.
 - o Child poverty rates.
- Transit.
 - o Impact on the spirit to beg to get on transit.
 - o Cost is an important investment.
 - o A world of difference.
 - o Having to sneak on a bus and the walk – 90 minutes to get to the bus.
- Residential Tenancy Act
 - Fixed term lease can't be increased if tenant remains the same.
- Education.
 - o ESL.
 - o Access to education.
- Wages.
 - o Living wage.
 - o Guaranteed basic income research shows people work to get ahead.
 - o Fair wage – coming weeks will receive government report out on plans for fair wage.
 - o No loss of employment as a result of higher wage.
- Addiction and treatment.
 - o No follow up after treatment.
 - o No supports.
 - o Approach with love, caring, concern.
 - o Service needs to continue.

- Harm reduction but also need support for living.
- Emergency shelters.
 - If evicted from shelter then what!?
 - Operate like a business; they have lost the humanity
 - Having to leave the shelter at certain time regardless of illness, weather.
 - Need more heart.
- Defining poverty.
 - We don't know how many people live in poverty; or the level at which we measure poverty.
- Affordability.
 - Welfare rates.
 - Lack of food security.
 - Inaccessibility of efficient transit (gas), affordable transit
 - Cost of owning a vehicle (insurance, gas).
 - Renewable energy/high cost of gas/electricity
 - Unaffordable education
- Housing.
 - Availability.
 - Cost.
 - Respectful.
 - Affordable.
- Job security.
 - Precarious work.
- Accountability.
 - Or lack thereof.
- Vulnerability.
 - Crime (reduction of poverty may reduce crime).
 - Latchkey kids – lack of affordable childcare.
 - Mental health.
 - Health care.
 - Seniors.
- Barriers to supports.
 - Complex systems of access to services.
 - Societal apathy.
 - Indigenous services not available (1 vote).
 - Dignity for people with disabilities.
 - Discrimination.
 - Not enough money.
 - Not enough housing.
 - Not sure how to access resources.
 - Per diem rate has not increased since 1996 for community care per diem.
- Treatment.

- People with addictions can't get into treatment due to waitlists, but there is immediate access for private funded beds.
- A dog goes to daycare for \$32/day but a person only gets \$40/day.
- Treatment centres cannot pay for all the services clients get when they only receive \$40/day.
- When people leave treatment, supports aren't available – they need re-education, proper housing.
- Too much reliance on medicating/injecting clients (harm reduction).
- Clients with addiction/homeless issues – whole family needs to be involved and the family needs support – what is going on in the whole family?
- Solutions focus.
 - So much focus on the problem – must be forward-moving and solution focused regarding addictions, poverty, etc.
 - Need education, re-education, focus on re-entry into the workforce.
- Housing
 - Market is putting everyone into poverty.
 - New West used to be a cheaper place that people would come to live – but no more – it is too expensive now.
 - If you move out to where housing is cheaper, transportation is horrible with long waits.
 - At the city – housing, long waitlist for social housing.
- Income assistance
 - E.g., someone with health issues can't get disability designation.
- Childcare
 - Expensive, for-profit.
- Food security.
 - E.g., accessing different community food programs can be difficult.
 - Reduced frequency/availability of food.
 - Funding cuts.
- Employment.
 - Especially for people with disabilities.
 - Challenge for some people who are job ready, but jobs need to be accommodating to disabilities (e.g., not just full time work postings, 8 hour days can be too long a shift; need shifts in employment environment).
- Advocacy.
 - Need advocacy/case worker/assistance to access and apply to programs.
 - E.g., can't just use the 1-800 number when on hold or you can't hear.
 - The application process is large and onerous, for example PWD application.
 - Difficulty finding forms, even when English is first language
- Housing.
 - Huge waitlists for BC Housing and finding affordable housing.
 - Moving to new school districts if you can't afford housing.
- Food in Schools

- Need for nourishment programs in school has increased in last 10 years in all geographic areas
- Difficulty of accessing services
 - Developing mental health issues as a result of the process of trying to access assistance/services
- Barriers to services.
 - Missing phone message because applicant can't hear.
 - Bureaucracy barrier – strength, time, and wherewithal needed to advocate for yourself.
 - E.g., refugees have barriers
 - E.g., literacy barriers
- Transportation
 - Large families who need to travel to access services (e.g., doctor) requires a lot of money and energy
 - E.g., New West pilot “Everybody active” didn't get high uptake for free recreation passes because of transportation costs
 - Expected to look for work?
 - Could use a 3-month bus pass, can help you get back on your feet.
 - Disabled pensioners have transport supports to have free parking costs, and other discount services – persons with disabilities could have supports too.
- Seniors are living in poverty
 - Isolated, barrier to access services
 - “House rich” but income poor
 - House seen as an asset but barrier to accessing services
- Accessing safe, secure housing.
 - Low income housing and bed bugs.
 - Not easy to apply for home care either; as referred to legislation, it's difficult to access basic info.
- Phone or internet.
 - Can't afford it in poverty.
 - Barrier to connecting to social services
- Transportation.
 - Cost of housing – transport hubs are expensive to live by, how to transport to services?
- Pharmacare
 - Deductibles = lots of seniors currently choosing between medication and food.
 - Free pharma-care a solution.
- Advocacy.
 - People don't know about low income benefits/programs (e.g., opting into MSP assistance).
 - Need help with filing taxes to access benefits, especially with mental health issues, lack of tax knowledge.
- Identification barriers.

- Needing identification (e.g., birth certificate from Ontario or refugee country of origin) to access services is expensive
 - Time consuming.
 - Complicated.
- Youth aging out of care a key demographic at risk for poverty.
 - Many are parents themselves.
 - Education, tuition.
 - Separated from supports.
 - E.g., one student worked 80 hours/week over multiple years of school.
- Ministry offices.
 - 1 hour wait, frustration and concern that EAW was actually trying to be helpful, too adversarial.
 - It's re-traumatizing to repeat yourself over and over, especially with mental health issues.
- Health.
 - No support for addictions treatment (Charlford).
 - Trauma
 - No drug awareness education in school.
 - Lack of free dental services.
 - Lack of mental health supports.
- Anti-community service
 - Communication disconnect between service providers
 - No central management of services (i.e., 1-800 number)
 - Lack of awareness of services
 - Services inconsistent between municipalities.
- Transit.
 - Lack of transit and/or affordable transit
- Police.
 - Over Policing of homeless population.
 - Mental abuse of homeless by policing.
- Access to essentials.
 - Housing.
 - Income (meaningful).
 - Access to food and/or nutritious food.
 - Access to free counselling, childcare; birth control info.
 - Info on financial planning and skills.
 - Financial barriers to post-secondary education.
 - Cheque cashing fees!
 - How to get ID.
 - Personal hygiene: lack of facilities, i.e. shower program.
 - Social isolation of seniors, homeless.
 - Lack of family physicians.

- Social Isolation/ breakdown of social supports.
 - o How to get seniors to participate in programs.
 - o Long wait lists in hospitals, shelters.
 - o Settlement of refugees; life skills.
 - o Breakdown of families and marriages.
 - o Lack of English language classes.
- Poverty as a result of a medical condition.
 - o 51 years of age.
 - o Made good money before, went on assistance after med issues, federal claw back rule is affecting him (6 votes).
 - o Citizens born and raised here aren't getting support.
 - o Was in hospital for 6 months, dependent on medications, had to pay for it (St Paul's Hospital).
 - o A non-addict now without support, no medical guidance, he was discharged from the hospital without any guidance or follow up.
 - o "Don't take my cash and abandon me"
 - o Not employable due to disability
- Government Collaboration.
 - o City and provincial government needs to work together (1 vote).
- Childcare.
 - o Supply and demand – families are demanding daycare but there are limited spaces available.
 - o South Burnaby – not for profit (1 vote).
 - o Before/after school care, school board refused to advertise saying that the school board can't advertise for a different authority;
 - o School board and parents should work together on before and after school care. It should be available as it's not for profit, this could help parents find a place for their kids.
 - o School board should work with the province
- People on PWD.
 - o Money that they receive = PWD rate subsidy → rental (1 vote).
 - o Couples who are on PWD and working have subsidized housing, but people who are disabled are not able to qualify as the waitlist is 5+ years.
- BC Housing.
 - o A criteria needs to be established – BC Housing should not be first come first serve (1 vote)
- Affordability.
 - o Most expensive province in Canada.
 - o Teachers leave because they only get paid \$15/hr, it's not enough money to retain teachers.
 - o Single parent family – runs daycare, and families are struggling, they can't pay for daycare and go to work.

- Affordable Childcare.
 - o Daycare operators have to pay for rent, wages, so they can't reduce daycare costs (1 vote).
 - o Lots of single parents are struggling (2 vote).
 - o Childcare takes a major portion of their salary.
 - o Operators are trying to help but can't be taking a hit as daycare has a low profit margin.
 - o Some children receive subsidy, but if parents earn slightly above the limit then they don't receive the subsidy; creates hardship.
 - o Operators are finding it difficult to find bigger facilities, zoning is an issue (1 vote).
 - o School board and health authorities should work together.
 - o Parents need help, daycare needs children, so if three parties work together parents will know that there is a daycare nearby; since school district doesn't allow daycare to advertise, parents are not aware (2 votes).
 - o Zoning.
- Affordability.
 - o Lack of affordable housing.
 - o Low social assistance rates.
 - o Cost of food, lack of nutritional food choices.
 - o Transportation
 - o Minimum wage.
 - o Lack of awareness.
- Children in poverty/ mental health and addictions.
 - o Children going to school hungry.
 - o Not enough support for mental health.
 - o Correlation between childhood trauma and substance abuse and mental health issues.
 - o Funding runs out before treatment is complete.
- Housing and financial supports.
 - o Disabled people - CPP claw back at age 60 which reduces amount of benefit and forced early retirement at age 60.
 - o Change in income and loss of housing – landlord could increase rent
 - o Temporary housing until experienced assault.
 - o Shelter for housing.
- Seniors experience of poverty
 - o government prevents getting out of poverty by clawing
- Systemic Problems.
 - o Excited to talk about change to systemic problems and barriers, like racism and stigma.
 - o Stigma, not just about unemployment
 - o Housing and childcare as transformative
- At risk seniors.
 - o Key issue: on provincial disability benefits and CPP/PPD, clawed back by province – pushing for a commitment from province.
 - o Homeless seniors, seniors living in cars.

- Stigma for seniors when they find themselves living in poverty.
- Navigating “the system”
 - 211 and 811 services have gaps, they know what things look like on “paper” but not much knowledge of what is happening on the street.
 - Lengthy application process to apply for welfare and the process of all the documents that are required is too onerous.
 - Homeless people don’t have computers to apply online.
 - 3 phone calls to apply for welfare – if client isn’t there because they are homeless and have issues, SR then closes – too hard for people.
- Working poor.
 - Low income workers who aren’t on welfare don’t have access to a funded bed; then they “use” and lose their job and then they qualify; must take care of working poor before they become unemployable (beaten down)
- Disabled People.
 - Small pensions for disabled people.
 - Disabled people don’t always know how to ask for help or where to get help – they need more support.
 - Hard to fill out PWD forms and government forms because a lot of clients do not have a regular doctor and can’t get one.
- Mental Health and addictions.
 - Not enough mental health workers in New West.
 - Hospitals trying to give morphine to past addicts.
- Housing
 - Reno-victions.
 - Rent increases
 - Displacement
- Children
 - Where will they live?
 - How will they be able to afford rent?
 - Living at home because can’t afford to rent.
- Disabilities.
 - Need to focus on the abilities.
 - At 15 years old, starting to fill out PWD applications.
 - Time it takes to get on disability.
 - Time it takes to get diagnosed.
 - Earning exemptions.
- Affordability.
 - Cost of living.
 - Food.
- Supports and advocates for youth with disabilities.
 - Knowing what’s available.
 - Assistance with kids who have aged out of care to apply for disability.

- Kid on a good day can function, on a bad day is suicidal.
- Transportation Barriers.
 - Economic markers.
 - Can't use transit.
 - Can't get driver's license.
 - Transit bills.
 - Transit police stereotype people who are poor.
 - Punishing people who work hard their entire lives.
- Getting medical therapies.
 - Access to therapy.
 - Takes so long to get therapy, by the time they get it they've aged out.
 - Affordability.
 - Steps to get to therapy: register, being in a waiting room, speaking to someone in a suit.
 - Need more than 6 sessions.
 - Most therapists won't meet kids in jail, ICU.
- Youth aging out of care.
 - About 1000 kids age out of care every year.
 - Need to help these kids when they first ask for help.
 - Prevents them from being on the streets.
- Accessing Therapy.
 - Wait time to see a therapist.
 - Need money to access private services.
 - Autism funding: \$7000/year BUT need the money upfront and wait for reimbursement – window of opportunity is gone.
- Childcare.
 - Daycare for single mothers.
- Hot lunch programs.
 - No kids left out/singled out if parents can't afford it.
 - Nutrition.
- Youth aged 19-25 years have help with Aunt Leah's and Broadway
 - Once 25+, no help
 - Need training programs
- Supports
 - Education.
 - Communication centres – no phones, no computers.
 - Resources are not advertised
 - ACCESS: outfit with work gear.
 - May have a job, but don't have the equipment.
 - Need a confirmation letter for gear, so singled out right away
- Cost of living.
 - People going for days without food.
 - Housing: poorly built/no insulation.

- BC Hydro increase – heat more than mortgage payment.
 - Medication – Epipen \$120/shot.
- Work ethic.
 - Kids not showing up to their jobs.
- Housing/ investment,
 - Using places as investments, flipping.
 - People have babies here, for citizenship, but are not contributing.
 - Housing is a big issue.
 - Rental housing is a growing problem (3 votes).
- Food security –
 - Price of bread, price fixing by Loblaws (1 vote).
- PWD
 - Disability rates are not good enough – core necessity is not covered.
- Transportation
- Rental Housing.
 - Rent around Metrotown is \$1800/month.
 - Burnaby is 3rd most expensive rental market in Canada – Canadian Housing Index puts Burnaby last.
 - \$1400/month for bachelor – “not even a one bedroom.”
 - Debt Burnaby – payday loans charge 500% plus per annum.
- Employment.
 - Precarious employment – employer has the power (2 votes).
 - No sick leave provision in the employment standards (1 vote)
 - Private sector does not have living wage (e.g., \$21/hour).
 - Very difficult to live on this wage.
 - Too expensive to live.
- Gentrification.
 - Replacing of lower income people with wealthy people (1 vote).
 - Transportation - Forcing people to move further out and it is longer to commute.
 - Metro town is a prime example of gentrification.
- Childcare.
 - No affordable childcare (1 vote).
- Vulnerable populations.
 - Issues with substance use; no place for people to go to.
 - Apartment dweller does not have a place to grow food, no community garden.
 - Skilled immigrants’ credentials are not being recognized.
 - Temporary foreign workers are forced to live 3 to a room, substandard housing.
 - In Alberta, they are living in the basement of a Burger King.
 - Surrey, working conditions for foreign workers is poor, working 14 hours a day.
 - E.g., only sign contract in India for \$30/day.
 - TFW would share a one bedroom apartment between 5 people.
- Health/housing.

- Substandard housing leads to poor health
- Poor health – wait 4 to 5 hours to see medical doctor, never see the same doctor
- Access to housing.
 - Reno-victions - Forcing people out.
 - Burnaby is not building enough housing units
 - 706 units lost.
 - Another 2,500 unit is slated to go.
- Isolation and loneliness
 - People don't have a place to go.
 - No community in your building, you can only go to your floor.
 - Living in poverty exposes you to more crime.
- Support for neglected populations.
 - People with criminal records should have support to reintegrate.
 - People are not getting full time or benefits when employed; no protection for workers
 - Poverty.
 - Homeless people are invisible.
 - Hard to find a job.
 - People give up because they are treated differently by employers because of the way they look, smell, act...
- Access to public space.
 - Lack of public washrooms (1 vote).
 - Lack of public space in general.
 - E.g., public library is the only public space left
- Income Assistance.
 - Welfare doesn't provide enough money for housing.
- Refugees/Recent Immigrants.
 - Work permits take too long so mom can't work – mom is skilled and wants to work but can't work without a permit (over 5 months).
 - Kids can't go to school because of no immigration status; New West allows kids to attend while waiting for refugee status
 - Families living in a shelter.
 - Can't move out of New West as not all municipalities provide school without immigration status.
 - Language barrier.
 - ESL provided in New West for free, but that's not the case everywhere.
 - Immigration hearing was cancelled, delaying access to immigrant status.
 - Discrimination against refugees.
 - Some people wrongly think refugees get access to lots of money and supports but they don't.
- Healthcare Benefits.
 - Gap in healthcare benefits, gap between what people need and what they receive, gap between those receiving PWD and those without PWD.

- Health benefits when sick are not sufficient.
- Housing.
 - Difficult to find housing... people living on street can't find anything.
 - Waitlists for housing are too long.
 - BC housing lists.
 - Co-ops, you need to know when someone is leaving.
 - RTB not helping tenants, they are helping landlords to discriminate against poor; people are asked how much money they make or on welfare.
 - Can't find housing which allows pets.
 - Landlords get away with breaking rules of the Residential Tenancy Act.
 - Want a house with more space for family but nothing is available.
 - People are taking homes that are too small.
 - Taking a bachelor when they need a 4-5 bedroom house.
 - No vacancy – living in inadequate housing instead of tent or living on the streets.
 - Everyone is fighting for crappy homes.
 - AirBnBs are making lots of money, rotating door of tourists while locals cannot find housing.
- Challenges of being homeless.
 - Have to go to community centre for a shower – costs money to shower.
 - Expensive to be homeless.
 - Clothes, bed are soaking wet and need to pay for laundromat to have dry clothes and bedding.
 - No fridge, so food goes bad or animals get into food.
 - Tent city – gets kicked out (Kingsbury) by municipality.
 - Go to Tim Horton's to buy coffee and get out of the cold, which costs money.
 - Friends are living in tent, so I bring them food and bedding to help – sleeping under a bridge to stay out of the rain and wind.
 - Tents/sleeping is rough, trying to stay hidden but other people join and it becomes visible instead of small, draws attention.
 - Finally found a house but was full of mould, 13 people living together – “Big Brother” gone bad
 - Mix of people are bad; too many “Type A's”
 - Stealing, people getting angry when using other people's stuff.
 - Being forced to leave even though paid rent and cleaned house
 - Living in motorhome, 1 week, seeking help from Elizabeth Fry society.
 - Death of friend from fentanyl.
- Transportation
 - Paying for bus limits options of where to live and makes it expensive to get around.
 - Can't get to larger/cheaper food stores, so buying local.
 - Can't get around on bus if have “500 bags” of groceries.
- Health.
 - Not eating enough, get sick, can't afford to get medical help

- Living in shelter with many others is unhealthy as some may have illness/disease that can be transmitted.
- 5 year old exposed to HIV and had to be treated – scared, painful.
- Access dental treatment at university because it's free; not covered as no immigration status; dental treatment is expensive.
- Affordable healthcare is important for all people.
- Medical treatment is expensive and can't afford it, so get sicker.
- Employment opportunities.
 - Not enough incentive for people to work, wages are too low, working but remain in poverty.
 - Working in social services doesn't pay enough; do more with less.
 - Have to go back to school but end up in a low wage job.
 - Quit job to return to school, traumatic event in first semester stopped me from being able to work part time while in school.
- Access to Education.
 - Education costs too much, get in debt from student loan.
 - Idea of having to pay back student loans is terrifying - \$700/month payment after graduation is not feasible.
- Fragmented system
 - Who to turn to?
- Homelessness.
 - Global warming, nowhere for people to go, freezing to death
- Housing – out of hand
 - City centre, losing housing to transit development networks, supports lost.
 - Homes, not shelters!
- Families with children with disabilities.
 - Barriers to employment to families with children with disabilities;
 - Families lack funding for children with disabilities and families with children with disabilities have lower income, lack of support
 - Hopelessness.
 - Caregivers lack support, understaffing.
- Access to Services.
 - Social safety neglected for a long time.
 - Make safe place for engagement in addiction services.
 - Long waitlist, too long – unable to get service when needed.
 - Lack of access to services without an address.
 - New welfare application unfair, not user friendly, sets barriers; applying for assistance is difficult and unobtainable.
 - Assistance rate is too low.
 - Language barriers when applying and navigating through the government assistance.
 - Changing processes difficult.
 - People not being discharged, held in hospital (expensive stay).

- Lack of communication between community resources, competition for funding
- Community based supports.
 - People working in organizations cannot live near work, due to housing, and commute causes stress,
 - Different community, different level of support or community partners.
 - Funding for outreach has been cut.
 - Social assistance is not language friendly.
 - Support for families with children
- Barriers.
 - Increase in dental and daycare costs.
 - Accessing computers is difficult.
 - Transportation is limited, handy dart has long waits.
 - Resource limited/lack of support, supports being cut.
 - People have to set priorities to something that should be commonplace, e.g., need to take transportation, not enough money for food.
 - Relationships loss, due to cut off supports (i.e., housing, outreach)
- Vulnerable people.
 - Chronic pain – suffering, not receiving care, not working, family units falling apart.
 - Seniors eating cat food.
 - Exploitation of workers.
 - Unfairness in the workplace.
 - People (seniors) living in abandoned houses as they are discharged from the hospital.
 - Landlords providing slum housing.
- Homelessness.
 - Vulnerable people on the street.
 - No housing to offer them.
 - Not enough shelters.
 - Traumatizing to front line workers, burned out staff leaving = less support.
 - One worker has lost 10 people in a day.
- Navigating the system.
 - Overcoming stigma of caring for vulnerable peoples.
 - Clear path – how to access assistance – equality is needed.
 - Different organizations funded by the government offer different services and are accessed in different ways.
 - Food bank accessed by PWD and brain injured people are unable to access the system.
 - People in and out of the system, unable to stay out.
 - Model of supports is one size fits all, but not all clients fit that model.

Question 2: What would address these issues and help you and people out of poverty?

- Affordable Housing.
 - o More affordable housing, fast (4 votes)
 - o Rent control tied to the unit (3 votes)
 - o Faster building for affordable housing; protection of affordable housing (3 votes).
 - o House sharing program.
 - o Incentives for people providing housing.
 - o More protection for tenants in home-sharing situation (2 votes).
 - o Co-op housing.
 - o Room and board in exchange for community hours/job (2 votes).
 - o More sober houses where people can get education, work experience.
 - o Low cost or free child care.
- Advocacy.
 - o Organization that connects people who can provide assistance to individuals in need (1 vote).
 - o Government funded advocates for vulnerable populations (1 vote).
 - o Promotion of info re: housing
- Social Assistance.
 - o \$1500/month social assistance (1 vote).
 - o Indexed.
 - o For a single person
- Rights as a homeless person.
 - o Security of person and possessions
 - o Treatment with respect
 - o No discrimination/no stigma
 - o Free lockers and storage for homeless.
- Food security.
 - o Community gardens (1 vote).
- Taxes/jobs
 - o Raise taxes for rich/businesses – you’ve done well? Pay up! (1 vote).
 - o Job creation.
 - o Vocational training that leads to job placement and good job – well paying.
 - o Immigration? Need housing for everyone and jobs Raise minimum wage/income assistance/disability rates (5 votes).
 - o Easier access to health intervention (4 votes).
 - o Higher pensions (1 vote).
- Funding claw backs.
 - o Eliminate CPPD claw back! (6 votes).

- Stop the seniors claw back of pension and costs increase, income decrease (3 votes).
 - Extend DB benefits.
- Universal childcare.
 - Demand affordable childcare (5 votes).
- Housing.
 - Better and more access to subsidized housing (2 votes).
 - New housing starts should include a percentage for affordable housing (1 vote).
 - Define affordable.
 - Incentivize building of economical housing options.
 - Explore shared housing models.
 - Cooperative and communal housing model (1 vote).
- Transportation.
 - Free transit for children (1 vote).
 - Transit discount for youth (1 vote).
 - Subsidized transit.
- Seniors.
 - Be creative, think about seniors needs now
- Access to Education.
 - Access to training, public education incentives (2 votes).
 - Post-secondary education cost reduction.
- Address scarcity.
 - Basic needs.
 - Food security.
 - Living wage.
- Housing Supports.
 - Housing support programs (e.g., SAFER) do not compete with income and disability assistance (4 votes).
- More mental health services.
 - “This one I find hits close to home, as I strongly believe we need a stronger health care system with a more in depth look on having an inpatient as well as outpatient program. And an education towards the youth on drug abusive”
- Affordable housing
 - “More co-op and social housing and modular homes, and a cap on the foreign buyers’ market. Tiny homes for the homeless”
- Welfare rates.
 - “The rates of welfare are too low in today’s society. We need to match it towards inflation on how to evaluate it on an annual basis. We need to make it accessible towards people and families in need, towards this tool, and to help provide a work training shop.”
 - Minimum wage/guaranteed annual basic income.
 - Definition of poverty.
 - Review welfare rates yearly in line with inflation (3 votes).

- Guaranteed annual or basic income (1 vote).
- Land use.
 - Utilize land effectively – community gardens (low cost).
- Transportation.
 - Affordable transit/efficient transit.
 - Less gas tax/insurance on cars – privatizing insurance.
- Affordable Housing.
 - A cap on rents/housing prices, international buyers, tenancy laws and co-ops (7 votes)
- Employment.
 - More full time jobs, unionized.
 - Green jobs (1 vote).
- Childcare.
 - More childcare.
 - Provided by employers.
 - Cheaper childcare.
- Accessible education.
 - Free or cheaper higher education (2 votes).
- Healthcare.
 - More facilities for mental health care services.
 - More workers and clinics (3 votes).
 - Tiered system of healthcare/dental.
- Seniors.
 - Housing for seniors and medical help.
- Access to services.
 - Simplify accessibility to services.
 - Raise awareness.
 - More commitment from the government.
 - More services for people with disabilities.
 - Dignity for all (1 vote).
- Housing.
 - Affordable housing including co-ops.
- Employment environment shifts (6 votes)
 - E.g., part time opportunities for persons with disabilities, and for people to save on daycare, and shorter shifts
 - Not just 8 hour positions
 - But note – need living wage
 - 3-month bus pass for unemployed to support their search (2 votes)
 - Free internet/cable for low income is an idea.
- Navigating the system.
 - Recipients of Ministry benefits receive notices but not about changes to programs supports/policies (e.g., orthotics got replaced but clients weren't informed) – so, send

- out this info and offer education and explanations of the services that are available (2 votes)
 - Paperwork and forms – need a sample of filled-in forms to show what would work/meet the criteria.
 - One on one support.
 - More one-on-one contact to help with forms and access (1 vote).
 - More outreach workers (6 votes).
 - E.g., helping travel to offices, identify individual barriers
 - Community social services hub in the style of community health services, or going into the community: schools, coffee shops, and the places where people already are (2 votes).
 - Libraries (have internet)
 - More friendly spaces in Ministry offices – e.g., IKEA’s calming environment
 - Organize the system with persons with disabilities in mind
 - Find employers who are supportive of persons with disabilities and adapting the workplace.
 - It’s not necessarily a loss in productivity to reduce work hours
 - Engage business community that’s not just charity, but working together – the “social purpose” of the company (3 votes).
 - Could be staff time, resources, not just money.
- Affordable Housing
 - Affordable housing policies for all new housing going up – a mix, co-ops and community spaces in townhouses (6 votes).
- Education.
 - Access to education, post-secondary (2 votes).
- Food security.
 - Nourishment.
 - Nutrition supplement/basic food allowance.
- Access to financial supports.
 - Living wage (5 vote)
 - Need improved access to welfare.
 - Need more stringent control/regulation for loans.
 - Abolish claw back (5 votes).
 - Not first come first served (1 vote).
 - PTSD.
 - Subsidy if they can’t afford it.
 - PWD needs volunteers, but there are no incentives for them to be involved; with incentives more people will volunteer, and reward volunteers for helping.
- Childcare subsidies.
 - More funding for day care operators so that day care fee can be reduced (1 vote).
 - More subsidy for daycare, increase the cut off \$ amount so that people can earn more and still receive the subsidy.

- Create more daycares so that supply increases, demand goes down, cost goes down – waiting list is too long, can't meet the needs of parents
- City and province need to work together (1 vote).
- Help find daycare facilities so that resources can be shared (1 vote).
- One location for daycare can have different age groups; some parents have to travel to different locations to help drop off and pick up kids.
- Medication/ Addiction.
 - Medication costs audit (1 vote).
 - A lot of efforts going into street drugs; but prescription medication requires guidance. Once [name] was addicted he was not given any help on how he could get off it. Let's protect residents of BC, provide help to people who need help coming off medical drugs; educate patients about the drugs and side effects. There has to be other options rather than just prescribing anti-depressants and pain medication.
 - Support naturopath and homeopaths; should be covered, natural is better for everyone.
- Vulnerable populations.
 - Need to provide preventative programs because children aren't always noticed until there is a problem.
 - Prevention, early childhood intervention (4 votes).
 - Address those groups of people who are challenged with mental health issues or substance abuse
 - Consider economically precarious folks who are employed but can't make ends meet due to low wages, etc. (1 vote).
- Access to supports.
 - Employer-provided subsidies.
 - Reduce transit costs for those on social assistance (1 vote).
 - Subsidized daycare costs for low income people (3 votes),
 - Progressive tax bracket (2 votes).
 - Guaranteed liveable income – market basket measure based (4 votes)
 - Life skills education in high schools.
 - Free access to birth control/IUDs.
 - Free access to RESP, government contribution increased (1 vote).
 - Free education (2 votes).
 - STOP daily interest on student loans.
 - Universal childcare (2 votes).
 - Expand QUEST program (2 votes).
- Housing.
 - New Zealand model for inhibiting foreign investment in our housing market AND have a plan to make up for lost economic activity (4 votes).
 - Change local zoning laws (municipal) for rental and high density housing (6 votes).
 - Government support for community capital investments.
 - Portable housing (2 votes).
 - Expand rental subsidy program – so individuals on welfare can access (2 votes).

- Regulate lenders
- Free dentistry (1 vote)
- Increased supports.
 - o More schools designated as community schools.
 - o Increase funding for women and children’s shelters.
 - o Increase funding for refugee/immigrant programs (1 vote).
 - o Increased awareness of programs and services, i.e. via BC 211 (2 votes).
 - o Strategy for cohesive programs and services (1 vote).
 - o Focus on interpersonal ethics and morality.
 - o Important to listen to others with lived experience of poverty.
 - o More money and funding.
 - o Reallocate money.
- PREVENTION (6 votes)
 - o Schooling – create awareness of “this is what can happen.”
 - o In schools – counsellors, mental health assessments, resources.
 - o Prevention with new marijuana legislation coming into place.
 - o Europe does so much on prevention that now their problem is reduced; ex. Sweden does not have drug problem.
- Peer Supports/ Advocates.
 - o Educating doctor that a person should be there. A peer support worker, to be with person while they are waiting (4 votes).
 - o People with disabilities sometimes cannot speak and advocate for themselves. Sometimes they cannot speak well or understand well. They don’t know where to go. A lot of them don’t know what government workers, etc. are trying to say. They have a low level of understanding. Sometimes it is only “volunteers” who can help them. They can’t “keep up to the world themselves” so – they need one-on-one help to assist them (1 vote)
 - o Some people feel hopeless – they need a network of peer support (PAID) from those that have been through it and got through the other side.
 - o This will save money because you don’t have to pay a nurse \$50/hour to talk to them; they could use a peer support worker
 - o This would also help the peer support worker to be involved, build life and work skills
 - o People need inspiration – a peer support worker could help with this
- Housing.
 - o Need to be proper housing at reasonable rate.
- Mental health and addictions.
 - o Need long-term recovery orientated solution of care.
 - o This will reduce impact on justice and social systems.
 - o People shouldn’t have to prove they are on welfare to access addiction treatment in recovery house – it should be paid for by MSP (1 vote).
- Proper MSP billing system.

- (i.e., no more “honour system) to prevent improper billing by doctors – this saved money can be redirected to social housing and poverty reduction (1 vote)
- Promoting wellbeing.
 - School environment of not making kids feel bad.
 - Giving help, which was making people unhappy.
 - Can’t “say you need a job,” if they’ve been through trauma, addiction, etc. need therapy – the right kind, not blanket (2 votes)
- Education and training.
 - Free education for kids who aged out of care (4 votes) Seen a spike in kids who want to go to school.
 - A lot of kids will not go to university → trades.
 - Training in trades to get started and maybe they will end up going to university (1 vote).
 - Addiction programs – need to link together.
 - Teach kids how to cook, clean, budget.
 - Teach work ethics.
- Programs are disjointed.
 - Difficult to know what’s out there.
 - Only big programs are advertised.
 - Not getting to the market it needs to get to.
 - Need to be bigger than a government initiative.
 - Connecting service providers – need more organizations.
 - Deal with territorial issues
- Housing.
 - BC Housing: lowering wait time.
 - Homeless: no address, no phone.
 - More incentive/more push to have subsidized housing in big BOSA/Concord Pacific buildings (1 vote).
 - Building communities – not isolating within subsidized housing.
- Centralize services
 - Doctors, dentist, everything in one area
- Reducing stigma (1 vote)
 - “They are on the streets, they are too lazy to work”
- Youth
 - Education grant - \$10,000 for education/training when they age out.
 - Broadway Youth Resource Passport.
 - Stamps for going to school, accessing health care.
 - Give everyone a fair chance.
 - Negative vs. positive reinforcement – empower kids.
- Housing
 - International investments
 - No one in BC can afford \$6 million price tag, if sold internationally then increase the tax
 - Renters cap (1 vote)

- Income.
 - o Increase income assistance rate (2 votes).
 - o Wages need to increase.
 - o Living wage.
 - o Minimum wage needs to be raised, eliminate serving wage.
 - o No exemptions to the minimum wage.
 - o Increase minimum wage and tie minimum wage/living wage to cost of living increases (1 vote)
 - o Increase welfare and disability (1 vote)
- Support Community members.
 - o Give tools, take care of our own, but don't want to push others out.
 - o We are pushing people out to other provinces.
 - o Need to be a working tax payer to own land.
 - o Homes in Richmond, owned by students not working.
 - o Stop it now, the balloon will pop.
- Community design/public space.
 - o Have community garden, place for people to congregate.
- De-commodifying housing (2 votes)
 - o Taxing housing sales so that you cannot speculate (1 vote)
 - o Ban on foreign ownership of property
 - o More social housing (1 vote)
 - o Need a provincial strategy to deal with empty homes.
- Basic income guarantee (1 vote)
 - o Basic income guarantee should not replace other social services (e.g., health, housing, education, childcare, etc.).
- Childcare.
 - o Child subsidy increase.
 - o Increase daycare space and make it more affordable (1 vote).
- Tax the wealthy.
 - o Reduce inequality by taxing the wealthy and high income earners (1 vote).
- Free transit (1 vote)
 - o Pay for transit by increasing property tax
- Employment.
 - o Recognize foreign credentials
 - o Increase worker protection, employment standards
- Food Security.
 - o Create a food security plan
- Reduce Stigma.
 - o Integrate people living in poverty into poverty reduction discussion
 - o Free injection sites.
 - o More education on poverty (educate kids).
 - o Destigmatize poverty.

- Affordable housing.
 - o Engage city in affordable housing plan (1 vote).
 - o Need provincial definition of “affordable housing” (1 vote).
 - o Rent caps from government/landlords regulation across the province to avoid people having to live in specific municipalities (3 votes).
 - o \$1000/month for 1 bedroom – solution is rent caps by government, a certain % of income.
- Transportation.
 - o Solution – subsidize public transit – people helping people through small portion of fare from each rider.
 - o Affordable bus passes (1 vote).
 - o Charge 5-15 cents on each bus ticket and use it to subsidize cheaper bus fares for low income people.
- Support for single parents.
 - o Help people in families with one income (single parents) with education costs, transportation (2 votes).
- Awareness.
 - o Shed light on the reality of people living on welfare (1 vote).
- Tenant Protection
 - o Reduce the amount that a landlord can raise rents – rent control (1 vote).
 - o Improve the Residential Tenancy Act/Branch so they help tenants rather than just protecting landlords (1 vote).
- Ministry.
 - o The ministries get together to talk and share info on funding streams, work collaboratively to understand and identify gaps or overlaps that exist (2 votes)
 - o Better publicize services and supports available so people know what is out there to help them and how to access it; e.g., EI retraining, BC Housing supports (2 votes).
 - o Improve EI programs
 - o Provide physical copy (not just online or 211) of Redbook info on settlement services for agencies and people (1 vote).
 - o Integrated case management across the government (1 vote).
- Medical
 - o No cost prescription coverage, dental care, optical (1 vote).
 - o Insurance premiums should be low/free for all people.
- Guaranteed minimum income (7 votes)
 - o Like pilot done in Manitoba
 - o \$20.08/hr in Vancouver
- Employment and training.
 - o Speed up work permit process so people can get to work sooner (3 votes)
 - o Tax breaks for people entering social service work (NGOs, etc.) (1 vote).
 - o Educational grants/bursaries/free education (4 votes).
 - o Ensure quality workers, improve qualifications or regulations (2 votes).

- Affordable housing.
 - o More affordable housing to help homeless/under housed (2 votes).
 - o Look at other jurisdictions to understand what works.
- Wages.
 - o Increase pay for teachers, childcare workers.
 - o Increase minimum wage to be livable wage (1 vote).
- Communication.
 - o Make policy and legislation accessible (plain language) (1 vote).
- Employment.
 - o Support employed workers to get better paying jobs (2 votes).
 - o Focus on fastest way into sustainable employment, not just employment (2 votes).
- Put social (human) element back in services (3 votes).
 - o Easier access.
 - o Case workers.
- Housing.
 - o Health authority should fund housing (mixed housing) for different needs, ages, etc. – progressive housing to independence (2 votes).
 - o Social housing incorporated into all future building structures (4 votes)
- Access to support.
 - o Singular database for resource support – integrate and connect services (common intake, etc.) (4 votes)
 - o Advocates from different languages, access for all (1 vote).
- Governance.
 - o Give municipalities power to regulate taxes and vacant oversight, governed by government (1 vote).
 - o Equitable service to all (2 votes)
 - o I.e., Vancouver has its own charter, why not all municipalities
- Housing.
 - o Land supplied for affordable housing (1 vote).
 - o Rent supplements – not time restricted – support to independence.
 - o Take housing back to making it a basic need, not an investment.
 - o Pet friendly housing.
 - o Fill vacant houses, owned by off shore – ban vacancies (1 vote).
 - o Reduce inequality by progressive taxation of wealth and high incomes, speculative land value/housing taxation
 - o Renters cap
- Make people employable
 - o Education – relevant to the individual.
- Services.
 - o Centralized services.
 - o Eliminate CPP/Disability claw back
 - o Universal childcare

- Living wage
- Housing.
 - o Eliminate competition between housing support programs (i.e., SAFER) and income assistance/disability assistance
 - o More affordable housing as fast as possible.
 - o Faster construction and more protection of affordable housing.
 - o Strong rent control.
 - o De-commodification of housing – homes are not an investment.
 - o Build social housing.
 - o Have a provincial definition of affordable housing.
- Healthcare.
 - o Easier access to health interventions.
 - o Educating doctors with peer support for patients – not having addicts being told they are not welcome at the hospital.
 - o Eliminating 2-tier healthcare.
- Raise the financial supports
 - o Minimum wage.
 - o Income.
 - o Disability rates.