



Since 1986

March 29th, 2018

Discussion summary re: BC Poverty Reduction Strategy

Location: 1338 Seymour St, Karis Place, subsidized housing operated by More than a Roof Housing Society

Location: 1655 Barclay St, Sunset Towers, subsidized housing owned and operated by More Than a Roof Housing Society

As there were only two participants at Sunset Towers I would like to combine the information as one report.

Primarily seniors represented, all of whom reside in subsidized housing, 6 women, 4 men.

1. What are the issues facing you and people living in poverty right now?

- Lack of intermediate housing options – you make too much money for subsidized housing but not enough for market rent
- Lack of meaningful employment (especially for older adults)
- Access to nutritional food, dealing with dietary restrictions, cost of fresh food and cost in general
- Food security
- Not enough supportive employment available
- Disability rates need to be higher
- Better transit access
- Still a bias around persons with disabilities
- Barriers to employment or training – not enough money for transportation or food
- Disconnect between agencies (not enough collaboration)
- Not enough mental health resources
- No access to alternative types of medicine (due to cost), Naturopaths etc...
- Ongoing stigma around poverty and lack of money
- Lack of affordable housing
- Children's issues – labelling, break down of family, stigma, (name calling)
- Long term affects on children and families
- Addiction issues
- Loss of hope (systemic issues, lack of dignity, "Line ups".)
- Not enough support for families

2. What would address these issues and help you or others out of poverty?

- Affordable housing
- Job programs that reduce barriers, support a variety of skills and trades, work sharing, work experience, and education for employers and decisions makers (around human rights)
- Proper analysis of homeless population (why?). Look at the big picture and be aware of the full history (everyone has a story)
- Educate around cultural biases

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- Provide options other than online for accessing support
- Food security (limit processed food into the donation system, incentivize donations of fresh foods, make better use of urban space to grow fresh produce, divert food waste to community kitchens or food programs)
- More money – “Raise the rates!” Disability and social assistance money.
- Better access to medical system and prescriptions
- Increase societal awareness (start with high school students)
- Collaboration between all the players (gov't, non-profits, agencies, etc.).making it easier to access support (wrap-around).

Top three solutions:

- 1) Education
 - remove stigma
 - influence decision makers, employers, policy makers, mental health and culture
 - increase respect
 - life skills
 - listen to people
- 2) Raise the Rates
 - There simply is not enough money for people to live on
- 3) Affordable housing options
 - more subsidized housing availability (families and singles)
 - community based (natural part of the community environment)