



Together Nelson

A Community Action Strategy to Reduce Poverty in Nelson & Area
2022 - 2026

prepared by

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in collaboration with

Together Nelson's Leadership Round Table

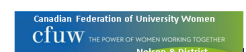
for

Nelson at its Best

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gratefully acknowledges the support of



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Together Nelson acknowledges with respect and gratitude that we operate on the traditional, unceded territories of the Sinixt, the Ktunaxa, the Syilx and the Secwépemc peoples. We acknowledge the diversity of First Nations and Métis peoples who live here today. We are grateful to the keepers of these territories that have sustained life and human communities throughout time – land where we live, learn, and work.

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SUMMARY

Together Nelson's four-year Community Action Strategy To Reduce Poverty in Nelson & Area marks the conclusion of a year of research, data analysis, community engagement and planning with input from over 80 community members. A broad range of people contributed their thoughts and ideas to inform this Strategy -- people with previous or current experience of poverty, Indigenous people, local businesses, community leaders, front line workers, local police, local government, and provincial government offices including education, health, children and families, social development & poverty reduction. This input, combined with additional research from other community poverty reduction efforts, both provincially and nationally, expertise from *Tamarack Institute's Communities Ending Poverty*, and *Nelson at its Best's End Poverty Initiative*, guided the development of this Community Action Strategy which has resulted in the identification of **5 priority Pathways To Change**, along with over 100 suggested actions or solutions. These suggested actions were prioritized into the top **16 recommended actions** to **effect the greatest change** in reducing Nelson's poverty rate. These five priority pathways, recommended actions and our anticipated impact -- lifting 500 people out of poverty in the next four years -- are highlighted at the end of this Summary.

This Community Action Strategy proposes we **do things differently** in order to effect change. We embrace a collective impact approach and focus our efforts primarily on economic inclusion and opportunities.

Collective Impact is an innovative community-based approach to solving the complex social challenge of ending poverty. It recognizes that organizations working in isolation are not the route to creating desired social change, but rather it requires a collective group of people and organizations, from across all sectors working collaboratively, in a structured way. The key tenets of the collective impact approach are: creating a common agenda, providing strong backbone organization support, conducting mutually reinforcing activities, using shared measurements of change, and delivering continuous communication about the work. This Community Action Strategy represents our community's common agenda, where **collaborative, multi-sector** involvement has defined the problem and impacts of poverty in our community and has created a shared vision and strategies to address it. It is designed to create opportunities that foster mutually reinforcing activities across organizations that maximize collective, **community-based effort** critical to poverty reduction. It includes a strong backbone organization that encourages continuous communication, builds trust and relationships amongst participants, and coordinates a team dedicated to supporting *Together Nelson's* work. It puts forward a baseline of shared measurements that will enable *Together Nelson* to track progress and continuously improve on poverty reduction efforts.

Economic Inclusion recognizes everyone's right, regardless of gender, place of birth, family background, age or other circumstances, to full and fair access to economic opportunity. Economic inclusion refers to the opening up of economic opportunities to under-served social groups and ensuring **equal access** to public goods and services including education, housing, and transit. An inclusive economy is about investing in making our local economy more equitable from the bottom up, acknowledging that economic growth and inclusion is likely to be better for everyone's pocketbooks and for our **collective well-being**. In this Strategy, we are laser-focused on supporting shared prosperity for people facing the greatest barriers to advancing their financial well-being and securing their futures. Reducing poverty in Nelson and Area requires community leaders to look at aligning the work of their own organizations or groups with priorities identified in this Strategy and to consider new, innovative ways to support greater economic inclusion.

This Community Action Strategy is data-driven and focuses on highest need with **priority consideration** given to the two largest groups currently experiencing poverty in Nelson and Area – **single parents** and **low income earners**. Our aim is to reduce the current 18.6% poverty rate by 4% over the next four years by focusing our efforts on lifting 500 people, primarily in these two groups, out of poverty.

Involving people impacted by poverty underpins everything we do in this Strategy offering opportunities for guiding the overall direction, sharing perspectives and priorities, shaping initiatives, and evaluating success.

Priority actions identified here will have a **ripple effect** on Nelson's surrounding communities. Employment, education and community support opportunities initiated in Nelson may be accessed by people living in surrounding communities where similar opportunities may not exist. We anticipate communities such as the Slocan Valley (40% poverty rate) and Salmo (23% poverty rate) will benefit from *Together Nelson's* efforts.

To implement this Community Action Strategy, a Collective Impact governance structure has been put forward that will enable multiple organizations and community leaders to support poverty reduction. There is opportunity for **30-40 community leaders to be directly involved** through the Strategy's Community Voices Advisory Group, Community Leadership Team, and Community Action Teams, along with many more community members who will participate in, and benefit from, priority activities.

Our Collective Impact, 5 Pathways To Change & 16 Recommended Priority Actions



Background

Together Nelson is a collaborative, multi-sector community-based initiative launched in the fall of 2020 by *Nelson at its Best*, a local community development organization. Following seven years of encouraging public discourse about local poverty and initiating some innovative projects, *Nelson at its Best* believed that the community was ready to put forward a longer term Community Action Strategy that identified specific poverty reduction targets and measurable action strategies.

Together Nelson is a Leadership Round Table made up of diverse representatives including people with experience of living in poverty, the Indigenous community, local business, local government,

education, health, and mental health services, and non-profit community organizations.



Poverty

Poverty is a complex issue resulting from economic and social systems that enable and perpetuate economic and social disparity. This disparity is reflected in insufficient income to meet basic human needs that interacts with and shapes individual circumstances. Poverty is one of the key social determinants of health, and although it often manifests as income and financial instability, it is much more than simply financial earnings. Poverty causes ongoing stress and struggle that can impact physical health and mental health. It carries with it the stigma of shame that often impacts social connection, personal confidence and ability to access opportunities. It is an expression of gender, cultural, educational and employment inequality. It is also an expression of barriers to accessing poverty alleviating services and programs. The below definition identifies the complexity of poverty and underpins this Strategy's development.

POVERTY results from economic and social systems that create a consistent lack of resources, choices, opportunities and power needed to participate fully and with dignity in community.

Poverty Reduction

The primary drivers to reducing, and ultimately ending, poverty are **economic inclusion** and **opportunity**. We all have a basic right to economic opportunities and full access to supports and services that foster good health and participation with dignity in our community. Poverty reduction efforts focus on increasing opportunities for economic independence, or pre-cursors to economic independence, along with a range of community supports and services, so that everyone can be successful.

Nurturing an inclusive local economy requires the full participation of all sectors of the community. No one organization or sector can do it alone. We can no longer work in silos expecting that the social services sector will take responsibility for reducing poverty in our community. Economic inclusion and poverty alleviation efforts must work hand-in-hand to reduce, and ultimately, end poverty. In this case, “the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts”, and it requires a common vision and shared purpose of all sectors to create and sustain efforts that lead to a community where everyone has the opportunity to do well financially and socially.

This important work begins with a caring, committed community who understands that reducing poverty benefits the entire community. A commitment toward reducing poverty and supporting each other means that we can begin to see an end to situational and generational poverty, offering everyone the opportunity to have a future filled with hope and accomplishment.

Shared Responsibility

Poverty reduction is a shared responsibility across federal, provincial, municipal, regional governments and communities. The Federal government released a national poverty reduction strategy in 2018, *Opportunity for All*, which includes a commitment to reducing poverty by 50% by 2030. The BC government also released a poverty reduction strategy in 2018, *Together BC*, which aims to reduce poverty by 25% overall and by 50% for children by 2024.

Together Nelson is an opportunity for our community, along with our local governments, to understand the impact of local poverty and to take actions that will contribute to, complement, or promote provincial and federal efforts, while setting a local target for a further **25% reduction in local poverty**. All together, we can end poverty in Canada.

Our Process



The development of this four-Year Community Action Strategy involves four phases:

- ❖ **Take Stock** of the most relevant and currently available data to create a snapshot of the state of poverty in Nelson. We identified local poverty indicators and created an inventory of services and initiatives in place, or in development, which interacts with people experiencing poverty.
- ❖ **Engage Community** in identifying barriers and gaps that perpetuate poverty and in creating a vision and priorities for reducing poverty. We conducted six, online consultation sessions with over 70 community members with expertise in key areas impacting those experiencing poverty. Engagement outcomes form our community-driven Agenda that directly influences this Strategy's development.
- ❖ **Organize For Success** by identifying a governance model and implementation plan for launching the Strategy in the broader community.
- ❖ **Be A Catalyst For Collective Community Action** by gaining commitments from community and local government partners to collaborate on the Community Leadership Table and/or Community Action Teams to deliver priorities in this Community Action Strategy.

We recognize that ending poverty will take more than four years given the complex nature of poverty and shared responsibility for its elimination. However, we also recognize community-based responses are an important part of addressing local poverty, and this four-year Strategy offers us a starting point for a community-based contribution to reducing poverty.

Poverty in Nelson

Key poverty indicators in any community include areas such as income, education levels, housing, transportation and access to a range of community-based support and services including health, mental health, food, children, youth and family supports, justice and many other areas.

The poverty indicators that shape this Community Action Strategy, identified in the adjacent Fact Sheet, reflect our data-driven approach that supports each of the Strategy's five Pathways To Change and can be used to monitor the impact of priority actions being taken. Data on these indicators is available annually and can be monitored regularly to determine the impact of our efforts.

A detailed summary of other poverty indicators that informed our community consultations can be found in Appendix A – *A Brief Summary Of Poverty In Nelson*.



Poverty Data - Context & Explanatory Notes

Data Collection

The data collection period used in this Community Action Strategy ranges from the 2016 Federal Census (based on 2015 data) to 2019 Tax Filer data. Indicators noted here are chosen that reflect the most recent data available based on Tax Filer information. That being said, Tax Filer data has a lag time in being released, for example 2019 data was released late summer 2021. Data is ever-changing -- by the time it is collected, analyzed and used, it is already out-of-date. However, we believe that the data paints a relatively accurate picture of poverty in Nelson pre-pandemic and expect that 2020 data, which will become available in 2022, will reflect both the economic implications of pandemic-related income loss along with the effects of the temporary guaranteed income (Canada Emergency Response Benefit) via federal government income supplements.

Poverty Rate

Nelson's poverty rate of 18.6% (2020) is notably higher than both the federal and provincial poverty rates. This has two probable reasons. Rural poverty rates are historically known to be higher than urban poverty rates. And, Low Income Measures (LIM) are known to report higher poverty rates than Market Basket Measures (MBM). We are using the LIM rate as no MBM rate has been calculated for Nelson. The difference between these two rates is as follows:

MBM costs out a specific basket of goods and services associated with a modest standard of consumption, taking into consideration costs of specified qualities and quantities of food, clothing, footwear, transportation, shelter and other expenses adjusted for family size and geographical region.

LIM measures the fraction of the population with an income lower than 50% of the median income in a given year and is adjusted to take into account household size reflecting the fact that a household's needs increase as the # of members increase. It is a relative measure of income that is continually updated as the median income changes.

We also know that the number of people living on less than a full-time living wage (currently at \$33,945 per annum) is higher than the number of people living below the poverty rate, MBM or LIM. **This means that more than 18.6% of our population is living on less than what is needed for a basic, minimum standard of living that a living wage would afford. However, the exact number of people is unknown.**

Our Shared Strategy

Community Consultation

This Community Action Strategy is guided by the voices of **80+ multi-sector, community leaders** and **people with living or lived experience** who identified barriers and gaps in our community, shared their stories and vision for reducing poverty, and identified over 100 actions to help reduce poverty in Nelson. In Appendix B you will find our ‘*What We Heard*’ Report which documents community consultation outcomes and Appendix C which documents the many solutions identified during these consultations. This Strategy is also guided by the expertise of our Leadership Round Table members, *Nelson at its Best’s* poverty reduction work done to date, and research into what other communities are doing to reduce poverty both provincially and nationally.

Collective Impact Approach

This Strategy is based on the belief that **ending poverty** is a **shared** and **collective responsibility** where all levels of government and all sectors of the community have an important role to play. We therefore embrace the Collective Impact approach which is a proven framework for tackling deeply entrenched and complex problems. Collective Impact purposefully brings together people with living or lived experience of poverty, Indigenous people, and representatives from local governments, local business, provincial health and education organizations, and non-profit community organizations to collaborate, share leadership, share ideas/perspectives, cultivate community engagement, mobilize resources, and take bold action to create lasting social change within the community.

Reach Of Our Work

Nelson is a central employment, education, recreation, and services hub for people living in surrounding communities. The lack of available and affordable housing in recent years in Nelson has forced many people to live outside the city thereby creating new access and participation challenges. This Strategy will have a **ripple effect** beyond the city of Nelson by offering opportunities that have the potential to reduce poverty for many individuals and families who live in areas surrounding Nelson.

Our Role

This Strategy reflects that *Together Nelson* is a **convening body** committed to **doing things differently** to reduce poverty. Convening means we will engage partners within economic and social systems to collaboratively impact economic well-being. Doing things differently means we will focus our efforts on activities that increase financial stability through economic opportunities. Doing things differently also means we will support the development of, and access to, services that will enhance and

sustain these economic opportunities. This Strategy is based on the premise that changing economic systems will eliminate poverty for the vast majority of people who experience it.

Values And Guiding Principles

The following have shaped our understanding of poverty, poverty reduction, and the development of this Strategy and will shape the delivery of priority actions:

People With Living Experience – We believe the voices of people with living, or lived experience, of poverty must be at the heart of everything we develop. This Strategy involves people with direct experience of poverty in all levels of this initiative - in guiding the overall direction, sharing perspectives and priorities, shaping strategies and actions, and promoting a clearer understanding of key poverty-related issues.

Inclusion & Diversity – We are committed to honouring the diversity of our community by ensuring, with dignity and respect, that people's experiences are heard and captured in our work. We are committed to including the voice of Indigenous peoples, immigrants, LGBTQ+, people without permanent housing, people of colour, women, men, youth, adults, and seniors. We value all contributions and wish to promote a sense of belonging in developing and implementing this Strategy.

We also recognize that low income and trauma are persistent challenges faced by Indigenous community members, who are over-represented in poverty rates. We believe an inclusive approach that embraces both Indigenous leadership and Indigenous perspectives on poverty is essential in reducing poverty.

Cultural Safety & Gender Equity – We understand the role that cultural trauma and gender inequity play in perpetuating poverty. Hence, promoting cultural safety and gender equity underpins all our work.

Collaboration & Collective Effort – We know poverty is a community-wide issue that takes the whole community, working together, to identify and implement a common Agenda to reduce poverty. Hence, we promote shared leadership across community leaders and local government leaders to guide and implement our efforts.

Innovation – We realize that if we are to succeed we need to be open to doing things differently. Many current approaches serve to alleviate the impacts of poverty but do little to lift people out of poverty. We aim to be creative in leveraging existing resources and creating new opportunities so that our work both prevents people from falling into poverty and lifts people out of poverty.

Build On Community Strengths – We recognize the importance and value of maintaining, supporting and leveraging existing poverty reduction and alleviation efforts of our local organizations.

Vision

Nelson is a poverty-free community where everyone has access to opportunities and resources that enable them to participate fully in community and reach their highest potential.

Mission

Identify innovative ways of reducing poverty in Nelson and Area by collaborating and aligning our work with existing organisations and the whole community.

Goals

Community Commitment

We will build a collective, multi-sector, community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Nelson and Area.

Poverty Reduction

We will reduce Nelson's poverty rate from 18.6% to 14.6% (4%) which means **500 people will be lifted out of poverty.***

Housing

We will contribute to the development of affordable housing units that support the needs of priority populations.

Transportation

We will provide input into the development of affordable and accessible local and regional transit options.

Community Supports

We will support development of a coordinated and integrated network of local health and social services for improved access and navigation.

** 500 people is close to 25% of Nelson's community members estimated to be experiencing poverty (2,100+ people) and our community-based contribution to provincial and federal poverty reduction efforts. This number is based on LIM rates derived from 2019 tax filer data.*

Priority Considerations

We believe this Community Action Strategy should focus on those who are most impacted by poverty in our community. From our data, we know that single parent families and people working but still living in poverty represents **1,540 of the 2,100+ community members that live below the poverty line** in Nelson. We expect there is overlap between these two groups. However, combined they represent a significant number of people living in poverty in our community.



Single Parent Families



Working Poor

Youth, adults, seniors, people living with a physical or mental disability, recent immigrants, and Indigenous peoples may also be experiencing financial hardship. However, exact numbers are not known and we expect that many of these demographic groups will more than likely be represented in our priority groups.

All of the five Pathways To Change in this Strategy hold significant promise for dramatically improving the lives of single parent families and the working poor.

Five Pathways To Change

To achieve our goals, *Together Nelson* has identified five Pathways To Change which represent the top priority areas for action that have been identified through local data and community consultations. Below is a brief description of each Pathway To Change and how they support poverty reduction.

1. **Employment & Income** - Adequate employment and income are central to reducing poverty. Employment and income generating activities focus on ensuring more people earn liveable wages and receive applicable government benefits.
2. **Education & Skill Building** - Youth and adults need foundational skills for finding and maintaining employment, optimizing their incomes, increasing financial assets, and reducing debt. Education & skill building opportunities will help develop appropriate and relevant skills needed to navigate life successfully.
3. **Affordable Housing** – Affordable and appropriate housing increases the likelihood that people will remain healthy and engaged in community life. Housing should cost no more than 30% of a person's total income. A broad range of affordable housing options will help to ensure everyone's right to a place to call home.
4. **Transportation** – Public transportation is essential, especially for those on lower incomes, for accessing work, education, recreation, and essential health services. Residents of Nelson and Area require a transportation system that provides convenient, accessible and affordable options.
5. **Access to Services** – Accessing and navigating health, justice, and community-based social services can be complex and overwhelming. A more coordinated and integrated service network will mean easier access and navigation, promote usage, and improve service efficacy.

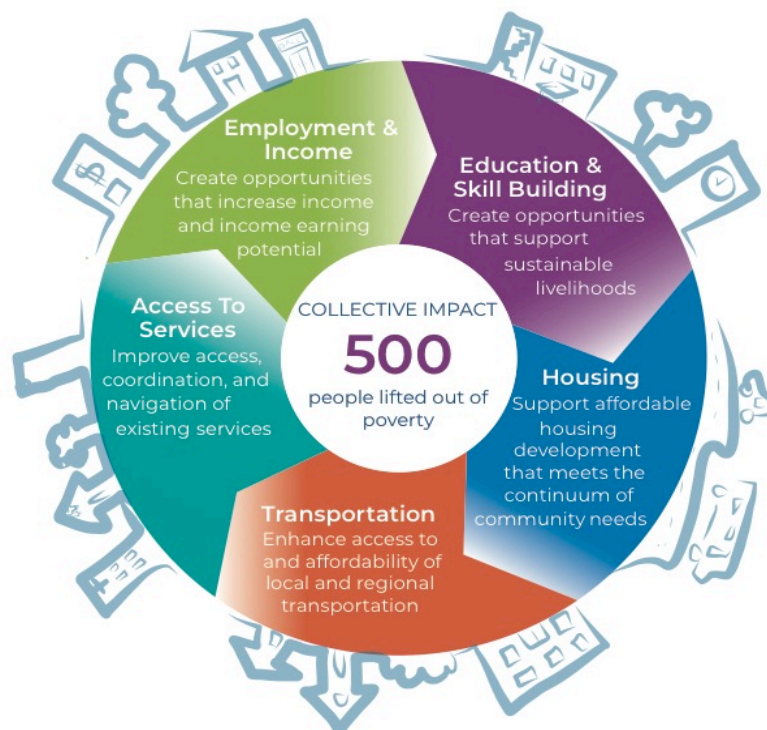
Recommended Actions & Anticipated Outcomes

Each Pathway To Change is considered essential to both reducing *and* alleviating poverty in Nelson and Area. Each pathway contains three to four recommended priority actions which arose from data collection, community consultations, Leadership Round Table input, *Nelson at its Best's* prior experience, and research into innovative poverty reduction efforts from other jurisdictions across Canada.

Recommended priority actions are also based on **impact, effort, resources, and innovation**.

Impact refers to activities that have the potential to reduce poverty for the largest number of people in Nelson. Effort refers to the feasibility of being able to reduce poverty within this Strategy's four-year time period. Resources refers to the community strengths, assets, and partnerships we can build upon to further our work. Innovation refers to new and creative ways we can approach poverty reduction.

These recommended priority actions are **driven by the most recent information and data** available. We recognize our community is continually developing and that the pathways and actions identified here may not reflect evolving needs over the next four years. This Strategy is a starting point, and we recommend it be regularly assessed to ensure priority pathways and actions identified here continue to meet community needs and priorities and reflect both capacity and resources. The 5 Pathways To Change, highlighted on the below diagram and expanded on in the following table, support our vision and mission and are underpinned by our values and guiding principles, while recognizing resources, local dynamics, and potential collaborators to achieve our intended outcomes.



EMPLOYMENT & INCOME	
RECOMMENDED PRIORITY ACTIONS	OUTCOMES
1. Social Enterprise Development – Explore potential to transition existing businesses towards a social enterprise model or develop new social enterprises with emphasis on providing a living wage and employment training & career development opportunities targeted to youth, under employed, and unemployed with laddering to other career opportunities.	Poverty will be reduced in Nelson by 4%, meaning close to 1 in 4 people, 500 community members are lifted out of poverty.
2. Liveable Wage Business Network – Establish a network to explore, advocate for, and implement strategies in the business community to lift workers out of poverty by promoting capacity building in the areas of basic income, liveable wages, and social enterprises.	
3. Tax & Benefits Clinics – Build on existing tax clinics to support more low income individuals and families increase their income by raising awareness about and access to programs such as the Canada Learning Bond, Canada Education Savings Grant, BC Training and Education Savings Grant, and Guaranteed Income Supplement.	
EDUCATION & SKILL BUILDING	
1. Financial Literacy & Career Mentorship – Increase access to financial education, awareness, and coaching through financial literacy training and career mentorship opportunities.	More opportunities are available to help individuals gain financial management and employment readiness skills.
2. Career & Post-Secondary Support – Work with SD#8, Selkirk College, and local banks to establish supports that help students navigate post-secondary education and student loans.	
3. Employment Readiness – Build on existing pre-employment skill development programs to support individuals' readiness and success at securing and maintaining employment.	
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	
1. Affordable Housing Development Plan – Advocate for a long term plan that actively encourages affordable housing across the continuum of housing needs including non-market and rental housing.	We have short and long-term affordable housing units in development.
2. Affordable Housing Stock – Help build capacity for increasing affordable housing stock.	
3. Housing Authority/Endowment Fund/Land Trust – Research these approaches to affordable housing that we know have been successful in other communities and determine if they might be viable in Nelson and Area.	

TRANSPORTATION	
1. Public Transit – Support development of routes that provide greater reach, late night services, longer hours, and more efficient routes that support increased ridership within Nelson and surrounding communities.	We have accessible and affordable local and regional transit options.
2. Innovative Transportation Options – Explore development of a local program or system such as taxi vouchers being distributed to low-income people for use when bus service isn't available.	
3. Affordability – Advocate for free or sliding scale low income transit passes.	
ACCESS TO SERVICES	
1. Community Health & Wellbeing Network – Establish a service provider network of decision-makers and workers across all local services and programs, particularly those that support people vulnerable to or experiencing poverty, to meet regularly to support service awareness, service planning, streamline service access, gap identification, training, and leveraging funds across all services.	We have a coordinated 'every door is the right door' network, where community members, families and youth are more easily accessing and navigating Nelson's many services and programs.
2. Family Support Network – Establish a network of diverse programs and support services that offers a comfortable, safe space for families, children, and youth to access services related to supporting and uplifting families, children and youth experiencing or vulnerable to poverty. <i>* Services could include conversation cafés, exposure to education/career options for mums, learning to cook affordably, healthy eating, youth employment mentorship by professionals working in their fields, linking families to recreation and leisure access passes.</i>	
3. Affordable & Accessible Childcare – Advocate for more affordable childcare spaces in our community including spaces within work places and schools.	
4. Digital Access & Information – Conduct an inventory of community sites that offer free access to computers and the internet, as well as free orientation and training opportunities. Identify gaps in digital access and work with community stakeholders to find solutions that increase access and support digital literacy.	

Impacts Of The Pandemic On Poverty And Priority Setting

The pandemic has been unfolding as we've been gathering data and planning this Strategy. Given data collected is primarily pre-pandemic and our landscape is changing as a result of the pandemic, it has been difficult to truly understand the breadth of vulnerability to, and experience of, poverty in Nelson. We have been planning within an environment where there have been notable changes during our planning process and where there are likely to be many more in the future. We may learn that the number of people experiencing financial hardship is actually higher than what we have identified. Or it may be that the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) has played an important role in mitigating financial hardship caused by the pandemic, so poverty may be lower than expected.

The pandemic has anecdotally shown that more people in Nelson than originally appreciated are vulnerable to financial hardship, and that many live only a few paycheques away from financial instability. We have seen a disproportionate impact on women staying home and unable to work in order to care for children that can no longer attend childcare or school. We have seen people employed in low wage work such as hospitality, service, and retail sectors lose their source of income due to the pandemic. We have also become more aware of the effects of social isolation on people's mental health.

This Strategy takes into consideration the effects of the pandemic by focusing on the importance of income and employment opportunities as well as access to critical services and supports --- two concerns that have risen to the fore as a result of the pandemic.

We recognize that there will continue to be new and deeper challenges brought about by the ongoing pandemic. Ongoing assessment of the pulse of our community is an integral part of implementing this Strategy as we work to address challenges created by this new context.

Organizing For Success

Governance Model

Effectively advancing poverty reduction in our community begins with adopting a Collective Impact approach and governance model. This model promotes the involvement of key people from diverse perspectives and expertise to work collaboratively, align activities with their respective sectors and organizations, cultivate community commitment, and mobilize resources to advance our community-driven work.

This model will enable multiple organizations and community leaders to support poverty reduction efforts through a Community Partner Network that will **directly involve 30-40 community leaders** working as part of the Backbone Organization, Community Leadership Table, Community Voices Advisory Group, and Community Action Teams. Many more community members will be engaged through community consultations or participation in priority area activities.

The following diagram reflects our governance model where the efforts of everyone working collaboratively will enable the success of this Strategy. The diagram reflects key roles and responsibilities associated with each element of our governance model. Detailed role descriptions follow the diagram.

COMMUNITY PARTNER NETWORK

- Interest in/support of vision, goals & action areas
- Participate in Leadership Table & Action Teams
- Contribute resources
- Receive regular communications



Promote Vision & Strategy * Mobilize Resources * Build Community Engagement & Ownership * Coordinate Project Staff

Coordination * Evaluation * Grant Development * Communications * Data Identification & Analysis

Skill Building * Share Perspectives & Priorities * Advise on Strategies & Actions * Evaluate Success

Guide Vision & Strategy * Align Missions & Mandates * Deliver Continuous Communications * Establish Shared Measurements * Evaluate Success

Convene * Research * Communicate * Consult * Design * Implement * Monitor & Evaluate Priority Initiatives

Community Partner Network

Community Partners have the opportunity to directly support *Together Nelson* initiatives that best align with their organizational or personal interests, vision and/or mission. Opportunities exist to participate in the Backbone Organisation, Community Voices Advisory Group, Community Leadership Table or Community Action Teams. Partners are committed to contributing resources - expertise, staff or funds – to support or further the collective or specific aims of this Community Action Strategy. They represent community members, community organizations, local businesses, municipal and regional government, and provincial government offices. The Community Partner Network represents the collective power of our community for creating bold change. The four Community Partner opportunities are detailed below.

1. Backbone Organization (one or multiple organizations working together)

The Backbone Organization is critical to the sustained operation and communication of the collective impact initiative. Its functions can be performed by one organization or shared amongst multiple organizations. It can be privately funded, government supported, a new non-profit, or an existing non-profit. Key roles of the Backbone Organization are to:

Promote the Vision & Strategy by building a common understanding of poverty and the community-wide benefits of reducing poverty. They serve as a thought leader and vision-holder for the initiative.

Mobilize Resources by working with funders, partners or volunteers to ensure adequate support across the initiative for the work of the Community Voices Advisory Group, Community Leadership Table and the Community Action Teams.

Build Community Engagement & Ownership by providing consistent, continuous, open communication amongst people and organizations participating in the initiative (Community Partner Network) and promoting the work of *Together Nelson* within the broader community.

Coordinate Dedicated Project Staff to support the work being done at all levels of the initiative, to develop funding applications, to collect, analyze and interpret required data, to support the evaluation of all initiatives, and to coordinate internal and external communications regarding targets and outcomes.

2. Community Leadership Table (8-12 members, including Action Team Chairs & Co Chairs)

This Table is composed of multi-sector leaders and decision-makers who support this Strategy's implementation by providing strategic direction, championing the effort, and aligning relevant organizations' work to *Together Nelson's* priorities. The purpose of this Table is to oversee implementation of the Community Action Strategy's priorities and provide strategic guidance to the

Community Action Teams in consultation with and advice from the Community Voices Advisory Group. The Table's primary responsibilities are to:

Guide Vision & Strategy to support the priorities identified in this Strategy and identify emerging opportunities for action while adapting to changing contexts or systems.

Align Organizational Mission & Mandates by seeking out opportunities for alignment with their own or other's organizational mandates or other community efforts.

Coordinate Continuous Communication by championing the initiative and providing continuous communication about overall progress and outcomes to the Community Partner Network, potential stakeholders, and the community in general.

Establish Shared Measurement Practices where partners agree on how to measure and report on progress which includes identifying and monitoring a short list of common indicators that drive learning and evaluation.

Evaluate Success & Support Accountability by reporting on actions implemented and monitoring if poverty is being reduced, staying the same, or increasing and by providing evidence as to actions' effectiveness. Based on this reporting, the strategy can evolve to address new issues or respond to unforeseen circumstances.

Six Leadership Table members play dual roles as Community Action Team Chairs or Co Chairs supporting two-way communication flow between these two partner groups.

3. Community Voices Advisory Group (6-8 members, people with living expertise)

People with living or recently lived experience of poverty provide advice to the Community Leadership Table on the selection, design and implementation of specific initiatives that Community Action Teams are working on. They may also be involved in speaking and communication roles within the initiative. The aim for this group is to employ a person with living experience of poverty to Coordinate and/or Chair this group.

4. Community Action Teams (Chair & Co Chair, plus 6-8 others)

Community Action Teams conduct project specific activities over the term of the initiative with each Action Team aligning their work with one of five priority action areas through three Teams:

Employment & Income Opportunities

Education & Skill Building Opportunities

Access Opportunities (Affordable Housing & Transportation, Community Supports & Services)

Each Team furthers priority actions recommended in the Community Action Strategy by engaging in the following processes:

Convene a multi-sector team of partners whose organizational mission and mandates align with the team's specific priority area to drive priority solutions forward in our community.

Review recommended priority actions to determine actions to be pursued and connect to any existing community initiatives, networks, and collaborative tables.

Research additional data and clarify priority actions to be pursued.

Communicate to Community Partner Network, stakeholders and community in general about research findings, priority activities, and their outcomes.

Consult with people with living experience of poverty, multi-sector organizations, and the community in general to identify key components of an Action Plan to further solutions for each Pathway To Change.

Design an Action Plan that includes specific targets, success measures, timelines, evaluation processes and resource requirements for poverty reducing solutions that can be implemented based on each Team's membership and available resources. In some cases, membership may be augmented to address a specific action or a sub-team established to focus on a specific action.

Implement poverty reduction actions.

Monitor & Evaluate activities and success measures.

Action Timeline

Year 1 (2022)

#1 - Gain **Endorsement** of the Community Action Strategy from key local government representatives and community leaders by securing sign off on a Memorandum of Agreement or Partner Protocols that confirm how partners will work together.

#2 – Identify **Backbone Organization** to provide leadership, support collaborative efforts, focus on collective impact conditions, and continuous communication to build community will.

#3 - Secure stable base of **Funding** to support project coordination and communication efforts.

#4 - Establish **Community Leadership Team** to oversee and provide strategic implementation of the Strategy's priority actions.

#5 – Establish **Community Voices Advisory Group** to consult and advise on strategic direction, priorities, and activities.

#6 - Establish collaborative **Community Action Teams** to work on moving Pathways To Change forward by digging deeper into root causes of poverty in our community and carrying out collaborative projects that further priority action items.

#7 – Create a **Communication Plan** to build community commitment and momentum by growing and keeping the Community Partner Network and their networks connected, informed, and engaged.

Year 2 – 4 (2022 – 2026)

#8 - Community Leadership Table deliver **Communication Plan** activities.

#9 - Community Action Teams implement, monitor and evaluate **Action Plans** including establishing an annual community poverty profile renewal process to check if poverty is increasing, decreasing or staying the same.

Year 4 (2026)

#10 – Backbone Organization and Community Leadership Table re-assess **Community Action Strategy** priorities, through a community check-in and consultation process, to determine the need for continuing the Strategy's work, re-purposing the mandate, or winding down in response to evolving community needs.

APPENDIX A

Take Stock – A Brief Summary Of Poverty In Nelson



A Brief Summary Of Poverty In Nelson

INTRODUCTION

This summary is based on a review of data ranging from 2015 to 2019, with some 2020/2021 data. It will likely generate more questions than answers. However, it will hopefully stimulate the demand for more and better information as it becomes available.

Nelson's demographics, Nelson's poverty indicators, data in six priority areas that align with *Together BC's* poverty reduction strategy and the Social Determinants of Health help to inform our work at the community level.

NELSON'S DEMOGRAPHICS

The estimated 2019 City of Nelson population is 11,359 made up of 20% children and youth, 60% adults and 20% seniors. 5% identify as Indigenous. 13% are immigrants born outside Canada. The number of new immigrants per year is less than 1%. Like the rest of BC, Nelson's population is aging.

There are 8,950 households in Nelson: 4,850 family households and 4,100 single households. Of the 4,850 family households, 4,123 (85%) are couples and 727 (15%) are single parent households. 43% of family households have children, and of these, nearly half (44%) are singles.

POVERTY INDICATORS IN NELSON

Canada's 2019 national poverty rate (based on Low Income Measure or LIM) is 10.1%. BC's 2018 poverty rate (based on Market Basket Measure or MBM) is 8.9%. Nelson's 2019 LIM poverty rate is 19% (2,170) and as high as 25% for those under 17 years of age.

Nelson's poverty rate is notably higher than the provincial and national rates. 11.3% of those in poverty are employed. 40% to 48% of single parent families live in poverty. 75% of single parent families are female-led households.

Nearby communities serviced by Nelson with higher poverty rates are Slocan at 40% and Salmo at 23%, Castlegar and Trail have lower poverty rates closer to 14%, while Rossland and Fruitvale are just above 10%.

The BC Minimum Wage of \$14.60/hour (2020) for a single person results in an annual income of \$26,572. The 2019 LIM poverty line is an annual income of \$25,153 for a single-person household.

Two parent families with both parents working a minimum wage role results in an annual income of \$53,144. The living wage calculation for two parent/two child families is an annual income of \$67,850. Two parent families with two children earning a minimum wage is \$14,700 less than a living wage income.

The 2019 Living Wage in Nelson was calculated at \$18.46/hour. The Living Wage calculation includes the amount required for a family of four (two adults/two children) to cover basic expenses including food, clothing, rental housing, childcare, and transportation plus a small amount of savings to cover illness or emergencies. There is limited data on the number of community members living on less than a living wage, but we do know that 150 families (19% of families) reported an annual income of \$70,000 or less in 2018 and that the annual cost of living (based on a living wage calculation) for 2019 was \$72,760. The number of community members living on less than a living wage is higher than the number of community members living below the LIM poverty threshold. This means more than 19% of our population is living on less than what is needed for a basic, minimum standard of living that a living wage would afford, but what % is unknown.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Access to Health Care & Mental Health Care *

30% of our community members are not attached to a health care practice, and 40% are not attached to a GP or nurse practitioner. Nelson has a 5% higher rate of non-attachment to a health care practice than surrounding communities such as Arrow Lakes, Castlegar, Kootenay Lake, and Trail with only 25% attached to a health care practice.

** Data on access to mental health care and addiction supports was not located for this report.*

Affordable Housing

61% of households own their home. 39% of households rent their homes, while 54% of Nelson's Indigenous community members rent their homes. 47% of renter households and 21% of owner households spend 30% or more of their total household income on rent/mortgage and heat. 31% of single parent households and 22% of single person households live in unaffordable situations, where they pay more than 30% of their income on rent/mortgage and heat.

During Nelson's April 2019 Homeless Count, 132 people were identified as homeless (unsheltered, emergency sheltered, or provisionally accommodated) on a given night in Nelson, including accompanying dependent children. Of this number, 72% (95) were unsheltered and 44% (58) have called Nelson home for at least 10 years. 35% (46) identify as Indigenous and 18% (24) are under age 25.

Nelson has 31 Cooperative housing units and 754 non-market* housing facilities ranging from emergency shelters to subsidized rental units, 237 of these are affordable housing units. An additional 127 affordable housing units are currently being built but will not reach demand with 819 waitlisted for these units.

Average rental costs range from \$633/month for a room to \$1,842 for a 3 BR unit.

** BC housing & community based non profit housing*

Education

At school entry there is a regular assessment of children's readiness to learn. The Early Development Index (EDI) is a validated tool for examining developmental vulnerabilities in five domains. The most recent EDI in SD #8 (Nelson only) shows the number of children with vulnerabilities has been increasing. All other regions in SD#8 have seen EDI vulnerabilities decreasing. Quality early childhood experience is known to improve EDI scores and life course success.

Nelson's graduation rate has been declining over the past three years from 86% in 2017/2018 to 83% in 2019/2020. 22% of our population has post-secondary education (which is lower than the provincial average of 25%). 13% of adults in Nelson have no post-secondary education.

Employment & Income Supports

The unemployment rate has almost doubled from 6% to 11.3% between 8/2019 and 8/2020. The majority of employees (64%) in Nelson are part time. Close to 1 in 4 (23%) are in sales & service roles. 5% of our workers are in arts/culture or recreation/sport roles. Our top three industries are Healthcare & Social Services (15%), Retail Trade (13%) and Construction (9%).

The median income of couple families is \$88,760 per year. The median income of single parent families is \$42,030 per year. Single parents earn 40% less than what couples with children earn. Only 36% of those employed report full time work. 1,400 people received EI in 2018 and 679 people received social or disability assistance in 2019.

Social Supports & Social Inclusion (justice, immigrants, food security, transportation)

No data was located for this brief summary on access to justice or access to services. 13% of our population are immigrants, with less than 1% being recent immigrants. On average, in 2019, Nelson Food Banks received an average of 50 visits a day and served 73 emergency food services / community meals a day. Monthly bus pass costs range from \$31/month (students) to \$60/month (adults). The low-income bus pass is \$45/year, which is only available to seniors aged 60+, people with a disability and people living on a First Nations reserve getting Band Office assistance. There is no low-income bus pass for adults or families in general.

Note: effective September 1, 2021 the province of BC made public transit free for all children aged 12 and under.

Supports for Families, Children & Youth

There are 378 licenced childcare spaces in Nelson and Areas E & F. 863 additional spaces are needed to bring Nelson and Area's coverage rate to a recommended target of 55%. 64 spaces have been approved and are being created in 2021. The increasing availability of universal quality childcare will help address this gap.

Full-time, average monthly childcare costs, after eligible fee reductions, are \$718 for infants and toddlers, \$754 for 3 – 5 year olds, and \$350 for school-aged children in after school care.

28% of children live in low-income households, significantly higher than the provincial rate of 18.5% and Canada's child poverty rate of 18.2%.

Want to learn more?

Listen to *Nelson at its Best's* recent Kootenay Coop show on local poverty [here](#).

Read a short overview of BC's first-ever provincial poverty reduction strategy, *Together BC* [here](#)

Read a short overview of Canada's first-ever national poverty reduction strategy, *Opportunity for All* [here](#)

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Together BC, British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2019 Annual Report

Together Nelson is led by



Together Nelson gratefully acknowledges funding from



APPENDIX B

Community Engagement Outcomes – What We Heard Report



Together Nelson

A Community Action Plan to Reduce Poverty

Community Consultations

What We Heard

Summary Report – Outcomes & Priority Solutions

July 5, 2021

Introduction

Our community engagement vision was to conduct:

Meaningful, inclusive dialogue that supports the creation of a community-driven Action Plan that is adopted by our community.

With engagement that provides:

Opportunities for community to identify key issues, root causes and barriers, propose ideas and come up with collective solutions.

And goals to:

- 1. Raise Awareness of Poverty**
- 2. Build trust and relationships at different levels**
- 3. Gather thoughts, ideas and stories**
- 4. Ensure participation reflects the diversity of our community**
- 5. Make it easy for community to participate**
- 6. Build a collective, common commitment to and ownership of the a community Action Plan**

This report highlights community engagement themes, ideas, and priorities shared by community members and drawn from the full *What We Heard* report which includes all participant input. This summary contains the below sections:

1. Who did we consult? (participant demographic survey)
2. What did we hear?
 - a. Why is reducing poverty important?
 - b. What else are you seeing or experiencing?
 - c. What barriers or gaps are you seeing?
 - d. What's our vision?
 - e. What can we do together?
 - f. What are our priorities?
3. How did we do? (participant feedback survey)

WHO DID WE CONSULT?

134 invited

80 accepted

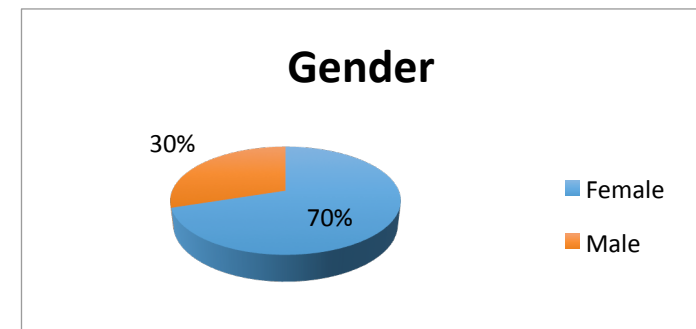
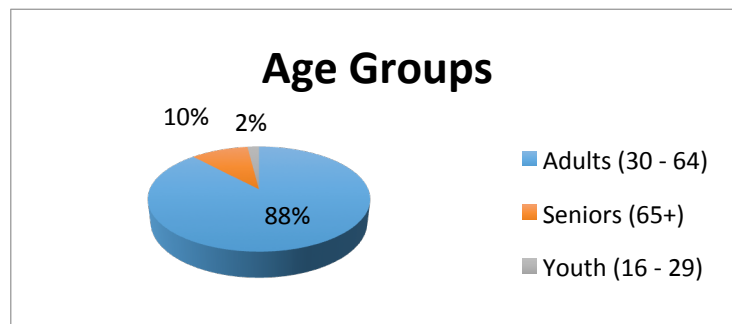
67 participated, (62 online, 5 email)



Diversity and Sector Representation – The below table identifies diversity and sector representation in relation to our Engagement Plan.

Community Members	Large Employers /	Local Gov / Gov Offices	NFP, Community Orgs/Front Line Workers
<p>Engaged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Adults/Youth/Seniors Indigenous community Immigrants LGBTQ+ People/families in perm housing People of colour People living on social assistance income People living on disability pension income Working people/families with low/modest income Women & Men <p>Not Engaged</p> <p>Areas not well represented/not represented at all include people who are often more marginalized – people without permanent housing, immigrants, refugees, gender non-conforming, trans women & men; smaller populations that were harder to connect with. However, we were able to consult with organizations who represent these groups, if not with the people themselves.</p>	<p>Engaged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SD#8 Selkirk College Whitewater Marbour Holdings – Hume/Best Western City of Nelson Kootenay Coop Nelson CARES Society Cover Architecture Hipperson Hardware Play It Again Royal Bank Tamil Kitchen Traction for Good WKB Investment Coop <p>Not Engaged</p> <p>Large businesses where we had no pre-existing relationships were harder to engage (Kalesnikoff, Save On, Safeway, and Walmart). Businesses where there were pre-existing relationships were easier to engage.</p>	<p>Engaged</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> City Administration Emergency Services - police Interior Health Ministry of Children and Family Development Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction RDCK Administration / Board Schools - SD#8/Independent Charter Schools - Selkirk College <p>Not Engaged</p> <p>5 out of 6 council members were invited, 2 accepted invitations. One participated via email. Other gov. offices that were not engaged or were not invited to participate as we had no pre-existing relationships/knowledge of whom to invite (MPSSG, Justice Services, RDCK Board / Recreation, Independent Charter Schools)</p>	<p>Engaged</p> <p>Childcare – KKS, private childcare providers</p> <p>Education – CBAL, Nelson Library</p> <p>Employment & Income Supports - KCDS</p> <p>Families, Children & Youth – NCS, KKS, Youth Centre</p> <p>Health Care - GP</p> <p>Homelessness - NCOH, NCS, ANKORS</p> <p>Housing – NCARES, NCS (Cicada Place), CMHA (Anderson Gardens)</p> <p>Mental Health/Substance Use/HIV, AIDS, Hep C Support, Trans Support - NCS, ANKORS</p> <p>Social Supports – NCS, ANKORS, NCARES</p> <p>Indigenous cultural supports - COINS</p> <p>Food Security - St. Saviour's Church</p> <p>Senior Supports – NCARES, Seniors Coord. Society</p> <p>Women's Supports – Women's Centre</p> <p>Not Engaged</p> <p>13 organizations/groups were not engaged. 5 were invited but unable to attend. (CFCK, KidSport, Hospital, KBDFP/ PCN, KCF/SHARE Housing Initiative). The remaining 8 were not invited (CoC, KATI, local landlords, Kootenay Society for Community Living, 12-Step Groups, Food Policy Council, Learning in Retirement, faith groups). This was primarily a result of prioritization and having enough representation from this area.</p>

Participant Demographics - The below graphs and tables further identify diversity at our community consultations. Participants (67) were primarily female, adults of white/European descent with 77% working full or part time. However, seniors, youth, immigrants, First Nations/Metis and LGBTQ had some representation along with people who were living on less than a living income and/or social assistance. Consultations were also able to connect with a significant group of people (59%) who had situational, lived experience of poverty with 18% living below the cost of living and 12% living below the poverty line.



Lived Experience of Poverty		59%			41%		
		Experienced poverty			Never experienced poverty		
Diversity	88%	12%	7%	4%	2%		
	White/European Descent	Immigrants	First Nations/Metis	LGBTQ	Persons of colour		
Employment & Income	59%	19%	19%	12%	7%-10%	7%	0%
	Full time	Part time	Rental	Investments	OAP/CPP	Social Assist	Disability/Pension
Personal Income		18%			12%		
		Below cost of living			Below poverty line		

What did we hear?

Why Is Reducing Poverty in Nelson Important?

Top 10 Reasons

1. It is a **moral imperative** – society is judged by how we care for our most vulnerable and for one another, in general.
2. Being able to meet our basic needs is a **human right**, not a privilege.
3. The historical injustice, oppression, and **trauma of colonization** on our Indigenous peoples has led to deep generational poverty, homelessness, poor health outcomes, disconnection from community/culture/language, etc.
4. **Too many less than living wage jobs** in the community maintains a certain level of poverty.
5. Poverty **leads to a multitude of challenges through** the **interdependent impacts of poverty** e.g. poorer health outcomes, health inequity, service inequity, relationship violence, children being taken into foster care, overuse of criminal justice and health systems, etc.
6. Poverty **impacts capacity and motivation to learn** (esp. children & youth), which impacts ability to work and build positive, interdependent futures.
7. Reducing poverty will ensure that all of us can **achieve our full potential** in life and be fully contributing community & society members.
8. When poverty is reduced, everyone benefits. It makes for a **healthier, more engaged**, more **creative**, and more **economically vibrant community**.
9. The cost of 'fixing' poverty is far less than the costs associated with maintaining the **systems that perpetuate poverty**.
10. Canada is a wealthy nation. **There is enough for us all**. Poverty is a **policy failure** of government. No one should be left behind! We can do better!

What else are you seeing or experiencing in our community?

Social Supports & Social Inclusion	Affordable Housing	Access to Health Care & Mental Health Care	Supports for Families, Children & Youth	Employment & Income Supports	Education & Training
Top Themes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to affordable and convenient public transportation to be able to attend medical appointments, work, and social activities 2. Stigma associated with those perceived as losers vs winners (e.g. homeless) 3. Equal access to fresh and affordable food 4. Limited social supports leads to people getting shuffled from one resource to another, or to none at all 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Not enough supply, especially for low-income families, singles, couples, students, or those with pets 6. Lack of available and affordable land for building more housing 7. Over-gentrification of the community forcing people away, and not enough low barrier or supportive housing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. No support for upstream community wellness promotion; reactive vs proactive health care system 9. Not enough health care professionals (esp. physicians, psychologists, counsellors, and specialists) leading to burnout 10. Cost of accessing medical services (e.g. dentistry, medications) and healthy recreational activities is prohibitive 11. Lack of cultural safety and stigma when accessing Health/mental health care 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Limited resources to help deal with family stressors (e.g. mental health & substance use supports, family/child support services, financial literacy support, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Too many low-paying, short-term, precarious jobs. Very few decent-paying employment opportunities. 14. Lack of sufficient skill development and work readiness training 15. Limited access to suitable, consistent mental health supports for workers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Lack of affordable education opportunities to get good-paying jobs 17. Limited access to technology and poor digital literacy skills 18. Lack of supports and personal connections during education process to ensure success

What barriers or gaps are you seeing that contribute to poverty in Nelson?

Top 10 barriers or gaps across all priority areas

1. Limited number of well-paying, stable, ongoing **jobs**
2. Limited **affordable housing** options - home ownership models, housing stock is old and in need of significant upgrades; growing amount of sub-standard rentals
3. Insufficient affordable and available **childcare** (including after school care) – even with subsidy cost is too high, hard to go to school/work/health/mental health appointments
4. Insufficient and limited access to **mental health care services** which can help prevent relationship violence/breakdown, leads to poor health and homelessness
5. Lack of **cultural safety** in accessing services, especially health and mental health care
6. Lack of convenient & affordable local and regional **transportation** options – cost and inaccessible schedules, can't access health, budget shopping, work, training
7. Insufficient access to healthy and affordable **food**, along with opportunities to grow and process own food
8. Limited access to **technology** (internet and devices) and **digital literacy** e.g. issues in equal access to justice system, post-secondary education
9. Lack of **financial literacy** support (manage funds, student loans)
10. Presence of widespread **stigma** and **discrimination** preventing access to services, supports and opportunities

Top 20 Barriers/Gaps Unique to Priority Focus Areas

Social Supports & Inclusion	Affordable Housing	Access to Health Care & Mental Health Care	Employment & Income Supports	Education & Training
<p>1. Limited access to Legal Aid services</p> <p>2. Cost of recreational, community and social activities</p>	<p>3. Renovations and conversions to AirBnB's continue to impact the number of available rental units</p> <p>4. Limited supply of available building land and high cost of construction</p> <p>5. Huge (persistent) discrepancy between Income Assistance rent allowance (\$375) and the cost of housing</p>	<p>6. Cost of complementary medical benefits such as dentistry, optometry, medications, addictions treatment, home support, respite support, etc. is unaffordable without subsidies or benefits plan and contributes to deteriorating overall health</p> <p>7. Lack of health care workers – GP's, locums, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health/substance use workers, social workers, marriage and family therapists; lack of housing influences ability to attract and keep professionals</p> <p>8. We continue to defund services, while not doing timely prevention and early intervention</p> <p>9. Typical hours of operation (8:30 to 4:30, M to F) limits access for many people</p> <p>10. Insufficient hospital discharge planning esp. with those who are without homes</p> <p>11. Health literacy and health services navigation (esp. Indigenous health navigation) limit access to services and sufficient interpretation of care needs</p>	<p>12. Entering workforce without baseline skills; lack of support for job readiness or re-entering the workforce</p> <p>13. Having diverse abilities prevents many from gaining employment</p> <p>14. Difficulty getting onto Income Assistance & PWD; earnings thresholds are too low</p> <p>15. No clear way for local employers to connect with unemployed people who want to work</p>	<p>16. Post-secondary school costs are prohibitive for many; competition for scholarships and bursaries is very high</p> <p>17. Post-secondary (esp. Indigenous) students who come from away face lack of social and cultural supports and spaces for connection</p> <p>18. Lack of access to affordable trauma counselling to ensure educational success</p> <p>19. Absence of vocational mentoring</p> <p>20. Lack of general educational opportunities to access high-paying jobs</p>

OUR VISION (For a Poverty Free Community)

Nelson is a community where:

Access to Health & Mental Health Care

Everyone has equal access to patient-centred, relationship-based, culturally-safe, trauma-informed, stigma-free services, where everyone has equitable and timely access to health care (primary & complementary) and mental health care when they decide they need them, and where service providers collaborate through an established network, are well-trained, well-supported, and well-paid in ways that encourage more into the fields enhancing longevity and retention in those fields.

Affordable Housing

Everyone has a place to call home and opportunity to realize their potential. All levels of government, sectors, and community come together, plan for and develop, sufficient, sustainable, safe, appropriate and affordable housing along the housing continuum to meet the diverse needs of everyone. We are proud of our community and work together with creativity, dignity and respect. We recognize the connection of affordable housing to health, workforce development and supporting a diverse community.

Education & Training

All students and their families are supported to access the training and careers that they are interested in and passionate about. Students and families have barrier-free access to education and training supports (e.g. housing and basic needs, technology, financial management support).

Employment & Income Supports

There is no unemployment. There are sufficient well-paying jobs and employees to meet employer demand. There are innovative ways to generate income and people are able to make a living following their passions and talents. Guaranteed basic income and financial literacy training opportunities are available along with a more formal bartering system of goods and services to help build a sense of community.

Support for Families, Children & Youth

All families have access to quality childcare, nutritious food, and appropriate housing and that they enjoy improved health and mental health free of addictions and live more balanced lives. That children and youth benefit from good parental role modelling, safety in their homes and community, and have access to life skills training and fun. Families have a sufficient income to meet the family's needs (beyond basics). All family members have opportunities to reach their highest potential through access to affordable training, education and career opportunities. Families feel loved, accepted and included in the community.

Social Supports & Social Inclusion

Everyone is celebrated, and has access to stigma & barrier-free:

- *Food – Healthy and culturally-appropriate food; regional scale/sharing.*
- *Justice Services - Community supports and services to help keep people from becoming involved in justice system along with full supports to navigate the system once involved in it.*
- *Transportation - Services that are expanded & enhanced including local and regional coverage.*

TOP 40 ACTIONABLE SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR VISION

* Priority, refers to # of participant votes, per priority session in response to – What idea are you most passionate about?

ACCESS TO HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE		
Proposed Solutions	Description	Priority*
1. Complementary Health Cooperative	James Bay model – Community poll, strong desire to access funds to pay for non-MSP covered health-related services (e.g. dental, optometry). 10% of purchases in James Bay donated to access health purchases through a health access card.	5
2. Training - Cultural Safety & Trauma Informed Care	All health, mental health providers and businesses take a mandatory Indigenous cultural safety and trauma-informed care course upon hiring and then every 3 years. (Social and emotional learning with a trauma-informed, cultural safety lens). <i>* Also trauma-informed practice education with teachers, parents, coaches of younger age kids.</i>	3
3. Training – Early Years	Provide free and low barrier access to strengths-based, resiliency training in early years.	3
4. Community Engagement & Collaboration	Hold town halls to understand what would improve healthcare access that would inform a collaborative table that would include all sectors and work broadly on health engagement, access, and advocacy. Work to engage people where they are (e.g. Salvation Army, Our Daily Bread, etc.) and work with outreach nurses <i>*This has to occur regularly to understand evolving needs. Not a one-time thing.</i>	2
5. Advocacy, Health Care Provider Support	Advocate for health care providers, including navigators and mental health workers, MOA's, etc. to ensure they are paid well, with extended health benefits, pensions, etc. to support and honour the high stress jobs - burnout is real!!!	0
6. Advocacy, Relationship-Based Health Care	Advocate for change in the health care system and education system whereby the targets and outcomes are relationship-based	0
7. Health Ambassador	Create a City of Nelson Health Ambassador, akin to Cultural and Sports Ambassadors. Terms of Reference includes physical, complementary, mental, public and preventive health.	0

AFFORDABLE HOUSING		
Proposed Solution	Description	Priority*
1. Increase Density	<p>Municipal incentives to increase supply of secondary suites and laneway houses, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build higher density, smaller homes, neighbourhood/pocket communities with shared amenities • Tiny House Community - City buys land, people are able to own their own home and pay a rental pad fee to access safe and appropriate services - like a mobile home park, long-term campground • Support appropriate, accessible housing, e.g. multi-family, modular builds, innovative/different types of technologies to allow us to increase housing. 	3
2. Rent Smart Program / Supportive Housing	<p>Enable more people to stay in housing: Rent Smart program is established and can be locally developed to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader spectrum of housing, 2nd stage/supportive housing • Everyone's unique needs are met (e.g. match tenant need with housing type) • Meet them where they are. No one left behind. • Nothing done without consultation • Government programs to support rental housing • Renovations and energy efficiency upgrades for housing • Understand gaps in demographics and work to support those groups. 	2
3. Secondary Suites	<p>Develop a grant program to reduce the cost of putting in the suite and put a restrictive covenant on title to maintain the rent at a low level (x- number of years). Or stage housing grant, conversion of SFH into multi-unit or share homes.</p>	2
4. Rent-to-Own	<p>Municipality collaborates with other sectors to develop rent- to-own system (leverage with land, taxes & real estate)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality could be responsible for developing houses on existing property • Could include private rent-to-own mortgage arrangement but would need to be monitored and fair 	2
5. Companion Housing / Home Shares	<p>Create a local program to match individuals who are experiencing poverty with seniors (55+) who have at least one spare furnished bedroom/bed and are comfortable sharing common spaces in their home. Mutually supportive program – seniors provide young adults with housing & life skills – young adults provide care and support for seniors, e.g. Happipad, a CDN social enterprise.</p>	1
6. Landlord & Tenant Capacity Building	<p>Licensing of landlords to build capacity including skills for being a good landlord and a process for tenants to understand how to be responsible tenants (life skills training) that makes it more appealing to rent current stock. Create Tenant Society – smooths landlord/tenant relationships and improves relationships & communications.</p>	1
7. Supportive Partnerships	<p>Develop relationship with Fortis to buy into the Housing Plan – <i>or West Kootenay Real Estate Board/Nelson Realtors</i></p>	0

EDUCATION & TRAINING		
Proposed Solution	Description	Priority*
1. Collaborative Community (Learning) Hub	One point of access for resources, education, training and community connections with cross-sectoral / collaborative opportunities e.g. Selkirk College Info Sessions. A centralized location with barrier-free, non-institutionalized access to programs over and above what is being taught in public schools to set them up for success.	7
	<p>Programs might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic supports - in and out of school, broadened beyond school guidance counsellors. • A place to access teachers, volunteers, mentors that can speak to their professional experiences • Career supports - advice, how to apply for school, bursaries, grants, insights on what your future is going to look like and how to get there. • Help Youth test career-goals and see if it is what they want to do, build up to a wrap-up event with (e.g. sample trial with a lawyer). Gets kids connected to what they care about, drives motivation through training, builds network of people to connect with, draws on alumni/mentors' resource-bank. Involve College, etc. • Initiate partnerships with local organizations & private sector to wrap hands around youth, e.g. gaining skills, apprenticeships or mentoring through local tech companies, growing networks or mentoring through the Chamber of Commerce, bursaries to help students of any age access careers and training they are passionate about. Also, to support network building for vulnerable youth & students. 	2
2. "Citizen School"	Recreate (international) model locally, might include enrichment program in early years education, elementary school/middle-school, paired with volunteer instructors & apprenticeships.	1
3. Indigenous Friendship Centre	<p>Dedicated space, connecting Indigenous peoples to discuss and plan programs that meet their needs. A gathering place for Indigenous people to access culturally specific activities, e.g. Longhouse. Many Indigenous peoples don't want to set foot in institutional buildings.</p> <p><i>Other suggestions identified:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to traditional foods. Nothing currently in area. Great model in Squamish - wild rice, growing traditional foods. 	1

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME SUPPORTS		
Proposed Solution	Description	Priority*
1. Guaranteed Basic Income	Advocate to provincial and federal governments for guaranteed liveable income tied to the cost-of-living, e.g. GBI pilot in Nelson.	6
2. Community Connection, Multi-Generational & Inter-Cultural Programs	E.g. Toronto initiative with seniors/youth from same country building a garden together, retaining language. Addresses mental health. Festivals, etc. Creates an opportunity for employers.	4
3. Youth Employment Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop job search skills • Facilitate obtaining practicums & volunteer work • Start youth early in the job market; retain youth in jobs • Inspire/educate youth re: local career opportunities • 	4
4. Pre-Employment & Upgrading Programs	<p>More pre-employment programs e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 week programs, learn about strengths, labour market, obtain work experience via work placement. • understand local employment needs and offer training for locals to meet those needs. • Training institutions take more responsibility for job placement. • Offer more skill updating/recertification, retraining opportunities or skills upgrading to be able to keep up with job changes. <p><i>The government could support businesses to retrain/upgrade employees' skill levels. This keeps the person in their job without the huge cost of retraining.</i></p>	3
5. Redistribute City Marketing Funds	(2% municipal tax) to social service/ enterprise for community poverty reduction efforts	2
6. Advocacy, Living Wage	Government subsidies for employers to be able to pay a living wage, e.g. tax breaks for employers paying a living wage, offering benefits and paid sick days.	2
7. Childcare	More access to childcare within workplaces and schools. A social enterprise to support community childcare access. Collective child care facility that allows for flexibility, family needs, support each other in filling in the gaps, e.g. Single Mothers Network, people contributing their skills, collective, supportive offering.	1

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN & YOUTH		
Proposed Solution	Description	Priority*
1. Coordinated Community Support Network / Hub	Bring all family service agencies together. Create an inclusive, safe place, where childcare/kids are included, that provides all things people need relevant to families, such as:	5
a. Financial Literacy Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financial literacy (savings, budgeting, time management, investing, credit/credit cards/interest, make the most of what you have) navigating how/when to complete forms, how systems work (especially people on welfare) 'find your career' for young mums learn how to cook cheaply, healthy 	4
b. Conversation Cafés	A place where parents can 'get away', meet new people, learn about resources or new things. Professionals mentor youth as they enter or re-enter the job world.	1
c. Mentorship Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate funding, not on volunteers, need to be paid and sustainable with buy-in from local and provincial government. Secure sponsorship – create a connection, provide resources to children, youth, and families to access. <p><i>* Need for trained, well-paid, qualified staff to support the needs for the growth of our children for this cooperative idea.</i></p> <p><i>* Groups coming together to raise children, support each other, empower each other.</i></p>	
3. Networking Time	Time for community services program staff to meet, discuss & share what is being done, what gaps are coming up, changes occurring, etc.	3
4. Communication Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve communication of resources or address communications gap with an infographic / visual representation of services & gaps. 	3
5. Reduce Stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce stigma through universal access and processes that build community/bring people together. <p><i>* Training for local businesses to be more supportive of all community members, for e.g. when local food banks give out gift cards to food bank customers, and the person goes to use the gift card, some employees have been rather rude to the customer because they are known to panhandle or they do not have expensive / clean clothes.</i></p>	1

SOCIAL SUPPORTS & INCLUSION		
Proposed Solution	Description	Priority*
1. Food Security	Back yard chickens – lift restrictions. Increase locally grown food - City encourages growing food on available land e.g. allow City ROW to grow food.	4
2. Street Outreach	Expand program to help police do their job and help the community. Involve trusted group/peer group, e.g. REDUN	3
3. Transportation	Ensure access to free/sliding scale transit so people can stay, work and have services where they live. <i>Other Related Suggestions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Taxi voucher system to use when bus service is not available</i> • <i>On demand service - viable option in other communities, buses run when needed, not all the time, or any kind of transportation. Diverse to meet community needs - bikes to vehicles (e.g. volunteer driver program)</i> • <i>Better car pooling, peer to peer sharing</i> • <i>Transportation matching program - needs/options</i> 	2
4. Kootenay Car Share	Broaden appeal, increase membership, build incentives & expand program to allow people to share their car.	1
5. Wrap-Around Criminal Justice Service	Reallocate community resources to develop public and private support for people to move away from habits and cyclical poverty, e.g. Rhode Island model “Seattle is Dying” (KOMO news). Person accepts responsibility for actions, moves into the system that include recovery programs and eventually into community with social and medical supports. Move away from crime & punishment to skill building model (e.g. money mgmt, apartment skills, etc.).	2
6. Volunteer Hub	Connect people with work that needs to be done, e.g. additional support to the Food Centre to help with Harvest Rescue. Opportunities for people to give back/contribute to their community, so not always on the receiving end, e.g. volunteer coordination/ opportunity engagement. Hub could be a drop-in volunteer centre or board that lists ways to help out e.g. help a senior with yard work (builds awareness and makes one feel good).	2
7. Restorative Justice	Increase investment in this program.	1
8. Community Connection	Nelson could better maintain existing / develop public spaces to be used as a place for people to connect. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop better bus shelters, comfortable, place to build community • Create more places to meet, for e.g. more seating downtown • Create a space to build connections for communities including Indigenous communities and other populations. New Library building could potentially have that space. • Ensure places designed for community connection are available, e.g. downtown seating impacted by COVID patio's being opened. 	1

APPENDIX C

Community Engagement Outcomes - What We Heard: All Solutions Identified



Together Nelson

A Community Action Plan to Reduce Poverty

Community Consultations

What We Heard

Ideas Not Prioritized During Consultations

June 23, 2021

This report identifies over 100 solutions for reducing poverty in Nelson which were identified by community consultation participants, but not elevated to the top 16 priority actions recommended in the Community Action Strategy. Actions identified below are ideas that will be provided to Action Team members, for further review and consideration, and also be provided to sector representatives that attended the community consultations so that these ideas can also have the potential to inform other work already happening or being considered in our community.

ADVOCACY
Guaranteed Basic Income – Align with and support provincial and federal groups advocating for a basic income, tied to the cost of living.
Affordable Internet – Advocate to Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation and others for more affordable internet.
Employer Subsidies - Incentivize employers to hire employees that still need some development through subsidies.
Tax Reform - Fairer tax system, corporations and wealthy pay fairer taxes. Reduce taxes on middle income earners and the poor and tax the corporations and the wealthy so that they pay their fair share.
Federal Tax Breaks - Give businesses a tax-break so they can offer support to employees.
Medication Coverage - Advocate for all medications being covered by social assistance.
MSP Tax Credit Reallocation - Take the current MSP tax credit and reallocate them into other supports/benefits for employees
Social Assistance Increase - Advocate government to raise social assistance rates and provide free or affordable post-secondary education.
Social Support & Employment Alignment - Less penalization to benefits from accessing work when on social support.
Stable Annual Operating Funding for ongoing services e.g. Family and Youth Support programs.
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
Home Ownership - Support collaboration amongst local funders, existing rent to own businesses and other relevant sectors to develop a home ownership program targeted to low income renters, including indigenous community members.

Rent Smart – Expend the existing program being delivered to the homeless community through Nelson CARES to include low income renters, second stage and supportive housing.
Selkirk College Partnership – Create a partnership on trades training to help build affordable housing. Convert an existing SFH into multi-unit.
Incentives, Housing Trust/Fund – Create incentives to developing affordable housing e.g. Development costs towards a housing trust/fund.
Employer/Workforce Housing - Employers own and rent out units to employees .
Long Term Campground/RV Pads - Amend bylaws to accommodate housing alternatives and flexible housing or encourage long-term campgrounds or use of RVs on private land (social enterprise?) - properly serviced with clean drinking water... tie into City services. This could be done as a pilot project.
Increase Available Land – Continue to make land available for development e.g. - Railtown
Housing Agreement in Perpetuity – Create Homeowner Grant rebates for building suite/laneway/etc. in exchange for affordable housing
Energy Assessments & Retrofits – Incentivise motivation for renovations, retrofits & upgrades for rental units and low-income properties. Expand discussions between potential funders and City coordinator. e.g. Carmen Procter/Tyler Rice
Municipal and Regional Housing Authority - Support building affordable non-market housing.
Home Repair Program – Form an association of caring people/volunteers to support lower income families in repairing/maintaining their homes, potential to provide skill building/training. So they can stay where they live and gain employable skills.
Repurpose Building Materials - Create a place where discarded/unused building materials are available for free (or small fee) to help lower income people maintain their homes.
24/7 Harm Reduction Housing - Build low-barrier 24/7 harm reduction housing.
Student Housing - Canvas community re: vacancies/spaces for students or those wishing to pursue education. Frame rental as “home-stay” or “mentorship” and backup-from community to provide mentorship component, include an apprenticeship aspect. Not a “rental” but a mutually beneficial experience.
Homeowner / Landlord Incentives – To keep rentals affordable for community members. This could be part of this marketing fund redistribution.
Creative Mortgage Financing - Get more creative with ways to finance mortgages - eg: shared mortgages, creates more security, etc.

Seasonal/Temporary Housing - For folks who are new to work, seasonal workers, or college students. Including child/family friendly housing.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Social Responsibility – Work with education leaders to identify and implement a local pilot that engages children, youth and young adults in initiatives related to poverty reduction and food security, and in the case of schools, support initiatives that link to the Personal and Social Core Competencies that weave Social Responsibility through the K-112 curriculum.

School Supplies – Strengthen and expand on local programs to enhance access to school supplies e.g. back packs, binders, paper, runners etc for low income families with school age children.

Cultural Sensitivity & Gender Equity – Assess and leverage existing training programs to develop and promote training for local employers to access and deliver to employees that de-stigmatizes poverty, promotes cultural sensitivity and gender equity.

Expand CBAL - Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, can work with youth that have left skill and support them with literacy, through tutoring, college/training-prep, settlement & ESL supports. Match students with tutors. All CBAL programs are free. Limited capacity currently.

Technology & Training - Hub of service providers helping with technology where access is provided through an existing community organization e.g. library or CBAL. Service could include making computers more affordable to students, families, elderly people in our community which supports access to information and training online. Or, finding ways to upgrade old computers using free software so everyone has access to technology.

Soft Skill Development - Paid training options for soft skills development.

Centralized Skills Training - For employers and employees in the community to access.

Co-op programs - Students receive credits for community engagement and workplace placements.

Businesses-Based Training – Businesses offering training & support to specific individuals who eventually become full-time employees.

Employer/Employee Training & Matching Service - We have employers who are looking for employees. Matching Service for candidates with employers and fill gaps by making training available.

Professional Community Share Back Program - Professionals who share their knowledge through the library system (i.e. with others entering the field) - speed dating format e.g. family and youth supports.

Youth Career Identification Program - Youth need support identifying their strengths & skills and what work they would be well suited to, e.g. KCDS: Youth Mean Business program. Educate youth re: career opportunities.
Life Skills Training, Employees - Help people navigate the workforce e.g. asking for sick days, communications skills, money/time management, conflict resolution.
Life Skills Program, Youth - Need to be life skills type programs for youth where they are taught things like how to plant trees or change the oil in a car. These can be programs where youth are taught by others or where parent/youth work together to learn new skills.
ACCESS TO HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH CARE
Cultural Safety & Trauma Informed Training & Practices – Support awareness of the importance of delivering ongoing training to ensure provision and navigation of culturally safe and trauma informed health care and mental health care services.
Increased Access to GP's – Advocate for Primary Care Health Network outreach to increase low-income access to GP's.
Mental Health Care Data – Gather data, identify gaps and develop collective responses to child, youth and adult mental health supports.
SERVICE DEVELOPMENT, COORDINATION & NAVIGATION
Employment & Income Supports - Have full wrap-around service of local support for folks. A one stop shop of the available services.
Collaboration, Patient Navigation - Collaborative tables to help with patient navigation E.g. Indigenous Team for Primary Care Network
Service Delivery, Hours of Operation - Changing program hours to evening and weekends to increase access opportunities.
Integrated Health Services - Community investment in real estate for health services and integrated services and mental health services.
Disney Land Project - Have MCFD, SD8, IHA, KBDiv, CoC, CoN, fee-for-service providers and a philanthropist commit \$ to a three-year “Disney Land” pilot project 12 hrs/day, 7 days a week complete health service.
Connect Day - Build on existing community generosity.
Casual Job Boards - Casual work is regularly posted for those who want, or can only do, one or two days of work at a time; sometimes for medical or other reasons people can only work one or two days or every other week; still important for them to work and have skills.

Professional Grant Writer / Subsidy Expert - Make accessing government grants support easier for businesses, employees & communities (agencies/schools).
More delivery services , e.g. groceries (esp. for moms at home with kids)
Youth Street Outreach - There are more young kids on the streets every year. Nelson needs a youth street outreach program.
Increase Successful Programs e.g. Selkirk College, youth and seniors.
Service Credit Program - As a community, to be able to earn credits for services that can be used to access a wide variety of services that our community needs.
FOOD
West Kootenay Food Policy Council, Food Security Plan – Align with WKFPC to support recommendations that interact with people vulnerable to or experiencing poverty.
ALR (Agricultural Land Reserve) Program - Connect people with vacant land and people who want to farm (ALR inventory). Expand Young Agrarians to improve land matches and business development supports and resource support. Expand these programs to promote access to land for people to grow food.
Free hot meal programs (breakfast and lunch). Part of the school system? Non-profit funded? Build on the Salvation Army school lunch program.
Farms to Families - Build on (or expand) farm to friends. Make it a centralized system where they can donate or be compensated for the produce. \$21 can be used a farmers markets (expand)
Food Security - City to make properties available (e.g. NCFC garden) for food production. Want to see more. Ambassador programs for food production, workshops (e.g. composting). Build garden boxes in neighbourhoods from reclaimed materials. Municipal support would help the program get traction
Food Sharing, Production & Processing – Explore options to enhance opportunities for low-income residents to be involved in food production, processing and preparing. E.g. Neighbourhood kitchens - Walk to a facility within 10 minutes to prepare food and share meals. Accessibility important. Places to do batch cooking as a community (e.g. access SD#8 facilities).
Community garden projects for low income folks. This could look like paid positions to maintain these gardens. Support for community members to convert their lawns into garden space.

Develop / Expand Tool Libraries - access to food preservation or tools for food production to enhance food sovereignty.
Wednesday Markets – current location misses seniors trade, disabled, and people without access to transportation.
TRANSPORTATION
Active Transportation - Encourage the City to continue to invest in Active Transportation infrastructure that is universally accessible (sidewalks, bike paths). Bike lending library or centralized donation program. City working on the plan. Dedicate streets to pedestrian or active transportation only - no cars.
Regional Transit - Improve regional transit for commuting. Well funded and robust regional transit system.
Reinstitute Rideshare Program - “Give a Senior a Lift”. Promote new ideas around transportation. Seniors program would be free to users.
Angel Wheels Program - Expand Angel Flight program - all volunteer, fly people to Kelowna for health care. Could expand this to a transportation program, support more local transportation needs. Provides social support to clients as well.
JUSTICE SERVICES
Expand Legal Aid - Have local lawyers provide services for lower level charges. Avoid other longer-term issues with the justice system.
GENERAL
Access, Household Services - More showers and laundry services for folks that do not have adequate housing and laundry facilities.
Association of Caring People - Form an association of caring people that can share and help each other find resources so that no one needs to live in poverty.
PWLE, Involvement in City Planning - People with living or lived experience are actively involved in city planning/community decision-making.