

# THE END OF POVERTY:

EIGHT PATHWAYS THAT  
ARE ENDING POVERTY  
IN CANADA



ENDING POVERTY  
DEEPENING COMMUNITY  
BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES  
CLIMATE TRANSITIONS

**Vibrant Communities**

TAMARACK INSTITUTE

Connecting local community efforts  
through national support  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Between 2015 and 2020, 1.3 million people in Canada were lifted out of poverty. Our national poverty rate had been reduced to its lowest in recording history. Throughout COVID-19, **Communities Ending Poverty** (CEP)'s partners and members have been supporting our communities to respond and recover, as well as to concurrently keep their sights set on our ultimate collective goal – the end of poverty in Canada.

CEP's thinking and actions are continually evolving as we learn from programs, policies, models, and methodologies that are realizing population-level success in reducing poverty. We closely follow – then adapt – big, innovative ideas that support equity-deserving groups, those newly vulnerable through COVID-19, and others that are disproportionately affected by poverty.

Canada's national poverty reduction strategy, *Opportunity for All*, serves as an overarching framework for ending poverty in Canada. Benefits associated with the strategy, including the Canada child benefit (CCB) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), have continued to support children and seniors throughout the pandemic. Canada's National Advisory Council on Poverty serves as a critical conduit of communication between citizens and stakeholders, and the strategy's ambitious target of reducing poverty by 50% by 2030, as measured by a now official national poverty line, has helped keep sub-national levels of governments, businesses, non-profits, and citizens engaged in mutually reinforcing activities and focused on this common goal.

Provinces and territories continue to step up their commitments and investments, with 12 of 13 now having poverty reduction strategies. Provinces and territories create a critical link between *Opportunity for All* and the crucial place-based work that is happening in cities and communities across the

country. They connect both upward, for example, through child tax benefits that complement the CCB, and downward, for example, as Quebec, British Columbia, and New Brunswick have all funded local poverty reduction strategies, collaboratives, and efforts.

At the local level, CEP connects more than 350 municipalities and commu-

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nities. Members develop and implement plans to reduce poverty in their communities, provide tangible benefits to individuals and families, influence policy and systems change, and build a critical mass of support with the public and decision-makers. The success of this national movement has stemmed in large part from members' commitments to comprehensive approaches that address the complexities of poverty and to collaborative solutions that bring together governments, businesses, non-profits, and people with

lived/living experience. They are seeing real success, for example, in Saint John, which has cut its poverty rate in half over the last 20 years, from 28% to 14%.

While COVID-19 has compounded the impact of systemic inequities, the pandemic and related events since its onset have also elevated important conversations around racial equity and Truth and Reconciliation. As we move forward, ending poverty efforts need to put Indigenous peoples and communities at the centre of our conversations. We must address trauma and systemic racism and build self-determination within Indigenous communities.

The pandemic has also brought to the forefront the negative impacts that Canada's growing precarious job market has on essential workers, particularly amongst Indigenous people, newcomers, racialized individuals, and women. With 42% of people living in poverty considered the "working poor," an end to working poverty presents a prime shared goal for all levels of government and all sectors to come together around. Strategies include \$15/hour minimum wages, mutually reinforcing government benefits that complement one another, full-time and full-year decent work, inclusive hiring practices, training opportunities that overcome barriers to employment, and tax-filing supports. With this combination of policies and programs, we could end working poverty and cut Canada's poverty rate almost in half.

Increasingly, poverty reduction practitioners are seeking evidence-based models and methodologies that they can apply to increase their impact. While there are many big ideas for ending poverty, this guide highlights

three that are both transformational and that are backed by significant Canadian evidence.

First, Basic Income is a high-impact, ending-poverty idea that has gained momentum throughout the pandemic. When used to establish an adequate minimum income floor as a complement to social supports and good public policy, a national Basic Income program could generate new jobs and grow the economy, support people who are currently falling through the cracks of Canada's safety net, and reduce income inequality for all family types. The model presented in this guide is progressive, universal, financially sustainable, and equitable. It supports labour participation, provides an adequate income floor to everyone regardless of (dis)ability, and has the potential to reduce absolute poverty by 96%.

Second, in follow-up to September 2020's speech from the throne, the Government of Canada and its provinces and territories plan to draw on Quebec's childcare model as they develop a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system. Quebec's \$5/day model exemplifies a publicly funded system that supports affordable, accessible, and high-quality care and healthy childhood development – one that can both increase labour force participation and grow to pay for itself.

A last example of an impactful, data-driven model is Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C)'s agile approach to ending homelessness. The BFZ-C methodology includes leveraging real-time data to ensure that, each month, fewer people are experiencing chronic homelessness than can be routinely housed. Its coordination of service providers, resources, and systems optimizes local homelessness response systems and drives continuous improvement.

As communities across Canada recover from COVID-19, together, we are refocusing our sights on the end of poverty. Despite the challenges imposed by the pandemic, CEP recognizes that we find ourselves in a time of great opportunity. As our partners and members continue to leverage government and community priorities, policies, and programs, CEP's collective impact approach will continue to serve as an effective pathway to ending poverty in Canada.

# PATHWAY 1: **ENDING** WORKING POVERTY



*Adapted from: [Ending Working Poverty in Canada: How to Get It Done](#)*

At 42%, the working poor make up the single largest group of people in Canada living in poverty – 1.6 million people. This figure includes working individuals aged 18–64 that live independently, are not full-time students, and earn more than \$3,000 annually but less than the Low-income measure after tax (LIM-AT) threshold. As LIM-AT thresholds<sup>1</sup> are higher than Market Basket Measure (MBM) thresholds<sup>2</sup> Canada’s official poverty line – LIM-AT captures workers living below both.

The pathway to ending working poverty requires governments, employers, non-profits, and people living in poverty to work together. Every sector has a role to play. The success of large-scale targeted benefits has been clearly evidenced by the success of the Canada child benefit (CCB) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) in reducing poverty for children and seniors, respectively. Benefits for the working poor can also be successful if they are designed properly and work together effectively.

Working poverty is on the rise in part due to the evolving nature of work, including a growing precarious labour market for essential (particularly entry-level service) work, increasing contract labour in the “gig economy,” and decreasing job tenure at the low end of the job market. People working in minimum-wage jobs are heavily impacted by working poverty as they need to be working both full-time and full-year to be just above the poverty line. These workers are at risk of slipping into poverty if their work is interrupted or if their hours are decreased. Single adults, adults aged 18–29, racialized peoples, individuals with disabilities, immigrants, and those living

<sup>1</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110023201>

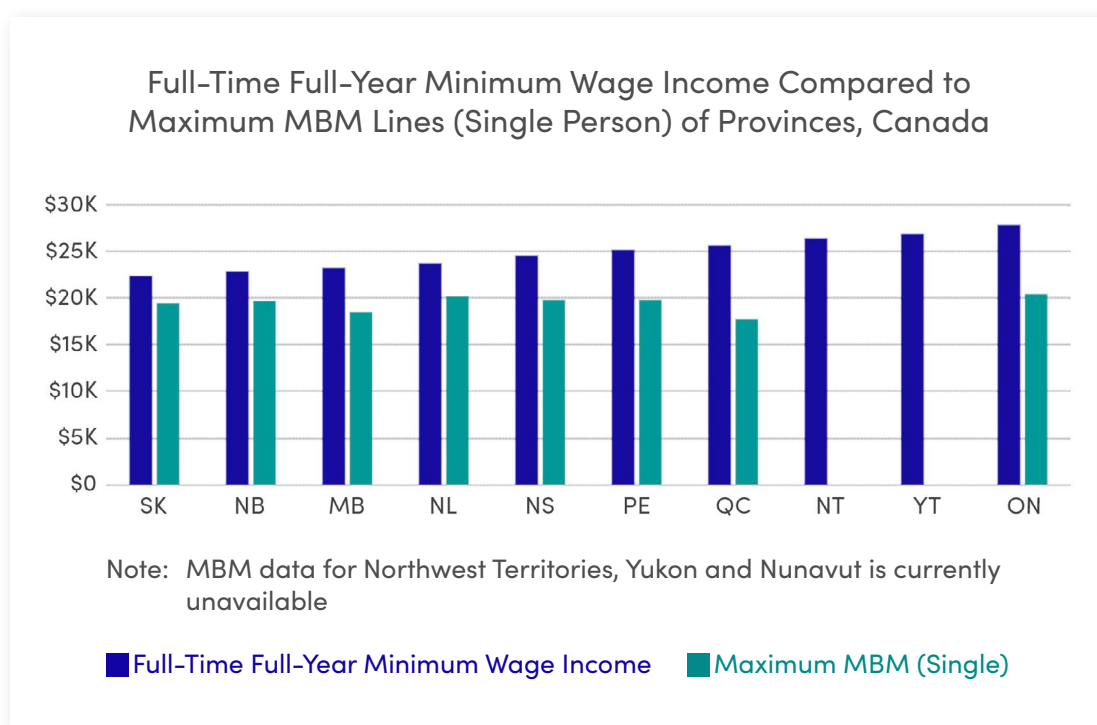
<sup>2</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110006601>

in large, prosperous cities are more likely to be living in working poverty.

Government supports for working individuals reflect a tacit expectation that working adults should be income-secure through their employment earnings. For example, 89% of government expenditures (including Canada Pension Plan [CPP], Employment Insurance [EI], Workers' Compensation, workplace programs, and veteran supports) only provide support to people after they have worked. Social and Income Assistance, EI Working While on Claim (WWOC) and the Canada workers benefit (CWB) are the only three programs that support people while they are working.

Unfortunately, these programs do not work well together, and in fact deduct and offset each other. Of all people living in poverty, workers who are not currently working full-time and full-year have the lowest access to income supports.

The pathway to ending working poverty first requires every province and territory in Canada to implement a minimum wage of at least a \$15 per hour. While a precarious success, at current MBM thresholds, this alone would lift every full-time full-year worker in every province (data for the territories is still in design) above Canada's poverty line and just out of economic poverty.



ESDC and provincial/territorial ministers must also mandate reforms to income security systems for working-age adults and offer mutually

reinforcing benefits that work well together. This includes ensuring that these benefits are designed to avoid onerous barriers and claw-backs, for example with respect to eligibility, deductions, exemptions, benefits, and thresholds.

The pathways out of working poverty require governments to update laws and policies to disincentivize precarious work and the low-end gig economy. They must concurrently create incentives for businesses to classify workers as employees as opposed to contractors and improve job and worker protection while increasing employees' access to both government and employer benefits.



Employers and local governments must recognize the value of essential work and pay livable wages for it. They must devise better work that attracts better pay to develop full-time and full-year positions, create culturally safe workspaces and opportunities for under-represented populations, adopt inclusive and equitable hiring practices, hire employees over self-employed contractors, and offer employee benefit packages and advancement opportunities.

Employers can sign on to local, regional, and provincial Living Wage campaigns, and can encourage others to become accredited Living Wage employers. Local governments can ensure that they have poverty reduction plans that embed income security and decent work as core pillars.

Non-profits and educators are important contributors across the Ending Working Poverty pathway, as they raise awareness and advocate for policy change at all levels of government and run community Living Wage

campaigns. They advocate for supports, services, infrastructure, and community benefits that adopt a decent work lens, target populations disproportionately affected by working poverty, and account for the shifting nature of work.

Their work must effectively support individuals to meet basic needs (such as housing and childcare), overcome barriers to employment, and bridge workforce supply and demand. Importantly, they must





support tax filing to reduce barriers and promote uptake of and access to government benefits for people living in working poverty. In turn, individuals living in working poverty need to feel comfortable accessing wraparound supports that help them overcome barriers to training and employment and expand their professional connections. They must be empowered to seek out, access, and maintain full-time full-year work as their circumstances allow, while accessing the full extent of government benefits for which they are eligible.

Working poverty can be eliminated in our lifetime. Doing so would cut Canada's national poverty rate almost by half, from 10.1% to 5.9%. The tools we need to end working poverty already exist – we just need them to work better together. To have a meaningful impact, we must work better together across all levels of governments and all sectors, with each partner committing to a future with greater income security and where all workers enjoy access to a fair and equal labour market.

## MARIA'S PATHWAY OUT OF ECONOMIC POVERTY

Maria is a single 25-year-old woman who started working at a local grocery store in Toronto in the summer of 2017. She started at \$11.60/hour (Ontario's minimum wage at the time), and her employer was able to offer her 20 hours per week, year-round. Her income at that time left her well below the poverty line.

In 2018, with Ontario's increase in minimum wage to \$14.00, Maria's annual employment income increased from \$12,064 to \$14,560, and on October 1, 2020, a second increase to \$14.25 bumped it to \$14,820. While Maria was earning significantly more than two years prior, her income still placed her at only 60% of the 2019 MBM threshold for a single person of \$24,652.<sup>3</sup>

In early 2021, Maria accessed a free non-profit-run Canadian Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) tax clinic to file her 2020 return. Filing her taxes for the first time, she was able to claim \$1,652 in benefits (see Table 1) through the CWB refundable tax credit, Climate action incentive (CAI) and CPP/EI overpayments. While these benefits contributed positively to her net income, now \$15,645, Maria was still living at only 63% of MBM and still struggling to meet her monthly expenses.

<sup>3</sup> 2019 MBM for a reference family (four people) in Toronto is \$49,304, which is converted to other family sizes by multiplying the amount for persons not in economic families by the square root of the desired family size.

In March 2021, Maria successfully negotiated with her employer to obtain full-time work hours. Accounting for tax benefits, her after-tax income moved up to \$24,688, bringing her just above Canada’s poverty line, to \$36 above the MBM threshold (see Table 2). Her promotion made her eligible for workplace benefits, including paid sick days. In addition, Maria worked with her employer to access training opportunities that would prepare her for a management position, thus creating a stable pathway to continue to improve her income and employment security.

<b>Gross income:</b>	<b>\$14,820.00</b>
<b>Deductions:</b>	<b>\$828.00</b>
Taxes deducted (federal and provincial):	\$0.00
CPP/EI premiums:	\$828.00
<b>Benefits added (total refundable tax credits):</b>	<b>\$1652.96</b>
Tax deducted:	\$179.84
Climate action incentive:	\$300.00
Other credits:	\$1173.12
<b>Net income:</b>	<b>\$15,644.96</b>

<b>Gross income:</b>	<b>\$27,787.50</b>
<b>After-tax income:</b>	<b>\$24,033.00</b>
<b>Taxes Owing:</b>	<b>\$2,102.62</b>
Basic federal tax:	\$1,802.62
Provincial tax:	\$300.00
<b>Benefits added (total refundable tax credits):</b>	<b>\$2,757.96</b>
Tax deducted:	\$2040.00
CPP/QPP and EI overpayments:	\$417.96
Climate action incentive:	\$300.00
<b>Net income:</b>	<b>\$24,688.34</b>

Maria, her employer, and her community benefited from her being lifted out of economic poverty. Maria became more self-sufficient in meeting basic needs and found greater security in her financial situation – notably with

respect to housing as a single person living in one of the most expensive cities in Canada. She became better able to take care of herself and less likely to require health-care and social service supports. She also became less likely to need to access the justice system, for example as she no longer faced the prospect of eviction. Maria's employer gained an employee with greater stability, and her community benefited from her increased participation as she chose to spend some of her free time in volunteer roles.

While Maria's financial circumstances now set her just above the MBM threshold, it is important to note that her after-tax income still fell \$465 below the higher LIM-AT threshold. Accounting for the fact that provincial/territorial minimum wages and government benefits are not increasing as fast as inflation (e.g., CPP contributions are increasing and Ontario's minimum wage is only scheduled to increase by \$0.10 in September 2022), Maria's wages and benefits will need to continue to increase for her to counter her still precarious situation and avoid falling back into poverty.

#### **Resources:**

- Publication: [Ending Working Poverty in Canada: How to Get It Done](#)
- PowerPoint: [Ending Working Poverty workshop](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 2. Ending Working Poverty](#)

# GOVERNMENTS ENDING POVERTY



## PATHWAY 2: The Government of Canada Ending Poverty

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments across Canada recognize that poverty is a wide-reaching social issue, and that to be successful in ending it, all levels need to be involved. Released in 2018, Canada's first poverty reduction strategy, *Opportunity for All*, forms an effective pathway for ending poverty. The strategy and the large-scale national cash benefits and investments that stem from it, including the Canada child benefit and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, have so far contributed to poverty being reduced for 1.3 million Canadians.



Canada's poverty reduction strategy recognizes that while increased income is a critical component of poverty reduction, cash transfers alone will not end poverty. To make a sustained impact, a strategy as robust



and agile as the changing nature of poverty is needed. *Opportunity for All* creates a space where top-down and bottom-up organizing intersect. In essence, the federal government has introduced a nationwide collective impact initiative to reduce poverty. Collective impact is a high-impact, evidence-based approach for sustainable social change.<sup>4</sup>

The Government of Canada's establishment of a National Advisory Council on Poverty created a critical conduit of communication between citizens and stakeholders. Its setting of an ambitious target (to reduce poverty by 50% by 2030) rallies governments, organizations, businesses, and citizens under a common goal. Its setting of an official poverty line and introduction of a publicly reported dashboard (the Dimensions of Poverty Hub) of indicators brings consistency to how stakeholders from all sectors define, monitor, and tackle poverty across the country.

Mutually reinforcing activities are key to this pathway's success. With established targets and metrics, support primarily flows from the federal government through provinces and territories to local governments and organizations. Each level of government and organization or collaborative has autonomy to engage with their community to identify their assets, priorities, and available policy and systems levers, and how best to redistribute resources to support the common goal.

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**Opportunity for All provides the foundations for provinces/territories and municipalities to align their efforts**

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*Opportunity for All* provides the foundations for provinces/territories and municipalities to align their efforts more under major domains such as housing, employment, transportation, child-care, and health care. Locally, each sector has a role to play in amplifying the success of the strategy. A growing number of community-based collaboratives are taking leadership, making bold commitments and investments, and developing co-owned communi-

ty-wide poverty reduction strategies that reflect the diverse expertise of all residents, particularly those with lived/living experience of poverty.

Despite the setbacks realized from COVID-19, the 1.3 million people lifted out of poverty demonstrates that *Opportunity for All* creates a successful pathway to ending poverty, in partnership with the strategies and investments of provinces, territories, and local governments across Canada, and the many contributions of local businesses, non-profits, and experts with lived/living experience. We are heartened knowing that the strategies we

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/collectiveimpact>

have been enlisting work. As governments and all sectors work toward a just recovery for all, we are refocusing our vision, commitments, and efforts toward the end of poverty in Canada. Together, we will make it happen.

## MONCTON ACTIONS CANADA'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Rising Tides Inc., an incorporated collaborative in Moncton, NB, has garnered partnerships and investments with all levels of government to support their community's vision of achieving functional zero homelessness<sup>5</sup> by 2023.

The number of homeless people in Moncton doubled from 153 in 2019 to 300 in 2021. Disappearing affordable housing and a rise in visible homelessness downtown made housing a hot topic in the city, particularly in the business community.

The new non-profit was launched by the local United Way, John Howard Society, and Food Depot Alimentaire. Their purpose is to tackle homelessness in the city by increasing and sustaining the affordable housing stock and providing wraparound supports. They planned to buy and renovate properties that contained a total of 160 affordable housing units. Rent would cost \$300/month and would include hydro, food, television, continuous case management, and live-in peer support. The program was designed to help residents be successful in their homes by combining the approaches of Housing First, case management, and coordinated access.

The City of Moncton was the first government body to invest in this initiative and in ending the housing crisis by putting forward \$6 million over three years. Funding was committed on the condition that the provincial government matched it. New Brunswick's Department of Social Development agreed to do so, which allowed the non-profit to start purchasing properties and plan for housing the first 25 people in 2021. With resources and a solid business plan in place, Rising Tides Inc. garnered an additional \$3.4 million from the Rapid Housing Initiative fund through Canada's National Housing Strategy. This allowed them to expand their operations to house 62 people in their first year of operations.

The success of this project was magnified by widespread community support. Lawyers, engineers, and building suppliers offered pro bono services, and a building supply company offered discounted materials.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://bfzcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/Functional-Zero-QA.pdf>

Rising Tides Inc. will manage and maintain the properties, while other non-profits fill the units and provide social supports. Supporting the sustainability of the project, Rising Tides Inc. will own all properties and therefore does not have to worry about landlord disputes, evictions, or increased developer costs.

Moncton's Coordinated Access System provides real-time data allowing the partnering agencies to know each homeless person by name, document their needs, prioritize them for housing, and refer them to housing and supports that best meet their preferences and needs. Their housing-first approach moves people quickly into independent long-term housing without prerequisites, and helps act as a stabilizing force for other aspects of their life. Finally, the intense supports and case-management approach helps individuals set and move toward goals and coordinates access to supports to overcome challenges with homelessness.

This story exemplifies that community organizing is essential, even if government isn't yet at the table, and that the municipal government can serve as a significant launchpad as an investor and policy influencer. It also highlights the multiple roles that the private sector can play, and the ability of the community to put the federal plan into action using evidence-based innovations.

Through Rising Tides Inc., Moncton is poised to cut homelessness in the city over the next three years by more than 50%.

#### Resources:

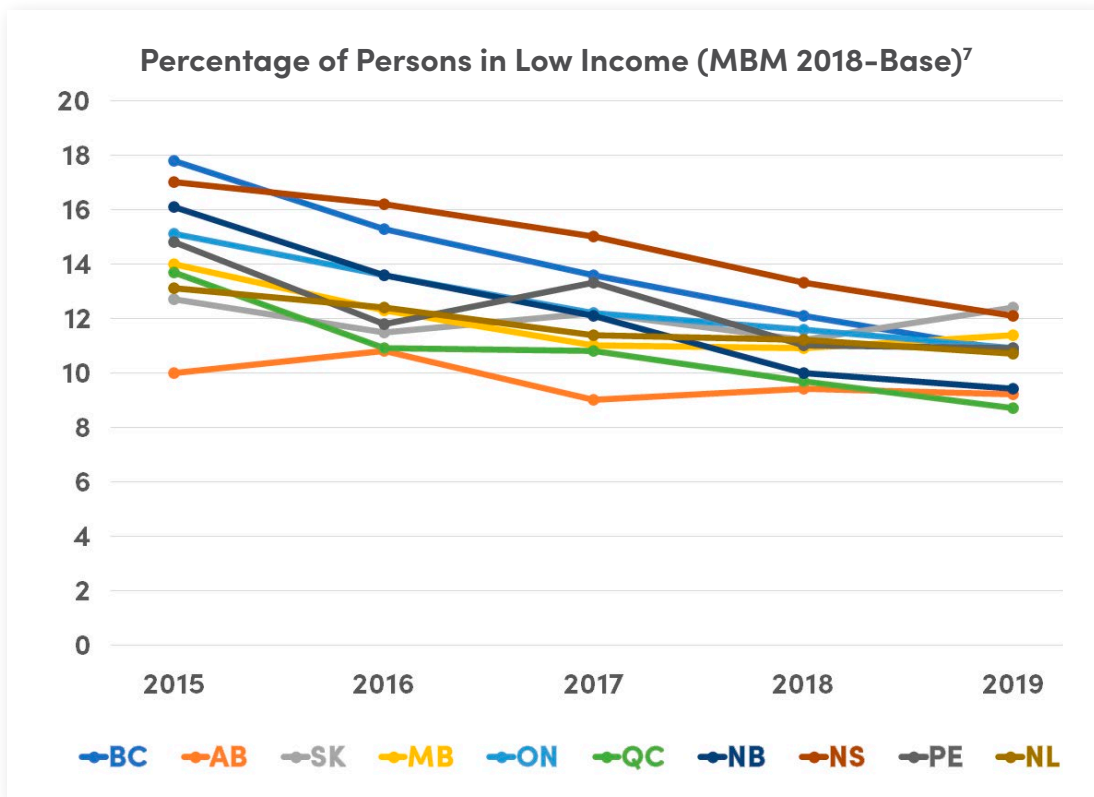
- Strategy: [Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
- Hub: [Canada's Dimensions of Poverty Hub](#)
- Report: [Building Understanding: The First Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty](#)
- News release: [Partnership announced for Moncton-based Rising Tide housing project to provide more services to the homeless](#)
- News release: [Moncton affordable housing project expands with new funding, seeks partners](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 3. Canada's Federal Government Ending Poverty](#)

### PATHWAY 3: Provinces and Territories Ending Poverty

Provinces and territories are essential in ending poverty as they create a critical link between Canada’s poverty reduction strategy and the crucial place-based work that is happening in cities and communities across the country. Provinces also have their own tools and resources that can be used to further poverty reduction efforts.

Over the years, provincial and territorial governments have stepped up their commitments to and investments in poverty reduction. Every province and territory has now created a poverty reduction strategy, and 12 of 13 have been launched.<sup>6</sup>

The success of provincial/territorial strategies is exemplified by significant reductions in poverty rates between 2015 and 2019, most notably in British Columbia (from 17.8% to 10.8%), Ontario (from 15.1% to 10.9%), Quebec (from 13.7% to 8.7%), New Brunswick (from 16.1% to 9.4%), and Nova Scotia (from 17% to 12.1%).



6 While Alberta has not formally launched a poverty reduction strategy, previous governments had developed them and the Notley government worked through an informal but coordinated strategy.

7 [Table 11-10-0135-01 Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type](#)

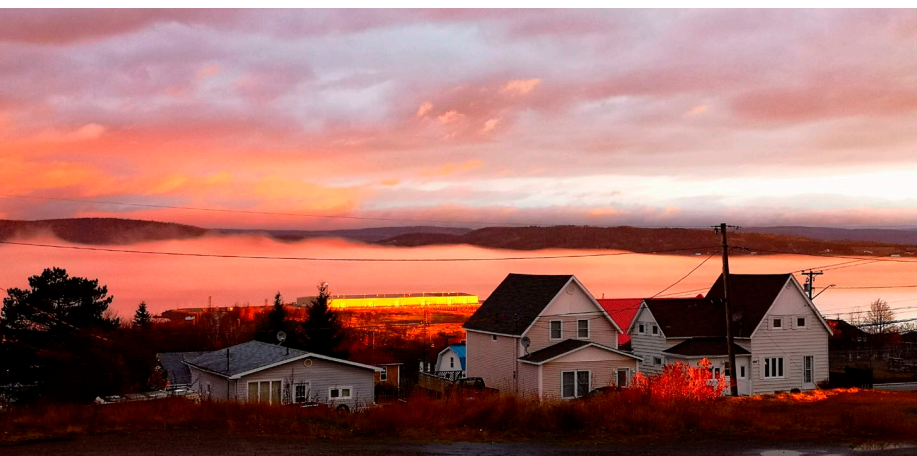


In July 2018, the Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Social Services released *Meeting the Challenge: Provincial-Territorial Mission Statement on Poverty Reduction*. Included in Canada's national strategy, this statement highlighted the need to connect Canada's national poverty reduction strategy with provincial/territorial strategies and for provincial/territorial governments to work with local poverty reduction efforts.



The provincial/territorial pathway to ending poverty requires provinces/territories to recognize the complex nature of poverty and to adopt Canada's definition and official poverty line (2018-base MBM). This alignment supports cohesion across the way they prioritize programs, policies, and benefits.

An impactful application of this alignment has been where provinces/territories have developed supports that complement federal child and family tax credits. For example, in 2015, the Government of Alberta introduced the Alberta Child Benefit (ACB) to complement the Canada child benefit. The ACB provided direct financial support to families with net incomes of less than \$42,255 per year and with children under the age of 18. Combined with other programs, Alberta cut its poverty rate in half – from 10% to 5%. Across Canada, there are now 11 related provincial/territorial programs.



The provincial/territorial pathway to ending poverty also requires these governments to advance the important place-based poverty reduction work that is happening within cities and communities, for example by funding communities to develop and implement local poverty reduction strategies.

For example, as part of their Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion<sup>8</sup> and through their Alliances for Solidarity,<sup>9</sup> Quebec's Social Initiatives Fund entrusts regional anti-poverty roundtables and other organizations to mobilize local projects that promote social and economic inclusion. New Brunswick's Economic Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC)<sup>10</sup> approves,

8 <http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ShowDoc/cs/L-7>

9 [https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/sacais/soutien-financier/soutien\\_sacais/fonds-quebécois-initiatives-sociales/index.asp](https://www.mtess.gouv.qc.ca/sacais/soutien-financier/soutien_sacais/fonds-quebécois-initiatives-sociales/index.asp)

10 <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic.html>

resources, and supports the success of 12 Community Inclusion Networks (CINs)<sup>11</sup> that develop and implement local poverty reduction plans. CIN boards include representation from business, government, non-profits, and individuals with lived/living experience. In 2020, British Columbia announced a \$5 million investment through its Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program, which in its first round supported more than 50 local governments.

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*For this pathway to be successful, provinces and territories must recognize city and community stakeholders [...] as experts of their own contexts and circumstances.*

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For this pathway to be successful, provinces and territories must recognize city and community stakeholders (such as advocates from multi-sectoral roundtables, frontline service providers, and citizens with lived/living experience) as experts of their own contexts and circumstances. They should be open and amenable to drawing on local knowledge, data, and experience, to amend policies, programs, and systems to better meet community needs.

Vibrant Calgary and Action to End Poverty in Alberta demonstrate the critical role that non-profits play in advocacy. Of the 71 recommendations for policies that could reduce poverty in the province that they advocated for, more than 22 have to date been implemented, including their recommendation for a provincial child benefit (implemented as the ACB) and for regulation of predatory lending (implemented as the Act to End Predatory Lending).

Beyond advocacy, the provincial/territorial pathway to ending poverty requires governments and communities to work together toward the effective implementation of provincial/territorial strategies. This includes engaging diverse sectors in the work, and building up the capacity of communities to serve as implementors of provincial programs, services, and benefits, including those related to housing, transportation, and financial empowerment.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/community\\_inclusionnetwork.html](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/community_inclusionnetwork.html)

As provinces and territories play an increasingly important role in ending poverty, jurisdictions like Quebec, British Columbia, and New Brunswick have shown that through thoughtful and innovative approaches, ending poverty is possible.

## BC'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY FUNDS COMMUNITIES

*TogetherBC*, British Columbia's first poverty reduction strategy, was released in 2019. It followed the Government of BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, which had formally called for the development of the strategy, mandated annual reporting, set provisions for an advisory committee and public participation, and set a target of reducing poverty by 25% for all persons and 50% for persons under the age of 18 by 2024.

*TogetherBC* is the outcome of more than a decade of advocacy from local poverty networks, roundtables, and organizations, including the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Living Wage for Families, and First Call. The strategy was informed by extensive consultations from across the province held over a five-month period, which engaged more than 8,500 individuals. It takes a whole-of-government approach, makes a strong commitment to reducing poverty through a lens of equity and reconciliation, and is built on the principles of affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion. The BC government works with local experts with lived/living experience to better understand how the system of supports for individuals could be reformed to reduce poverty and build a more just society.

One major innovation has been the province working with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to invest in and implement the 2019 \$5 million Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program – a three-year program that funds and supports municipalities to develop and implement poverty reduction strategies. In its first year, \$1.6 million in funding was allocated to 63 local governments for 34 projects.

A second innovation has been the creation of BC's Expert Panel on Basic Income, an interdisciplinary committee that sought to understand the province's current intersecting systems, identify gaps, and envision what a just society and system of support would look like. They produced an incredible amount of research (more than 40 studies and papers) and modelled possible Basic Income scenarios. The committee's final report, *Covering All the Basics: Reforms for a More Just Society*, provided 65 whole-of-government recommendations to reforming BC systems in order to improve the social safety net for residents and to translate their vision to reality.

Two years after its release, *TogetherBC* is already showing significant gains toward ending poverty. Between 2016 and 2019, poverty rates dropped from 15.3% to 10.8%. In 2020, in the face of COVID-19, the strategy served as a foundation for an efficient rollout of supports that were designed to reduce the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable populations. Its first Annual Report demonstrates successes being realized through substantial investments the province is making in housing, childcare, and food security.

*TogetherBC* exemplifies a successful provincial/territorial pathway to ending poverty due to its clear connection to Canada's poverty reduction strategy, recognition of local poverty reduction actors as experts, direct funding of local poverty reduction strategies, and municipal alignment with provincial priorities. While BC is the province that most recently developed a formal poverty reduction strategy, its leadership and commitment to ending poverty is truly an inspiration.

## Resources

- Strategy: [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
- Committee: [BC's Poverty Reduction Advisory Committee](#)
- Act: [BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy Act](#)
- Report: [TogetherBC 2019 Annual Report](#)
- Program: [UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program](#)
- Case study: [Alberta Proves that, Yes We Can! Reduce Poverty](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 4. Provinces and Territories Ending Poverty](#)



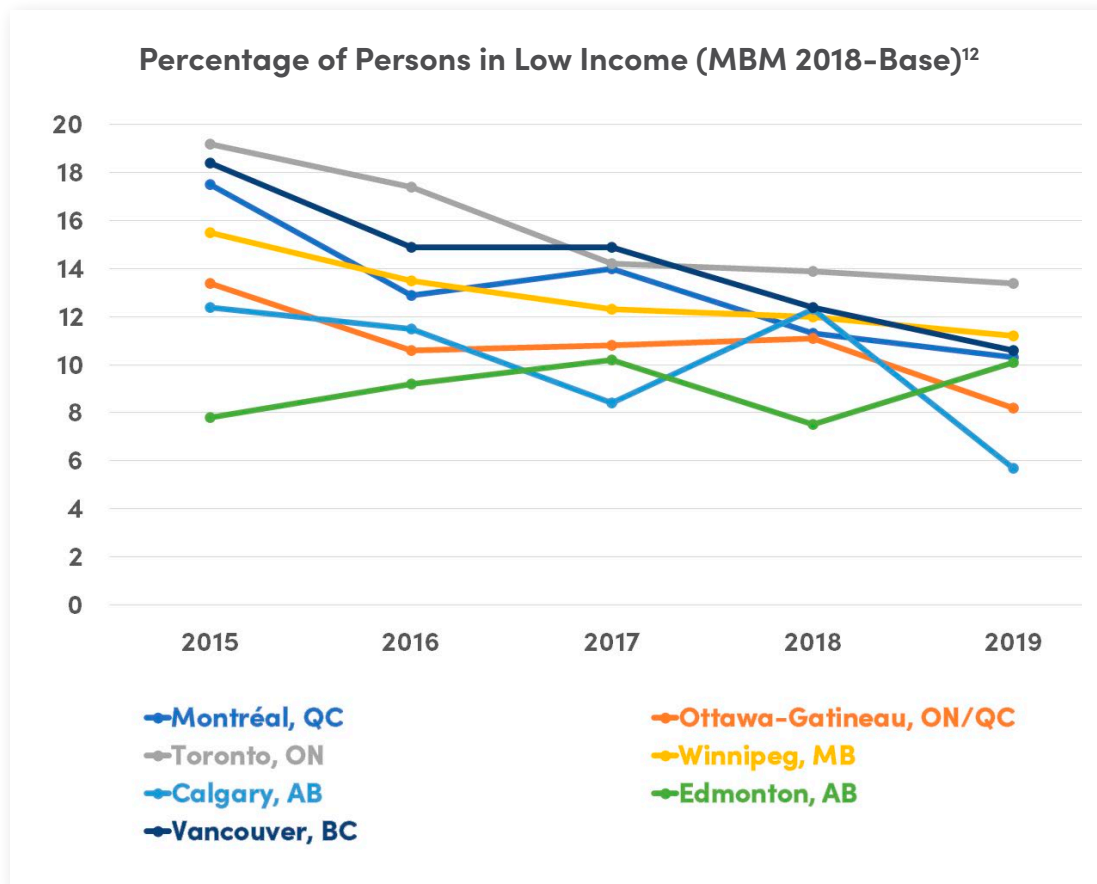
# PATHWAY 4: CITIES AND COMMUNITIES ENDING POVERTY



Founded in 2002, Communities Ending Poverty (CEP; formerly Cities Reducing Poverty) has grown to support more than 330 municipalities represented by 88 regional roundtables that develop and implement plans to reduce poverty in their communities. CEP is a powerful collective impact movement that provides immediate benefits to individuals and families, demonstrates new best practices and influences policy changes, initiates systems changes, and builds a critical mass of support with the public and decision-makers to create meaningful change for people living on low incomes.



Between 2015 and 2019, CEP contributed to poverty being reduced for more than 1.3 million Canadians. The success of cities and communities in ending poverty is exemplified by significant reductions in poverty rates between 2015 and 2019, most notably in Vancouver (18.4% to 10.6%), Montréal (from 17.5% to 10.3%), Calgary (from 12.4% to 5.7%), and Toronto (from 19.2% to 13.4%). Building on this momentum, CEP is now amplifying its mission – from reducing poverty in Canada to ending it altogether.



CEP’s pathway for cities and communities ending poverty has been successful in large part due to its members committing to comprehensive approaches that address its complexities of poverty through collaborative, multi-sectoral solutions that bring governments, businesses, non-profits, and people with lived/living experience together. CEP members develop poverty reduction roundtables and embed collective impact approaches and continuous learning and innovation to drive long-term change.

<sup>12</sup> [Table 11-10-0135-01: Low income statistics by age, sex and economic family type](#)

A successful collective impact pathway for cities and communities ending poverty embeds the following conditions:

- **Collaborating across sectors.** Each sector brings unique assets to the table. Local governments provide leadership, resources, and an ability to effect high-impact policy change, while business leaders contribute strong networking and innovation skills. The social sector and citizens with lived/living experience are well-positioned to come up with solutions. Collaborating partners develop a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem, and agree upon priorities and mutually reinforcing actions that they will take to realize it.
- **Data-gathering and research.** This helps cities and communities create a baseline of current conditions and assets, set priorities, goals, and targets, and track progress along the way. Data informs strategic learning and empowers them to initiate dialogue, catalyze community engagement, and build empathy and understanding.
- **Strategically focusing on key domains of work.** Focusing areas of influence (e.g., income and employment, housing, early childhood development) helps communities deliver on their goals, elicits an array of other significant, positive outcomes, and effects positive policy and systems changes that profoundly impact the course of poverty reduction.
- **Open, continuous communication.** Both within a poverty reduction roundtable and with the community it serves, communication is foundational to strong relationships and to authentic, meaningful engagement. It facilitates trust, debunks myths and stigma, and is critical to building a common community understanding and vision over time.
- **Infrastructure.** Infrastructure is required to facilitate, convene, and coordinate all moving parts of an ending-poverty initiative. Poverty reduction roundtables can be led by local government or by community roundtables. They access funding, pool resources, and drive priorities forward, building collective capacity over time.



The following approaches and levers, as successfully applied by Communities Ending Poverty members and detailed in the 2020 Impact Report, have contributed to community- and population-level change:

- **Awareness raising amongst policy makers and the general public** (e.g., the local costs of living, insufficiency of Social Assistance rates, affordable housing options, RESPs)
- **Bridging communication between sectors and addressing gaps** (e.g., employers and unemployed youth, the food bank and health professionals doing home visits, food donors and non-profits)
- **Delivering programs, projects, and services to individuals and families** (e.g., literacy or financial literacy training for adults, funding eyeglasses and prescription drugs, eviction intervention, enrichment classes for young children and parents, a mobile food market, Community Volunteer Income Tax Programs)
- **Raising collaborative funds** (e.g., Community Development Corporations or collaborative funding proposals)
- **Running innovation labs and pilot projects to create the case for new policies** (e.g., affordable housing and transportation models, increasing teacher-to-student ratios)
- **Introducing subsidies that ease the cost-of-living burden** (e.g., affordable transit passes, affordable childcare, affordable recreation)
- **Changing infrastructure** (e.g., increased night bus service, introducing dial-a-ride, creating neighbourhood-based health care, securing space for community food storage and distribution, launching a bus to the food bank)



While higher levels of government play a critical role in ending poverty, it is at the local level where the real work happens. While COVID-19 amplified cracks in our social systems, it also reinforced the need for a strong safety net and the drive to build both individual and community resilience. Throughout the pandemic, CEP members were able to leverage their already strong relationships, partnerships, and collaborative systems to pivot quickly, innovate, and work together across sectors as they supported each other to meet unprecedented challenges.

We are in a time of great opportunity. Over the coming months and years, CEP's collective impact approach will continue to serve as an effective



pathway to ending poverty, as the network continues to leverage government and community priorities, policies, and programs to collectively end poverty in Canada.

## SAINT JOHN CUTS THEIR POVERTY RATE IN HALF

Saint John was one of CEP's first trail-builder communities. When they joined the network in 2002, 28% of the city's population was living in poverty. Experiencing one of the highest poverty rates in the country, their goal became to cut that rate in half. After nearly 20 tireless years, they achieved their goal. As of 2019, Saint John dropped their poverty rate to 14%.

From the onset of their poverty reduction journey and their membership with Tamarack's CEP network, Saint John already had a strong culture of collaboration and giving, and a passionate sense of place that formed a strong foundation for their work.

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*"Tamarack gave us the infrastructure and tools. We knew leaders of all four sectors needed to be at the table. This has been our strength. We didn't know how we were going to do it, but we were all totally committed. The strong start was so important."*

*– Monica Chaperlin*

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Saint John adopted a rigorous collective impact process to tackle poverty. Early on, they realized that it wasn't enough to have sector representatives at the table, but that they needed decision-makers who could influence the systems they represented. Collectively, the group met community challenges with curiosity, continuous dialogue, and an appetite to learn and change. The group created an understanding of the need to think outside the box, and that tough conversations were necessary. As relationships and trust grew, they came to consensus on the initiative's targets, measurements, and goals.

After 10 years of work, Vibrant Communities Saint John became Living SJ and narrowed their focus to ending generational poverty. Living SJ identified education as their biggest pillar, adopting a "cradle to career" approach that focused on working with families and children so the next generation would be better off. This approach underscored a citywide understanding that ending poverty requires every child to succeed.

Their targeted programs overcame inequities and channelled significant resources and wraparound supports to those in need, for example from reducing the teacher/student ratio in elementary schools serving low-income neighbourhoods, to supporting vulnerable youth to stay in school, graduate, and access post-secondary programs and jobs.

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*“We’ve gone from start-up to maturing to renewal. We keep changing what we need to grow as we learn. Nimbleness of the collective has been our key to longevity and our ability to respond. Learning, learning, learning together! It’s not about the people who live in poverty, it’s about how we address it that’s important. We need to be useful to people instead of expecting them to fit into our boxes.”*

*– Monica Chaperlin*

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Nearly 20 years in, Living SJ’s proven pathways and practices have captured the attention of higher levels of government and have resulted in a number of systems changes, including in the form of policy and funded programs at the provincial level. Some of Saint John’s poverty reduction champions have been at the table since its onset. They are still passionate about the work, and they experience a strong sense of responsibility and care.

Ending poverty is a long-term journey. As early literacy scores and graduation rates for children and youth in low-income neighbourhoods improve, the education achievement gap between these priority neighbourhoods and the SJ average is gradually closing. With more and more children succeeding, Living SJ comes closer to their goal of ending generational poverty.

## Resources

- Publication: [Cities Reducing Poverty: 2020 Impact Report](#)
- Website: [LivingSJ.ca](http://LivingSJ.ca)
- Report: [Living SJ Annual Report 2020](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 5. Cities and Communities Ending Poverty](#)

# BIG IDEAS FOR ENDING POVERTY



## PATHWAY 5: A Basic Income for Ending Poverty

When used to establish an adequate minimum income floor as a complement to social supports and good public policy, a national Basic Income program has the potential to nearly eradicate poverty. It also has the potential to generate new jobs and grow the economy by putting money in the hands of people who will spend it. Basic Income increases revenues for businesses by providing capital for investment and growth. By raising the incomes low-to-moderate middle-income households, it can act as a cushion for families that are just getting by.

Basic Income is broadly defined as “cash transfers to individuals with very minimal conditions (such as residency) attached.”<sup>13</sup> A number of trends have contributed to its recent rise in popularity, including the COVID-19 pandemic, persisting poverty rates, the automation of work, the threat of climate change, and the growing precarity of the labour market.

The success of Basic Income as a pathway to ending poverty is evidenced by its long history around the world, including through two Canadian pilots – one in the 1970s in Dauphin, MB, and one in 2017 in three Ontario cities: Hamilton, Thunder Bay, and Lindsay. Research, including Basic Income Canada’s *Some Policy Options for Canada* and an AI-simulated research study by the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA), has recently contributed to the Canadian conversation around the design of a nationwide benefit.

<sup>13</sup> [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/bicn/pages/3725/attachments/original/1579707497/Basic\\_Income- Some\\_Policy\\_Options\\_for\\_Canada2.pdf?1579707497](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/bicn/pages/3725/attachments/original/1579707497/Basic_Income- Some_Policy_Options_for_Canada2.pdf?1579707497)



COVID-19 brought Basic Income back into the spotlight in 2020, as the pandemic revealed how many Canadians were only one paycheque away from poverty, and how across levels of governments and sectors, systems are woefully underprepared to withstand widespread shocks. It also proved that Canada's tax system already provides the infrastructure needed to roll out cash transfers, as evidenced by the efficient rollout of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

The success of Basic Income as a pathway to ending poverty is also evidenced by the success of other forms of Basic Income for children and seniors that are already embedded into Canada's tax and transfer system. In the 2000s, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) coupled with Old Age Security (OAS) took Canada from a laggard in seniors' poverty to the fourth best OECD country. Between 2015 and 2019, the Canada child benefit was a key driver behind 1.3 million Canadians being lifted out of poverty.

This proposed Basic Income pathway to ending poverty is detailed in *Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada*. It is an income-tested model, which as opposed to a universal model only benefits individuals who fall below a specific income threshold. The cash benefit amount is set at \$22,000 (\$31,113 for couples divided equally to each) and to avoid the cliff effect, in which individuals earn slightly more income but see their Basic Income benefit drop off suddenly and end up with less income overall, it incorporates a gradual 40% reduction rate (whereby the benefit is reduced 40% for every dollar of additional income). This scenario includes benefits for seniors and leaves current child benefits in place as is.

This pathway would support people that are currently falling through the cracks of Canada's safety net. It would reduce income inequality for all family types and is a progressive, universal, sustainable, and equitable model that supports labour participation and provides an adequate income floor to everyone regardless of (dis)ability. Implementation of this pathway would drop poverty rates to 1.2 – 2% for two-parent working-age families, working-age couples, and senior couples. Absolute poverty would be reduced by 96% and relative low-income would be reduced by 75%.

It is important to note that this model does not replace other social programs and services. Accessible transportation, daycare spaces, affordable housing, etc. are all needed in combination with a foundational income floor. The proposed program is paid for through a combination



of rearranging existing tax credits, eliminating social assistance, and/or progressive personal and corporate taxation where the wealthiest earners bear the greatest cost starting at the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> income decile. The addition of temporary federal debt funding could also stimulate more rapid short-term economic growth.

It is not only the federal government that has a role to play in a national Basic Income. Provincial, territorial, and municipal governments are already doing Basic Income cash transfers in the United States, Spain, and other parts of the world. Stockton, California, for example, gave \$500 per month to every individual,<sup>14</sup> and Oakland has announced \$500 per month to all Black and racialized individuals<sup>15</sup> in an attempt to reduce the racial wealth gap. Subfederal levels of government can use transfers such as this one to demonstrate that the implementation of a Basic Income is feasible, build support region-by-region, and build pressure for the federal government to implement a sustainable Basic Income.



Businesses also have a role to play in the Basic Income pathway to ending poverty. Business owners have unique channels to raise awareness of and advocate for Basic Income in sections of the community that non-profits and residents find more challenging. They can help myth-bust amongst other employers and build momentum. In October 2020, local Chambers of Commerce mustered support across the country and succeeded in getting the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to make an official ask to the federal government to pilot a national Basic Income.<sup>16</sup>

14 [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6039d612b17d055cac14070f/t/603ef1194c474b329f33c329/1614737690661/SEED\\_Preliminary+Analysis-SEEDs+First+Year\\_Final+Report\\_Individual+Pages+-2.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6039d612b17d055cac14070f/t/603ef1194c474b329f33c329/1614737690661/SEED_Preliminary+Analysis-SEEDs+First+Year_Final+Report_Individual+Pages+-2.pdf)

15 <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/universal-basic-income-in-oakland-is-first-program-only-for-people-of-color-133139312.html>

16 <https://basicincometoday.com/canadas-chamber-of-commerce-adopts-resolution-calling-for-federal-government-to-pilot-basic-income/>

Non-profits and citizens can support a national Basic Income by voicing their support to Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP), as the perspectives of constituents are essential in realizing transformational policies. Non-profits, who are already skilled collaborators, can bring the varying perspectives on Basic Income's goals closer together so that advocates are united in their call to government representatives. They can use a combination of data and human stories to show naysayers that Basic Income is a moral imperative as well as has a positive long-term return on investment, despite its upfront cost. Research and reports generated by non-profits, such as *Poverty Costs* reports, are handy tools that document the economic costs of poverty and can help other sectors understand the government's pocketbook.

Basic Income is a high-impact strategy for ending poverty and can be sustainably financed as a nationwide Canadian benefit. Now is the time to move beyond pilots, which are devastating to participants if cancelled early. With Basic Income now a serious debate in provincial and federal chambers, and the public primed to be more understanding of the need for government assistance and to have a buffer for future crises, it is now a sheer matter of will to push Basic Income through and reduce poverty for up to 95% of Canadians.

## ONTARIO'S BASIC INCOME PILOT PROVIDED WIDESPREAD BENEFITS

From 2017 to 2019, 4,000 people across Ontario, including 1,000 Hamiltonians living on low income between the ages of 18 and 64 years (61 years at enrolment), received Basic Income payments as a pilot of the Government of Ontario. The benefit was set at 75% of the Low-Income Measure – \$16,989 per year for a single person and \$24,027 per year for a couple – with a 50% reduction rate and replaced Social Assistance, but did not interfere with child benefits.

While the pilot was cancelled early with the election of a new government, McMaster University's sample of 257 participants of the Ontario pilot revealed stunning results. Most surprisingly, the cash transfers provided the most benefits to participants who were already employed before the pilot began. They reported more physical and mental health improvements, and the vast majority of those who were working stayed working. One-third reported salary increases and one-third reported finding a job with better safety. Of the 27% who stopped working, 50% did so to go back to school and upgrade their skills, and 30% were caring for a family member or left

an abusive work situation. Further, 20% of those receiving social assistance when the pilot started transitioned into work. Their experiences highlight that for precariously employed workers, cash transfers are a high-impact way of helping them to reskill, and they provide security to take risks with longer-term rewards.

Participants of the Ontario pilot have said that the increase in financial security that Basic Income offered was the pool ball strategy they needed to give them hope and the ability to plan for their future. One participant reported making healthier food choices, purchasing fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats that are more expensive than packaged goods but that were essential for them to manage their diabetes. Another gained a feeling of inclusion over the holidays after being able to purchase gifts for friends and family.

Physical and mental health improvements were reported universally by all participants. They used the public health system less and had increased food security. Participants reported being less angry and having a better outlook on life, which allowed them to engage with their community in a more positive way. They adopted better life choices, such as reduced smoking and/or drinking due to less stress, and reported improvements in family dynamics, with fewer fights over money, less anxiety, and a stable environment that created better health outcomes for children.

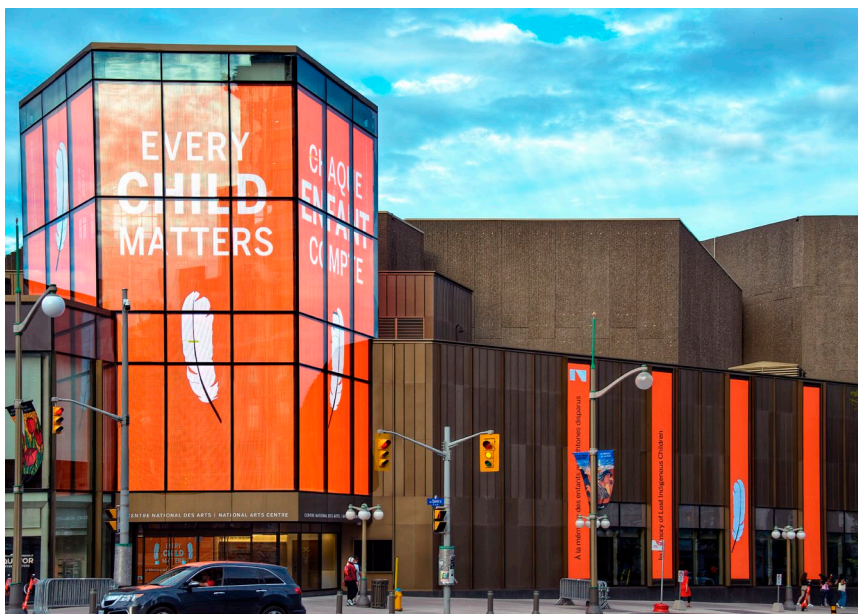
## Resources

- Report: [Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada](#)
- Report: [Southern Ontario's Basic Income Experience](#)
- Report: [Potential Economic Impacts and Reach of Basic Income Programs in Canada](#)
- Resource Library: [CEP Basic Income Community of Practice](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 6. A Basic Income for Ending Poverty](#)



## PATHWAY 6: Ending Indigenous Poverty in Cities

Indigenous poverty is the most prevalent form of poverty in Canada today. The discovery of mass, unmarked graves at former residential school sites across the country underscores a deep need to face our collective truth as a first step toward reconciliation and healing. Indigenous poverty has been the inevitable result of multi-generational trauma and colonial policy; there is opportunity to learn from the past to create a new, better future built on equity and reconciliation.



The pathway to ending Indigenous poverty requires Indigenous peoples and communities at the centre of the conversation, addressing systemic racism, addressing trauma, improving data and access to it, and building self-determination within Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations. It requires incorporating Indigenous practice models into standards of practice across all support systems and building community understanding of cultural safety through training programs (such as San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training<sup>17</sup>).

In urban centres across the country, Indigenous people are working independently and with others to support pathways out of poverty for Indigenous children, families, and Elders. Twenty Communities Ending Poverty members across Canada have named ending Indigenous poverty as one of their priority domains of work.

Calgary's Indigenous Strategy and Indigenous Advisory Committee ensures that Indigenous people are equal participants in Calgary's future. In April 2021, Vibrant Communities Calgary kicked off a series of Indigenous learning events that built understanding and mutual respect with Indigenous communities. Participants reflected on their own Truth and Reconciliation journey, its place in the Enough for All strategy, and the barriers to moving Indigenous engagement work forward. Each lever of change from the *Enough for All* strategy aligns with the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sanyas.ca/training>



Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC), guided by the TRC's 92nd call to action bridges relationships between non-profit community job trainers and businesses to increase employment opportunities for Indigenous job seekers within Winnipeg's corporate sector. Since 2015, companies have been reaching out to community organizations and Indigenous jobseekers, employers have amended human resources practice and policies to support Indigenous engagement, more Indigenous candidates are applying for jobs, and Indigenous job seekers have entered job, internship, job-shadowing, and term positions.

The experience of poverty for Indigenous people is complex and underscored by racism, multigenerational trauma, and both historical and current colonial policies woven through every domain from housing to food security. Indigenous poverty has been an inevitable outcome of the residential school system, chronic exclusion, marginalization, and oppression. While overall child poverty rates have declined, the Indigenous child poverty rate of 47% is 2.6 times higher than the Canadian average, and four times that of non-Indigenous, non-racialized children.<sup>18</sup> COVID-19 coupled with the opioid crisis exacerbated inequities and the devastating impacts of trauma.



*"When you are Indigenous, you have lived experience."*

*– Cheryl Whiskeyjack*

The pathway to ending Indigenous poverty in cities first requires settlers to acknowledge that the lands we live, work and play on are the places of origin for Indigenous peoples. In BC, it is estimated that close to 85% of Indigenous people live off-reserve or in urban areas. As Indigenous people migrate from rural to urban areas, creating culturally safe spaces to gather is critical. Friendship Centres, for example, are an invaluable

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Upstream\\_report\\_final\\_English\\_June-24-2019.pdf](https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Upstream_report_final_English_June-24-2019.pdf)

resource in urban settings and serve as an important link to “home.” These Indigenous-led community hubs build on the strengths that are inherent to Indigenous peoples, including strong kinship ties and interconnectedness, and a strong sense of belonging that comes with being part of a larger community. They support the health, wellness, and prosperity of urban Indigenous peoples and communities through events, direct programming, and connecting people with resources. They also act as springboards for advocacy. Indigenous-led community organizations and those that support an Indigenous practice model can also serve as community hubs by connecting people to community and decreasing barriers for service users to access supports.

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**Addressing  
systemic racism  
is imperative  
to the pathway  
to ending  
Indigenous  
poverty**

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Addressing systemic racism is imperative to the pathway to ending Indigenous poverty in cities. Racism is one of the primary barriers to health, wellness, and prosperity. Its experience prevents successful outcomes from healthy early childhood development to adults accessing good jobs. A 2020 independent investigative report into racism in the BC health-care system found that 84% of Indigenous people who participated in the study had experienced discrimination. A key outcome of this research has been the development of the Safespace app.<sup>19</sup> This app was created by Canadian Medical Association President-elect Dr. Alika Lafontaine, an Alberta-based

anesthesiologist of Anishinaabe, Cree, Metis, and Pacific Islander descent. Housed on the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) website, it supports Indigenous patients to anonymously report experiences of racism within the health-care system. Data from the app is used to assess patterns of racist incidents in the health-care sector, and to create solutions around how to address these issues with policy makers.

The pathways to ending Indigenous poverty in cities requires better data, and better access to it. A 2019 report, *Toward Justice: Tackling Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada*, identifies profound gaps in both taxfiler and census data that make it challenging to accurately assess the current situation of Indigenous people across the country. The First Nations Information Governance Centre,<sup>20</sup> an independent, apolitical, and technical non-profit organization operating with a special mandate from the Assembly of First Nations’ Chiefs-in-Assembly, supports data sovereignty through the development of information governance and management at the community level through regional and national partnerships.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/safespace-app-report-racism-indigenous-1.5961483>

<sup>20</sup> <https://fnigc.ca/about-fnigc/>

The pathway to ending Indigenous poverty requires Indigenous peoples to gain self-determination, including control over finances and programming content and direction. For example, in Quebec, lower child poverty rates are a direct outcome of resource revenue sharing from joint hydroelectric projects of the provincial government and Indigenous partners.



Poverty, as experienced by Indigenous people, is a violation of human rights, including the right to flourish and to experience joy. Ending Indigenous poverty in cities requires us to be open to learning, growth, and change. We must accept that addressing inequity takes time and resources. We must practice patience and kindness as we all travel this path together. As entire communities are impacted by poverty and marginalization, working together with Indigenous partners empowers and improves prosperity for all.

## **BENT ARROW FORGES A PATH TOWARD BELONGING AND HEALING**

Cheryl Whiskeyjack, executive director of Edmonton's Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, has been a strong leader and a powerful voice for change, co-chairing End Poverty Edmonton and participating in Canada's National Advisory Council on Poverty, where she sees opportunity to help address the impacts of racism and colonialism on Indigenous people.



The Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society began serving Indigenous children, youth, and families in Edmonton and the surrounding area in 1994. While the original focus was to be on youth, the group quickly expanded in response to intersectional needs. Today, the organization operates many programs, from employment to housing, resources for newcomers, and family and youth services.

Its New in Town services are offered to all, including Indigenous people who are new to the city and recent immigrants. Its C5 Collaborative – Collaborating for Change has grown from a diverse group experiencing similar challenges to a collective voice that adds strength and legitimacy to systems change advocacy efforts and has raised cultural awareness and addressed assumptions and barriers. Collaboration has enabled Bent Arrow to achieve stronger outcomes for families and communities.

Bent Arrow's Journey to Success pre-employment program was designed to meet the needs of unemployed and marginally employed Indigenous people by addressing barriers and supporting people to obtain and maintain long-term employment. In 2020, 420 out of 600 students graduated from the program, and nearly one-third were successfully employed after 180 days.

One of Bent Arrow's most significant indicators of positive change has been an increase in the number of Indigenous children in care who remain either at home or with kin in their home communities. In Edmonton, 74% of children in care are Indigenous. Of these, 22% are supported to remain at home, 24% are adult youth with Support and Financial Agreements, and 54% are in care. Of the 54% in care, 35% are with kin. The benefit for Indigenous children remaining in their home communities is tremendous; being at home with cultural identity, history, and a sense of place and belonging is a game changer, helping to build resilience and positive life experience.

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*The benefit for Indigenous children remaining in their home communities is tremendous; being at home with cultural identity, history, and a sense of place and belonging is a game changer*

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Bent Arrow has evolved this success through a number of key factors:

- Its practice and funding model afforded the society total control over its finances and service delivery. This allows self-determination around what services are needed and how they were provided. It



also promotes innovation and creativity as the community is able to voice needs and identify appropriate and accessible supports.

- Keeping ceremony and culture at the centre of all aspects of the work is crucial as it forges a path to belonging, healing, and processing challenges. Ceremony supports those experiencing poverty of the spirit and helps address deep pain and trauma, connecting people to culture and stories that have been lost or forgotten. For the community at large, ceremony and cultural teachings promote knowledge of Indigenous culture and to help others find a sense of connection and belonging.
- Partnerships are important for opening doors. Deep collaboration, engagement, partnerships, and understanding exist between organizations and systems in Edmonton. This has enhanced their capacity to serve the Indigenous community in culturally relevant, authentic ways and has helped to achieve stronger outcomes for families and communities.

Bent Arrow's leadership, collaborations, and high-impact and culturally safe programming exemplify some of the systems changes that will be needed to help end poverty for Indigenous people in cities.

#### Resources:

- Report: [Towards Justice: Tackling Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada](#)
- Website: [National Association of Friendship Centres](#)
- Report: [Addressing Racism: An independent investigation into Indigenous-specific discrimination in B.C. health care](#)
- Calgary: [Indigenous Strategy](#) and [Indigenous Advisory Committee](#)
- Winnipeg: [Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council](#)
- Edmonton: [Indigenous Circle First Voice Inclusion and Participation Equity Protocol](#)
- Website: [Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 8. Ending Indigenous Poverty](#)

## PATHWAY 7: Built for Zero Canada for Ending Homelessness

The pathway to ending homelessness requires a community-based, agile, problem-solving, and data-driven approach. It looks upstream to prevent people from entering homelessness and supports those who are experiencing homelessness to rapidly exit it. The pathway requires safe, secure, affordable, and suitable housing that embeds appropriate and sufficient wrap-around supports.

Built for Zero Canada (BFZ-C)'s approach to ending chronic and veteran homelessness presents a proven pathway to ending homelessness in Canada. Powered by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), its communities recognize that homelessness is a result of vulnerable populations colliding with broken systems. BFZ-C's model and methodology demonstrate how these systems can be fixed, as they respond to homelessness as a national emergency that requires urgent and immediate action.

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*Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked, with homelessness being the most visible expression of poverty, and ending poverty being pivotal in preventing homelessness*

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Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked, with homelessness being the most visible expression of poverty, and ending poverty being pivotal in preventing homelessness. According to the State of Homelessness in Canada 2016,<sup>21</sup> at least 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a given year, and many more, such as those living with friends or relatives, are housing insecure. Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted, and almost one in five people experiencing homelessness are youth.

The monetary cost of a Canadian struggling with both homelessness and mental illness is estimated at \$53,144 per person per year,<sup>22</sup> as they seek out emergency shelters and social services to meet basic needs, interact with police, and access health supports such as paramedics and hospitals. Homelessness is estimated to cost the Canadian economy more than \$7 billion per year, including the cost of emergency shelters, social services, health care and corrections.<sup>23</sup>

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21 [https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16\\_final\\_20Oct2016.pdf](https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16_final_20Oct2016.pdf)

22 <https://www.cmajopen.ca/content/5/3/E576.full>

23 <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/SOHC2103.pdf>

BFZ-C's pathway to ending chronic homelessness focuses on creating a sense of urgency, optimizing local homelessness response systems, and driving continuous improvement. Its data-driven and coordinated system ensures that each month, fewer people are experiencing chronic homelessness than can be routinely housed. It targets individuals with the most urgent needs across a broad range of populations, including youth, women, veterans, and Indigenous peoples.



BFZ-C builds on the momentum of CAEH's previous 20,000 Home Campaign, founded on a Community Solutions model first launched in the US, which has led to over a dozen US communities ending homelessness for a population (e.g., chronic or veteran) along with measurable reductions in another 40 communities. So far, this approach has been adopted and adapted to more than 30 municipalities across Canada. Since 2017, 23 communities have confirmed a quality by-name list, of which five communities have sustained measurable reductions in chronic homelessness and one community has ended veteran homelessness.

Communities that have reduced chronic homelessness span the country from Saint John, NB, to Fort McMurray, AB. In March 2021, London, ON, was celebrated as the first community to reach a functional zero proof-point in Canada for ending veteran homelessness. As of 2021, BFZ-C is supporting the Government of Ontario's directive for municipal service managers to develop and implement by-name lists (real-time, person-specific lists that include all people known to be experiencing homelessness in a community) by the end of the year.

BFZ-C communities create by-name lists. They develop coordinated access systems that bring consistency to the process by which people experiencing or at risk of homelessness access housing and related services within a geographic area. Having access to real-time actionable data about the supply of and demand for housing resources builds a systems-level understanding of individuals' and families' inflow and outflow from homelessness and supports service providers to more effectively recognize and advocate for the policies and resources necessary to end it.

Other key components of the BFZ-C model include a Housing First approach, a standardized workflow for triage and assessment and prioritization, and vacancy matching and referral.

BFZ-C's pathway to ending homelessness combines the urgency of a campaign-style movement with a collaborative peer-learning approach that connects communities with each other for innovation, knowledge exchange, and group problem solving. Through a mix of in-person and virtual learning sessions, communities engage in the following process:

- **Forming a team.** Communities build an integrated, command centre team that can take responsibility for getting to zero.
- **Building a database of real-time data.** Communities build a comprehensive, real-time, by-name list of all people experiencing homelessness that ensures reliable, real-time, and actionable data.
- **Reducing to zero.** Communities adapt their approaches to their contexts and circumstances, coordinate their efforts, focus their resources, and employ rapid cycle testing to continually improve their approach and improve their success in ending homelessness.
- **Achieving zero for all.** After reaching their first zero, communities focus on maintaining their progress and expand their efforts to reach new populations.

The success of BFZ-C as a pathway to ending homelessness is dependent on its position within comprehensive national and provincial/territorial strategies and support systems, where every order of government and sector has a role to play.

To be successful, the federal government must continue to build on its commitment made through *A Place to Call Home: Canada's National Housing Strategy* and *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy*. It must continue to work toward ending homelessness, for example by employing recommendations CAEH's 2020 *Recovery for All* plan. This plan proposed an affordable and achievable path to ending chronic homelessness by using \$52 billion worth of COVID-19 economic recovery measures in targeted spending and could solve homelessness by 2030. The



continued role of the federal government includes investing in infrastructure (e.g., affordable, social, and rental housing), responses (e.g., Reaching Home and the Homelessness Partnering Strategy), benefits (e.g., Canada Housing Benefit), proven approaches (e.g., Housing First), and partnerships (e.g., with Veterans Affairs, the private sector, and community-based organizations).

Governments at all levels, but also the private and philanthropic sectors, can support by securing new resources, expanding local affordable housing stocks, and removing policy roadblocks. The roles of non-profits include engaging people from across sectors to learn about and tackle the root causes of homelessness, amplifying the voices of lived/living experience, and developing and running innovative programs and services, such as rent banks, that prevent eviction. People with lived/living experience provide critical context expertise that builds understanding of the intersectionality of the systems they interact with, and that supports myth-busting, raising awareness, and building urgency and community will for ending homelessness.

BFZ-C's ambitious national change effort demonstrates that it is possible to close the homelessness gap to zero, particularly when communities change the way they understand the problem, harness data and collaboration, and focus their resources. BFZ-C's commitment to stop managing homelessness and to start ending it is proving it is possible to rebuild systems and end homelessness, one community at a time, once and for all.

## **GUELPH-WELLINGTON BUILT FOR ZERO REDUCES YOUTH HOMELESSNESS BY 76%**

In 2018, after becoming a Built for Zero Canada community, Guelph-Wellington conducted their second point-in-time count and registry week, which identified 203 people, including 62 youth, who were experiencing chronic homelessness. Through this survey, the community learned that almost half of all respondents had experienced their first instance of homelessness as a youth.

Guelph-Wellington recognizes that young people are dealing with complex circumstances within their lives and family dynamics, and are experiencing transitions relating to personal development, peer relationships, and identity. Service providers are therefore intentional about connecting youth to housing placements that effectively meet youth's evolving needs and are responsive to the fact that they are likely to change over time. Their work

includes connecting youth to appropriate housing placements and intensive wraparound supports.

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*“By focusing specifically on youth homelessness, we are able to provide stage-matched, developmentally appropriate support to young people as they move between the children and adult systems and their housing needs change and evolve.”*

*– Kristen Cairney, Wyndham House Program Director*

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Employing BFZ-C’s proven methodology, service providers in Guelph-Wellington continually collect robust and holistic data on youth experiencing homelessness and use it to inform service decisions. For example, they include mental health records and full housing histories as part of client records in their Homeless Individual and Families Information System (HIFIS) database and are continually refining their client intake interviews to better reflect clients’ support needs and housing options.

Guelph-Wellington’s work with BFZ-C has also engaged them in data-driven Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles – an improvement model that has supported their community to explore creative approaches that stretch beyond usual service models to improve service delivery for subpopulations of youth. It has also supported service providers (including the Canadian Mental Health Association, Family and Children’s Services, the Welcome In Drop-In Centre, and Stonehenge Therapeutic Community) to meet regularly to plan and coordinate care and action plans and ensure the seamless delivery of services.

Through 2021, Guelph-Wellington plans to apply their learning from their work with the youth chronic population to all youth and adults experiencing homelessness. They will also continue to develop holistic, developmentally appropriate care plans that build on individual resiliency, and to support service providers to address youth’s needs as early as possible, in order prevent their entry into the homelessness system altogether.

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*“In order for us to end chronic homelessness, we need to continue to refine service delivery to transform the emergency shelter system and enhance early intervention supports to prevent homelessness.”*

*– Lori Richer, Housing Stability Manager,  
County of Wellington Social Services*

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A number of factors contributed to Guelph-Wellington's success, including the community's unwavering focus on housing youth, and to their commitment to creativity, collaboration, and finding innovative solutions. The community exemplifies the successful nature and application of BFZ-C's model and methodology in ending chronic homelessness.

## Resources

- Canada's [National Housing Strategy](#)
- Plan: [Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#)
- Plan: [CAEH's Recovery for All](#)
- Website: [Built for Zero Canada](#)
- Blog: [Guelph-Wellington Built for Zero reduces chronic youth homelessness by 76%](#)
- Podcast: [Ending Poverty Pathways - 7. Built for Zero Canada for Ending Homelessness](#)

## PATHWAY 8: Quebec's Childcare Policies Ending Poverty

Healthy early childhood development, including access to affordable and quality childcare, is an important poverty reduction and prevention strategy, as it supports children's social, behavioural, and cognitive skills, readiness for and transition to school, and lifelong physical and emotional health. Particularly for children from low-income families, access to affordable, high-quality child care can offset their decreased likelihood of entering school ready to learn,<sup>24</sup> as it supports healthy growth and development, for example by offering them a safe place to play and developing positive behavioural and cognitive skills.<sup>25</sup> Investing in early childhood services is cost-effective, as it reduces spending on health, education, security, and justice, and generates up to \$7 in savings for every \$1 invested.<sup>26</sup>

To give their children a good start in life, parents and guardians must have the right resources at hand, including access to affordable and quality childcare services. However, childcare across Canada is almost universally unaffordable. The average two-income family in Canada spends 22.2% of their net salary on childcare, and single parents spend even more at 32%.<sup>27</sup> Living Wage calculations consistently place childcare as one of families' top two monthly expenses, and its cost often exceeds that of housing.



Working mothers are subject to what has been called the “motherhood wage penalty,”<sup>28</sup> where they are more likely to reduce their hours due to unpaid family obligations or to not having access to childcare.

The cost burden of childcare is especially heavy for low-income families. It restricts parents and guardians from entering the workforce and limits the number and types of hours they can work. Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is a poverty prevention and reduction strategy as

24 <https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/children-youth/child-care-a-powerful-intervention-for-low-income-children-and-families/>

25 <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2018/05/early-childhood-is-critical-to-health-equity.html>

26 <https://www.ffyf.org/why-it-matters/economic-impact/>

27 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/oecd-child-care-costs-1.3815954>

28 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2019013-eng.htm>



it supports parents and caregivers to increase their income, opens doors to employment and training, builds resiliency, reduces chronic stress, and supports nurturing environments for children.

In 1997, to support to women’s labour force participation and number of hours worked, the Quebec government leveraged very strong political will as they pioneered an innovative pathway to accessible and quality child-care. The province launched Canada’s first universal, publicly funded child-care system that made licenced care extremely affordable.



Quebec implemented a \$5-per-day childcare policy (still affordable in 2021 at \$8.50) which was made available to families of all income levels and across all employment statuses. Social assistance recipients received free access, and rates for low-income families were subsidized by \$3. At the heart of Quebec’s new system were early childhood centres called Centres de la Petite Enfance (CPE) – directly funded, served, regulated, high-quality, and well-managed facilities that have been recognized as the “crown jewels”<sup>29</sup> of Quebec’s trans-

formed system. Families that are not able to access the limited number of CPE spaces (which are currently only able to supply 32% of the demand for needed spaces for children 0–4), receive reimbursable tax credits to access home-based and for-profit centres, whose fees are controlled), and the Quebec government absorbs any differences in costs.

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*The high quality of care found at CPEs has been connected to sharp improvements in children’s development*

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The benefits of Quebec’s transformed system extend from children to parents to communities at large. For children, the high quality of care found at CPEs has been connected to sharp improvements in children’s development.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/february-2021/what-is-the-quebec-model-of-early-learning-and-child-care/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-12-31/affordable-daycare-and-working-moms-the-quebec-model>



Parents and caregivers have been supported to overcome key barriers to childcare. Between 1997 and 2007, the low-income rate for single-parent families headed by women fell from 60.3% to 20.4%.<sup>31</sup> By 2018, the system had supported a dramatic rise in the employment rate of working-age women in Quebec, from below Canada's national average to 5% above it.<sup>32</sup> The employment rate for mothers of children under age 3 increased 20% since the start of the program. Accessibility also improved as the percent of eligible children served by CPEs jumped from 18% in 1998 to 53% in 2011. As of 2019, fewer Quebec parents/guardians (30.5% vs 36.4% across Canada) reported having difficulty finding a childcare arrangement for children under 5 years.<sup>33</sup> Affordability was also improved – of parents reporting difficulty, only 27.2% (vs 48.3% across Canada) cited affordability as a barrier to childcare.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, governments have benefited as Quebec's system grew to pay for itself and to realize net benefits. Between 1997 and 2008, nearly 70,000 more mothers (an increase of 3.8%) were back at work than would have been in the absence of the program,<sup>35</sup> and their contributions increased

31 <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/latest/quebecs-universal-access-to-low-fee-child-care-les-centres-de-la-petite-enfance>

32 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-12-31/affordable-daycare-and-working-moms-the-quebec-model>

33 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=4210000701>

34 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=4210000801>

35 <https://www.ourcommons.ca/content/Committee/421/FEWO/Brief/BR8806290/br-external/FortinPierre-e.pdf>

Quebec's GDP by \$5.1 billion (by 1.7%).<sup>36</sup> It was found that the tax-transfer return that the Canadian and Quebec governments received from the system significantly exceeded its cost.<sup>37</sup>

CPEs create a deep collaboration between community actors as organizations work together to support families through both short- and long-term difficulties. They serve as a safety net for families living in difficult conditions, working with families and as first responders, ensuring that food and clothing needs are met, and that housing, domestic violence, and other issues are addressed.

CPE staff develop an important bond of trust with families. As many parents have had past negative experiences in their interaction with institutions, they may experience distrust. The CPE greets them with kindness and without judgment and ensures that each child finds their place. This includes building caregivers' familiarity with the centre and with its staff team, involvement in the day-to-day life of the centre, and access to a support network of staff and parents that helps them to overcome feelings of isolation. Barriers must be overcome, such as the need for parents to have ID and a valid email address. It is often difficult for parents to find housing that is affordable, suitable for their family composition, and supports critical access to public transportation and other services.



<sup>36</sup> <https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/impact-quebecs-universal-low-fee-childcare-program-female-labour-force-participation>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/News/Fortin-Godbout-St\\_Cerny\\_eng.pdf](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/UserFiles/File/News/Fortin-Godbout-St_Cerny_eng.pdf)



*“When I enter the CPE, it’s like entering our home. Even my boy puts his backpack in front of the door in the morning to let me know he’s ready to go.”*

*– a parent*

The pathway to ending poverty through affordable, accessible, quality childcare stems from the many successes realized in Quebec. It requires dramatically cutting the cost of childcare through the provision of direct subsidies, the creation of new early childhood facilities that offer training to staff, and the delivery of regulated, high-quality childcare services. Funding should be provided directly, so that centres do not have to apply for reimbursements, and childcare supports must be embedded into a broader range of income supports for families, including generous, flexible, and inclusive (e.g., included father’s participation) parental leave policies and insurance plans, and full-time kindergarten.

This pathway to ending poverty should also apply learning from the challenges Quebec has experienced in their design and delivery of the provincial model. For example, provincial and territorial governments must plan to increase supply and capacity in a way that keeps up with demand if they are going to be successful in accurately budgeting and planning for delivery costs and in keeping waitlists down. They must ensure that parents who are experiencing the most pressing affordability challenges have equitable access to quality spaces, and that services are available to meet parents’ needs in rural and remote communities.

For this pathway to be successful, childcare centres, including non-for-profit, home-based care should integrate the same standards of quality as regulated care, and systems should be put in place to monitor and enforce them. Training for site operators and childcare providers must be comprehensive and effective across all site-types, and centres should offer flexibility of operating hours, for example to account for parents who work shift work, and should employ childcare workers into secure jobs that offer decent wages and that include benefits.





Children are our future leaders, parents, and consumers. Maximizing development through their early years ultimately creates positive and supportive communities for all. While early childhood development is a complex realm that requires a comprehensive approach, childcare forms a strategic piece of its public policy puzzle.

In September 2020's speech from the throne, the Government of Canada recognized that they would draw on Quebec's model to develop "a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and child care system."

In July 2021, the Government of Canada announced that they would invest \$30 billion over the next five years and would work with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners to build a Canada-wide, community-based, affordable, inclusive, and high-quality early learning and child care system with the goal of on average \$10-per-day child care.<sup>38</sup> This system is anticipated to "reduce fees for parents with children in regulated child care by 50 per cent on average...make life more affordable for Canadian families, create new jobs, grow the middle class, increase women's participation in the work force, and drive strong economic growth across the country. It will [also] ensure that early childhood educators are provided with the training and development opportunities needed to support their growth and the growth of a child care system that works for all Canadians."

Now is the time for us to learn from Quebec's experience, and to work together to implement this effective pathway to ending poverty through an affordable, accessible, and quality childcare system.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/-10-a-day-child-care-for-canadian-families-889453177.html>

## **SAINT-CÔME'S CHILDCARE CENTRE SUPPORTS LOCAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**

In 2009, the mayor of the municipality of Saint-Côme (population of 2,300) in the Lanaudière region of Quebec realized that in the face of a small demographic boom, his community needed an early childhood centre. He contacted the general management of a neighbouring childcare centre (Centre de la Petite Enfance [CPE] La Chenille), which already had two facilities in Saint-Donat and Chertsey, to discuss the establishment of a third facility.

The municipality invested \$950,000 in the implementation of this this new childcare centre. Many partners were involved, including family daycare providers, the village school, the school board, local health services, the local bank, and the local development centre.

As this new centre expanded the existing CPE La Chenille, it was eligible for provincial subsidies. As the municipality was the owner of the building, barriers such as the cost of buying land and constructing an appropriate building were overcome. The new CPE opened its doors in January 2014; childcare spaces filled up immediately.

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*“Many young families have come to live in St-Côme because of the CPE...The CPE is extremely important for our municipality. Every municipality should have one.”*

*– Martin Bordeleau, Mayor of Saint-Côme*

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The CPE contributes to the economic activity of the municipality by both creating jobs and encouraging parents to return to work. It has supported parents, particularly mothers, to get jobs, and attracts and helps to retain young families in the municipality. The CPE also forms an essential part of the social fabric of Saint-Côme. Functioning in solidarity with schools, community agencies, and health and social services, it has allowed families to develop a sense of belonging to their community, take part in activities, and get to know other parents and local resources.

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*“For me and my family, the CPE has been a big plus. We quickly saw an incredible evolution in our children, in terms of their cognitive development and the friends they were able to make. As a parent, I’m so glad to see this... [As] one of the big employers in the region, I can find staff because of the CPE, [as] one of the reasons that young families decide to settle in the region is because of its services.”*

*– Maxime Legros, parent*

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## SABRINA: THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

“I had access to childcare space at the CPE thanks to my nurse, Jeannette, who came into my life when I was pregnant with my son through the SIPPE<sup>39</sup> program. When my son was two months old, someone reported to the Director of Youth Protection that he was malnourished. It was the intervention of my nurse that allowed me to close that file by reassuring them of my boy’s wellbeing. She worked in collaboration with the CPE, supporting me to obtain the necessary services for my boy. This allowed me to better understand and adapt to the particular needs of my child who has been diagnosed with ASD and hyperactivity. The CPE quickly put in place resources around my child’s special needs. Regular meetings allow me to follow my son’s progress and challenges. I feel very comfortable talking to the daycare team and sharing my concerns. Jeannette has now been in my life and that of my son for five years.”

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39 Services Intégrés en Périnatalité et pour la Petite Enfance – Integrated Perinatal and Early Childhood Services

### Resources:

- Article: [A new normal for child care in Canada: Accessible, affordable, universal](#)
- Article: [Quebec’s Childcare Program at 20](#)
- Article: [Quebec daycare model holds lessons for other provinces](#)
- Article: [Measuring the Long-Term Effects of Early, Extensive Day Care](#)
- Article: [What is “the Quebec model” of early learning and child care?](#)
- Data: [Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2020](#)
- Portrait: [Early Learning and Child Care for Children aged 0 to 5 years](#)

# CONCLUSION



Prior to COVID-19, Canada's national poverty rate had been reduced to its lowest level in recorded history. Throughout the pandemic, CEP members have supported their communities to respond and recover, while concurrently keeping their sights set on our ultimate collective goal – the end of poverty in Canada.

Some common factors that have contributed to the success of CEP members include meaningfully engaging people from across all sectors, developing comprehensive and community-wide plans, and shifting systems and policies. At higher levels of government, large-scale national benefits that work well together, particularly those that support children and seniors, have been game changers. Quebec's pioneering \$5/day





childcare model, BFZ-C's data-driven methodology, and the big idea of Basic Income all offer structures, supports, and tools that poverty-reduction actors can use to implement these programs in their own communities.

This guide aims to capture some of the high-impact policies, evidence-based models, and innovative programs that are supporting equity-deserving populations. These pathways, in concert with the social support system and good public policy, are realizing population-level change. While decent work, liveable minimum wages, unconditional cash transfers, affordable childcare, and person-centered support are all transformational ideas, none of them are new. The knowledge, tools, resources, and passion exist to make it a reality.

Though COVID-19 has presented life-changing hurdles, it has also served as a catalyst for change. It has fostered stronger relationships, new collaborations, innovative ideas, and discontent with the status quo.

Communities and governments at all levels have proven that, yes, we can end poverty. We hope that the evidence we have compiled and the stories of change we have shared will help you to make the case for these pathways as you speak with your colleagues, partners, friends, family, local business owners, and government representatives.

Together, we can end poverty in Canada.

