

HALIFAX

Building Poverty Solutions – Ideas for Action

Community Planning and Economic
Development Committee

16-Jan-2019

Background

- ❑ April 2017 – Regional Council directed and funded collaboration with United Way and others on a poverty reduction strategy
- ❑ Mayor Savage co-chaired Poverty Solutions Advisory committee with United Way CEO Sara Napier
- ❑ Councillors Streach and Cleary participated on advisory committee
- ❑ HRM political and administrative staff also supported HRM's participation

Engagement



 129 Ideas for Action



BUILD FROM EXISTING COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE, RESEARCH AND DATA

- United to Reduce Poverty Consultations (117 participants)
- United Way Halifax Agency & Community Partners
- Policy and Literature Review



INITIATE DATA COLLECTION AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

- Low income data collected and analyzed for 1000+ census tracts in HRM using 2016 Statistics Canada data
- Participate in a community data working group



CONSULTATIONS TO ENGAGE COMMUNITY AND IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND IDEAS FOR ACTION

- Solutions Task Teams (6 teams / 48 members)
- Focus Groups (13 engagements / 184 participants)
- Business Alliance (18 members)
- Online Consultations (621 participants)



PUBLIC REVIEW AND INPUT

- Ideas for Action Open House
- Public Gallery of Solutions - 80 attend in person and 1,391 views online



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Stewarded by a diverse cross section of 22 members of our community - Poverty Solutions Advisory Committee

WE LEARNED FROM...

- First voice - experts by experience
- Non-profit agencies and service providers

- Community advocates
- Government agencies and departments
- Faith-based communities
- General Public

- Business community
- Academic and Poverty Researchers
- Cities reducing poverty and other groups leading and supporting municipal poverty strategies

7 Themes



QUALITY JOBS AND LIVABLE INCOMES



TRANSPORTATION



FOOD SECURITY



HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING



SERVICE ACCESS FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



EDUCATION AND LEARNING



SYSTEMIC CHANGE

129 Ideas for Action



ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS

1. Improve the quality of and access to income supports.

- 1.1 Advocate and work with the provincial and federal governments to raise social assistance rates and other income supports and benefits (ex: tax credits).
- 1.2 Advocate and work with the provincial government to ensure income supports and services meet residents' needs by reducing barriers and increasing supports (ex: allowing individuals to retain greater earned income, while maintaining eligibility; reviewing the special needs list to reflect actual cost and needs).
- 1.3 Better assist low-income and marginalized residents to access childcare spaces and fee subsidies.
- 1.4 Improve access to health benefits, including dental, pharma, and vision care, for those transitioning to employment from Employment Services and Income Assistance (ESIA) and Nova Scotia Disability Support Program.
- 1.5 Work with all levels of government and community partners to complete a feasibility study looking in detail at how to implement a basic income.

47 (36.4%)

In Progress

25 (19.4%)

In Scope

57 (44.2%)

Out of Scope

Poverty Solutions (In Progress)

- ❑ free or low-cost recreation programming (72,000+ participants);
- ❑ low-income transit pass program (1,000+ enrolled);
- ❑ transit pass program with the Department of Community Services (6,700+ enrolled);
- ❑ creation of a Diversity and Inclusion section and framework;
- ❑ participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership; and
- ❑ work with the United Way on approaches to poverty reduction.

Poverty Solutions (In Scope)*

- ❑ Day Care Centres in Municipal Facilities;
- ❑ Expand nutrition programs for children and youth;
- ❑ Prioritize community-based affordable housing options for people with disability, seniors, and people with mental health conditions;
- ❑ Expand density bonusing and inclusionary zoning throughout the HRM.
- ❑ Support the creation of community land trusts, and non-profit development resource and management groups.

* Within the municipality's existing authority/capacity. Does not reflect a staff recommendation to pursue the idea.

Social Policy Lens

Work on the social policy lens has begun and will include:

- ❑ assessment of current social development activity;
- ❑ cross-jurisdiction research and analysis;
- ❑ legislative framework; and
- ❑ consideration of the various policies, procedures, programs and activities through which municipalities support implementation of a social policy.

Recommendation

That Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council direct the CAO to:

- continue to work collaboratively with United Way Halifax on the development and implementation of anti-poverty solutions for the municipality;
- include a strategic response to the United Way report “Building poverty solutions: Ideas for Action” in the development of a Social Policy Lens; and
- incorporate updates on federal/provincial poverty reduction action plans and basic income projects when reporting on the Social Policy Lens and poverty reduction solutions.