

Mayor and Councillors
c/o The Office of the City Clerk
Burnaby City Hall
4949 Canada Way
Burnaby, B. C., V5G 1M2

January 10, 2019

Re: Request to Appear as a Delegation on February 11, 2019

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am writing to request to appear as a delegation on Monday, February 11th, 2019. Along with Tara Shushtarian (604-889-4216), resident of Burnaby and volunteer with our Poverty Free Action Team, I will be speaking about the call for the ABC Plan, an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BC.

Enclosed you will find supporting material related to the delegation, including the resolution that we would encourage council to endorse. This resolution has now been endorsed in New Westminster, Vancouver and Port Moody, and will be endorsed on Monday in Richmond.

Sincerely,



Trish Garner

Copied to:
City Manager
Dir. Corporate Services
Dir. Planning and Building

tel: **604.877.4553** / fax: **604.709.6909**

web: www.bcpovertyreduction.ca / email: trish@bcpovertyreduction.ca

**302-312
Main Street
Vancouver, BC
V6A 2T2**

Municipal resolution: Call for the ABC Plan for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for British Columbia

WHEREAS:

1. The poverty rate in British Columbia continues to be among the highest in Canada at approximately 1 in 8 using Canada's official poverty line (Market Basket Measure), and child poverty rates in BC are still 1 in 5;
2. Many impacts of poverty are experienced at the local level, and local residents pay for poverty in increased health care costs, higher crime, higher demand for community, social and charitable services, lack of school readiness, reduced school success, and lower economic productivity;
3. 4 people are dying every day in BC due to the opioid epidemic that the Provincial Health Officer of BC has declared a Public Health Emergency. Many more are sick from poverty with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression or other health issue; and the health of everyone is worse from living in such an unequal society;
4. A poverty reduction plan will save lives and money as it is a social and economic investment in our province;
5. There was unanimous support from all three provincial parties for legislated targets and timelines to reduce poverty in Bill 39: Poverty Reduction Strategy Act when it was passed on November 5, 2018;
6. BC is the last province in Canada to have a poverty reduction plan and is now developing a plan to be launched in March 2019;
7. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (the "Coalition") is a broad-based network of over 400 organizations including community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, indigenous organizations, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups;
8. The Coalition has renewed its call for a strong poverty reduction plan for BC by launching the ABC Plan, which outlines an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan to prevent and reduce poverty in BC.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT this council support the Coalition's ABC Plan for an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

THAT this council advocate to the provincial government to develop and implement a provincial poverty reduction strategy that includes the measures within the ABC Plan before February 2019, with the commitment that this council will work with the provincial government in implementing this plan.

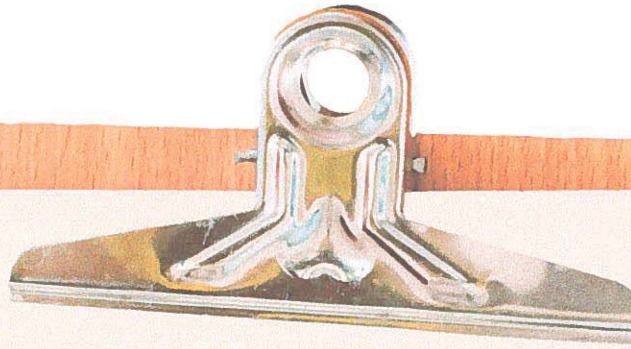
For more information:

Contact: Trish Garner, Community Organizer, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition

Email: trish@bcpovertyreduction.ca

Phone: 604-877-4553

Website: bcpovertyreduction.ca / ABCplan.ca



An Effective Poverty Reduction Plan: It's as simple as ABC

First Steps for an Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive Poverty Reduction Plan for BC

Over half a million British Columbians live in poverty: from youth aging out of care to sleeping on the streets to seniors struggling to buy food; from low-wage workers having to commute hours every day to people on income assistance trying to survive day by day; from newcomers to indigenous people who we welcome and acknowledge with words but not with enough financial support; from the homeless to those living one paycheque away from joining them; and from people with disabilities facing a lifetime of poverty to families trying to give their children the lives they never had.

In a wealthy province like BC, we can do better.

And the good news is that British Columbians want to do better. The majority of voters in BC's 2017 provincial election voted for bold action on poverty; and with all three major political parties now publicly committed to a poverty reduction plan, British Columbians can finally look forward to action to tackle poverty and the increasing levels of homelessness and inequality that we see in our communities.

This is a crisis that requires urgent action. 4 people are dying every day in BC due to the opioid epidemic that the Provincial Health Officer of BC has declared a Public Health Emergency. Many more are sick from poverty with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression or other health issue; and the health of all of us is worse from living in such an unequal society.

A poverty reduction plan will save lives.

It will also save money. It's an economic investment in our province. Initial funding should be provided by restoring tax fairness. Then, over the long term, a poverty reduction plan that puts in place strong, preventative measures to tackle both the depth and breadth of poverty costs far less than the cost of poverty, at \$8 to 9 billion per year for health and criminal justice costs, as well as lost tax revenue. Let's stop mopping the floor and fix the roof.

An Accountable, Bold and Comprehensive poverty reduction plan for BC is the solution to save lives and promote equality.

So far, the government has undertaken a poverty reduction consultation from October 2017 to March 2018. They visited communities throughout the province and heard consistent themes about the issues and the necessary solutions. They now plan to table legislation in the fall and launch the full plan in February 2019.

Now British Columbians expect action with an accountable, bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan that reflects those themes. A plan needs to tackle immediate affordability challenges but, more importantly, go upstream to enhance our universal basic services to prevent these challenges in the first place and ensure healthy people and healthy communities throughout our province.

The over-arching vision and first steps matter in leading in the right direction.

That is why the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition with over 400 supporting organizations recommend the following first steps for the government's legislation and plan:

✓ **A is for Accountable.**

Embed strong accountability measures

- ◆ **Ensure long-term sustainability through legislated targets, timelines and accountability measures:**
 - ◆ Reduce BC's poverty rate by 30% within four years, and by 75% within 10 years.
 - ◆ Recognize that poverty is concentrated in particular marginalized groups and ensure concurrent declines in the poverty rates for these groups by 30% in four years, and by 75% in ten years.
 - ◆ Within two years, ensure that every British Columbian has an income that reaches at least 75% of the poverty line.
 - ◆ Within two years, ensure no one has to sleep outside, and end all homelessness within eight years (ensuring all homeless people have good quality, appropriate housing).
 - ◆ Commit to United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #1: "End poverty in all its forms everywhere" by 2030.
 - ◆ Create an independent, funded Office/Advocate to monitor the plan's implementation.
- ◆ **Make sure all Ministries are working together, including:**
 - ◆ Legislate a Poverty/Equity Lens at Treasury Board to ensure no Ministry can make decisions that will hurt people in poverty.
 - ◆ The Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction should present mandatory annual reports (including reports from all relevant Ministries) to the Legislature and to the public about actions taken, outcomes and advocacy to other levels of government.
- ◆ **Embed strong fundamental principles in the legislation and plan:**
 - ◆ Respect the human rights of people living in poverty.
 - ◆ Upstream approach focusing on the social determinants of health.
 - ◆ Poverty reduction as a social and economic investment for our province.

✓ **B is for Bold.**

Take bold, immediate action

- ◆ **Increase income supports, including raising welfare and disability rates to 75% of the poverty line (Market Basket Measure) immediately and to 100% of the MBM in 2 years.**

The first step would cost \$365 million while lifting everyone on income assistance to the poverty line would cost \$1.16 billion, only 2% of the provincial budget
- ◆ **Tie rent control to the unit (not the tenant), and build and protect affordable social and rental housing.**

Affordable is defined as 30% of income. An appropriate percentage of the housing to be built should be at welfare shelter rates and another set target should be tied to the senior shelter level.

✓ **C is for Comprehensive.**

Develop a comprehensive poverty reduction plan with short, medium and long-term actions in 7 policy areas:

- ◆ **Income assistance:** Provide adequate and accessible income support for the non-employed.
 - ◆ Increase and index income and disability assistance.
 - ◆ Increase earnings exemptions, and remove clawbacks and arbitrary barriers that discourage, delay and deny people in need.
- ◆ **Employment:** Improve the earnings & working conditions of those in the low-wage workforce.
 - ◆ Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers with no exemptions and index it to the cost of living.
 - ◆ Enhance and restore the coverage and enforcement of employment standards.
- ◆ **Equity:** Address the needs of those most likely to be living in poverty, including:
 - ◆ Restructure federal and provincial funding to better address the needs of all Indigenous people, including the large off-reserve population.
 - ◆ Guarantee access to income assistance for all regardless of citizenship status.
 - ◆ Provide free transit for children 0-18 years of age and a low-income transit pass for adults.
- ◆ **Housing:** End homelessness and adopt a comprehensive affordable housing and supportive housing plan.
 - ◆ Build 10,000 new social & co-op housing units per year that low income people can afford.
 - ◆ Introduce stronger tenant protections, including rent control on the unit (not the tenant), tighter limits on annual rent increases, adequately enforcing the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) and the Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act, and extending tenant rights to include all non-profit social housing currently exempt from the RTA.
- ◆ **Child care:** Provide universal, high quality, publicly-funded child care.
 - ◆ Improve the wages of early childhood educators.
 - ◆ Continue to increase the number of licensed spaces.
 - ◆ Prioritize expanding the fee reduction program so that the affordable child care benefit can be reduced over time, and ensure that low income families have access to free, high quality child care.
- ◆ **Education and training:** Enhance support for training and education for low-income people.
 - ◆ Reduce tuition fees by 50% and increase the availability of post-secondary grants for low-income students; allow welfare recipients to attend post-secondary education and get apprenticeships.
 - ◆ Adequately fund K-12 education to mitigate inequalities and to ensure adequate library staff and resources, and special needs assessment and support
- ◆ **Health and food security:** Enhance community mental health and home support services, and expand integrated approaches to prevention and health promotion services.
 - ◆ Expand essential health services in the public system, such as dental and optical care and community mental health services.

More information and take action at ABCplan.ca

For more information, visit:

ABCplan.ca

The **BC Poverty Reduction Coalition** is a coalition that includes community and non-profit groups, faith groups, health organizations, indigenous organizations, immigrant service agencies, businesses, labour organizations, and social policy groups. We have come together around a campaign aimed at seeing the introduction of a bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan from the government of British Columbia that would include legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty, inequality and homelessness. We have over **80 Coalition Members** and over **400 supporting organizations** that have joined the call for a poverty reduction plan.

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