



qathet Region

POVERTY REDUCTION REPORT



November 2019

Introduction

In June 2019 a group of local stakeholders came together to initiate a process to reduce poverty in the qathet region. Stakeholders included representatives from Vancouver Coastal Health, First Credit Union, PREP Community Services, City of Powell River, qathet Region, Tla'amin, and peers with lived experience. It was agreed by this group that our first step should be to gather the information needed to better understand the landscape of poverty in our community. The initial work in developing a poverty reduction strategy for the qathet region was funded by Vancouver Coastal Health and First Credit Union. This report was prepared by Lisa Gibson, consultant.

Executive Summary

The qathet region is an area of great natural beauty, abundant resources and a connected community. However, it is also an area where poverty is growing and where the stresses of a declining resource sector, skyrocketing rents and increased costs of living are being felt by a growing number of individuals and families.

Although exact numbers are difficult to estimate, the increase in visible homelessness is also creating uncertainty and fear among some residents, and it is clear that there is a need for a new approach to deal with a changing context. In fact, the UN Ranks Ending poverty as the number one greatest global challenge of its Sustainable Development Goals.

Over the past decade, there has been significant research, engagement, and planning around poverty reduction and other social issues in the qathet region, including the Tapping the Groundswell Report (2016) and Social Planning Program Report (2017). Building on previous work, this qathet Region Poverty Reduction Report paints the picture of poverty in the qathet region, looks at what can be learned from other poverty reduction strategies from other communities in Canada, and points the way to the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy for the qathet region.

Poverty can be defined as a lack or denial of resources and opportunities that provide the quality of life needed for people to be able to fully participate in all aspects of community life. While there are many important initiatives working to support people living in poverty, the statistics are stark:

■ 1 in 4 children and youth in Powell River are living in poverty

■ 1 in 6 seniors in the qathet region are living in poverty

■ People receiving disability assistance spend an average of 82% of income on rent

■ Indigenous people and people with disabilities are 2x as likely to live in poverty in BC

■ Children in single parent families are 3x more likely to live in poverty than two parent families in BC

Strategies to reduce poverty have become a growing movement across Canada, in large part sparked by the work of the Tamarack Community Institute and their Cities Reducing Poverty Network. Started in 2002, their network now includes 176 cities across 61 regions in Canada. The regional context for a poverty reduction strategy is also supported by the recent implementation of the Provincial government's BC Poverty Reduction Strategy passed in 2019, and Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy passed by the Federal government in August 2018..

Developing a Poverty Reduction Strategy for the qathet Region

As the qathet region moves towards the development of its own strategy, there is a strong body of work to draw on from the decades of poverty reduction work across Canada, as well as the important work done locally to identify and address social issues in the qathet region. In addition, the recently passed federal and provincial strategies provide support for a collaborative approach to ending poverty. Municipalities cannot address these pressing social issues alone. Rather, solving the challenges of poverty requires all levels of government working in collaboration, including the Tla'amin First Nation, City of Powell River, qathet Regional District, Province of BC, and Government of Canada.

In the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy, there are a number of components to consider, including the principles that will guide the strategy, focus areas for action, how the process will be governed or structured, and who will be involved.

Although there are many best practices, promising practices and effective strategies that can be learned from other communities, the qathet region has a unique context, distinct needs and a mobilized community of citizens who care about the wellbeing of each other. This means that the community will need to develop its own strategy that meets those unique needs and builds on existing assets to work towards a shared vision.

In general, strong poverty reduction strategies are:

- Multisectoral, bringing together people with lived experience, all levels of government, community organizations, business, the health sector to work towards a common vision for the reduction or elimination of poverty
- Informed and led by people with lived experience
- Focused on good process and implementable actions that can be measured
- Supported by a backbone organization and clear leadership from the local municipalities.
- Iterative, adapting to the changing context
- Systemic, getting at the roots of poverty, not just making it easier to live in poverty
- Target a holistic approach to poverty in a variety of areas such as: affordable housing, livable incomes, accessible transit, childcare and education, social inclusion & equity, food security.

This document provides background information that will support the qathet region in doing the work of developing its own strategy. The first section provides an overview of poverty reduction strategies across Canada and what the qathet region can learn from others doing this work. Section 2 provides overview a roadmap for the development of a poverty reduction strategy that meets the unique needs of the qathet region. Section 3 provides an overview of poverty in Canada, BC and the qathet region.

The key next steps forward in the development of a poverty reduction strategy in the qathet region will be to:

1. Determine governance and accountability structures with a core team of multistakeholders

2. Identify backbone organization(s) to support the work

3. Look for resources to support the strategy development

4. Convene a key multisectoral process with diverse representation, including those with lived experience, community organizations, all levels of government and business

5. Develop a strong and unifying vision statement and definition of poverty

6. Identify priority action areas, and actions with measurable outcomes and timelines

7. Move from strategy to implementation: monitor collective progress on priority action areas

The final stage of the development of a poverty reduction strategy is to ignite a movement to end poverty in this community and beyond. Poverty reduction has become a movement across Canada, and this is an opportunity for the qathet region to join this growing movement of municipalities and regions who are taking a systemic approach to eliminating poverty and ensuring the human rights of all citizens. With the increase in visible homelessness and poverty, along with statistics that support this increase, the qathet region is being called into action as a community to come together to make a difference in the lives of those who are most affected by poverty.



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SECTION 1:

Poverty Reduction Strategies Across Canada



Poverty reduction strategies are nothing new, and the qathet region is in a fortunate position to take advantage of many of the learnings of other communities having gone through the same hardships and learning from it. There are also many previous studies and reports done locally that will inform a qathet region poverty reduction strategy. The following section is a summary of poverty reduction strategies elsewhere in Canada. This review focuses on who and which types of organizations were involved, what issue areas and strategies they focused on, what impact they've had (if any), and any features that made them unique.

CANADA'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

The first Canada Poverty Reduction Strategy developed by Employment and Social Development Canada was passed in August 2018 after an extensive consultation process that began in 2016. The Canadian Poverty Reduction Act came into law in June 2019 and entrenches poverty reduction targets, most notably the creation of Canada's first official poverty line, and the creation of a national advisory council. The official poverty line departs from one of the more commonly used measures of poverty, namely the Low Income Measure After Tax (those with an income less than half of the median income) in preference for a Market Based Measure (combined costs of a basket of goods and services required to meet basic needs). This means that the definition

of those living in poverty line is affected by the cost of living that changes depending on the location.

The legislated targets include reducing the poverty rate by 20% (of 2015 level) by 2020, and by 50% by 2030. This 2030 reduction would see a reduction of the people living below the poverty line from 12% to 6%. The act itself is one result of the strategy released in 2018. Other prominent features of the strategy include increases to the Canada child benefit, Canada worker's benefit, guaranteed income supplement and old age security. According to the strategy update, these measures have helped BC to achieve the largest poverty reduction of all provinces from 2015-2017 at 4.5%.

Pillars of Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy



Efforts at the provincial and federal level have arguably contributed to poverty reduction in Powell River with the recent release of First Call BC's calculation of the 2019 Living Wage for Powell River (hourly wage to support cost of living for a family with two children) which decreased from 2018 from \$17.16 to \$16.31. This reduction has been attributed to the efforts of the provincial and federal poverty reduction strategies targeted at childcare.

TOGETHERBC: BC'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy Act passed in fall 2018 legislates a 25% reduction in BC's overall poverty rate and 50% reduction in child poverty rate by 2024. The strategy was developed in partnership between the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Parliamentary Secretary for Poverty Reduction with extensive public consultation. A strategy was created to address these legislated targets and released in March 2019. The strategy consists of four guiding principles, five foundation elements to be implemented by 2024, and six priority action areas that span across BC government ministries.

The four guiding principles are:

- Affordability
- Opportunity
- Reconciliation
- Social Inclusion

The five foundation elements are:

- the child opportunity benefit
- increases to minimum wage
- child care fee reduction initiative, and new child care spaces
- increases to income and disability assistance, and
- leveraging federal initiatives

Work is also underway across six key priority areas for enacting poverty reduction that span across other ministries and target improvements in the near and long term beyond 2024. These priority action areas, and their top actions are:

- 1. More affordable housing for more people;**
 - Support for renters, increasing supply of affordable homes
- 2. Supporting families, children and youth;**
 - Child Care prototype sites
 - Dental care and pharmacare supports
 - Increase foster care rates by 20%
 - Support for former youth in care including tuition waiver program and increased support for caregivers in extended family program by up to 75%
 - Improved rates for home share providers
- 3. Expanding access to education and training;**
 - Eliminate interest on BC portion of student loan
 - Skills training for workers who face barriers
 - Tuition free adult basic education and English language
- 4. More opportunities, more jobs;**
 - Opportunities for people with disabilities
 - Employment standards
 - Protection for temp foreign workers
- 5. Improving income supports;**
 - Eliminate MSP premiums
 - Climate Action Tax Credit for low income
 - Strengthened rights of borrowers on pay day loans
 - BC Farmers Market Nutrition program
- 6. Investing in social inclusion;**
 - Affordable / Accessible Transportation
 - Human Rights Commission restored.

The release of TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy in March 2019 formalizes and updates the ongoing cross-government efforts underway to address poverty since fall 2017. Between October 2017 and April 2018 the government consulted more than 8,500 people including those with lived experience of poverty in addition to organizations, service providers, local governments, Indigenous peoples, businesses and unions before passing the poverty reduction strategy act in fall 2018.

TAMARACK'S CITIES REDUCING POVERTY INITIATIVE

In 2002, Tamarack Community Institute launched its Vibrant Communities with 13 cities across Canada, an initiative to engage poverty reduction strategies at a municipal level. After significant success, they scaled up their initiative in 2012 and rebranded as Cities Reducing Poverty (CRP), which now includes a network of 176 cities across 61 regions in Canada.

Their work is grounded in the following principles:

- Poverty reduction focus,
- Comprehensive thinking and action,
- Multisector collaboration,
- Community asset building, and
- Community learning and change

The CRP approach emphasizes the development of strategies that fit the realities of local contexts. Determining what type of strategy to develop is shaped by the unique local landscape, including the extent of the community's will and capacity and the nature of any pre-existing efforts to address poverty.

They identify four stages of a poverty reduction initiative:

1. Startup: convene roundtable, look for resources, engage partners, assess community readiness, and do initial sense-making around local poverty data.
2. Exploration: involves developing a common agenda, vision and principles, defining poverty, identifying priorities, and developing a strategy that includes targets and timelines.
3. Development: the focus shifts to monitoring and communicating collective progress and moving from strategy to implementation.
4. Maturity: cities are concerned about issues of sustainability, using evaluation for strategic learning, and possibly contemplating renewing their poverty reduction efforts.

They also refer to three types of strategies, with the caveat that most strategies incorporate elements of all three:

1. Emergent: focus on testing or experimentation. Can work well in dynamic contexts where there is pressure to act and a weaker understanding of the issue.
2. Umbrella: allows for self-organization among stakeholders while still working toward a collective goal.
3. Detailed: can be valuable when the issue is well understood, there is strong agreement among stakeholders, and there is enough capacity and resources for implementation

Major themes of the 16 years of learning include:

1. Champions – and more specifically the importance of Mayors championing Public Relations efforts
2. Wisdom and voices of people with lived and living experience
3. Role of businesses
4. Aligning poverty reduction and reconciliation

Tamarack identified four focus areas where they saw significant success in local/municipal approaches (as opposed to initiatives at a provincial and federal level) including:

1. Committing to a Living Wage – and the example of New Westminster as the first to do so in 2011
2. Financial Empowerment – Increasing awareness of existing mechanisms financial mechanisms for people in low income
3. Housing First and Affordable Housing initiatives
4. Affordable and Accessible Transportation

At the provincial and federal level Tamarack identified three primary areas of success:

1. Child Care and Early Learning
2. Reducing Post Secondary tuition fees, particularly for low-income youth
3. Addressing predatory lending

The main challenges they noted have been the ability to gather current, high quality, and locally specific data, and that reporting is heavily influenced by funding structures and requirements of funders of poverty reduction initiatives. They also note the large opportunity for aligning poverty reduction strategies between cities and provinces & federal governments as they release their over-arching poverty reduction strategies.

BC POVERTY REDUCTION COALITION

The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition (BCPRC) is an alliance of over 400 organizations throughout the province that came together in the lead up to the development of the provincial poverty reduction strategy. Their work is grounded in the foundation of universal human rights. The BCPRC focuses on the role that municipalities can play in reducing poverty, and underline the need to align municipal commitments with provincial and federal strategies. Solving the challenges of poverty requires all levels of government working in collaboration: municipalities cannot address these pressing social issues alone.

The BCPRC recommends actions in seven policy areas: income assistance, employment, housing, child care, education, health, and equity, as follows:

Human rights:

- Municipal governments should stop criminalizing poverty by revoking laws that penalize or discriminate against people for engaging in behavior necessary for survival because of homelessness and poverty, such as sleeping and erecting shelter in public spaces.
- Follow best practices for public consultations on new affordable housing projects

Housing

- Work with local non-profits, co-operatives, and other levels of government to find opportunities for social/affordable housing to meet a diversity of needs

Health and Food Security

- Provide free or discounted access to recreation, public amenities, and programs (including harm reduction)
- Support community gardens and kitchens to provide affordable, nutritious food; also for schools

Equity

- Affordable access to transit, particularly for youth and low-income
- Pursue the five TRC calls to action that directly apply to municipal governments

Childcare

- Require child care spaces be included in new buildings
- School boards ensure stability of child care programs on school sites

Education

- School boards should reduce field trip / program fees for low-income students
- Adopt SOGI curriculum to support LGBTQ+ students

Low Wages

- Become living wage employers
- Advocate to provincial government to increase incomes and improve working standards of low wage workers

Income Assistance

- Advocate to provincial government for increased income and disability assistance rates

END POVERTY EDMONTON - POPULATION 981,280

End Poverty Edmonton (EPE) is a movement that convenes and coordinates other groups with the goal of eliminating poverty within a generation. The End Poverty Edmonton Road Map to End Poverty in a Generation was approved by City Council in 2016. Since then, a backbone organization to support the movement has been set up and many individual actions involving hundreds of partners across Edmonton, Alberta and Canada have been started. Their 2016 roadmap, update reports, and website are a wealth of resources on rationale, methodology, indicators, impact evaluation, and context for poverty elimination.

EPE also is very conscious to centre the voices of those with lived experiences of poverty. The EPE Indigenous Circle and participants with lived experience developed the First Voice Inclusion and Equity Protocol, which

guides EPE in compensating individuals equally and in respectful ways. The Protocol is framed on Indigenous values of giving and gifting, respecting reciprocity and preventing stigmatization.

Key Strategies / Actions:

The road map contains 35 actions under five goal areas. The goals are: toward true reconciliation, justice for all, move people out of poverty, invest in a poverty free future, change the conversation and build movement. They also define six key areas of action including: eliminate racism, livable incomes, affordable housing, accessible & affordable transit, affordable and quality child-care, and access to mental health services & addictions supports. A key deliverable in 2017 was to develop and implement an evaluation framework.

EPE's 2017/18 progress update demonstrates significant headway on their actions even just one year into implementing their plan. Highlights include:

- 55% of the police force taking "Working with Indigenous Communities: Historic Trauma" and 200 city staff participating in intercultural competency workshops, both courses are now mandatory
- A design and plan for a new Indigenous culture and wellness centre
- 125 people saved \$130,000 through financial literacy and empowerment program
- Support to prevent evictions of 177 vulnerable households
- 11,000 subsidized transit passes sold each month through Ride Transit pilot program
- 808 children and youth from five lower-income schools supported with learning, leadership, and recreation during out-of-school hours.
- The Community Mental Health Action Plan started collecting a living library of people with various life experiences and knowledge to inform mental health practice and policy development
- 500 copies of the end poverty action guide distributed to religious and spiritual groups

EVERYONE IS HOME YELLOWKNIFE – 10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS 2017 – POP 20,000

Yellowknife has a population very similar to that of qathet Region at 20,000. However, their isolated location and significantly higher Indigenous population (~25% vs 8%) are two prominent differences. In 2017, Yellowknife launched a ten-year plan to end homelessness. The plan was set in motion by the Community Advisory Board on Homelessness. The objective by 2026 is that homelessness in Yellowknife will be prevented wherever possible; if homelessness occurs, it is a rare and brief experience. Yellowknife is somewhat unique in that a much higher proportion of their homeless population identify as Indigenous (91%), so a holistic Indigenous lens is at the centre of their understanding the roots of poverty and homelessness, and in reducing it.

A housing first pilot project got investment from the federal homelessness partnering strategy (HPS) along with City funding to contribute to the Yellowknife Women's Society to operate a housing first program as an initial pilot project. Case workers and peer support workers with lived experience help people with complex needs experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness find housing, and access the wrap-around supports to aid the recovery and stability for 14 individuals housed in the program. They added a second project with YWCA using HPS funds to serve 12 more families.

Indicators of success largely relate to providing housing and cultural wellness supports, and reducing the amount of people entering homelessness.

Key Strategies / Actions:

Yellowknife's strategy focuses on a **housing first** model with wrap-around supports and meeting people in the community where they are at. Housing first is a model based on important research demonstrating that the service costs of keeping people homeless (policing, jail, shelters, hospitals etc.) are much higher than the cost of providing safe housing for that same person.

ABBOTSFORD HOMELESSNESS - POP 150,000

Similar to Yellowknife, Abbotsford's strategy emphasizes homelessness with housing first and wrap around supports. In 2014, a task force on homelessness was created and in 2015 they released a Homelessness Action Plan with the goal to ensure that everyone has a home. Through a series of interactive forums a **collaborative road map** was created in 2016 that contains both a system map of drivers and trends of homelessness in each focus area, as well as strategies to address these.

Unique aspects of the Abbotsford model include some key direct services, such as the Coordinated Intake and Referral System, the Inter-agency Care Team and the Abbotsford Community HUB Centre.

The Coordinated Intake and Referral system (CIR) is a three year project with three streams of service delivery:

- Prevention and Diversion from Homelessness;
- Accommodation and Support to access housing and services; and
- Emergency Response.

Since its implementation launch on September 1, 2017, the system has received and responded to over 300 referrals of individuals into the system.

INTER-AGENCY CARE TEAM - The City of Abbotsford, in partnership with the **Fraser Health Authority** and support from **BC Housing** launched an Inter-Agency Care Team in September 2017, in coordination with the CIR. This team offers health-centered outreach-based support and housing placement for individuals, who require access to housing, health, income assistance and support connections.

ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY HUB CENTRE – integrated support service providing individuals experiencing complex health and social challenges. The Hub, which is integrated with **Positive Living Fraser Valley**, Inasmuch Society-MOSAIC, **Healthy Aging Abbotsford**, reduces barriers for individuals accessing vital support services.

Key Strategies / Actions:

The key strategies focused on three areas: homelessness, housing, and community integration. The housing focus area includes three initiatives including supportive housing, Abbotsford rental connect, and their affordable housing strategy plan.

PEEL POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY - 1.382 MILLION

The Peel Poverty Reduction Committee is a collaborative network that includes residents, people with lived experience, poverty reduction advocates, academia, regional and local government, non-profit organizations and public sector organizations working together to address poverty. The committee is co-chaired by United Way Greater Toronto, Region of Peel. The mission is to create a Peel community where everyone works together to build a poverty free future. They recently released a ‘refreshed’ strategy for 2018-2028.

Key Strategies / Actions:

The priority areas are formulated in short, intermediate and long-term desired outcomes and strategic actions:

- Income Security - Equitable and inclusive access to income that results in adequate income security for Peel residents
- Economic Opportunity - Stable, non-precarious employment opportunities
- Reduced systemic barriers, including inequitable access to stable non-precarious employment and good quality education for marginalized and equity seeking groups
- Wellbeing and Social Inclusion - Equitable and inclusive access to essential supports and services that meet the needs of Peel residents and their human rights

TORONTO'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY - POP 2.7 MILLION

The City of Toronto has a bold Poverty Reduction Plan developed through an inclusive and collaborative process. People in all four corners of the city, including residents with lived experience shared their stories, visions, and solutions were involved in developing a vision for the city:

By 2035, Toronto is a city with opportunities for all: a leader in the collective pursuit of justice, fairness and equity. We want to be renowned as a city where everyone has access to good jobs, adequate income, stable housing, affordable transportation, nutritious food, and supportive services.

Key Strategies / Actions:

Their 3 objectives to address immediate needs, create pathways to prosperity, driving systemic change are laid out within 6 key priority areas:

1. Housing stability
2. Access to services
3. Transit Equity
4. Food Access
5. Quality Jobs and Livable Wages
6. Systemic Change

Using a collective impact approach, the strategy is supported by the Poverty Reduction Unit, a backbone organization housed within the City of Toronto to coordinate ongoing community engagement, facilitate ongoing communication, evaluate, track, and move initiatives forward. The main multistakeholder group is the Accountability Table, which is informed by a number of working groups, including the Lived Experience Advisory Group, Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group, Private Sector Roundtable and the Senior Staff Steering Committee. Developed in 2015, the strategy has clear objectives, actions and indicators to monitor its success over time, with a long term commitment to systemic change.

SECTION 2:

Towards a qathet Poverty Reduction Strategy

This section synthesizes lessons learned from past reports, research and engagement in the qathet region, as well as successful poverty reduction strategies across Canada. This will provide a roadmap for the development and implementation of a strategy in the qathet region, and considerations for moving forward. Categories that need to be considered, include: *principles that underlie the entire strategy, key action areas, best practices, governance structures and processes, and key stakeholders in the qathet region.*

LEADING TO A QATHET POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Over the past decade, there has been significant research, engagement, and planning around poverty reduction and other social issues in the qathet region. These events, reports and plans are the foundation of this report, and should inform poverty reduction work going forward. Previous work in the qathet region is show in the below timeline.

2011	Vital Signs Report - PR Community Foundation Homeless Strategy - PR Employment Program & Alofli	2013/ 2015	Defining Diversity: Creating Community - VIU & Tla'amin
2014	Groundswell Conference - VIU & Tla'amin	2015	Vital Signs report - PRCF
2016	Tapping the Groundswell Report - Powell River Diversity Initiative (PRDI)	2016	Final Community Social Program - PRDI
2017	Social Planning Program Final Report - Alofli (finalized Jan 2019)	2018	Small Group Discussion Report & Housing Needs and Demands Study - SPARC BC
August 2018	Government of Canada releases its Poverty Reduction Strategy	2019	BC Government releases its Povety Reduction Strategy

Through these reports and the work in the community over the past decade, it is clear that Powell River shares a desire to create a community where everyone thrives, especially those who are living in poverty and on the margins. However, these reports also reveal. According to the 2016 Community Social Plan developed by the Powell River Diversity Initiative, “engagement revealed a widely shared perception of a lack of communication and cooperation among organizations, as well as a lack of centralized information and shared resources. Although there have been many efforts to address poverty issues, because people have been working within silos, the impacts have been limited. The past few years have also seen an increase in the number of people who are visibly homeless and living in tents in different parts of the city. On the one hand, poverty issues may be increasing. On the other hand, there is a strong desire among diverse groups to work together to make a difference.

The Social Planning Program initially released in 2017 (Newbury and Kaaij 2019) in many ways summarizes and builds on much of the work that precedes it, with further engagement, a vision, and four priority action areas that overlap closely with many poverty reduction strategies. Four priority action areas from the 2017 Social Planning Program include:



The plan also includes best practices of social planning surfaced through interviews with other smaller population rural BC towns. These practices include:

- Establish ongoing funding from local governments (i.e. City, Tla’amin Nation, Regional District)
- Develop a clear vision
- Identify existing high level priorities in the region
- Hire a social planner
- Create a coordinating committee
- Build emergent action teams
- Hold regular community consultations
- Track progress

Many of these have already begun to be implemented.

A ROADMAP FOR A qATHET REGION POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Key Principles

There are a number of foundational principles that are present across the best examples of poverty reduction strategies. These principles underline all of the work in the development and implementation of strong poverty reduction strategies.

- **Social inclusion:** Embedding people with lived experience and their experience in all phases of the strategy
- **Equity, decolonization and reconciliation:** Poverty reduction work is an opportunity to create more equity and work towards reconciliation.
- **Human rights approach:** Every citizen has the right to enjoy basic freedoms and rights in order to fully participate in community life.
- **Evidence based:** Drawing on good research and data to make informed decisions. This includes both quantitative and qualitative data that is informed by local experience.

Best Practices

The following highlights best practices that are present in many poverty reduction strategies across Canada. These practices inform the process, the governance structure and the development of the strategy itself.

- **Build on initiatives, recommendations and collaborations that already exist.** There has already been a lot of excellent work that has been done in Powell River over the past decade that can be built on and integrated into poverty reduction work going forward.
- **Ensure an inclusive and collaborative process in the development of the strategy, implementation of actions and evaluation of impact.** This means ensuring the voices and experiences of those living in poverty and affected by poverty are included at every level. It also means ongoing collaboration with all citizens to build a movement for change.
- **Bring together stakeholders from multiple sectors.** Bring together a mix of all levels of government, people with lived experience, citizens from all walks of life, business and community organizations. This ensures a process that addresses the diversity of opinions and that everyone will be involved in implementing the actions that are identified.
- **Seek active leadership from key community players, including Mayor and Council.** Having strong leadership, especially in the early phases of the strategy development, is critical to ensuring that there is visibility of the strategy and buy in from different levels of government, community organizations and community members themselves.

- **Take a systemic approach to poverty.** Get at the root causes of poverty and ensure there isn't a focus on simply managing poverty which implies there is a degree of acceptance in allowing it to continue.
- **Develop a strong vision** that unites people to work towards a common long term goal, such as Edmonton's bold vision of "ending poverty within a generation".
- **Use clear, plain language and actionable priorities with measurable impact.** Make sure that the plan is accessible to the general public so that they can continue to be engaged in the process. Ensuring that the strategies are specific and that their impact can be measured will help you to implement the actions and keep all stakeholders involved.
- **Include actions that fall under multiple jurisdictions.** In some areas, municipalities have the tools, resources, and authority to take leadership on. In other areas, municipalities must partner with other levels of government (Indigenous, regional, provincial, federal), the private sector, labour, and community organizations to counter poverty, provide based human rights and promote inclusive economic growth.
- **Connect priorities and actions at a local level to regional, provincial and federal strategies.** Get to know the provincial and federal strategies, as well as the current context to Identify areas where there is synergy and overlap.
- **Embed a reconciliation and equity lens across all processes and actions.** The urgency of poverty among Indigenous people and the number of Indigenous people in the qathet region needs particular attention, whether that means establishing reconciliation focus priority areas (as in Yellowknife), establishing an Indigenous circle or advisory to inform the process (as in Edmonton), or establishing a separate Indigenous Poverty Reduction Strategy parallel to the broader strategy (as in Calgary).
- **Take your time.** While it is important to get to actions, it is also important to take the time to build relationships and engage the broader community. Focus on both process and outcomes.
- **Learn as you go.** Make sure to not get stuck in implementing actions that aren't having an impact. As you keep engaging the community, you will learn about what is working. Adjust to changing conditions, build on what is working and change what isn't working.
- **Recognize Success.** Focus on what is working and where movement forward is happening, big or small.

Key Action Areas

There are a number of key focus areas, which are also referred to as “priorities”, “game changers” or “focus areas” depending on the community and strategy. These are the key areas where communities are taking action. While some strategies focus on the multiple factors that contribute to poverty, such as the Toronto or Yellowknife plans, other plans narrow in on homelessness and housing, such as the Abbotsford strategy.

The key focus areas that are included across a number of poverty reduction strategies across Canada include:

- Livable incomes & quality jobs
- Affordable housing
- Accessible & affordable transit
- Childcare & early learning
- Health services, including mental health & addiction
- Social inclusion, social cohesion or social equity

Some strategies, such as the Edmonton and Toronto plans take an explicitly systemic approach to understanding what contributes to keeping those living in poverty poor, and points to the need to address beliefs, values, stigma and discrimination, such as:

- Racial equity
- Stigma & discrimination
- Changing the conversation
- Systemic change

Other focus areas that are included in some strategies take a broader approach to understanding the different components that contribute to poverty including:

- Food security
- Financial empowerment
- Community economic development
- Access to services

The table on the following pages outlines key focus areas that are used across many poverty reduction strategies, along with examples of actions for how to address those focus areas. It also notes which poverty reduction strategies include those specific focus areas.

Focus Area	Key strategies and/or actions	Canada	BC	Edmonton	Toronto	Yellowknife	Abbotsford	PR's social plan
Incomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Basic Income • Improved income assistance • Improved minimum wage • Commitment to living wage 		X	X	X			X
Quality employment; Community economic development; Financial empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development strategies / diversification • Transition economies • Social Enterprise • Adult Education and Skills training 	X	X	X	X			X
Housing & homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing first models • Temporary modular housing 		X	X	X	X	X	X
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible and affordable transit • Reduced or free fair • Improved routes 		X	X	X			
Children, child-care & early learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare spaces and programs • SOGI curriculum • Reduced field trip and school fees • Child benefits 	X	X	X	X			X
Health services, including mental health & addiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dental care and pharmacare • Harm reduction services • Access to doctors • Mental Health and counseling 		X	X	X		X	
Social inclusion, social cohesion or social equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed hiring practices • Involvement of diverse voices, especially those with lived experience • Formation of Advisory council with lived experience 		X	X	X	X	X	X

Focus Area	Key strategies and/or actions	Canada	BC	Edmonton	Toronto	Yellowknife	Abbotsford	PR's social plan
Reconciliation; racial equity; stigma & discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply racial / gender lens • Apply decolonizing / Indigenous approaches (medicine wheel, healing) • TRC Calls to Action & UNDRIP 	X	X	X		X		
Systemic / Structural change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider other levels of government • Challenging acceptance of poverty / Eliminating poverty • Contributes to social mobility 	X	X	X	X	X		X
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community garden programs • Social Enterprise • Low-cost nutritious food programs 		X	X	X			
Access to services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of city services (programs, recreation) • Reduced service fees for low-income • Accessible services 		X	X	X	X		

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURES: HOW TO DO IT

Structures and processes that support the development and implementation of a poverty reduction strategy are critical to its success. How it is done will make a big difference on the kind of impact that is possible. Here are the key considerations in establishing the right structure for your community:

- **Convene a multisectoral process that is timebound and structured.** There are many structures for bringing together different sectors to work towards a common goal, such as a Task Force, a Roundtable or a Lab. Have clear goals for what will be accomplished through the process and how the work will continue to be implemented.
- **Establish clear leadership for the strategy.** Some poverty reduction strategies are driven by municipalities, while others are community based. Many began as Task Forces or Round Table. Some, like End Poverty Edmonton began as an initiative of the City Council but moved out into the community so that a movement could begin to grow. Being clear about who is taking leadership is important in communication with stakeholders to ensure accountability to the process.
- **Identify backbone organization(s).** A backbone organization is a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies. Sometimes this is a municipality and another organization. Other times, the work is kept separate from a municipality.
- **Engage an evaluation and impact framework.** A Collective Impact approach is a proven methodology across many poverty reduction strategies. This approach requires the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem, using a structured form of collaboration and evaluation of impact.
- **Develop a clear governance structure with accountability.** Most poverty reduction strategies have a core group of multistakeholders who ensure the effective engagement, implementation, and measurement of the strategy. This group is supported by the backbone organization, and may be informed by working groups or advisories, as noted below.
- **Use working groups or advisories as needed.** Some poverty reduction strategies develop separate working groups or advisories, such as with people with lived experience or the private sector, where there is a need to inform the key decision makers about a particular aspect of poverty reduction. This can also create more safety for people with differing perspectives and life experience. Working groups may also be used to move action forward in a particular priority area such as Housing. Members of these working groups or advisories may or may not sit on the main Roundtable.
- **Stay connected to the broader community.** Although it is necessary to have key stakeholders play a more active role in the development and implementation of the strategy, good strategies also continue to communicate with, engage and be informed by the broader community.
- **Adapt the governance structure as needed.** There may be a need for a more comprehensive governance structure in the initial development phase of the strategy, and this may shift over the life of the project. Ensure that the governance structure continues to meet the needs of where the strategy is at.

STAGES IN A POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

According to the work of Cities Reducing Poverty, there are four stages of a poverty reduction initiative:



WHO TO INCLUDE

In the qathet region, there is a diversity of organizations and sectors that need to be included in the development and implementation of a poverty reduction strategy. In an initial meeting in June 2019, the following stakeholders were identified:

Government/Public bodies

- Tla'amin
- Chair or rep from Transit Committee
- Rep from MSDPR
- MCFD
- School district
- WorkBC
- BC Housing
- RCMP
- City of Powell River – Planning Department

Business

- Money Mart
- Remax Property Management
- Mall owner
- Chamber of Commerce
- First Credit Union

Associations + multistakeholder groups

- Seniors Council
- Neighbourhood Association
- Housing Committee
- Early Years Table
- Local Media

Nonprofits

- United Way
- Poverty Law
- Salvation Army
- SUSTAIN
- CRC
- Food Bank
- Family Place
- Resilient Streets
- Mental health
- Texada Food Bank
- Texada Seniors Housing
- Lifecycle Housing
- Inclusion
- Family Services
- Powell River Educational Society
- Division of Family Practice
- Rotary
- Lift Community Programs

SECTION 3:

Understanding poverty in BC, Canada and the qathet region



Poverty can be defined as a lack or denial of resources and opportunities that provide the quality of life needed for people to be able to fully participate in all aspects of community life

..... (Dierckx & Ghys 2013).

WHAT IS POVERTY: DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Poverty exists across Canada and throughout the qathet region and doesn't just affect individuals; it also affects our whole society. Although some poverty is very visible, such as in encampments and the line-ups at food banks, much of the poverty in our community remains hidden.

In the past, getting an education could help you get a stable job, and if a crisis struck, there were social supports to help people to get back on their feet. But in an era of globalization and a changing context, this is no longer the case. The housing crisis in Canada has meant that safe and affordable housing is scarce, and even more scarce for those living in poverty. The resource sector which has historically created stability no longer does. There is limited access to full time stable employment. Climate change is impacting jobs, as is the effects of colonization and residential schools.

There are many definitions of poverty that focus on different aspects of the experience of poverty. Some definitions focus on poverty as a material concept: people are poor because they don't have something they need or they are poor because they don't have the resources to get the things they need. Other definitions of poverty focus on poverty as an economic concept that can be understood in terms

of economics, and more specifically income. Still other conceptions of poverty focus on patterns of deprivation of different kinds of needs, in particular food and housing. Most definitions are a combination of different conceptions of poverty.

In Canada, most poverty reduction strategies use a definition that is similar to the Government of Canada's definition of poverty as ***"the condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society."***

Historically in Canada, governments have measured poverty through the Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT) which compares the income of a household to the rest of the population, accounting for family size and allowing for international comparisons.. The LIM-AT refers to a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted after-tax income of private households. When the unadjusted after-tax income of a person falls below the threshold applicable to the person based on household size, the person is considered to be low income and living in poverty according to LIM-AT.

With the new Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2018, the Government of Canada has set an official

measure of poverty in Canada called the Market Basket Measure (MBM). The MBM is based on the cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living. The MBM provides a region-specific snapshot of the estimated cost of a “basket of goods” to meet the basic needs of a family of two adults and two school-aged children. It recognizes the potential differences in the cost of the basket between similar-sized communities in different provinces and between different geographical regions within provinces.

The MBM measures poverty by identifying the percentage of households whose income falls below the level that would be necessary to buy this basket of goods. Under the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy deep income poverty refers to individuals or families whose income is 75 percent of Canada’s official poverty line. Prior to this there was no official measure. This is the same measure that is used in the Province of BC’s TogetherBC Poverty Reduction Strategy. At the root of poverty is inequality, and a lack of access to resources, supports and opportunities that affect different people in different ways. Certain communities are disproportionately impacted, for example, women, seniors, people living with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, immigrant, refugees and racialized communities. The stigma of poverty itself is another dimension that works to further

impoverish those already dealing with the systemic barriers and structures that keep them in poverty, so addressing the stigma of poverty is an important consideration itself. Moreover, poverty tends to reproduce itself: those living in poverty don’t have access to the supports that would lift them out of poverty, so they stay poor, and so do their children.

Despite social services, food banks, income assistance and other supports, poverty has endured for decades, even though our society is getting wealthier. The fact that poverty is not eliminated even when society is becoming more affluent reveals the way that poverty serves inequity. This means to get at the root causes of poverty, a poverty reduction strategy must consider the reinforcing structures, power dynamics, and groups that poverty serves as well as those with lived experience.

The more direct causes of poverty are multi-dimensional and connected. These direct causes strongly overlap with the Social Determinants of Health which are widely accepted as a holistic way of understanding an individual’s health and well-being. The following indicators are included in an intersectional understanding of poverty and poverty reduction as identified in the City of Vancouver’s review of poverty reductions strategies in 2017:

1. Income, income distribution (relative income)
2. Employment: Jobs, job security, working conditions, Community Economic Development
3. Health, Well-being, Social Inclusion
4. Race, Gender, Aboriginal Status
5. Accessible and affordable Transportation
6. Affordable and subsidized Housing
7. Education and Training
8. Child Care and Early Childhood Development
9. Access to services, resources, supports
10. Food security

There are many indicators that are used by poverty reduction strategies, largely determined by the forces that are considered the greatest threats to a community. Still, indicators that are more directly related to poverty such as income and poverty rate are often the first to be used to measure and identify the problem. The federal government emphasizes the poverty rate, as well as the poverty entry and exit rate (those that enter and those able to escape poverty), children and seniors in poverty, deep income poverty (below 75% of poverty line, and relative low income (less than half as much as median after-tax income).

For many municipalities, it is important to develop a locally informed definition of poverty through engagement with those with lived and living experience. Community-based definitions of poverty allow for community-led initiatives to impact poverty. Research has shown that universal supports (such as

parental leave, subsidized childcare, health benefits, and higher minimum wages) are more effective than targeted supports (that require a certain level of ‘need’ in order to access them) at shrinking the gap between rich and poor, and at helping people to live well. Universal childcare helps women to enter the workforce and sustain employment after becoming parents. In general, universal supports also help to reduce stigma and increase social mobility.

Ending poverty in all its forms is considered the greatest global challenge by the United Nation’s (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, and has been deemed indispensable requirement for sustainable development.

THE EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE

Poverty Alleviation

First used around global poverty strategies following WWII in the frame of developing and developed countries. Criticism arose that alleviation strategies focused on band-aid solutions (eg. food or medicine drops) that simply ‘made it easier to live in poverty’ and is rare to find now in poverty strategies relating to cities.



Poverty Reduction

By 2000’s Reduction was being used more commonly than alleviation, and continues to be the most mainstream term now (BC and Canada have poverty reduction strategies)



Poverty Elimination/ Eradication

In 2000 the UN also named Eradicating Extreme Poverty as Goal 1 of their Millenium Development Goals. This goal was reiterated as #1 in the 2015 release of the Sustainable Development Goals and modified as ‘Ending poverty in all its forms.’ Some strategies that have formed since 2015 have increasingly used end, eradicate, or eliminate (eg. End Poverty Edmonton) interchangeably as do the SDGs.

POVERTY ACROSS BC AND CANADA

Poverty rates and income inequality in Canada have increased dramatically over the past ten years, and economists estimate unprecedented rates expected to come in the next ten years. Canada ranks last among developed nations on childcare funding, and BC families have the country’s highest proportion of personal income designated to cover childcare costs. This province also has one of Canada’s highest rates of child poverty, a growing gap between rich and poor, one of the lowest minimum wages, and yet, at the same time, a growing gross domestic product (GDP).

As of 2016 more than 557,000 BC residents lived below the poverty line, the second highest in Canada, and 40% of those below the poverty line were in the workforce. BC uses the same definition or rate of poverty as Canada, called the Market Based Measure which is a combination of goods and services required to meet basic needs. Indigenous people are two times as likely to live in poverty and children in single parent families three times more likely than two parent families. BC has 99,000 children living in poverty, one of the highest nationally.

SNAPSHOT OF POVERTY IN BC

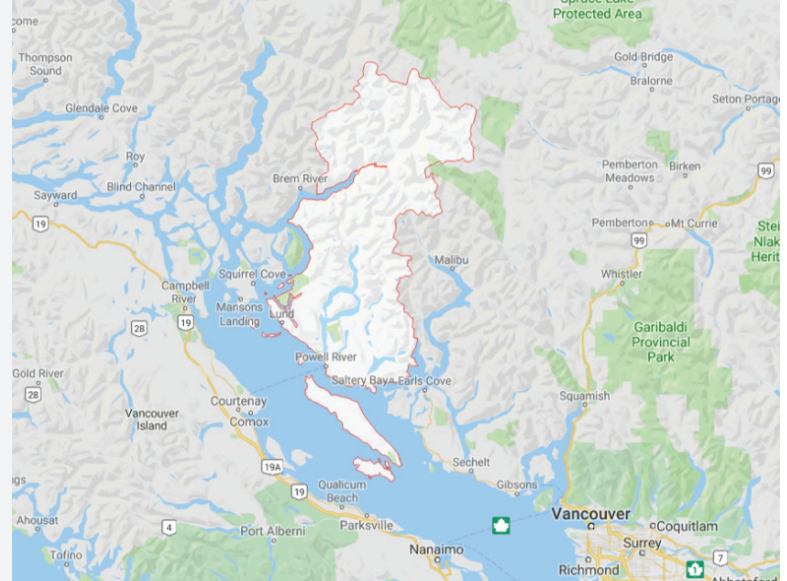
- As of 2016 more than 557,000 British Columbians were living below poverty line. Second highest in country.
- One of highest poverty rates for decades.
- 40% below poverty line are working.
- Indigenous people are 2x as likely to live in poverty
- BC has 99,000 children living in poverty, one of highest nationally
- Children in single parent families 3x more likely to live in poverty than two parent families

In the case of the qathet region, at the most basic level there are five different levels of government involved, and their jurisdictions are complex with overlaps and gaps. The five levels are City of Powell River, Tla’amin First Nation, qathet Regional District, Province of BC, and Government of Canada. While provincial and federal governments have held legal responsibility for broad social policies (housing, minimum wage, income assistance, infrastructure) many of these services have seen significant cut for the past 30 years leaving municipal governments in a difficult position to address the consequences and very real needs with very little funding.

Government	Jurisdiction related to poverty and social planning
First Nation (Tla’amin)	Self-governed as per their treaty agreement in 2016
Municipal (City of Powell River)	Development & zoning (bylaws), police & fire, local parks and recreation, economic development
Regional District (qathet)	Regional parks, emergency services, transit, and social planning bylaw
Provincial (BC)	Minimum wage, post-secondary tuition, income and disability assistance, funding for various programs (housing, child care, transit, employment)
Federal (Canada)	Benefit payments, Canada Pension Plan, funding for various programs (housing - historically through CMHC, infrastructure)
Health Authority (Vancouver Coastal Health)	Health

A SNAPSHOT OF POVERTY IN BC, CANADA AND THE QATHET REGION *

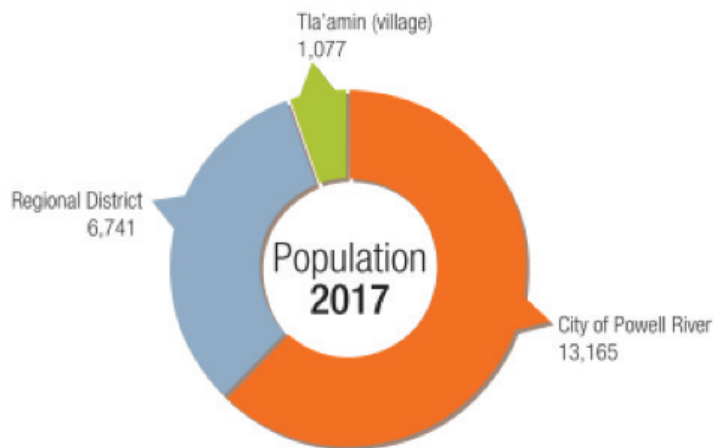
qathet Regional District (qRD - formerly Powell River Regional District) covers an area of approximately 5,245 km² about 175 km north of Vancouver within the traditional territory of the Tla'amin Nation with a population of about 20,000 people. The qRD includes 5 electoral areas and one municipality (the City of Powell River).



	2011	2016
Region	19,906	20,070
City	13,165	13,165

A Stable Population

The population is stable with very little growth over the past 25 years (Powell River Community Foundation 2015), though roughly 15% of the population has turned over in the past five years. Most new arrivals to the region (3025 people between 2011 – 2016) are from within BC (2285), while only 550 are from other provinces and 195 from outside of Canada. Population projections anticipate very little increase in population over the next 20 years with projections of 21,841 in 2030 and 23, 886 in 2040 for the qathet region. (source: BC Stats, Sub-Provincial Population Projections 2017)

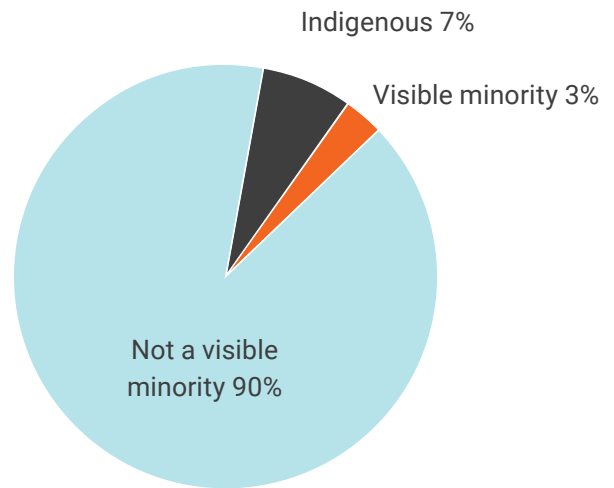


Estimated population in the Powell River region

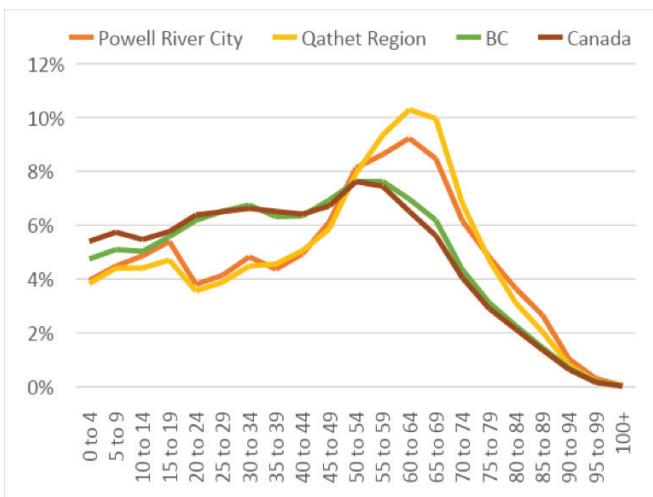
* Most of the data from this section is taken from Statistics Canada Census data unless otherwise noted.

Powell River is predominantly white

Representation of racialized people in the qRD and CPR (not including indigenous peoples) is relatively small at 3% and 4% for the City of Powell River (CPR) as compared to 30% for BC and 22% for Canada. Of those 3%, people of Filipino, Chinese, Black, Korean, South Asian, and Southeast Asian are most represented. Those identifying as indigenous make up 8% of the Region and 5% of the City of Powell River, roughly similar to the proportions seen in BC and Canada.



An Aging Population



Seniors (aged 65+) now make up 28% of the regional population as compared to 18% in BC. Seniors are expected to increase to 30% of the population by 2036 (Powell River Community Foundation 2015).

Household Makeup

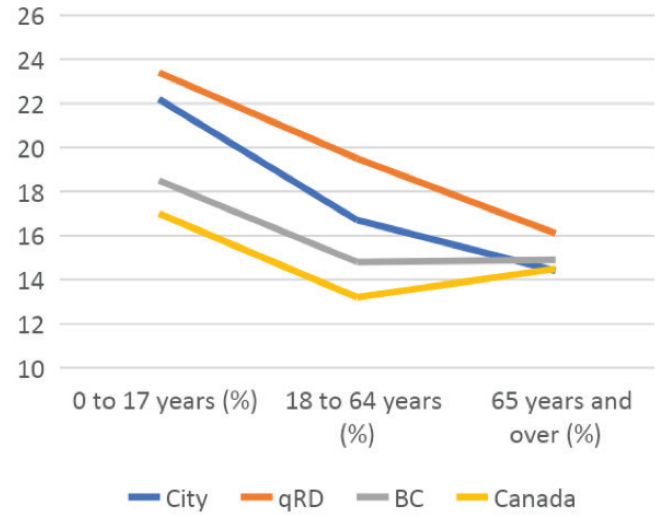
The majority of households are single person (34%), couples without children (36%), and couples with children (25%) (2016 Census).

Currently 43% of renters spend more than 30% of their income on housing, and 11% live in subsidized housing in the region (both within 2% of the provincial and national averages).

Poverty rates

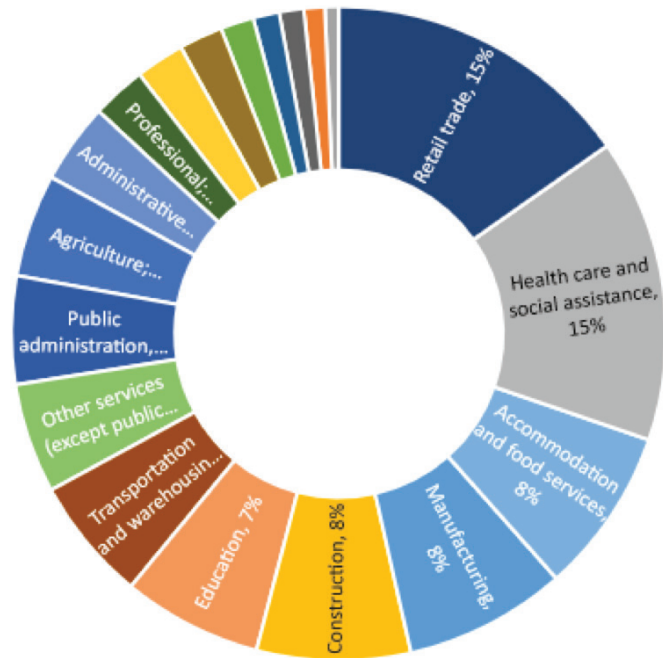
The poverty rate of youth (0-17 years) in qRD is relatively high at 23.4% as compared to BC (18.5%) and Canada (17%), while the poverty rate for seniors is more consistent with provincial and federal averages.

Poverty rates (based on low income measure after tax)



Income and Employment

While participation rate in the labour force is relatively low (predictably due to high population of retirement age), the unemployment rate is relatively similar to that of BC and Canada (~7%). The main jobs by industry sector in order are retail trade (15%), Health Care and Social Assistance (15%), Accommodation and Food Services (8%), Manufacturing (8%), Construction (8%), and Education (7%). This is in keeping with BC and National average with notably more jobs in health care and less in business and finance in qRD.



Living Wage in BC and Powell River

Year	PR Living Wage	BC Min Wage
2017	\$16.75	\$11.35
2018	\$17.16	\$12.65
2019	\$16.31	\$13.85
2020	TBD	\$14.60
2021	TBD	\$15.20

Employment based on sector in Powell River (2016)

The living wage for Powell River decreased in 2019, largely credited to BC government’s income-tested Affordable Child Care Benefit and the universal Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

Homelessness

The visibly homeless population has been increasing anecdotally, as it has across the province in the past decade. In 2018 BC Housing conducted homeless counts in 12 different BC communities, although Powell River was not included. In some initial observations by the City of Powell River staff, there are a number of encampments as well as parked motorhomes, campers and cars in which people are living. The largest encampment observed included 20 tents and was the length of a city block. These encampments tend to increase in the summer months. The encampments have raised a number of concerns, including sanitation, health and safety; and concern about fires.

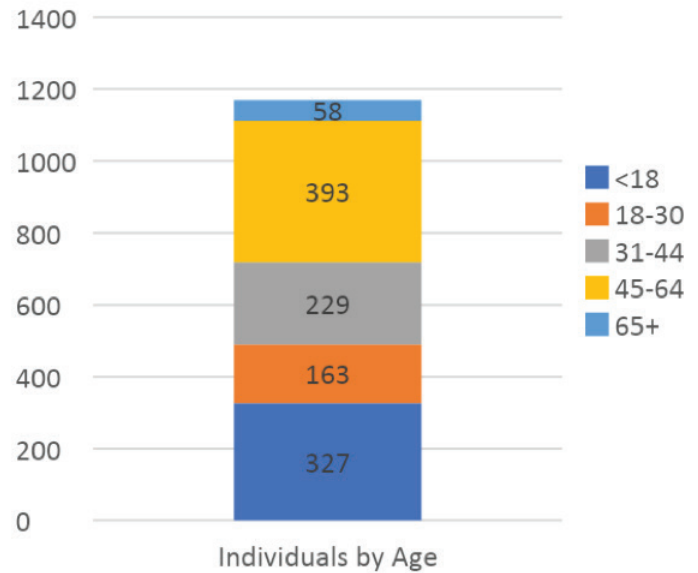
A winter shelter with 20 beds was opened in November 2018 and a social housing project for 40 units is being constructed with funding from BC Housing, PREP Society, Life Cycle Housing Society, and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Food Security

Less than 3% of food consumed in the region is locally produced and in 2016 it was estimated that the monthly cost of nutritious food for a family of four was approximately \$1,000 (Newbury 2019). Vancouver Coastal Health’s Vancouver Coastal Health’s My Community My Health report (MCMH) from 2013-2014 showed that access to healthy foods is better than average in the region, though incidence of obesity higher than average (38% vs. 27%), possibly a correlative of having an older population.

The Powell River Action Centre Society runs a food bank for low-income individuals. Data from the food bank from July 2017 to June 2018 show that 1170 people used the services a total of 4929 times, and of those using the service the majority were between the ages of 31-64. The majority of those that used the service are also either single parent families or single people and are on social assistance or disability related benefits. The Powell River Food Security Project also maps out local low cost meals and food in the area.

Individuals food bank use July 2017-June 2018 by age group



Food bank use July 2017-June 2018

	Children (<18)	Adults (18+)	Total
Individuals	327	843	1170
Total visits	1392	3537	4929

Health

The MCMH report shows that Powell River residents have higher prevalence of health conditions including obesity, arthritis, cancer, and multiple chronic conditions. Traveling by car was also higher than average. MCMH does not have data specifically on the homeless population.

A selection of standout results from Vancouver Coastal Health My Communities My Health Study from 2014

	Powell River	Coastal Rural AVG	MHMC AVG
General Health	47.6	54.8	50.3
Obesity	37.9	26.9	17
High Blood Pressure	29.6	19.1	16.4
Arthritis	21.1	15.5	12.4
Multiple Chronic Conditions	13.2	7.8	6.8
Cancer	7.5	4.9	2.9
Physical Activity	53.8	57.3	46.4
5+ servings fruits and veg	35.3	32.2	27.2
Commute Car	85.5	80.4	45.2
Commute Walk Cycle	8.4	13.5	20.2
Community Belonging	78.2	74.3	57.8



MOVING FORWARD

In summary, the key next steps forward in the development of a poverty reduction strategy will be to:

1. Identify backbone organization(s) to support the work
2. Look for resources to support the strategy development
3. Determine governance and accountability structures with a core team of multistakeholders
4. Convene a key multisectoral process with diverse representation
5. Develop a strong and unifying vision statement and definition of poverty
6. Identify priority action areas, and actions with measurable outcomes and timelines
7. Move from strategy to implementation: monitor collective progress on priority action areas

The final stage of the development of a poverty reduction strategy is to ignite a movement to end poverty in this community and beyond. Poverty reduction has become a movement across Canada, and this is an opportunity for the qathet region to join a growing movement of municipalities and regions who are taking a systemic approach to eliminating poverty and ensuring the human rights of all citizens.

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