Regional District of Central Okanagan

CENTRAL OKANAGAN

POVERTY & WELLNESS STRATEGY

DRAFT REPORT | MAY 2022

urban
matters

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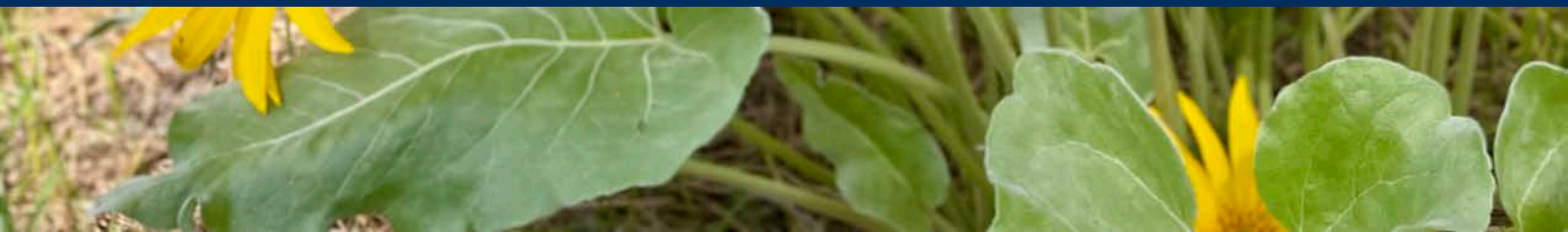

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Acknowledgements

Territory

The Regional District of the Central Okanagan, the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Leadership Committee, and Urban Matters CCC Ltd. acknowledge the traditional and unceded territory of the Okanagan syilx people. We recognize, honour and respect the presence of Indigenous people, past, present and future

Leadership Committee

The research completed for this Strategy was guided by the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Leadership Committee. Their local expertise informed decisions related to research and engagement, assisted with analysis, and helped inform the writing of this Strategy. This project would not have been successful without their insight, wisdom and passion.

Executive Summary

This Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy (Strategy) charts a path towards a poverty free Central Okanagan. It required collaborative initiative and builds on work already completed by community organizations, leaders, and local governments. This previous work created a shared understanding of how poverty is affecting the wellness of residents in the Central Okanagan. What was identified was the need for a comprehensive strategy that would support systems level changes to further reduce poverty and increase wellness.

For several years, multiple stakeholders, organizations and community members in the Central Okanagan have been working toward developing and implementing a regionally focused poverty and wellness strategy (Strategy). In 2017, the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Committee (Committee) was established with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy. Supported by funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership, the Committee set the stage for a community-driven, regional approach to reduce poverty.

With additional grant funding in 2019, the Committee commissioned a regional community poverty analysis known as the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Analysis. The Analysis was informed by lived experience and key engagement from stakeholders including Interior Health, municipal governments, and First Nations. The analysis provides foundational information to focus the Strategy, including baseline data, insight into poverty at the community and regional level, and eight key priority areas.

In early 2020, an opportunity to build on the work completed by local governments and community partners arose through the Union of BC municipalities. The Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO) Board and member municipalities approved a joint grant application to develop a regional strategy to increase wellness and reduce poverty throughout the Central Okanagan. A successful grant application enabled the creation of this Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy. This Strategy complements many Regional Growth Strategy priorities, including the development of a Regional Housing Strategy and a Regional Transportation Plans.

2017

- Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Committee (Committee) was established with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy
- Supported by funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership, the Committee set the stage for a community-driven, regional approach to reduce poverty

2019

- The Committee commissioned a regional community poverty analysis known as the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Analysis
- The analysis provides foundational information to focus the Strategy, including baseline data, insight into poverty at the community and regional level, and eight key priority areas.

2020

- Union of BC Municialities creates a granting program for municipalities to create local poverty Reduction Strategies as part of the TogetherBC Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO) Board and member municipalities approved a joint grant application to develop a regional strategy to increase wellness and reduce poverty throughout the Central Okanagan

2022

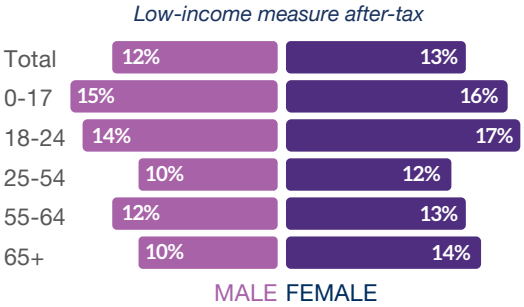
- This Strategy is completed to complement many Regional Growth Strategy priorities, including the development of a Regional Housing Strategy and a Regional Transportation Plans.

Why is a Poverty Reduction Strategy Needed?

Engagement for this strategy found that concerns about financial security, inclusion and connection, and mental health and wellness are growing. More and more people are experiencing financial difficulty as cost-of-living increases. Mental health and overall wellness is also declining as services, opportunities for recreation, and social interaction have reduced or changed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whether in a short-term struggle, an ongoing struggle, or a crisis, everybody needs some help sometimes. This Strategy can assist in creating a structure for ongoing action to improve wellness and reduce poverty.

INCOME

12.5% of the overall population of the Central Okanagan is in poverty according to the Low-Income-Measure



HOUSING

Rate of core housing need: The rate of core housing need in the RDCO in 2016 was **10%**, 4.9% percentage points lower than BC.

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

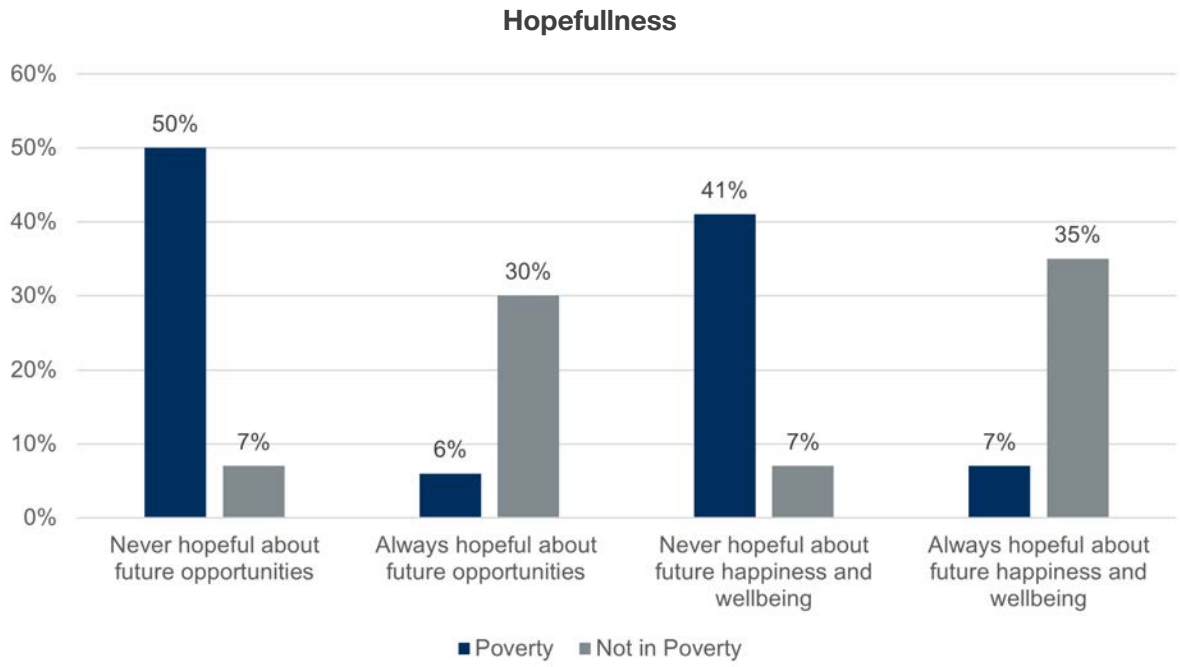
Youths (0-17) and young adults (18-24) in the RDCO had very high LIM-AT rates compared to other age groups and the general population.

Poverty impacts some people more than others. During research for this project, it was found that some groups are more likely to experience poverty.

High risk groups are:

- Seniors and Elders
- Families with children
- Youth who have been in the Foster Care System
- Immigrants and new comers
- Unattached (single) individuals

People experiencing poverty were also experiencing more exclusion and less hopefulness than participants who were not living in poverty.



Why a Regional Strategy?

Experiences of poverty are never isolated incidences. They are the result of systems and programs designed by communities. Poverty is not isolated to a geographic area. Changes in the opportunities available and systems of support in one area create movement of people, either going to other places for new opportunities or coming to an area for opportunities. Taking a regional approach is part of making sure that poverty reduction happens in an equitable way that addresses needs of diverse community members.

How was the strategy created?

Building on the past work of the community, the writing of this strategy included three key activities:

Project Initiation

During initiation, a background review was completed which describes the Central Okanagan's past work and the frameworks used for approaching poverty reduction and wellness. It focused on data and reports from multiple levels of government. Key documents were Canada's Opportunity for All (2018) poverty reduction strategy and BC's Together BC Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019), which both set targets for reducing poverty across Canada and outline processes for achieving these goals. Connecting these documents to this Strategy allows for the Central Okanagan member municipalities and community partners to align their poverty reduction and wellness actions with provincial and federal targets, while also providing context on local issues.

See Background Report (HYPERLINK TO COME)

Community Engagement and Consultation

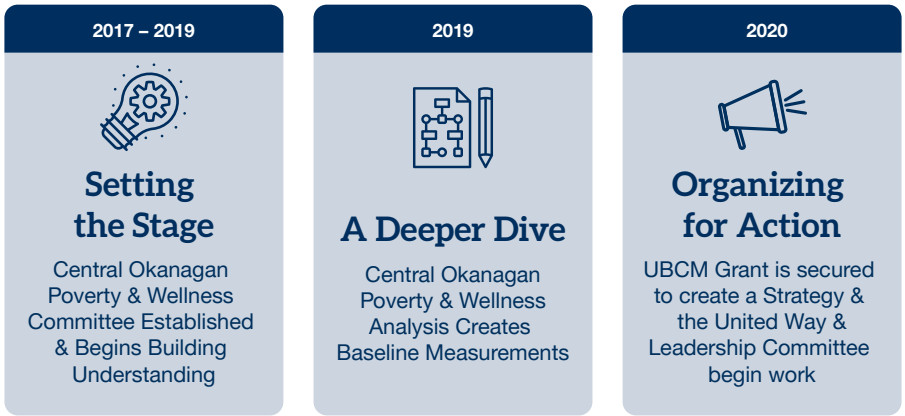
Over 750 community members participated in engagement through surveys, interviews, focus groups, and a community forum. Ideas shared highlighted the community needs, a community vision for a Central Okanagan without poverty, and generated ideas for addressing poverty and improving wellness for all residents.

See What We Heard Report (HYPERLINK TO COME)

Strategy Development

Taking the ideas for action shared during community engagement and consultation, stakeholders and community partners in local government, non-profit, and community services were invited to participate in Planning and Implementation Workshops to sort the ideas, discuss their feasibility, and begin identifying key actions. From their input, the Priorities for Process and Priorities for Interventions were determined.

The Foundation:
Work Completed that Enabled this Strategy



Developing this Strategy: Key Phases of Work

Community Vision

Through this Strategy a collective vision has been created that is supported by actions targeted at reducing poverty for everyone living in the Central Okanagan.

Vision

A community where every person and family feel secure in meeting their basic needs (e.g., housing, food, clothing, transportation, mental health, wellness, etc.), is resilient to challenges and setbacks, and feel a sense of meaningful inclusion. As people move from surviving to thriving, they can explore themselves and their community in new ways that bring joy.

Key Values

The following key values were distilled from the engagement process supporting the strategy, and these underpin both the vision and the approach to setting priorities for intervention:

- Basic Needs are Met: individuals and families must be able to fulfill their basic needs before they are able to build personal resilience or participate in community activities;
- Connection and Inclusion: feeling connected and included in community supports self-esteem, resilience and personal growth;
- Personal Development and Participation: supporting individuals to build their personal resilience, living fulfilling lives and engage with their communities results in a state of positive individual and community wellness.

Roles & Responsibilities

Actioning the Strategy will require work from many different sectors. Everyone has a role to play. To ensure that the different sectors actions work to reduce poverty, though, participation in Collective Impact work and collaborative tables is critical.

Local Government

- Leadership
- Resources
- Aligns policies and plans with poverty reduction work and community vision
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Service Providers

- Aligns programming with community vision
- Provides services needed to meet basic needs
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Business Sector

- Provides income and employment
- Hiring, human resources, and employee policies impact individuals and families financial stability, work/life balance and overall wellness
- Skills and resources to share with other sectors
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Ministries, Health Authorities

- Align funding and reporting requirements with community vision
- Ensure funding for services is available
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

First Nations & Indigenous Communities

- Leadership
- Resources
- Aligns programming with cultural knowledge and practices
- Provides services needed to meet basic needs
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Priorities for Process & Interventions

The priorities for process reflect the values of how the community wants to reduce poverty in the Central Okanagan. The processes of Reconciliation and Collective Impact ensure that diverse sectors work together and that actions are based on shared understanding and opportunity for inclusion and involvement.

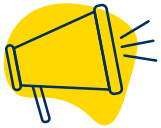
Priorities for Process

Reconciliation

Building Partnerships

Cultural Safety

Data Sovereignty



Calls to Action

Systems Approach through Collective Impact

Governance & Infrastructure

Strategic Action Planning

Community Engagement

Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement

Collaborating through Collective Impact

Collective Impact is a structure for collaboration focused on creating lasting change in communities through addressing complex problems. It is a useful structure that has been applied in many regions and cities across Canada to address poverty and improve well-being. Collective Impact approaches are not new to the Central Okanagan. There are several examples of Collective Impact projects already occurring across the region including the Journey Home Strategy and the Upstream Project. This Strategy is one more step in advancing collaborative action and approaches to addressing poverty and wellness in the Central Okanagan.

COMPONENTS OF SUCCESS

- Developing a common agenda
- Using shared measurement to understand progress
- Building on mutually reinforcing activities
- Engaging in continuous communications
- Providing a backbone to move the work forward

This Strategy uses a Collective Impact approach to:

- Show how the Central Okanagan is already working together to address poverty and wellness
- Outline Core Processes for action which will build capacity and create a strong foundation of collaboration and reconciliation to work from

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is an important path toward an equitable future. The Indigenous experience of poverty is compounded by ongoing impacts of colonialism, capacity challenges, and entrenched racism and stigma. The systems which have created and maintained colonial practices, such as legal rights and title, education systems, funding structures and governance, must be addressed for meaningful change to happen.

Actions to pursue reconciliation and meaningful relationships involve personal and collective learning about the history of colonization and its impacts, collaborating with Indigenous partners, building Cultural Safety, developing partnerships, acting on key reports and documents (e.g., In Plain Sight, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Report, and UNDRIP), and supporting responsible data collection and analysis.

** Tamarack Institute. (n.d.). Collective Impact. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/collectiveimpact.*

Priorities for Intervention

Priorities for Intervention reflect what the community wants to do to reduce poverty in the Central Okanagan. These are areas where special attention is needed in policy, service provision, and funding disbursement. Aligning work across sectors in these areas will ensure that residents have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Meeting Basic Needs

Transportation

Housing

Health & Wellness

Food Security

Financial Resources

Inclusion & Community Belonging

Community Events

Diversity & Accessibility

Welcoming Places

Preventative Interventions

Child Development

Youth Well-Being

Universal Benefits & Supports

Core Actions in the Priorities for Intervention are:

- Collaborate across sectors to find creative solutions to gaps in services
- Focus on preventative measures rather than crisis interventions
- Ensure that strategies for housing, transportation, health, and food security reflect the values of equity, affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and inclusion, as well as systems thinking.
- Design programs and services to be accessible and welcoming to all.
- Create opportunities for participation in community and getting to know one's neighbors.

Next Steps

The Next Steps for the Central Okanagan are to begin to implement this strategy by building the capacity of stakeholders to act on the systems which perpetuate poverty.

Collective Impact core processes show the key actions are:

- Establishing a Backbone Organization,
- Coordinating to assign tasks and begin actions,
- Start community-wide dialogues and share information about this report, and
- Report regularly on progress.

Begin Implementation – Key Actions for Next Steps

	Action	Work to Be Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Launch work groups and select backbone organization	Identify a backbone organization and address how to support regional and local community involvement. Establish a Backbone organization • Funding and/ or partnership agreement • Agreements for structure (membership, decision making, participation guidelines, etc.) Begin discerning roles and responsibilities
Strategic Planning	Develop blueprint for implementation and identify quick wins	Stakeholders and the backbone organization will need to coordinate to assign tasks and take ownership of the actions. Identify a Course of Action • Conduct Strategic Action Planning when Backbone Organization is established • Gain consensus on first steps Key components of this work are sharing resources and building partnerships.
Community Engagement	Engage community more broadly and build public will	Continuing to engage with the public and stakeholders through sharing this report, promoting actions as they happen, and articulating the community vision.
Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Establish shared measures (indicators and approach)	As stakeholders and working groups act, their data collection and sharing will support additional shared measures for tracking progress.

CHAPTER 1

Defining the Strategy

This *Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy* (Strategy) is informed by community knowledge and insight that charts a path towards a poverty free Central Okanagan. It required collaborative initiative and builds on work completed by community organizations, leaders, and local governments. This previous work created a shared understanding of how poverty is affecting the wellness of residents in the Central Okanagan and identified the need for a comprehensive strategy that would support systems level changes to further reduce poverty and increase wellness. Together through this Strategy a collective vision has been created that is supported by actions targeted at reducing poverty for everyone living in the Central Okanagan.

Collaborating through Collective Impact

Addressing the needs of the community is going to require action from the whole community– from grassroots initiatives right through to the federal government. The various sectors of business, government, non-profits, and community groups all intersect in improving community wellness.

This Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy draws on guidance and best practices related to opportunities for collaboration among community partners, Indigenous communities, and local governments across the Central Okanagan. The history of the steps the community has taken together to create this strategy demonstrates collaboration and collective action, inline with a Collective Impact approach. Continuing this approach through the implementation of this Strategy provides a formal structure around collaboration that has demonstrated success in the region through other initiatives (Journey Home and the Upstream Project).

Why Poverty & Wellness Together?

Poverty and wellness are tightly interwoven and contribute to quality of life.

Often, definitions of poverty are narrowly focused on people's ability to access "essentials"—food, shelter, clothing, and transportation. While these necessities are critical to peoples' quality of life, the consequences of poverty are multi-faceted which is why this Strategy also considers wellness. Wellness adds a social dimension, recognizing the importance of maintaining physical and mental health, but also more abstract states like happiness, and feelings of belonging

The following are defined in this Strategy:

- Project background on how the vision and actions were created (Chapter 2 - Creating the Strategy)
- Community vision and priority areas for action (Chapter 3 – Common Agenda)
- Actions to reduce poverty (Chapters 4 and 5– Organizing for Impact)
- How to evaluate progress (Ch 6 – Ongoing Evaluation)
- A framework for taking action, focused on Collective Impact and Systems Change (Chapter 7 – Moving Forward Together)

Using this Strategy

This Strategy is designed for all community members and organizations who have an interest in reducing poverty in the central Okanagan. The vision sets out where the community would like to be and acts as a 'North Star' to guide actions. Partners and collaborators can align with the vision and principles reflecting on if their mission or actions contribute to moving the community closer to its vision.

The actions are not designated to a particular organization or group. The intent of this reflects that anyone with capacity and interest in acting can get involved. Reducing poverty will require lots of effort and action. The actions reflect both small and large system changes and fit a variety of opportunities to respond in the region.

A collaborative structure underpins this Strategy and is known as Collective Impact. This structure can help people understand how small actions contribute to system changes. The shared understanding and baseline numbers in the final chapter support tracking community impact over time. The statistics shared are part of showing where the needs are the highest and progress as work is done.

In organizing for Collective Impact this strategy conducted new research to:

- Establish a common agenda, clear problem definition, and identify a population level goal,
- Incorporate community voice, gain community perspective and input around issues related to poverty and wellness,
- Develop high level shared metrics and/or strategies,
- Identify mutually reinforcing activities related to priorities, and
- Highlight potential next steps to establish a formal backbone organization.

With this work complete, the Regional District, member municipalities and community partners will be well-positioned to begin implementing this Strategy and moving into sustaining action and impact.

Community Partner Roles & Responsibilities

There are many actors in the community who influence the well-being and resiliency of residents throughout the Central Okanagan. Each of these actors carry diverse roles and responsibilities. This section defines each of these actors because their unified action and collaboration to reduce poverty will contribute to greater system impacts and lasting change.

Local Government

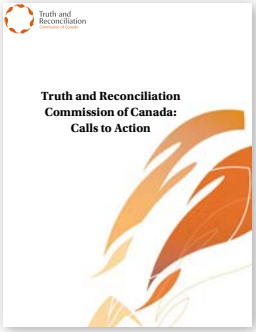
Understanding which level of government is responsible for addressing social needs can be challenging because high-level policies often delegate overlapping roles to federal, provincial, regional, and local governments. Regional and local governments are frequently not the lead

government responding to community social issues. However, local governments play an important advocacy role as they are in direct contact with residents and keenly aware of local needs and concerns. This valuable knowledge enables local governments to work together in advocating for change across a regional level. In addition, local governments have authority over a range of policies, practices, bylaws, and infrastructure developments that directly impacts what is built, where things are built, and by extension, the kinds of resources residents have access to (i.e., housing, amenities, economy, etc.).

First Nations & Indigenous Communities

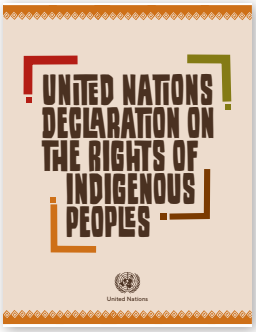
First Nations and Indigenous organizations have important roles and responsibilities related to providing health and wellness services to Indigenous people. Indigenous people seek to create respectful relationships and partnerships that support a pathway out of poverty and understand that unity is needed among Indigenous partners to push priorities forward. Indigenous communities are calling for local leadership to embed recommendations that exist within a series of documents to continue paving a path forward.

These reports all contain recommendations and actions that can be taken by multiple sectors to improve health and wellness for Indigenous persons:



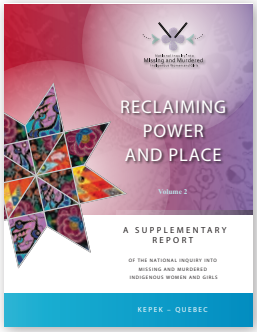
Truth and Reconciliation Commission Reports and Calls to Action

Read Report



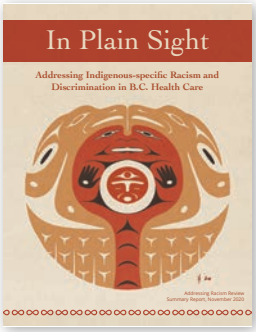
The United Nations Declarations of Indigenous Peoples

Read Report



National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Reclaiming Power and Place

Read Report



In Plain Sight

Read Report

These documents share ways in which to move towards safer and more inclusive spaces for Indigenous peoples and are a roadmap towards meaningful reconciliation. There is much to unpack within these resources, and it is the work of and responsibility of all those who are willing to participate in reconciliation including local government, institutions, non-profit organizations, and individual community members. Indigenous participants encouraged building relationships and listening to learn. Indigenous people want their stories of systemic and structural violence to create an awareness so that they can access services without experiencing shame and stigma and feel included as valuable members of our communities.

Non-Profit Sector

In addition to the role of governments, community actors—individuals, Indigenous communities, businesses, the non-profit sector—have their own distinct roles and responsibilities. Non-profit organizations provide critical services that contribute to social and economic stability and mobility. Non-profit organizations are often the voices of the people they serve. Through their combination of strong community relationships and intimate local knowledge, non-profits often understand their communities' needs and the best ways to meet them.

Business Sector

Businesses contribute to strengthening economic development and resiliency: they create jobs, improve local communities, contribute to the Canadian Gross Domestic Product (GDP), fuel innovation, and can improve access to resources and wellness for residents. When collaborating with non-profits in a community, the business sector often brings innovation, an eye for viability, and other needed resources. However, a business' viability is significantly impacted by local changes that can be related to community emergencies, crime, theft, vandalism, revenue loss, and employee recruitment and retention. An under-utilized strategy that businesses can use to counter these impacts is to actively support the work of local non-profits through entering a public/private partnership. These relationships help grow social enterprise businesses, employ people with diverse lived experiences, and test innovative approaches to community issues.

Recognizing these diverse roles and responsibilities, Table 1 highlights opportunities open to each community partner that can contribute to reducing poverty and increasing wellness throughout the Central Okanagan. This Strategy considers these relationships and their benefits to collective action.

Table 1: Roles & Responsibilities

Local Government

- Leadership
- Resources
- Aligns policies and plans with poverty reduction work and community vision
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Service Providers

- Aligns programming with community vision
- Provides services needed to meet basic needs
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Business Sector

- Provides income and employment
- Hiring, human resources, and employee policies impact individuals and families financial stability, work/life balance and overall wellness
- Skills and resources to share with other sectors
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

Ministries, Health Authorities

- Align funding and reporting requirements with community vision
- Ensure funding for services is available
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

First Nations & Indigenous Communities

- Leadership
- Resources
- Aligns programming with cultural knowledge and practices
- Provides services needed to meet basic needs
- Participate in Collective Impact through collaboration and reconciliation processes

CHAPTER 2

Creating the Strategy

For several years, multiple stakeholders, organizations and community members in the Central Okanagan have been working toward developing and implementing a regionally focused poverty and wellness strategy (Strategy). In 2017, the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Committee (Committee) was established with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy with an upstream focus on what causes poverty. Supported by funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership, the Committee set the stage for a community-driven, regional approach to reduce poverty. The Committee gathered insights from families with lived experience of poverty, provided a system planning workshop, and developed a work plan to guide strategy development. The Committee determined that further action was needed before moving into strategy development. These actions included a poverty analysis, community engagement, lived and living experience of poverty engagement, and the development of a governance structure with sufficient resources to plan and execute a strategy.

With additional grant funding in 2019, the Committee commissioned a regional community poverty analysis known as the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Analysis. The Analysis is informed by lived experience and key engagement from stakeholders including Interior Health, municipal governments, and First Nations. The analysis provides foundational information to focus the Strategy, including baseline data, insight into poverty at the community and regional level, and eight key priority areas.

In early 2020, an opportunity to build on the work completed by local governments and community partners arose through the Union of BC municipalities. The Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO) Board and member municipalities approved a joint grant application to develop a regional strategy to increase wellness and reduce poverty throughout the Central Okanagan. A successful grant application enabled the creation of this Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy. This Strategy complements many Regional Growth Strategy priorities, including the development of a Regional Housing Strategy.

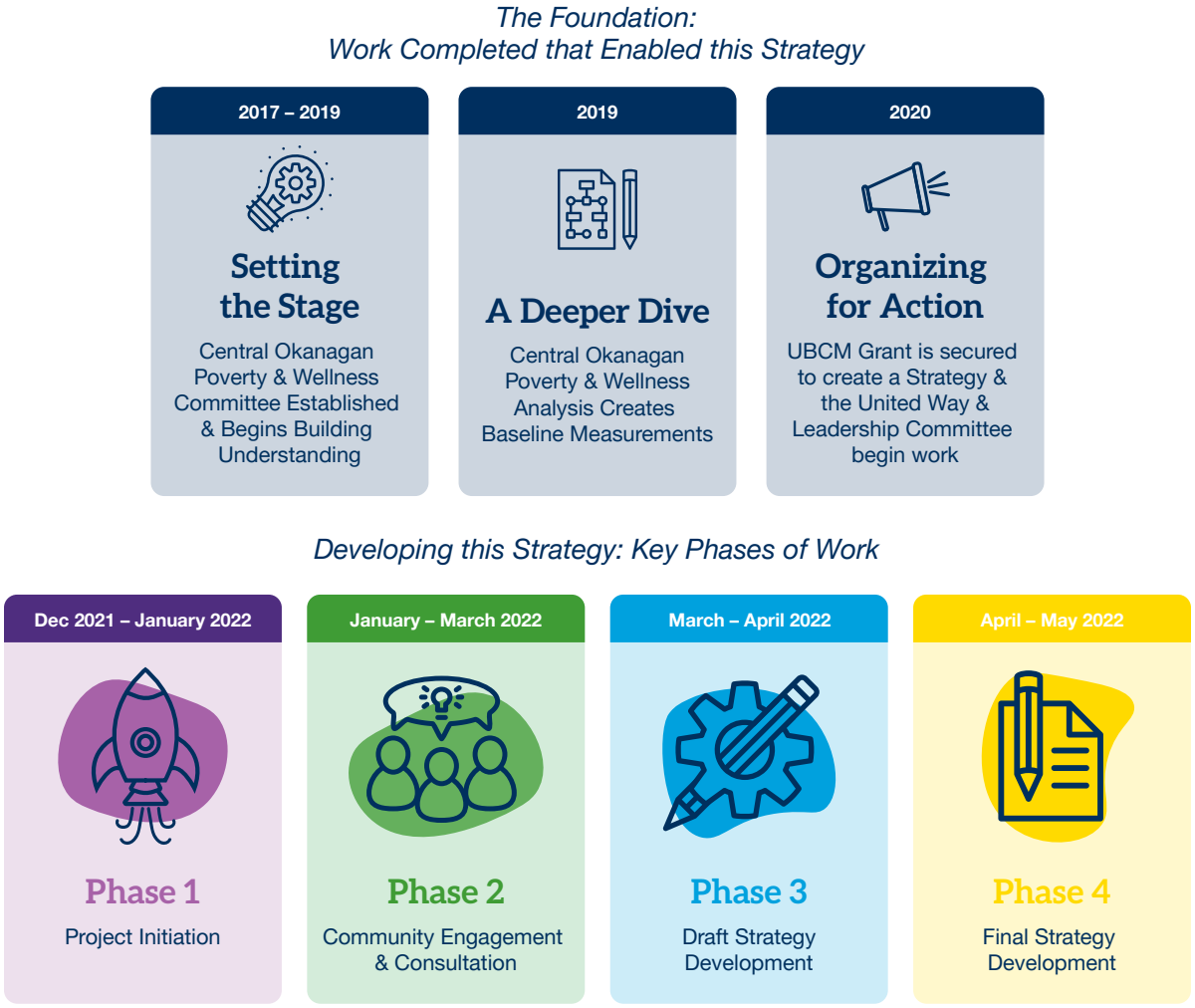
Strategy Approach

In 2020, a partnership between the United Way and the RDCO was established to achieve the grant outcomes. A Leadership Committee, comprised of representatives from local governments and community service providers, was established to support the Strategy's development by providing local knowledge, community connection, and a source for communication and outreach. A Governance Committee with representatives from each member municipality provided project oversight to ensure that the Strategy reflects the unique needs of each community, aligns with policy objectives and leverages existing community strengths and resources.

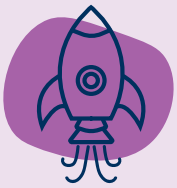
Initial work included community engagement, outreach, and a Lived Experience Survey. However, the project was temporarily put on hold in July 2021 following several complications, including the ongoing challenges from Covid-19. Consultants were later hired to complete the Strategy.

This Strategy was developed through the implementation of four distinct phases (Figure 1). This section includes a description of how each phase was implemented between December 2021 and May 2022.

Figure 1: Key phases of the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Strategy



Dec 2021 – January 2022



Phase 1

Project Initiation

Phase 1: Project Initiation

This Strategy builds on significant collaborative work already completed across the Central Okanagan. The Background Review accompanying this Strategy describes the Central Okanagan's past work and the frameworks used for approaching poverty reduction and wellness. It focuses on the documents described in the regional actions section of Figure 2. Underpinning these initiatives are Canada's *Opportunity for All* (2018) poverty reduction strategy and BC's *Together BC Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2019). Both the federal and provincial strategies set targets for reducing poverty across Canada and outline processes for achieving these goals. Connecting these documents to this Strategy allows for the Central Okanagan member municipalities and community partners to align their poverty reduction and wellness actions with provincial and federal targets, while also providing context on local issues.

Figure 2: Key documents reviewed in Phase 1

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Opportunity for All Strategy

PROVINCIAL ACTIONS

Together BC Poverty Reduction Strategy

REGIONAL ACTIONS

Child Care	Housing	Transportation
• Community Childcare Planning • Childcare Needs Assessment	• Kelowna Housing Needs Assessment • Journey Home Strategy • Healthy Housing Strategy • Regional Housing Needs Assessment • Complex Needs Advocacy paper	• Regional Transportation Plan • 2040 Transportation Master Plan

Community Wellness Analysis

The accompanying Background Review (2022) summarized research supportive of achieving improved outcomes related to poverty and wellness (e.g., the Priorities). The review includes poverty reduction in a policy context, best practices, and data collection. The review is comprehensive and leverages data and information from various sources to provide:

- An overview of the federal and provincial policy contexts for reducing poverty
- A summary of poverty reduction policy work that has been done to date, or is ongoing, in the region
- Data about key demographics vulnerable to poverty and poor wellness
- A review of key indicators of poverty and wellness
- An overview of best practices for collective action
- Regional and local area quantitative data that provides a baseline 'snapshot' of poverty in the region.

This information provides a foundation for the final Strategy by helping to identify service and policy gaps and summarize what is currently known about the state of poverty in the Central Okanagan.

January – March 2022

Phase 2

Community Engagement & Consultation

Phase 2: Community Engagement & Consultation

Following the review of background documents, community engagement and consultation were conducted. Over 750 people were engaged over 2 months. Figure 3 shows the types of engagement conducted. All the engagement collected provided insights from a diverse group of people across many different walks of life. The knowledge gained through this engagement phase supported Phase 3 of this project, the Draft Strategy Development. The findings from all engagement sessions can be found in the accompanying *What We Heard Report* (2022).

Figure 3: Community Engagement Summary

PUBLIC SURVEY	• Online Survey • 748 Participants
SURVEY OF PEOPLE WITH LIVED & LIVING EXPERIENCE	• Online and paper survey distributed in 2021 by the United Way • 223 Participants
COMMUNITY FORUM	• Online public meeting to discuss poverty, its impacts, and community vision for reducing poverty • 10 Participants
SERVICE PROVIDER INTERVIEWS	• For service providers working with target populations who were unable to make other engagements, interviews were held to ensure their perspectives were collected • 2 Interviews
PEOPLE WITH LIVED & LIVING EXPERIENCE	• A combination of questionnaires distributed by service providers, interviews, and focus groups with people experiencing poverty • 10 Participants
PRELIMINARY PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION SESSION	• A focused workshop with service providers and local government representatives to begin identifying possible solutions and interventions to reduce poverty • 11 Organizations
LOCAL AREA FOCUS GROUPS	• Local community focus groups with service providers in West Kelowna, Peachland, and Lake Country were held to gather community specific concerns and experiences • 16 Participants over three focus groups
INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT	• A combination of interviews, focus groups and workshops with Indigenous community leaders and service providers were held with Okanagan Indian band, West Bank First nation, Métis Community, Okanagan Nation Alliance, and Urban Indigenous services • Urban Indigenous Organizations – 5 engagements, 12 participants • Okanagan Indian Band – 3 engagements, 8 participants • Westbank First Nation – 2 engagements, 6 participants • Okanagan Nation Alliance – 2 engagements, 8 participants

[1]

[1] Local area focus groups were held in member municipalities to understand local experiences. Due to its larger size and population, more data is available for Kelowna, including more disaggregated data and higher proportion of participation in this Strategy and past engagements for other projects. Engaging with West Kelowna, Peachland and Lake Country allowed for nuanced local area understanding that is not as available in the data.

Summary of Key Findings from Engagement

These key findings contributed to the context of poverty in the region and the framing of the vision and actions within this Strategy. The following list provides a summary of findings in the Central Okanagan gained from the community engagement noted above:

A Vision for the Future

- A future without poverty means basic needs are met, and people feel a sense of inclusion.
- Work done to address poverty and wellness must take an intersectional and equity lens to ensure that no one is left behind.
- Service providers and community leaders have a strong desire to see social service systems be more integrated and streamlined to give a better experience to service users.
- Everyone needs some help sometimes, and a stronger support system should come with easier access to services, less stigma about needing help, and more crisis prevention programs.
- By bringing together multiple sectors (government, First Nations and Indigenous communities, service providers, residents, people with lived and living experiences, businesses, and others) this work will be more successful as the work can be done together and sectors can support each other.

Barriers Identified:

- Transportation ranked among the top choices of services that help or would help people stay employed.
- High cost of housing continues to impact residents negatively.
- Some groups of people are disproportionately impacted by poverty: Seniors and Elders, people living with a disability, and children and youth/ young adults.
- More and more people in the Central Okanagan need support with managing costs of daily living such as housing, transportation, food, health, and recreation, etc.
- Indigenous communities, who participated, emphasized that their experience of poverty is coloured by the ongoing impacts of colonialism, capacity challenges, and entrenched racism and stigma. These systems must be addressed for meaningful change to happen.
- Childcare was among the top services that respondents identified would help them acquire employment or remain employed.

Respondents who identified as living in poverty or having inadequate incomes had more experiences related to:

- Accessing services, programs, and other supports,
- Being in unstable or unsuitable housing,
- Struggles in acquiring necessities (e.g., food, healthcare), and
- Having poorer mental health and social wellbeing (e.g., feelings of isolation and exclusion, challenges accessing amenities and opportunity).

March – April 2022

Phase 3

Draft Strategy Development

Phase 3: Draft Strategy Development

During the engagement phase for this Strategy, over 140 distinct ideas for reducing poverty were identified. These ideas formed the starting point for this Strategy (see Figure 4). The ideas were initially analyzed for level of intervention (which level of government, what can be done at the community/ grassroots level) and then reviewed with community partners over three planning and implementation workshops. Workshops focused on identifying actions available to community members, rather than to governments, to underscore the role of the Strategy as being community driven. Actions that participants resonated with were defined in further detail. The process of analysis and results of these workshops are discussed in the *What We Heard Report* (2022). Once the draft Strategy was created, it was circulated to the Leadership Committee, refined again and then shared with the RDCO Board and the public for further comment.

April – May 2022

Phase 4

Final Strategy Development

Phase 4: Final Strategy Development

Once feedback from RDCO Board, municipal councils, First Nations councils and community partners was provided the Strategy was finalized. It was then presented to the RDCO Board to support final submission to the Union of BC Municipalities satisfying grant reporting requirements. All presentations included a discussion of the actions identified through engagement, and options available to community partners interested in acting.

Figure 4: Phases 3 and 4 - Creating a Strategy

GATHER IDEAS

- Background Review
- Engagement

ORGANIZE IDEAS

- Sort the over 140 ideas provided during engagement into themes
- Sorted themes and ideas by level of government responsible
- Idenfiy ideas for action at a local and regional level which can be driven by community

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOPS

- Discuss ideas with stakeholders and partners
- Identify additional ideas for community based action
- Sort ideas according to their level of effort and begin to prioritize
- Identify 'Big Ideas' that can be starting points

CREATE A DRAFT STRATEGY

- Draft a comprehensive report which summarizes all actions and begins to identify roles and priorities
- Reflect on how Collective Impact can be applied to create a structure for Implementation

DISCUSS DRAFT

- Leadership Committee sent Draft Version 1 for comment and suggestions
- Present Draft to RDCO Board
- Post Draft on RDCO Website for public comment

FINALIZE THE STRATGY

- Review comments, feedback and suggestions from Leadership Committee, RDCO Board and the Public
- Refine the Strategy and Finalize
- Present to the RDCO Board for approval
- Present to Local Government Councils, the public (through Housing Symposium and Open Houses), and local First Nations Chief and Council (as requested)

BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION

- Stakeholders and partners from across the Region can now take steps towards implementation of the actions.

CHAPTER 3

Setting a Common Agenda

Collaboration and strategic action require a common understanding and a shared vision for the future. This chapter sets a common agenda for reducing poverty and increasing wellness in the Central Okanagan. A community vision, guiding principles, key values, and priorities for action support the groundwork required for the community to have systems level impact.

Vision

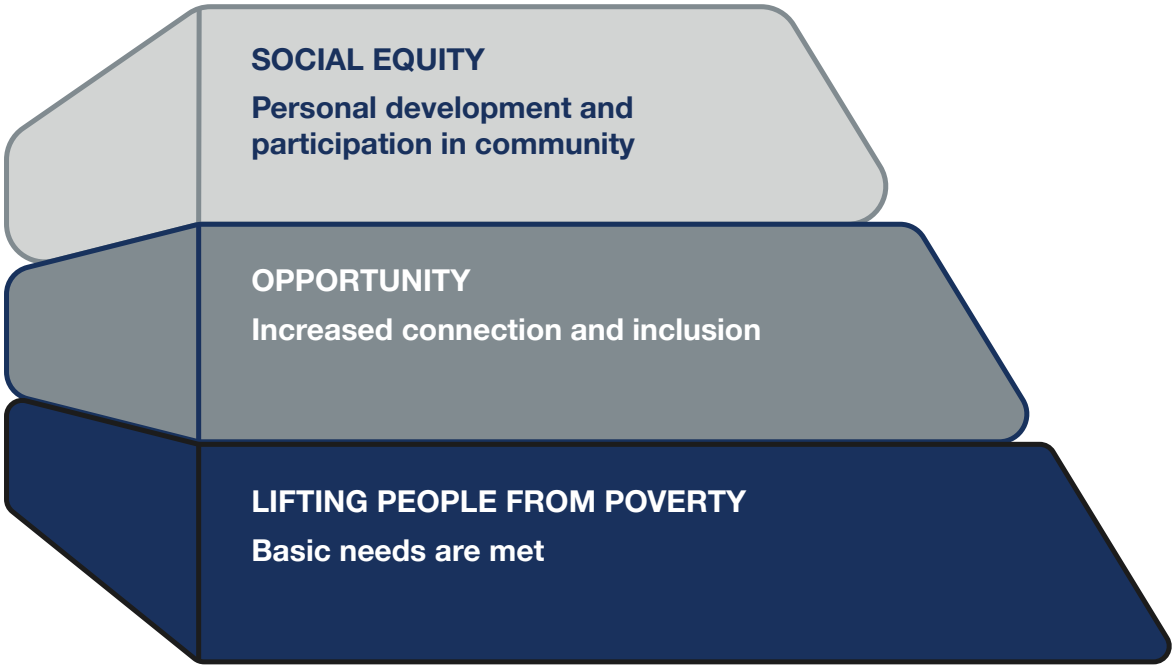
A community where every person and family feel secure in meeting their basic needs (e.g., housing, food, clothing, transportation, mental health, wellness, etc.), is resilient to challenges and setbacks, and feel a sense of meaningful inclusion. As people move from surviving to thriving, they can explore themselves and their community in new ways that bring joy.

Community Vision

Participants involved in the engagement process for this Strategy were asked to imagine a future without poverty. Central to the visions shared was the idea that people will thrive when they no longer need to focus on surviving. Visions of thriving included creating a more inclusive community where people are encouraged and welcomed to participate, where people can experience deep, meaningful relationships and build purposeful lives through participation in their community and healthy activities and opportunities. In this vision, health and wellness are also connected to environmental health and relationship with the lands.

The following subsections highlight key values that were repeated across engagement sessions in support of this vision. Figure 5 represents the hierarchy of well-being as key values that reflect this vision.

Figure 5: Hierarchy of Well-Being – Key Values



Key Values

The community vision represents the following key values that were distilled from all engagement supporting this Strategy.

Basic Needs Are Met

Ensuring that people meet their basic needs is paramount to achieving other values of the community's vision. Families must first fulfill their physical needs for communities to reach a state of interconnectedness and inclusion.

Connection & Inclusion

Meeting basic needs can lead to stronger family and personal relationships, as well as opportunities to participate in the community (e.g., education, employment, volunteering, recreation, etc.). A future without poverty would resolve issues of stigma and exclusion. Without the negative associations tied to harmful stereotypes of poverty, people would no longer internalize shame, would grow self-esteem, and access health activities. Improving relationships and

community wellbeing would reduce instances of domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, child poverty, stress, mental health triggers, and substance abuse. Feelings of connection and inclusion would grow individual self-esteem and increase communal regard for one another. An inclusive community must work to eliminate racial stereotypes and harmful divides between people.

Personal Development & Participation

A future without poverty where communities welcome a diverse range of individuals can provide people with the time and capacity to continuously improve their situations and engage further with their community. People would be able to invest in creating fulfilling lives and pursuing individual interests that may include education, employment, volunteering, recreation, etc. A poverty-free future will help people develop a rich social life, achieve greater self-satisfaction, and ultimately get more enjoyment out of life – a state of positive individual and community wellness.

The key values supporting the community vision are represented in the actions, as shown below:

BOTTOM OF HIERARCHY Basic Needs Are Met	MIDDLE Inclusion	TOP Personal Development
Meeting basic needs and focusing on intervention work alongside each other to ensure that everyone has access to needed material resources and are resilient to changes.	Opportunities for community members to come together, participate in activities and recreation, and feel a sense of belonging support inclusion and opportunity.	Reconciliation and collaboration are processes which encourage upstream action by addressing systems through multi-stakeholder action, and support meaningful ways for people to be meaningfully involved in their community's wellbeing (and therefore their own).

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for this strategy were created through an understanding of what poverty and social equity are and include the four guiding principles defined in BC's Together BC Poverty Reduction Strategy (2019) – Affordability, Opportunity, Reconciliation, and Social Inclusion.

Affordability

Establishing financial security starts with addressing affordability. Key components of affordability include the cost of living, housing affordability, and access to income.

Opportunity

Opportunity is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty. It means giving people access to education and skills training, focusing on regional economic development, and ensuring workers of all kinds have fair wages and working conditions.

Reconciliation

Government policies that worked to suppress Indigenous culture, languages, economies, and systems of governance have had lasting effects on health, well-being, and wealth of Indigenous peoples in BC. Despite these inequities, Indigenous communities remain strong and resilient. Ongoing systems racism continues to be a barrier to opportunity and economic security and needs to be tackled collectively.

Indigenous Experiences of Poverty

An Indigenous experience of poverty is one that is deeply embedded in everyday life for Indigenous people throughout the region. Regardless of jurisdictional boundary, First Nation membership, or Métis citizenship, there are both unique and shared community experiences, intersecting challenges and collectively held visions of pathways out of poverty.

A series of systemic policies and entrenched colonial values have, for generations, constituted a genocide of Indigenous people. Residential schools, the 1960's child welfare scoop, and ongoing social and institutional injustices have been paired with systemic racism, white supremacy, and a societal push for individualism that have intentionally dismantled and eroded Indigenous culture. This Indigenous experience of poverty is marked by intergenerational trauma and rooted in the loss of culture, language, and relationships. This fracturing of Indigeneity extends to interactions with the land, with family relationships, and cascades generations, fundamentally affecting Indigenous people's ability to connect with each other, serve as caregivers, engage in intergenerational knowledge transfer, and be stewards of the land as they have been for millennia.

Social Inclusion

A large part of community wellness is about belonging. People living in poverty indicate they feel cut off from their communities, and stigma makes it harder for them to thrive. Inclusion is a fundamental principle – it starts with creating a culture where people who find themselves in need of supports feel welcome.

Poverty Defined

The primary definition of poverty is the state of material or physical deprivation. Poverty exists when people cannot meet their most basic needs—things that are necessary to sustain human life such as food, clothing, and shelter. When a person experiences poverty, they are also deprived of the non-tangible areas that are necessary for a person to thrive. These non-tangible areas include concepts such as opportunity, happiness, hopefulness, and connectedness. This Strategy expands on the concept of poverty by also considering the impact of poverty on individual and community wellness. This consideration is important as poverty and wellness are mutually exclusive. When a person is experiencing poverty, they may also reach a state of deteriorated wellness which affects their ability to pursue actions that could lift them out of poverty. Therefore, a state of surviving (not being in poverty) and thriving (having good wellness) are central and equally important to the community vision identified during the engagement process.

Social Equity

Social equity is a collective desire to ensure all citizens across a community have fair and equal access to services, programs, and opportunities to participate, prosper, and reach their full potential (American Planning Association, 2019). By applying a social equity lens to address social needs in the region, inequitable conditions based on factors such as income, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, and mobility, among other factors, can be identified and addressed. This also includes the ways in which these identity characteristics intersect. Individuals can belong to many different groups at once, which creates unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. For example, a person may experience privilege associated with their race but discrimination for their abilities. Planning community programming and infrastructure with social equity in mind means actively working with community members who have been negatively impacted by social inequities to improve access and participation for all.

The application of a social equity lens is an iterative process that seeks to continuously assess the advancement of social equity across all municipal functions. The process is typically guided under a strategic organizational framework that allocates resources (e.g., tools, training) towards ensuring local governance is inclusive and facilitates equitable community development.

A sincere commitment to social equity requires policy makers to continuously challenge their assumptions, identify groups whose voices may have been traditionally overlooked in the municipal policy-making processes, and working to remove barriers to ensure participation in the community is inclusive of all residents.

Community-Identified Priorities for Action

In the Central Okanagan Wellness Analysis (2020) an assessment of local area trends in poverty highlighted priority areas for action. Eight priorities were identified through research, community engagement, and partner feedback (shown below). Through research and engagement for this Strategy, additional priorities emerged as new concerns were raised by community members.

Priorities for Process

Upstream Focus

Focus on root causes and upstream measures in addition to acute issues and solutions.

Complex challenges such as wellness and poverty have roots in the social, political and economic structures of a society. These are the 'upstream' causes of poverty and ill-health, which are symptoms of systems which do not produce or distribute resources to meet all people's needs. Addressing upstream causes means looking at how to modify systems of support and care rather than 'treating the symptoms' such as challenges in affordability, challenges accessing services, or isolation.

Community Activation During Strategy Development

Processes for determining actions engages and builds capacity within the community, community partners, and people with lived/living experience. There is collaboration across multiple sectors in developing and activating solutions.

The history of the steps the community has taken together to create this strategy demonstrates collaboration and collective action. Continuing this approach through the implementation of this Strategy provides a formal structure around collaboration that has demonstrated success in the region through other initiatives (Journey Home and the Upstream Project).

Reconciliation

Incorporate meaningful reconciliation priorities to support Indigenous people and communities to thrive.

Indigenous communities and other community participants emphasized that their experience of poverty is colored by the ongoing impacts of colonialism, capacity challenges, and entrenched racism and stigma. These systems must be addressed for meaningful change to happen.

Priorities for Intervention

Youth Poverty & Wellness

Youth have the best chance to access opportunity and establish themselves in early adulthood.

It is well understood that youth in poverty have a higher risk of falling into poverty into adulthood: youth wellness influences opportunities for future success and positive health outcomes (e.g., education, social connection, physical activity, etc.). Moreover, wellness affects youth personalities, ambitions, creativity, and social well-being during transition into adulthood. Without addressing the root causes of poverty among these households, these youth may experience poverty traps and "inherit" the socioeconomic status of their predecessors.

During a focus group with youth who have experienced poverty and marginalization, it was found that

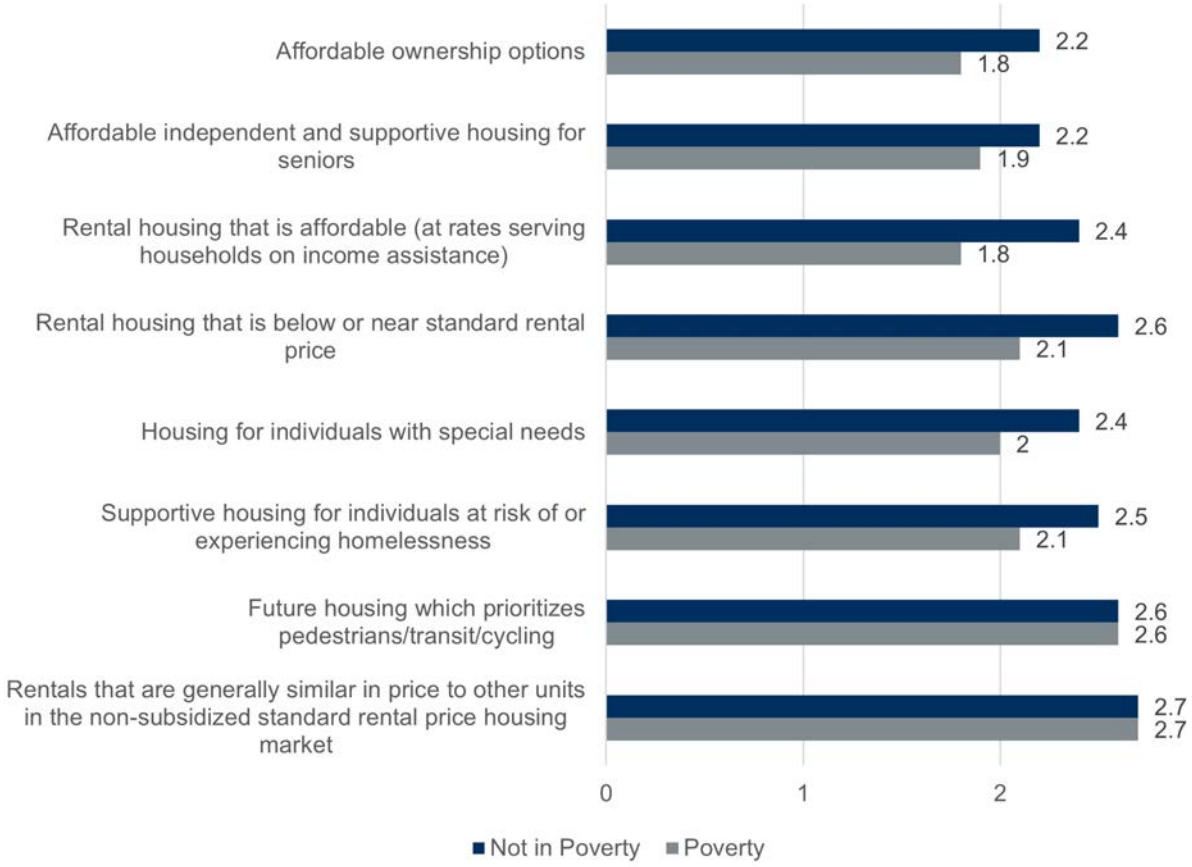
- participants commented on their need to begin to work at an early age due to their individual or family's inability to meet their basic needs. This led to lower focus on education or dropping out of school entirely and limited to no participation in sports and other recreational activities
- Money trauma was an apparent theme across focus groups. Multiple respondents experience chronic anxiety and paranoia stemming from their childhood and current strained financial situation

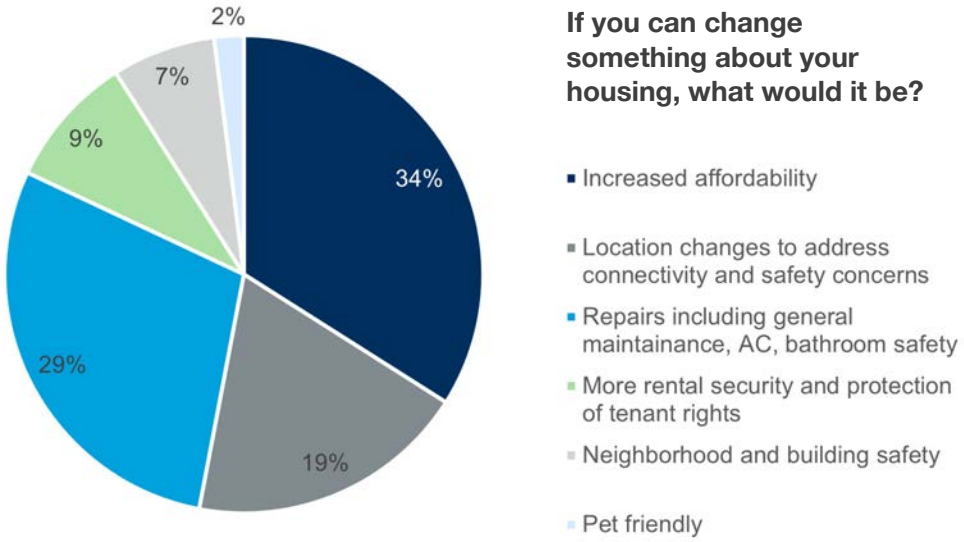
Regional Housing & Homelessness

Housing policies and practices are aligned to support housing affordability, accessibility, and diversity. Diverse housing options from emergency shelters to home ownership are available to meet people where they are at and support resiliency to changing life circumstances.

High housing and rental costs remain a significant barrier to thriving in the region. Strong leadership and decisive action are needed

What areas do you think the RDCO should target for provincial and federal support in the RDCO? Rate priority from (1) highest and (5) lowest - Average.

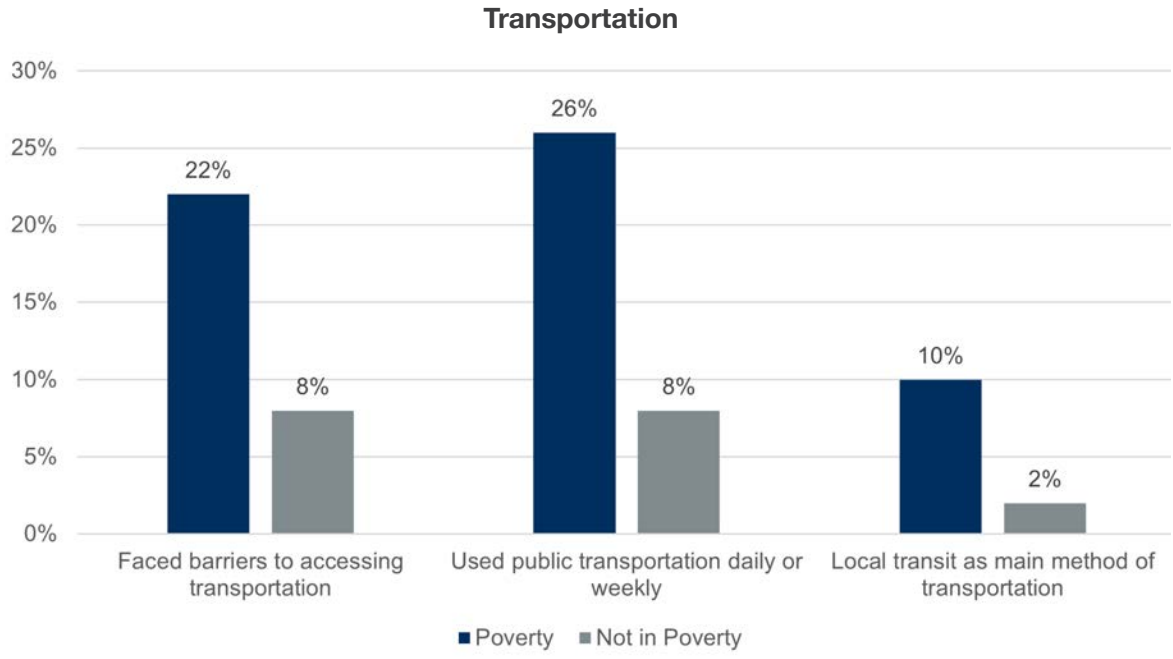




Transportation

Access to affordable transportation options that enables individuals to access various social health and well-being programs and services, housing, education and training, and employment opportunities. Alternatives to private vehicles are affordable, reliable and available for residents across the district with diverse needs.

Transportation was identified as a key barrier to access, limiting community involvement and access to basic needs (e.g., health and mental health services, employment, food, etc.). Results from the Person with Lived and Living Experiences (PWWLE) survey identified transportation as one of the top services that helps, or would help, survey respondents stay employed.

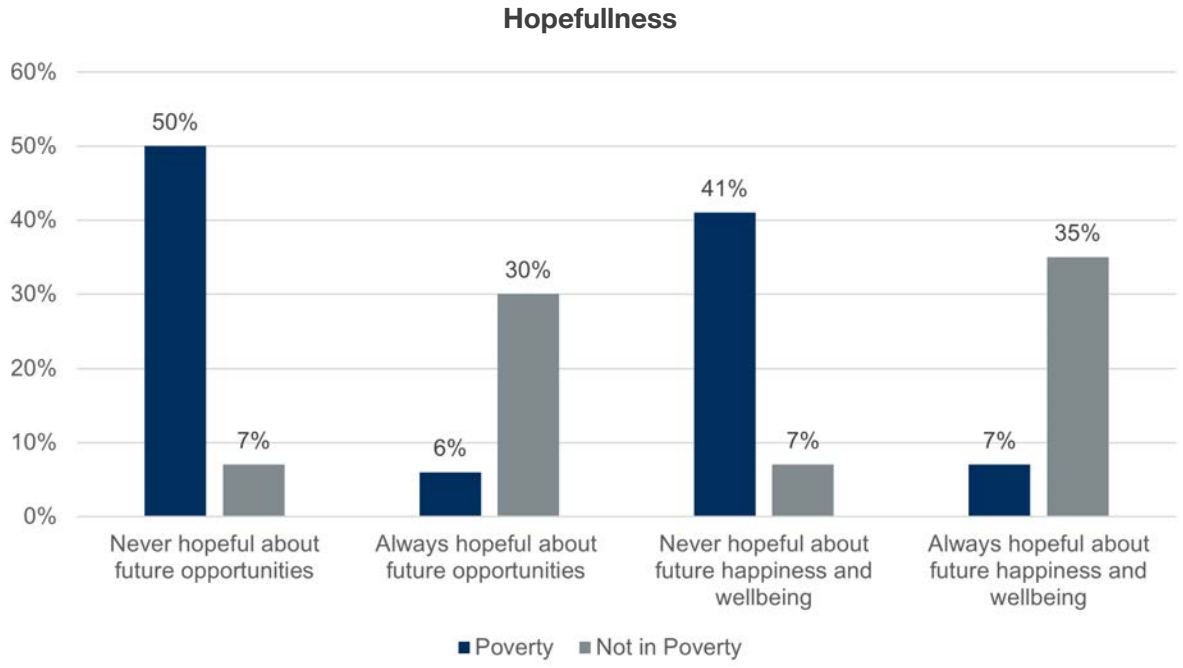


Isolation & Inclusion

People have relationships and connections to a social net which brings a sense of inclusion and belonging. Inclusion and social connections improve people's opportunities and access to the resource amenities in their community.

Poverty prevents people from fully participating in society, and this isolation combines with stigma to exert an emotional impact, negatively affecting individual mental health and well-being.

- Low levels of mental health affect life outlook, creating feelings of negativity and hopelessness that reduce capacity to seek out or participate in systems of support.
- Experiences of exclusion among vulnerable and marginalized groups increase isolation and create added barriers to service access.
- Covid-19 has exacerbated isolation and amplified feelings of community detachment, leading to a need for communities to support individuals in finding ways to reconnect.

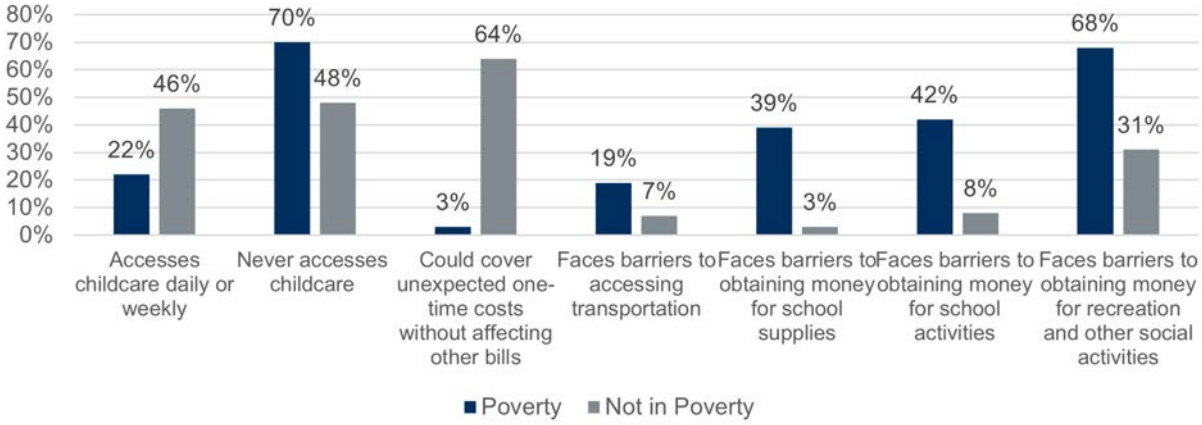


Child Development & Care

Children and families have safe, affordable childcare and developmental supports such as nutrition, health and mental health services, education and learning supports, and recreation.

A significant portion of families with children persistently face unstable housing, food insecurity, and inadequate income. Indeed, these have ramifications on the wellness of children in these households. These risks are even higher for low-income households with children.

Child Development & Care



Service Navigation

Every resident can access supports when needed without experiencing stigma, shame or judgement. Residents are aware of supports available and feel comfortable accessing them.

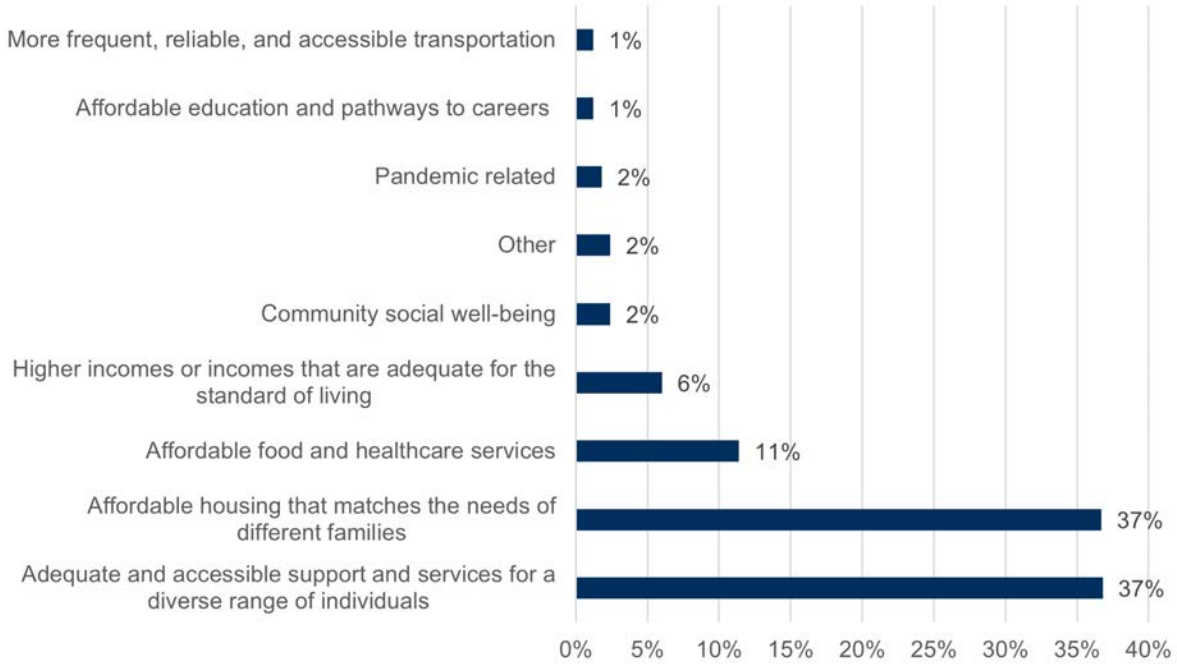
28% of respondents to the 2021 survey revealed they do not know where to access needed income supports.

37% of respondents of the 2021 survey reported being ineligible or being unable to access supports for other reasons

When respondents were asked why they need assistance seeking support the following themes emerged:

- Respondents feel shame and embarrassment
- Respondent do not meet age limitations associated with supports
- Respondents are unsure of their available options
- Respondents do not meet requirements such as age or income
- Respondents have time constraints that make applying for support challenging

What Would Help Lift You Out of Poverty



Health & Wellness

Opportunities for healthy activity, connection, and accessing mental health services are readily available for people of all incomes and life stages.

The 2021 asked what made accessing healthcare services challenging. The following themes emerged:

- Decreased ability to afford health-related services including mental health, dental, optometry
- Covid-19 related challenges such as restrictions, service closures and service capacity reductions
- Limited community service providers including family doctors, mental health practitioners, psychiatrists etc.
- Increased waitlists and wait times associated with health services
- Increased system navigation barriers including long health care referral processes, health service eligibility requirements and a general lack of awareness of health-related services available
- Decreased ability to afford travel costs associated with accessing health services
- Anxiety and fear associated with traveling to access services, combined with stigmatization related to service use
- Lack of virtual technology to connect to services

Activities that were identified as improving mental health and well-being in the 2022 survey included social activities, religious services, and recreation (especially the gym). The limitation or cancellation of these activities during Covid-19 left many respondents susceptible to reduced social connection and resilience and increased mental health struggles.

Food Security

Food security programs are part of an active and resilient community where people come together to share meals, learn about growing and preparing food, and build skills. Food programs are spaces for uniting and building connection.

Food is a powerful support for people, not only is food a basic need but a community meal or event can bring diverse people together and strengthen community cohesion. Rising food costs and the isolation experienced during Covid-19 impacting everyone.

Financial Resources

Households are able to afford their basic needs and access financial services. Financial supports are easily accessible when an individual needs help, whether it be one time or ongoing support.

Of the 38% of respondents who indicated their income does not meet their needs, the following patterns arose:

- 46% are unemployed compared to 54% of respondents who are employed
- Reasons for unemployment include retirement (58%) and an inability to work due to injury/health or a condition/ disability (55%)

Additional insights were captured through an open-ended question that revealed Covid-19-related work closures contributed to unemployment among respondents.

Emphasis on Prevention

Services are available to anyone who needs help and focus on early interventions to support at critical moments rather than crisis-intervention. Residents have access to opportunities which build resilience, connection, capacity, and financial security to shelter them from crisis.

A sentiment expressed throughout engagement was the dissatisfaction many service providers feel working in a system that creates poverty. A few respondents acknowledged feeling like services are a “band-aid”, while also recognizing their necessity. Respondents repeatedly noted that funding is designed to be reactive—supporting people through states of crisis—and that investment in preventative programing needs to be prioritized.

Identifying Actions

The vision, guiding principles, key values and priorities for action have set out specific actions discussed in the next Chapter.

Actions are identified as two distinct areas – priorities for process (the how) and priorities for intervention (the what). The actions were identified by the community through the engagement process and with the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Committee. They bring together preventative, upstream, and grassroots strategic actions.

Priorities for Process

The priorities for process reflect the values of how the community wants to reduce poverty in the Central Okanagan. The processes of Reconciliation and Collective Impact Processes ensure that diverse sectors work together and that actions are based on shared understanding and opportunity for inclusion and involvement.

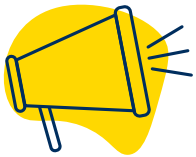
Priorities for Process

Reconciliation

Building Partnerships

Cultural Safety

Data Sovereignty



Calls to Action

Systems Approach through Collective Impact

Governance & Infrastructure

Strategic Action Planning

Community Engagement

Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement

Priorities for Intervention

Priorities for intervention reflect what the community wants to do to reduce poverty in the Central Okanagan. The priorities are:

Priorities for Intervention

Meeting Basic Needs

- Transportation
- Housing
- Health & Wellness
- Food Security
- Financial Resources

Inclusion & Community Belonging

- Community Events
- Diversity & Accessibility
- Welcoming Places

Preventative Interventions

- Child Development
- Youth Well-Being
- Universal Benefits & Supports

Understanding the Actions

The actions are shared in the next two chapters are sorted by process and intervention priorities, with specific actions shared for each of the priorities in each category. They are formatted in tables for consistency. The table below describes the content of each action.

Heading – the priority area these actions address	Now	Next	First Steps
	Do now = low effort, high value.	Do Next = high effort, high value	
This area describes the action which was shared as an idea during engagement.	These actions are the ones which require minimal resources to achieve but will have a high impact on reducing poverty and improving wellness.	These actions are the ones which will require more resources, coordination and effort to achieve and will need preparation to be actioned.	Suggested first steps for action or potential leaders in a position to act.

Amongst the actions tables, there are also 'Big Ideas'. These are examples of first steps to take an action idea and start strategizing on how to make it happen. These Big Ideas were selected from the 140+ ideas during the Planning and Implementation Workshops by participants.

CHAPTER 4

Organizing for Impact: Priorities for Process

Organizing for impact to reduce poverty in the Central Okanagan is a key phase of the Collective Impact model. This Chapter is focused on creating a blueprint for action and identifying immediate first steps which can support building capacity for systems approaches and community-wide involvement in solutions.

The Priorities for Process are foundational first steps which will make efforts on all other actions easier and more effective at achieving long term goals. By focusing on working together, these processes ensure that the components of success are strengthened, reinforced, and outline the next steps for each of the core processes of Collective Impact.

Equity & Inclusion

Equity and inclusion happen when diverse people and stakeholders are involved in their communities. By establishing collaboration and reconciliation as foundational processes, an intersectional approach to problem solving is easier as more people are involved in a meaningful way.

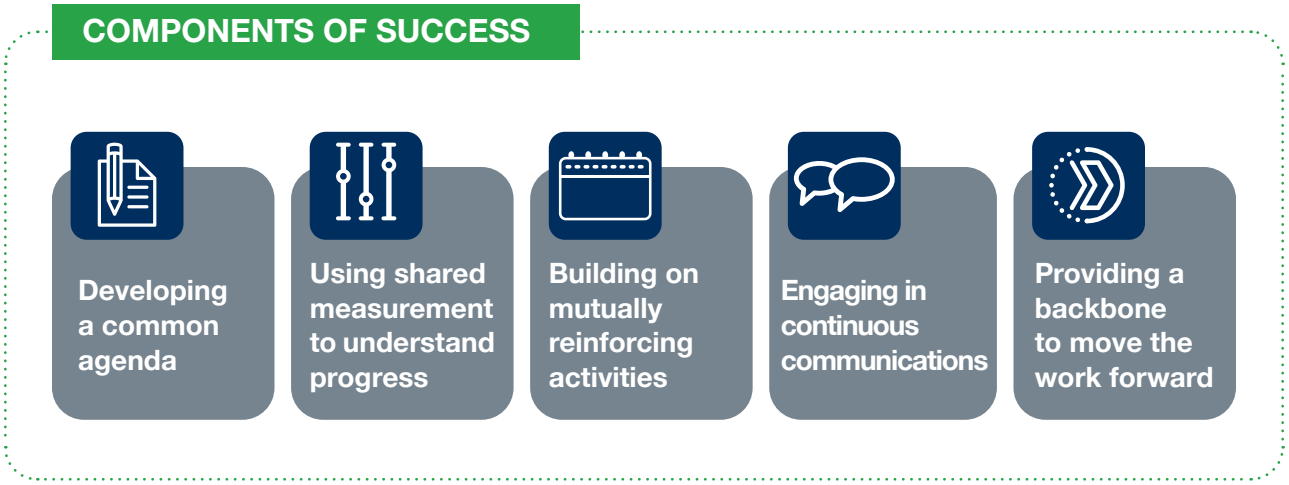
Collective Impact

Collective Impact is a structure for collaboration focused on creating lasting change in communities through addressing complex problems.* It is a useful structure that has been applied in many regions and cities across Canada to address poverty and improve well-being. Collective Impact approaches are not new to the Central Okanagan. There are several examples of Collective Impact projects already occurring across the region including the Journey Home Strategy and the Upstream Project. This Strategy is one more step in advancing collaborative action and approaches to addressing poverty and wellness in the Central Okanagan.

The application of a Collective Impact model involves three distinct elements – components of success, phases of action and core processes. The following three sections break down the features contained within each element.

Components of Success

The emphasis of Collective Impact is to facilitate and create components of success. These tools include a common agenda, shared measurements to track progress, mutually reinforcing activities to keep people engaged and facilitating ongoing communication. Central to this work is the establishment of a coordinating entity that can act as a backbone for implementation (Graphic below). It is possible for an existing organization to take on this role if resources are allocated to support their capacity in doing so.



** Tamarack Institute. (n.d.). Collective Impact. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/collectiveimpact.*

Phases of Action

There are five phases to Collective Impact identified by the Tamarack Institute, moving from assessing readiness and building action, to sustaining action and impacts. In each phase there are core processes related to governance and infrastructure, strategic action planning, community engagement and evaluation and improvement. The graphic below illustrates the phases of the action.

Core Processes

Facilitating change through collective action involves implementing core processes. Embedded within each of the phases of action are the following four processes that ensure a comprehensive response throughout development, implementation, and monitoring.

Governance & Infrastructure

Strategic Action Planning

Community Engagement

Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement

The actions described in the tables below are the array of possible actions identified through the engagement process. During the Planning and Implementation Workshops these ideas were organized according to the amount of effort and potential impact they could have on achieving community goals. The actions here were considered high impact and are shown as ‘do now’ (low effort) and ‘do next’ (high effort). During the next phase of work, working groups, community partners, and various sectors of the community will need to identify their specific roles and responsibilities.

GOVERNANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE

The establishment of a governance structure is important to achieving agreement on how partners will work together. Identifying who should be invited to the table, how often the table will meet, roles of key partners and decision-making processes are critical in collaborative efforts. This is even truer for collective impact efforts. In the early stages of a collective impact effort, asking the influential leaders around the table to look internally at their own systems and determine how these systems can change will provide momentum and early wins.

In collective impact efforts there are often many key players who have different levels of reporting and accountability. A clearly defined structure, which identifies the layers of accountability, will benefit the collective impact effort immensely. Developing a Terms of Reference is often not considered the most important task but in collective impact efforts, with so many moving parts, the terms of reference can be critical. They should be tied to the collaborative model and to any shared agreements. They also become a tool for partners to understand the role and contributions they can make to the collective effort.

Table 2: Create a Governance Structure

CREATE A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE	Now	Next	First Steps
Identify influential leaders and explore how their own systems can change to support the common vision.	X		Leadership Committee to discuss and evaluate.
Establish a Terms of Reference connected to the implementation of this strategy that outlines roles and responsibilities clearly for all partners.	X		Leadership Committee to create draft based on existing collaborative efforts and key learnings through this Strategy.

Once the governance structure is established among all partners, work can begin on defining and creating a backbone organization to support the coordination and implementation of this strategy. A Backbone Organization is a single table where the work of community wide poverty reduction and wellness actions are launched from. These tables have multiple stakeholders present who are supported by a coordinator with dedicated resources and time to support facilitation, recruitment, meeting coordination, media inquiries, information sharing, and reporting on successes related to action items. They do not have to be new tables, rather the role of an existing collaborative group becomes formalized and may expand through a governance structure and supported by funding for a coordinator.

Table 3: Establish a Backbone Organization

ESTABLISH A FORMAL BACKBONE ORGANIZATION	Now	Next	First Steps
Define and create a backbone organization.	X		Secure funding and determine governance structure.
Identify any local groups who may be best positioned to form the backbone organization.	X		Generate a roster of potential organizations, if available in the Central Okanagan.
Amalgamate existing collaborative tables/ groups where possible to reduce number of meetings.	X		Backbone Organization facilitator to do this as first step in building partnerships.
Invite Indigenous communities to participate in creating the structure and role of this backbone organization.	X		Indigenous communities to be included in development of the organization.
Establish a budget and source funding for implementation of systems approach and capacity building for collective action.		X	See sample budget below.

Funding a Backbone Organization

Creating a Backbone could cost the five local governments in the Central Okanagan $15,000 each, annually. Funding a Backbone Organization isn't as costly as it can seem. Below is a sample annual budget which demonstrates expected costs. The total is then divided by 5 for each of the local governments partnered for this Strategy.

**This is a basic cost budget. Funding for specific projects or initiatives would be raised through grants, fundraising or other means.*

ITEM	Estimated Cost
Facilitator, including WorkSafe, GST, and other costs	$55,000-70,000
Supplies	$1000
Website and Media to promote the work and engage with community	$3000
Event Supplies for attending community events or hosting gatherings	$1000
Total	$60,000 - $75,000

Table 4: Building Partnerships

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS	Now	Next	First Steps
Ensure multi-sector partnerships include Indigenous communities, school districts, post-secondary institutions, service providers, local governments, business sector, libraries, RCMP, people with lived and living experiences (PWLLE), provincial ministries, and the health authority.	X		Lead organization or coordinator to maintain a community partner contact list and begin recruitment of additional sector representatives.
Involve perspectives of people with lived and living experience in projects and decision-making tables.	X		Peer programs and supports help build PWLLE capacity for advocacy and participation. Connect PWLLE to working groups and decision-making tables.
Decision making tables to make invitations and reach out to PWLLE to participate. During recruitment consider how to engage people with intersecting experiences and identities (disability, immigrant/ refugee, families, etc.).	X		Backbone Organization facilitator to do this as first step in building partnerships.
Facilitate alignment of local initiatives through a regional approach to support shared resources and key messages.	X		Sharing local initiatives through committee meetings will help to align interests and reduce duplication of effort.
Engage and support grassroots initiatives focused on reducing poverty and wellness in communities throughout the region.	X		Understanding grassroots efforts across the region increases awareness of the diverse efforts underway.

Big Idea: Building Partnerships with Business Sector

Goal: Expand the circle of partners involved in this work to include businesses.

Key Partners:

- Business Associations (e.g., Downtown Kelowna Association, Uptown Rutland Business Association)
- Chambers of commerce (e.g., Greater Westside Board of Trade, Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, etc.)
- Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission
- Business owners and operators

Potential Actions:

- Develop recruitment and retention practices for people with diverse experiences and support employers to hire them.
- Strengthen relationship between businesses and the education sector increase opportunities for having staff trained in the skills they need.
- Enhance business sector capacity to support poverty reduction efforts.

STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING

This Strategy is a starting point for action and prioritizing next steps, however, further definition related to the who, when, where, and how are required to carry out these actions. Establishing a strategic action plan that contributes to mutually reinforcing activities identified by participating collaborators is an essential step to ensuring everyone is contributing and advancing priorities forward.

Table 5: Mutually Reinforcing Activities

MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES	Now	Next	First Steps
Ensure collaborators participate in strategic action planning and understand benefits/contributions to both their organization and the collective.	X		All collaborators identify commitments in support of the joint action plan.
Define community partner programming decisions based on community identified actions	X		Each partner needs to understand how they are connected to the strategy and what decisions they make contribute to the common vision.
Embed equitable community building within plans, policies and programs that will have a direct impact on reducing poverty and improving wellness among residents (e.g., Official Community Plans, Regional Growth Strategy, Comprehensive Community Plans, etc.).		X	Ensure regional, local, and Indigenous governments are aware of the Strategy and collective action model. Highlight examples of areas of contribution that will support the common vision.
Reframe decisions about the implementation of programs, services, and funding to align with the priorities of basic needs, inclusion, and preventative measures identified in this Strategy.		X	Non-profit organizations and community service providers respond to the implementation of this strategy through their organizational decision-making processes.

Table 6: Sharing Resources

SHARING RESOURCES	Now	Next	First Steps
Enhance existing systems that disseminate information about grants and funding opportunities across the region	X		All collaborators identify commitments in support of the joint action plan.
Encourage joint funding applications that involve sharing information and data across sectors to enhance application requirements.	X		Leadership committee or defined backbone organization can identify opportunities for joint applications.
Create reporting requirements that help track action and impact on this strategy across all community partners.		X	Backbone organization can support the establishment of a process for sharing data and progress regularly.
Consider investing in human resource sharing among non-profit organizations to address ongoing recruitment and retention challenges with the Central Okanagan.		X	Identifying the challenges that exist and creating a coordinated strategy will help enhance the sector's capacity to deliver services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Collective impact movement building relies on community engagement and is much more consistent with bottom-up community development, shared power, and principled community engagement. Authentic community engagement places the community at the center of the change process and ensures that those most affected by the change are involved from the start. The experience and insights of people with lived experience are vital if we are to promote equity and to ensure that those who are impacted by an issue can fully participate in creating change. Community engagement needs to involve active, meaningful participation and not simply consulting community leaders.

Table 7: Community Engagement

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	Now	Next	First Steps
Ensure regional and local resource/service inventories are updated and include accurate information is available on websites and social media.	X		Gather information about available resource/ service inventories to support understanding of what improvements can be made to communicate more effectively what is available in the region.
Create and design collaborative anti-stigma campaigns that communicate a shared message in plain language. This should include providing communication assets to collective members to further joint campaigns.		X	Starting with designing an anti-stigma campaign to raise awareness of the collective's joint efforts will help increase interest and track progress.
Establish a local lived and living experience engagement best practices guide to help facilitate inclusive engagement with first voices throughout the community.		X	Defining local best practices in collaboration with PWLLE will ensure community partners are respectful of first voices and have guidance on methods for engaging to support collective action.

Big Idea: Declaring a United Voice in Reducing Poverty in the Central Okanagan

Goal: Develop a collective narrative about poverty reduction in the region that amplifies the efforts of each partner.

Key Partners:

- People with lived and living experience
- Community champions
- Existing committees aligned with this Strategy
- Faith-based organizations
- Businesses
- Education Institutions
- Government Ministries
- Non-profit organizations

Potential Actions:

- Identify successful local/regional campaigns to model.
- Define purpose of message and audience.
- Involve diverse perspectives/experiences in developing messaging and approaches.
- Establish a strategy for how to communicate effectively to the community.
- Gather in-kind and funding to support marketing materials and campaign roll out

Big Idea: Fact Sheets

Goal: Create fact sheets on subjects like food security, childcare, income supports, etc.

Key Partners:

- Members of the Leadership Committee
- Media outlets – print, online, tv, radio, etc.

Potential Actions:

- Create public awareness of issues around poverty and possible solutions.
- Contribute to a unified community voice on poverty reduction and wellness.
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge resources.
- Create concise, easily referenced information for advocacy efforts.
- Identify a lead organization to develop content and support distribution.

ONGOING EVALUATION & MONITORING

Collective impact evaluations help collaborative tables to refine their goals, enhance communications and operations, and assess progress and outcomes. It also contributes to continuous learning which is critical to the success of the collective impact initiative. A two-part process that involves measuring progress and evaluating effectiveness should be considered.

Table 8: Community Engagement

REPORTING ON PROGRESS	Now	Next	First Steps
Update Community Profiles (Chapter 6) every 5 years (Census years) and report back to the community on progress and learning.		X	Backbone organization in collaboration with government partners can coordinate this work.
Relaunch public survey every 3-5 years to track changes in community experiences which are not easily tracked in Census or other data collections (e.g., sense of belonging and inclusion).		X	Backbone organization to work alongside partners to revisit survey design and to support engagement delivery of survey.
Continue tracking indicator areas and report back to community through annual impact reports.		X	Backbone organization to coordinate, write, publish, and distribute.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is an important path toward an equitable future. The Indigenous experience of poverty is compounded by ongoing impacts of colonialism, capacity challenges, and entrenched racism and stigma. The systems which have created and maintained colonial practices, such as legal rights and title, education systems, funding structures and governance, must be addressed for meaningful change to happen.

Actions to pursue reconciliation and meaningful relationships involve personal and collective learning about the history of colonization and its impacts, collaborating with Indigenous partners, building Cultural Safety, developing partnerships, acting on key reports and documents (e.g., In Plain Sight, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Report, and UNDRIP), and supporting responsible data collection and analysis.

The following tables describe tangible actions toward reconciliation that the community can take.

Table 9: Building Partnerships

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS	Now	Next	First Steps
Convene open dialogues and meaningful discussions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities focused on sharing knowledge to reduce poverty and increase wellness throughout the region.	X		Non-Indigenous leaders and community members to invite Indigenous peoples to engage, knowing that capacity, funding, and availability will require advance notice and patience in finding a time to connect.
Learn about and establish budgets that appropriately accommodate cultural protocols at events and gatherings that involve and honour local Indigenous cultural including Elder involvement.	X		Non-Indigenous organizations and leaders establish relationship with Indigenous peoples and seek out knowledge related to building awareness of cultural protocols.
Engage Indigenous communities on projects/initiatives prior to planning, and ensure timelines and deliverables are appropriate for the needs of all partners.	X		Non-Indigenous leaders and organizations to initiate and continue to foster relationships.

Table 10: Cultural Safety

CULTURAL SAFETY	Now	Next	First Steps
Define organizational commitments and develop plans to embed practices of cultural safety. Assess readiness to design and implement cultural safety training.	X		Organization leadership set out a course of action suitable to their programs.
Develop programs that incorporate Indigenous worldviews.		X	In collaboration with Indigenous communities, seek ways to Indigenize programs as appropriate.
Establish equal opportunity hiring practices that support hiring people from racialized groups, and (when possible) multiple people to avoid isolation in the workplace.	X		Update HR hiring practices / train recruiters in unconscious bias.
Provide staff with educational opportunities to learn about colonialism and discuss the importance of reconciliation. Make cultural safety and colonial history education mandatory as part of onboarding processes.		X	Appoint a lead to source learning materials/ opportunities and advertise / make available to staff.

Table 11: Data Sovereignty

DATA SOVEREIGNTY	Now	Next	First Steps
Use data with a decolonizing lens* by developing organizational protocols for using data on Indigenous peoples. Follow data sovereignty practices when collecting and reporting on data.	X		Funders and others who require reports review their data collection and analysis methods.
Use Indigenous indicators for measuring wellness and consult with Indigenous leaders to identify their preferred methods of data collection, reporting and how they define and use various indicators.		X	Learn or engage in training on Indigenous indicators and collaborate with local leaders to source local data.

Table 12: Calls to Action

CALLS TO ACTION	Now	Next	First Steps
Commit to self-education on key documents (In Plain Sight, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Report, and UNDRIP) and take the time to read and discuss them.	X		Create a database of key documents/physical copies and make available to organizations. Organize regular discussion groups.

** Indigenous perspectives reflect that data collection methods are incomplete and often not reflective of Indigenous experiences. Applying a Decolonizing lens when looking at data means considering how a colonial lens used in data collection methods and data reporting may reinforce assumptions and mis-represent Indigenous peoples.*

CHAPTER 5

Organizing for Impact Priorities for Intervention

To fulfill the vision of the community that all residents must have basic needs met as well as access to preventative services, opportunities and a sense of belonging and inclusion. It will be important to ensure that investments in new and expanded resources and programming are data driven and have measurement strategies in place to support impact tracking.

Preventative Interventions

Actions in this area are focused on universal belonging, child development and youth wellbeing. Prevention and early interventions can help people get support before they are in crisis. Collectively these actions focus on ensuring that young people get the best start in life and have access to resources to establish themselves, and that everyone in the community can access help and support when they need it across their lifespan. Services, such as Income Assistance, are crucial for supporting people who are struggling to make ends meet but who are not in need of crisis intervention. Breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty is also important and can be supported by investing in childhood development and youth services.

Table 13: Child Development

CHILD DEVELOPMENT	Now	Next	First Steps
Pursue funding for early intervention programs. Advocate to Ministry of Children and Family Development for more funding for these services. Fundraise for preventative programs. Educate public, philanthropists, and others who may be able to support as part of fundraising efforts.	X		MCFD is an active participant at collective tables. Fact Sheets on early childhood interventions, service providers and school districts work together to operate alongside each other. Example, explore opportunities with school districts to make space available for children and youth services to operate.
Reduce barriers and increase access to subsidies for recreation, health and wellness and education programs and opportunities for young children and their families.		X	Explore and map barriers to access and opportunities for collaborative approaches via collective tables.
Offer support groups for parents of children with disabilities	X		Organizations with a compatible mission make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.
Explore partnership opportunities to use existing spaces like elementary schools as children and youth service hubs where multiple services and providers can operate alongside each other and bridge youth, children, parents, and services.		X	School District leadership and participation. Provincial government needs to support through capital investment and policy.
Create opportunities for intergenerational learning by incorporating interactions with older adults into programming and childcare.	X		Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.

Table 14: Youth Wellbeing

YOUTH WELLBEING	Now	Next	First Steps
Increase number of afterschool and summer mental health programs for elementary-aged students to support resilience building			Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.
Increase opportunities and access to a variety of recreation programs for youth, identify barriers to participation, and map solutions		X	Map existing programming and identify gaps and barriers to access. Recreation services identify ways to subsidize youth recreation passes.
Develop 'adulting' workshops or opportunities for youth learn life skills (renting, cooking, taxes, banking, etc.) and support access to employment (resume building, interviewing skills, etc.)		X	Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan.
Offer support and coaching for youth navigation of education systems by offering scholarships and additional post-secondary education supports		X	Financial Institutions and other funders have scholarships available for at-risk community members.
Develop opportunity roadmaps (for example Youth Wellness Strategy, Childcare Action Plan)	X	X	Establish working groups for each topic area with collaborating organizations. Local governments see the value of these projects and invest in them.
Create volunteer opportunities, programs, and services during school hours for youth who are not in school full-time	X		Volunteer organizations connect with service providers to identify opportunities for youth volunteers
Work with children aging out of foster care to connect with financial support programs and employment capacity building workshops	X		MCFD social workers stay connected with youth in care after the age of 19. Explore opportunities to link with WorkBC services. Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.
Develop age-inclusive day programs and volunteer opportunities	X		Local services, non-profits and other organizations like churches or youth groups could look for volunteer roles which may be a good fit for youth. Communicate roles to school districts and youth services providers. Create a centralized youth volunteerism program geared towards youth seeking daytime activities and skills training.

Table 15: Service Navigation/Access to Services

SERVICE NAVIGATION/ACCESS TO SERVICES	Now	Next	First Steps
Bring services to clients by focusing services through community hubs Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.		X	Feasibility studies in each community to determine cost and resources needed for hub. Consider hubs in each community which share resources amongst each other.
Streamline processes for accessing services. Have central applications for multiple services, where possible, or accept confirmation of eligibility to one program as proof of eligibility to another program with similar requirements. For example, eligibility to a discount recreation pass can be verified by showing a discounted bus pass.		X	Government services, local organizations identify where their eligibility is aligned and which programs have proof of eligibility that can be used across programs and services.
Source land and affordable access to spaces to host service providers in heavily residential / aging communities		X	Identify landowners with space for service providers and engage to explore opportunities. Municipalities to explore opportunities to support through zoning bylaws.
Strengthen peer navigator programs to ensure that people are able to access services and feel comfortable doing so.	X		Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.
Streamline referral process between service providers		X	Maintain an ongoing resource list for service providers and explore opportunities for shared intake/eligibility screening and navigation pathways.
Promote services and system navigation making efforts to communicate directly with groups who face challenges accessing online information (e.g. seniors)	X		Utilize plain language approaches to increase accessibility.

Big Idea: A community resources guide which shares information about local services and benefits.

Goal:

- People across the region are aware of the services and supports available to them and able to navigate benefits.
- Resource guide to cover needs of a particular population identified as not being aware of services such as youth, elders, seniors, people with disabilities, etc.
- Widespread promotion of the guide to ensure that residents of Central Okanagan are aware and know where to find it and how to use it.

Resources Needed:

- A central database of programs, services, and their eligibility requirements
- A way to update the information easily
- Methods of pulling reports from this database for reporting
- Online and hard copies for individuals to access
- Single entity to manage updates and functionality

Basic Needs

Everyone has the same basic needs: food security, livable income, financial resilience, housing, transportation, and health. It is important that access to resources to meet these needs is available to everyone. To meet these needs there need to be services, funding for those services, and people need to know about the services and feel welcome to access them.

Table 16: Transportation

TRANSPORTATION	Now	Next	First Steps
Plan transportation strategies that focus on the values of poverty reduction: affordability, accessibility, etc.		X	When making transportation strategies, ensure that accessibility, affordability and access to resources and employment are embedded. Local government staff can identify where strategies can effectively address these values. Elected officials are informed of when a policy may have unintended consequences and solutions.
Supply free transit passes for low income individuals and households.	X		BC Transit and the Regional District create free transit passes program
Implement new driver training programs for people without access to a vehicle or a teacher. Could be subsidized driver's education courses, which also help to secure lower insurance costs.		X	Funding for a drivers' training program, subsidize drivers' education courses or provide scholarships to them

Table 17: Housing

HOUSING	Now	Next	First Steps
Ensure local government builds in poverty reduction and equity lenses into their work – use data from this report and research to help form the Regional Housing Strategy.	X		Local government staff can identify where strategies have impacts on housing equity and affordability. Elected officials are informed of when a policy may have unintended consequences and solutions
Continue tracking supply of affordable housing		X	Local Government Housing Needs Reports and Strategies
Implement a Rent Bank program	X		Promote and distribute information about the BC Rent Bank services available through CMHA Kelowna Branch.
Advocate to provincial and federal governments to increase funding, streamline processes, and increase access to housing financial benefits for individuals and families		X	Fact Sheets, data, common message, public awareness
Create informational campaign to educate public (and potential landlords) on challenges created by short term rentals and value of long-term landlords		X	

Table 18: Health & Wellness

HEALTH & WELLNESS	Now	Next	First Steps
Improve health appointment transportation.	X		Assess Handi-dart coverage and explore gaps in service access
Increase access to mental health services, including where necessary, specialized trauma therapists		X	Health Authority is primarily responsible for allocating resources to these programs.
Expand and enhance in home support programs to help people age in place, including Better at Home and Home and Community Care programs.	X		Health Authority is primarily responsible for allocating resources to these programs. Possible opportunity to explore connecting volunteers through Better at Home programs.
Bolster outreach services to have in-person interactions with members of vulnerable populations		X	Potential area for peer-support programs, youth volunteering opportunities (youth visit elders for example)

Table 19: Food Security

FOOD SECURITY	Now	Next	First Steps
Promote increased awareness of food programs and integrate them with other services	X		Map existing programs and develop a community data base/ resource guide
Divert food from the waste stream into a range of food programs to normalize and de-stigmatize accessing food outside a grocery store setting		X	Explore innovative food programs from other communities like Free Fridges, food boxes, etc.
Offer food education to youth that teaches good nutrition and aspects of food production. For example, school cooking/gardening programs.	X		Source the required funding and partnerships to create gardens and food programs on school property.
Design food sharing programs for people who face constraints purchasing, prepping, and cooking themselves. For example single parents cooking and meal sharing programs, people on fixed incomes, and youth.	X		A community kitchen where programs can be held, a lead organization to schedule, promote the program, and organize the meals.
Source further cold storage space to expand capacity for food recovery and redistribution.		X	Need to identify existing under-utilized cold storage facilities. Arrangements and partnerships to be made. Business sectors which use cold storage are a key partner.

Table 20: Financial Resources

FINANCIAL RESOURCES	Now	Next	First Steps
Ensure a range of financial literacy programs are available to help people with short-term and long-term needs (Insurance, education planning, budgeting, taxes, retirement)	X		Explore organizations who have this in their mandate, and support promotion and expansion of services.
Advocate to provincial government to raise rates for income assistance and PWD (Persons with Disabilities), reduce wait times for services, create streamlined referral and enrollment processes, financial supports for working individuals and families, services for middle income households, and more 'universal' benefits to offset rising cost of living	X		Partner with or join provincial advocacy organizations such as BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to move these actions forward. Create Fact Sheets to support advocacy.
Work to ensure employment wages meet Living Wage requirements and provide suitable income.	X		Develop a Living Wage information/education campaign to encourage all employers to move towards paying a living wage. Identify champions who can lead this work.
Hiring and HR practices across all sectors ensure equity and are designed for diverse people to obtain and keep suitable employment.	X		Identify and share resources that support employers to advance equity in hiring and HR practices.

Big Idea: Increasing resiliency through financial literacy and access to financial tools

Goal:

- Expand access to financial tools to reduce the cost and stress of financial management. For example, no-fee banking for low-income households, free investment and banking services, and programs to support people to get and manage a bank account. Low interest loans to cover off high-cost debt are other programs which could be explored.
- Build access to literacy programs by piggy backing on other services such as childhood and youth programs, recreation programs and services, and community gatherings or groups
- Target financial education programs at life transition points (preparing for post-secondary, completing post-secondary, getting your first significant raise, moving out of family home, pre-retirement, post-retirement, etc.)
- Lack of trust in financial institutions can be a barrier to accessing financial services. Build trust through learning and sharing to give people tools to make informed choices.
- Provide barrier-free access to bank accounts

Key Partnerships:

- Financial Consumer Agency of Canada
- Credit Unions
- Food Banks
- Financial Institutions

Inclusion & Community Belonging

Belonging and inclusion are important for everyone. Stigma keeps people experiencing poverty feeling isolated and prevents people who could use support from accessing it. Building relationships amongst diverse community members is an important way to increase belonging and community pride. Additionally, ensuring that services and amenities are designed to be inclusive, culturally safe, accessible, and available to everyone is an important step to making sure all residents can participate fully in their community.

Table 21: Participation in Community Recreation

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY RECREATION	Now	Next	First Steps
Create shared experiences that bridge gaps across community members by offering free, accessible events. For example, neighbourhood block parties, meet your neighbour day, concerts/movies in the park, skating, community meals, strong neighbors programs	X	X	Approach local governments to explore opportunities to support event coordinators, funding for event costs, promotion. Support community champions to apply for neighbourhood small grants (Vancouver Foundation).

Table 22: Diversity & Accessibility

DIVERSITY & ACCESSIBILITY	Now	Next	First Steps
Educate staff on privilege and internal bias, and offer empathy and compassion training	X	X	Ongoing equity and diversity education for all organizations.
Ensure that local government strategies, policies and practices consider equity in their planning and implementation.	X	X	Include analysis of equity in all reports and strategies. Council and Board members can request staff for this analysis before voting.
Develop programs for caregivers that celebrate shared experiences and provide access to support networks	X		Organizations with a compatible mission to make services part of their strategic plan. Existing services promote their programs in community resource guides.

Table 23: Welcoming Places

WELCOMING PLACES	Now	Next	First Steps
Provide workshops on trauma informed practices, cultural safety, and other training programs for those interacting with the public / vulnerable community members.	X		Source or develop workshops. Encourage organizations to make staff training mandatory to ensure that vulnerable people do not get further marginalized by services providers or public facing roles
Conduct cultural audits or create an internal process to assess equity, diversity and inclusion in organizations. Develop internal strategies based on where organizations are at. Review internal polices and create EDI committees.	X		Organizations seek out opportunities to assess their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion culture, practices and strategies.

CHAPTER 6

Ongoing Evaluation & Monitoring Progress

To ensure this Strategy can create lasting change, future actions and interventions will need to build on a strong foundation of data. This chapter describes the methods, tools, and baseline information that create this foundation.

Part 1 describes the indicators of poverty and wellness where actions are likely to be demonstrated as impact. Indicators are identified that will help evaluate future progress on poverty reduction and deepen understandings of community change.

Collectively, these indicators provide a measure of the impacts of poverty and wellness interventions. Implementing a methodical approach to tracking poverty in the Central Okanagan generates multiple benefits:

- Outlines clear priorities and creates a shared understanding of goals
- Provides a focus for research collection / engagement and reduces the duplication of work
- Generates confidence in the process, priming community, and community partners for future engagement
- Produces information to share with public and to be held accountable to.

Part 2 provides an overview of poverty and wellness in the Central Okanagan through a Gender Based Analysis + (GBA+) lens and summarizes baseline data through individual community "snapshots". Baseline data will be crucial for measuring the success of future interventions.

Part 1 - Methodology

Establishing a formal poverty line is key to evaluating the ability of actions to meet certain targets and goals.

In Canada, two measures are currently used. The Market Based Measure (MBM) is the gold standard. This measure has only been used for a few years, though, and so finding historical and local area data is limited. The Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) has been used for many years and so there is more information available to track changes over time and find local data.

Because the MBM limited data available at the subdivision level, this report uses LIM-AT to identify the number of people living in the RDCO and member communities who are living in poverty. Going forward, MBM measures will likely be more available at the local area level in Canada and future reporting should change to using MBM as this data becomes available.

Market Basket Measure

One way of measuring poverty is through the Market Basket Measure.

In Canada, the Market Basket Measure (MBM) is the gold standard for estimating the number of individuals and families experiencing poverty. The MBM generates a poverty line based on the income needed to afford a "basket" of essentials. The goods and services considered in the estimate include food, clothing, footwear, shelter, transportation, and other necessities like school supplies, recreation costs, and phone use.

Low-Income Measure After-tax

LIM-AT defines a person as low income if their after-tax income falls below 50% of the median household income. For example, if the median household income in an area is $50,000, then the LIM-AT poverty line is $25,000 (half of $50,000).

Disposable income is the income a household has after subtracting taxes and non-discretionary expenses. It is the real income a household has to spend on goods and services, which is the clearest indicator of a household's budget and capacity.

Poverty & Wellness

Poverty and wellness are two different things: people experiencing poverty do not necessarily have poor health, and people who have poor health are not necessarily experiencing poverty. However, poverty and wellness are often measured together as wellness is a risk factor for poverty. Societal stigma and discrimination mean differences with personal wellness, both mental and physical, can manifest as real barriers, resulting in added difficulty accessing education, employment, appropriate housing, and a host of other services. For many, including those with disabilities, extended experiences facing these barriers and added challenges can be a tipping point into poverty.

One way of reducing these barriers to access is by improving community wellness and facilitating equitable access to opportunities. For example, when a community has access to their environment (e.g., through transit), people are better able to engage in meaningful work and social engagement. These changes can promote more investment in social capital within a community. More income can also increase a community's tax base which means a community has more resources for more amenities.

Indicators to Measure Success

Indicators provide insight into peoples' experience of poverty and wellness. To help with ongoing evaluation, each of the 5 initially identified priority areas from the Community Wellness Analysis were paired with a set of indicators. Indicators were selected based on data availability, their relevance to the priority areas, and their alignment with other poverty reduction strategies (Together BC, Opportunity for All). When considered together, these indicators enable assessment of poverty reduction actions and tracking of emerging patterns and trends.

Because poverty is complex and arises from many intersecting factors, multiple indicators are needed to appropriately capture the scope of each priority area. The following table provides a summary of each indicator and a description of their overall relevance to the priority area. More detailed information on each indicator is available in the Background Report.

KEY PRIORITY AREAS

Income & Poverty

Indicator

- LIM-AT
- Education level
- Median Household Income
- Main industries

Description

Reporting on the income and economic statistics helps identify who is experiencing relative low-income (LIM-AT). Reporting by sex (male female), household incomes, and education level helps identify which individuals and families may be struggling more than others. For example, it is common for females to make less income than males.

Youth Poverty & Wellness

Indicator

- Youth living in a low-income household
- Youth (12-17) charged with crime

Description

The number of youths (0-17) in families experiencing relative low income and the number of youths (12-17) charged with crime per 100,000 people helps us understand the experiences and opportunities available to youths in the Central Okanagan. High relative low-income and crime rates may indicate that there are deficient pathways to enhancing community wellbeing for youths.

Regional Housing & Homelessness

Indicator

- Core Housing Need
- Extreme Core Housing Need
- Homelessness

Description

Households with core housing needs are those with homes that are inadequate (requiring major repairs) or unsuitable (size and bedrooms do not match the household composition). Moreover, the housing costs are also unaffordable (spending more than 30% of their before-tax income). Core housing needs speak to how secure a household's shelter is and affects other dimensions of wellbeing. As housing is the largest expense for many families, it also affects how much money households allot to other necessities.

Point-in-time (PiT) estimates for homelessness are provided when available, which provides a snapshot of how many and sometimes why people experience homelessness.

Transportation

Indicator

- Trip Mode share

Description

Trip mode share indicates which modes of transportation people primarily rely on. The distribution of transportation modes has implications on the infrastructure of several types of transportation in the Central Okanagan

KEY PRIORITY AREAS

Isolation & Inclusion

Indicator	Description
• Crime Severity Index • Violent Crime Severity Index • Sense of belonging to community	Crime is a symptom of dysfunction within a society and provides a snapshot of how people respond to various pressures, opportunity gaps, and inequities. The Crime Severity Index (CSI) assigns weights to crimes based on how long the sentences were. More severe crimes (e.g., longer sentences) are weighed higher. A rising index means that crimes are becoming more severe. The base year is 2006 (e.g., 2006 = 100) meaning that every year's value is relative to 2006. There are two indexes presented: the Crime Severity Index and the Violent Crime Severity Index. Sense of belonging is a direct measure of isolation and inclusion. This indicator was derived from the Canadian Community Health Survey. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had a somewhat/very strong or somewhat/very weak sense of belonging. This indicator was only available at the Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA).

Child Development & Care

Indicator	Description
• Early Development Instrument	The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures how many kindergarten children are vulnerable in 5 core predictors of adult health: physical health & wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language & cognitive development, communication skills & general knowledge. Children between the age of 3.5 and 6.5 are assessed to determine their development as they transition to school-age.

There are many other indicators and measurements which can be used to assess and understand the wellness and resiliency of communities. The indicators selected for these profiles are readily available and reported on by governments, making them easy to update and track over time. Other metrics may be identified over time to measure the impact of specific programs or actions, and tools may be developed as part of Collective Impact evaluation as community specific indicators or data are sourced.

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

Between 2016 and 2021, the RDCO's population grew **14%** from **194,892** to **222,162** residents.

POPULATION

222,162

14% CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-17)

12% YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)

53% ADULTS (25-64)

21% SENIORS (65+)

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income

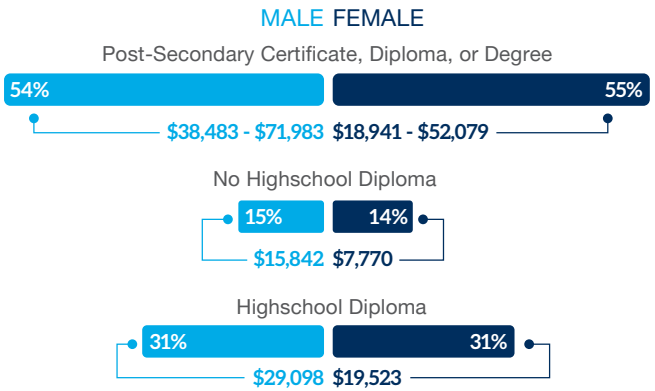
2016-2019	RDCO	BC
North American Aboriginal	7%	7%
Other North American	26%	20%
European	82%	63%
Caribbean	1%	1%
Latin, Central, and South American	1%	2%
African	1%	1%
Asian	7%	29%
Oceania	1%	1%

EDUCATION

Socioeconomic Profile

There was a slightly greater proportion of females who were post-secondary educated; however, females earned significantly less than males across all levels of education. A common finding among all the communities in the RDCO is the lower income range for post-secondary educated females and females with less than a high school diploma earning approximately half of males.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

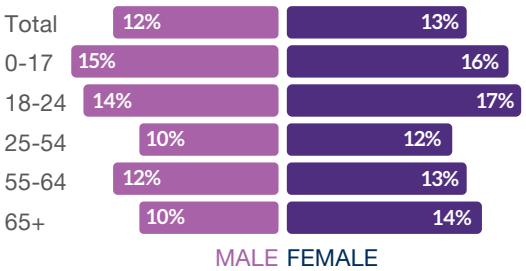
The lowest earning family type in the RDCO was unattached individuals, whose median household incomes were less than a third of the total average.

Median Household Income

$69,642	$98,614	$47,368	$27,881
Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached individual(s)

Females had higher rates of relative low-income at all age groups, compared to males. The largest difference in rates was at the 65+ age group, indicating that female seniors were more vulnerable than male seniors. However, youths and young adults in the RDCO were at the most at-risk age group.

Low-income measure after-tax



EMPLOYMENT

Key industries by sex

MALE

1. Construction (18%)
2. Retail Trade (12%)
3. Manufacturing (8%)
4. Accommodation & Food Services (7%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (23%)
2. Retail Trade (14%)
3. Accommodation & Food Services (11%)
4. Educational Services (9%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)

RDCO PRIORITY AREAS

HOUSING

Rate of core housing need: The rate of core housing need in the RDCO in 2016 was **10%**, 5 percentage points lower than BC.

Homelessness: In 2018, there were at least **677** people experiencing homelessness in the RDCO, based on point-in-time counts in Kelowna and West Kelowna. This number is likely to be larger, but other communities did not have estimates. There were **2,239** non-market units available in the RDCO, **387** of which were emergency shelters or housing for the homeless (the latter all being in Kelowna). In the RDCO, there were **259** persons on the waitlist for non-market housing in 2018.

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

In 2016-2017, **72%** of people over the age of 12 in the Okanagan Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA) had a somewhat or strong sense of belonging to their community; down **1 percentage** point from 2015-2016.

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

Children and youths (0-17) and young adults (18-24) in the RDCO had very high LIM-AT rates compared to other age groups and the general population.

TRANSPORTATION

The most common method of transportation in the RDCO was using personal vehicles, with **86%** of people driving or being a passenger.

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
68%	18%	3%	2%	8%	2%	1%

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Central Okanagan School District	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%
BC	33%	14%	18%	11%	15%	16%

Compared to BC, kindergarten children in the Central Okanagan school district had lower rates of vulnerability across all 5 core predictors of adult health.

Lake Country

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Lake Country's population grew **22%** from **12,922** to **15,817** residents.

POPULATION

15,817

- **16%** CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-17)
- **11%** YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)
- **57%** ADULTS (25-64)
- **17%** SENIORS (65+)

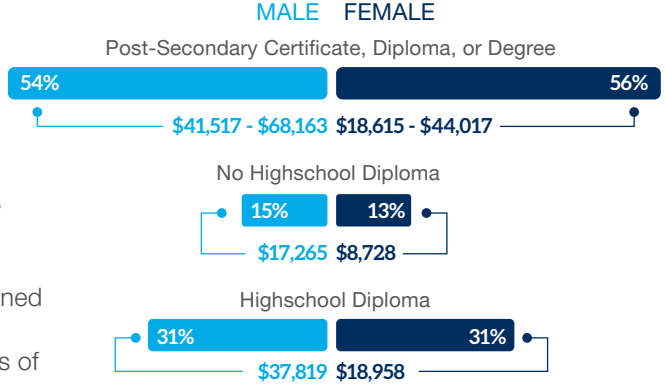
Compared to the RDCO, Lake Country's population is **3** percentage points higher in Other North American descent and **3** percentage points lower in Asian descent.

Socioeconomic Profile

EDUCATION

There was a greater proportion of females who were post-secondary educated; however, females earned significantly less than males across all levels of education.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

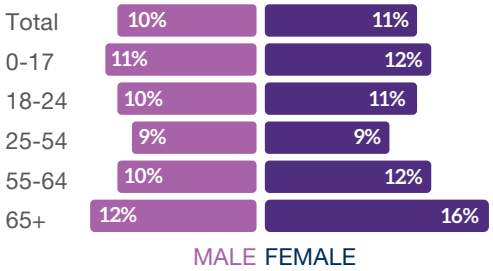
The most vulnerable family type in the Lake Country was unattached individuals, whose median household incomes were approximately a third of the total average.

Median Household Income

Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached Individual(s)
$87,501	**$100,192**	**$46,976**	**$29,163**

Females had slightly higher rates of relative low-income at all age groups, compared to males, likely reflecting females' lower median employment incomes across all levels of education. Like the RDCO, the most significant gap was between males and females over 65.

Low-income measure after-tax



Key industries by sex

EMPLOYMENT

MALE

1. Construction (17%)
2. Manufacturing (11%)
3. Retail Trade (11%)
4. Transportation & Warehousing (9%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (6%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (18%)
2. Accommodation & Food Services (13%)
3. Retail Trade (11%)
4. Educational Services (10%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (8%)

LAKE COUNTRY PRIORITY AREAS

HOUSING

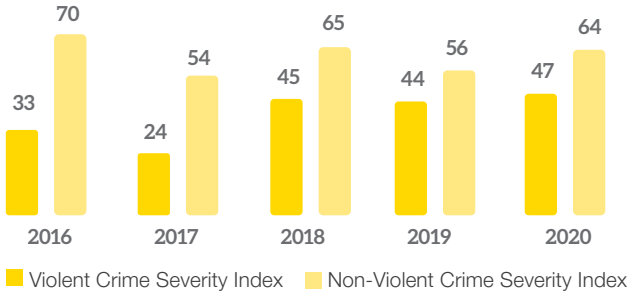
The rate of core housing need was **8%**, which was 2 percentage points lower than the RDCO.

Homelessness: A point in time estimate in 2018 revealed that there was no one experiencing visible homelessness in Lake Country. Those who were experiencing homelessness likely would have moved to Kelowna where there are more support options.

Source: rdco.com - District of Lake Country Housing Highlights

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Crime Indicators in Lake Country



Compared to other communities in the RDCO, crimes were significantly less severe in Lake Country.

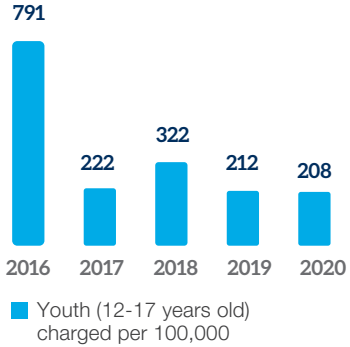
TRANSPORTATION

A slightly higher percentage of people relied on vehicles for mobility in Lake Country than the RDCO. There were much lower rates of active transport in Lake Country than the RDCO.

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
73%	16%	3%	3%	4%	0%	0%

Source: Smart Trips - Okanagan Travel Survey 2018 Report

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS



The number of youths charged per 100,000 has significantly decreased since 2016.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Lake Country-Oyama	36%	11%	18%	14%	17%	16%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%

Compared to the Central Okanagan school district, the Lake Country-Oyama school district had a larger proportion of kindergarten children experiencing vulnerability in any of the 5 core predictors of adult health, most significantly in cognitive and physical competences.

City of Kelowna

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Kelowna's population grew **14%** from **127,390** to **144,576** residents.

POPULATION

144,576

- **14%** CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-17)
- **13%** YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)
- **53%** ADULTS (25-64)
- **21%** SENIORS (65+)

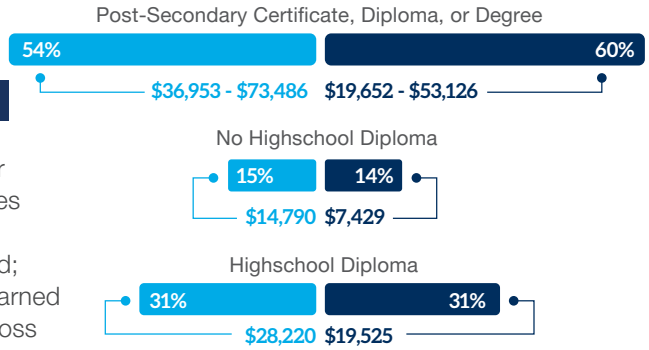
Compared to the RDCO, Kelowna's population is **2 percentage points** lower in Asian descent.

Socioeconomic Profile

EDUCATION

There was a greater proportion of females who were post-secondary educated; however, females earned less than males across all levels of education.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

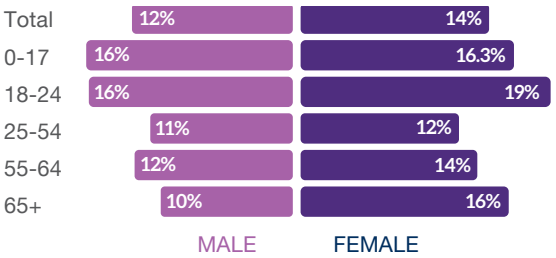
The most vulnerable family type in the Kelowna was unattached individuals, whose median household incomes were approximately a third of the total average.

$69,711	$99,390	$47,077	$27,469
Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached individual(s)

Median Household Income

Females had higher rates of relative low-income at all age groups, compared to males. The largest difference in rates at **6 percentage points** were between males and females over the age of 65.

Low-income measure after-tax



Key industries by sex

EMPLOYMENT

MALE

1. Construction (18%)
2. Retail Trade (12%)
3. Accommodation & Food Services (8%)
4. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)
5. Manufacturing (7%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (23%)
2. Retail Trade (14%)
3. Accommodation & Food Services (12%)
4. Educational Services (9%)
5. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

CITY OF KELOWNA PRIORITY AREAS

City of Kelowna

HOUSING

Rate of core housing need (2016): The rate of core housing need in Kelowna was **12%**, which was 2% points greater than the RDCO.

Homelessness: Point-in-time counts of the number of people experiencing homelessness in Kelowna was **605** in 2018, **286** of whom were sheltered or unsheltered and **319** were temporarily housed. Most of the people experiencing homelessness in Kelowna were men and **26%** were Indigenous or had Indigenous ancestry. The topmost common reasons for absolute homelessness were household conflict, inadequate income, high rents, substance abuse, conflict with the landlord, and health conditions.

TRANSPORTATION

While people in Kelowna relied on vehicles for mobility, the rates was **2 percentage points** lower than the RDCO.

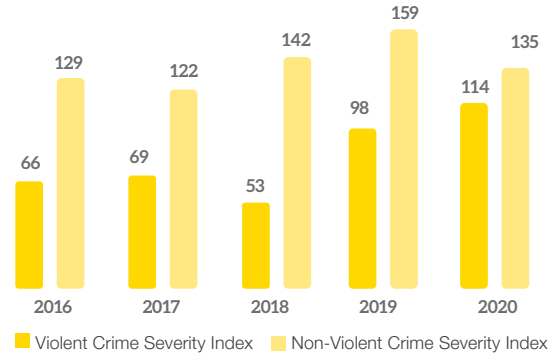
Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
66%	18%	3%	2%	8%	2%	1%

Early Development Index

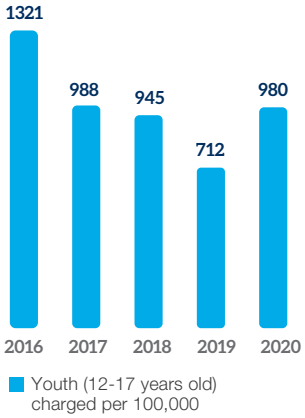
2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Glenmore-Dilworth	23%	9%	13%	7%	12%	11%
Central Kelowna	30%	12%	17%	9%	15%	16%
Mission-South Kelowna	20%	4%	12%	3%	9%	9%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Crime Indicators in Kelowna



While non-violent crimes have remained consistent in Kelowna, violent crimes have steadily become more severe since 2016.



YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

Children and youths (0-17) and young adults (18-24) had the highest LIM-AT rates in Kelowna, but female young adults were more impacted than male young adults. The number of youths per 100,000 charged in Kelowna has declined since 2016, with a significant dip in 2019.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

Compared to other school districts in Kelowna, the Central Kelowna school district had the highest rates of vulnerability among kindergarten children across all 5 core predictors of adult health.

West Kelowna

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

Between 2016 and 2021, West Kelowna's population grew **11%** from **32,655** to **36,078** residents.

POPULATION

36,078

17% CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-24)

11% YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)

52% ADULTS (25-64)

20% SENIORS (65+)

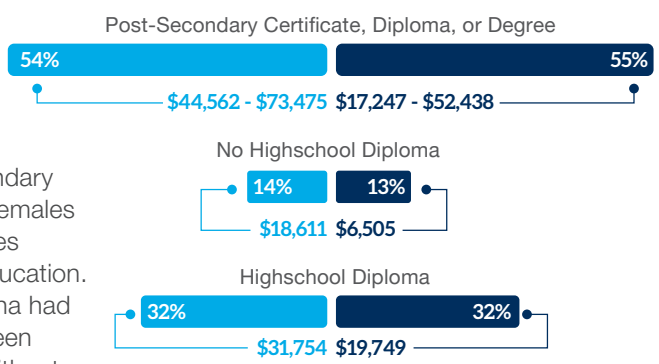
Compared to the RDCO, West Kelowna's population is **3 percentage points** higher in European descent and **2 percentage points** lower in Asian descent.

Socioeconomic Profile

EDUCATION

There was a greater proportion of females who were post-secondary educated; however, females earned less than males across all levels of education. Notably, West Kelowna had the largest gap between males and females without a high school diploma.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

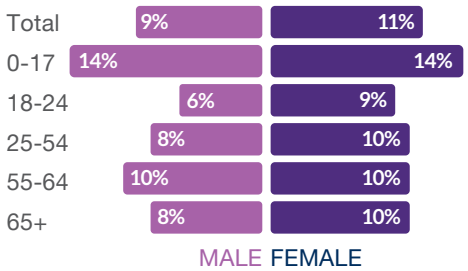
While most family types in West Kelowna had higher median household incomes than other communities in the RDCO, the most vulnerable family type was still unattached individuals.

Median Household Income

Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached Individual(s)
$72,292	$101,241	$50,546	$30,060

West Kelowna had the lowest LIM-AT rates in the RDCO. Females still had higher rates of relative low-income at all age groups, compared to males; however, the gap between males and females was not as severe.

Low-income measure after-tax



Key industries by sex

EMPLOYMENT

MALE

1. Construction (18%)
2. Retail Trade (14%)
3. Manufacturing (9%)
4. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (6%)
5. Accommodation & Food Services (6%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (23%)
2. Retail Trade (14%)
3. Accommodation & Food Services (7%)
4. Educational Services (8%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)

WEST KELOWNA PRIORITY AREAS

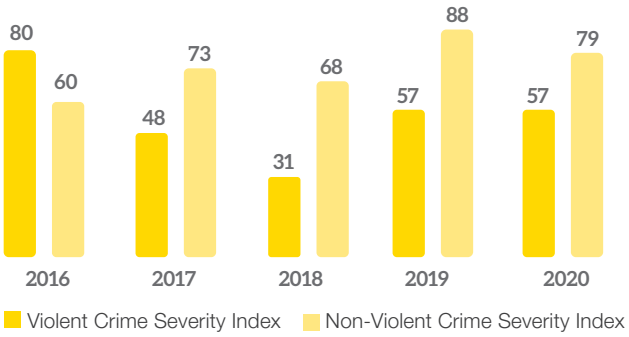
HOUSING

Rate of core housing need (2016): The rate of core housing need was the lowest in West Kelowna at **6%**, which was 4 percentage points lower than the RDCO.

Homelessness: A point-in-time count in West Kelowna in 2018 revealed that at least **72** people were experiencing homelessness, with **3%** below the age of 18, **61%** were Indigenous, and **62%** were male. **45%** of the people experiencing homelessness were unsheltered.

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Crime Indicators in West Kelowna



Non-violent crimes in West Kelowna have steadily increased in severity since 2016, while violent crimes have declined in severity.

TRANSPORTATION

West Kelowna had the highest rate of vehicle usage, at **90%.**

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
73%	17%	2%	2%	6%	1%	0%

Source: Smart Trips - Okanagan Travel Survey 2018 Report

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

A staggering **48%** of the homeless in West Kelowna reported that they came from foster homes or group homes while **60%** had dealt with the child welfare system before. Relative low-income among Children and youths (0-17) and especially young adults were the lowest in West Kelowna. Moreover, the number of youths per 100,00 charged have steadily declined since 2016, other than a large jump in 2018. *Source: rdco.com - RHNA*

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
West Kelowna	29%	11%	19%	9%	12%	15%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%

There was a slightly lower proportion of kindergarten children experiencing vulnerability in West Kelowna.

Peachland

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

POPULATION

Between 2016 and 2021, the Peachland's population grew **14%** from **5,428** to **5,789** residents.

5,789

- **10%** CHILDREN & YOUTH (0-24)
- **6%** YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)
- **51%** ADULTS (25-64)
- **32%** SENIORS (65+)

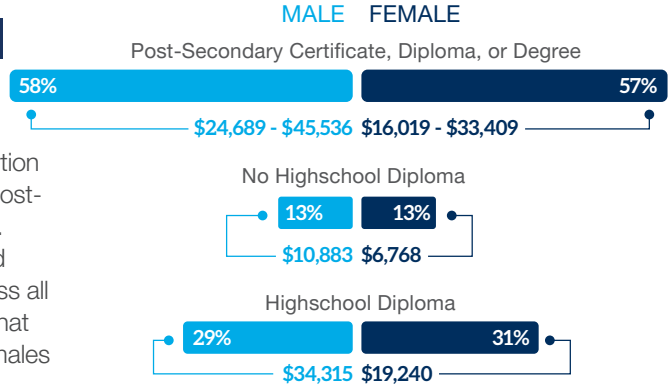
Compared to the RDCO, Peachland's population is **4 percentage points higher** in European descent and **4 percentage points lower** in Asian descent. There were very few or virtually no people with Caribbean, Latin, Central, and South American, African, or Oceanian origins.

Socioeconomic Profile

EDUCATION

Unlike other communities, there was a greater proportion of males who were post-secondary educated. While females earned less than males across all levels of education, that difference between males and females was the narrowest in Peachland.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

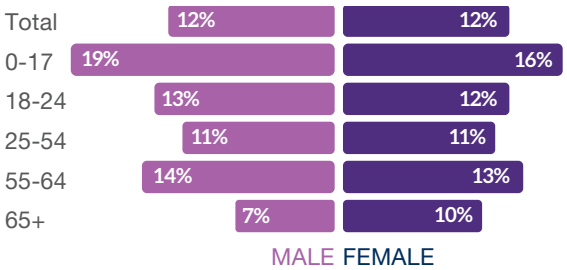
While the income gap between family types was comparative low in Peachland, the most vulnerable family type in Peachland was still unattached individuals.

Median Household Income

Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached Individual(s)
$68,896	$90,880	$44,032	$30,080

Unlike other communities in the RDCO, males had higher rates of relative low-income at all age groups, except those over 65.

Low-income measure after-tax



EMPLOYMENT

Key industries by sex

MALE

1. Construction (24%)
2. Retail Trade (11%)
3. Manufacturing (10%)
4. Administrative & Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services (9%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (6%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (24%)
2. Retail Trade (12%)
3. Accommodation & Food Services (10%)
4. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (8%)
5. Other Services (7%)

PEACHLAND PRIORITY AREAS

HOUSING

Rate of core housing need (2016): The rate of core housing need in Peachland was 2 percentage points lower than the RDCO, at **8%**.

Homelessness: Local area data not available for this indicator.

TRANSPORTATION

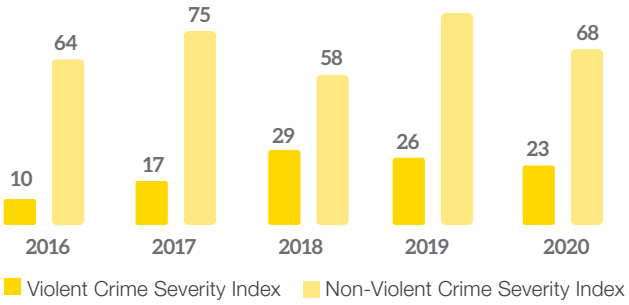
The overwhelming majority of people relied on vehicles for mobility in Peachland, at **94%**.

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
76%	18%	1%	3%	3%	0%	0%

Source: Smart Trips - Okanagan Travel Survey 2018 Report

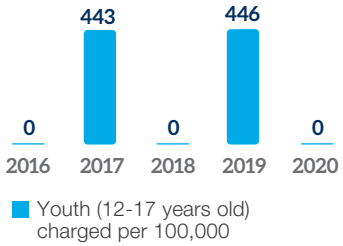
ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Crime Indicators in Peachland



While overall crime severity is among the lowest in Peachland, there has been a slow rising trend in the severity of violent crime.

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS



Children and youths (0-17) had among the highest rates of relative low income in Peachland, especially among males. The number of youths per 100,000 charged in Peachland is comparatively low, but the data does not seem consistent.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Glenrosa-Peachland	29%	18%	17%	6%	12%	16%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%

While there is a lower proportion of kindergarten children experiencing vulnerabilities in the Glenrosa-Peachland school district, there is a significantly larger vulnerability in communication competencies than in the RDCO.

Central Okanagan (West)

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

POPULATION

Between 2016 and 2021, the Central Okanagan West electorate area's population grew **46%** from **1,991** to **2,897** residents.

2,897

- **11%** CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-24)
- **6%** YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)
- **60%** ADULTS (25-64)
- **24%** SENIORS (65+)

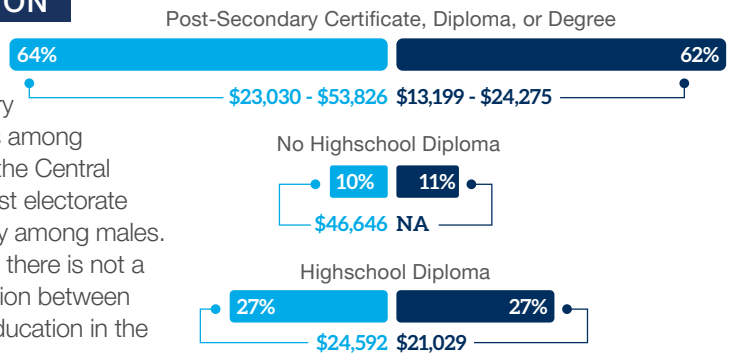
Socioeconomic Profile

Compared to the RDCO, Central Okanagan West's population is **8 percentage points higher** in European descent, **2 percentage points lower** in Other North American descent, and **5 percentage points lower** in Asian descent.

EDUCATION

Rates of post-secondary education was among the highest in the Central Okanagan West electorate area, especially among males. It appears that there is not a strong correlation between income and education in the electorate area.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

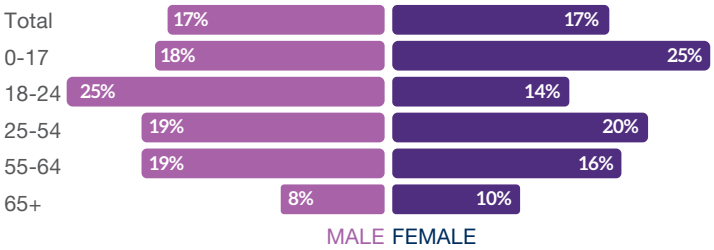
The most vulnerable family type in the West Central Okanagan electorate area was unattached individuals, whose median household incomes were nearly a third of the total average.

Median Household Income

$68,896	$90,880	$44,032	$30,080
Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached Individual(s)

There were significant differences in relative low-income rates between males and females across different age groups. More female children and youths lived in relative low-income, while more male young adults lived in relative low-income.

Low-income measure after-tax



Key industries by sex

EMPLOYMENT

MALE

1. Construction (16%)
2. Manufacturing (12%)
3. Retail Trade (10%)
4. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)
5. Wholesale Trade;Transportation & Warehousing; Accommodation & Food Services; Other Services (6%

FEMALE

1. Retail Trade (16%)
2. Accommodation & Food Services (16%)
3. Healthcare & Social Assistance (14%)
4. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (10%)
5. Other Services (10%)

CENTRAL OKANAGAN WEST PRIORITY AREAS

Regional District of Central Okanagan

HOUSING

Rate of core housing need (2016): The rate of core housing need in the Central Okanagan West electorate area was **7%** which was 3 percentage points lower than the RDCO.

Homelessness: Local area data not available for this indicator.

TRANSPORTATION

The vast majority of people relied on vehicles for mobility, at **93%**.

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
76%	17%	0%	2%	4%	0%	0%

Source: Smart Trips - Okanagan Travel Survey 2018 Report

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Local area data not available for this indicator.

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

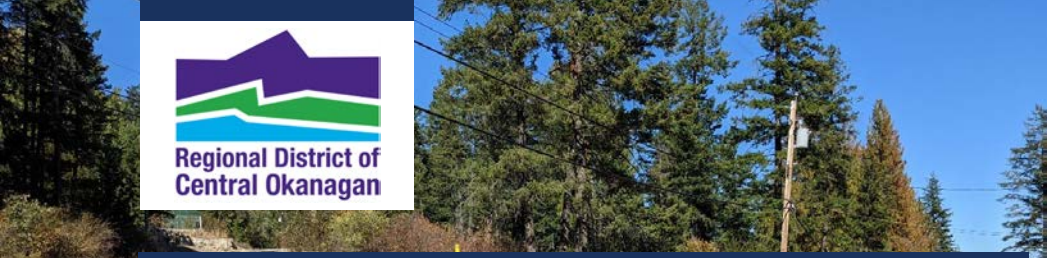
There were a significant proportion of children and youths (0-17) experiencing relative low-income. In particular, a quarter of female youths were affected.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

There was a significantly larger proportion of kindergarten children in the Lakeview Heights-Boucherie school district experiencing vulnerabilities, most notably in communication and physical competencies.

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Lakeview Heights-Boucherie	36%	15%	19%	8%	17%	16%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%



Central Okanagan (East)

Sociodemographic Profile

Unless otherwise stated, all data is from Statistics Canada.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Central Okanagan East electorate areas' population grew **12%** from **3,814** to **4,258** residents.

POPULATION

4,258

12%	11%	56%	21%
CHILDREN & YOUTHS (0-24)	YOUNG ADULTS (18-24)	ADULTS (25-64)	SENIORS (65+)

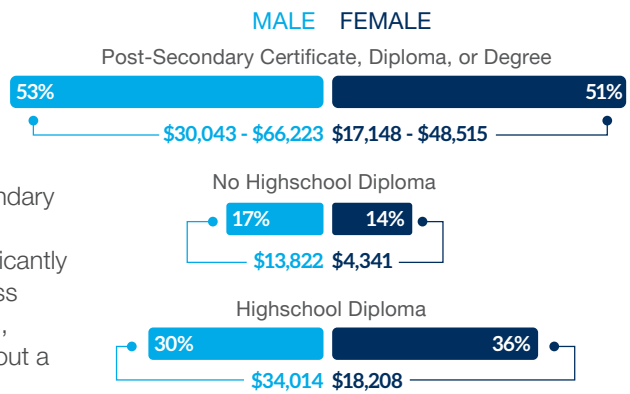
Compared to the RDCO, Central Okanagan East's population is **4 percentage points higher** in European descent, **4 percentage points lower** Other North American descent and **2 percentage points lower** in Asian descent. There were very few or virtually no people with African or Oceanian origins.

Socioeconomic Profile

EDUCATION

There was a greater proportion of males who were post-secondary educated; however, females earned significantly less than males across all levels of education, especially those without a high school diploma.

Education Statistics (2016) & Median Employment Income



There is an income range for post-secondary education due to various levels of post-secondary education.

INCOME

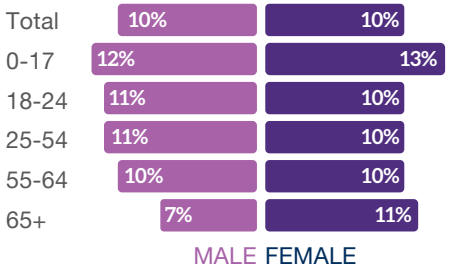
The most vulnerable family type in the Central Okanagan East electorate area was unattached individuals.

Median Household Income

$73,259	$101,120	$48,640	$29,856
Couple without Children	Couple with Children	Lone Parent	Unattached Individual(s)

Females had slightly higher rates of relative low-income at most age groups, compared to males, especially among those over 65. However, the rate was the same between males and females, on average.

Low-income measure after-tax



Key industries by sex

EMPLOYMENT

MALE

1. Construction (18%)
2. Manufacturing (13%)
3. Retail Trade (12%)
4. Transportation & Warehousing (11%)
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (7%)

FEMALE

1. Healthcare & Social Assistance (23%)
2. Retail Trade (17%)
3. Educational Services (9%)
4. Other services (8%)
5. Accommodation & Food Services (8%)

CENTRAL OKANAGAN EAST PRIORITY AREAS

Regional District of Central Okanagan

HOUSING

Rate of core housing need (2016): The rate of core housing need in the Central Okanagan East electorate area was among the lowest in the RDCO at **6%.**

Homelessness: Local area data not available for this indicator.

TRANSPORTATION

Like other communities in the RDCO, most (**92%**) people relied on vehicles for mobility, although it was slightly more walkable than other low-populated communities.

Auto Driver	Auto Passenger	Transit Bus	School Bus	Walk	Bicycle	Other
73%	19%	0%	3%	5%	0%	0%

Source: Smart Trips - Okanagan Travel Survey 2018 Report

ISOLATION & INCLUSION

Local area data not available for this indicator.

YOUTH POVERTY & WELLNESS

Relative low-income among children and youths (0-17) was among the lowest in the Central Okanagan East electorate area.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & CARE

There was a slightly lower proportion of kindergarten children in the Black Mountain-Ellison school district experiencing vulnerabilities, other than in cognitive competency.

Early Development Index

2016-2019	VULNERABLE IN AT LEAST 1 AREA	COMMUNICATION	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
Black Mountain-Ellison	29%	12%	14%	11%	12%	12%
RDCO	30%	12%	17%	9%	13%	14%

CHAPTER 7

Moving Forward Together

The Central Okanagan has already begun action on Collective Impact. The following tables summarize the work already undertaken toward a Collective Action approach to reducing poverty in the Central Okanagan and the next steps for action.

PHASE 1

Assessing Readiness

The table below identifies activities related to the first stage of Collective Impact: Assessing Readiness. While much work had been done previously, a collective attempt to act on reducing poverty became formalized with the beginning of the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Committee in 2017.

Phase 1 – Assesing Readiness

Table 24: – Assessing Readiness – Central Okanagan Activities to date

	Action	Work Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Convene Community leaders	**2017** – The Central Okanagan Poverty Reduction Committee (Committee) was created with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy with an upstream focus.

	Action	Work Completed
Strategic Planning	Hold dialogue about issue	As part of the work of the Committee's and the Journey Home process, conversations with stakeholders were held to deepen the understanding of regional issues.
Community Engagement	Determine community readiness, create a community engagement plan	Extensive work completed by local government, stakeholders, and community partners creating baseline reports and strategies that identified the needs and supporting strategic action. These reports demonstrated detailed engagement with the community. Findings indicate that there is a sincere desire on the part of the Central Okanagan to act toward improving living conditions for all residents. See Background Report for more details.
Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Determine if there is consensus/ urgency to move forward	The Committee determined that action was required to understand the intersecting of issues and interrelated systems which contribute to poverty/ poverty reduction as a first step to action.

PHASE 2

Initiating Action

Between 2018 and 2019 the Central Okanagan Poverty Reduction Committee continued to meet and work towards understanding the factors that produce poverty and effects it is having on residents.

Phase 2 – Initiating Action

Table 25: Initiating Action – Central Okanagan Activities to date

	Action	Work Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Identify champions and form cross-sector Steering Committee	**2018-2019** – The Central Okanagan Poverty Reduction Committee continued to meet and discuss how to move forward action to reduce poverty.
Strategic Planning	Map the landscape and use data to make a case	**2019** – The Committee commissioned a regional poverty analysis known as the Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Analysis. This analysis provided context to various interrelated systems, including housing, income, employment, food security, transportation, and access to education.
Community Engagement	Begin outreach to community leaders	The RDCO and member municipalities convened to submit a collaborative grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities for funding to create a Regional Poverty and Wellness Strategy.
Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Analyze baseline data to ID key issues and gaps	The Central Okanagan Poverty and Wellness Analysis identified Priority Areas for Action based on identified gaps in the community and key indicators for shared measurement.

PHASE 3

Organize for Impact

The creation of this Strategy reflects how the community is organizing for impact.

Phase 3 - Organize for Impact

Table 26: Organize for Impact – Central Okanagan Activities to date

	Action	Work Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Determine initial workgroups and plan backbone organization	**2020** – The RDCO Regional Board collaborative grant application to the Union of BC Municipalities was approved, providing funding for the creation of this Regional Poverty and Wellness Strategy. A leadership Committee of local stakeholders and a Governance Committee of representatives from the member municipalities were created.
Strategic Planning	Create common agenda, clear problem definition, population level goal	**THIS STRATEGY** – Engagement for this Strategy creation included a wide range of stakeholders, which identified key challenges, solutions, and a vision for what reducing poverty would look like for the Central Okanagan. Stakeholders involved included people with lived and living experience, local leadership, non-profits and service providers, First Nations and Indigenous communities, and the public. A full report on the engagement findings is in the What We Heard Report.
Community Engagement	Incorporate community voice, gain community perspective and input around issue	
Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Develop high level shared metrics and/or strategies	**THIS STRATEGY** – Based on best practices and publicly available data, a set of data indicators for priority areas were established. Baseline data is reported in Chapter 6 – Community Profiles. Additionally, the community identified goals developed during engagement that were used during Implementation Planning Sessions as a starting point for creating strategies for action.

PHASE 4

Next Steps & Beginning Implementation

The next steps for poverty reduction and wellness work in the Central Okanagan are to implement and sustain community action. This Strategy provides a sense of immediate and short-term actions that can be taken. These can form the basis for planning roles, responsibilities, and immediate actions necessary to achieve the goals. Community partners should continue to connect, collaborate and report to each other tracking outcomes and learning along the way.

Phase 4 – Next Steps & Beginning Implementation

Table 27: First Steps

	Action	Work to Be Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Launch work groups and select backbone organization	Identify a backbone organization and address how to support regional and local community involvement. Establish a Backbone organization • Funding and/ or partnership agreement • Agreements for structure (membership, decision making, participation guidelines, etc.) Begin discerning roles and responsibilities
Strategic Planning	Develop blueprint for implementation and identify quick wins	Stakeholders and the backbone organization will need to coordinate to assign tasks and take ownership of the actions. Identify a Course of Action • Conduct Strategic Action Planning when Backbone Organization is established • Gain consensus on first steps Key components of this work are sharing resources and building partnerships.
Community Engagement	Engage community more broadly and build public will	Continuing to engage with the public and stakeholders through sharing this report, promoting actions as they happen, and articulating the community vision.
Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Establish shared measures (indicators and approach)	As stakeholders and working groups act, their data collection and sharing will support additional shared measures for tracking progress.

PHASE 5

Sustaining Action & Impacts

For these actions to be successful, work will need to be sustained long-term. This final action phase focuses on continuing doing the work, tracking progress and outcomes and engaging with the community. This process requires an iterative approach and creative adaptations responding to changes in service ecosystems, government policy and practice, the economy, and other factors that affect financial security and well-being. Sustaining Action and Impact will happen gradually, some actions may get to this phase more quickly than others, but as work is done, momentum will need to be maintained.

Phase 5 – Sustaining Action & Impacts

Table 28: Sustaining Action

	Action	Work to Be Completed
Governance & Infrastructure	Build out the backbone organization, evolve work groups to meet emerging strategy	Establish working groups to take on areas of the work. These could be existing working groups or collaborations that are suited to a particular focus area and can act with backbone organization support to ensure their work aligns with the community vision.
Strategic Planning	Refine strategies and mobilize for quick wins	Identify and secure funding sources and other resources for project initiation. Begin the implementation of ideas, new programs, and practices for collaboration, record keeping and sharing updates across sectors.
Community Engagement	Continue engagement and conduct advocacy	Communicate progress • Regular social media or other newsletter type updates to community and partners (from Backbone coordinator) • Create and distribute Fact Sheets • Host regular meetings with community partners and stakeholders to report on progress and impacts • Promote opportunities for participation to the public, People with Lived and Living Experience, and other stakeholders who are under-represented

Ongoing Evaluation & Improvement	Collect, track, and report process (process to learn and improve)	Ongoing Evaluation • Community profiles data updates • Report on progress in Bi-annual reports

Conclusion

When tackling poverty reduction, the work is neither linear nor simple. Engagement and research for this Strategy have informed a common agenda, guiding principles, and ideas for action that reflect the ideas from the community. While there are many steps and identified, the core components are the priorities for processes which outline ways of working together to build the capacity for collaboration and reconciliation. Having a long view and understanding that small investments and an ongoing sense of curiosity about impacts is important to sustain efforts and keep the process going. It is the cumulative impact of actions across all sectors that will make the true difference.

The research and engagement conducted to create this Strategy showed a common vision of the Central Okanagan without poverty as being one where people's basic needs are met, people are included, and there are opportunities to participate in the social, economic, cultural, and recreational opportunities the region has to offer. To get there, processes of collective impact and reconciliation are fundamental to building the capacity of community partners and continue to identify and respond to the needs of residents. The ideas for acting on Interventions show some ideas to get started on. New ideas and actions will emerge over time as new challenges and successes arise.

This Strategy is a blueprint for next steps building on the many projects already occurring across the Central Okanagan. With this work complete, the Regional District, member municipalities, Indigenous communities, and community partners can begin implementing this Strategy and moving into sustaining action and impact.