



From Experience:

Community Voices for Saskatchewan's Poverty Reduction Plan

A Community Consultation by Poverty Costs

May, 2015

Executive Summary

Poverty Costs is a collaborative seeking to advance the development of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy in Saskatchewan. In April 2015, a consultation was conducted with people who have lived experience of poverty. The goal of the consultation was to facilitate an opportunity for those with lived experience of poverty, to share their thoughts, opinions, and ideas about what should be done to reduce poverty in Saskatchewan. The results will be offered to the Saskatchewan Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction (AGPR), who will be creating recommendations for the strategy.

The report was designed around six components from Sherri Torjman of the Caledon Institute's components for comprehensive poverty reduction strategies², and the elements of the Market Basket Measure of low income¹. The six categories selected were: basic necessities, housing, food, income, supporting children, and training and education. These categories were selected because they are elements known to be important to poverty reduction based on Torjman's work and many relate to the social determinants of health, which are known to be indicators of a healthy society.

Key Findings

Barriers

Frequent barriers to moving out of poverty that were identified in all categories by respondents included:

- rising costs of living without adequate, indexed income or income support
- lack of transportation options and accessibility
- high housing costs and lack of appropriate housing options
- limited education and support to access further education
- lack of access to secure, well-paying jobs
- lack of supports for parents, including daycare

Supports

The primary supports identified in all categories by respondents as helping them to "make ends meet" included:

- employment income
- government income support
- family

Responses about what could help people move out of poverty, and prevent others in Saskatchewan from moving into poverty were most often related to systems-level change. The most frequently identified changes called for by respondents were:

- access to safe and affordable housing
- employment opportunities
- supports for training and education
- improved supports for childcare
- universal guaranteed income
- minimum wage and social assistance indexed to the costs of living

Respondents identified barriers, supports needed, and solutions in each of the six categories of a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy that were explored in the consultation, demonstrating that poverty has complex and diverse causes and solutions. While families often cited family and community-level supports as important, they predominantly identified the need for systems-level changes in order to move out of poverty. The results strongly support comprehensive and system-levels change to reduce poverty in our province.

Acknowledgements

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The campaign team includes dedicated members from the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre, Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition who provide First Voice representation at our table, the Saskatoon Health Region, Upstream: Institute for a Healthy Society, and Unite Digital Marketing Cooperative.



The full report can be found at: www.povertycosts.ca/resources



References

1. Plante, Charles and Keisha Sharp. 2014. Poverty Costs Saskatchewan: A New Approach to Prosperity for All. Saskatoon: Poverty Costs.
2. Torjman, Sherri. 2008. Poverty Policy. Ottawa, ON: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
3. Poverty Free Saskatchewan. 2011. Strategies to Eliminate Poverty in Saskatchewan. Regina, SK.
4. - 2012. Communities Respond – Summary Report: PFS Consultations 2011-2012. Regina, SK