

PATHWAYS TO A BETTER FUTURE:  
**MANITOBA'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY**

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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE POVERTY REDUCTION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS**

Reducing and preventing poverty is achievable and essential for a thriving Manitoba. Our province has many resources and opportunities, and our government is working to help Manitobans access the pathways that lead to a better quality of life.

Manitoba is transforming its approach to poverty. Our government's outcomes-driven strategy focuses on solutions and pathways to success, guided by the ideas and feedback of Manitobans who are living in poverty.

Our government connected with Manitobans through a public consultation process designed to inform the development of a new poverty reduction strategy. Manitobans who are struggling with limited and low incomes face burdens that challenge their ability to participate fully in society. Manitoba's poverty reduction work is informed by the voices of people living in poverty, the expertise of community organizations, and the ideas of engaged citizens. Their input is fundamental in working towards improved program and service delivery outcomes.

As co-chairs of the Poverty Reduction Committee, we acknowledge the involvement of numerous people who provided insights around the multi-dimensional aspects of poverty. Specifically, we extend our appreciation to members of the Poverty Reduction Committee and sub-committee, workshop facilitators and advisors. As well, we extend our thanks to the Manitoba organizations and individuals who participated in the consultation process.

Our government is committed to being the most improved province in Canada. A key part of achieving this goal is reducing poverty and alleviating its effects on Manitobans. We are encouraged by recent reports showing improvements in this area, although there is still much work to do. Achieving a brighter future for those in need is a shared responsibility. We look forward to collaborating with governments, Indigenous partners, community-based organizations, service providers and others involved in this important work.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*  
**Honourable Heather Stefanson**  
**Minister, Manitoba Families**

*Original signed by*  
**Honourable Kelvin Goertzen**  
**Minister, Manitoba Education and Training**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

***“The people for whom poverty is or has recently been an issue need to be drivers at the table, not just token spots if they’re there at all. No one knows the ins and outs, the gaps and strengths of services better than those who have to navigate them in the real world.”***

*Participant, Community Conversation*

Approximately 2,000 Manitobans took part in public consultations, sharing their thoughts and ideas about preventing and reducing poverty in Manitoba. This included more than 1,500 Manitobans who responded to the online survey.

Numerous stakeholders contributed time and expertise to ensure the process was an inclusive one, taking into account specific needs of participants, as well as local and regional perspectives. Over a dozen community-based organizations facilitated a series of in-person community conversations with Manitobans, primarily with participants who are living in poverty.

The Manitoba government expresses sincere gratitude to every individual and organization who participated in the consultation on a new poverty reduction strategy. This candid feedback provided insight into the experience of Manitobans living with low income, and what should be done to reduce poverty in the province. The significance of this topic was evident in the breadth of perspectives shared by stakeholders via written submissions, as well as in-person participation at government-facilitated community workshops.

Thank you all for your participation. The input gathered through all of these methods is integral to Manitoba’s new poverty reduction strategy.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act requires Manitoba to review and update its poverty reduction strategy at least once every five years.

***Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy*** is the new strategy for Manitoba. It affirms the Manitoba government's commitment to reducing poverty in the province.

Extensive consultations with Manitobans, conducted from November 2017 to March 2018, informed the development of the strategy. Approximately 2,000 Manitobans participated in the consultations through community conversations, workshops, an open call for written submissions and an online survey.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** aims to break the cycle of poverty. The strategy is guided by the following vision:

***“All Manitobans have resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life.”***

The key target of the strategy is to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by 2025, relative to the 2015 baseline. In addition, the Manitoba government will work with the federal government and other partners to support the federal goals of reducing the national poverty rate by 20 per cent by 2020, and by 50 per cent by 2030. A measurement framework of 13 indicators, including Canada's Official Poverty Line, will track the progress of the strategy.

The strategy is organized around the following six priority areas:

- investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth
- working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living
- promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training
- facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations
- strengthening client-centred service delivery
- making positive change through social innovation

The strategy takes a whole-of-government approach. It highlights the progress that has been accomplished through collaborative work across government. In addition, it presents ongoing and future key initiatives along the six priority areas.

The strategy supports Manitoba's commitment to forge a strong path to reconciliation by establishing pathways to a better life for Indigenous people. It will build on meaningful engagements with Indigenous nations and peoples.

The federal poverty reduction strategy provided valuable insights into the development of the Manitoba strategy. The provincial strategy recognizes the synergy of working in partnership with the Government of Canada in the common areas of focus:

- meeting basic needs
- service navigation
- jobs
- child care
- reconciliation

Eight of the 13 renewed indicators of Manitoba's poverty reduction strategy are also included in the federal strategy.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** is Manitoba's blueprint for a better life for all Manitobans.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

***Pathways to a Better Future: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy*** affirms that the Manitoba government plays an important role in efforts to reduce and prevent poverty. It recognizes that reducing poverty is a shared responsibility, requiring strong partnerships with community organizations and other levels of government.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** sets the course for the Manitoba government; it is guided by the following vision statement:

***“All Manitobans have resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life.”***

The strategy aims to break the cycle of poverty by focusing on pathways that lift Manitobans out of poverty and improve outcomes for families, children and youth. The strategy seeks to alleviate the burden of poverty, particularly for those most at-risk, by promoting opportunities for economic inclusion and successful transitions through life.

Across government, there is continuous movement on the priorities of reconciliation, social innovation, accessibility and public service transformation, to support better care, best practices, integrated programs and better outcomes for Manitobans. ***Pathways to a Better Future*** identifies the following six priority areas of focus to reduce poverty in Manitoba.

- investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth
- working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living
- promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training
- facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations
- strengthening client-centred service delivery
- making positive change through social innovation

***Pathways to a Better Future*** is a whole-of-government strategy that brings together the important work that departments, agencies and other partners are doing to improve the lives of Manitobans.

### **Why Now?**

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act requires Manitoba to:

- implement a poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy
- develop indicators to measure progress
- report on performance annually

- form a governing committee
- release an annual budget statement on poverty

The minister of families is responsible for the act. Government must review and update the strategy every five years.

## **How to Use this Document**

Chapter 2 of the strategy document provides an overview of the consultation process, reconciliation activities and our collaborative work with stakeholders.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of progress to date on reducing poverty and provides data on low-income rates.

Chapters 4 to 9 provide information on the six priority areas, including what we heard from Manitobans during consultations and key activities related to each priority area.

Chapter 10 discusses Manitoba's poverty reduction legislation and regulation.

Chapter 11 explains the targets and indicators that will be used to measure progress in reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion.

There are two appendices. Appendix 1 provides a list of current and future initiatives by priority area, including some of the initiatives that are described in chapters 4 to 9. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the consultation process.

***“Our community needs to do better at walking a mile in each other’s shoes. We need to change the conversation from doing “for” those with poverty to increasing our ownership and doing things “with” them.”***

*Citizen Respondent, Online Survey*

***“We need to expand our approaches to find new approaches to fit each person’s needs.”***

*Participant, Community Conversation (Winnipeg - youth)*

## CHAPTER 2: PATHWAYS TO A BETTER FUTURE - CREATING THE STRATEGY

All Manitobans have resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life. This is our vision. ***Pathways to a Better Future*** is our government's new strategy of how to achieve this vision.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** is a whole-of-government strategy that brings together collective efforts to address the many challenges faced by Manitobans living in poverty. This strategy will help us achieve better outcomes through the delivery of quality services and critical supports.

The key target of this strategy is to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by 2025, compared to the baseline year of 2015. In addition, the Manitoba government will work with the federal government and other partners to support the federal goals of reducing the national poverty rate by 20 per cent by 2020 and 50 per cent by 2030.

A measurement framework has been developed to track progress on poverty reduction actions.

### **Work of the Poverty Reduction Committee and Subcommittee**

In Manitoba, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act establishes a Poverty Reduction Committee, which is comprised of community members and provincial ministers responsible for poverty-related policies, programs and services. The committee provides advice on the poverty reduction strategy, monitors implementation, and facilitates community involvement in strategy development.

The Poverty Reduction Committee includes the following Manitoba government members and community members:

- Honourable Heather Stefanson, minister of families (co-chair)
- Honourable Kelvin Goertzen, minister of education and training (co-chair)
- Honourable Eileen Clarke, minister of Indigenous and northern relations
- Honourable Blaine Pedersen, minister of growth, enterprise and trade
- Honourable Rochelle Squires, minister of sustainable development, minister responsible for francophone affairs and status of women
- Rev. Dr. Stanley McKay (Petersfield)
- Ms. Zully Trujillo (Winnipeg)
- Dr. Jennie Wastesicoot (Thompson)

In July 2017, the Poverty Reduction Committee established a subcommittee to guide community input and involvement in developing a new poverty reduction strategy. The subcommittee performed an important role in the development of a consultation framework and plan. Membership included community and government representatives.

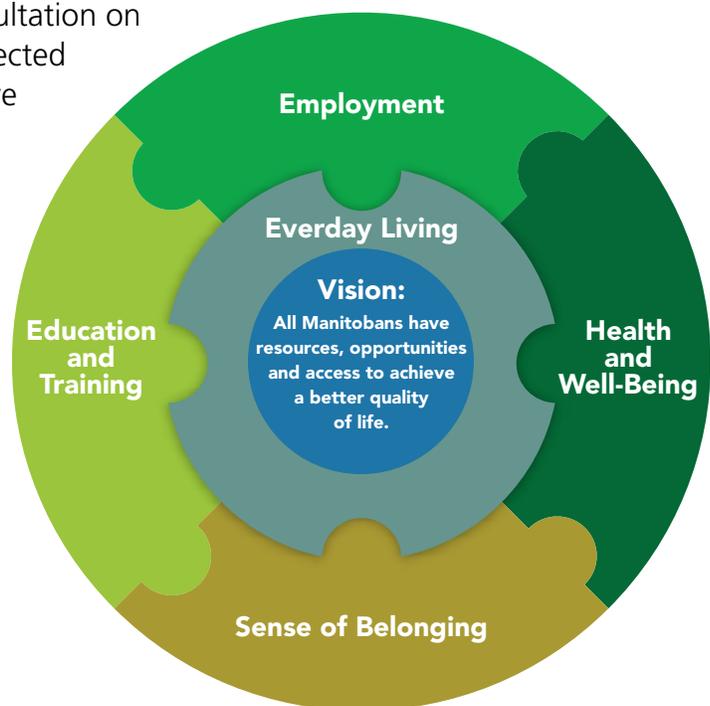
Poverty reduction requires a whole-of-government approach. To this end, it was important to include subject matter experts from a variety of government departments on the subcommittee.

In October 2017, the Poverty Reduction Committee endorsed the subcommittee's recommended framework to guide consultation activities. The framework had five themes to guide community engagement activities:

- everyday living: the basics to support a modest standard of living
- employment: work that provides an income
- education and training: the skills and knowledge needed for personal and professional advancement
- health and well-being: personal health and a sense of well-being
- sense of belonging: a sense of being part of the community

The vision and five themes that guided consultation on poverty reduction were represented as connected pieces, as shown in the image below. The five themes – everyday living, employment, education and training, health and well-being and sense of belonging – reflect the vision that all Manitobans have resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life.

The Poverty Reduction Committee met four times each year in 2017 and 2018. Meetings focused on consultation planning, reviewing ideas and inputs from Manitobans and strategy development.



## Reconciliation

The Manitoba poverty reduction strategy takes a reconciliation-focused approach to building pathways to a better life for Indigenous people.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** supports the ongoing process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in order to build trust, affirm historical agreements, address healing and create a more equitable and inclusive society.

The legacy and continuation of colonialism, racism and exclusion creates and prolongs experiences of poverty within Indigenous communities. This strategy is part of Manitoba's commitment to forge a path to reconciliation.

Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, the Manitoba government unanimously ratified The Path to Reconciliation Act, which became law on March 15, 2016. The act was the first reconciliation legislation in Canada.

Guiding government's efforts towards reconciliation are the principles of respect, engagement, understanding and action. Manitoba's commitment to reconciliation has a particular focus on addressing the persistent and long-standing negative impacts of residential schools and reconciling relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Manitoba.

The minister of Indigenous and northern relations will lead our government's participation in the development of a reconciliation strategy. This work will include a public engagement process in collaboration with Indigenous communities and all Manitobans, to develop a comprehensive reconciliation framework and action plan for advancing Indigenous priorities.

Each year, the government reports on its progress towards reconciliation through ***The Path to Reconciliation Act Annual Progress Report***.

## Community Involvement and Collaboration

Reducing poverty is a shared responsibility. The Manitoba government plays an important role, but poverty reduction efforts must be done in partnership with Indigenous communities, businesses, community organizations and other governments. Individual Manitobans, especially those with lived experience of poverty, will be included in our continued efforts to reduce poverty and alleviate its impacts.

The Manitoba government held consultations on a new poverty reduction strategy from November 2017 to March 2018. Public consultations encouraged participation of those at highest risk of poverty, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous people, newcomers and vulnerable youth. Sessions were held in Winnipeg, Selkirk, Brandon, Thompson, Flin Flon, The Pas and Dauphin.

During the consultation, Indigenous service providers and community-based organizations identified the need to authentically engage Indigenous partners, communities and Indigenous-serving organizations in order to reduce poverty on and off reserve. A common message heard was the need to attend to the calls to action articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Indigenous service providers and participants stressed the importance of having Indigenous voices engaged and a recognition that Indigenous poverty has a specific historic and cultural context. Consultation participants also emphasized the importance of time and appropriate processes to support this work.

Poverty and the legacy of colonialism are closely connected. Participants living in poverty shared stories of how racism, discrimination, intergenerational trauma, substance abuse, addictions and violence continue to present barriers in their lives. These stakeholders stressed that the experience of poverty for Indigenous people is different than other communities.

The consultation used several different methods of engaging with Manitobans in discussions on poverty reduction in both English and French:

- community conversations for people with lived experience of poverty, facilitated by community-based organizations
- community workshops with community-based organizations, experts, advocates and other stakeholders, facilitated by government staff
- an online survey for all Manitobans
- an open call for written submissions

Consultation participants were asked questions on:

- access and barriers
- pathways
- solutions and priorities
- measuring progress

Approximately 2,000 Manitobans participated in the public consultations, including more than 1,500 who responded to the online survey.

The chart below shows the number of Manitobans who participated in the consultation. There were 471 individuals who participated through in-person sessions, 1,564 who responded to the survey and 440 who provided written submissions.

## Participation Results



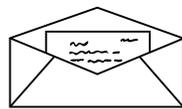
### IN-PERSON SESSIONS

- 201 participants who are living in poverty
- 178 community-based organization participants
- 92 Manitoba government staff participants



### SURVEYS

- 266 participants who are living in poverty
- 994 other participants
- 304 community-based organization participants



### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

- 382 responses from 2 targeted campaigns
- 58 emails, letters, phone calls, papers

## Provincial-Territorial Collaboration

The Manitoba government is committed to working with other provinces and the territories to share information on innovative and effective ways to deliver services and to promote partnerships in ongoing efforts to reduce poverty across Canada. In July 2018, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services met in Halifax to discuss key social policy issues, including income security and poverty reduction.

At the meeting, the provincial-territorial ministers released the statement, ***Meeting the Challenge: Provincial-Territorial Vision Statement on Poverty Reduction***. This statement recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts from all governments, as well as communities, community-based groups and individuals. The statement also acknowledges the diverse circumstances across the country, and that the voices of those with lived experience of poverty must be central to poverty reduction work.

The Manitoba government endorses this statement, which will guide provincial-territorial collaboration on joint initiatives to reduce poverty.

## ***Meeting the Challenge: Provincial-Territorial Vision Statement on Poverty Reduction***

### **Vision:**

All Canadians have the opportunity to live with dignity and realize their full potential. Provinces and territories are united in their vision of a Canada where all individuals are included, can develop to their full potential and can participate fully in social and economic life. This can be achieved by working in collaboration to address the social and economic disparities that exist today, and by creating the innovative and responsive solutions required to meet the challenges of the future.

### **Principles:**

It is important that all Canadians are supported to develop to their full potential. Preventing and reducing poverty, as well as alleviating its impacts, are ongoing priorities for Provinces and Territories. A long-term collaborative effort from all governments is needed, as is the involvement of communities, community-based groups and individuals. We must find more effective ways to support those living in poverty and to protect those who are at risk, while recognizing the need for prevention and being able to respond to the changing nature of Canadian society.

Provincial and Territorial Governments have a responsibility to listen to those with lived experience of poverty and to work collaboratively to reduce poverty. Social change, emerging technologies, demographic shifts, and the evolving nature of work and labour markets present new challenges for our country and for reducing poverty. Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services are united in recognizing the need for innovative responses; we cannot meet these challenges while working in isolation and we can learn and build on experiences from across Canada.

Our poverty reduction efforts must also acknowledge the diverse circumstances in different parts of the country. The voices of those with lived experience, and the unique needs of rural and remote regions, urban areas, Indigenous communities, recent immigrants and refugees, children, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities, as well as the gendered nature of poverty, must be central to poverty reduction work.

Poverty Reduction must recognize the historic and ongoing impacts of government policies on Indigenous peoples and poverty in Indigenous communities. In the spirit of reconciliation and renewed relationships, poverty reduction must support and empower Indigenous peoples, communities and leaders.

Respecting their distinct roles and responsibilities, Provincial and Territorial Ministers are committed to working collaboratively with the federal government and other partners in the development and implementation of meaningful and effective solutions that build upon the work of Provinces and Territories.

**Priorities:**

Provincial and Territorial Ministers are committed to working with each other and the Federal Government to prevent, reduce and alleviate poverty. Approaches to transformative change could include developing the tools, strategies, and policies, including:

- Future-proofing: Responding to the changing nature of work and other social changes, including ensuring that our social and income security systems reflect today's realities and are prepared for the trends and challenges of the future.
- Alignment: Better coordinating programs, services and policies to avoid duplication, maximize cumulative impact, and improve ease of access for individuals and families living in or vulnerable to poverty.
- Measurement: Developing, sharing, and using information to identify trends and gaps, and as appropriate, establishing common measures and indicators.
- Prevention-focused approach: Recognizing the multiple dimensions, causes and consequences of poverty and its intergenerational nature, ensuring an approach that is consistent with human rights principles and is focused on preventing poverty.

## Partnership with Government of Canada

In August 2018, the federal government released Opportunity for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy and introduced supporting legislation in November 2018. The strategy and legislation establish Canada's Official Poverty Line and commit to reducing the national poverty rate by 20 per cent by 2020 and 50 per cent by 2030. The federal government has also created a National Advisory Council on Poverty.

The Manitoba government commends the federal government on its strategy, particularly the commitment to poverty reduction targets and timelines. Common areas of focus within Manitoba's and Canada's poverty reduction strategies include:

- meeting basic needs
- service navigation
- jobs
- child care
- reconciliation

These common areas are critical to ensuring that all Manitobans have the opportunity to achieve a better quality of life.

A good measurement framework is vital to the success of any poverty reduction strategy. The Manitoba government is supporting the federal government's poverty measurement, and is aligning some of its renewed poverty reduction indicators with the federal poverty indicators.

Eight of the 13 indicators of Manitoba's poverty reduction strategy are also included in the federal strategy. Manitoba may report on other federal indicators, if provincial data is available.

Moving forward, the Manitoba government will continue to participate in pan-Canadian work to coordinate efforts to reduce poverty through support for mutual priorities and sharing of best practices. As well, Manitoba will continue to seek opportunities for alignment as federal efforts evolve on poverty reduction.

## **Budget Commitments to Poverty Reduction**

The Manitoba government is committed to making continued progress to reduce poverty and create a better life for all Manitobans. Prior to the renewal of the strategy, the government embarked on important initiatives that have helped to improve the lives of many low-income Manitobans.

In Budget 2017, the government laid out the foundation to streamline service delivery by creating greater program coordination and eliminating wasteful spending through innovative community partnerships that provide value for money, while improving outcomes for Manitobans living in poverty. In Budget 2018, reforms were initiated to deliver better outcomes in the areas of child welfare, justice and family law, domestic violence, child care, education, employment training and job creation.

The Manitoba government remains committed to reducing poverty. Through strong partnerships, innovative solutions and creation of pathways to a better life, the government is set to implement a renewed poverty reduction strategy focused on improving the lives of all Manitobans.

Moving forward, the government will continue to focus on strengthening its programs to ensure future sustainability and equal access to Manitobans, especially those in greatest need of support.

## CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING POVERTY AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Manitoba government has made real progress on reducing poverty since the beginning of its tenure in 2016. We will continue to work with families and communities to provide the services and supports that promote economic opportunities and build effective and accessible pathways out of poverty. In 2016, Manitoba saw the greatest improvement in poverty reduction amongst Canadian provinces, with Manitoba's low-income rate falling from 12 per cent in 2015 to 9.4 per cent in 2016.

Manitoba also experienced the greatest improvement in child poverty and is no longer considered the child poverty capital of Canada. The number of children living in low income decreased substantially from 16.4 per cent in 2015 to 11.9 per cent in 2016. This was the largest decrease in child poverty rates across the country, as Manitoba went from 10th place (or worst province) in 2015 to 5<sup>th</sup> place in 2016. This is a significant improvement, but there is still much work to be done to improve the lives of children in Manitoba.

Changes are underway across government to promote better outcomes and real results for Manitobans, including in the areas of:

- child welfare
- health care
- housing
- employment and income assistance
- education and training
- justice
- early learning and child care

***Pathways to a Better Future*** is about expanding upon this work to ensure further results in reducing the poverty rate, especially among children and youth.

### **Understanding Poverty**

Poverty is complex and multi-faceted. It is often perceived to be only a lack of money, but poverty is more than the absence of material things. Poverty is also inequitable access, absence of opportunities, social isolation, discrimination and stigma. Evidence shows that experiences of poverty have direct links to the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

Although poverty has the potential to impact all Manitobans, some segments of the population are more vulnerable than others and are disproportionately affected. Manitoba has seen recent success in its efforts

to reduce poverty across the province, but low income continues to be prevalent among certain groups. Youth, Indigenous people, single-parent families, single individuals and people with disabilities are more likely to be living with low income than are other Manitobans.

The table below shows the low-income rate, based on data from the 2016 Statistics Canada Market Basket Measure. The data is based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services for a modest, basic standard of living.

### Low Income in Manitoba 2016, Statistics Canada Market Basket Measure

Population Group	Manitobans Living in Poverty in 2016	
	Rate, Per Cent	Number
Manitobans	9.4%	115,000
Persons in Single-Parent Families	36.9%	22,000
Persons in Youth-Led Families	35.9%	18,000
Single Individuals (non-elderly)	30.1%	36,000
Indigenous Persons (off reserve)	23.2%	23,000
Persons with Disabilities	13.2%	35,000
Children	11.9%	32,000
Seniors	2.5%	5,000

Youth-led families include couples, single-parent families and unattached individuals, whose primary income earner is 24 years old or younger.

Although comparable data is unavailable, the Manitoba government recognizes that recent immigrants are also more likely to be living with low income.

### Low-income Rates

The tables below show a comparison of 2008, 2015 and 2016 low-income data, using the Market Basket Measure for Manitoba and Canada. Manitoba performed better than Canada in improving the overall low-income rate, as well as the rates for children, seniors, persons in single-parent families,

and persons with disabilities. Extra effort needs to be made in improving the lives of certain segments of the population, particularly Manitobans in youth-led families, Indigenous Manitobans, and single Manitobans.

### Low Income in Manitoba, 2008, 2015 – 2016, Statistics Canada Market Basket Measure

		2008	2015	2016	2015-16 (Per Cent Change)
All Manitobans	Rate, per cent	9.9	12.0	9.4	-21.7
	Rank (1 is best)	3	4	4	
	Number	111,000	146,000	115,000	
Persons in Single-Parent Families	Rate, per cent	24.2	41.3	36.9	-10.7
	Rank (1 is best)	2	7	8	
	Number	F	22,000	22,000	
Persons in Youth-Led Families	Rate, per cent	34.5	30.6	35.9	17.3
	Rank (1 is best)	3	1	6	
	Number	16,000	17,000	18,000	
Single Individuals (non-elderly)	Rate, per cent	31.1	29.8	30.1	1.0
	Rank (1 is best)	3	3	4	
	Number	35,000	38,000	36,000	
Indigenous Persons (off reserve)	Rate, per cent	14.0	21.6	23.2	7.4
	Rank (1 is best)	3	4	8	
	Number	13,000	24,000	23,000	
Persons with Disabilities	Rate, per cent	10.0	16.7	13.2	-21.0
	Rank (1 is best)	2	3	3	
	Number	27,000	42,000	35,000	
Children	Rate, per cent	12.5	16.4	11.9	-27.4
	Rank (1 is best)	3	10	5	
	Number	32,000	43,000	32,000	
Seniors	Rate, per cent	F	4.8	2.5	-47.9
	Rank (1 is best)	F	3	1	
	Number	F	9,000	5,000	

F – Indicates that the data are too unreliable to be published.

## Low Income Rate (Per Cent) in Manitoba and Canada, 2015 and 2016, Statistics Canada Market Basket Measure

		2015	2016	2015-16 (Per Cent Change)
All Persons	Manitoba	12.0	9.4	-21.7
	Canada	12.1	10.6	-12.4
Persons in Single-Parent Families	Manitoba	41.3	36.9	-10.7
	Canada	29.8	29.2	-2.0
Persons in Youth-Led Families	Manitoba	30.6	35.9	17.3
	Canada	42.7	33.9	-20.6
Single Individuals (non-elderly)	Manitoba	29.8	30.1	1.0
	Canada	35.9	33.9	-5.6
Indigenous Persons (off reserve)	Manitoba	21.6	23.2	7.4
	Canada	24.3	16.8	-30.9
Persons with Disabilities	Manitoba	16.7	13.2	-21.0
	Canada	18.3	14.6	-20.2
Children	Manitoba	16.4	11.9	-27.4
	Canada	13.3	11.0	-17.3
Seniors	Manitoba	4.8	2.5	-47.9
	Canada	5.1	4.9	-3.9

## Measurable Progress

The 2017/18 fiscal year has been a year of progress for poverty reduction in Manitoba. Manitoba showed progress or stability on 17 of 21 poverty reduction indicators, as detailed in the 2017/18 Poverty Reduction Annual Report. Progress has been made in the areas of housing, community belonging, high school graduation, wages and availability of child care, among others.

Growth of the Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) caseload slowed to two per cent between March 2017 and March 2018, a significant improvement over the last several years. The reduction in the rate of growth is partially attributable to supports to help people obtain and retain work, which is a positive trend in reducing dependency on EIA.

While EIA has created opportunities for growth and financial independence for many Manitobans, the program has also enhanced the income supports provided to those who are most in need. For example, since July 2006, income assistance for those residing in the private rental market has increased by 70.8 per cent for single adults, by 38.4 per cent for single adults with a disability, by 37.3 per cent for single parents with two children (ages 10 and 13) and by 32.2 per cent for two parents with two children (ages four and six). The increase in income assistance benefits has been significantly greater than the increase in general prices in Manitoba. The table below compares the change in EIA support for selected family scenarios between July 2014 and July 2018.

### **Available Income for Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) Participants, Selected Family Scenarios, July 2014 and July 2018\***

Family Scenarios	Monthly Income		Per Cent Change
	July 2014	July 2018	
Single General Assistance Adult	\$655	\$796	21.5
Single Person with Disability	\$871	\$1,012	16.2
Single-Parent and Two Children (ages 10 and 13)	\$1,082	\$1,417	31.0
Two General Assistance Adults – Two Children (ages 4 and 6)	\$1,117	\$1,411	26.3

\* Provincial income benefits include basic assistance and Rent Assist, and exclude federal benefits.

Welfare incomes in Manitoba rank in the top half of provinces in terms of adequacy where the Market Basket Measure (MBM) is used. The high rankings are a result of the Rent Assist program that provides shelter benefits to EIA clients and other low-income Manitobans. The table below compares Manitoba's welfare incomes as a proportion of the MBM threshold based on *Welfare in Canada 2017* (Maytree report).

### Interprovincial Comparison of Adequacy of Welfare Incomes as a proportion of the Market Basket Measure Threshold (per cent)

	Single Employable	Rank	Single Person with Disability	Rank	Single Parent, 1 Child	Rank	Couple, 2 Children	Rank
British Columbia	40	6	64	6	68	8	63	10
Alberta	39	8	50	12	68	8	71	8
Saskatchewan	46	4	58	8	77	4	77	4
<b>Manitoba</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>3</b>
Ontario	45	5	70	4	71	7	72	6
Quebec	51	3	71	3	85	1	83	1
New Brunswick	39	8	54	9	77	4	72	6
Nova Scotia	38	10	53	10	66	10	71	8
Prince Edward	40	6	52	11	74	6	82	2
Newfoundland	58	1	59	7	84	2	74	5

Rank 1 = highest income as per cent of the MBM threshold

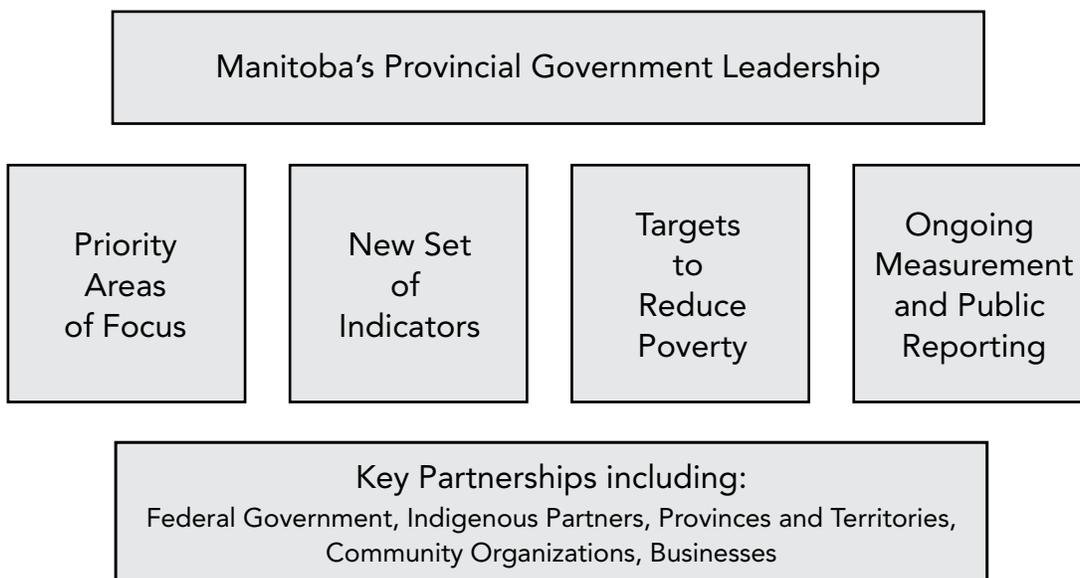
Manitoba is seeing progress in the area of employment. In 2018, there were approximately 3,600 more Manitobans employed compared to the previous year.

Gaining employment can lift entire families out of poverty. The unemployment rate was 6.1 per cent in 2016, 5.4 per cent in 2017 and 6.0 per cent in 2018.

Manitoba has seen real progress in decreasing the number of children in care. Compared to 2016/17, the number of children in care had been reduced by more than three per cent in 2017/18. Manitoba saw the largest reduction of the total number of children in care in the last 15 years. In addition, on a province-wide basis, agencies achieved an 8.8 per cent increase in reunifications and a 9.1 per cent decrease in apprehensions.

## Next Steps

The Manitoba government is committed to reducing poverty in the years to come. The following six chapters outline the actions to date and future initiatives that government will take in each of the six priority areas of focus, in partnership with other government and key stakeholders. These chapters also summarize what we heard during the 2017/18 consultations on poverty reduction.



## CHAPTER 4: INVESTING IN MANITOBA'S FUTURE PROSPERITY THROUGH SUPPORTS TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

***“If my parent(s) would have had more support when I was growing up, things would have been less fractured and scary. More support for families that are struggling to get by and more support for single moms trying to provide for their kids.”***

*Person with Experience of Poverty, Online Survey*

Supporting children and youth to meet their full potential represents an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty for generations of Manitoba families. Although Manitoba has seen significant improvements in its low-income rate for children, there are still far too many children and youth living in poverty. In 2016, 11.9 per cent of Manitoba children and 35.9 per cent of persons in youth-led families were living in low income, based on the Market Basket Measure.

Recent government investments in early learning and child care, child development and education, along with ongoing transformation of the child welfare system, will help generations of Manitoba children and youth to grow, thrive and succeed. The future prosperity of our province depends on the opportunities we provide today to children and youth.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

Manitoba's consultations included the voices of children, youth, parents, educators and others that work with children and youth. We have listened. The Manitoba government is committed to removing barriers and creating positive pathways, so young Manitobans grow up with the supports they need to attain good health and well-being, social inclusivity, employment opportunities and a better quality of life.

Parents spoke about difficulty in finding quality, affordable child care spaces that aligned with their needs, including services offered beyond traditional hours. Many participants spoke about long waitlists and their difficulties paying or obtaining subsidies for child care. Others shared feelings of frustration that a large portion of income goes to pay for child care. Community-based organizations and survey respondents noted challenges for early childhood educators in terms of low wages, professional recognition and investments in training. Expansion of quality, child care supports across Manitoba was a common message shared during consultation.



Throughout the consultations, respondents highlighted the important roles of early childhood development and quality child care opportunities in reducing poverty for children and families. Accessible, affordable child care spaces are needed to help foster healthy children and support families.

Respondents discussed the importance of having licensed early learning and child care available to allow them to work or study. Educators and parents spoke about the role of education in reducing poverty.

Consultation participants, including those living in poverty, shared their experience with the child welfare system. This included ongoing trauma and stress associated with child apprehensions, difficulties in working with service providers and challenges in navigating government systems. Participants talked about the need to hide authentic stress and emotions, and the difficulties in managing individual and family health, including mental health and addictions.

Parents emphasized their desire to be supported to love and care for their own children. Consultation participants spoke about the need for early childhood programming, youth-led programming and family supports that include parenting programs and parent-child programs. These needs were considered to be effective in keeping families healthy and in promoting long-term social and economic benefits.

Community-based organizations called for concrete actions to reduce the number of children in agency care and to deliver better outcomes for children and youth.

These organizations called on government to implement the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry recommendations and make concrete inroads to reduce the time and number of children in care.

Literacy and numeracy skills were highlighted through the consultations as an important element of success in the complex and evolving economy. Consultation participants also discussed the need for complementary learning opportunities, such as summer and after-school activities, as well as educational supports for students with disabilities, life skills training and early intervention for students who are experiencing challenges at school. Emphasis was placed on the need for educational curriculum to include financial literacy, nutritional literacy and parenting skills.

The following initiatives support what we heard through consultations and will contribute to the Manitoba government's goal of ensuring prosperity for children and youth.

## Key Initiatives

### ***Supporting Children and Families and Reducing the Number of Children in Care***

The Manitoba government is working in partnership with Manitobans to fundamentally transform the child and family services (CFS) system to deliver better outcomes for children and youth. The plan responds to reports and recommendations from the Advocate for Children and Youth, Commissioner Ted Hughes, following the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry, the Child Welfare Legislative Review Committee, Indigenous organizations and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Proposed changes are focused on four pillars:

- community-based prevention
- lifelong connections through reunification and permanence
- funding for results
- legislation

The plan focuses on healthy communities, strong families, and keeping children and youth safely within their family networks and home communities when possible.

In 2017/18, Manitoba Families worked collaboratively with the four CFS authorities, CFS agencies, and community partners to develop new initiatives and demonstration sites to support family preservation and reunification, and permanency options for improved outcomes for children and families who are involved in the CFS system.

Going forward, Manitoba is implementing evidence-based permanency initiatives, such as customary care, and providing block funding to CFS agencies for enhanced flexibility and prevention.

Legislative changes to The Child and Family Services Act will be introduced in 2019 to ensure better child and youth outcomes. In developing these changes, the Manitoba government continues to work collaboratively with communities, organizations, CFS authorities and agencies, families and Indigenous leaders who know best about the care, health and safety of their children and youth.

## ***Enhancing Opportunities for Early Learning and Child Care***

A system of accessible early learning and child care (ELCC) services is an essential component of a successful poverty reduction strategy. Enriching the multiple dimensions of child development including cognitive, social and physical development, provides children with a healthy start and enhances present and future learning opportunities. At the same time, ELCC services that support parental participation in the labour force and in training or skills development will open economic opportunities to families.

In February 2018, the Manitoba government announced the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the Government of Canada. As part of this agreement, nearly \$47 million will be invested from 2017/18 to 2019/20 to create 1,400 new, targeted and newly funded child care spaces, along with various other initiatives aimed at building and growing the ELCC system in Manitoba. This is in addition to the annual investments in ELCC by the Manitoba government, including \$169.2 million in 2017/18, to directly support facilities, as well as workforce education and training. These investments will improve licensed services in underserved communities, and services for vulnerable populations, using innovative approaches that target families and children most in need of child care services.

Manitoba's agreement focuses on increased quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity, in order to foster children's social, cognitive and emotional development.

### **The five pillars of the agreement are:**

#### **Pillar 1: Supporting New and Newly Funded, Affordable and Accessible Spaces**

- Creating new and newly funded child care spaces corresponds to the principle of accessible, affordable and flexible regulated ELCC services.

#### **Pillar 2: Building Sector Capacity and Stability**

- Building sector capacity and stability corresponds to the principle of ensuring high quality ELCC under the agreement by increasing professional development opportunities offered to the ELCC workforce.

### **Pillar 3: Rural and Northern Strategy**

- Manitoba's rural and northern strategy corresponds to the principle of accessible, affordable and flexible ELCC services under the agreement, particularly for communities that face high operation costs for licensed ELCC services due to their geographic locations.

### **Pillar 4: Diversity and Inclusion**

- Promoting diversity and inclusion corresponds to the principle of accessible, affordable, flexible and inclusive ELCC services.

### **Pillar 5: Community Engagement and Reporting**

- This pillar includes engaging the community to successfully implement bilateral initiatives and supporting public consultation and reporting.

As of March 31, 2018, there were 36,799 child care spaces in Manitoba. Of these, 33,526 spaces are located in child care centres and 3,253 spaces are located in homes.

Through the three-year term of the Canada-Manitoba ELCC Agreement, the Manitoba government will provide \$365,500 to Science of Early Child Development through Red River College to establish province-wide access to regularly-updated living textbooks and modules. These living textbooks offer current research and links to practice on pre-natal and early child development through a convenient online platform, accessible via computer, tablet and smartphone. Students and professionals across Manitoba will have free access to online learning resources, as will any Manitoban interested in the impact of early experience on lifelong health and well-being.

The Manitoba government continues to work with Red River College and child care centres that serve a high proportion of vulnerable families to implement Abecedarian-inspired practice. The Abecedarian Approach is an evidence-based, early childhood intervention that focuses on language and literacy development. It is designed to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children.

## Improving Education Outcomes

Education is a means to employment and higher income. Providing quality education to children is a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty.

The Manitoba government has prioritized improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all Manitobans. To this end, the government announced that it will undertake a comprehensive review of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system, scheduled to begin in early 2019. The review will focus on a variety of topics, such as student learning, teaching, accountability for student learning, governance and funding.

Futures Forward is a community-based program that provides career development supports and wrap-around services to help current and former youth in care to transition to adulthood, further education and find jobs. The program provides help with employment, training, housing, mental health and addictions assistance, financial counselling, crisis management, and job retention and advancement.

Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living continues to lead a partnership with Manitoba Education and Training to improve the health and wellness of children and youth across the province. Using a comprehensive school health framework and a population health approach, the Manitoba Healthy Schools Initiative supports all schools to promote well-being and good health among students, which are vital to student academic achievement.

The Vital Statistics Agency is working with federal, provincial and municipal partners to increase the number of children in Manitoba accessing the Canada Learning Bond. The Canada Learning Bond is a federal program that provides financial contributions to a Registered Education Savings Plan to help families save for their child's education. Similarly, the Manitoba government is collaborating with community organizations to increase awareness and access to the Registered Disability Savings Plan.

For a full list of initiatives related to investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth, see Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 5: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AND STANDARD OF LIVING

***“The poor simply cannot afford to have an emergency.”***

*Person with Experience of Poverty, Online Survey*

***“You have to be creative and improvise on everything, you have to go to every store and look at deals and bargains, you have to be stingy and you have to walk across the city to get eggs that are \$2 cheaper, we try to make our money stretch.”***

*Youth Participant, Community Conversation (Winnipeg)*

***Pathways to a Better Future*** highlights initiatives that help Manitobans keep more of their income, improve their health outcomes and achieve a better standard of living. Families are better off when they have more resources, more opportunities and more choice. Healthy individuals are less likely to experience poverty. Individuals with low income are more likely to struggle with poor health.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

We have heard from Manitobans, especially those with lived experience of poverty, about the difficulties in securing enough income to meet their needs. Manitobans also need patient-focused health care, better treatment options for mental health and addictions, and access to safe and affordable housing. ***Pathways to a Better Future*** will help Manitoba families access the health, mental health and addictions services they need, while working to improve their overall standard of living.

Consultation participants across Manitoba spoke about the importance of healthy, nutritious food, dental and vision care, medications, safe housing and public transportation. Participants highlighted the difficulties of limited income and the choice between basic needs and items such as work items, school supplies and personal care items.

During consultations, health care providers discussed the importance of the social determinants of health and the correlation between poverty and negative health outcomes. Life expectancy, injuries, chronic disease, cancer, disability and mental health are correlated with poverty, with the poorest outcomes reported for people with the lowest incomes. Poverty is recognized as a primary social determinant of health. Income influences health outcomes directly through access to housing, food, transportation and other basic needs. The experience of living in poverty puts people at elevated risk for various health and social problems. The experience of chronic health problems puts people at risk of living in poverty.

Community organizations highlighted the importance of continued universal health care across Manitoba. Participants living in poverty discussed barriers to accessing adequate health care, including transportation, lack of medical specialists in northern Manitoba, inequitable health care funding, stigma and gaps in medical care. Opportunities for positive actions included culturally-centric health care approaches, addressing the prohibitive costs of medications and dental and vision care, and enhanced rehabilitation supports.

Mental health and addictions are recognized as significant contributors to poverty, life outcomes and social inclusivity. Consultation participants spoke about their struggles to access services, early interventions and medications, and to maintain employment when facing mental health issues and addictions. They highlighted that a complex system of government supports can have negative impacts on mental health issues. Solutions discussed included enhanced access to mental health supports and increased funding to community mental health organizations.

Food security was a central theme discussed during the consultations. Participants living in poverty described difficulties in accessing healthy and affordable food. They discussed the lack of grocery stores in communities, difficulty in meeting dietary needs on a budget, the high cost of food, and their appreciation of food banks and community food programs for ongoing support.

Expansion of child nutrition programming was seen as a viable and responsive support for struggling families. The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba provided a formal written submission, accompanied by an email campaign that was endorsed by 281 Manitobans (primarily from school divisions), with recommendations around school nutrition programs, curriculum, nutrition guidelines and other topics.

Finding adequate, affordable, safe housing is a particular concern for many participants living in poverty. During the consultation, they shared information on barriers such as racism and the overreliance on rental histories, as well as problems related to building maintenance, unfair policies and limited housing options for larger families and single individuals. Participants spoke about the impact of inadequate housing on mental health, mobility, self-esteem and safety. Rent-geared-to-income, stable rent, supports for homeless and precariously housed populations, and expansion of existing housing support programs were identified as positive solutions.

To support what we heard from Manitobans during consultation, the following initiatives are being implemented and will contribute to the reduction and prevention of poverty.

## Key Initiatives

### *Increasing Family Income*

Poverty is a lack of income that inhibits an individual's capacity to access the basic necessities of life. Boosting the incomes of Manitoba families living in poverty is vital to make basic living affordable.

The Basic Personal Amount (BPA) is a non-refundable tax credit that every Manitoba resident is entitled to claim on their income tax return. The Manitoba government legislated indexing of the BPA and personal income tax brackets to the rate of inflation beginning in 2017 for the first time in the province's history. The basic personal amount will increase from \$9,382 in the 2018 tax year to \$9,626 in 2019. Since 2016, the BPA has increased by \$492.

In 2018, indexing removed an estimated 1,740 Manitobans from the tax rolls and saved residents more than \$17.5 million annually. In 2019, indexing will remove an additional 3,810 Manitobans from the tax rolls for an additional annual savings of \$38 million. These savings will continue growing at the rate of the growth in the consumer price index, meaning that Manitobans are able to keep more of their income.

<b>Tax Year</b>	<b>Basic Personal Amount</b>	<b>Manitobans removed from tax rolls (year-over-year)</b>
2018	\$9,382	1,740
2019	\$9,626	3,810
2020	\$9,809 <sup>f</sup>	2,850

f – forecast and subject to change

In 2017, amendments were made to the Employment Standards Code to provide a consistent and predictable way of indexing the minimum wage in Manitoba. The change in minimum wage is calculated through a formula based on the rate of inflation, which is the change in the previous year's consumer price index. Adjustments to the minimum wage are announced before April 1 and take effect on October 1 of each year. This is the first time in Manitoba's history that the minimum wage has been indexed to inflation.

## ***Transforming Health Care***

Poverty is associated with poor health outcomes. Giving a better quality of life to Manitobans living in poverty means providing for their essential health care needs. The health system in Manitoba is undergoing unprecedented change. This change is driven by a commitment to improve the system and to make it more patient focused, operate more efficiently and ensure it is safe, affordable and sustainable in the long term. These changes are aimed at improving the quality, accessibility and efficiency of health care services for all Manitobans.

This transformation includes the creation of a provincial health organization called Shared Health. Shared Health will enable provincial planning and integration of services, improve care and provide coordinated support to regional health authorities across the province and establish provincial standards of care for all Manitobans. It is anticipated that coordinating provincial standards of care and improving access to health care across regions will benefit all Manitobans, including those living in poverty and those who may have experienced challenges accessing health care.

In addition to health care services, there is substantive evidence that supports health promotion and prevention activities as key to improving the health and well-being of populations. In Manitoba's health system, there is a focus on addressing the social, economic and environmental factors that contribute to health.

New public health strategies in progress include an e-learning website that will increase access to educational resources and offer online support to all prenatal and post-partum families across Manitoba. Current Manitoba programs include Families First Home Visiting, which helps families develop stronger parenting skills and connects them with supports within their communities. Public health nurses also help families access health and social services and community-based programs. Public health staff enable families to access financial and material resources through the Prenatal Benefit program. Community health centres and access centres remain important integrated models of care to assess community needs and work to address the root causes of poor health by promoting wellness and the prevention of illness.

### ***Expanding Mental Health and Addictions Support***

Issues of mental health and addiction are challenges for people living in poverty. Programs that aim to tackle the root causes and consequences of these problems are important to improve the lives of Manitobans.

In the spring of 2018, VIRGO Planning and Evaluation Consultants provided the minister of health, seniors and active living with a report entitled ***Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addictions Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans***. VIRGO's report includes recommendations for improving access to and coordination of mental health and addictions services in Manitoba. The strategy report focuses on services across the lifespan for children, youth, adults and older adults.

With the goal of transforming mental health and addiction services in the province, the Manitoba government has begun to plan the execution of the recommendations in the strategy. Some of VIRGO's recommendations are already in the process of being implemented, including:

- opening Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinics - RAAMs are fully accessible walk in clinics that treat adults seeking help for substance-related addictions, including those struggling with opiate, methamphetamine and alcohol addiction.
- signing on to Canada's Emergency Treatment Fund to establish flexible length withdrawal management services and recovery beds in Winnipeg and Brandon. This bilateral agreement will provide funding to increase access to essential detoxification treatment services in Manitoba.
- adding six mental health inpatient beds at the Health Sciences Centre
- equipping paramedics with olanzapine to treat agitated patients at risk of developing methamphetamine psychosis
- issuing a request for proposals to treat people with co-existing addiction and mental health issues, allowing them to stay closer to home and their support networks

The Manitoba government provides support to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), which has recently expanded a number of services in response to continued demand for residential addiction treatment services. AFM has doubled the number of women's treatment beds to 24 from 12 at their Portage Avenue site. AFM has also developed and implemented trauma-informed training modules for service providers, and provided webinars and other training for health professionals and the public on methamphetamine use and addiction.

### ***Expanding Food Security***

Access to nutritious food is a daily challenge for people living in poverty. Many vulnerable Manitobans eat what they can afford, and not what they need for good health.

The Manitoba government supports the Child Nutritional Council of Manitoba, a charitable organization dedicated to helping school age children learn, grow and succeed by providing high-needs schools with grant funding for breakfast, snack and lunch programs. Program support and training on such topics as menu planning, budgeting and healthy options are also provided.

In 2017/18, the Manitoba government, in partnership with the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, supported over 4.5 million meals and snacks to approximately 28,000 students in 259 nourishment programs.

Healthy Food in Schools is a Manitoba government initiative that supports schools to promote healthy eating, provide access to affordable healthy food and foster positive school food environments. Through a partnership with Dietitians of Canada, a registered dietitian is available to provide one-on-one support to schools to implement healthy eating policies and guidelines, provide expertise in menu planning and improve healthy eating environments.

### ***Supporting Affordable Housing***

Housing costs impose a significant barrier to accessing the basic necessities of life for low-income Manitobans.

Rent Assist helps low-income Manitobans rent in the private market. In July 2017 and 2018, Rent Assist rates were increased to maintain indexation to 75 per cent of median market rent. Changes to the non-Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) client contribution percentage were made to ensure that the program remains financially sustainable and available to low-income Manitobans with the greatest shelter-related needs.

As of November 2018, approximately 26,000 households on EIA in private rent, board and room, trailer and homeowner situations received Rent Assist. This is an increase of approximately 4,000 (or 18 per cent) since March 2016. More than \$8.3 million was approved in Budget 2017 for indexation of EIA Rent Assist to 75 per cent of median market rent, while Budget 2018 added \$3.4 million.

Total expenditures for non-EIA Rent Assist in 2017/18 were approximately \$30.5 million. This represents an increase of almost \$3.7 million (14 per cent) over 2016/17 and an increase of almost \$17.5 million (133 per cent) over 2015/16. The 2018/19 budget is \$33.267 million.

As of November 2018, there were 7,518 low-income households not on EIA and renting in the private market receiving Rent Assist. This is an increase of more than 2,750 (58 per cent) since March 2016 (4,750).

Programs and services to meet the housing needs of Manitobans are an important component of poverty reduction. Manitoba Housing, in partnership with private, non-profit and cooperative housing organizations, supports the construction of affordable rental housing supply. A portion of these homes are constructed or renovated to ensure the availability of accessible rental housing for Manitobans with disabilities. Rental units are under construction in Brandon, Thompson, Winnipeg and other locations, representing over \$25 million in capital funding.

The Manitoba government is encouraged by the federal government's ongoing engagement in housing and its plans for new initiatives, commencing in 2018/19.

Manitoba Housing is in the process of developing a new provincial housing framework. It will respond to housing issues, while reflecting broader priorities in the areas of:

- poverty reduction
- addressing homelessness
- improving the life outcomes of youth aging out of care
- supporting transitions of families and individuals through life circumstances
- helping households most in need

The framework will build on the strength and capacity of community-based service providers and emphasize innovative partnerships to ensure sustainable, solution-oriented housing outcomes for families and individuals.



The Manitoba government engaged the services of KPMG to identify transformational opportunities to increase efficiencies, value for money, and better allocation of financial resources in serving the housing needs of vulnerable Manitobans. The key objective of the engagement is to ensure the long-term sustainability of providing social housing to Manitobans living in poverty. The transformational vision in delivering social housing is an important consideration in the development of the provincial housing framework, which complements the poverty reduction strategy.

The Manitoba government supports a number of initiatives to reduce homelessness and prevent Manitobans from becoming homeless. These include emergency shelters, Housing First programs, portable housing benefits, eviction prevention and homeless outreach mentors. The Manitoba government also supports End Homelessness Winnipeg as the entity to develop an integrated and coordinated response to homelessness in Winnipeg.

More recently, a targeted response to address youth homelessness has been initiated. Government and community organizations represented on the committee have worked toward addressing recommendations related to youth homelessness through facilitating solution-based discussions and increasing alignment between community and government priorities.

For a full list of initiatives related to working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living, see Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 6: PROMOTING ECONOMIC INCLUSION THROUGH EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

***“Don’t have an abundance of job opportunities; fighting for a job I don’t even want.”***

*Participant, Community Conversation (Flin Flon)*

***“Indigenous youth, when looking for employment, want places where families and relations can come.”***

*Indigenous Participant, Community Workshop (Winnipeg)*

***Pathways to a Better Future*** creates opportunities for all Manitobans, empowering them to be economically and socially included through greater participation in employment, education and training. This approach recognizes the importance of fostering opportunities to access jobs, skills and knowledge. Government supports can often play an important role in providing these opportunities. Promoting economic inclusion has a direct impact on reducing and preventing poverty for many Manitobans.

The Manitoba government is investing in initiatives that will create jobs, promote economic stability, expand workforce development, support students and improve educational outcomes. These initiatives support the priority of providing a better future for all Manitobans through greater economic inclusion.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

Participants living in poverty described the need for education as a way to move out of poverty. They described barriers to getting a good education, which included:

- a lack of access in the north
- a lack of financial and student aid, scholarships and bursaries for students
- the importance of offering complementary learning opportunities throughout the year, such as summer programming and after-school activities

Community-based organizations and educators echoed these challenges and noted the need for additional attention to all aspects of the education system. They highlighted the need for adult learning supports, apprenticeship programming, adult literacy and life skills training approaches. Educators also noted the importance of:

- educational data to direct programming
- support for special needs students
- culturally-appropriate approaches in education

Consultation participants discussed barriers to moving off social assistance, including the lack of supports, policies and services to help them transition from EIA to employment. Respondents suggested a basic income, reviewing income-related tax benefits, and an increase of EIA rates as pathways to improve income security for people living in poverty.

Consultation participants living in poverty discussed the difficulty in finding stable, long-term employment as a barrier to moving out of poverty. Mental health issues, transportation, work-related costs and a lack of training opportunities all pose challenges. Many participants shared stories of employers being unsympathetic to the barriers experienced by those living in poverty. Others discussed their experiences of stigma, gender inequity and racism. They proposed employment incentives for those living in poverty and for businesses hiring those with additional employment barriers. They also proposed expanded training opportunities and support for social enterprise strategies.

## **Key Initiatives**

### ***Expanding Employment Supports***

Creating jobs and helping low-income Manitobans earn a living are keys to moving people out of poverty. The Manitoba government recognizes that work is beneficial to health and that we should not assume that people cannot work due to medical conditions or other barriers to employment. Having a job can have profound effects on a person's life, contributing to a sense of purpose, pride and belonging. It can also create opportunities for growth and provide access to more money, and ultimately, financial independence.

Launched in March 2017, the Refugee Employment Development Initiative (REDI) integrates refugee job seekers, who face multiple barriers, into Manitoba workplaces. In a safe, supportive learning environment, participants receive occupation-specific, essential skills development, technical training, and English language training. Since April 2018, the second phase of REDI has been targeting participants with low language benchmarks, to improve work placement suitability and increase labour market participation.

The Manitoba government is working to enhance employment-focused services and improve labour market participation rates among Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) participants. CLDS is adopting an Employment First framework where community employment is the primary expected goal for working age adults with an intellectual disability.

Over the next several years, CLDS services will work towards supporting and realizing this goal by integrating more employment-focused services and supports into current programming. Primary target groups are those identified as being closest to the labour market, and transitional youth, who are able to move directly into paid employment opportunities upon graduating from high school at age 21.

Currently, fewer than five per cent of CLDS participants are employed. Employment is key to the CLDS vision of inclusion and full citizenship for all. By adopting an Employment First approach, and enhancing employment-focused services within current programming, our goal is to increase the number of adults with intellectual disabilities participating in the labour market by an additional five per cent across Manitoba over the next three years.

### ***Transforming Employment and Income Assistance***

Fostering financial independence and creating economic opportunities for people on income assistance is an important part of the government strategy to reduce poverty.

Manitoba Families and Manitoba Education and Training are working together to transform programs and supports for employable Manitobans to help them transition from social assistance into the workforce.

Research has shown that early and rapid interventions and transitions to employment support prolonged independence. This is why the Manitoba government is implementing a new approach, working closely with EIA participants and community partners, to create timely and holistic employment plans for those who are ready to move towards employment.

EIA participants are supported in plans that are tailored to their personal circumstances. They consider each person's strengths, how they align with available job opportunities, and what steps are needed to prepare for success in the labour market. This may include programming for personal or family wellness, such as treating addictions or teaching life skills, or for literacy, skills upgrading or skills development.

Jobs on Market is a rapid re-employment service model in Winnipeg. This service model is for non-disabled adults without children applying for or receiving EIA who are assessed as closest to the labour market. A number of services are being provided on site, such as job leads and resume development. Since the launch of Jobs on Market in February 2017, 3,900 people have been served and over 1,150 of these people are no longer dependent on EIA for financial assistance.

Going forward, plans are underway for the expansion of the Jobs on Market model to include similar services throughout the province for EIA clients identified as ready to engage in employment planning.

Once employment plans are developed, clients are referred to and supported in responsive programming that is designed to help them prepare for and move into employment. Manitoba Education and Training delivers a wide range of employment and training options for EIA clients, including career and employment counselling, employment services, skills development, wage subsidy and self-employment supports.

New funding through the Canada-Manitoba labour market transfer agreements will help individuals with complex barriers to employment, including those receiving EIA, to access specialized programs to develop their employment skills. Funding will also help adults with disabilities to find and maintain employment, and it will support refugees with low language benchmarks and other barriers to workforce integration to join the labour market.

The EIA program has implemented a motivational interviewing approach to engage with clients in employment planning. Motivational interviewing is a collaborative, goal-oriented style of communication that pays particular attention to the language of change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for, and commitment to, a specific goal by eliciting and exploring the person's reason for change in an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion. Research, conducted in Manitoba, demonstrated that clients were 30 per cent more likely to gain financial independence if they received services from a caseworker trained in motivational interviewing.

In 2018/19, efforts will continue to enhance supports to help EIA participants get back to work or increase their readiness to work. This will be achieved through rapid assessments and referrals to programs and services designed to help address barriers to working, and prepare people for successful employment outcomes.

In 2018/19, the EIA program will consult with community agencies to support the implementation of a simplified EIA application form and a new online application process. This initiative will reduce the amount of information applicants are required to provide for their initial application. Streamlining the application process is intended to allow program staff to focus on assessment and planning, to help clients move toward financial independence.

### ***Promoting Success in Education and Training***

An essential pathway to employment and better economic opportunities are provided through education and training.

The Manitoba government delivers grant funding for Youth Build, North End Trades Discovery Initiative, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council, Bright Futures and the Young Entrepreneurs Business Grant, connecting Indigenous youth with education, training, mentorship and business opportunities.

The government supports partners such as the North End Community Renewal Corporation and the Urban Circle Training Centre through grant funding. This funding provides counselling, training and resources to help reduce barriers to employment and promote economic independence.

The ACCESS Program is a unique Manitoba initiative with the mandate of increasing access to, and success in, post-secondary education for students facing significant barriers, including academic, financial, cultural, language and geographic barriers. The Manitoba government provides funding and guidelines for individual ACCESS programs delivered by publicly funded colleges and universities in Manitoba. The programs provide students with academic programs and tutoring, systems navigation, cultural and language supports, counseling, life skills training and career development.

The Manitoba Student Aid Program continues to ensure accessible and sustainable post-secondary education for low-income students through enhanced support for students in need, including providing financial aid more quickly.

Manitoba Education and Training will be pursuing a series of enhancements to the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative (MSBI) starting in 2019/20. This will better coordinate government bursaries and scholarships, leverage federal and private sector donations, and better align MSBI with the labour market.

Effective for the 2018/19 academic year, MSBI received an additional \$2.7 million investment, to provide more upfront grant support to low-income postsecondary students. Investments in 2018/19 include a \$1,500 top-up grant for eligible low-income Indigenous students.

The Manitoba government is also reducing red tape, streamlining the application process, and exploring self-serve applications to improve access to student financial assistance and decrease administrative requirements.

Education, training and workforce development are cross-cutting themes across departments. Under Manitoba's Economic Growth Action Plan, Manitoba Education and Training is leading the development of a Skills, Knowledge and Talent Strategy that will:

- support the post-secondary education system
- develop partnerships to improve job creation and retention
- align student outcomes to Manitoba's evolving labour market

For a full list of initiatives related to promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training, see Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 7: FACILITATING PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

***We have relationships with the people [at community-based organizations], they understand us.”***

*Participant, Community Conversation (Winnipeg)*

**Pathways to a Better Future** is about fostering relationships across sectors to address our shared responsibility to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. This strategy brings together diverse stakeholders across governments, businesses and community organizations to implement innovative solutions by and for Manitobans.

Poverty reduction is complex. The expertise of our cross-sectoral partners is fundamental to working together to improve outcomes for vulnerable Manitobans. The Manitoba government will build on the relationships developed during our public consultations to ensure that poverty reduction efforts renew and build upon these existing partnerships.

Community-based organizations played a key role in our consultations. These organizations understand community issues and champion the needs of those they support. Community-based organizations provide critical services, programming and social connections that help support Manitobans in need. The Manitoba government is committed to empowering these organizations and fostering community-based solutions that produce positive results.

Individuals who have experienced poverty will continue to be included in our poverty reduction efforts. Through the consultation process, individuals with lived experience highlighted their strengths and resiliency in the face of low income and adverse circumstances. Ongoing efforts to reduce poverty must include those with lived experience.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

A message that was clearly voiced throughout the consultation was the positive value of, and good work being done by, community organizations, agencies, anti-poverty advocates, neighborhood renewal corporations, non-profits and the charitable sector. Participants living in poverty suggested that the government should disperse funds to agencies to facilitate services to those living in poverty.

Throughout the consultations, Manitobans recognized specific organizations, programs, initiatives or interventions that had made a positive difference in their lives. They indicated that agencies provide hope and support, make good things possible and have a positive impact on their lives. These same sentiments were shared by front-line workers and representatives from community-based organizations.

Participants representing community-based organizations highlighted the difficulty in maintaining programs, effective delivery and staff, and in developing direction when funding cycles are short-term. They highlighted a need for longer term funding cycles that can support the growth and development of evidence-based programming.

Based on feedback gathered through consultations, the Manitoba government will support community-based organizations through the following initiatives.

## **Key Initiatives**

Community-based organizations are important partners of government in delivering services to Manitobans. These organizations have the best knowledge of the day-to-day challenges facing the local community. They also have the best insight to find appropriate solutions to meet the community's basic needs.

### ***Community Mobilization***

Manitoba is home to several community mobilization models addressing community safety and well-being. As referenced in the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy, the Manitoba government is committed to multi-sector collaborative approaches that include community organizations, law enforcement, schools and government services. Through a community mobilization approach, family crisis is prevented, young people are diverted away from the justice system and resources are used most efficiently. This innovative approach includes the development of the Manitoba Community Mobilization and Safety Initiatives Network. The purpose of the network is to provide a collaborative provincial platform for the promotion and strategic alignment of Manitoba multi-agency community safety projects.

### ***Community Schools Program***

The Community Schools Program supports the capacity of schools as hubs within communities to strategically mobilize and deploy school-community resources that attain better outcomes for students, families and neighbourhoods, particularly those living with multiple disadvantages.

### ***Look North***

Look North is a movement by northerners, for northerners, to grow the economy in northern Manitoba. Since the inception of Look North, there have been many meetings, events and conversations with northerners leading to the creation of the ***Look North Report and Action Plan*** and formation of the Look North Steering Committee.

The report outlines six priority areas with the greatest potential to grow the northern economy:

- mining and other resource development
- strategic infrastructure investment
- housing challenges and opportunities
- enterprise eco-system of support
- Indigenous engagement and partnerships
- education, training and workforce development

The steering committee recognizes that meaningful change requires a long-term commitment. It intends to respond to each of these priority areas through a combination of short-term actions and long-term initiatives designed to increase economic prosperity and reduce poverty.

### ***Supporting Community Organizations through Grant Funding***

Manitoba is working towards building on its single window grant intake to support thriving, sustainable communities by:

- being client-focused
- streamlining and reducing the administrative burden
- recognizing the diversity of Manitoba communities and encouraging partnerships and collaboration
- broadening the reach of grant programming to communities and organizations that have not previously been funded
- improving alignment of grant funding with provincial, regional and municipal priorities and plans

In 2018/19, 403 projects are approved under the Community Development Grant program. These projects support non-profit and community-led organizations and represent a provincial commitment of \$5.5 million.

Going forward, the new Manitoba Economic Development Office (EDO) will lead major economic development initiatives and investment projects and collaborate with strategic and regional partner organizations. The EDO will coordinate across government departments, agencies and organizations to advance the needs of business and industry.

## ***Preventing Family Violence***

The Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat continues to support vulnerable and at-risk women, their children and men who are experiencing family violence. Funding and program and administrative support are provided to 33 community-based agencies that deliver family violence prevention and intervention programs and services across Manitoba.

The Manitoba government funds a provincial toll free crisis line that automatically links callers with the nearest available shelter that will provide safety. Women's shelters, resource centres, second-stage housing programs, and specialized programs provide various services and supports including individual counselling, support groups for women and men, and children's programming.

The following are some of the funded programs and services:

- Ten women's shelters provide safe, emergency accommodations and supportive counselling to women and their children who have experienced family violence, as well as counselling and off-site accommodation options to men and their children.
- Six of the 10 shelters also offer longer-term accommodation and support, in addition to emergency accommodation.
- Four residential second-stage programs offer long-term, safe, protective, affordable interim housing and services for women leaving abusive relationships. The programs also offer individual and group counselling, parenting support and other information.
- Nine women's resource centres provide individual counselling, information and referral, and outreach and support groups to women affected by family violence. They also offer educational programs, volunteer training and community development activities.
- Fourteen specialized programs offer a variety of unique services to those affected by family violence, such as Indigenous programs, services for immigrants, child visitation services, men's programming and couples counselling.

In 2018/19, the Family Violence Prevention Program will be providing additional funding support to Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. to help the organization move on to the next phase of their Indigenous-focused, public awareness campaign on sexual violence. The Manitoba government funded the first phase of the campaign in early 2018, which included public awareness materials, such as a video and posters.

For a complete list of initiatives on facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations, see Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 8: STRENGTHENING CLIENT-CENTRED SERVICE DELIVERY

***“From a process point of view, every time government or the province looks at creating a strategy, it needs to be both inclusive and fit within a reconciliation strategy.”***

*Indigenous Service Provider, Community Workshop (Winnipeg)*

***“Please educate people about poverty. It isn’t a choice. People don’t want it. Please do a campaign against stigma. People are not immature for asking for support. They don’t have the means others with more opportunities take for granted.”***

*Person with Experience of Poverty, Online Survey*

The Manitoba government has set out a new public service transformation strategy, with a focus on outcomes. It is one that challenges public servants to better understand and meet the needs of citizens, to innovate, to build capacity and harness talent, and to advance the commitment to make Manitoba the most improved province in Canada. ***Pathways to a Better Future*** commits to further our client-centred and inclusive service delivery.

Poverty affects people in different ways. Discrimination, stigma and other barriers limit access to critical public resources and opportunities. Part of the solution is to embed culturally appropriate supports in practice and policy across government.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

Service delivery was a key challenge highlighted at each consultation session, particularly challenges with:

- navigating government systems
- accessing pertinent information and assistance about government programs and services
- overload and compassion fatigue
- a lack of diversity training for front-line workers
- a cultural disconnect in programming
- a lack of services in northern and rural communities

Consultation respondents shared many examples of helpful services and programs being provided across Manitoba, including women’s health, parent support groups, food security, child nutrition and shelters. There was also a broad call for enhanced supports (centralized information sources and information hubs, transparency, advocates and needs-based evaluation) to support system navigation and equity.

Throughout the course of consultation, participants living in poverty spoke about their experiences of social exclusion and the importance of participating in social networks and belonging to their communities. They shared their experiences of alienation from society, the apathy of the general population to the barriers they experience, and feelings of desperation and loneliness. Participants also shared their experiences with the stigma of living in poverty, racism, and feeling unsafe.

Others shared their desire to participate in recreation activities and the celebrations of life, as well as the need for connectivity to participate in society. Youth spoke about the importance of having a pet for comfort and companionship. A recurring theme was the desire for welcoming public spaces, and encouragement and care from others.

Consultation participants across Manitoba spoke about the need for:

- additional supports for those with disabilities, particularly enhanced income support
- better access to education and employment opportunities
- reduced employment discrimination (including fair wages)
- increased supply of housing and assisted living
- challenges of access and costs of transportation

Community organizations called on government to put in place a seamless and lifelong continuum of support services for persons with disabilities.

Participants living in poverty spoke about the importance of more relevant service delivery, including the need for culturally-appropriate approaches, life skills and the importance of early interventions. The need for culturally-appropriate approaches was especially highlighted within education, addictions support and health care. Participants spoke of the value of being included in policy and program development, and having their voices heard on issues that directly affect their well-being.

The Manitoba government acknowledges what was heard through consultations and will continue to strengthen service delivery to all Manitobans, particularly those with low-income. To this end, the following key initiatives support this priority area.

## Key Initiatives

### ***Providing Professional Development and Training for Public Servants***

Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action #57 calls upon all levels of government to provide education to public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaty and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Indigenous-Crown relations.

The Manitoba government is committed to providing training to civil servants at all levels through various methods of professional development and training activities within the Manitoba public service, including:

- creating and delivering the Indigenous Peoples: Building Stronger Relationships workshop across government
- developing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Training Framework
- supporting the annual National Indigenous Day learning event for all government staff
- designing an on-line course series on the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous rights and Indigenous-Crown relations and reconciliation
- supporting staff to use the ***Truth and Reconciliation Reading Guide***, developed by the Manitoba Harm Reduction Network

### ***Expanding Accessibility for Manitobans***

People with disabilities are two to four times more likely to live in poverty than people who do not have a disability. The Manitoba government is committed to becoming a more inclusive society by removing barriers to daily living that affect one in four Manitobans with disabilities (Canadian Disability Survey, 2017). To this end, the government enacted The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) in 2013 with new standards regulating the public and private sectors in five areas:

- customer service
- employment
- information and communications
- transportation
- design of public spaces



Working with business and community, including people with disabilities, the Manitoba government is set to enact all five standards by 2020. The first standard targeting customer service is already law. It requires that affected organizations introduce policies, practices and training to ensure people with disabilities receive the services they require in a timely and respectful manner. Soon, a second standard will be in place to remove barriers in all stages of employment, beginning with recruitment.

As of November 2018, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service requires Manitoba businesses and organizations, with at least one employee, to introduce policies and train staff on how to provide quality customer service for everyone. For example, they must consider the communication needs of customers and clients, whether in person or in print. They must also welcome support persons and service animals, and allow the use of assistive devices like wheelchairs.

Going forward, the enactment in 2019 of the Accessibility Standard for Employment will assist people with disabilities by removing barriers to recruiting, hiring and retaining employees. Business will gain through increased access to skilled employees, including the growing number of seniors affected by disability. We will all benefit from the successful participation of jobseekers in our economy and the reduced reliance on publicly funded income supports.

The AMA calls on the Manitoba government and other public sector organizations to provide leadership through the development of accessibility plans. The aim is to review existing policies and practices and set organizational priorities for the future, ensuring public services and programs are accessible for everyone.

Information about the law, resources and upcoming workshops is available on the Manitoba government website.

### ***Access to Services***

The Manitoba government will create a framework for citizen-centric service and build capacity in public servants to modernize and transform programs to best serve clients and advance stronger outcomes. An important element of poverty reduction is ensuring that citizens are aware of the array of services and benefits available to them.

An important tool to reducing poverty is ensuring that persons living with limited and low incomes have access to all the benefits and services for which they may be eligible. Building on the many inter-sectoral efforts in this area, Manitoba Families has established a Supports for Independence Team to focus on supporting EIA participants to apply for additional federal and provincial benefits.

The Vital Statistics Agency (VSA) is planning to reduce wait times to access birth certificates by creating online applications available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. VSA aims to reduce barriers for individuals with incomplete registration or application information. Accessing a birth certificate allows people to more easily access benefits and programs and apply to the Social Insurance Registry to receive a social insurance number and gain access to employment.

For a complete list of initiatives on strengthening client-centred service delivery, see Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 9: MAKING POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH SOCIAL INNOVATION

***“A social innovation strategy is an opportunity to leverage and stack resources.”***

*Participant, Community Workshop (Winnipeg)*

***“Purchasing from social enterprises should be scaled up, providing employment opportunities.”***

*Non-Profit-Organization Client Respondent, Online Survey*

***Pathways to a Better Future*** recognizes the need for new and innovative solutions to the challenge of poverty reduction. This strategy's support for social innovation in service delivery, programs and policies provides opportunities to implement creative approaches to achieve better outcomes for children and families.

The Manitoba government will continue to work with businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to develop and implement innovative approaches to social problems. This strategy will foster innovative solutions to poverty and social exclusion. Together, we can make positive change.

### **What did we hear during consultations?**

Many Manitobans shared their thoughts about the important role of the Manitoba government to develop pathways out of poverty and create conditions that promote the full economic and social participation of all. There was a strong call for the development of a robust, indicator-based poverty reduction strategy, which aligns with provincial, community-based stakeholder and federal government priorities.

A common message from consultation was that poverty is felt across communities. It impacts the livelihoods and health of families, and needs innovative and collaborative strategies, programming and pathways, to create better outcomes and achieve positive results. Community-based stakeholders suggested that collective impact strategies are an effective vehicle for moving forward with poverty reduction.

The Manitoba government is committed to social innovation and fostering collaborative problem solving to deliver on positive results. Below are key initiatives that support some of Manitoba's newest approaches to reducing and preventing poverty.

## **Key Initiatives**

Because of the fiscal challenges in addressing the social issues affecting Manitobans living in poverty, the government is pursuing innovative approaches to solving these complex social problems. Key initiatives involve innovative social financing strategies and partnerships with community organizations, the business sector and social enterprises.

### ***Delivering Social Impact Innovation***

Manitoba has announced its first landmark Social Impact Bond (SIB), an innovative social finance tool that encourages partners in the private and not-for-profit sectors to work collaboratively with government to deliver community-driven, evidence-based prevention programming, where government provides a financial return based on improved outcomes.

A new set of solutions has emerged that promote public sector innovation and harness a new way of collaborating with non-government entities. SIBs have gained traction in Manitoba due to their innovative take on social service delivery. Social finance supports government's broader vision of empowering individuals, grassroots organizations, communities, businesses and social entrepreneurs that wish to contribute their time and resources to help tackle persistent social challenges and create new and innovative models for delivering services through SIBs.

Manitoba's first SIB aims to improve outcomes for children and families through a collaborative effort between government, service providers and other community stakeholders. The Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC) is delivering the landmark SIB in child welfare. SFNNC has partnered with Wiji'iwag Ikwewag to connect expectant mothers to an Indigenous doula to avoid a newborn apprehension or, if a child must be placed in care, to reduce the number of days in care. The doula will work with the mother for a period of up to a one year. The doula's work with the mother will promote supportive relationships, connect her to services, and share traditional Indigenous teachings to encourage safer parenting practices and to strengthen the mother-child bond. The service provider will serve approximately 200 mothers over a two-year period. The program will be assessed by an independent evaluator in the third year.

The SIB will contribute to an innovative and collaborative approach to measurable and meaningful outcomes that ensure a better quality of life for vulnerable Manitobans. The SIB has the potential to positively affect other aspects of the child's life, leading to improved mental health, better educational outcomes and more stable housing, all of which are connected to a positive mother-child bond during infancy.

### ***Offering Affordability Programs for Manitobans***

In 2016, Manitoba Hydro formed a Bill Affordability Working Group, as directed by the Public Utilities Board, including various lower income stakeholders, interveners and the Manitoba government. Its purpose was to identify and assess measures that may result in energy bills being more affordable to lower income customers. The working group reviewed Manitoba Hydro's existing energy efficiency programs and initiatives to identify potential enhancements, along with possible new program offerings or rate assistance programs. The working group's final report and recommendations are available at [billaffordabilitymb.ca](http://billaffordabilitymb.ca).

Manitoba Hydro indicated that it would continue to implement many recommendations to assist lower income customers through enhancements to the Affordable Energy Program (AEP) and the Bill Management Program.

The AEP consists of several initiatives such as the Power Smart Affordable Energy Program, Indigenous Power Smart Program and the Power Smart Neighbourhood Project. The Bill Management Program includes:

- individualized payment due dates
- flexible payment arrangements
- an equal payment plan for customers with arrears
- waived late payment due dates (under certain conditions)
- alternative payment methods

Going forward, with the responsibility for energy efficiency transitioning to Efficiency Manitoba, it is anticipated that Manitoba Hydro's existing bill affordability programs will also be transitioning to the new Crown corporation.

A detailed list of initiatives related to making positive change through social innovation is found in Appendix 1.

## CHAPTER 10: LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

Manitoba's Poverty Reduction Strategy Act came into effect in 2011 and guides a whole-of-government approach to reducing and preventing poverty. The act includes five main obligations for government:

- Publish a poverty reduction strategy and review and update it every five years.
- Link the strategy to the provincial budget.
- Establish poverty reduction and social inclusion indicators.
- Monitor progress and publish a poverty reduction and social inclusion annual report.
- Establish a committee on poverty reduction and social inclusion.

There are currently 21 indicators to measure progress on poverty reduction identified in the regulation. Manitoba's new poverty reduction strategy includes 13 indicators. Formally establishing the new indicators on poverty reduction will require a regulatory change.

Moving forward, government will work with the Poverty Reduction Committee to review The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act to ensure that the legislation continues to support work to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion in Manitoba.

### Key Targets

***Pathways to a Better Future*** includes key targets to measure success in reducing poverty and social exclusion. This is critical to the strategy. The measurement framework will ensure accountability to Manitobans and provide an evidence-based structure for measuring the outcomes of our poverty reduction initiatives.

The Manitoba government's vision for this strategy is that all Manitobans have resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life. The success of this vision will be based on our ability to reduce poverty. It is our objective to have fewer Manitobans living with low income every year.

We are committed to building on our recent success to reduce child poverty in Manitoba. The key target of this strategy is to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by the year 2025, compared to the baseline year of 2015. This will be measured using Canada's Official Poverty Line, also known as Statistic Canada's Market Basket Measure.

Enhancing supports for Manitoba children will increase the standard of living for the most vulnerable citizens. This will help address the intergenerational cycle of poverty and reduce the number of Manitobans living in persistent or chronic poverty.

The Manitoba government is committed to working with the federal government and other partners to support the federal goals of reducing the national poverty rate by 20 per cent by 2020 and by 50 per cent by 2030. Significantly, the commitment to poverty reduction does not end in 2030. Our long-term aspiration is for the eradication of all poverty in Manitoba.

### Measurement Framework

The consultations and federal measurement framework provided valuable insight to support the review of the current 21 poverty reduction indicators and the formulation of the appropriate set of indicators for the new poverty reduction strategy.

The 21 current indicators have been streamlined. We will measure our progress in reducing poverty, using 13 key indicators to provide focus on the important objectives of the strategy and giving due attention to the critical facets of poverty.

### ***Measurement Framework Going Forward***

By working in partnership with the federal government, we are taking into account the federal framework, data and indicators in developing a measurement framework for poverty reduction in Manitoba. Eight out of the 13 indicators of Manitoba's strategy are also included in the federal strategy, which will allow comparison with national trends and with other provinces and territories. These indicators are:

- Canada's official poverty line
- core housing need
- income inequality
- not in employment, education or training
- literacy skills
- numeracy skills
- poverty entry rate
- poverty exit rate

The set of 13 indicators will be used to measure the progress of the strategy in the areas of employment, education, skills, training, child care, child welfare, health, housing and income inequality. The Manitoba government will report on these indicators on an annual basis to measure how this strategy is improving essential aspects in the lives of Manitobans.

The table below shows the renewed indicators by priority area.

### Measurement Framework

Priority	Indicator	Description
Reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by year 2025 Support the federal government's goal of reducing poverty by 50 per cent by 2030	Canada's Official Poverty Line	The cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families need in order to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across Canada
	Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	Percentage of youth aged 15 to 24 years who are not in employment, education or training
Investing in Manitoba's future prosperity through supports to children and youth	Availability of licensed child care	The percentage of children (ages 12 and under) for whom there is a regulated child care space
	Children in care	The percentage of children who are in the care of a child and family services agency
Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living	Premature mortality rate	Deaths occurring (number of years of life lost) before the age of 75 per 1,000 population
	Poverty entry rate	The proportion of Manitobans who, among two years of filing their taxes, entered low income in the second year after not being in low income in the first year
	Poverty exit rate	The proportion of Manitobans who, among two years of filing their taxes, exited low income in the second year after being in low income in the first year
	Core housing need	The proportion of households in housing that is below one or more of the adequacy, suitability and affordability standards

## Measurement Framework

Priority	Indicator	Description
Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training	Employment	Employment rates, by demographic group
	High school graduation	Manitoba's student-tracked high school graduation rate that follows individual students in public and funded independent schools from Grade 9 and calculates the percentage who graduate on-time
	Income inequality (Palma ratio)	The ratio of the richest 10 per cent of the population's share of after-tax income divided by the share of after-tax income of the poorest 40 per cent
	Literacy (reading skills)	Average scores of 15-year old Manitobans in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Reading
	Numeracy (math skills)	Average scores of 15-year old Manitobans in Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in Mathematics

Where possible, the Manitoba government will provide disaggregated information on indicators. This may include disaggregation by income quintile, age, sex, single parent status, First Nation status and geographic area, if data is available. This will show any differences in low income and other indicators among population sub-groups.

The Manitoba government will report on other indicators, including food insecurity and unmet health needs, as more data become available to measure the effectiveness of our actions in reducing poverty. This will be supported by national efforts to improve data collection and measurements of poverty.

The federal government is investing in improved data collection to address key gaps in poverty measurement across Canada. This will support the Manitoba government's efforts to disaggregate national data to better understand poverty and its impacts on different population groups and provide a more responsive and accurate measurement of poverty and social exclusion.

***Pathways to a Better Future*** affirms the Manitoba government's ongoing role in efforts to reduce and prevent poverty, while continuing to foster strong partnerships with community organizations and other governments.

This strategy highlights what we heard from Manitobans on challenges and opportunities related to each of the six priority areas, as well as our ongoing and future initiatives for each priority. It highlights our work across government and in partnership with our diverse stakeholders to support better services, practices and care to ensure the best possible outcomes for Manitobans.

This paper focuses on key initiatives under each priority area. The full list of poverty reduction initiatives can be found in Appendix 1.

With a renewed framework for measuring poverty and social exclusion, we are committed to continuing to improve data collection and reporting so that we better understand poverty and its impact on different groups. This will ensure that we implement the most effective solutions to the challenges of poverty and social exclusion.

The federal government has a new national measurement of poverty, called Canada's Official Poverty Line (formerly known as the Market Basket Measure). The Manitoba government recognizes that this is just one measurement of poverty, based on a family's ability to purchase a basket of goods and services to meet basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living.

Poverty reduction measurement and targets are essential components of the strategy. The Manitoba government will use Canada's Official Poverty Line as one indicator within our measurement framework to track our results in reducing poverty across the province, in addition to reporting on other indicators of social and economic well-being.

The key target of this strategy is to reduce the child poverty rate by 25 per cent by year 2025, compared to the baseline year of 2015. Other indicators will be used to track progress on the impact of our poverty reduction actions.

Our commitment to reduce poverty does not end in 2025, but continues as a long-term goal until poverty is eradicated in Manitoba. We hope to realize our vision of a province where everyone has the resources, opportunities and access to achieve a better quality of life.

# APPENDIX 1: FULL LIST OF CURRENT AND FUTURE INITIATIVES BY PRIORITY AREA

This appendix provides a list of Manitoba’s current and future initiatives related to poverty reduction, organized by the six priority areas. The list includes the key priorities highlighted in chapters 4 to 9.

## 1. Investing in Manitoba’s future prosperity through supports to children and youth

Initiative	Description
Transforming Child Welfare	The Manitoba government is working in partnership with Manitobans to fundamentally transform the child and family services (CFS) system to deliver better outcomes for children and youth. Proposed changes are focused on four pillars: community-based prevention; lifelong connections through reunification and permanence; funding for results; and legislation.
Early Learning and Child Care	In February 2018, the Manitoba government announced the Canada-Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with the Government of Canada. As part of this agreement, nearly \$47 million will be invested from 2017/18 to 2019/20 to create a targeted 1,400 new and newly funded child care spaces along with various other initiatives that are aimed at building and growing the early learning and child care system in Manitoba. This is in addition to the annual investments by the Manitoba government.
Abecedarian Approach	The Abecedarian Approach is an evidence-based, early childhood intervention that focuses on language and literacy development, and is designed to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children. The Manitoba government continues to work with Red River College and child care centres that serve a high proportion of vulnerable families to implement Abecedarian-Inspired Practice.
Kindergarten to Grade 12 Review	The Manitoba government is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system.
Futures Forward	Futures Forward is a community-based program that provides career development supports and wrap-around services to help current and former youth-in-care transition to adulthood, further education and jobs.
Healthy Schools Initiative	The Healthy Schools Initiative supports all schools to promote wellbeing and good health among students.
Canada Learning Bond Program	The Vital Statistics Agency is working with federal, provincial and municipal partners to increase the number of children in Manitoba accessing the Canada Learning Bond. The Canada Learning Bond is a federal program that provides financial contributions to a Registered Education Savings Plan to help families save for their child’s education.
Inclusion Support Program	The Inclusion Support Program provides additional financial support to licensed Early Learning and Child Care centres, nursery schools, and family or group child care homes for services to address barriers. This allows a child with additional support needs to effectively participate in programming and activities.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Provincial Student Information System	Manitoba Education and Training staff will continue their work on developing an integrated provincial student information system that will greatly enhance a student engagement process and allow for the monitoring of student attendance rates, potentially in real-time.
Financial Capabilities	The Canadian Foundation for Economic Education will work with Manitoba Education and Training on a variety of initiatives to improve the financial capabilities of Manitobans. The partnership will focus on five important target groups: youth, parents, newcomers to Manitoba, seniors, and Indigenous youth and communities.
Children Protection Centre Pilot	There is an interdisciplinary service pilot with the Child Protection Centre at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. This innovative approach ensures children and youth in care receive appropriate, timely resources to support their development and progress. Enhancing the Child Protection Centre's assessment capacity allows child and family services agencies to make evidence-based case management plans that will enhance children's safety and their quality of care.
Attendance Improvement Project	The Attendance Improvement Project is creating an interdepartmental process to support students who are chronically absent. School divisions identify students and work collaboratively with Manitoba Education and Training, Manitoba Justice, and Manitoba Families to develop an action plan to assist the family and student to reengage with school.
Closing Education Gaps between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students	<p>Manitoba is seeking to address the legacy of colonialism impacting the educational success of Indigenous peoples of all ages. Examples of programming and initiatives to close the education gaps include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting school division programming through the Indigenous Academic Achievement Grant to improve the academic success of Indigenous students.</li> <li>• Funding the Building Student Success Indigenous Parents Program to enhance parental and community involvement in children's education.</li> <li>• Providing education and training supports to Indigenous youth previously in contact with the child and family services system through a number of programs including the Advancing Futures Bursary, Building Futures, Youth in Care Tuition Waiver Post-Secondary Initiative, and Work2It.</li> </ul>
The Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative	The Manitoba government provides financial assistance and program support to youth-focused programs or projects in northern Manitoba through the Northern Youth Empowerment Initiative.
Urban Development Initiative	The Manitoba government provides grant funding to support Indigenous families relocating to Winnipeg with resources such as employment assistance and programming for Indigenous youth to connect with cultural, social, personal and economic supports.
Early Intervention Programs for Youth	The Manitoba government delivers funding to organizations such as Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata for early intervention programs for youth.

## 2. Working together to improve health outcomes and standard of living

Initiative	Description
Indexation of the Basic Personal Amount and Personal Income Tax Brackets	The Manitoba government legislated indexing of the Basic Personal Amount (BPA) and personal income tax brackets to the rate of inflation beginning in 2017. The BPA is a non-refundable tax credit that every Manitoba resident is entitled to claim on their income tax return.
Indexing Minimum Wage	In 2017, amendments were made to the Employment Standards Code to provide a consistent and predictable way of indexing the minimum wage in Manitoba. The change in minimum wage is calculated through a predictable formula based on the rate of inflation.
Transforming Manitoba's Health System	The health system in Manitoba is undergoing unprecedented change, driven by a commitment to improve the system and to make it more patient-focused, operate more efficiently and ensure it is safe, affordable and sustainable in the long term.
Mental Health and Addictions Strategy	<p>In the spring of 2018, VIRGO Planning and Evaluation Consultants provided a report entitled <i>"Improving Access and Coordination of Mental Health and Addictions Services: A Provincial Strategy for all Manitobans."</i></p> <p>VIRGO's report includes recommendations for improving access to and coordination of mental health and addictions services in Manitoba. The strategy report focuses on services across the lifespan for children, youth, adults and older adults.</p> <p>With the goal of transforming mental health and addiction services, the Manitoba government has begun to plan for the execution of the recommendations in the strategy.</p>
Addictions Foundation of Manitoba	The Manitoba government provides support to the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (AFM), which has recently expanded a number of services in response to continued demand for residential addiction treatment services. AFM has doubled the number of women's treatment beds to 24 from 12 at their Portage Avenue site, AFM has also developed and implemented trauma-informed training modules for service providers, and provided webinars and other training for health professionals and the public on methamphetamine use and addiction.
Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba	The Manitoba government supports the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, a charitable organization dedicated to helping school age children learn, grow, and succeed by providing high-needs schools with grant funding for breakfast, snack, and lunch programs. Program support and training on such topics as menu planning, budgeting and healthy options are also provided.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Healthy Food in Schools	Healthy Food in Schools is a Manitoba government initiative that supports schools to promote healthy eating, provide access to affordable healthy food and foster positive school food environments. Through a partnership with Dietitians of Canada, a registered dietician is able to provide one-on-one support to schools to implement healthy eating policies and guidelines, provide expertise in menu planning and improve healthy eating environments.
Rent Assist	Rent Assist supports low-income Manitobans to rent in the private market.
Promoting Affordable Housing	Manitoba Housing, in partnership with private, non-profit and cooperative housing organizations, supports the construction of affordable rental housing. The Manitoba government is encouraged by the federal government's ongoing engagement in housing and its plans for new initiatives, commencing in 2018/19.
Homelessness	The Manitoba government supports a number of initiatives to reduce homelessness and prevent Manitobans from becoming homeless. These include emergency shelters, Housing First programs, eviction prevention, and End Homelessness Winnipeg.
My Health Teams	My Health Teams are virtual networks of providers that collaborate to deliver comprehensive primary care services to patients based on community needs. Examples of services include chronic disease management, mental health, health education and rehabilitation support. These teams are connected through innovative partnerships between regional health authorities, fee-for-service clinics and community organizations.
Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine	In May 2018, the Manitoba government announced the development of five Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine (RAAM) clinics across Manitoba. The first RAAM clinic opened at Winnipeg's Crisis Response Centre in August 2018, and the second opened at the Addiction Foundation of Manitoba's River Point Centre in September 2018. The other clinics are in Thompson, Brandon and Selkirk.
Pharmacare	Manitoba's Pharmacare program is accessible to all Manitobans with a deductible based on total family income.
Community Volunteer Income Tax Program	Manitoba Finance assists with and participates in tax preparation clinics organized by the Canada Revenue Agency, called the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program.
24-Hour Safe Spaces	Manitoba Justice funds two safe space locations in Winnipeg. These sites provide 24-hour supports for youth in need of safe space. Supportive staff help to address the underlying issues and work collaboratively with social service systems, agencies and supports involved with the youth.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Promoting Affordable and Healthy Foods	Affordable Food in Remote Manitoba is a retail subsidy that reduces the price of milk, infant formula, fresh vegetables and fresh fruits in remote northern communities (rail or fly-in access only) that do not receive the federal Nutrition North Canada subsidy. Participating stores are required to pass on the full subsidy to the customer.
Northern Healthy Foods Initiative	The Northern Healthy Foods Initiative (NHFI), a Manitoba government program, supports local and regional projects that contribute to the development of culturally relevant, healthy food systems, while improving health and well-being. NHFI goals are to increase food security efforts at the community level and strengthen community-led development.
Supports for Asylum Seekers	Asylum seekers often experience income insecurity and limited access to affordable housing. Manitoba provides funding for asylum seekers to access temporary shelter in Winnipeg, as well as settlement and integration services including community resources, health and wellness supports, legal advice, and other supports

### **3. Promoting economic inclusion through employment, education and training**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Refugees Employment Development Initiative	The Refugee Employment Development Initiative integrates refugee job seekers facing multiple barriers into Manitoba workplaces. In a safe, supportive learning environment, participants receive occupation-specific essential skills development, technical, and English language training.
Employment First	Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS) has adopted an Employment First framework where community employment is the primary expected goal for working age adults with an intellectual disability. Over the next several years, CLDS services will work towards supporting and realizing this goal by integrating more employment focused services and supports into current programming.
Supporting Employment for Employment and Income Assistance Clients	The departments of Families and Education and Training are working together to transform programs and supports for employable Manitobans to assist them in transitioning from social assistance into the workforce.
Reducing Red Tape in Employment and Income Assistance	The Manitoba government continues to place high priority on regulatory accountability and red tape reduction. A number of initiatives are underway to simplify and modernize program delivery and reduce red tape, including the development of a simplified EIA application form and a new online application process.

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Jobs on Market	<p>Jobs on Market is a rapid re-employment service model in Winnipeg. A number of services are being provided on site, such as job leads, resume development, and other employment assistance services.</p> <p>Plans are underway for the expansion of the Jobs on Market model to include similar services throughout the province to EIA clients identified as ready to engage in employment planning.</p>
Labour Market Transfer Agreements	<p>New funding through the Canada-Manitoba labour market transfer agreements will help individuals with complex barriers to employment, including those receiving EIA, access specialized programs to develop their skills for employment. Funding will also help adults with disabilities to find and maintain employment and support refugees with low language benchmarks and other barriers to workforce integration to join the labour market.</p>
ACCESS Program	<p>ACCESS programs help low-income students participate in post-secondary education. Revitalizing the program will provide more opportunities and better outcomes for students.</p>
Manitoba Student Aid	<p>The Manitoba Student Aid Program continues to ensure accessible and sustainable post-secondary education for low-income students through enhanced support for students in need, including obtaining financial aid more quickly.</p> <p>The Manitoba government is reducing red tape, streamlining the application process, and exploring self-serve applications to improve access to student financial assistance and decrease administrative requirements.</p>
Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative	<p>Manitoba Education and Training will be pursuing a series of enhancements to the Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative.</p>
Manitoba Bursary	<p>Effective for the 2018/19 academic year, the Manitoba Bursary received an additional \$2.7 million investment to provide more upfront grant support to low-income postsecondary students. Investments in 2018/19 include a \$1,500 top-up grant for eligible low-income Indigenous students.</p>
New Service Response to Support Newcomer English Language Proficiency	<p>Manitoba is exploring a new service response designed to support newcomers wishing to improve their English language proficiency. By supporting learners assessed at the Canadian Language Benchmark 5 – 8 level, this initiative would be intended to assist newcomers to move into sustainable employment and/or further training.</p>

Initiative	Description
Skills, Knowledge and Talent Strategy	Education, training and workforce development are cross cutting themes across departments. Under Manitoba's Economic Growth Action Plan, Manitoba Education and Training is leading the development of a Skills, Knowledge and Talent Strategy which will support the post-secondary education system, develop partnerships to improve job creation and retention, and align student outcomes to Manitoba's evolving labour market.
Responsible Reintegration Initiative	The Responsible Reintegration Initiative supports offender reintegration into the community while reducing recidivism, improving public safety and providing a supported transition from custody to community.
Manitoba Start	Manitoba Start is a nationally-recognized best practice for welcoming newcomers. It provides comprehensive career development and job matching services that support successful labour market integration of newcomers in Manitoba. Through its centralized registration system, newcomers are also registered to receive orientation to living in Manitoba and referred to first-point-of-contact settlement agencies and other support services as needed.
Recognition Counts	This program provides financial counselling and flexible, low-interest loans to skilled immigrants seeking the necessary qualification recognition and/or training to work in their professions in Manitoba. These unique, character-based loans require no equity and are available up to a maximum of \$10,000. Loan recipients can apply the funds toward eligible costs.
Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program – Renewal	Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP) is the main tool for nominating skilled economic immigrants to meet Manitoba's labour and economic development needs. Through partnerships with post-secondary institutions, industry, and employers, the MPNP renewal will facilitate better career paths that lead to stronger labour market outcomes for new immigrants in Manitoba. Revenue generated from MPNP applications is reinvested in programming and resources to support settlement and integration of all newcomers and their families.

## 4. Facilitating partnerships and supporting community-based organizations

Initiative	Description
Community Mobilization Models	Manitoba is home to several community mobilization models addressing community safety and well-being.
Community Schools Program	The Community Schools Program supports the capacity of schools as hubs within communities to strategically mobilize and deploy school-community resources that attain better outcomes for students, families and neighbourhoods.
Look North	Look North is a movement by northerners, for northerners to grow the economy in northern Manitoba. The Look North Report and Action Plan (released October 2017) outlines six priority areas with the greatest potential to grow the northern economy: mining and other resource development; strategic infrastructure investment; housing challenges and opportunities; enterprise eco-system of support; Indigenous engagement and partnerships; and, education, training and workforce development. The Look North Steering Committee is responding to each of these priority areas through a combination of short-term actions and long-term initiatives designed to increase economic prosperity and reduce poverty.
Grant Funding	Manitoba is working towards building on its single window grant intake to support thriving communities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being client-focused, streamlined and reducing the administrative burden</li> <li>• recognizing the diversity of Manitoba communities and encouraging partnerships and collaboration</li> <li>• broadening the reach of grant programming to communities and organizations that have not previously been funded, and improving alignment of grant funding with provincial regional and municipal priorities and plans</li> </ul>
Family Violence Prevention Program	The Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat continues to support vulnerable and at-risk women, their children and men who are experiencing family violence by providing funding and program and administrative support to 33 community-based agencies delivering family violence prevention and intervention programs and services across Manitoba.
Building Student Success with Indigenous Parents	The Building Student Success with Indigenous Parents Grant was established to better support schools in building trusting relationships with Indigenous parents and enhancing their involvement in their children's education. The current grant places an emphasis on establishing safe, welcoming school environments and positive home-school communication.

Initiative	Description
Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres	Manitoba provides annual core funding to the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres, an incorporated not-for-profit corporation. Friendship Centres improve the quality of life for Indigenous people in urban communities through participation and access to programs, services and supports in many areas. Friendship Centres help to meet the needs of Indigenous communities by providing information, counselling, referral to housing, literacy, employment and social services along with cultural and recreation activities.
Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg	Manitoba provides annual core funding to the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg (ACW), an advocacy and leadership entity operating in Winnipeg. The ACW has been instrumental in creating a cohesive and effective network of Indigenous support services that provide a broad array of services for urban Indigenous peoples. The ACW advocates on behalf of Indigenous citizens and organizations. This is done by voicing concerns, issues and priorities of the ACW membership and the broader urban Indigenous community to all levels of government.
Endow Manitoba 24-Hour Giving Challenge	The Manitoba government will be providing up to \$225,000 over three years to the Winnipeg Foundation to support provincial participation in the annual Endow Manitoba 24-Hour Giving Challenge. Established in 2014, Endow Manitoba's 24-Hour Giving Challenge is administered by the Winnipeg Foundation, providing incentives for rural community foundations to build their primary fund. The goal of the challenge is to raise general awareness of community foundations as a way for Manitobans to support their community.

## 5. Strengthening client-centred service delivery

Initiative	Description
Professional Development and Training for Public Servants	Truth and Reconciliation Commission call to action #57 calls upon all levels of government to provide education to public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaty and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law and Indigenous-Crown relations. The Manitoba government is committed to providing training to civil servants at all levels through various methods.
The Path to Reconciliation Act	The Manitoba government is advancing reconciliation by fostering mutually respectful relationships between the Crown and Indigenous peoples. The government is committed to working and engaging with Indigenous nations and peoples to inform a Reconciliation Strategy. Each year, the government reports on its progress towards reconciliation through <i>The Path to Reconciliation Act Annual Progress Report</i> .
Reconciliation Strategy	The minister of Indigenous and northern relations will lead our government's participation in the development of a Reconciliation Strategy. The strategy will build upon meaningful engagement with Indigenous nations and peoples.

Initiative	Description
Duty to Consult Framework	The Manitoba government has a duty to consult in a meaningful way with First Nation, Métis, and other Indigenous communities when a government decision could affect their ability to exercise their Indigenous or treaty rights. The government continues to work with Indigenous communities and organizations on a Duty to Consult Framework for respectful and productive consultations and works jointly and cooperatively with First Nations.
Developing Culturally Appropriate Curricula	A curriculum committee, comprised of Manitoba government representatives, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and elders, is meeting to strengthen social studies curriculum.
Continue to Implement the Accessibility for Manitobans Act	The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA), that became law in 2013, provides a long-term, proactive approach to removing barriers that affect full participation and inclusion of Manitobans with disabilities. The Manitoba government is working with private and public sector organizations on developing standards to enhance accessibility in key areas of daily living, including customer service, employment, information and communications, transportation and the built environment.
Accessibility Standard for Customer Service	As of November 2018, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service requires Manitoba businesses and organizations with at least one employee to introduce policies and train staff on how to provide great customer service for everyone. For example, they must consider the communication needs of customers and clients, whether in person or in print. They must also welcome support persons, assistive devices such as wheelchairs, and service animals.
Accessibility Standard for Employment	The enactment in 2019 of the Accessibility Standard for Employment will assist people with disabilities by removing barriers to recruiting, hiring and retaining employees. Business will benefit through increased access to skilled employees including the growing number of seniors affected by disabilities. We will all benefit from the successful participation of jobseekers in our economy and the reduced reliance on publicly funded income supports.
Remove Barriers to Accessing Identification	The Vital Statistics Agency is planning to reduce wait times to access birth certificates by creating online applications available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
Supports for Independence Team	Manitoba Families has established a Supports for Independence Team to focus on supporting Employment and Income Assistance participants to apply for additional federal and provincial benefits for which they may be eligible.

Initiative	Description
Primary Caregiver Tax Credit	The Primary Caregiver Tax Credit provides recognition and financial support to individuals who serve as primary caregivers. This program is intended to help care recipients remain independent as long as possible. Care recipients may have cognitive, physical or behavioural barriers. They require assistance in completing personal care and home making activities and in using community resources, so that they can remain in the community longer. In 2018, the Manitoba government simplified the process for claiming the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit by making it easier for caregivers to access the credit and implementing a flat \$1,400 annual credit available to all eligible caregivers.
Mineral Protocol	The Manitoba government engages and works in partnership with First Nation communities to develop a new mineral development protocol. The protocol will establish a clear pathway forward on mineral development to ensure Manitoba is informed of, and addresses, potential adverse effects to the exercise of Aboriginal and treaty rights.
Land and Resources	The Manitoba government provides advice and assistance to 29 entitlement First Nations, Canada and the Treaty Land Entitlement Committee to fulfill outstanding Treaty Land Entitlement obligations by transferring provincial Crown lands into reserve lands.
Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Safety Training	The Manitoba government is piloting the new online Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Safety Training within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. The training addresses the need for health care service providers to develop and deliver culturally safe care.
Cultural Resources Kit	The Southern Health – Santé Sud Regional Health Authority developed a Cultural Resources Kit that supports an ongoing relational process of inclusion, and building and maintaining trust, while providing parents, clients and residents access to traditional healing practices and ceremonies.
Culturally Relevant care for Indigenous Families	The Manitoba government provides a series of four parenting booklets for First Nations and Métis families. The booklets were developed with the advice of an Indigenous advisory group, including Indigenous community service providers and representatives, and include photos, stories and teachings contributed by First Nations and Métis people.
Protecting Indigenous languages	The Manitoba government is working with Indigenous Languages Manitoba, the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and the University College of the North to develop and offer special language credit options for Indigenous languages.
Manitoba Moon Voices Inc.	Manitoba provides annual core funding to Manitoba Moon Voices Inc. (MMVI), an incorporated non-profit Indigenous Women’s organization. MMVI has three main priorities: missing and murdered Indigenous women; child welfare system; and governance and administration. MMVI will ensure that there is a platform for issues and challenges faced by Indigenous women in Manitoba and that the voice of Indigenous women are heard.

Initiative	Description
Gender and Diversity Analysis and Promoting Women in Underrepresented Careers	Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat (MSW) recognizes that women are disproportionately affected by poverty. The Gender and Diversity Analysis online intranet course for employees of the Manitoba Civil Service helps public servants apply a gendered lens to their work in drafting policy for all Manitobans.
Social Housing Rental Program	Affordable, quality housing is central to the health, social and economic well-being of all of Manitoba Housing tenants. The goal is to promote safe, healthy communities that are inclusive and encourage self-reliance and shared housing responsibility. The full implementation of the modernized Social Housing Rental Program will ensure client-focused policies and procedures that create consistency and clarity for applicants, tenants and staff; reduce barriers in program access; and support equitable and efficient delivery throughout the province.
Support for Indigenous-Focused Campaign on Sexual Violence	In 2018/19 the Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) provides additional funding support to Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. to move on to the next phase of their Indigenous-focused public awareness campaign on sexual violence. FVPP funded the first phase of the campaign in early 2018, which included public awareness materials such as a video and posters.

## 6. Making positive change through social innovation

Initiative	Description
Social Impact Bonds	Manitoba's first Social Impact Bond (SIB) aims to improve outcomes of children and families through a collaborative effort between government, the Southern First Nation Network of Care (SFNNC) and Wijiiji'idewag Ikwewag.. The Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC) is delivering the landmark SIB in child welfare. SFNNC has partnered with Wijiiji'idewag Ikwewag to train Indigenous doulas to provide culturally appropriate services and supports to mothers at risk of coming into contact with the child welfare system. By having the doula work with the mother for up to a year, the goal is to prevent apprehensions and reduce the overall number of days that children spend in care.
Energy Efficiency and Bill Affordability	In 2016, Manitoba Hydro formed a Bill Affordability Working Group. The working group reviewed Manitoba Hydro's existing energy efficiency programs and initiatives to identify potential enhancements along with possible new program offerings or rate assistance programs to help address bill affordability. Manitoba Hydro indicated that it would continue to implement many recommendations to assist lower income customers manage their energy bills through enhancements to the Affordable Energy Program and the Bill Management Program.

Initiative	Description
Broadband in the North	<p>The Manitoba government is partnering with Clear Sky Connections, a First Nations owned and operated Internet provider, to bring high-speed internet to rural and remote communities. This service is key to unlocking the economic potential of the North, providing Manitoba communities the tools to maximize opportunities and generate economic growth.</p> <p>Manitoba Hydro is providing in-kind support that will allow Clear Sky Connections to use existing fibre-optic cable network and related assets. Once completed, the broadband project will include 10-gigabit ethernet fibre connections that will provide 72 communities and 88 institutions with access to high-speed Internet services on par with southern urban areas. Thirty seven of these communities are First Nations; 18 are located in remote regions of northern Manitoba.</p>
Manitoba Open Innovation Challenge for Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy	<p>The Manitoba government is partnering with North Forge Technology Exchange on the Manitoba Open Innovation Challenge to improve early childhood literacy and numeracy. The 24-month challenge was launched in November 2016 with an open call to all Manitobans to share their innovative ideas. Diverse teams of judges selected three of the most promising ideas for further development, testing and evaluation in communities. These community prototypes are designed to support vulnerable families by increasing access to quality, evidence-based services that improve early childhood literacy and numeracy.</p>
Science to Practice to Play	<p>This is a partnership on a social innovation initiative between Red River College, NorWest Co-op Community Health, the Manitoba government, and the federal government to transfer the best of early child development evidence to parents through integrated health equity teams.</p>

## APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION ON MANITOBA'S POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

### Methodology

The Manitoba government reached out to speak with Manitobans using various methods:

- community conversations, primarily for persons with lived experience of poverty, facilitated by community-based organizations
- community workshops for representatives of community-based organizations and other stakeholders, facilitated by government staff
- an online survey, available in French and English
- a call for written submissions

The guiding questions for each consultation method are provided below.

<b>Community Conversations</b>	<b>Facilitated Workshops</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>
<b>Access and Barriers</b>		
<p>Tell us how you (or your family) deal with living on a low income?</p> <p>What are some of the resources you use to help?</p> <p>Tell us about the challenges you face?</p>	<p>What do you see as the most pressing issues/needs for those living in poverty [i.e. issues that are most unique or important to the community/region]?</p>	<p>How easy is it for persons in low income to access, supports, goods and services?</p> <p>What barriers do you think those living in low income may experience?</p> <p>What supports and services do you access most frequently?</p>
<b>Pathways, Solutions and Priorities</b>		
<p>What are the most important things (or solutions) that should be done to reduce poverty?</p>	<p>What are pathways to reduce and/or prevent poverty (solutions, programs, services, supports, and promising practices), that government can focus on to address these priority issues?</p> <p>What is working well to prevent, reduce or minimize the impacts of poverty in the community?</p>	<p>Which of the following would you prioritize to make progress on poverty reduction? [Respondents were provided a list of 16 items and asked to identify five, and to list any others]</p>
<b>Measuring Progress</b>		
<p>Describe what the term "good quality of life" means to you.</p>	<p>How would you measure progress?</p> <p>What are some potential targets and indicators?</p>	<p>Describe what a good quality of life means to you?</p> <p>How will you know that Manitoba is making progress on poverty reduction?</p>

## Consultation Participants

Thirteen community conversations were held with more than 200 Manitobans. Participants included representatives of groups more likely to experience low income, including:

- at-risk youth
- single parents
- newcomers
- Employment and Income Assistance participants
- people with disabilities
- seniors
- students
- working poor

The conversations were facilitated by community-based organizations. One conversation, hosted by Aboriginal Youth Opportunities, was open to the public at the Meet Me at the Bell Tower gathering in Winnipeg's North End.

Eleven community workshops were held with 178 representatives of community-based organizations, educators, health practitioners, advocates, faith-based organizations, businesses and governments. There were four workshops in Winnipeg, each with a specific focus:

- disability
- ethno-cultural communities
- francophone organizations
- Indigenous service providers

The bilingual online survey received 1,564 responses, including 266 from those living with low income, 994 from other Manitobans, 245 from non-profit organizations with a general interest in poverty reduction, and 59 from representatives of non-profit organizations that directly serve low-income individuals. In addition to a government news release, the survey was promoted widely across government, by community organizations and to community-based networks.

A total of 24 submissions were received from individuals, in writing or by phone, in addition to 29 written submissions from organizations. The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba provided a formal written submission, accompanied by an email campaign with submissions from 281 Manitobans (primarily from school divisions) who endorsed its recommendation. Five documents were submitted jointly. In addition, Make Poverty History Manitoba launched an email campaign, with submissions from 101 Manitobans.

During the consultation process, Indigenous service providers and Indigenous participants stressed the importance of having Indigenous voices engaged and a recognition within the strategy that Indigenous poverty has a specific historic and cultural context. Of the 379 persons who attended in-person workshops, 80 participants self-identified as First Nations or Métis.

### **Group Submissions**

1. Basic Income Manitoba and Make Poverty History Manitoba
2. Community Financial Counselling Services, Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba, SMD Clearinghouse, SEED Winnipeg Inc.
3. Crossroads United Pastoral Charge (on behalf of community representatives from Carman)
4. R. Garmeh, V. Niemez, F. Siyawareva, Pre-MSW Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba
5. SEED Winnipeg Inc. and Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

### **Organizational Submissions**

- Addictions Foundation of Manitoba (Flin Flon)
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada
- Basic Income Manitoba
- Canadian Centre for Child Protection
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Canadian CED Network, Manitoba Region
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Central, Interlake, Manitoba and Winnipeg, Thompson)
- Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba

- City of Brandon Poverty Committee
- Coalition for Healthy Aging Manitoba
- Dieticians of Canada
- Get Your Benefits
- Make Poverty History Manitoba
- Manitoba Association of Community Health Centres
- Manitoba Child Care Association
- Manitoba Teachers Society
- Portage la Prairie School Division
- Right to Housing
- The Salvation Army
- Sara Riel Inc.
- St. Claude School Complex
- United Way Winnipeg
- West Central Women's Resource Centre
- West Grove Learning Centre
- Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Population and Public Health
- Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council
- Winnipeg School Division
- Women's Health Clinic



