

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

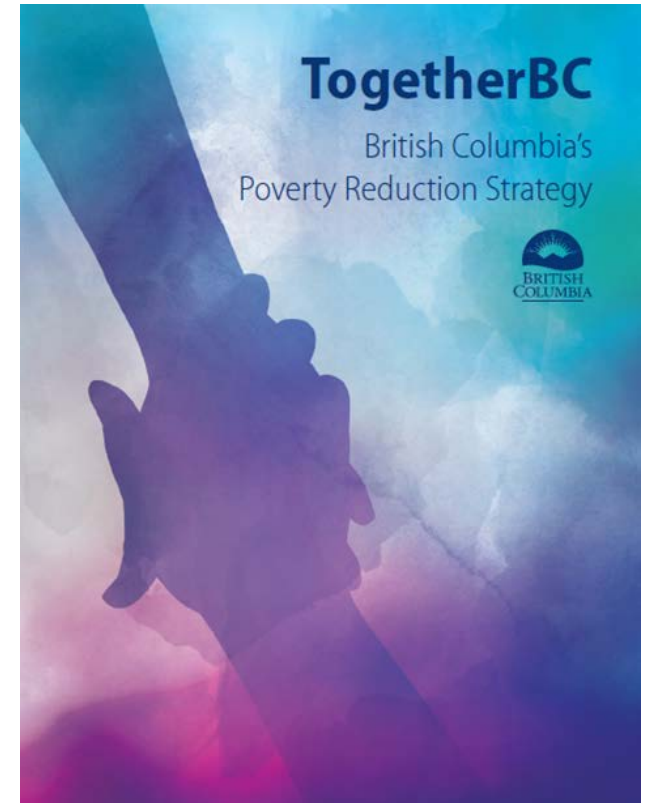
Overview

Presented to: Nanaimo Health and Housing Task Force

Date: September 18, 2019

TogetherBC

British Columbia's first poverty reduction strategy, **TogetherBC**, outlines programs and initiatives that will help reduce overall poverty in the province by 25%, and cut child poverty in half, over the next five years.



Overview

Built on the principles of Affordability, Opportunity, Reconciliation, and Social Inclusion, TogetherBC focuses on six priority action areas:

- More affordable housing for more people
- Supporting families, children and youth
- Expanding access to education and training
- More opportunities, more jobs
- Improving income supports
- Investing in social inclusion

TogetherBC

British Columbia's
Poverty Reduction Strategy



Ministries Involved

- Finance
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Jobs, Trades and Technology
- Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR)
- Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Mental Health and Addictions
- Health
- Advanced Education, Skills and Training
- Agriculture
- Transportation & Infrastructure
- Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation
- Attorney General
- Labour
- Public Safety & Solicitor General
- Citizens' Services

SDPR Changes

- Effective in July 2017, increased income and disability assistance rates
- Effective October 2017, increased earning exemptions
- Effective in January 2018, introduced a new transportation supplement for people receiving disability assistance
- Effective in April 2019, increased income assistance rates for individuals and single parent families and for couples and two-parent families
- Increased amount for crisis food supplement and improved access to crisis utilities support
- Created the Office of Homelessness Coordination

SDPR July 1st 2019 changes

- Decrease the work search from five weeks to three weeks
- Eliminate the “transient” client category
- Remove \$10,000 limit on primary vehicle
- Increase asset limits for people on income assistance
- Remove housing penalties by providing the same level of assistance to clients paying room and board to a parent/child
- Expand access to the identification supplement
- Expand access to Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) programs
- Expand the moving supplement for clients to move anywhere in B.C.

SDPR Upcoming Changes

- No longer require clients to apply for early Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- Modernize the definition of spouse
- Remove the limit of two housing security deposits
- Create a new pet damage deposit supplement in alignment with the Residential Tenancy Act
- Increase the crisis supplement for shelter
- Expand hardship assistance to include access to special care facilities and substance-use treatment
- Streamline the return to assistance process within six months of leaving
- Eliminate the two-year independence rule

Our Commitment to Service

We commit to meeting your needs by providing you with service that is:

- Reliable and accessible
- Fair and impartial
- Responsive and accurate
- Respectful and courteous

The ministry provides a variety of options to citizens for accessing information, assistance and services, including: online, in person and over the phone.



Online, 24 hours a day

» Through My Self Serve (myselfserve.gov.bc.ca) you can:

- Apply for assistance
- Receive and reply to messages from the ministry
- Make and track service requests
- Submit your monthly report
- Find information about your next payment date
- Get information on services and supports through the ministry's website at: gov.bc.ca/sdpr

All offices have computers and free Wi-Fi available to access My Self Serve during office hours



In Person

- » Offices are open Monday – Friday (except statutory holidays) between **9 a.m. and 4 p.m., closed 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. local time**
- » Cheques are produced in all ministry offices at least three times per day at **11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.**
- » Clients attending a ministry office are acknowledged and informed of service request processing times
- » All ministry offices are accessible



Phone

- » Information about ministry programs and services is available 24 hours a day, toll free at: **1 866 866-0800**
- » Phone lines are open Monday – Friday (except statutory holidays) between **9 a.m. and 4 p.m. local time**
- » Clients calling the ministry are informed of service request processing times



Mail

The ministry is committed to providing responses to ministerial correspondence within **14 business days**.

Office for Homelessness Coordination (OHC)

- Prevention
- Immediate Response
- Stability
- Working Better Together

Community Action Grants



Province granted \$6 million to the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC BC) for a Homelessness Community Action Grant to help groups address homelessness in their towns and cities.



What is the Grant?

This funding is in the form of a one-time grant that can be used to support specific planning and collaborative initiatives

Additional Resources:

- News Release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019SDPR0046-001223>
- SPARC BC Grant Information: <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Homelessness-Community-Action-Grants-Program-Overview.pdf>
- SPARC Grant Application Form: <https://www.sparc.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Homelessness-Community-Action-Grants-Application-Form.pdf>

Provincial Rent Bank

Province granted \$10 million to Vancity Community Foundation to develop a sustainable, province-wide rent bank system, which will provide support to existing rent banks and expand services to new communities.



What is a Rent Bank?:
A way to provide emergency low-cost or no-cost loans to help renters facing evictions

Additional Resources:

- News Release: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019SDPR0043-001206>
- Vancity News: https://www.vancity.com/AboutVancity/News/AdditionalNews/RentBank_Jun10_2019/

Building a better BC: accessibility and inclusion in British Columbia

- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is leading work across government to improve access for people with disabilities.
- This work includes a consultation process beginning in fall 2019 regarding new accessibility legislation which will make BC a more inclusive and welcoming place. Accessibility legislation is fundamental to bringing about a culture shift toward greater inclusion and accessibility in the province's workplaces and communities.
- Background: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/building-a-better-bc-accessibility-and-inclusion-in-british-columbia>
- Consultation: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/govtogetherbc/consultation/accessibility-through-legislation/>



Ongoing

Just the beginning of the work we're doing. It's a living document that will guide us in our efforts to reduce poverty in B.C. We'll be working with all sectors, community organizations, businesses, labour organizations, Indigenous people and all levels of government to implement these important changes.

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