



**IGNITING COMMUNITY ACTION THROUGH
COLLABORATION, EDUCATION AND MUTUAL
PROBLEM-SOLVING**

**VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY'S
COMMUNITY PLAN
FOR SUSTAINED POVERTY REDUCTION
2005 – 2008**

December 1, 2004

Vibrant Communities Calgary Steering Committee

**Proposal Submission
to
Vibrant Communities Canada**

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IGNITING COMMUNITY ACTION THROUGH COLLABORATION, EDUCATION AND MUTUAL PROBLEM- SOLVING

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES CALGARY'S COMMUNITY PLAN FOR SUSTAINED POVERTY REDUCTION 2005 – 2008

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines a Community Plan to reduce poverty through strategic interventions that will substantially reduce poverty, improve quality of life for all Calgarians, and contribute to Calgary's economic and social health. Although this work is long term and some of the impacts might not be felt for ten years or longer, for the purposes of this Community Plan, we have focused on the next three years. Please refer to Appendix G on the final page of this Community Plan for an illustration of Vibrant Communities Calgary's Vision of Change.

Purpose of Community Plan:

The target audiences for this version of the Community Plan are the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the Vibrant Communities Canada Steering Committee, for the purposes of Vibrant Communities Calgary's application for Phase 3 Trail Builder status. This Community Plan also forms the basis for Vibrant Communities Calgary's work over the next three years, and therefore will assist our participating members in articulating the strategic framework and implementing their plans of action. Components of the Community Plan will be adapted and re-written for use with specific target audiences and purposes, such as fundraising requests to corporate partners. As such, this Community Plan is a foundational document that will form the basis for other key documents including a Business Plan, Fundraising Plan, Communications Plan and Evaluation Plan. The Community Plan is a work in progress and will be revisited and revised on a periodic basis to ensure Vibrant Communities Calgary is moving in the most appropriate direction.

Vision:

A substantial and sustained reduction in the number of Calgarians living in poverty.

Mandate:

Vibrant Communities Calgary exists to ignite new community action to create and implement bold solutions that reduce and prevent poverty through collaboration, education and mutual problem-solving.

Commitment:

We develop and support creative and innovative poverty reduction strategies in Calgary, knowing that our combined diversity of experience and expertise will achieve results none of us could achieve individually.

Definition of Poverty:

Poverty is the condition of a human being who does not have sufficient economic and other resources to live with the dignity, choices and power which support full participation in society.

Root Causes of Poverty:

Vibrant Communities Calgary has identified five pillars necessary to achieve sustained poverty reduction. These pillars encompass the range of personal and financial assets and resources that an individual or family needs to exit poverty:

- Economic Security, including both employment income and public income supports
- Education and Skills Training
- Basic Supports such as Housing, Transportation, Child Care and Food Security
- Physical and Mental Health
- Full Participation in Society

Vibrant Communities Calgary has identified a lack of these personal and financial assets as the root causes of poverty.

Strategies:

The Vibrant Communities Calgary Steering Committee has selected the following two strategies that they feel well-suited to undertake:

- Increase Public Awareness and Civic Engagement
- Reduce Policy and Procedural Barriers

Current Initiatives:

Vibrant Communities Calgary will address the five pillars using these two strategies through a variety of initiatives, including the following ones which are already underway:

- Living Wage Initiative
- Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative
- Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative
- Fair Fares Initiative

In addition, Vibrant Communities Calgary is planning on influencing public policy through an ongoing Public Policy Initiative, which will address specific public policy issues as they become ripe for action. This initiative will focus on strengthening relationships with government and working collaboratively to affect positive changes to policies that impact people living in poverty.

Vibrant Communities Calgary recognizes that this work is fluid and continually evolving, and these current initiatives do not limit the work that might be undertaken in the future.

Household Targets:

Vibrant Communities Calgary has set a target of sustained poverty reduction for 1,000 households in Calgary over the next three years. More precisely, we aim to positively impact 200 low-income Calgarians by the end of 2005, another 300 low-income Calgarians by the end of 2006, and 500 more low-income Calgarians by the end of 2007.

Engagement Targets:

In addition to tracking the number of people moving out of poverty, Vibrant Communities Calgary will also work to track other groups who will be engaged in our sustained poverty reduction initiatives. Vibrant Communities Calgary projects that, over the next three years, its efforts will engage the leadership of 130 individuals broken down as follows:

- 50 individuals representing 20 community organizations (including not-for-profit agencies, foundations, labour organizations and faith communities);
- 30 individuals representing municipal, provincial and federal government departments, and quasi-governmental bodies such as education and health care;

- 20 individuals who are living the experience of poverty;
- 20 individuals representing the private sector; and
- 10 individuals representing the general public.

Cultural Shifts:

These goals will be achieved using a holistic approach which builds the capacity of a variety of sectors to work collaboratively to implement this broad range of initiatives addressing the root causes of poverty. This holistic approach will encompass comprehensive thinking and action, multi-sector collaboration, community learning and change, and community asset building. As the underlying philosophy for its poverty reduction work, Vibrant Communities Calgary will build on the positive work already underway in our community to make five important cultural shifts:

1. Away from a culture that emphasizes alleviating the effects of poverty towards a culture that focuses on reducing poverty;
2. Away from a culture that promotes quick fixes to reduce poverty towards a culture that thinks comprehensively about poverty and strives to address its root causes;
3. Away from a culture of individual, isolated efforts towards a culture of multi-sectoral collaboration, weaving together skills, knowledge, resources and efforts;
4. Away from a culture of blaming different people and sectors for poverty towards a culture that recognizes that everyone is part of the problem and everyone is part of the solution; and
5. Away from a culture that emphasizes cautious, short-term responses to poverty towards one that emphasizes innovation, risk-taking and long-term change.

Many not-for-profit and government agencies are already well on their way to implementing these philosophical shifts in their poverty reduction initiatives, and we have much to learn from them.

When people live in persistent financial distress, the whole community pays in increased costs to the health care and education systems, to the criminal justice system, and to our local economy in lower spending on goods and services. The long-term results of the successful implementation of our Community Plan will improve the quality of life for all Calgarians and make Calgary an even more attractive location for economic, educational, health and social investment.

2. INTRODUCTION

Vibrant Communities Calgary (VC Calgary) is committed to being one of the Trail Builder Communities engaged in Vibrant Communities Canada (VC Canada). VC Canada is a Pan-Canadian Learning Community convened and supported by Tamarack – An Institute for Community Engagement, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, and J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. It provides a process and a working environment where diverse community leaders from fifteen communities across Canada work together to share ideas, practices and policies that strengthen their community-based poverty reduction initiatives. For more information, please visit: www.vibrantcommunities.ca.

The mission of VC Canada is to create and grow a movement of diverse leaders and communities from across Canada committed to exploring, challenging and testing ways to unleash the potential of communities to substantially reduce poverty and ensure a good quality of life for all of its citizens.

VC Calgary recognizes that sustained poverty reduction is long-term work. We have articulated broad outcomes for three, five and ten years, with the understanding that many impacts resulting from our work will not be felt for a generation. For the purposes of this Community Plan, we have focused on our strategies for the next three years.

Over the next three years, VC Calgary will implement and evaluate a comprehensive Community Plan for sustained poverty reduction that incorporates new approaches and partnerships to reduce poverty and integrates broad communication of our successes, challenges and learnings. The Community Plan sets a framework for developing comprehensive, collaborative efforts that reflect opportunity, need and impact. It is based on the priorities of our community determined by analysis of existing research and a two-year collaborative process of building relationships and convening a multi-sectoral partnership of community leaders who are dedicated to sustained poverty reduction.

The target audiences for this version of the Community Plan are the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and the VC Canada Steering Committee, for the purposes of VC Calgary's application for Phase 3 Trail Builder status. This Community Plan also forms the basis for VC Calgary's work over the next three years, and therefore will assist our participating members in articulating the strategic framework and implementing their plans of action. Components of the Community Plan will be adapted and re-written for use with specific target audiences and purposes, such as fundraising requests to corporate partners. As such, this Community Plan is a foundational document that will form the basis for other key documents including a Business Plan, Fundraising Plan, Communications Plan and Evaluation Plan. The Community Plan is a work in progress and will be revisited and revised on a periodic basis to ensure VC Calgary is moving in the most appropriate direction.

2.1 BACKGROUND

VC Calgary believes that **poverty is the condition of a human being who does not have sufficient economic and other resources to live with the dignity, choices and power which support full participation in society**. Poverty is not inevitable. It is, however, devastating in its effects. Not only does it exact a huge toll on the people who endure it, it is an indictment of the society that tolerates it – particularly if that society is in a position to do something about it.¹

Poverty is a complex issue that is broader than not having enough money to cover the basic necessities of food, clothing and shelter. It also means not having the social, human, physical, personal, as well as financial assets to access opportunities to participate fully in one's community.

People do not choose poverty. At the root of poverty are systemic economic, social and political factors that go beyond individuals. This is why we need a concerted effort at the community level – because poverty is not an individual issue, it is a systems issue. Only by addressing the underlying and inter-

¹ Brathwaite, E. *The Case for Community Action: Sustained Poverty Reduction*, 2004.

related root causes – including inadequate education and skills training, low wages, insufficient availability of quality affordable housing, unaffordable childcare, and transportation barriers, will we achieve sustained poverty reduction.

2.1.1 The Human Cost of Poverty

Poverty comes at a very high cost both for the people who endure it and the society that tolerates it. Poverty is wasted human potential. People who struggle in poverty are not able to contribute to society to their fullest ability.

The Canadian National Council of Welfare refers to the increased incidence of low birth weight babies, increased burden of illness, reduced labour force participation, lowered educational achievement, the break up of families and the lives lost due to homicide or suicide, as costs which have been associated with poverty.²

For adults and children, poverty also can mean loneliness and exclusion from sports, recreation, culture and other activities around which individual confidence, friendships and other positive social relationships are built. For children, especially, this can have long-lasting effects.

Finally, the power to make decisions and plan your life to best meet your own needs is a privilege that is denied to many people who are poor. This loss of self-determination can both result in (and deepen) poverty for people.

2.1.2 The Economic Cost of Poverty

When people live in persistent financial distress, the whole community pays in increased costs to the health care and education systems, to the criminal justice system, and to our local economy in lower spending on goods and services. Poverty has been associated with increased spending resulting from greater need for health care, reduced high school completion rates, the need for more remedial early childhood and special education services, additional demands on the criminal justice system, and costs associated with the provision of income and social support.

The National Council of Welfare observed in its 2004 report *The Cost of Poverty*, that one of the difficulties with measuring the cost of poverty, as well as other matters related to human well-being and quality of life, is that economic and social policy have historically developed on different tracks, without recognizing the extent to which they are interdependent.³

A recent report assessed the external costs of poverty for the city of Calgary. These findings represent the potential savings that could be realized were Calgarians to implement an effective and sustained program of poverty reduction in the city. A conservative estimate concluded that the elimination of poverty in Calgary could result in:

- savings in health care costs of at least \$3.35 million per year and possibly as much as \$16.3 million;
- savings in costs associated with the schools system of at least \$4.9 million and perhaps as much as \$7.9 million; and
- savings elsewhere in the economy that could amount to as much as \$32.6 million per year.⁴

This does not include expenditures on income supports such as Alberta Works, which amount to approximately \$400 million annually in Calgary. These income supports are considered to be transfers

² National Council of Welfare, *The Costs of Poverty*, 2001.

³ National Council of Welfare, *The Cost of Poverty*, 2004.

⁴ Shiell and Zhang, *The External Costs of Poverty: A Conservative Estimate*, 2004.

from taxpayers to people living in poverty, and thus in purely economic terms, do not count as a cost of poverty.⁵ However it stands to reason that if we were to reduce poverty, we would reduce the need for income supports and free up these tax dollars for other purposes.

2.1.3 Poverty in Calgary

Canada's future is extremely bright. We are recognized as one of the best countries in which to live. Calgary shares in that prosperity. Canada's oil and gas capital, Calgary is Canada's fastest growing major city with the country's third largest concentration of corporate headquarters. Calgary is also a service centre for surrounding agricultural communities, has a growing high tech sector, and is a tourism destination.

Calgary is a prosperous city experiencing rapid growth. From 1993 to 2003, the population of Calgary grew by 26.6 percent to 922,000. In 2004, employment grew faster than the labour force, pushing the unemployment rate down to 5.2 percent. Over the past five years, 85,000 people have moved to work in Calgary.⁶ According to the Canada West Foundation, the labour force in Calgary has increased by 14.35 percent over the past five years, giving Calgary the highest labour force growth rate in Canada.⁷ In 2001, the median income in Calgary was \$65,488, more than \$10,000 higher than the median income for Canada of \$55,016.

Despite this growth and prosperity, there is a great discrepancy in the distribution of wealth:

- According to the 2001 Census figures, the poorest 10% of the Calgary population had an average annual income of \$13,000 while families in the top 10% averaged annual incomes of \$248,600. This is a 19:1 ratio.
- In 2000, 12.5% (one out of every eight) Calgarians lived below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-off lines.⁸
- In 2000, an estimated 109,000 Calgarians lived in low-income households, nearly 28,000 of these were children under 18.
- In 2001, 58,225 Calgarians over the age of 15 earned more than \$75,000, while almost five times as many (280,725) earned less than \$20,000.
- 14.8% of Calgary children lived in poverty in 2002, up from 11.1% in 2001.⁹
- 57.9% of children living in low income households in Alberta had parent(s) who worked all year.¹⁰
- At \$5.90 an hour, Alberta's minimum wage is the lowest in Canada and hasn't been increased since 1999.
- In 2002, more than 82,000 employed Calgarians earned less than \$9 an hour; over half of these low-wage workers were over the age of 25.¹¹ These are not teenagers or students from comfortable homes, but adults who must somehow sustain themselves and their families on less than a living wage.
- Aboriginal people, recent immigrants, lone parents and people with disabilities are more likely than average to experience poverty. For many poverty is a transient experience, but 30% of people living in poverty do so for protracted periods of three years or more.¹²

As a result of rapid growth, the city of Calgary is experiencing increasing strain on its assets: meeting the need for suitable, affordable housing, providing resources for recreational opportunities, and accessing

⁵ As explained by Shiell and Zhang, "[Income transfers] are not in themselves a payment for resources. The transfer of money does not change the aggregate amount of resources available to Albertans. It simply changes which Albertans have access to the resources that this money can buy." Shiell and Zhang, *The External Costs of Poverty: A Conservative Estimate*, 2004, p. 10.

⁶ RedPoint Media Group Inc., *Calgary Inc.*, December 2004, p. 9.

⁷ RedPoint Media Group Inc., *Calgary Inc.*, December 2004, p. 9.

⁸ City of Calgary Fact Sheet: Poverty in Calgary, from Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

⁹ *One Million Too Many: 2004 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada*, Campaign 2000, November 2004

¹⁰ *One Million Too Many: 2004 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada*, Campaign 2000, November 2004

¹¹ *Understanding Living Wage*, Vibrant Communities Calgary, December 2003.

¹² Shiell and Zhang, *The External Costs of Poverty: A Conservative Estimate*, 2004, p. i.

funding for community agencies. We are witnessing increasing demand for a more skilled workforce, yet many in our community are not able to meet this demand.¹³ Despite the impact of poverty on one's health, quality of life, and ability to contribute, the issue of poverty remains peripheral to the political agenda as well as to our community as a whole.

Changes in the 1990's to the social policy agenda of all levels of government in areas such as social housing, employment insurance, and the Canada Assistance Plan, have exacerbated the situation of poverty. This significantly impacts government agencies and community organizations who are working for a better way of life for those living in poverty. Many not-for-profit organizations in our community have been negatively affected by diminished core funding from government while experiencing increasing demands for their programs and services. Budget decreases have had a similar effect on many government departments.

In 2003, TD Bank Financial Group published a special report titled, "The Calgary-Edmonton Corridor: Take Action Now to Ensure Tiger's Roar Doesn't Fade." According to the TD Report, key challenges for the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor include:

1. Reliance on the oil and gas industry for economic growth
2. Fewer high school students moving to post secondary education than other provinces creating a reliance on positive net migration to build skilled workforce, doubling of post secondary education tuition costs, low levels of R&D spending and venture capital financing
3. Labour shortages particularly within the next 5 years
4. Urban sprawl and expensive public transit
5. Upgrades to physical infrastructure required
6. Growth in earnings at low end of income spectrum less than growth at high end and wage increases are not sufficient to counter increases in housing costs.¹⁴

2.1.4 Vibrant Communities Calgary

Increasingly, communities are seeking new ways of doing things. Vibrant Communities is a response to that call. As a participating member of VC Canada, VC Calgary believes that local residents and organizations can significantly reduce poverty if we build on the positive work already underway in our community to make five important cultural shifts:

1. Away from a culture that emphasizes alleviating the effects of poverty towards a culture that focuses on reducing poverty;
2. Away from a culture that promotes quick fixes to reduce poverty towards a culture that thinks comprehensively about poverty and strives to address its root causes;
3. Away from a culture of individual, isolated efforts towards a culture of multi-sectoral collaboration, weaving together skills, knowledge, resources and efforts;
4. Away from a culture of blaming different people and sectors for poverty towards a culture that recognizes that everyone is part of the problem and everyone is part of the solution; and
5. Away from a culture that emphasizes cautious, short-term responses to poverty towards one that emphasizes innovation, risk-taking and long-term change.

These cultural shifts form the underlying philosophy for VC Calgary's poverty reduction work.

VC Calgary wants everyone in Calgary to benefit from the current and future rewards of a robust economy and healthy community. Sustained poverty reduction will help ensure that everyone is able to reach their full potential, reduce the tax burden for social assistance programs, lessen health and public safety service needs, strengthen employment opportunities, and create more personal and household wealth for re-investment into the local economy.

¹³ A recent survey of Alberta industry associations found that 41 percent reported that their industry is facing a severe labour shortage. RedPoint Media Group Inc., *Calgary Inc.*, December 2004, p. 9.

¹⁴ TD Bank Financial Group, "The Calgary-Edmonton Corridor: Take Action Now to Ensure Tiger's Roar Doesn't Fade", TD Economics, April 22, 2003.

Phase 1:

The initiation of a community plan for sustained poverty reduction began in 2002, when Calgary was one of 15 communities who accepted an invitation from VC Canada to participate in a competitive 3-stage funding process that would enable our community to develop and undertake a comprehensive poverty reduction plan. VC Canada provided the financial and coaching resources to engage local community leaders in Phase One of the process.

Phase One resources were used to explore local interest in forming a multisectoral collaborative partnership to address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. Together as co-convenors, MCC Employment Development and United Way of Calgary and Area leveraged community contacts and invited participants from a range of sectors to join the Sustained Poverty Reduction Working Group, now called the Vibrant Communities Calgary Steering Committee. In March 2003, United Way hired a full time staff person to coordinate VC Calgary. The VC Calgary Steering Committee began to determine its governance structure, articulate its long-term outcomes for sustained poverty reduction, and take action on a number of specific initiatives such as living wage and means testing. The Steering Committee also developed the following definition of poverty: **Poverty is the condition of a human being who does not have sufficient economic and other resources to live with the dignity, choices and power which support full participation in society.** This definition was adapted from one used by Health Canada, Atlantic Region. It is inclusive and emphasizes meaningful participation; recognizes that isolation is an issue intricately connected to poverty. It defines poverty as an issue beyond a lack of money, which is a critical and fundamental belief in addressing the root causes of poverty. VC Calgary believes that all Calgarians have a right to full participation in the family, social, economic and political life of their communities, and that poverty limits this full participation.

Phase 2:

In January 2004, VC Canada and United Way provided VC Calgary with further grants to support the work of Phase Two – the development of a comprehensive community plan to reduce poverty in Calgary. Phase Two began with the creation of a mandate: **VC Calgary exists to ignite new community action to create and implement bold solutions that reduce and prevent poverty through collaboration, education and mutual problem-solving.** A governance consultant was engaged to assist the Steering Committee to draft its governance structure. VC Calgary continued to work to engage the local community and diversify the membership at both the Steering Committee and Action team levels. VC Calgary summarizes the way in which it works as follows: **We develop and support creative and innovative poverty reduction strategies in Calgary, knowing that our combined diversity of experience and expertise will achieve results none of us could achieve individually.**

Phase 3:

VC Calgary has now developed a theory of change and strategic plan about the pathways necessary to move individuals and families out of poverty. We are prepared and motivated to move into Phase 3 – implementation of the Community Plan for sustained poverty reduction. Our long-term vision for this work is **a substantial and sustained reduction in the number of Calgarians living in poverty.**

We are encouraged by the local conditions that will enable our success. The community is mobilized around the “Imagine Calgary” dialogue¹⁵; numerous groups and coalitions are effectively working on pieces of the poverty puzzle; and there is multi-sector commitment to a Community Plan for sustained poverty reduction in Calgary. There is also evidence in the media of a growing realization that the “Alberta Advantage” has come at the expense of the working poor and those on social assistance.¹⁶

2.1.5 S.W.O.T. Analysis

Following are VC Calgary’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as identified by the

¹⁵ The City of Calgary is leading an initiative to create a 100-year vision and goals to ensure quality of life remains high for the long term. Imagine Calgary is a bold, two-year initiative that will engage the public, and business, community and government stakeholders in a broad-based dialogue.

¹⁶ For example: Ziff, P. “Alberta advantage on backs of poor” *Calgary Herald*, November 15, 2004, p. A10.

Steering Committee.

Strengths of VC Calgary:

- Diversity of membership on the Steering Committee and Action Teams
- Increasing group cohesion and healthy debate at the Steering Committee and Action Team levels
- Strong participation and commitment from members of the Steering Committee and Action Teams
- Ongoing financial commitment from United Way of Calgary and Area
- Extensive feedback on draft Community Plan provided by volunteers outside of VC Calgary
- Co-convenor leadership from two partners, United Way of Calgary and Area and MCC Employment Development
- Some initiatives already underway

Weaknesses of VC Calgary:

- Need to strengthen connection to private sector partners
- Need to work on resource development to reduce financial dependence on United Way of Calgary and Area
- Need to secure one or more fiscal agents

Opportunities for VC Calgary:

- Strong economy
- Highly skilled immigration population
- Low unemployment results in tighter labour market and resulting pressure to increase wages
- Low unemployment creates a climate where business is more open to new approaches to recruitment and retention of employees
- Low unemployment increases opportunities for matching foreign qualifications with employers' needs
- Urban Aboriginal Youth Initiative underway in Calgary, with a goal of improved educational success for urban Aboriginal youth in Calgary
- Imagine Calgary initiative
- Political interest in setting long-term social goals to announce in celebration of Alberta Centennial in 2005
- New provincial Cabinet Ministers appointed November 24, 2004
- Opportunity for extensive alignment of outcomes and strategies with United Way's Sustained Poverty Reduction Committee of the Board
- Opportunity for alignment of some outcomes and activities with the Calgary Children's Initiative
- Opportunity for mutual support with the Calgary Homeless Foundation

Threats for VC Calgary:

- Economy is very resource dependent (oil and gas),¹⁷ and therefore vulnerable to activity shifts, mid east politics, environmental concerns, and state of other provincial, national and international economies
- Strong economy and low unemployment lead to corresponding misperception that poverty is not an issue in Alberta
- Focus on health care, education, infrastructure and seniors issues by government and general public, often to the exclusion of other social issues related to poverty
- Minimum wage in Alberta is lowest in Canada, which impacts ability of working poor to meet basic living expenses, but is used by others as evidence that low wages are business-friendly and could not be changed without negatively impacting the local economy

¹⁷ According to the Conference Board of Canada, 18.2 percent of Calgary's GDP is accounted for by its energy sector, making it the only city in Canada in which the largest share of its GDP is its primary sector. Almost seven percent of Calgarians are employed in the energy sector. RedPoint Media Group Inc., *Calgary Inc.*, December 2004, p. 9.

3. COMMUNITY PLAN

The process of Vibrant Communities is about building community capacity to achieve the shared goal of poverty reduction. We recognize that sustained poverty reduction cannot be achieved by a single sector or a single program. We support a holistic approach which builds the capacity of a variety of sectors to work collaboratively to develop a broad range of initiatives addressing the root causes of poverty.

How does VC Calgary's work fit into the VC Canada jigsaw puzzle?



Comprehensive Thinking and Action

- We work on a *multiplicity of long-term* strategies addressing the *causes* not the effects of poverty

Multi-Sector Collaboration

- We work *strategically* to coordinate current and future initiatives, and ensure efforts are *well-resourced* and *supported*
- We ensure the *participation, cooperation* and *contribution* from *all sectors*

Community Learning and Change

- We are part of a national network of vibrant communities committed to *learning* from each other's shared experiences
- We understand the importance of *evaluation* and incorporate this into all aspects of our work

Community Asset Building

- We focus our work on *enhancing existing* assets in the community

The final page of this Community Plan offers a visual illustration of how these four approaches fit into VC Calgary's strategic framework. VC Calgary will make a concerted effort to ensure that comprehensive thinking and action, multi-sector collaboration, community learning and change, and community asset-building are woven throughout its strategies and the actions undertaken in each initiative.

3.1 COMPREHENSIVE THINKING AND ACTION

VC Calgary understands that sustained poverty reduction will only be achievable if addressed in a collaborative, multi-faceted manner. Similarly, poverty will not be substantially reduced unless our community works towards comprehensive solutions that address the causes, rather than the effects, of poverty. There is no magic bullet to eradicate poverty. No one strategy by itself, no matter how well-resourced, will be sufficient to address an issue as complex as poverty.

VC Calgary and its partners have developed a working framework for understanding how an individual or family obtains the resources, means, choices and power necessary to maintain economic self-sufficiency and meaningful participation in society. The following are the five pillars that VC Calgary and its partners believe our community needs to address together to achieve sustained poverty reduction:

- Economic Security, including both employment income and public income supports
- Education and Skills Training
- Basic Supports such as Housing, Transportation, Child Care and Food Security
- Physical and Mental Health
- Full Participation in Society

These pillars encompass the range of personal and financial assets and resources that an individual or family needs to exit poverty. In Calgary, there exist dozens of not-for-profit (including non-profit) and government agencies working to support a broad range of programs and services that address these areas. Many of these agencies are part of VC Calgary and bring their knowledge and expertise to the sustained poverty reduction work. VC Calgary wishes to use this knowledge of the issues – not to develop new programs and services in these areas – but to address the underlying causes of poverty, as well as the barriers that prevent people from escaping it.

A number of VC Calgary's partners have carried out comprehensive scans of the local environment, the results of which have enabled us to identify the strategies VC Calgary and others might focus on to generate substantial reductions in poverty in Calgary. The VC Calgary Steering Committee has selected the following two strategies that they feel well-suited to address:

- Increase Public Awareness and Civic Engagement
- Reduce Policy and Procedural Barriers

VC Calgary will make itself available to support its community partners on the work of a third key strategy, that being the provision of programmatic interventions, thereby achieving a holistic approach to poverty reduction.

Vibrant Communities Calgary will address the five pillars using the two strategies above through a variety of initiatives, including the following ones which are already underway and are described in greater detail in the following pages:

- Living Wage Initiative
- Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative
- Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative
- Fair Fares Initiative

In addition, Vibrant Communities Calgary is planning on building the capacity of the Calgary not-for-profit sector to influence public policy through an ongoing Public Policy Initiative, which will address specific public policy issues as they become ripe for action. This initiative will focus on strengthening relationships with government and working collaboratively to affect positive change to policies that impact people living in poverty. Vibrant Communities Calgary knows that this work is fluid and continually evolving, and these current initiatives do not limit the work that might be undertaken in the future.

VC Calgary has been strategic in determining the two strategies it is best-suited to address, those being increasing public awareness and civic engagement and reducing policy and procedural barriers. We have been more opportunity driven in terms of the initiatives on which we are embarking. However, VC Calgary is "strategically opportunistic" because we are very purposeful about identifying opportunities that

are ripe for action and will be the best use of our resources. The overarching filter for identifying opportunities is whether there is sufficient concern about the issue and support for an initiative to address the issue. The following is a selection criteria used by VC Calgary to select initiatives:

Respond to each question by checking off the appropriate box based on the following scale:

1. = Absolutely does not meet the criterion
2. = Somewhat meets the criterion
3. = For the most part meets the criterion
4. = Absolutely meets the criterion

	QUESTION	1	2	3	4	COMMENTS
Sustained Poverty Reduction	Does the opportunity clearly identify the target group it intends to benefit?					
	Is the opportunity designed to reduce poverty in a sustained way?					
	Does the opportunity have clear goals, objectives and time frames?					
	Does the opportunity fit the vision, mandate and principles of VC Calgary?					
	Does the opportunity fit the VC Calgary strategies for sustained poverty reduction?					
Comprehensive Thinking	Would the failure of the opportunity leave the people it is designed to assist worse off than before?					
	Is the opportunity designed to address more than one pillar of sustained poverty reduction (e.g. housing, employment skills, economic security)?					
	Is the opportunity designed to benefit more than one demographic group that is working poor? (e.g. immigrants, youth, lone parents)?					
Multisectoral Collaboration	Does the opportunity provide ability to link up with other complementary initiatives to reduce poverty?					
	Is the opportunity designed to involve organizations/people from more than one sector?					
	Does the opportunity have a plan and sufficient resources (e.g. technical assistance, information, funds, etc.) to support collaboration among organizations from different sectors?					
	Does the opportunity enable cross collaboration among sectors?					
	Can representatives of the target group be actively involved in designing the opportunity?					
Community Asset Building	Are there any barriers that prevent the target group from benefiting from the opportunity?					
	Is the opportunity designed to increase the 'willingness' of local organizations to get involved in sustained poverty reduction?					
	Is the opportunity designed to increase the capacity (i.e. skills, resources, knowledge and networks) of local organizations to reduce poverty?					
Community Learning & Change	Will the opportunity strengthen the policies and practices of organizations external to the local community (e.g. provincial and federal agencies, business and trade associations, foundations, etc.) to support local efforts to reduce poverty?					
	Is the opportunity designed to generate results long into the future?					
	Will the opportunity generate shorter-term results that will demonstrate its effectiveness and build support among stakeholders?					
	Is the opportunity grounded in the 'lessons learned' of other similar initiatives?					
	Does the opportunity have an easy-to-implement plan to capture results?					
	Does the opportunity have an easy-to-implement plan for <i>all</i> its stakeholders to regularly review results and identify ways to improve the initiative?					
	Does the opportunity provide incremental capacity building/scaling up of an existing project that reduces poverty instead of re-profiling/re-allocating resources?					

In the following sections we describe each of the specific initiatives that VC Calgary is undertaking.

3.1.1 Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative

VC Calgary believes that if Calgarians were more knowledgeable about the true extent of poverty, the root causes, the impact, and the case (both economic and social) for reducing it, many more people would actively seek out and act on ways they could help reduce poverty in the community.

Outcome

- Calgarians have heightened awareness of the extent and root causes of poverty, and are inspired to take action to reduce poverty.

Outputs

- Calgarians engage in meaningful conversations and public debate about poverty-related issues
- Calgarians' intolerance for poverty is increased, causing them to ask "why?"
- Calgarians shift thinking beyond the individual and towards the community-wide benefits of poverty reduction
- Poverty and related social issues are more prominent on the political, health and education agendas
- VC Calgary and other community partners working to reduce poverty experience reduced opposition and increased support

Measurement

- Track the rate at which social issues related to poverty are showing up in polls
- Track issues in the media
- Document changes in public policies
- Follow-up with targets to ask if they have taken any action based on the information they received
- Invite people to contact VC Calgary with their stories of what action they took
- Document the number of people affected and in what ways

Activities	Status	Responsibility
Form a Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team	Completed November 2003	VC Calgary
Communications Plan	Completed June 2004	VC Calgary Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team
The External Costs of Poverty in Calgary Report	Completed June 2004	United Way, Centre for Health and Policy Studies, University of Calgary and Institute of Health Economics
Compelling Case for Poverty Reduction	In progress	United Way
Connect with United Way's Sustained Poverty Reduction Public Awareness and Social Marketing Sub-Committee	Ongoing	VC Calgary Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team, SPRC Sub-Committee
Determine a key issue on which to focus initial marketing messages	Completed October 2004	VC Calgary Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team
Align with United Way's Sustained Poverty Reduction Public Awareness Action Group	In progress	VC Calgary Public Policy Action Team, SPRC Action Group
Align with VC Calgary's Living Wage Action Team	In progress	VC Calgary Living Wage and Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Teams
Secure funding for a public awareness and social marketing campaign	In progress	VC Calgary
Secure fiscal agent	In progress	VC Calgary
Develop and release a marketing RFP	In progress	VC Calgary Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team
Hire a marketing agency to develop and carry out public awareness and social marketing campaign	Not yet started	VC Calgary Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team

3.1.2 Living Wage Initiative

VC Calgary believes that if employers were educated about the link between poverty and issues that impact their business or organization, they would begin to see themselves as part of the solution, and contribute by: raising wages to a living wage level, offering health benefits, assisting employees with transportation and child care, providing opportunities for skills training, upgrading and career advancement, and offering flexible work hours and permanent employment opportunities rather than seasonal or contract positions, thereby benefiting employers, workers and the community.

Outcome

- Employees are paid a wage and benefits package that allows them and their families to be economically self-sufficient, meet their basic needs, and fully participate in the family, social, economic and political life of their community.

Outputs

- Positive relationships with employers are established and strengthened.
- Employers are educated about the link between poverty and issues that impact business, and how skills training, increased wages and employment of a diverse workforce benefits business, workers and community.
- Employers begin to see themselves as part of the solution, and contribute by: raising wages to a living wage level, offering health benefits, assisting employees with transportation and child care, providing opportunities for skills training, upgrading and career advancement, and offering flexible work hours and permanent employment opportunities rather than seasonal or contract positions.
- Employees and their families experience: increased savings, access to credit and investment in assets such as home ownership, vehicles, education and business ownership; increased sense of efficacy; reduced stress and improved health; and greater economic self-sufficiency and reduced reliance on social programs.
- Employers who are engaged in progressive workplace practices reap the benefits in terms of higher employee productivity and lower absenteeism, improved customer satisfaction, decreased employee turnover and the resulting cost savings in staff hiring and training.
- The broader community experiences positive outcomes including increased social participation, increased taxpayer base resulting from increased incomes, increased consumer purchasing power, and reduced costs in health care and social services.

Measurement

- Keep records of who receives information, participates in meetings, etc.
- Do follow-up calls or emails to ask if participants have made changes in human resource practices. If so, ask them to complete a short questionnaire.
- Contact employees at targeted businesses and ask them if changes in human resource practices have been made.

Activities	Status	Responsibility
Conduct community consultations to explore local interest in living wage	Completed March and April 2003	MCC Employment Development and United Way
Form Living Wage Action Team	Completed March 2003	VC Calgary
Complete and disseminate Living Wage Research Report	Completed December 2003	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team
Conduct community consultation to review results of research	Completed March 2004	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team
Conduct community consultation to discuss options for moving forward	Completed June 2004	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team
Participate in VC Canada's Living Wage Tele-learning Initiative	November 2004 through January 2005	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team – Learning Leads
Align with VC Calgary's Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team	In progress	VC Calgary Living Wage and Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Teams
Secure funding for a living wage campaign	In progress	VC Calgary

Secure fiscal agent	In progress	VC Calgary
Hire a living wage campaign coordinator	In progress	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team
Creation of action plan	Not yet started	VC Calgary Living Wage Action Team and campaign coordinator

3.1.3 Fare Fairs Initiative

Calgary Transit is a primary means of transportation for Calgarians living on low incomes. However, the cost of using Calgary Transit is a barrier for some individuals and families living on low incomes. For example, someone receiving the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) benefit would have to spend 8 to 10 percent of their monthly income to purchase an adult transit pass (slated to increase to \$70.00 on January 1, 2005). Similarly, someone working for the minimum wage of \$5.90 per hour would have to work over 11 hours to afford that same transit pass.

VC Calgary believes that affordable public transportation facilitates access to employment and training opportunities, recreation and social participation, volunteer work and medical appointments, assists in meeting basic needs, increases self-sufficiency, improves mobility, and enhances the quality of life for people living on low incomes. Discounted transit passes would also benefit small business owners and other employers by increasing the labour pool and reducing turnover by removing one of the barriers to work for low income earners. There are also economic benefits associated with providing affordable transportation. Individuals who are able to work because they have access to affordable transportation contribute back to society through the payment of income taxes. In addition, increasing the number of people who are working leads to savings in employment insurance and social assistance payments.

The Fair Fares Action Team is proposing a joint provincial/municipal government one year pilot project, beginning in January 2005. The purpose of the pilot project would be to assess the interest in discounted transit passes and demonstrate the benefits of such a program for people living on low incomes. The pilot project would provide half price adult transit passes for individuals 18 years of age and older whose income is below a prescribed level. Eligibility for the passes would be determined using a process similar to The City of Calgary's Fee Assistance for Recreation Services. It is anticipated that there will be 3,000 pilot project participants representing a range of individuals living on low incomes, including individuals who are unemployed and seeking work but not in receipt of social assistance, and individuals receiving AISH benefits. The Committee intends to formally approach the Provincial Government and Calgary City Council in the fall of 2004 to sponsor the pilot project.

Outcome

- Provincial and Municipal governments agree to fund discounted transit passes for all qualifying low-income Calgarians

Outputs

- Results of the pilot project evaluation are used to convince policy makers of the need for a discounted transit pass for low-income Calgarians
- Low-income Calgarians purchase discounted transit passes to improve their access to employment, recreation and social opportunities
- Improved access to employment, recreation and social opportunities leads to improved mental and physical health and economic circumstances

Measurement

- When people apply for discounted transit pass they complete a brief questionnaire indicating their level of transit usage in the previous year, to what degree transportation costs were a barrier to usage, and to what extent improved access to transportation would assist them in accessing employment, recreation and social opportunities
- Follow up with both pilot project participants and control group at six months and one year after start of pilot project to determine current level of transit usage and to what extent access to transportation has assisted them in accessing employment, recreation and social opportunities

Activities	Status	Responsibility
Form Fair Fares Action Team	Completed	Community Committee on Discounted Transit Fares
Develop a proposal for a joint provincial/municipal discounted transit pass program	Completed	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Host a community forum on discounted transit passes	Completed	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Sponsor a petition to be tabled in the Alberta Legislature	Completed	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Present to Calgary City Council	Completed	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Present to Calgary Caucus	Completed	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Meet with Calgary MLAs to raise their awareness around the transportation needs of people living on low incomes	Ongoing	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Contact the City of Edmonton who is sponsoring a one year pilot project which provides half price transit passes to AISH recipients	Ongoing	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Secure United Way funding for evaluation component	October 2004	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Secure fiscal agent for evaluation component	Completed October 2004 – Calgary SCOPE Society	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Secure commitment from the Provincial Government and Calgary City Council to sponsor the pilot project	In progress	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Hire an evaluation consultant	Not yet started	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Conduct pilot project	Not yet started	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team
Use results of the pilot project evaluation to convince policy makers of the need for a discounted transit pass for the 30,000 low-income Calgarians who require access to affordable transit	Not yet started	VC Calgary Fair Fares Action Team

3.1.4 Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative

VC Calgary believes that financial eligibility testing requirements (means tests, needs tests, income asset tests) for various services are inconsistent and onerous to low-income recipients, which in turn impact accessibility to the needed services and potentially have a negative effect on the clients' self-esteem.

Outcome

- Access to services is facilitated by the standard eligibility test so the process is less demeaning and more accessible for low income Calgarians and more efficient for service providers.

Outputs

- A once annual standardized eligibility test is developed for social service programs relating to health and food services, financial and legal aid, education and skills development, leisure and recreation, transitional housing and emergency shelter
- The standard eligibility test is widely accepted and used by service providers to facilitate ease in accessing services by low income Calgarians

Measurement

- When people complete eligibility test for service, have them complete a brief questionnaire indicating their level of service usage in the previous year
- Follow up with similar survey after implementation of standard eligibility test to find out if service usage has changed and any beneficial impacts they have experienced

Activities	Status	Responsibility
Conduct initial research of eligibility tests	Completed December 2003	United Way and YWCA
Form Standard Eligibility Testing Action Team	Completed February 2004	VC Calgary

Develop action plan	Completed February 2004	VC Calgary Standard Eligibility Testing Action Team
Conduct focus groups with service recipients and providers	In progress	VC Calgary Standard Eligibility Testing Action Team

3.1.5 Public Policy Initiative

VC Calgary believes that public policies have a significant impact on people living in poverty. Public policies are a key tool to substantially reduce poverty and thereby positively impact the lives of all Calgarians.

VC Calgary believes strongly in the benefits of approaching government with an aim to building positive, collaborative relationships. We therefore define this work as mutual problem-solving, rather than advocacy, which carries with it notions of a more adversarial approach. VC Calgary also believes that by working collaboratively with government, we will avoid the common advocacy concerns of our not-for-profit partners, these being the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency's limitations on advocacy by charitable agencies, the loss of government contracts, and reduced financial support from the private sector.

Outcome

- Public policies are created or redesigned in an effort to improve the lives of low-income Calgarians

Outputs

- VC Calgary works with government and other community partners to provide meaningful input into the creation or redesign of specific public policies
- Various levels of government use VC Calgary as a resource for information and input on specific public policies
- The knowledge and capacity of VC Calgary's participating members to work collaboratively with government and influence public policy is enhanced
- Public policies increasingly reflect the concerns of the social services sector

Measurement

- If and when policy changes, determine the number of people affected and in what ways
- Conduct questionnaire or interview with a sample to determine the nature, if any, of the benefit they experienced from the policy change
- Have someone, possibly Caledon, interview the policy makers to get an indication of the contribution that VC Calgary made to the ultimate outcome (i.e. 10% contribution to 1,000 Calgarians equals 100)

Activities	Status	Responsibility
Follow progress of Calgary AISH Public Policy Roundtable	September 2003 through October 2004	VC Calgary
Secure fiscal agent	December 2004	VC Calgary
Form VC Calgary Public Policy Action Team	Not yet started	VC Calgary
Review process evaluation and lessons learned from the Calgary AISH Public Policy Roundtable	Not yet started	VC Calgary Public Policy Action Team
Align with United Way's Sustained Poverty Reduction Public Policy Sub-Committee	Not yet started	VC Calgary Public Policy Action Team, SPRC Action Group
Begin to explore, select and begin work on a specific public policy initiative	Not yet started	VC Calgary Public Policy Action Team

3.2 MULTI-SECTOR COLLABORATION

Under the leadership of the Chairs, VC Calgary will continue to strive to ensure that the combined members represent a balanced cross section of community representatives, government (including health and education), business, labour and not-for-profit organizations who have an ongoing passion for poverty reduction in our city. See Appendix B for a list of the current members of VC Calgary.

We recognize that each sector will be able to offer diverse contributions and will demonstrate their commitment to this work in different ways. Though we expect passion and commitment from all of our partners, we remain flexible as to how the various sectors choose to become engaged in this work.

The following table outlines various attributes by sector that will enable change through the implementation of VC Calgary’s Community Plan:

	Business → influence and leverage	People Living in Poverty → grounding solutions	Not-for-profit Organizations → community process	Government → serving the public	Labour → collective action	Community → strength in numbers
Access to leadership	√	√	√	√	√	√
Access to capital and in-kind resources	√		√	√	√	
Drive for results and focus	√					
Perspective may result in barrier identification	√					√
Source of knowledge of root causes of poverty		√	√		√	
Ability to interpret the realities		√				
Ability to surface the contradictions		√				
Advises on the practical implications of a strategy		√				
Mobilizes passion and commitment		√	√			
Diversity of program offerings			√	√		
On the ground experience		√	√			
Source of social innovation			√			
Understanding process brings engagement			√			
Ultimately responsible for public policy				√		
Large delivery systems for programs and services			√	√		
Key agent of social change	√	√	√	√	√	√
Experience influencing public policy	√	√	√	√	√	√
Driving force for capacity building and mobilization					√	√

Strengthening and continuing the development of a community however is no simple task. It is not something that can be simply laid out or formally mandated. Throughout the process of Vibrant Communities planning, tensions between sectors and perspectives have emerged on various issues. This is not only predictable, but a necessary and fundamental aspect of collaboration. Vibrant Communities is about building capacity among the sectors towards a common community purpose of reducing poverty. There is a demonstrated shared interest in the greater good of poverty reduction and a belief that by working together more is possible. Ultimately, this belief is our community's greatest asset.

3.2.1 Strategies to Engage the Local Community in Reducing Poverty

VC Canada describes the following three ways in which local communities can be engaged in reducing poverty:

Strategy	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Inside-Out	The local steering committee's staff, volunteers and a few partners develop concrete strategies and poverty reduction initiatives, and invite other local organizations to participate in final shaping and implementation of those strategies and initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allows local steering committee to select strategies and initiatives that have a great potential for impact, address a "gap" in the community's current responses to poverty, and that "model" approaches the group finds important (e.g. multi-sector collaboration) can be relatively quick to get strategies and initiatives off the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fewer local organizations may feel ownership for strategies and initiatives limits the number of strategies and initiatives that the local steering committee can take on due to capacity constraints the range of strategies and initiatives may be limited by the expertise of the steering committee group may become too closely identified with the strategies they are championing, rather than overall mission of poverty reduction
Bottom-Up	The local steering committee staff and volunteers identify a key issue (e.g. affordable housing) as important and encourage local organizations to create strategies and initiatives to address that issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourages a wide variety of unique responses the potential for "innovation" is greater ownership of initiatives and issues (and long term commitment) among local organizations may be greater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> somewhat slow to unfold often requires extensive steering committee supports or incentives to convince local organizations to become involved many responses will not be high impact or innovative
Mix of Inside-Out and Bottom-Up	The local steering committee staff and volunteers select a key area to focus on (e.g. better wages for the working poor), and a few strategies and initiatives to develop centrally (e.g. a living wage campaign), and invite others to support, all the while encouraging local organizations to develop and share their own initiatives (e.g. training programs, child care, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allows a group to encourage wide-spread and various local responses while retaining the option of selecting a few high impact or "gap filling" strategies of its own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may be more challenging to manage may require the staff and volunteers to have two different sets of skills and experience

VC Calgary uses a mix of inside-out and bottom-up strategies to engage the local community in reducing poverty. Our primary engagement strategy is to "plant a tree" (inside-out), where the Steering Committee develops concrete strategies and poverty reduction initiatives and invites other stakeholders to participate in shaping and implementing these strategies and initiatives. Our secondary engagement strategy is to "let a thousand flowers bloom" (bottom-up), where the Steering Committee identifies a key issue as important and encourages stakeholders to create and implement strategies and initiatives to address that issue.

3.3 COMMUNITY LEARNING AND CHANGE

We believe that community learning is a prerequisite to community change. Ongoing investment in learning is the basis for human development and community well-being. The key to learning is active engagement with the information – what can be learned from a given effort. It is a process that entails the exploration, discussion and implementation, all with a focus on continuing improvement.

3.3.1 Learning Locally

The VC Calgary Steering Committee has adopted the below indicators of sustained poverty reduction for households, developed by VC Canada. A tracking system will be created and utilized to measure the progress for each initiative and towards the target of sustained poverty reduction for 1,000 low-income households in Calgary by 2008.

1. Employability and Employment
 - Obtained training and education
 - Secured full- or part-time employment
 - Improved quality of employment (preferred type of work, hours, working conditions)
 - Reduced reliance on social assistance
2. Finances
 - Increased income through employment
 - Increased income by accessing an income support program
 - Built financial asset
 - Obtained capital asset (computer, car, home)
 - Reduced costs
 - Reduced debt
3. Housing
 - Accessed affordable housing
 - Improved quality of housing (security, space, cleanliness and repair)
4. Other Basic Needs
 - Improved food security
 - Obtained child care
 - Secured transportation
 - Coverage of health and dental costs
5. Personal
 - Greater self-efficacy
 - Improved capacity to self-advocate
 - Greater awareness of rights
 - Improved access to programs and services

VC Canada will assist in preparing a logic model as the base evaluation framework for VC Calgary’s local learning. VC Calgary has formed a Learning and Evaluation Action Team (see Appendix B), and set aside resources in its annual budget (see Appendix C) for more detailed planning and implementation of the evaluation framework.

3.3.2 Learning Nationally

The greatest value of our involvement in Vibrant Communities is the opportunity to participate in a national network of communities who are each working towards local poverty reduction and willing to share their strategies, struggles and successes with others.

VC Calgary is committed to fully participating in the Pan-Canadian Learning Community, and helping to lead this work as a Trail Builder community. The VC Calgary Coordinator takes primary responsibility for acting as the liaison between VC Calgary and VC Canada (see Appendix F). Other VC Calgary members will be asked to assume the role of Learning Leads on specific topic areas, with a responsibility for bringing learnings from that topic area back to VC Calgary.

3.4 COMMUNITY ASSET BUILDING

VC Calgary believes that sustained poverty reduction is best achieved by focusing on local community assets, rather than deficits. We work under the following five core operating principles:

1. We support a developmental approach that will engage local leaders from all sectors to build the capacity of our community to reduce poverty.
2. We are committed to identifying barriers to exiting poverty and addressing the root causes of poverty.
3. We believe in shared learning where research, innovative action and evaluation are communicated back to the community.
4. We focus on the strengths and assets of our community.
5. We are committed to ensuring our strategy reflects: comprehensive thinking and action, multi-sector collaboration, community asset building, and community learning and change.

3.4.1 Strategies for Supporting Organizations Plan, Implement and Grow Poverty Reduction Initiatives

VC Canada describes the following six ways in which local communities can support organizations plan, implement and grow poverty reduction initiatives:

Strategy	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Social Marketing	The local steering committee describes and promotes different options for local organizations getting involved in reducing poverty, the benefits for getting involved, and how they can become involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relatively inexpensive to launch and manage • can reach a large number of local organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may by itself be insufficient to encourage a large number of organizations to get involved in poverty reduction efforts • difficult to measure the results and effectiveness of social marketing
Technical Assistance and Coaching	The local steering committee provides hands-on assistance to local organizations in the planning, development, packaging, implementation and evaluation of poverty reduction initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addresses one of the greatest obstacles to local organizations creating high impact initiatives – insufficient skills or knowledge • provides the local steering committee with a strong case for asking local organizations to “track” results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires experienced staff and volunteers to provide such assistance • requires funds to pay for staff • intensive number of organizations that the local steering committee can assist
Brokering and Coordination	The local steering committee identifies and links local organizations with information, organizations, resources and projects to support their poverty reduction work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local steering committee’s birds-eye view and extensive information on local poverty dynamics and local organizations puts it in a strong position to play such a role • a relatively inexpensive and uncomplicated role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may by itself be insufficient to encourage a large number of organizations to get involved in poverty reduction efforts
Improving Access to Funding	The local steering committee creates new pools of funding for poverty reduction projects and / or encourages funders to make existing pools of funds more accessible to this long-term work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the strongest incentive for most local organizations – particularly not-for-profits – for getting involved in poverty reduction efforts • provides the local steering committee with a strong case for asking local “track” results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the local steering committee administers such funds, the work can be time-consuming • may distract local organizations (particularly not-for-profits) from the steering committee’s convening role • requires experienced staff and volunteers
Advocacy	The local steering committee identifies policies and / or practices that one or more organizations might adjust in a way that leads to a reduction in poverty and actively encourages the organization(s) to make the change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relatively inexpensive • a respected local steering committee can have a dramatic and positive influence on the organization(s) being encouraged to adjust their policies and / or practices • can result in large scale, long 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local steering committee may struggle to come up with a position on an issue that they all agree with • some organizations may dislike “political positions” • may endanger charitable status or access to government

Strategy	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
		term systemic changes	contracts
Project Facilitation and Management	The local steering committee directly plans (or facilitates planning) and manages one or more poverty reduction initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a steering committee full control to design and carry out an initiative • can often be done quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can distract a steering committee from its "catalyst" work • may confuse local organizations regarding the primary role of the steering committee • may open the steering committee up to criticism of duplication

VC Calgary is currently working on, or planning to work on, four of the six strategies:

- Social Marketing – ex. Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative;
- Brokering and Coordination – ex. Public Policy Initiative;
- Advocacy – ex. Living Wage Initiative, Public Policy Initiative and Fair Fares Initiative; and
- Project Facilitation and Management – ex. Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative, Public Policy Initiative, Living Wage Initiative, Fair Fares Initiative, and Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL VIBRANT COMMUNITIES TARGETS

VC Calgary recognizes that outcomes work is not static and should be constantly evolving along with the work itself. At the same time, to work without targets poses a danger that an initiative will lose focus and end up unintentionally heading down a path very different from where it began. Outcomes are also a key strategy to engage the community, particularly non-traditional partners, in the work. Focusing on mutually agreed-upon outcomes can also build positive relationships between individuals and groups who might not normally be on the same side of the table for political and other reasons. Finally, long-range outcomes allow us all to take a step back and refocus our attention and energy at times when we become bogged down by frustrations that arise in this complex work.

VC Calgary has committed to setting and measuring two levels of outcomes – household outcomes and engagement outcomes. Each level is described in great detail below.

4.1 HOUSEHOLD OUTCOMES

Vibrant Communities Canada has identified several targets for the work of the Pan-Canadian initiative. Up to six communities will be approved for Trail Builder status; currently, four communities have received this approval: BC's Capital Region (Victoria and surrounding municipalities), Niagara, Saint John and Edmonton. Montreal and Calgary are applying for Trail Builder status. These Trail Builder communities will strengthen their capacity to reduce poverty, and as a result, assist a minimum of 5,000 low-income households to improve their circumstances:

VC Calgary has set a target of sustained poverty reduction for 1,000 households in Calgary over the next three years, and will use the indicators listed under Section 3.3.1 of this Community Plan as one method of measuring our impact by proxy. Due to the fact that our work is not programmatic in nature, it is very difficult to project specific timelines for our household level targets, however we aim to positively impact 200 low-income Calgarians by the end of 2005, another 300 low-income Calgarians by the end of 2006, and 500 more low-income Calgarians by the end of 2007.

4.2 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The collective VC Canada goal is to engage representatives from the following sectors to join the local Trail Builder communities in implementing poverty-reduction plans:

- 250 non-profit organizations and government agencies;
- 100 low-income leaders; and
- 100 businesses.

In addition to tracking the number of people moving out of poverty, we will also work to track other groups who will be engaged in VC Calgary's sustained poverty reduction initiatives. VC Calgary projects that, over the next three years, its efforts will engage the leadership of 130 individuals broken down as follows:

- 50 individuals representing 20 community organizations (including not-for-profit agencies, foundations, labour organizations and faith communities);
- 30 individuals representing municipal, provincial and federal government departments, and quasi-governmental bodies such as education and health care;
- 20 individuals who are living the experience of poverty;
- 20 individuals representing the private sector; and
- 10 individuals representing the general public.

We are already well under way with 55 individuals actively engaged in VC Calgary on an ongoing basis. We aim to increase this number to 75 individuals by the end of 2005, 100 individuals by the end of 2006, and 130 individuals by the end of 2007.

The following chart summarizes the number of people who we hope to influence and engage through our work at the local level, as well as the methods and indicators of engagement:



METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT	INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL	
		December 2004	December 2007
Not-for-profit agencies			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Discuss how sustained poverty reduction intersects with and impacts the work of the relevant agency Ask employees to contact politicians directly and/or speak publicly about poverty in general and specific public policies Invite agencies to allocate some programmatic resources to sustained poverty reduction work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative Providing technical knowledge / expertise 	Individuals: 27 Organizations: 17	Individuals: 35 Organizations: 20
Foundations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Discuss how sustained poverty reduction intersects with and impacts the work of the relevant foundation Ask employees to contact politicians directly and/or speak publicly about poverty in general and specific public policies Invite foundations to allocate some financial resources to sustained poverty reduction work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of cash or in-kind resources 	Individuals: 0 Organizations: 0	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 3
Labour			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Arrange individual meetings to discuss public policy issues Ask volunteers to speak publicly and/or contact politicians directly about poverty in general and specific public policies Ask volunteers to use extensive networks to rally broad support for specific public policy changes Ask volunteers to use networks to disseminate information about Living Wage Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative Providing technical knowledge / expertise 	Individuals: 2 Organizations: 1	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 3
Faith communities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Arrange individual meetings to discuss public policy issues Ask volunteers to speak publicly and/or contact politicians directly about poverty in general and specific public policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Implementing a poverty reduction initiative 	Individuals: 2 Organizations: 1	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 3



METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT	INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL	
		December 2004	December 2007
Government → municipal, provincial and federal bureaucratic arms			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Arrange individual meetings to discuss public policy issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative Providing technical knowledge / expertise 	Individuals: 12 Organizations: 3	Individuals: 15 Organizations: 3
Government → municipal, provincial and federal political arms			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Extend invitation to attend community consultations on specific public policy issues Arrange individual meetings with politicians to discuss public policy issues Ask politicians to support specific public policy initiatives by bringing motions forward and/or voting in favour of motion at Calgary Caucus or Standing Policy Committees Ask politicians to speak out publicly about public policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative 	Individuals: 0 Organizations: 0	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 3
QUANGO → quasi-non governmental organization (health, education)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Arrange individual meetings to discuss how specific public policies affect the relevant QUANGO Ask employees to contact politicians directly and/or speak publicly about poverty in general and specific public policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative Providing technical knowledge / expertise 	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 3	Individuals: 10 Organizations: 5
People living in poverty			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Extend invitation to community consultations and focus groups Ask volunteers to speak publicly and/or contact politicians directly about poverty in general and specific public policies Invite volunteers to share their personal stories with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Using influence 	Individuals: 5 Organizations: 4	Individuals: 20 Organizations: 5



METHODS OF ENGAGEMENT	INDICATORS OF ENGAGEMENT	TOTAL	
		December 2004	December 2007
Private sector			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend invitation to both employers and employees to join Steering Committee and Action Teams Arrange individual meetings to discuss how poverty affects the relevant business Invite volunteers to provide feedback on the Living Wage Action Plan Ask individuals or Government Relations departments to champion specific public policy initiatives Work with agencies that help employees ease into retirement to present volunteering with VC Calgary as an opportunity to use skills and stay engaged in community Disseminate information about poverty in company newsletters and on intranet Ask company to host volunteer fair to recruit volunteers to VC Calgary Brown Bag lunches to educate employees about poverty and the work of VC Calgary Approach Community Investment professionals about company donations of time, talent or treasure Use employees as focus groups for public awareness and social marketing materials Ask Communications professionals to leverage contacts to reduce costs of public awareness and social marketing campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Investment of cash or in-kind resources Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative Providing technical knowledge / expertise People retiring from private sector offer their skills to VC Calgary Information about poverty is disseminated in company newsletters and on intranet 	Individuals: 1 Organizations: 1	Individuals: 20 Organizations: 15
General public			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite volunteers to provide feedback on the draft Community Plan Invite volunteers to provide feedback on the Public Awareness and Social Marketing materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment of time and leadership Using influence Implementing a poverty reduction initiative 	Individuals: 1 Organizations: N/A	Individuals: 10 Organizations: N/A
TOTAL		Individuals: 55 Organizations: 31	Individuals: 130 Organizations: 60

5. GOVERNANCE, FISCAL MANAGEMENT, BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

VC Calgary has developed governance and fiscal management structures that we hope will strike an appropriate balance between attention to the details necessary for good governance, and allowing volunteers the freedom to develop and implement innovative solution-based actions to reduce poverty.

5.1 GOVERNANCE

VC Calgary is continually working to improve its governance structure to ensure clarity around decision-making at all levels. Please see Appendix A for a visual diagram of VC Calgary's organizational structure, Appendix D for a description of member expectations, and Appendix E for a description of the membership processes.

Currently, the Chair or Co-chairs of each Action Team is responsible for reporting to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee offers feedback on and approves the Action Plans of each Action Team, and delegates responsibility for carrying out the work as set out in the Action Plans to the Action Teams. Updates and changes to the Action Plans are brought forward at the monthly Steering Committee meetings.

The Management Team of VC Calgary oversees various management aspects, including Human Resources, Learning and Evaluation, Resource Development, and Communications. Each of these issues is immediately governed by a Standing Committee, all of which report to the Management Team.

5.2 FISCAL MANAGEMENT

United Way of Calgary and Area is currently acting as temporary charitable agent for VC Calgary. Recently, United Way's Finance and Audit Committee of the Board decided that United Way could no longer continue to act in this capacity for VC Calgary. VC Calgary has had a number of partner agencies offer to take on the charitable agency role in United Way's place, and the Management Team of VC Calgary – in consultation with the Steering Committee and Action Teams, is currently exploring the best possible options. The Management Team is in the process of securing legal advice on this matter, and will report back to the Steering Committee its recommendations for moving forward. There is agreement from all that these issues are very important and only fully informed decision should be made. VC Calgary hopes to have the fiscal management issues settled in January 2005.

It is possible that VC Calgary will apply for its own Society status, provided this option would then allow VC Calgary to have legal status and contract with its charitable agent(s) and employer(s) of record.

Longer-term options are for VC Calgary to apply for charitable status or become a Part IX (not-for-profit) company.

5.3 BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING

VC Calgary's estimated 2005 budget is \$419,806 (see Appendix C). Funding for 2005 will be almost completely covered by the generous contribution of \$250,000 from United Way of Calgary and Area and, if approved for Phase 3, \$100,000 from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.

VC Calgary's projected budgets for years 2006 and 2007 are \$327,525 and \$333,102, respectively. VC Calgary plans to ask United Way for a contribution of \$200,000 in 2006 and \$150,000 in 2007. Phase 3 status would provide an additional \$100,000 for each of these years.

VC Calgary has formed a Resource Development Standing Committee whose role is to secure additional sources of funding. The following is a list of potential funders who we plan to approach:

- Anadarko Canada Corporation
- BMO Fountain of Hope
- Calgary Health Region

- Calgary Chamber of Commerce
- Calgary Foundation
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
- Canadian Pacific Rail
- City of Calgary FCSS
- Epcor
- Imperial Oil
- Labour Congress
- MCC Employment Development
- Merrill Lynch Canada Inc.
- RBC Financial
- Shaw Foundation
- Suncor

VC Calgary has received Letters of Intent to consider funding requests from the following:

- City of Calgary FCSS
- United Way of Calgary and Area

5.4 STAFFING

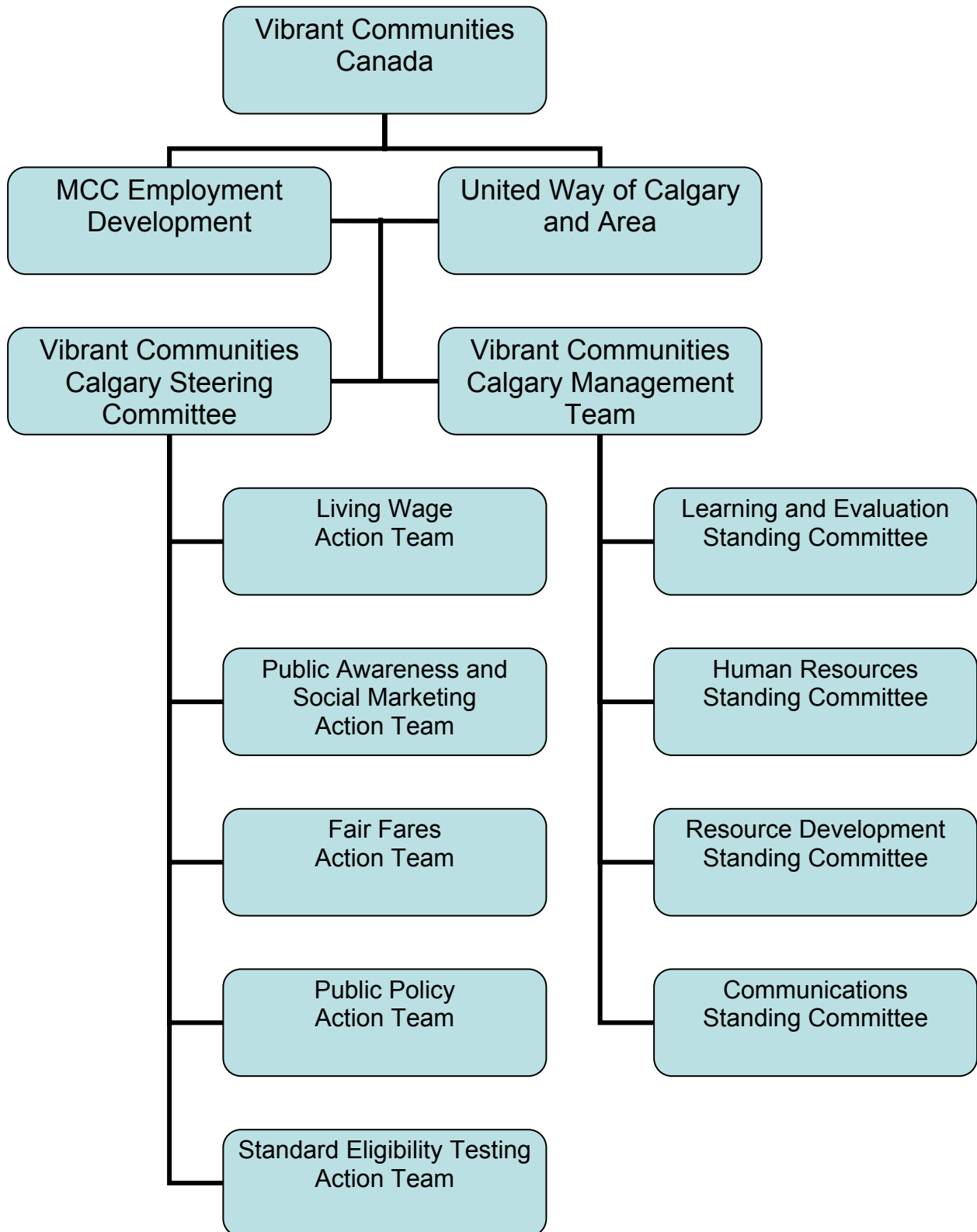
VC Calgary currently has no staff and is led in large part by a United Way staff person who acts as VC Calgary's Coordinator on an almost full-time basis. Upon securing a charitable agency, VC Calgary will confirm whether United Way can second a full-time staff person to act as VC Calgary Coordinator, or whether VC Calgary will need to hire its own full-time Coordinator.

VC Calgary will also hire a full-time Living Wage Campaign Coordinator, beginning with a one-year contract in 2005. Please see Appendix F for VC Calgary's current job descriptions.

VC Calgary is extremely fortunate to have very dedicated volunteers. Presently, the participation of the Steering Committee Co-chairs together make up approximately a 0.5 FTE staff.

VC Calgary recognizes that the budget for years 2006 and 2007 will need to be adjusted based on the progress in 2005, including the possibility that additional staff may be necessary to help carry out the work of VC Calgary.

APPENDIX A: Vibrant Communities Calgary Organizational Chart



APPENDIX B: Vibrant Communities Calgary Membership

Vibrant Communities Calgary Steering Committee

Amy Alexander (Co-Chair), *City of Calgary*
 Dariel Bateman, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Greg Campbell, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*
 Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
 Tim Stock-Bateman, *CUPS Community Health Centre*
 Cori Ghitter, *YWCA Social Issues Committee*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
 Robin Houston-Knopff, *Bow Valley College*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Ruth Kohut (Co-Chair), *Calgary Health Region*
 Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
 Chris MacFarlane, *Alexandra Community Health*

Centre
 Laura MacKinnon, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 Donna McLeod / Varina Russell, *The Calgary Children's Initiative*
 Donna McPhee, *Alberta Coalition Against Poverty*
 Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
 Bev Sheckter, *Jewish Family Service*
 Jackie Sieppert, *University of Calgary*
 John te Linde, *City of Calgary*
 Stephanie Won, *City of Calgary*

Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
 Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
 Cori Ghitter (Chair), *YWCA Social Issues Committee*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

Area
 Lorie Friesen, *The Calgary Children's Initiative*
 Jennifer Myers, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Carmen Sparrow, *MCC Employment Development*

Living Wage Action Team

Julie Ball, *Calgary Chamber of Commerce*
 Donna Bonertz, *Calgary Drop-in Centre*
 Gord Churchill, *Living Spirit United Church*
 Gordon Christie, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 John Currie, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
 Caroline Fairbrother, *Alberta Human Resources and Employment*
 Michael Fitzpatrick, *Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers*
 Elliot Hewitt, *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
 Patricia Jones, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*
 Ramona Johnston (Chair), *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*

Darla Leard, *Canadian Labour Congress*
 Laura MacKinnon, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 Mardy Roberts, *United Church*
 Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
 Jenny Saarinen, *MCC Employment Development*
 Yvonne Schmitz, *United Way Board Member*
 Tim Stock-Bateman, *CUPS Community Health Centre*
 Sharon Stroick, *City of Calgary*
 Brenda Wadey, *Sunrise Community Link Resource Centre*

Standard Eligibility Testing Action Team

Mary Jane Amey, *City of Calgary*
 Carlene Donnelly, *CUPS Community Health Centre*
 Stephen Hansen, *Calgary Transit*
 Ruth Kohut (Chair), *Calgary Health Region*
 Joanne Pinnow, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

Area
 Karoline Sandhurst, *Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank*
 Luke Shwart, *Calgary Health Region*
 John Te Linde, *City of Calgary*
 Stephanie Won, *City of Calgary*

Fair Fares Action Team

Derek Cook, *City of Calgary*
 Murray Crosby, *Disability Action Hall (Volunteer)*
 Susan Easton, *Alberta Human Resources and Employment*
 Jane Gray, *Calgary Self Help (Volunteer)*
 Stephen Hansen, *Calgary Transit*
 Colleen Huston (Co-Chair), *Disability Action Hall*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Michelle Kuiken, *University of Calgary (Practicum Student)*

David McDonald, *City of Calgary*
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 Bonnie Pacaud (Co-Chair), *Community (Volunteer)*
 Christina Stebanuk, *Disability Action Hall (Volunteer)*
 Leanne Squair, *City of Calgary*
 Stephanie Won, *City of Calgary*
 Denise Young, *Calgary SCOPE Society*

Management Team

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
 Dariel Bateman, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

Area
 Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*

Communications Standing Committee

Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*

Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
 Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*

Resource Development Standing Committee

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

Area
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*

Learning and Evaluation Standing Committee

Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*
 Chris MacFarlane, *Alexandra Community Health*

Centre
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 Jackie Sieppert, *University of Calgary*

Human Resources Standing Committee

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*

Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*

APPENDIX C: Vibrant Communities Calgary Budget

Below are the projected budgets for 2005, 2006 and 2007 for the sustained poverty reduction work of VC Calgary. Upon receiving Phase III Trail Builder status with Vibrant Communities, VC Calgary will receive up to \$100,000 each year in matched funds from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. VC Calgary has a Resource Standing Committee whose purpose is to explore and pursue external funding and oversee the distribution of funds to various VC Calgary initiatives.

2005:

VCC Steering Committee

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
VCC Coordinator	Salary of \$4,200 per month for 12 months	50,400.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	7,560.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	7,560.00
Low-income participant involvement	Honorarium of \$40 each for three participants for 12 monthly meetings	1,440.00
Coaching	One-third of the costs for coaching services provided by Garry Loewen for the Coordinator and Steering Committee Chair(s)	2,000.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$73,960	7,396.00
Total		\$ 81,356.00

Fair Fares Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Pilot Project	Evaluation consultant	30,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	Calgary SCOPE Society	1,000.00
Total		\$ 31,000.00

Living Wage Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Campaign coordinator	Salary of \$3,750 per month for 12 months	45,000.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	6,750.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	6,750.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$63,500	6,350.00
Total		\$ 69,850.00

Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Marketing contract	Fees for marketing materials and professional services	150,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$150,000	15,000.00
Total		\$ 165,000.00

Communications

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Communications plan	Communications consultant fees and expenses	5,000.00
Marketing materials	Website and brochure development	15,000.00
Conference presentations	Registration and travel expenses for marketing of VCC at select conferences	2,000.00
Kick-off event in 2005	Public launch of VCC to media and community	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$27,000	2,700.00
Total		\$ 29,700.00

Evaluation

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
External evaluator	Consultant fees (\$2,000 per month x 12 months)	24,000.00
Evaluation expenses		15,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$39,000	3,900.00
Total		\$ 42,900.00

Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

Public Policy Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

TOTAL BUDGET 2005

Initiative	Estimated cost
VCC Steering Committee	81,356.00
Fair Fares	31,000.00
Living Wage	69,850.00
Public Awareness and Social Marketing	165,000.00
Communications	29,700.00
Evaluation	42,900.00
Standard Eligibility Testing	0.00
Public Policy	0.00
Grand Total	419,806.00
Less Fair Fares amount previously allocated by United Way	(31,000.00)
Total	388,806.00
Less funding from United Way	(250,000.00)
Less Phase III matching funds from J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	(100,000.00)
Outstanding	\$ 38,806.00

2006:

VCC Steering Committee

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
VCC Coordinator	Salary of \$4,325 per month for 12 months	51,900.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	7,785.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	7,785.00
Low-income participant involvement	Honorarium of \$40 each for three participants for 12 monthly meetings	1,440.00
Coaching	One-third of the costs for coaching services provided by Garry Loewen for the Coordinator and Steering Committee Chair(s)	2,000.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$75,910	7,591.00
Total		\$ 83,501.00

Fair Fares Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

Living Wage Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Campaign coordinator	Salary of \$3,900 per month for 12 months	46,800.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	7,020.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	7,020.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$65,840	6,584.00
Total		\$ 72,424.00

Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Marketing contract	Fees for marketing materials and professional services	100,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$100,000	10,000.00
Total		\$ 110,000.00

Communications

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Marketing materials	Website maintenance and brochure development	5,000.00
Conference presentations	Registration and travel expenses for marketing of VCC at select conferences	2,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$7,000	700.00
Total		\$ 7,700.00

Evaluation

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
External evaluator	Consultant fees (\$2,000 per month x 12 months)	24,000.00
Evaluation expenses		15,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$39,000	3,900.00
Total		\$ 42,900.00

Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

Public Policy Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Research, convening meetings		10,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$10,000	1,000.00
Total		\$ 11,000.00

ESTIMATED BUDGET 2006

Initiative	Estimated cost
VCC Steering Committee	83,501.00
Fair Fares	0.00
Living Wage	72,424.00
Public Awareness and Social Marketing	110,000.00
Communications	7,700.00
Evaluation	42,900.00
Standard Eligibility Testing	0.00
Public Policy	11,000.00
Grand Total	327,525.00
Less funding from United Way	(200,000.00)
Less Phase III matching funds from J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	(100,000.00)
Outstanding	\$ 27,525.00

2007:

VCC Steering Committee

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
VCC Coordinator	Salary of \$4,500 per month for 12 months	54,000.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	8,100.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	8,100.00
Low-income participant involvement	Honorarium of \$40 each for three participants for 12 monthly meetings	1,440.00
Coaching	One-third of the costs for coaching services provided by Garry Loewen for the Coordinator and Steering Committee Chair(s)	2,000.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$78,640	7,864.00
Total		\$ 86,504.00

Fair Fares Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

Living Wage Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Campaign coordinator	Salary of \$4,050 per month for 12 months	48,600.00
	Benefits estimated at 15% of salary	7,290.00
	Office space estimated at 15% of salary	7,290.00
Other operating expenses	Meetings, transportation, office supplies	5,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$68,180	6,180.00
Total		\$ 74,998.00

Public Awareness and Social Marketing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Marketing contract	Fees for marketing materials and professional services	100,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$100,000	10,000.00
Total		\$ 110,000.00

Communications

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Marketing materials	Website maintenance and brochure development	5,000.00
Conference presentations	Registration and travel expenses for marketing of VCC at select conferences	2,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$7,000	700.00
Total		\$ 7,700.00

Evaluation

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
External evaluator	Consultant fees (\$2,000 per month x 12 months)	24,000.00
Evaluation expenses		15,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$39,000	3,900.00
Total		\$ 42,900.00

Standard Eligibility Testing Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Not yet budgeted		0.00
Total		\$ 0.00

Public Policy Initiative

Budget item	Details	Estimated cost
Research, convening meetings		10,000.00
Fiscal Agency Fee	10% of \$10,000	1,000.00
Total		\$ 11,000.00

ESTIMATED BUDGET 2007

Initiative	Estimated cost
VCC Steering Committee	86,504.00
Fair Fares	0.00
Living Wage	74,998.00
Public Awareness and Social Marketing	110,000.00
Communications	7,700.00
Evaluation	42,900.00
Standard Eligibility Testing	0.00
Public Policy	11,000.00
Grand Total	333,102.00
Less funding from United Way	(150,000.00)
Less Phase III matching funds from J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	(100,000.00)
Outstanding	\$ 83,102.00

APPENDIX D: Vibrant Communities Calgary Member Expectations

Members of the Steering Committee, Management Team, Standing Committees and Action Teams will:

- Be aware of and support the mandate and work of Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Honor and respect the accomplishments, current commitment and investments made by previous and ongoing members of the relevant sectors
- Be prepared for all meetings by reading the minutes and any additional information or by preparing any pre-work
- Promote Vibrant Communities Calgary in the broader community and within your organization and sector
- Identify and articulate issues important to the outcomes of Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Identify and share best practices
- Bring the resources and knowledge of their organizations/community to the achievement of the work of Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Communicate with other community groups engaged in similar work
- Honor and respect the opinions, issues and discussions within Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Assist in securing appropriate resources to support the work of Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Support asset-based approaches to sustained poverty reduction work

APPENDIX E: Vibrant Communities Calgary Membership Processes

Selection Process

- In consultation with current Steering Committee, Standing Committee or Action Team members, new members will be added at the invitation of the appropriate Chair.

Number

- Recommend a minimum of 10 members and a maximum of 20 members for the Steering Committee. Action Teams and Standing Committees will determine the number of members appropriate to their work.

Term

- A commitment of two years is recommended for all members, with an extension as mutually agreed upon for an additional two year term. There should be an organizational understanding that this is long-term work.

Composition & Representation

- Under the leadership of the Steering Committee Co-chairs, VC Calgary will strive to ensure that the combined Action Teams, Standing Committee and Steering Committee members represent a balanced cross section of agencies, companies, institutions, foundations, community representatives, government (including health and education), business, labour and non-profit organizations who have an ongoing passion for poverty reduction in our city.
- The membership of the Management Team is limited to the following: Co-Convenor representatives, Coordinator and Steering Committee Co-Chairs.

Member Replacement

- If an organization needs to replace a member, the organization will nominate another staff or volunteer. Upon approval by the Chair, an invitation for membership will be extended to the nominee.
- Sector representatives will be replaced by the Chair in consultation with the Steering Committee, Standing Committee or Action Team members.
- Individuals may or may not be replaced, depending on the Steering Committee, Standing Committee or Action Team needs.

Decision Making

- Where possible, decisions at Steering Committee, Management Team, Standing Committee and Action Team levels will be made by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, the decisions will be made by a vote of the members present, with two-thirds (2/3) vote carrying the decision. Chairs each have a vote equal to other members.

Meetings

- The Steering Committee and Management Team will each meet a minimum of six times a year.
- Action Teams and Standing Committees will meet as needed as per work plans.
- Action Teams will report to the Steering Committee a minimum of six times a year.
- Standing Committees will report to the Management Team a minimum of six times a year or as per their work plans.
- Meeting agendas will be prepared by the relevant Chair. Members are invited to submit agenda items two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. The agenda will be provided to members a minimum of one week prior to the meeting. The Chair may accept additions to the agenda on the day of the meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be circulated to the members within fourteen days of the meeting.
- Members unable to attend Steering Committee, Standing Committee or Action Team meetings should send their regrets to the appropriate Chair, and should not send a designate in their place unless agreed upon in advance by the Chair.

APPENDIX F: Vibrant Communities Calgary Job Descriptions

Co-Convenors

- Convenes a Steering Committee of non-profit, business, labour, government (including health and education) and community leaders
- Representative sits on both the VC Calgary Management Team and Steering Committee
- Representative participates in national Convenor conference calls and face to face meetings, and relays relevant information to the Steering Committee

Charitable Agent

- Acts as the charitable agent for Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency purposes, including issuing charitable tax receipts to VC Calgary donors and funders
- Administers funds allocated to the agency for the purposes of the relevant VC Calgary initiative

Steering Committee Co-Chairs

- Chairs the meetings of the Steering Committee
- Facilitates the work of the Steering Committee and guides the group towards planful action directed at the mandate/mission of VC Calgary
- Represents VC Calgary in the Pan-Canadian Learning Community and locally when required
- Sits as an ex-officio member of the United Way of Calgary and Area Sustained Poverty Reduction Board Committee to ensure ongoing communication and collaboration

Action Team Chairs

- Chairs the meetings of the relevant Action Team
- Ensures that Terms of Reference and Action Plans are created and followed
- Facilitates the work of the Action Team and guides the group towards planful action directed at the mandate/mission of VC Calgary
- Participates as a member of the Steering Committee
- Reports to the Steering Committee on behalf of the Action Team

VC Calgary Coordinator

- Coordinates a Steering Committee of non-profit, business, labour, government (including health and education) and community leaders
- Ensures proper communication between the Steering Committee, Management Teams, Standing Committees and Action Teams
- Assists in developing and implementing a local community plan for poverty reduction and administers Tamarack Institute coaching resources
- Acts as the local contact for the Pan-Canadian Learning Community
- Participates in national conference calls to share experiences and discuss policy and planning issues
- Shares tele-learning initiative opportunities with Steering Committee and relevant Action Teams and coordinates local involvement
- Provides regular updates to VC Calgary's webpage on national website
- Helps to draft and monitor the annual Pan-Canadian Learning Community work plan and assists in the design of annual forums
- Works with project evaluators and sponsors to assess and track outcomes
- Documents learnings and shares experiences with Pan-Canadian Learning Community members
- Updates the Community Plan to ensure it accurately describes the work of VC Calgary
- Other duties as required

Living Wage Coordinator

- Research and communicate best practices around low wage issues
- Bring business champions on board and engage them in the living wage campaign from the outset

- Work with Living Wage Action Team and other partners to develop an action plan with 3-4 key “asks” for employers, with an aim to educate employers about the link between poverty and issues that impact business, and how skills training, increased wages and employment of a diverse workforce benefits business, workers and the community
- Provide ongoing progress updates to the Living Wage Action Team and incorporate Action Team’s feedback into all aspects of work
- Assist Action Team members to develop roles for themselves and provide opportunities for involvement in campaign to other VCC members and interested community partners
- Other duties as required

APPENDIX G: Vibrant Communities Calgary Vision of Change

Ultimate Goal: Sustained Poverty Reduction

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