



Vibrant COMMUNITIES Edmonton

MAKE TAX TIME PAY CAMPAIGN PLAN (July 2005)

OVERVIEW

The **“Making Tax Time Pay”** campaign is a key activity under the VCE strategy of family economic supports. Vibrant Communities Edmonton believes that assisting families’ access benefits to which they are entitled, will increase their disposable income, thereby help build family economic success. The goal is to assist an additional 500 families obtain benefits and/or subsidies for which they are eligible and had not received in the past.

There are various benefits and subsidies available to families who are working and are earning low income. Most of the associated applications require evidence of income through the provision of a personal income tax assessment received by individuals after filing their income tax. Hence, it is important to link a campaign to increase uptake with tax preparation.

Central to the **“Making Tax Time Pay”** campaign is a multi-sectoral collaboration. A variety of access points is critical to building a broad network that will reach the families who will benefit from this campaign. While we will not focus on any one benefit or subsidy, because we have detailed information available about the Alberta Child Health Benefit (ACHB), we are using this benefit as an example of the potential impact of the **“Making Tax Time Pay”** campaign.

An evaluation conducted in 2001 found that the ACHB is having a positive impact on children’s health and the workforce participation of people living with low income.

Up to two-thirds of families feel that their children would not receive some health services in the absence of the program and those services would most likely be dental and optical services.

The ACHB frees many parents who are working and living with low income from having to divert money from their family’s basic needs in order to meet the health care needs of their children. About \$265 per year per child was the average amount paid to medical service providers under the ACHB. Dental care is valued particularly high among families receiving the ACHB.

Presently, there are approximately 15000 eligible families in Edmonton who are NOT receiving the Alberta Child Health Benefit. Assuming that each family has only 1 child and using the evaluation results calculate a benefit of \$265 per child per year at least an additional \$3,975,000 could be re-distributed into the community. The ACHB represents just one of the benefits and/or subsidies that the **“Make Tax Time Pay”** campaign will feature. Clearly, the campaign has the potential to benefit Edmonton families and the community at large.

RATIONALE

The campaign plan has been based on the findings and recommendations of the 2001 evaluation of the Alberta Child Health Benefit and the lessons learned from similar campaigns, such as “The National Tax Assistance For Working Families Campaign” in the United States.

There are 30 key activities that will be used in the “**Make Tax Time Pay**” campaign. They are intended to address barriers and challenges that prevent families from receiving benefits for which they are eligible and to establish relationships with members of various sectors that could benefit the Key Strategies of Community Investment and Workforce Development.

Our goal is to help 500 families obtain benefits and subsidies that they have not received in the past. The success of the plan is dependent on the Campaign Committee’s ability to plan, network and leverage partner capacity.

KEY ACTIVITIES

1. Research and develop contact information for potential partners
2. Compile database of benefits/subsidies applications, eligibility criterion and key benefit/subsidy program contact information
3. Research and develop contact database of media/ network contacts for PSAs and newsletter articles
4. Research cut off dates for inserts into utilities statements such as Epcor, Telus, Shaw, Telus Mobility, Bell
5. Develop binder containing photocopyable benefit/subsidy application information for tax preparation partners and other interested parties. Based on preliminary discussions there are many organizations who would like copies of this binder. Obtain assistance with printing costs. Create 150 binders. Put on Website to download.
6. Confirm partnership with call centre such as 211 (The Support Network) Develop (3) 1 page brochures explaining the campaign for use in the Following sectors: people with low income, business, non profits
7. Develop tracking/measurement tool
8. Develop Return on Investment model
9. Recruit and orient partners to campaign and tools. Provide them with initial copies with more to come as campaign is implemented. Target cultural societies as well as existing free tax preparation services.
10. Participate in Chamber of Commerce Small Business Week event
11. Plan Launch Event for beginning of November
12. Host Launch Event
13. Develop newsletter article for network to include in their internal newsletters or community/cultural newspapers. Request cultural media to translate. Include a call for volunteers to help as tax preparers.
14. Develop Public Service Announcements for use on radio, t.v. and Newspapers. Request cultural media to translate
15. Develop translations for inserts/posters
16. Develop payroll inserts/utility bill inserts.
17. Develop posters for Day Cares, schools (public, Catholic, charter, out of school care facilities
18. Develop presentation to businesses participating in the CRA seminars For GST, payroll deductions.
19. Organize tax preparation location at Chamber of Commerce.
20. Obtain assistance with printing costs for inserts and posters Print 5000 inserts. Print 500 posters.
21. Disburse tracking measurement tool and binders to partners.

TIMELINE (summary)

August

Approve campaign plan.
Develop partner recruitment materials.

September

Recruit partners
(sectors: business, citizen groups, non profit, health, Government: municipal, provincial, federal)

October

Plan launch event

November

Launch VCE with “Make Tax Time Pay” as the inaugural activity for VCE

December

Provide referral network with compilation of benefits package

January - May

Implement campaign

June

Compile results
Campaign celebration event

22. Recruit businesses that will include payroll inserts with their employees
T4 slips.
23. Disburse payroll and utility inserts; disburse brochures, posters to partner organizations
24. Issue PSA's and newsletter articles
25. Follow up regularly with partners to determine what is working &
what adjustments need to be made
26. Compile results
27. Organize campaign celebration event to announce results and thank partners
28. Host campaign celebration
29. Campaign Committee meets to review developments and provide feedback

STREAM 1

Recruit existing tax preparation services

non profit organizations	Federal Government
Student body associations	H & R Block

STREAM 2

Recruit new sources for on site preparation/referrals to existing tax prep services

Student body Associations	Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
Community Organizations Community Leagues in particular communities Support Network Capital Region Housing Corporation HomeEd Food Bank	Business by sector: Hotel and lodging Food Processors Cleaning/janitorial Retail Call Centres Financial institutions Business Associations in particular areas Telus/mobility/Shaw
Municipal: Mayor & City Council Epcor Community Services offices 211 Edmonton	Media: cultural newspapers
Provincial: Labour Market Centres Family and Community Support Services Capital Health Community Health Centres AB. Mental Health	University: Health Clinics Dental Clinic: Shine
Resources for Parents: Day cares, Training programs	Edmonton Public Schools – Consulting Services: Multilingual services Assessment Services Aboriginal Education Parent Education New District English Language Support Services
	Educational Institutions Student Services

See Figure 1 for complete campaign timeline

The “Make Tax Time Pay” application package will include a set of eligibility criterion and application forms for each of the featured benefits and subsidies. See Figure 2 for a list of featured benefit and subsidies.

Figure 2

<i>Tax Credit (Cash received)</i>	<i>BENEFITS</i>	<i>SUBSIDIES</i>	<i>PROGRAM PROVIDER</i>
	<i>Alberta Child Health Benefit</i>		<i>Alberta Human Resources and Employment</i>
	<i>Alberta Adult Health Benefit</i>		<i>Alberta Human Resources and Employment</i>
		<i>Alberta Health Care Premium Subsidy</i>	<i>Alberta Health and Wellness</i>
		<i>Alberta Blue Cross Premium Subsidy</i>	<i>Alberta Health and Wellness</i>
		<i>Child Care Subsidy</i>	<i>Alberta Children’s Services</i>
		<i>Out of School Care Subsidy</i>	<i>City of Edmonton</i>
	<i>Fee Reduction Program</i>		<i>City of Edmonton</i>
<i>Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit</i>			<i>Government of Alberta</i>
<i>GST Tax Credit*</i>			<i>Government of Canada</i>
<i>Child Tax Credit*</i>			<i>Government of Canada</i>

** The federal tax credits are received automatically when eligible families complete their tax returns*

Educating families about multiple benefits not only strengthens working families with low incomes, but also helps the local economy by drawing down additional federal and provincial resources. The return on investment model we are developing will help us determine what economic effect this campaign has on families and our community. Our goal is to assist 500 families access these benefits. If these families accessed just the Alberta Child Health Benefit, at least an additional \$132,500 would be infused into the local economy based on research that found on average, medical services per child amounted to \$265 per year.

By raising awareness of and assisting with applications for existing benefits and subsidies, Vibrant Communities Edmonton is helping families living with low income achieve family economic success.