
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.

Vibrant Communities is a Pan-Canadian Learning Community convened and supported by Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, and The 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

United Way of Calgary and Area and MCC Employment Development are the co-convenors for Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC). MCC Employment Development also acts as VCC's charitable agency. The VCC Steering Committee is co-chaired by representatives from The City of Calgary and Calgary Health Region.

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

Mandate: **VCC exists to ignite new community action to create and implement bold solutions that reduce and prevent poverty through collaboration and education.**

Commitment: **VCC develops and supports 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.**

When people live in persistent financial distress, the whole community pays in increased costs to the health care, education, social service and criminal justice systems, and to our local economy in lower spending on goods and services. Sustained poverty reduction will improve the quality of life for all Calgarians and make Calgary an even more attractive location for economic, educational, health and social investment.

VCC 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

VCC has set a target of sustained poverty reduction for 1,000 households in Calgary over the next three years. This goal will be achieved by building the capacity of a variety of sectors to work collaboratively to implement a 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, VCC 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.

The following pages briefly describe the work of each of VCC's committees and lists our dedicated volunteers.

The **Living Wage Action Team** was formed following an exploration of local interest through community consultations in March and April of 2003. A comprehensive research report was completed and disseminated. VCC has hired a Living Wage Coordinator who is building an action plan to work collaboratively with the City of Calgary to develop and implement a municipal living wage policy.

Ryan Anderson, *Hope Lutheran Church*
Julie Ball, *Calgary Chamber of Commerce*
Andrea Blakie, *Calgary Health Region*
Donna Bonertz, *Calgary Drop-in Centre*
Gordon Christie, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
John Currie, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
Michael Fitzpatrick, *Business Volunteer*
Susan Gillies, *Women's Centre of Calgary*
Barbara Henning, *Mustard Seed Street Ministry*
Elliot Hewitt, *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*
Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
Patricia Jones, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*
Sylvia Loewen, *Calgary Health Region*

Laura MacKinnon, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
Bill McIntyre, *Governors' Council*
Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
Rev. John Pentland, *Hillhurst United Church*
Mardy Roberts, *United Church*
Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
Jenny Saarinen (Co-Chair), *MCC Employment Development*
Maureen Sheppard, *Innovation Inc.*
Sharon Stevens, *City of Calgary Ward 9 Alderman's Office*
John Te Linde, *City of Calgary*
Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman, *Temple B'nai Tikvah*
Brenda Wadey, *Sunrise Community Link Resource Centre*
Joy Zerke, *City of Calgary*

The **Fair Fares Action Team** has been working since 2000 to establish a discounted transit pass program for adult Calgarians living on low incomes. The City of Calgary has established a discounted transit pass program for people on Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program effective August 1, 2005. Fair Fares is working collaboratively with City representatives to extend this program to other low-income Calgarians by January 2006.

Wayne Backer, *Calgary Region Community Board*
Murray Crosby, *Disability Action Hall Volunteer*
Stephen Hansen, *Calgary Transit*
Colleen Huston (Co-Chair), *Disability Action Hall*
Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*

Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
Bonnie Pacaud (Co-Chair), *Community Volunteer*
Shandra Smiley, *YWCA*
Leanne Squair, *City of Calgary*

The **Communications Action Team** aims to increase Calgarians' awareness of poverty and its root causes, and inspire individuals and organizations to take action to reduce poverty. Volunteers are working with the VCC Communications Coordinator to develop a communications strategy for VCC through which we will implement a long-term public awareness and social marketing campaign regarding poverty in Calgary, create key messages for VCC and produce a quarterly newsletter, participate in public dialogue on poverty and related social and economic issues, contribute to government consultation processes, and work to expand individual and organizational engagement in VCC.

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
Lorie Friesen, *The Calgary Children's Initiative*
Samantha Hubka, *Community Volunteer*
Paula King (Chair), *Anadarko Canada Corporation*
Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*

Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
Tim Moro, *Ipsos Reid*
Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
Paula Shaw, *Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre*
Carmen Sparrow, *MCC Employment Development*
Stephen Wright, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

The **Standard Eligibility Testing Action Team** was formed to address a concern expressed by social agencies and their clients that numerous applications for services are onerous for individuals in need and a constant detriment to their self-esteem. Volunteers are working to determine the feasibility of developing an annual standardized means test for a broad range of social service programs, which would be widely accepted and used by service providers to facilitate ease in accessing services by low income Calgarians.

Mary Jane Amey, *City of Calgary*
Carly Smith, *The KidSport Society of Calgary*
Caren Clouston, *Calgary Family Services*
Stephen Hansen, *Calgary Transit*
Ruth Kohut (Chair), *Calgary Health Region*

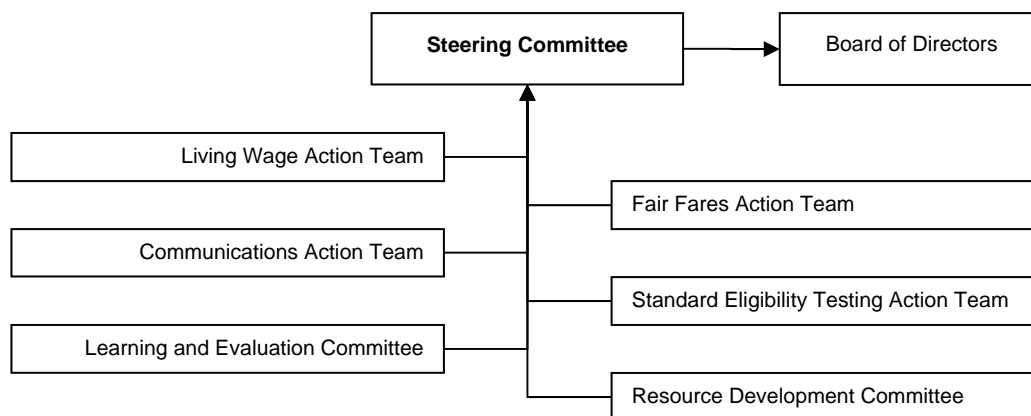
John Merriman, *City of Calgary*
Karoline Sandhurst, *Calgary Food Bank*
Luke Shwart, *Calgary Health Region*
Stephanie Won, *City of Calgary*
Joy Zerke, *City of Calgary*

The **Learning and Evaluation Action Team** is responsible for conceptualizing, designing and testing evaluation approaches to sustained poverty reduction. Volunteers recognize the importance of learning and evaluation to the development of creative and innovative poverty reduction strategies, and are working with our national partners to develop and implement an evaluative framework.

Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*
Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
Chris MacFarlane (Chair), *United Way of Calgary and Area*
Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*

Joanne Pinnow, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
Jackie Sieppert, *University of Calgary*
Billie Thurston, *University of Calgary*
Lori Villebrun, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

VCC's organizational structure ensures that there is proper stewardship of the funds that VCC receives and accountability for the time and resources that our volunteers dedicate. Legally, VCC Initiatives Ltd. is incorporated as a Part 9 not-for-profit company in Alberta. Our charitable agency is MCC Employment Development. The Board of Directors is appointed by the VCC Steering Committee. While the Board members ensure that VCC meets its legal responsibilities, strategic guidance of VCC remains with the Steering Committee members.



The **Steering Committee** exists to provide leadership to the work of VCC. These volunteers offer direction and governance and are responsible for ensuring the vision and strategic priorities of VCC are implemented and VCC activities are adequately coordinated and resourced.

Cathy Abel, *RBC Financial*
 Amy Alexander (Co-Chair), *City of Calgary*
 Greg Campbell, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*
 Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
 Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
 Robin Houston-Knopff, *Bow Valley College*
 Colleen Huston, *Disability Action Hall*
 Ruth Kohut (Co-Chair), *Calgary Health Region*
 Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
 Chris MacFarlane, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

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*
 Bonnie Pacaud, *Community Volunteer*
 Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
 Bev Sheckter, *Jewish Family Service*
 Jackie Sieppert, *University of Calgary*
 Tim Stock-Bateman, *CUPS Community Health Centre*
 John Te Linde, *City of Calgary*

The **Board of Directors** has primary responsibility for ensuring our bylaws are followed.

Cathy Abel, *RBC Financial*
 Greg Campbell, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*

Fred Robertson, *National Anti-Poverty Organization*
 Jenny Saarinen, *MCC Employment Development*

The **Human Resource Committee** exists to oversee the recruitment, hiring and supervision of the VCC Manager, and to assist the Manager with human resource issues related to other VCC staff.

Lisa Caton, *MCC Employment Development*
 Walter Hossli (Chair), *MCC Employment Development*

Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*

The **Resource Development Committee** exists to guide VCC's fundraising efforts.

Tasha Dobrovolsky, *EnCana Corporation*

Tanya Oliva, *Bell Canada*

For more information, please contact:

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