

Poverty is the condition of a human being who lacks the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain economic self-sufficiency and meaningful 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 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). The VCC Steering Committee is Co-Chaired by representatives from The City of Calgary and Calgary Health Region.

Vibrant Communities Calgary exists to ignite community action to create and implement bold solutions that reduce and prevent poverty through collaboration, education and advocacy.

The **Steering Committee** exists to provide leadership to the work of VCC.

Amy Alexander (Co-Chair), *City of Calgary*
Dariel Bateman, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
Carlene Donnelly, *CUPS*
Susan Easton, *Alberta Human Resources and Employment*
Dina Gauthier, *Feeding Calgary's Children*
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*
Patricia Jones, *Calgary Catholic Family Service*
Jacquie Keller, *City of Calgary*

Ruth Kohut (Co-Chair), *Calgary Health Region*
Lyn Koltutsky, *Governors' Council*
Jake Kuiken, *City of Calgary*
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, *Community Volunteer*
Fred Robertson, *Community Volunteer*
Bev Sheckter, *Jewish Family Service*
Jackie Sieppert, *University of Calgary*
John te Linde, *City of Calgary*

The initiatives we are presently working on include the following:

The **Public Awareness and Social Marketing Action Team** has completed the communications plan for a long-term public awareness and social marketing campaign regarding poverty in Calgary, with the following hoped-for outcomes:

- Calgarians have heightened awareness of the depth, breadth and root causes of poverty
- Calgarians are engaged in meaningful conversations and public debate about poverty-related issues
- Poverty and related social issues are more prominent on the political, health and education agendas
- Calgarians shift thinking towards the community-wide benefits of poverty reduction
- Calgarians are inspired to take action to reduce poverty
- Fewer Calgarians live in poverty

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*
Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
Dina Gauthier, *Feeding Calgary's Children*
Cori Ghitter (Chair), *YWCA Social Issues Committee*

Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
Donna McLeod / Varina Russell, *The Calgary Children's Initiative*
Jennifer Myers, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

The **Communications Action Team** is developing key messages and a communications strategy for VCC, through which we will proactively express our views on social policy issues, research reports, etc., as well as have a quick-response mechanism for government consultation processes and media coverage of poverty-related issues.

Debra Carnat, *Alberta Children's Hospital*
Walter Hossli, *MCC Employment Development*
Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

Ruth Kohut, *Calgary Health Region*
Donna McPhee, *Community Volunteer*
Fred Robertson, *Community Volunteer*

The purpose of the **Standard Means Testing Action Team** is to develop a once annual standardized means test 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, 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*
 Carlene Donnelly, *CUPS*
 Stephen Hansen, *Calgary Transit*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Jacquie Keller, *City of Calgary*
 Ruth Kohut (Chair), *Calgary Health Region*

Loraine Lundquist, *Calgary Housing Company*
 Joanne Pinnow, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Karoline Sandhurst, *Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank*
 Luke Shwart, *Calgary Health Region*
 Dale Stamm, *Calgary Housing Company*

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 has been completed and distributed to key stakeholders. A broad-based group of participants is now meeting regularly to strategize about the options for advancing living wage in Calgary.

Julie Ball, *Calgary Chamber of Commerce*
 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*
 Laura MacKinnon, *Calgary Homeless Foundation*
 Neil McKinnon, *Calgary and District Labour Council*
 Fred Robertson, *Community Volunteer*
 Yvonne Schmitz, *United Way Board Member*
 Sharon Stroick, *City of Calgary*
 Brenda Wadey, *Sunrise Community Link Resource Centre*

The **AISH Public Policy Roundtable** was convened by United Way in an effort to enhance the capacity of the non-profit sector to influence public policy. As a pilot project, a number of disability-serving agencies have come together to examine the issues of AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) as they impact Alberta's most vulnerable citizens. The purpose of this initiative is to build capacity among the non-profit sector in the area of public policy and mutual problem-solving, and to provide meaningful input into the redesign of the AISH program. To date, the Roundtable has conducted a well-attended community consultation, drafted and sent comprehensive policy recommendations to the Alberta government, and is coordinating presentations to the Standing Policy Committee and Calgary Caucus.

Ryan Geake, *Calgary Scope Society*
 Peter Johnson, *Canadian Mental Health Association*
 Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*
 Michelle Kristinson, *Multiple Sclerosis Society*
 Le-Ann Dolan, *AIDS Calgary*

Chris MacFarlane, *Alexandra Community Health Centre*
 Patty Morris, *Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary*
 Leslie Tamagi, *Vocational Rehabilitation and Research Institute*
 Bruce Uditsky, *Alberta Association for Community Living*

The **Resource Action Team** exists to explore and pursue external funding and oversee the distribution of funds to various Action Team projects.

Amy Alexander, *City of Calgary*

Ramona Johnston, *United Way of Calgary and Area*

The **Evaluation Action Team** will work to develop and implement evaluative measures for VCC's community plan.

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

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

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