



City of Richmond

**2021–2031
Collaborative
Action Plan to
Reduce and
Prevent Poverty
in Richmond**

Community Social
Development
Department



Council Resolution

On December 6, 2021, Richmond City Council adopted the following recommendation:

That the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond as outlined in the staff report titled, “2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond,” dated October 25, 2021, from the Director, Community Social Development, be adopted.



Acknowledgement

The *2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond* is a result of the combined efforts of community organizations, residents and City staff. We would like to thank everyone who participated and who shared their insights and experiences to support the development of this Plan.

This project was funded by the Province of B.C. through the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action program and administered by the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM).

The Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond was guided by a Steering Committee which included representatives from the following organizations:

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Executive Summary

The *2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond* (Collaborative Action Plan) is intended to guide the City of Richmond's work, in collaboration with stakeholder organizations, to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond over the next ten years. The purpose of the Collaborative Action Plan is to gain a deeper and shared understanding of the experiences and circumstances of individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond in an effort to identify actions to better meet their needs. This includes improved access to services and supports as well as the development and implementation of initiatives designed to promote a greater sense of belonging and inclusion in the community.

The Collaborative Action Plan is the result of a multi-phased engagement process that included analysis of community level data, regular meetings with a Steering Committee, and outreach with stakeholder organizations and residents, including residents with lived/living experience. Valuable insight into community needs emerged, resulting in the development of four strategic directions that form the framework for the Collaborative Action Plan:

1. Reduce and prevent poverty;
2. Support residents at risk of or living in poverty;
3. Increase awareness and educate; and
4. Research, monitor and evaluate.

Poverty impacts the entire community, not only individuals that experience poverty directly. Working collaboratively to reduce and prevent poverty improves a community's economy, social connectedness, and overall resiliency and well-being. Each strategic direction includes a set of actions that can be taken by the City, in collaboration with key stakeholders, to reduce the immediate impacts of poverty and to prevent poverty through city-wide and targeted approaches. Advocating and working with senior levels of government will also be essential as they are primarily responsible for the design and delivery of policies, programs and funding opportunities that are necessary to help lift individuals and families out of poverty.

It is important to note that the development of the Collaborative Action Plan was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet known, there is growing recognition that residents with lower incomes and lower net worth (including assets and savings) are more likely to have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. As economic recovery begins, the Collaborative Action Plan will be an important tool to support increased opportunity, resiliency and well-being for residents at risk of or living in poverty.



Glossary of Terms

Absolute poverty: The deprivation of basic needs, where basic needs are defined as those goods and services necessary to achieve and maintain a minimum, sustainable standard of mental and physical well-being. When persons live in absolute poverty, their lack of resources present a threat to their long-term health and overall well-being.¹

Basic needs: Includes clothing and footwear, transportation, nutritious food, shelter, and other goods and services such as personal care items, and basic telephone service and is based on the cost of a basket of goods and services, as reflected in Canada’s Market Basket Measure (MBM), that individuals and families need to achieve a modest standard of living in communities across Canada.²

BC Employment and Assistance Program: BC Employment and Assistance is composed of two types of assistance provided by the provincial government through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR): BC Income Assistance and BC Disability Assistance.

¹ Lamman & MacIntyre. An Introduction to the State of Poverty in Canada, 2016.

² Report on the second comprehensive review of the Market Basket Measure: Catalogue no. 75F0002M. Statistics Canada, 2020.

BC Income Assistance: A provincial program that provides financial support to individuals who are out of work or not earning enough to meet basic needs or who are in need of urgent food and medical attention and who may be eligible for temporary income assistance while they make the transition to employment.³

BC Disability Assistance: A provincial program that provides financial or health support to individuals designated as a Person with Disabilities (PWD). This assistance is available to low-income individuals who have severe physical and/or mental impairments and who require assistance with their activities of daily living.⁴

Census Family: A married couple (with or without children), a common-law couple (with or without children), or a lone parent family of any marital status who live in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. Grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present also constitute a census family.⁵

Community-based data: Information and data collected from within the community.

Cycle of poverty: Refers to the intergenerational effect of a child growing up in poverty, being disadvantaged for opportunities in education, skills and employment therefore being unable to improve their living conditions and starting a family restarts the cycle.⁶

Deep income poverty: Introduced by the federal government in *Opportunity for All*—Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy and defined as individuals living with income below 75% of Canada’s Official Poverty Line based on the Market Basket Measure and who do not have access to the resources needed to meet their basic needs and the needs of their family without assistance.⁷

Early Development Instrument (EDI): A questionnaire administered by the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) which focus on five core areas of healthy childhood development including physical health and well-being, language and cognitive development, social competence, emotional maturity and communication skills and general knowledge. The use of this measure tracks and reports on changes or trends in the vulnerability of children across time and locations.⁸

Economic Family: Refers to two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law union, adoption or a foster relationship. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. By definition all persons who are members of a census family are members of an economic family. However, economic family members can also include two co-resident census families, co-resident siblings or nieces or nephews living with aunts or uncles.⁹

3 Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Government of B.C.

4 Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Government of B.C.

5 Census Dictionary. Statistics Canada, 2016.

6 Tackling Poverty Together. Government of Canada, 2021.

7 Opportunity for All - Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

8 EDI Wave 7 Community Profile: Richmond School District. Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia. Vancouver, B.C., February 2020.

9 Census Dictionary. Statistics Canada, 2016.

Energy Poverty: Low and moderate income households that spend more than six per cent of their net income on home energy services are often defined as being in energy poverty. This definition does not include transportation costs but should be considered.¹⁰

Food Insecurity: Households that do not have enough money to purchase or access a sufficient amount and variety of food to live a healthy lifestyle.¹¹

Household type: A term used by Statistics Canada to differentiate households on the basis of whether they are census family households or non-census-family households.¹²

Housing stress: Represents unmet housing needs and is defined as the condition where the cost of housing is high relative to the income of the household therefore causing financial stress. Unmet housing needs are defined as Canadians who are in housing that is unaffordable (more than 30% of before tax household income), in need of major repairs or unsuitable for the size and make up of a family.¹³

Low Income Cut-off (LICO): A household is considered to be in low income based on LICO if it spends 20% more of the household income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. This measurement is based on 1992 spending patterns of Canadian families.¹⁴

Low Income Measure (LIM): A household is considered to be in low income based on LIM if its income is below 50% of median household incomes, accounting for household size. As this measure moves according to the changing incomes of the population, it is a relative measure of poverty.¹⁵

Market Basket Measure (MBM): A household is considered to be in low income based on the MBM if it does not have enough money to buy a specific basket of goods and services that allows them to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in their community. As this measure is based on having or not having enough money to purchase a basket of good or services, it is an absolute measure of poverty.¹⁶

Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI): A self-report questionnaire administered through the UBC Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) to be completed by children in Grades 4 through Grade 8 which includes questions around physical health and well-being, connectedness, social and emotional development, school experiences and use of after-school time. It is used as a predictor and measure of vulnerability, well-being, health and academic achievement.¹⁷

¹⁰ Sustainability Department. City of Richmond, 2021.

¹¹ Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

¹² Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, 2021.

¹³ Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

¹⁴ Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

¹⁵ Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

¹⁶ Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

¹⁷ A Companion Guide to the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI). Human Early Learning Partnership, University of British Columbia. Vancouver, B.C. updated April 2021.

Multiple-Census family households: A term used by Statistics Canada to differentiate census family households based on the presence of additional census family households or persons in a single dwelling unit.¹⁸

Non-census-family households: A term used by Statistics Canada to differentiate single person households or a group of two or more persons who live together but are not related and who are referred to as a person not in a census family.¹⁹

Poverty: The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic living standard needed to promote and facilitate integration and participation in society.²⁰

Relative poverty: A situation in which someone is relatively worse off than other members of society. It tends to focus on differences in income, and not necessarily on a person's actual living conditions.²¹

Sense of belonging: The psychological feeling of belonging or connectedness to a social, spatial, cultural, professional or other type of group or a community.²²

Social determinants of health: A specific group of social and economic factors within the broader determinants of health like an individual's place in society, such as income, education or employment. Experiences of discrimination, racism and historical trauma are important social determinants of health for certain groups such as Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ2S+ and Black Canadians.²³

Vulnerable populations: Groups that are at higher risk for poverty as a result of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability.²⁴

Working Poverty: Includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 (working age), who live in a family with after-tax income below Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure (LIM) and earn at least \$3,000 per year (the minimum working income required to qualify for the federal Working Income Tax Benefit). This does not include individuals who are students or who live with parents or other relatives.²⁵

18 Census Dictionary. Statistics Canada, 2016.

19 Census Dictionary. Statistics Canada, 2016.

20 Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

21 Relative vs Absolute Poverty. Habitat for Humanity, 2018.

22 Raman. Sense of Belonging, 2014.

23 Social determinants of Health and Health Inequalities. Government of Canada, 2020.

24 Glossary. National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, 2021.

25 Working Poverty in Metro Vancouver, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2016.



Introduction

Background

Poverty represents a significant and growing societal challenge in communities across British Columbia and Canada, including Richmond. In recent years, the federal and provincial governments have recognized the need for concerted action and have committed to working together to prevent and reduce poverty for all Canadians. The City of Richmond, like many other municipalities in the Lower Mainland, recognizes that it has a role to play in addressing poverty and in working together with senior levels of government, not-for-profit community service organizations, public-sector agencies, and residents to develop targeted actions to assist individuals and families who are at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond.

The *2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond* (Collaborative Action Plan) is intended to guide the City of Richmond's work, in collaboration with stakeholder organizations, to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond over the next ten years. The purpose of the Collaborative Action Plan is to gain a deeper and shared understanding of the experiences and circumstances of individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond in an effort to identify actions to better meet their needs. This includes improved access to services and supports as well as the development and implementation of initiatives designed to promote a greater sense of belonging and inclusion in the community.

Traditionally, poverty has been measured by focusing on the number of individuals and families who lack the resources needed to meet basic needs, including access to food, clothing, shelter and transportation. While income plays a role in determining the number of individuals and families experiencing poverty at any point in time, income-based measures alone do not provide an understanding of the experiences or impacts of poverty on individuals. As poverty affects the ability of an individual or family to participate in all aspects of community life (social, cultural, political, economic and recreational), it is important to understand how living in poverty impacts people beyond the need to make difficult decisions about how to meet basic needs.

Experiences of poverty are complex and varied, and can be affected by individual circumstances as well as broader systemic barriers and are disproportionately experienced by equity-based factors, such as gender, ethnicity, disability and age. While some individuals or families are at higher risk of living in poverty than others, no one is immune. When households do not have enough income or resources to manage an unexpected change in circumstances, they are at risk of experiencing poverty. This can include individuals who work multiple low paying jobs to make ends meet; newcomers whose foreign qualifications are not recognized and who can not find meaningful employment; and working households that do not have the additional resources required to manage job loss or sudden illness. It can also include seniors who may have stable housing



however, lack savings and resources to manage increased cost of living; young adults who are unable to find employment at above minimum wage; or single parent households who are unable to work full-time due to the lack of child care. Factors that are not commonly measured, such as total net worth (including assets and savings) or the support of family and friends, are important influencers for households at risk of or living in poverty.

Living in poverty does not only affect individuals and families who experience poverty, it also affects the community's overall resiliency, economy, social connectedness and well-being. Accordingly, the Collaborative Action Plan is founded on the principles of collaboration and partnerships as many stakeholders, including all levels of government, community organizations, the business community and residents with lived/living experience all have important roles to play in addressing the needs of individuals and families who are at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond.

Developing the Collaborative Action Plan

Through the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action program, administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), the Province of B.C. provided funding to support municipal governments and regional districts in reducing poverty at the local level. In May 2020, the City of Richmond was one of more than 50 local governments to receive a grant under the Poverty Reduction Plans and Assessments stream to develop the Collaborative Action Plan.

The development of the Collaborative Action Plan builds on the City's commitment to promote greater social equity, inclusion and well-being in Richmond. It outlines both city-wide and targeted approaches to reducing and preventing poverty that will guide Richmond's response to poverty reduction and prevention over the next 10 years.

Project Outcomes

Key outcomes from the development of the Collaborative Action Plan include:

- Improved understanding of the characteristics and challenges faced by individuals and families living in poverty in Richmond;
- Identified barriers to accessing services and potential gaps in the system of services and supports for those at risk of or living in poverty;
- Identified opportunities to leverage resources and capacity in the community to best support those at risk of or living in poverty; and
- Shared commitment, between the City and stakeholder organizations, to develop a set of actions to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond.

The outcomes were achieved by utilizing a multi-phased approach that included an analysis of poverty-related data complemented by engagement with stakeholder organizations and residents, including residents with lived/living experience.

Steering Committee

The process of developing the Collaborative Action Plan was guided by a Steering Committee that included representatives from community organizations who work with residents at risk of or living in poverty, residents with lived/living experience, the business community, and City staff who contributed their expertise to build a deeper understanding of poverty in Richmond. Organizations that were represented on the Steering Committee included:

- Connections Community Services Society;
- Richmond Food Bank Society;
- Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition;
- Richmond Public Library;
- Richmond School District;
- VanCity; and
- Vancouver Coastal Health.

Community Engagement

Significant engagement with both stakeholder organizations and residents played a key role in developing the Collaborative Action Plan. Engagement activities were hosted with community service organizations and public-sector agencies (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health) that provide services and supports to individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty, and separate engagement activities were facilitated with a range of Richmond residents, including those with lived/living experience. The list of stakeholder organizations that participated in the community engagement is summarized in Appendix A.

Stakeholder Organization Engagement

Stakeholder organizations provided valuable input through focus group discussions and online survey responses. In November 2020, participants from 30 Richmond-based community organizations provided input through five virtual focus groups designed to identify barriers and gaps in accessing services and supports as well as potential solutions. Each session focused on the needs of a particular demographic group (e.g. children and families) to develop a better understanding of the challenges specific to each group. Staff also gathered feedback and insights from several City Council advisory committees, including the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee. Additionally, two focus groups were held in March 2021 with administrators and counsellors from the Richmond School District to develop a better understanding of the challenges facing families with children and youth in the community.

An online survey was also available for organizations that could not attend the focus group discussions, with fourteen organizations participating in the Collaborative Action Plan organization survey.

Resident Engagement

Resident engagement included virtual and in-person focus groups, translated informal interviews with those with language barriers, and online and paper-based surveys that were available in English, Simplified Chinese and Traditional Chinese. Focus group sessions provided input from 68 individuals representing a diverse range of community members on the barriers they face when accessing services, perceived gaps in service delivery, and opportunities to increase inclusion. Participants included the general public, residents with lived/living experience, and volunteers who support various community programs that deliver services to residents at risk of or living in poverty. A total of eight virtual focus groups were hosted in February and March 2021, with six sessions hosted by Richmond-based community organizations, one session hosted by the Richmond Public Library and one session hosted by the City of Richmond. Additionally, an in-person session was hosted by the Richmond House Emergency Shelter staff with their clients. To reach residents who faced language barriers, informational interviews were conducted in Arabic, Mandarin and Cantonese by Richmond Family Place with eight Richmond families who were at risk of or living in poverty.

Recognizing that some residents may experience barriers to participation in the virtual sessions and the online survey, a printed version of the survey was distributed through a number of community service organizations that support residents at risk of or living in poverty in the community. Additionally, a condensed version of the survey was distributed to residents participating in community meal programs. In total 169 residents provided valuable feedback through the Collaborative Action Plan resident survey, with 123 residents participating in the full survey and 46 participating in the condensed survey that was distributed through community meal programs.

Evaluating the Actions Identified in the Collaborative Action Plan

In June 2021, three virtual focus groups were held to evaluate the proposed actions outlined in the Collaborative Action Plan, with participants providing important input and feedback that was used to refine and prioritize the actions. These sessions included: one with stakeholder organizations, one with residents with lived/living experience and one with staff from a number of City departments. Fourteen stakeholder organizations and 12 residents with lived/living experience participated in these sessions. Additionally, the project's Steering Committee reviewed the proposed actions and their input was utilized to shape the actions.

Stakeholder Organizations Roles and Responsibilities

Poverty is influenced by a broad range of social and economic forces. To effectively reduce and prevent poverty, a collaborative approach is needed that includes all levels of government, stakeholder organizations, and residents, including residents with lived/living experience working together.

The Government of Canada

The Government of Canada plays a central role in addressing and alleviating conditions of poverty in Canada with the federal government having responsibility for many of the broader macro-economic policies and social programs that affect the well-being of Canadians. This includes programs related to child and family well-being, such as the *Canada Child Benefit*, and employment-related policies and programs, such as the delivery of Canada's Employment Insurance programs. The federal government also provides per capita funding to provincial governments in key areas such as health care and child care, and provides funding to municipalities and community service organizations for projects and programs that align with federal priorities. Additionally, various federal agencies work closely with municipalities on areas of mutual concern, such as affordable housing that affect persons at risk of or living in poverty (e.g. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation).

Recognizing the need for leadership at the federal level, in 2018, the Government of Canada introduced *Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*. *Opportunity for All* sets out actions that span across areas of federal jurisdiction and establishes specific poverty reduction targets, including a 20.0% reduction from 2015 levels by 2020 and a 50.0% reduction from 2015 levels by 2030.

The Province of B.C.

The provincial government (the Province) has jurisdiction over a broad range of social policy areas that include health care, education and welfare. Additionally, it furthers its social development mandate through direct service provision (e.g. Ministry of Children and Family Development programs), services provided through health authorities or crown agencies (e.g. BC Housing), and contractual arrangements and grant funding with not-for-profit service providers.

In 2019, the Province adopted *TogetherBC*, British Columbia's first poverty reduction strategy that sets targets to reduce overall poverty by 25.0% and child poverty by 50.0% by 2024 with a focus on the principles of affordability, opportunity, reconciliation and social inclusion.

The City of Richmond

Local governments are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of those who live in their community. The City of Richmond (the City) is committed to working in partnership with other levels of government to ensure that the necessary services and supports are in place to help break the cycle of poverty. The City utilizes its planning and regulatory powers to advance actions that support increased affordability and livability in the community, such as the development of affordable housing and the provision of child care amenities. The City also works to address the specific needs within the community by:

- Working with stakeholder organizations to advocate to senior levels of government for resources, programs and funding;
- Sharing best practice research with the community to increase awareness and educate about the need for increased inclusion for all residents, regardless of socio-economic standing;
- Analyzing data on community needs to create policy and implement actions that support residents at risk of or living in poverty;
- Delivering programs and services, including poverty reduction initiatives, within the City's mandate;
- Developing and implementing initiatives in collaboration with stakeholder organizations that respond to the needs of residents at risk of or living in poverty; and
- Assisting not-for-profit community service organizations by facilitating collaboration, enabling capacity building, and providing financial and in-kind supports (e.g. program space).

Community Associations and Societies

The City works with community associations and societies to provide recreation, sport, arts, culture and heritage opportunities to all Richmond residents. The City provides the facilities and core staffing, and most of the community associations and societies are responsible for the delivery of programs and events. The City and the community associations and societies aim to provide programs that are inclusive and remove barriers to participation so all residents can participate. This includes offering a range of free and low-cost programs and opportunities. Community associations and societies also partner with the City to offer the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program (RFSP). The RFSP provides support to residents of all ages who are experiencing financial hardship. Through the RFSP, participants receive financial support to participate in most registered and drop-in parks, recreation and cultural programs offered at City community facilities.

Community Service and Faith-based Organizations

Community service and faith-based organizations in Richmond play an integral role in advocating for and responding to the needs of families and individuals living in poverty in the community. These organizations provide critical services that respond to existing and emerging needs, and work collaboratively to break down barriers to ensure that all residents are able to access the services and supports they need. Examples include:

- Referrals to government programs, health care and mental health services;
- Supportive programming including life and employment training skills;
- Provision of emergency food supports including community meals and food hampers;
- Provision of affordable housing units;
- Opportunities for social and community connection;
- Information and referral supports;
- Information on housing and education;
- Job skills training and career mentoring; and
- Support groups.



Richmond School District

Schools play a significant role in supporting children and families experiencing poverty that goes beyond their fundamental purpose of providing education. Schools are important community hubs that help families build support systems and create connections in the community. They provide access to important social and recreational opportunities that contribute to healthy childhood development. They also help connect vulnerable children and families to resources in the broader community. The Richmond School District also operates programs that ensure all children and youth have access to supplies, nutritious snacks and other basic necessities.

Vancouver Coastal Health

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) provides health care services through a network of hospitals, primary care clinics, community health centres and residential care, and is one of five regional health authorities that governs, plans, and coordinates health services in B.C. VCH also works with municipalities and community service organizations to employ a population health approach to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups by improving the social determinants of health in communities.

Business Community

The business community plays an important role in reducing and preventing poverty. Members of the business community are both employers and often Richmond residents. Their decisions and actions have a direct impact on employment levels, labour and income, and overall quality of life in the community. Businesses also offer mentoring opportunities and assist with sponsorship of programs and events that help foster the full participation of all Richmond residents in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the city.

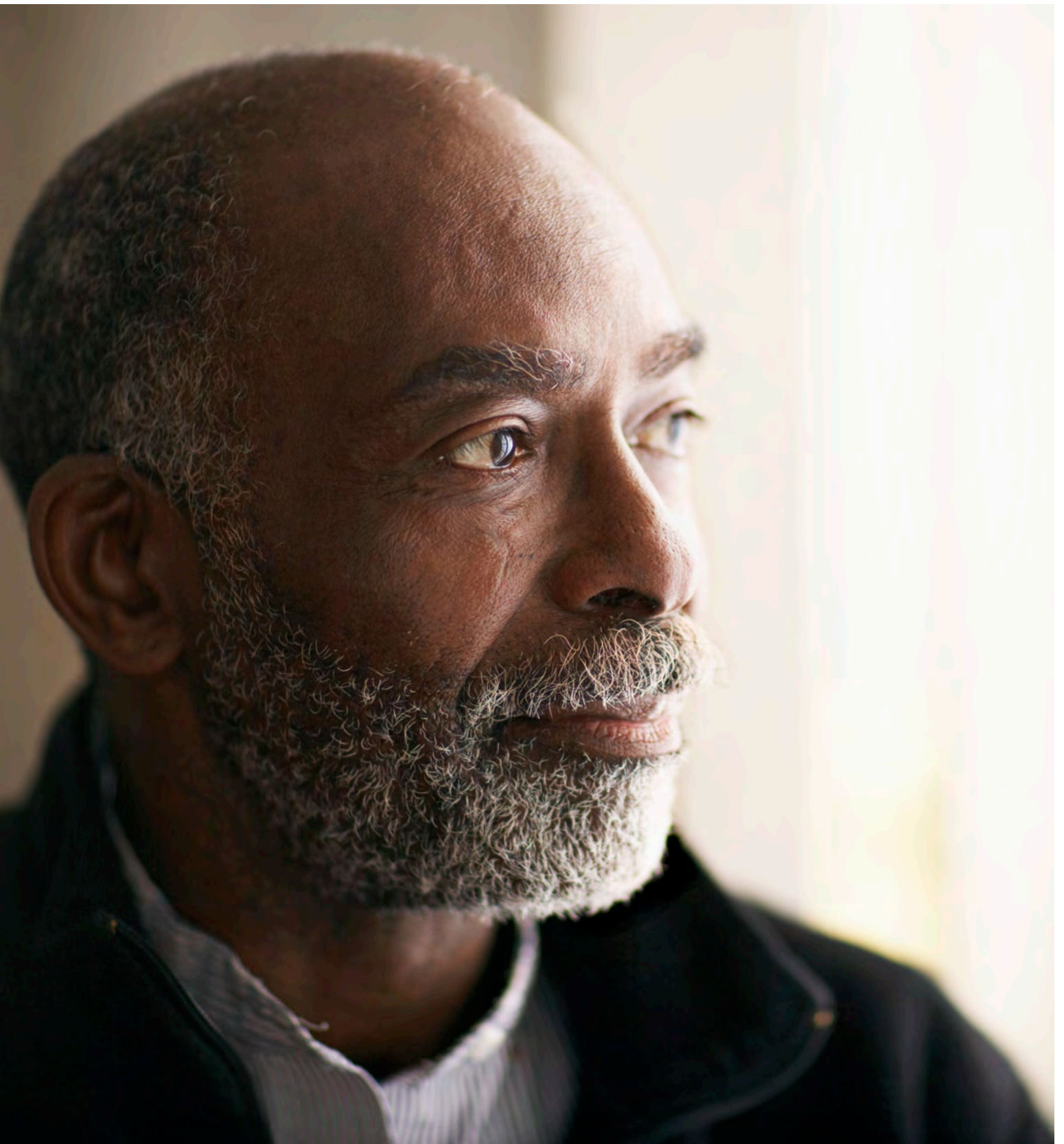


Alignment with Other City Strategies

The City of Richmond has undertaken the development of several Council adopted plans and strategies that support increased social and economic inclusion of Richmond residents. The Collaborative Action Plan works to align with and build upon these initiatives to further reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond. Current City strategies and plans that align with the *2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond* are listed below and summarized in Appendix B.

- Richmond 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP)
- Building Our Social Future: A Social Development Strategy for Richmond 2013–2022
- City of Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023
- Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050 Strategic Directions²⁶
- ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024
- Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019–2024
- Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy 2017–2027
- Richmond Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029
- 2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy
- Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029
- Seniors Service Plan: Active and Healthy Living 2015–2020 (strategy update in progress)
- Youth Service Plan: Where Youth Thrive 2015–2020 (strategy update in progress)

²⁶ The CEEP 2050 Strategic Directions were endorsed by Richmond City Council in January 2020, the plan is currently under development.



Understanding Poverty

Defining Poverty

In *Opportunity for All-Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*, poverty is described as “the condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic living standard needed to promote and facilitate integration and participation in society.”²⁷

This broader definition, which goes beyond earlier conceptions of poverty as being synonymous with low-income, was utilized for the purposes of the Collaborative Action Plan to provide a holistic understanding of the experiences and circumstances of those living in poverty.

Causes of Poverty

The causes of poverty are complex, as poverty affects different households in different ways and extends beyond the lack of financial resources. It is also influenced by a number of factors, including the lack of access to opportunities, issues of inequality and inequity, inadequate support systems and growing affordability pressures, which in turn lead to increasing levels of food insecurity, housing instability and housing stress. Poverty is often the product of the intersection of these issues, which increases the vulnerability of a household and can lead to individuals and families being at risk of or living in poverty.

While not everyone living in poverty remains in poverty, the persistent nature of poverty experienced by some households can result in generational impacts. Broader systemic barriers contribute to this cycle of poverty, as gaps between interrelated systems, such as health care, education, transportation, social services and affordable housing, make it more challenging for individuals at risk of or living in poverty to support themselves and their families. These systemic barriers create disparities in access to the types of opportunities that are needed to build strong financial futures, including high-quality jobs, post-secondary education, and social supports. They are also perpetuated by equity-based factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and disability. These barriers not only increase a household's risk of living in poverty, but also can extend the length of time a household is living in poverty.

27 Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. Government of Canada, 2018.

Table 1: Low Income Measure after Tax (LIM-AT) Thresholds by Household Size

Household Size	LIM-AT Threshold
1 person	\$25,153
2 persons	\$35,572
3 persons	\$43,566
4 persons	\$50,306
5 persons	\$56,244

Source: Statistics Canada, 2019 incomes released in February 2021.³⁰

Table 2: Low Income Cut-off Thresholds, after Tax (LICO-AT) 1992 base

Household Size	LICO-AT Threshold
1 person	\$18,520
2 persons	\$22,540
3 persons	\$28,068
4 persons	\$35,017
5 persons	\$39,874

Source: Statistics Canada, 2019 incomes released in February 2021.³¹

Table 3: Market Basket Measure (MBM) Thresholds

Household Size	MBM Threshold
1 person	\$21,770
2 persons	\$30,768
3 persons	\$37,706
4 persons	\$43,538
5 persons	\$48,677

Source: Market Basket Measure (MBM) threshold for economic families and persons not in economic families, 2015 adjusted to reflect the updated MBM thresholds.³²

Measuring Poverty

Standard Measures

Traditionally, Statistics Canada has utilized either the Low-Income Measure (LIM)²⁸ or the Low Income Cut-off (LICO)²⁹ to identify the number of individuals and families living in poverty in Canada. Both of these measures are based on reported income (before and after tax) and establish a measure of poverty that is relative to overall household incomes. For example, a household is considered to be living in poverty based on the LIM, if its income is below 50.0% of median household incomes of the same household size.

Market Basket Measure (MBM) shifts the measurement of poverty from a relative measure, compared to other household incomes, to an absolute measure of poverty that is based on the minimum household income required to meet these needs.

There are limitations, however, with all three of these measures. Both LIM and LICO are based on reported income and do not include a household's total net worth (including assets and savings) in their measurement of poverty. Additionally, as incomes increase, the rate of poverty reported through LIM and LICO also increases, as they are relative measures of poverty. Also, both LIM and LICO are national measures and, as a result, they are not able to provide information that is specific to the local context.

While the addition of the MBM shifts the determination of poverty away from relative income measures to the amount of income required to meet basic needs, it also only utilizes reported household income when determining the level of poverty in a community. Concerns have also been raised about the accuracy of the amounts attributed to the specific items contained in the MBM, most notably housing costs in areas such as the Lower Mainland. As data reported through all three of these measures can lack timeliness due to the period of time between data collection and reporting out; it is limited in how it can support the understanding of current levels of need in the community.

The federal government has committed to developing and improving ways to measure poverty in Canada, including regular reviews of the MBM. Statistics Canada also continues to issue data based on the LIM and LICO thresholds. While there are limitations that must be considered when utilizing data based on these measures, this data can help to provide insight into basic needs in the

28 A household is considered to be in low income by LIM if its income is below 50% of median household incomes, accounting for household size. As this measure moves according to the changing incomes of the population, it is a relative measure of poverty.

29 A household is considered to be in low income based on LICO if it spends 20% more of the household income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. This measurement is based on 1992 spending patterns of Canadian families.

30 Table 11-10-0232-01 Low Income Measure (LIM) thresholds by income source and household size in 2019 constant dollars. Statistics Canada, 2021.

31 Table 11-10-0241-01 Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs) before and after tax by community size and family size in current dollars. Statistics Canada, 2021.

32 Market Basket Measure (MBM) threshold for economic families and persons not in economic families, 2015 as found in the Census Dictionary https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/ref/dict/tab/t4_5-eng.cfm and adjusted to reflect the revised MBM thresholds by region for 2018 based on information reported in the second comprehensive review of the Market Basket Measure, Statistics Canada, custom tabulation catalogue no. 75f0002m. Ottawa. Appendix E. Table E-1. page 31. Statistics Canada, 2020.

community, especially when combined with other community-based data. For the purposes of the Collaborative Action Plan, the Low-Income Measure after Tax (LIM-AT) has been used, as it is a more established measure of poverty than the MBM and can also provide historical data.

The Collaborative Action Plan’s Approach to Understanding Poverty in Richmond

While the LIM-AT provides one measure of poverty levels in the community based on reported income, it does not provide a complete picture. Recognizing these limitations, where possible, the Collaborative Action Plan utilized the LIM-AT as an initial reference point and supplemented it with community-based data that measures the use of a variety of supports by residents to meet their basic needs, including data from the following programs:

- BC Employment and Assistance program³³
- BC Housing Applicant Registry
- 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver
- The Richmond Food Bank

Additionally, data that measures changes in reported well-being for children and youth was utilized, as lower well-being scores increase an individual’s vulnerability to being at risk of or living in poverty later in life. This included data from the following sources:

- The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP): Early Development Instrument
- The Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP): Middle Years Development Instrument
- The McCreary Centre Society: BC Adolescent Health Survey

To increase understanding of the LIM-AT and community-based data, qualitative data from stakeholder organizations and residents, including residents with lived/living experience, was incorporated to provide a greater understanding of the barriers and challenges persons at risk of or living with poverty in the community are experiencing.

Community Profile

While poverty is influenced by a number of factors, at the most fundamental level, households experiencing poverty lack the income and resources needed to meet a basic standard of living. While income-based data, such as LIM-AT from Statistics Canada has limitations, it is one of the measures of reported income that is available for Richmond and is the measure that has been most

³³ BC Employment and Assistance is composed of two types of assistance provided by the provincial government through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR): BC Income Assistance and BC Disability Assistance. BC Income Assistance provides financial support to individuals who are out of work or not earning enough to meet basic needs or who are in need of urgent food and medical attention and who may be eligible for temporary income assistance while they make the transition to employment. BC Disability Assistance provides financial or health support to individuals designated as a Person with Disabilities (PWD). This assistance is available to low-income individuals who have severe physical and/or mental impairments and who require assistance with their activities of daily living.

often adopted nationally and internationally. As a result, while acknowledging the limitations, the Collaborative Action Plan has utilized the LIM-AT data as a starting point and, where possible, combined it with the use of community-based data to develop a more complete picture of the needs and experiences of individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond.

Richmond Residents with Reported Income Below LIM-AT

According to the LIM-AT, an estimated 44,040 Richmond residents (22.2%) were living in poverty in 2016.³⁴ While this appears to be significantly greater than the rate of incidents across Metro Vancouver (16.2%) and the province as a whole (15.0%), it is important to note that, the LIM-AT is based on reported income and does not necessarily reflect total net worth. As a result, it does not provide a complete picture of income levels in the community. Currently, there is no single measurement available that can be used to determine the number of individuals or households living in poverty in Richmond, as a result the LIM-AT needs to be considered as one measure and when possible, combined with other data when evaluating levels of community need.

Table 4: Richmond Residents Living in Poverty Based on the LIM-AT Compared to Metro Vancouver and British Columbia

	Richmond	Metro Vancouver	British Columbia
Total number of residents	198,309	2,463,431	4,648,055
Below LIM-AT	44,040	398,860	695,165
% Below LIM-AT	22.2%	16.2%	15.0%

Source: Custom Cross Tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT). Statistics Canada, 2016.

Household Composition

The 44,040 individuals reported to be living below the LIM-AT thresholds in 2016 equate to 18,955 households³⁵ and include different family and household arrangements. Based on the 2016 Census, when categorized by family and household type, families with children and single person households (single persons and two or more unrelated persons sharing) account for 14,805 or 78.1% of the 18,955 households, based on the LIM-AT.³⁶ As the data does not include the total net worth of these households, the resulting data may not provide a complete picture of the levels of need within these households. However, the trend identified in the data indicating increased vulnerability of families with children and single-person households in Richmond, is consistent with findings from the community-level data and the community engagement process.

³⁴ Custom Cross Tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT) Block 3 (Household Universe). Statistics Canada, 2016.

³⁵ Cross tabulated by census households, non-census households and multiple-census-family households. Statistics Canada, 2016.

³⁶ Custom Cross Tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT) Block 3 (Household Universe) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada, 2016.

Table 5: Composition of Household Types Reported to be Living in Poverty in Richmond Based on the LIM-AT

Household Type	Number of households with income reported below the LIM-AT ³⁷	Percentage of households with income reported below the LIM-AT
Couples	3,660	19.3%
Families with children (0-17 years)	7,565	39.9%
Multiple-census-family households (e.g. multi-generational)	495	2.6%
Single-person households	6,275	33.1%
Two-or-more unrelated persons sharing (i.e. roommates)	965	5.1%

Source: Custom Cross Tabulation Table E03212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT). Statistics Canada, 2016.

BC Employment and Assistance Program Data for Richmond

While LIM-AT data provides some insight into overall levels of community need, data available through the BC Employment and Assistance Program provides a clear measure of the number and types of Richmond households who are in deep poverty and who require support from the Province to help meet their basic needs.

Since 2015, the number of households in Richmond who rely on BC Employment and Assistance has increased, with the total number of households receiving assistance growing from 2,326 households in 2015 to 2,847 households in 2020, an increase of 521 households or 22.4%.³⁸ These 2,847 households account for 3.2% of all households³⁹ in Richmond (73,457 households), and represent some of Richmond's most vulnerable residents.

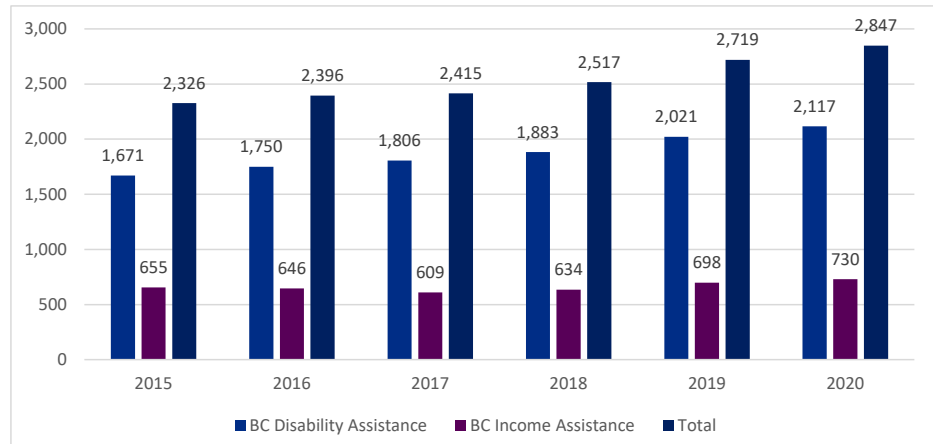
³⁷ Each individual value is rounded in this data. As a result, when these data is grouped, the total value may not match the individual values since totals and sub-totals are independently rounded to ensure confidentiality.

Similarly, percentages, which are calculated on rounded data, may not necessarily add up to 100%.

³⁸ BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

³⁹ Calculation based on 2015 BC Employment and Assistance Cases and 2016 Census data for total number of Richmond households.

Figure 1: Growth in Richmond Households Supported by BC Employment and Assistance from 2015–2020



Source: BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020), Government of B.C., 2015.

Household Composition

Overall, the majority of Richmond households receiving BC Employment and Assistance are single-person households accounting for 2,375 or 83.4%, of the 2,847 households that received assistance in 2020.⁴⁰ Of these households, there has been an increased level of vulnerability noted in adults aged 19–29 years relying on BC Income Assistance with individuals in this age group increasing from 98 recipients in 2015 to 177 recipients in 2020.⁴¹ This equates to an increase of 79 individuals or 80.6% with the high rate of growth indicating increasing vulnerability in this demographic.

Similarly, lone-parent families demonstrate increased vulnerability when compared to two-parent families who are receiving assistance through the program. In 2020, a total of 382 Richmond families with children were supported by BC Employment and Assistance.⁴² This included 103 two-parent families and 279 lone-parent families,⁴³ with lone-parent families accounting for 73.0% of all families with children that received assistance in 2020. The higher rate of lone-parent families accessing supports suggests this household type is more vulnerable to living in poverty.

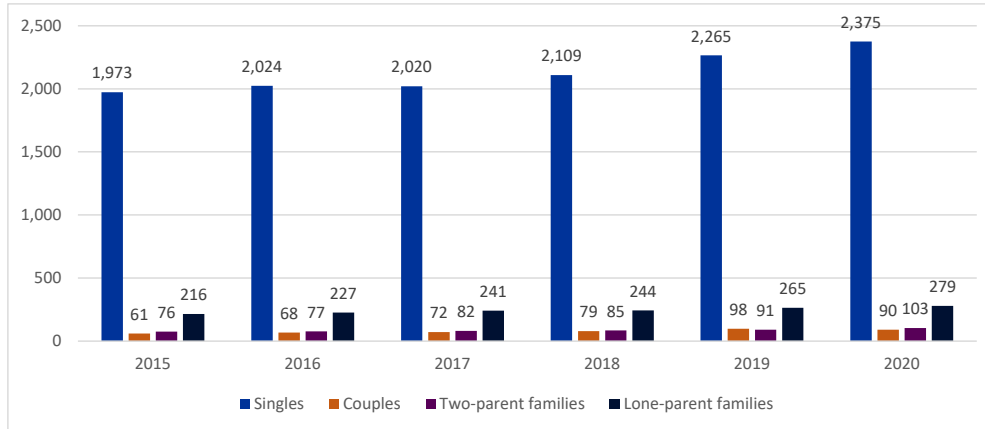
40 BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

41 BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

42 BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

43 BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

Figure 2: Comparison of Growth of Richmond Households Supported by BC Employment and Assistance by Household Type from 2015–2020



Source: BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020), Government of B.C., 2015.

Affordability Pressures on Richmond Households

Affordability is another concern for many households struggling to generate enough income to meet their basic needs. In 2016, the reported average household income for those identified as living in poverty in Richmond, based on the LIM-AT, was \$20,485.⁴⁴ In comparison, the reported average household income for all Richmond households, based on the LIM-AT, in 2016 was \$83,850.⁴⁵ This suggests that those experiencing poverty in Richmond have notable income disparity compared to the average Richmond household, equal to 24.4% of the reported average household income for all Richmond households in 2016.

Two important measures that are directly related to meeting basic needs that can be used to better understand the affordability pressures experienced by Richmond households are the number of households experiencing food insecurity and/or housing stress.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity occurs when individuals and families are struggling to afford necessities and need to choose between food and other basic living expenses. From January to December 2020, 726,113 kgs⁴⁶ of food was distributed through the Richmond Food Bank and other community service organizations to support a wide range of emergency food provision services, including over 1,000 community meals served weekly (pre-pandemic).⁴⁷ Many residents continue to rely on the Richmond Food Bank to provide healthy, culturally appropriate food for their families, with the number of households using food bank supports being

44 Custom Cross Tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT), Block 3 (Household Universe) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada, 2016.

45 2016 Census. Statistics Canada, Government of Canada, 2016.

46 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

47 Food Brings Community. Richmond Community Food Access Report, 2020.

relatively consistent from 2016 (1,646 households) to 2019 (1,622 households), averaging 1,585 households annually.⁴⁸ In 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number rose to 1,881 households supported by the Richmond Food Bank, an increase of 259 households since 2019.⁴⁹ Recent data has revealed, households living in private rental housing are relying more heavily on emergency food programs. From August 1 to December 31, 2020, these households accounted for 53.5% of the 1,454 households who used the Richmond Food Bank during this time.⁵⁰

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, stakeholder organizations spoke of continued reliance on emergency food supports and recognized seniors, single-person households, renters and families with children as populations who are increasingly accessing these supports. The lack of affordable, walkable grocery stores and low-cost amenities within some neighbourhoods were identified as a barrier, with some participants reporting the need to travel significant distances to secure enough affordable, culturally appropriate food to feed themselves and their families. Additionally, as the majority of emergency food supports in Richmond are volunteer run, staff and volunteers from community service and faith-based organizations spoke of the challenges in sustaining these programs and identified that a city-wide, community-based food centre that could provide a range of services from food supports to education programs would be beneficial to the community. The top two food-access related barriers reported in the project's survey results were, "cost of food" (55.3%) and, "lack of affordable, fresh food options in my neighbourhood" (25.2%).

Additional data regarding food bank use has been included in the demographic profiles section of the document to provide further insight into how poverty is affecting these specific populations.

Households experiencing growing levels of housing stress

Housing affordability continues to be an issue affecting many households in Richmond and across Canada. As of December 2020, there were 1,074⁵¹ households in Richmond on BC Housing's Applicant Registry, with the demand continuing to grow. From June 2013 to December 2020, the number of Richmond households on BC Housing's Applicant Registry increased by 461 households, from 611 households in June 2013 to 1,074 households in December 2020.⁵² While there was increased demand across all demographic groups, the greatest need was seniors (55+ years) who represented 47.0% of all Richmond households on BC Housing's Applicant Registry as of December 31, 2020.

48 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

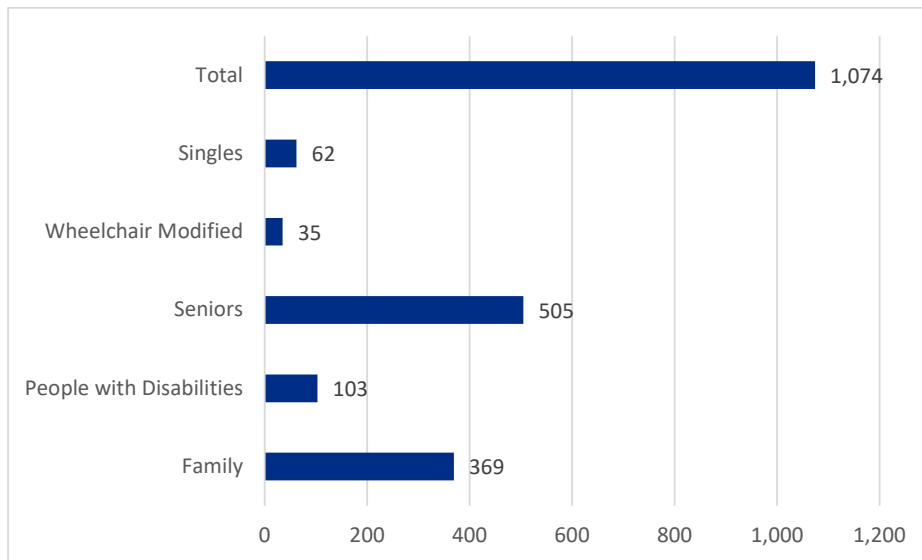
49 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

50 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

51 BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, 2021.

52 BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, 2013, BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Department, 2021.

Figure 3: Richmond Households on the BC Housing’s Applicant Registry by Household Type as of December 31, 2020



Source: WebFocus: HCSTAT002 December 31, 2020. Prepared by BC Housing’s Research and Corporate Planning Department, March 2021.

Additionally, single person households (including seniors) represented a significant proportion of households on BC Housing’s Applicant Registry. Of the 1,074 Richmond households on the BC Housing’s Applicant Registry as of December 31, 2020, 563⁵³ or 52.4% were single-person households, including single seniors, single persons with disabilities and other single adults.

The number of renter households in Richmond reported to be living in poverty also increased, with 5,500⁵⁴ renter households reporting incomes below the LIM-AT in 2011 compared to 6,730 renter households in 2016.⁵⁵ This represents an increase of 1,230 households between 2011 and 2016⁵⁶ and accounts for 35.6% of all renter households in Richmond in 2016 (18,910).⁵⁷ Additionally, there were 965 unrelated persons sharing housing (i.e. roommates) who were reported to be living in poverty in 2016 based on the LIM-AT.⁵⁸

53 BC Housing’s Research and Corporate Planning Department, 2021.

54 Custom Cross Tabulation CTS (2011 Private Households), Tenure (4) and Selected Characteristics for Private Households/Dwellings in British Columbia. 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada, 2011.

55 Custom Cross Tabulation CTS (2011 Private Households), Tenure (4) and Selected Characteristics for Private Households/Dwellings in British Columbia (25% Sample). 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2016.

56 Custom Cross Tabulation CTS (2011 Private Households), Tenure (4) and Selected Characteristics for Private Households/Dwellings in British Columbia (25% Sample). 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2016.

57 Custom Cross Tabulation CTS (2011 Private Households), Tenure (4) and Selected Characteristics for Private Households/Dwellings in British Columbia (25% Sample). 2016 Census, Statistics Canada, 2016.

58 Custom Cross-tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT), Block 3 (Household Universe) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada, 2016.

Experiences of homelessness are increasing

The number of individuals receiving income assistance through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) with “no fixed address” increased in Richmond from 42 individuals in 2015 to 94 individuals in 2020.⁵⁹ Individuals with “no fixed address” includes those who temporarily have no place to live and who are staying with family or friends as well as those who are staying in emergency shelters or are unsheltered. In March 2020, the 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver identified 85 Richmond residents as experiencing homelessness on the night of the count, an increase of 15 individuals or 21.4% from the 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver (70 individuals).⁶⁰ However, the Homeless Count is considered to be an undercount of the total number of individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness in Richmond with data collected by local service providers indicating that at least 193 Richmond residents experienced homelessness between June 2019 and April 2020.

Affordable housing emerged throughout engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan as a priority and while housing is not a focus of the Collaborative Action Plan, the data supports the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy, which have identified actions related to housing issues. Data from BC Housing suggests single-person households and seniors are priority populations in need of affordable housing, however stakeholder organizations also identified families, and youth and young adults who are transitioning to independent living as specific populations in need.

Demographic Profiles

The experience of poverty is complex and can vary across different demographic groups. The Collaborative Action Plan examined a range of data at the demographic level to better understand how the factors that influence poverty (e.g. affordability pressures and equity-based factors) affect different populations in the community and contribute to an increased risk of living in poverty for some households.

In *Opportunity for All – Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy* the following groups of Canadians were identified as being more likely to be living in poverty, including living in poverty for longer periods of time: single adults aged 45–64 years, lone-parent families, newcomers (those living in Canada for less than 10 years), people with disabilities and Indigenous people.⁶¹ Based on analysis of local data, these groups also appear to be at increased risk of living in poverty in Richmond; however, within the Richmond-based context the needs among newcomers are more nuanced and single adults of all ages (19+ years) are demonstrating increased need in the community and are accessing community supports more frequently. Additionally, stakeholder organizations identified children, youth and seniors as priority populations during engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan.

⁵⁹ BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

⁶⁰ BC Non-Profit Housing Association (2020). 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Prepared for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity. Vancouver, BC: Metro Vancouver. B.C. Non-Profit Housing Association and M.Thomson Consulting. (2017). 2017 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Prepared for the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Partnering Strategy Community Entity. Burnaby, BC: Metro Vancouver.

⁶¹ Opportunity for All - Canada’s First Poverty Reduction Strategy, Government of Canada, 2018.



Families with Children and Youth (0–17 years)

Children who grow up in poverty are more likely to remain in poverty as they age.⁶² In particular, the experience of poverty can negatively affect childhood development and contribute to reduced health outcomes and limit access to education and opportunities that support building stable futures. In 2016, 7,565 or 22.4% of families with children in Richmond were reported to be living in poverty based on the LIM-AT⁶³. These families included 8,655 children between the ages of 0–17 years, with 2,695 of these children being between the ages of 0–5 years.⁶⁴

Families with children were identified as a group that is frequently accessing community support programs to meet basics needs. Between 2016 and 2020, children (0–17 years) accounted for 28.6% of Richmond Food Bank clients.⁶⁵ While children supported by Richmond Food Bank programs experienced a slight decrease from 2016 (1,151 children) to 2019 (1,024 children), in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, children supported by these programs increased significantly to 1,461 children, an increase of 437 individuals or 42.7% more children than in 2019.⁶⁶ School food programs also provide important access to healthy food for children in Richmond. In the 2019–2020 school year, there were 25 primary and 15 secondary schools with school food programs supported by the Richmond Food Bank and Urban Bounty.⁶⁷

62 Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy, Government of Canada, 2018.

63 Custom Cross-tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT), Statistics Canada, 2016.

64 Census Profile, City of Richmond based on Low Income Status in 2015 for the population in private households based on the Low-Income Measure, after tax (LIM-AT). Statistics Canada, 2016.

65 Richmond Food Bank Society (2016-2019), 2020.

66 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

67 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020. Urban Bounty, 2020.

Families with children living in poverty often have multiple concurrent needs that create a compounding effect on families, such as parents with language barriers who are working multiple jobs and experiencing high levels of household stress. During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, complicated application processes, language barriers and previous negative experiences were all identified as factors that affect Richmond families and their ability to navigate the system of supports and access help. Limited digital access also contributed to these challenges for some families. As supports for school-aged children are often focused on the child and limited to the school year, stakeholder organizations identified the need to create programs that worked to strengthen family connections and support systems through the summer months as well.

Notably, there is a decreasing trend in well-being scores on the Early Development Instrument (EDI) and Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)⁶⁸ in Richmond in recent years. While these measures do not indicate that a child is living in poverty, they do indicate increased vulnerability that can contribute to an increased risk of experiencing poverty later in life. In the most recent EDI data (collected 2016–2019), 35.0% of children in kindergarten in Richmond reported overall vulnerability on one or more scales, which is slightly higher than the provincial average of 33.4%.⁶⁹ In 2021, the MDI identified 40.0% of Grade 5 students and 56.0% of Grade 8 students reporting low well-being at a higher rate than the provincial averages of 36.0% (Grade 5)⁷⁰ and 49.0% (Grade 8).⁷¹

Youth

Like children living in poverty, youth living in poverty are at increased risk of the intergenerational effects of poverty, with adverse childhood experiences frequently contributing to ongoing vulnerability. Findings from the McCreary Society *2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey* identified a correlation between youth who went to bed hungry and higher reported levels of deprivation which in turn, was correlated with poorer reported mental health and well-being scores.⁷² In 2018, 8.0% of Richmond youth who participated in the survey reported they sometimes went to bed hungry because there was not enough money for food at home and 1.0% reported that they often or always went to bed hungry. While the findings highlight need amongst youth in the community, the 2018 survey findings indicate an improvement since 2008, where the survey found 13.0% of Richmond youth went to bed hungry at least sometimes.⁷³

68 The EDI and MDI are population-level research tools developed by the University of British Columbia's Human Early Learning Partnership that measure developmental changes or trends in populations or groups of children.

69 EDI Wave 7 Community Profile: Richmond School District. Human Early Learning Partnership. University of British Columbia. Vancouver, B.C., February 2020.

70 Middle Years Development Instrument [MDI] Grade 5 report. School District & Community Results, 2020-2021. Richmond (SD38). Human Early Learning Partnership. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, School of Population and Public Health, May 2021.

71 Human Early Learning Partnership. Middle Years Development Instrument [MDI] Grade 8 report. School District & Community Results, 2020-2021. Richmond (SD38). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, School of Population and Public Health, May 2021.

72 Forsyth, K., Poon, C., Peled, M., Jones, G., Thawer, Z., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society. Balance and Connection in Richmond: The health and well-being of our youth. McCreary Centre Society, 2019.

73 Forsyth, K., Poon, C., Peled, M., Jones, G., Thawer, Z., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society. Balance and Connection in Richmond: The health and well-being of our youth. McCreary Centre Society, 2019.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, youth and organizations that support youth in Richmond reported challenges navigating the transition to adult support services once youth age out of specialized programs. These challenges result in barriers to accessing services that may increase the risk of vulnerable youth to living in poverty. Specific barriers identified during engagement included rigid eligibility requirements, lack of knowledge around available resources, hours of service and being unable to access documents needed to apply for services. Job readiness skills such as resume writing and interview skills, and opportunities for meaningful volunteer experiences were identified as barriers to finding employment. Additionally, the lack of employment opportunities at above minimum wage were reported to be a challenge for youth who are starting to build their financial futures. Input received from youth and stakeholder organizations noted discrimination experienced by LGBTQ2S+ youth that impacted family support systems and at times, resulted in homelessness. The need to develop more culturally appropriate programs and services (e.g. correct use of pronouns), and to implement broader community education to promote understanding and acceptance was identified by stakeholder organizations and youth with lived/living experience as important to better support this population.

Lone-parent families

With only one potential earner, lone-parent families are often at a higher risk of living in poverty. In 2016, there were 1,560 lone-parent families reported to be living in poverty in Richmond based on the LIM-AT.⁷⁴ Female lone-parent families accounted for 21.0% of all families in Richmond (compared to male lone-parent families at 4.0%); suggesting the majority of lone-parent families in poverty are female-led.⁷⁵

Single-Person Households

Single person households can also be extremely vulnerable, especially with their dependence on a single income. In 2016, there were 6,275 single-person households in Richmond living in poverty based on the LIM-AT.⁷⁶

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, stakeholder organizations identified single adults (19+ years) as a demographic group demonstrating increased need in the community and accessing community supports more frequently. From August to December 2020, single-person households accounted for 44.0% of all Richmond Food Bank clients.⁷⁷ Stakeholder organizations also spoke of younger adults having gaps in financial literacy skills that can contribute to financial instability and result in some households struggling to prioritize expenses and meet basic needs.

74 Custom Cross-Tabulation EO3426 Table 10A EF, CD-CSD, part 2] Urban Poverty Project (UPP) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada, 2016.

75 2016 Census. Statistics Canada, Government of Canada, 2016.

76 Custom Cross Tabulation Table EO3212 - CDCSDDA - Household & Family TGP of the low-income population (LIM-AT), Block 3 (Household Universe) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Statistics Canada, 2016.

77 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.



Seniors

Growing poverty amongst seniors remains a concern in Richmond and across Canada. Seniors are especially vulnerable to living in poverty due to fixed incomes that are not always adequate to meet the rising cost of living and for some seniors, the increased cost of health care needs due to chronic conditions. Single seniors are particularly vulnerable as they depend on a single income to meet these growing affordability pressures. In 2016, there were 7,250 seniors 65 years and older in Richmond who were reported to be living in poverty based on the LIM-AT,⁷⁸ of which 1,945 were seniors living in single-person households.⁷⁹

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, stakeholder organizations reported that seniors in Richmond are accessing community supports more frequently than in the past. From 2016 to 2019, the increase in the number of seniors that used the Richmond Food Bank was relatively steady, increasing from 509 seniors in 2016 to 570 seniors in 2019.⁸⁰ However, seniors' use of the food bank increased significantly in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, with 922⁸¹ seniors accessing food bank programs, an increase of 352 or 61.8% more seniors than in 2019, and accounting for 17.3% of all individuals supported through the Richmond Food Bank in 2020.⁸²

78 Census Profile, City of Richmond based on "Low Income Status in 2015 for the population in private households based on the Low-Income Measure, after tax (LIM-AT). Statistics Canada, 2016.

79 Custom Cross Tabulation EO3426 Table 10A EF, CD-CSD, part 2] Urban Poverty Project (UPP) available through the Community Data and based on 2015 incomes. Calculated based on the number of senior-led households 65 and older less the number of seniors living in economic families. Statistics Canada, 2016.

80 Richmond Food Bank Society (2016–2019), 2020.

81 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

82 Richmond Food Bank Society, 2020.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, language barriers, and limited digital access and digital literacy skills were identified as factors that made it more challenging for seniors who are at risk of or living in poverty to connect with supports, resulting in increased isolation and reduced well-being. Additionally, transportation barriers were identified as impacting the ability of seniors at risk of or living in poverty to access programs and services in the community, including health care. The need for one-to-one supports and outreach programs that connect seniors with programs, build community connections and increase access to supports was emphasized during engagement as an important and on-going need for seniors, especially those living alone and in low income.

Newcomers

Compared to their Canadian-born counterparts, newcomers who moved to Canada within the past 5 to 10 years are often identified as being at greater risk of experiencing poverty, especially in their early years of settlement. Factors such as language barriers, limited community connections, challenges finding meaningful employment and for some, being a member of a racialized group, all contribute to the challenges faced by this demographic.

In 2016, there were 6,205 newcomers living in Richmond who moved to Canada between 2011 and 2016 and were reported to be living in poverty based on the LIM-AT.⁸³ This represents 14.1% of all individuals reported to be living in poverty in Richmond. There are debates about the accuracy of this figure, as newcomers and newcomer experiences are incredibly diverse and it is widely acknowledged that some newcomers to Canada have considerable wealth that affords them the ability to acquire assets even with limited income. While this is the case for some, there is evidence that shows that many newcomers to Canada do not arrive with considerable wealth and experience challenges around settlement that include difficulties in accessing opportunities, with the lack of recognition for foreign credentials being one of the biggest barriers.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, both residents and stakeholder organizations spoke of language as being a fundamental barrier when trying to access employment, education, and programs and services, including health care and counselling services. Experiences of racism were also identified as a factor that prevented some individuals from accessing employment and social opportunities. Additionally, lack of digital access, digital literacy and financial literacy were factors that created challenges for recent immigrants in accessing programs, finding employment and building stable financial futures.

83 Custom Cross Tabulation EO20766 TGP LIM-AT (CD, CSD CT) available through the Community Data based on Total - Immigrant status and period of immigration for the population in private households (25% sample). Statistics Canada, 2016.

Refugees

Refugees are at increased risk of living in poverty as their experiences of settlement are often more complex than other newcomers. Refugees backgrounds and experiences from their home country, including traumatic experiences, often affect their transition to life in Canada. In 2016, there were 975 refugee households who were reported to be living in poverty in Richmond based on the LIM-AT.⁸⁴

Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities are also at increased risk of living in poverty, with less than 60.0% of individuals with disabilities aged 25–64 years being employed in Canada.⁸⁵ In 2016, there were 11,425 individuals reported to be living in poverty in Richmond who also reported some level of disability or health and activity limitations.⁸⁶ Additionally, individuals living with a disability are showing increased indications of vulnerability to poverty. In 2020, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction reported that 2,117⁸⁷ households in Richmond received BC Disability Assistance, accounting for 74.4% of all Richmond households receiving assistance through BC Employment and Assistance in 2020.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, residents and stakeholder organizations identified stigma as one of the most significant factors that contributed to limiting employment opportunities and increasing exclusion in the community. Additionally, it was noted that the cost and availability of transportation create barriers to accessing programs and supports in the community, including emergency food supports and health care services. As persons with disabilities frequently have complex, chronic health conditions, the need for increased subsidies to increase access to extended health supports was also identified.

Indigenous Individuals and Families

Historical and systemic barriers including racism, discrimination and the history of colonization have contributed to a higher incidence of poverty amongst Indigenous individuals and families in Canada. In 2016, there were 225 Indigenous individuals in Richmond who were reported to be living in poverty, equating to 0.5% of all Richmond residents (44,040) with income below the LIM-AT.⁸⁸ Indigenous people remain a vulnerable group within the community and are over-represented in the regional homelessness count.

84 Custom Cross Tabulation EO20766 TGP LIM-AT (CD, CSD CT) available through the Community Data based on admission category and applicant type and 2015 income. Statistics Canada, 2016.

85 Accessible Canada Act, Visual Representations. Employment and Social Development Canada. Government of Canada, 2020.

86 Custom cross-tabulation Table EO3212 – Target Group Profile of Persons with Activity Limitations CMA, CA and CT available through the Community Data and based on 2015 income. Statistics Canada, 2016.

87 BC Employment and Assistance Cases (2015-2020). Government of B.C., 2015.

88 Custom cross-tabulation EO20766 TGP LIM-AT (CD, CSD CT) available through the Community Data based on Total - Aboriginal identity for the population in private households (25% sample data) and 2015 income. Statistics Canada, 2016.

During the 2020 Metro Vancouver Homelessness Count, 14 or 16.5% of the 85 individuals identified as being homeless on the night of the count also reported they were Indigenous.⁸⁹

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, factors such as stigma and reduced community connectedness were identified as barriers to accessing programs and services in the community for Indigenous residents who were at risk of or living in poverty.

LGBTQ2S+

LGBTQ2S+ individuals are also recognized as a population that is at higher risk of living in poverty. During the engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, stakeholders spoke of the need to continue to develop culturally appropriate programs and services (e.g. correct use of pronouns), and to implement broader community education to increase access to services and supports and inclusion in the community for LGBTQ2S+ residents. Data is not included in the Collaborative Action Plan as Statistics Canada does not currently track data by sexual orientation and gender identity.⁹⁰



89 BC Non-Profit Housing Association. 2020 Homeless Count in Metro Vancouver. Prepared for the Greater Vancouver Reaching Home Community Entity. Vancouver, B.C.: Metro Vancouver, 2020.

90 Building Understanding: The First Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty. Employment and Social Development Canada, 2021.



Impacts of Poverty

The impacts of poverty are often inter-related, as living in poverty places individuals and families at greater risk for reduced health outcomes, social exclusion and reduced well-being, while also limiting their ability to access the resources and supports they need to move out of poverty. Examining how systems, such as transportation and health care, contribute to these challenges is important to developing a more complete understanding of the impacts of poverty on individuals and families in the community.

Access to Services and Resources

Throughout the engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, residents with lived/living experience shared their difficulties when trying to access services and supports. Challenges identified included: eligibility requirements, complexity and length of application processes, traditional hours of service (Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and language barriers. The shift to online information and digital applications was also identified as a barrier for some households, due to the lack of digital access. Additionally, participants spoke of the negative emotional impact of having to tell their stories repeatedly when trying to get access supports and receive assistance.

The relocation of some community service providers to outside of the City Centre was also identified as a concern. Stakeholder organizations emphasized the importance of maintaining a high level of services in the City Centre, to ensure services remain centralized, providing easier access for residents at risk of or living in poverty.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, residents and stakeholder organizations reported that they are not always aware of the types of services available in Richmond or how to access them. The importance of continuing to connect residents to programs and services through one-to-one supports and outreach programs was frequently noted.

Access to Transportation

Transportation challenges were identified during engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan as a barrier to accessing a range of essential services and opportunities, including support programs, health care services, employment and food access. The cost of transportation and the frequency and connections of bus routes were identified as specific barriers. The cost of operating a vehicle and the lack of free parking in the City Centre were also noted as barriers. The top two transportation related barriers reported in the project's survey results were, "cost of bus tickets and/or monthly passes" (43.2%) and "amount of time spent on public transportation" (25.2%).

Access to Health Care

There are direct links between poverty and reduced health outcomes. Poverty affects the likelihood that individuals will have risk factors for disease as well as the means to prevent and manage disease. This includes reduced access to healthy food and the inability to afford medications and extended health treatments.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, residents and stakeholder organizations reported difficulties accessing medical services due to extended waiting times, not having a family doctor and the complexity of navigating the health care system. Additionally, the high cost of medications and health treatments not covered through provincial health services impacted the ability for residents living in poverty to manage chronic health conditions. Access to free or low-cost dental care, including emergency dental care was identified as a gap in service delivery. The top two health care access barriers reported in the project's survey results were, "lack of free or subsidized supports for services not covered by Provincial healthcare (e.g. dental, foot care)" (46.3%) and "long waitlist for services" (41.5%).

Access to Mental Health Services

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, increased access to mental health services emerged as a priority. In particular, the need to develop alternative referral processes as many services currently require a referral from a physician. Additionally, hours of service and the difficulty in finding services that were culturally competent and/or offered in languages other than English were noted as barriers to access mental health services. Increased mental health supports for youth, seniors and those with a history of trauma were also identified as specific needs in the community. Residents and stakeholder organizations identified challenges accessing trauma counselling (in different languages) and detox programs, with residents having to travel outside the community to access these programs.

Access to Employment

Access to meaningful employment opportunities is essential for households at risk of or living in poverty to develop the financial stability necessary to move out of poverty. Many Richmond residents who are living in poverty are working however, they are often precariously employed in part-time or casual positions. In 2016, 11,820 individuals, living in Richmond, who worked part-time were reported to be living in poverty based on the LIM-AT.⁹¹ In comparison, 2,695 individuals, living in Richmond, who worked for a full year, full-time in 2016 were reported to be living in poverty based on the LIM-AT⁹², indicating that only 18.6% of employed individuals (part-time and full year, full-time) who were reported to be living in poverty in Richmond in 2016 were employed for a full year in full-time positions.

91 2016 Census. Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, 2016.

92 2016 Census. Statistics Canada. Government of Canada, 2016.

During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, barriers to attaining meaningful employment for individuals at risk of or living in poverty centered around eligibility criteria for job placement programs and a perceived need for more job readiness and upskilling programs in the community. Additionally, the lack of employable skills and the lack of digital access that limited individuals' ability to find and apply for new positions were identified as barriers. The top two employment barriers reported in the project's survey results were, "language barriers" (17.1%) and "lack of employment supports (e.g. career counselling)" (13.0%).

Sense of Connection and Inclusion

When households are struggling to cover the costs of day-to-day living expenses, there is very little at the end of the month to access basic social and recreational opportunities – opportunities that help to provide a deeper sense of belonging and connection and help to create important social and support networks. During engagement for the Collaborative Action Plan, many residents shared that they are unable to afford basic social or recreational opportunities, which contributed to a sense of isolation for many participants. Additionally, stigma, experiences of racism and language barriers were identified as contributing to a reduced sense of connection and inclusion for some residents.

Recognizing the importance that access to social and recreational opportunities plays in supporting overall well-being for residents living in poverty, the City of Richmond and partner community associations and societies implemented a revised Recreation Fee Subsidy Program in Fall 2018. This program provides residents of all ages who are living in poverty with financial support to access a wide range of parks, recreation and cultural programs offered in City community facilities. Participation in the program has been steadily growing, with 1,880 individuals participating in the 2019–2020 program year (September 1, 2019–August 31, 2020).⁹³

93 Recreation Fee Subsidy Program. City of Richmond, 2020.



Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet known, there is growing recognition that residents at the lower end of the income continuum are more likely to have been negatively impacted. As the pandemic continues it will be important to continue to develop a greater understanding of how the pandemic has affected residents at risk of or living in poverty in the community. Some initial impacts reported have included additional challenges for residents at risk of or living in poverty to access community-based supports, health care services and experiencing a deeper sense of isolation and exclusion. While these impacts mirror the experience of many residents during the pandemic, they result in increased vulnerability for residents at risk of or living in poverty particularly because access to many programs and services that provide essential supports has been affected. Going forward, actions outlined in the Collaborative Action Plan will be essential to better support these residents as economic recovery continues.

Strategic Directions and Actions

The Collaborative Action Plan consists of four strategic directions and 26 recommended actions to be completed over a ten-year period. The recommended actions build upon ongoing initiatives and work that has been accomplished to-date and respond to identified community need. The actions encompass city-wide initiatives as well as targeted approaches to support populations at risk of or living in poverty, through effective partnerships, with the aim to increase community capacity, and reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond. The four strategic directions are:

1. Reduce and prevent poverty;
2. Support residents at risk of or living in poverty;
3. Increase awareness and educate; and
4. Research, monitor and evaluate.

The needs and experiences of those at risk of or living in poverty overlap with initiatives outlined in several Council approved strategies (as outlined in Appendix B). In order to avoid duplication, the Collaborative Action Plan focuses on targeted actions that are not currently addressed through the implementation of other strategies. Information collected for the Collaborative Action Plan that relates specifically to actions within other strategies will be shared with relevant departments to further their work.

Successful implementation of the plan requires a shared commitment between the City and a broad range of stakeholders, to advancing the outlined actions in order to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond over the next ten years. Each action includes potential partners, the City's role, and an associated timeline for completion, which is characterized as short-term (0–3 years), medium term (4–6 years), long term (7–10 years) or ongoing. As the the City's role in reducing and preventing poverty can vary depending on the nature of the proposed action, the City's role in each action is outlined as follows:

1. **Lead:** The City takes the lead in defining and delivering the short, medium, long-term and ongoing actions and contributes knowledge, leadership, staff time and relevant resources.
2. **Collaborate:** The City plays a role in facilitating, convening and/or partnering, and where appropriate, contributing knowledge, leadership, staff time and relevant resources as an active participant on a team or table.
3. **Support:** The City plays a supporting role, by contributing knowledge, staff time and relevant resources to further the implementation of initiatives that are led by others.

Strategic Direction 1: Reduce and Prevent Poverty

The City of Richmond is committed to advancing social equity and addressing community needs, and has made significant investments in social planning and service delivery as well as physical and social infrastructure. Building on this work, the City will collaborate regularly with stakeholder organizations and residents with lived/living experience to ensure the successful implementation of the Collaborative Action Plan. Ongoing conversations and information sharing with stakeholder organizations and residents with lived/living experiences will ensure City processes and initiatives respond to emerging community needs.

Poverty reduction and prevention goes beyond supporting residents in meeting their immediate needs and includes the provision of accessible programs and services that support residents in developing more financially stable futures. Committing to reducing and preventing poverty can lead to increased participation in all aspects of civic life and an increased sense of belonging and inclusion for residents at risk of or living in poverty.

No.	Action	City Role	Potential Partners	Time Frame
1.1	Create a Community Poverty Reduction and Prevention Table to support implementation of the Collaborative Action Plan.	Lead	Business Community, Community Service Organizations, Provincial Government Agencies, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Short-term
1.2	Pursue funding opportunities to advance poverty reduction and prevention initiatives.	Lead	Community Associations and Societies, Community Service Organizations, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
1.3	Develop and implement a poverty lens criteria to support future City social planning processes (e.g. strategy and policy development, community needs assessments).	Lead		Medium-term
1.4	Expand work experience, mentorship, and upskilling opportunities for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Business Community, Community Service Organizations, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Senior levels of Government	Long-term
1.5	Increase educational opportunities to support employment readiness and digital literacy programs for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Business Community, Community Service Organizations, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Senior levels of Government	Medium-term
1.6	Develop social enterprise opportunities in the community to stimulate job creation for populations at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Business Community, Community Service Organizations, Senior levels of Government	Long-term
1.7	Provide additional staff resources to support the implementation of the Collaborative Action Plan and prevent and reduce poverty in the community.	Lead		Short-term

Strategic Direction 2: Support Residents at Risk of or Living in Poverty

Richmond has a strong network of dedicated community service organizations, community associations and societies, and public-sector agencies that provide a wide range of programs and services to support households at risk of or living in poverty. The City works regularly with these organizations and senior levels of government to remove barriers and increase access to programs and services that address specific needs in the community. Targeted approaches to service provision are critical to ensuring individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty are connected to community services that support increased resiliency and a sense of inclusion.

No.	Action	City Role	Potential Partners	Time Frame
2.1	Reduce barriers, address gaps and streamline access to City programs and services for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Lead	Community Service Organizations, Public Health Nurses, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District	Ongoing
2.2	Continue to monitor and refine the Recreation Fee Subsidy Program to ensure it responds to changing community needs.	Lead	Community Associations and Societies	Ongoing
2.3	Explore the development of a city-wide community food hub to expand access to healthy food and food skills programs for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Collaborate	Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Food Bank, the Faith Community, Urban Bounty, Vancouver Coastal Health	Medium-term
2.4	Implement initiatives to increase food security in the community for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Richmond Food Bank, Richmond School District, the Faith Community, Urban Bounty, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
2.5	Explore the development of a community resource centre for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Government Agencies	Short-term
2.6	Provide accessible community wellness opportunities for residents at risk of or living in poverty (e.g. dental clinics, mental wellness based programming).	Support	Community Service Organizations, Division of Family Practice, Primary Care Network, Richmond Public Library, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
2.7	Explore ways to improve community connections and health impacts for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Community Service Organizations, Primary Care Network, Residents with lived/living experience, Vancouver Coastal Health	Medium-term
2.8	Reduce transportation-related barriers in the community for residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Support	Business Community, Community Service Organizations, TransLink	Medium-term
2.9	Develop programs and services that respond to the specific needs of demographics at risk of or living in poverty (e.g. energy poverty reduction programs, financial literacy training for young adults, family-based outreach programming).	Collaborate	Community Association and Societies, Community Service Organizations, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing

Strategic Direction 3: Increase Awareness and Educate

Building a community that is inclusive of all residents regardless of socio-economic standing requires increased awareness and understanding of the needs and challenges of those at risk of or living in poverty in the community. Networks that promote cross-organizational collaboration and learning strengthen the community's response to reducing and preventing poverty. Participation of residents with lived/living experience is crucial to developing initiatives that address their needs as it ensures the solutions realized are accessible and meaningful. Developing a shared understanding of the needs of individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty will allow the City and stakeholder organizations to advocate more effectively to senior levels of government on behalf of Richmond residents for funding, policies and programs that best support individuals and families in Richmond.

No.	Action	City Role	Potential Partners	Time Frame
3.1	Advocate to senior levels of government regarding the needs of residents at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond (e.g. health care, transportation).	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Richmond School District, TransLink, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
3.2	Implement targeted outreach that facilitates connections to community programs and services for residents at risk of or living in poverty (e.g. community navigator programs).	Support	Community Service Organizations, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Short-term
3.3	Identify new opportunities to share poverty-related information and best practices among the City, community service organizations and key stakeholders.	Lead	Community Service Organizations, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Medium-term
3.4	Raise awareness and increase understanding of the challenges faced by residents at risk of or living in poverty in the community to support increased inclusion.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Medium-term
3.5	Foster dialogue with residents at risk of or living in poverty to ensure they are active participants in the development of initiatives related to reducing and preventing poverty.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Residents with lived/living experience, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing

Strategic Direction 4: Research, Monitor and Evaluate

Understanding the evolving context and trends related to poverty in Richmond is essential in determining the most effective and appropriate response. Though the City and many community service providers are working to address these needs and track data, where available, there is a gap in consistent and reliable information about the trends and experiences of individuals at risk or living in poverty in Richmond. Working with key stakeholder organizations to gather information that takes into consideration the unique circumstances and complex realities of individuals and families experiencing poverty is essential to continue to develop an increased understanding of community needs. Carefully monitoring Richmond-specific trends and staying abreast of emerging best practices in poverty reduction and prevention is also important to ensure Richmond is successful in collectively supporting its most vulnerable residents.

No.	Action	City Role	Potential Partners	Time Frame
4.1	Develop a consistent set of community-based measures to track trends and changing needs of residents at risk of or living in poverty.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Richmond Public Library, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Government Agencies	Short-term
4.2	Research and monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on populations at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, Provincial Government Agencies	Short-term
4.3	Monitor and analyze trends in poverty-related data to understand and respond to emerging and changing community needs.	Collaborate	Community Service Organizations, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
4.4	Research and evaluate best practices related to poverty reduction and prevention and continue to identify opportunities for Richmond.	Lead	Community Service Organizations, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing
4.5	Report out every two years on the progress of the Collaborative Action Plan.	Lead	Community Service Organizations, Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health	Ongoing



Next Steps

The Collaborative Action Plan outlines the City's commitment to take action, alongside the community, to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond. An immediate priority is the establishment of the Community Poverty Reduction and Prevention Table to support coordinated implementation of the plan.

Actions outlined in the Collaborative Action Plan align with work that is already in progress to respond to the specific needs of vulnerable or at risk populations in Richmond. This work is guided by various Council endorsed strategies that are monitored and adapted as required to best meet community needs. The findings from the Collaborative Action Plan that relate to previously endorsed strategies and work plans will be forwarded to the appropriate areas as part of ongoing best practices and needs assessment analysis.

To increase awareness of the needs of Richmond residents at risk of or living in poverty and to advance opportunities for collaboration, the Collaborative Action Plan will be shared with senior levels of governments and other community stakeholders. The City and its key stakeholders will also monitor the progress of the Collaborative Action Plan and report out to City Council and the community on a biennial basis.

Conclusion

The experience of poverty is complex and varied as poverty affects different households and demographics in different ways. A range of factors contribute to households' risk of living in poverty. These include lack of access to resources and opportunities, issues of inequality and inequity, inadequate support systems and growing affordability pressures.

While income-based measures are important to understanding the number of households experiencing poverty at any given time, they do not include a measure of total net worth (including assets and savings) or the impacts of poverty. Recognizing the limitations of income-based measures, the Collaborative Action Plan incorporates both qualitative and quantitative community-based data to develop a deeper understanding of the characteristics and needs of residents at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond. This increased understanding resulted in four strategic directions and 26 corresponding actions that support the implementation of initiatives to address areas of identified need for residents at risk of or living in poverty in the community.

The *2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond* outlines the City of Richmond's commitment and provides a framework for a collaborative, community approach to reduce and prevent poverty in Richmond over the next ten years. By implementing a collective approach to leveraging resources, developing solutions and implementing targeted approaches to address specific areas of concern, the community will collectively create meaningful change in the lives of Richmond residents at risk of or living in poverty.

Appendix A: Summary of Engagement

Significant engagement with both stakeholder organizations and residents, including residents with lived/living experience played an important role in developing the Collaborative Action Plan. Thank you to everyone who participated and shared their insight and experiences to support the development of this plan.

Stakeholder Organizations

The following stakeholder organizations participated in one or more virtual focus groups, held in November 2020, March 2021 and June 2021, and contributed their knowledge about the challenges and experiences faced by residents at risk of or living in poverty in Richmond. Their insight and feedback helped shape the strategic directions and corresponding actions outlined in the Collaborative Action Plan. These stakeholder organizations include:

- Atira Women’s Resource Society
- Back in Motion: Skills for Life and Work
- Chimo Community Services
- City Centre Community Association
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- Foundry Richmond
- Gilmore Park United Church
- Literacy Richmond
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Minoru Seniors Society
- Muslim Food Bank and Community Services Society (ASPIRE)
- Pacific Autism Family Network
- Pathways Clubhouse
- Richmond Addiction Services Society
- Richmond Centre for Disability
- Richmond Community Connect (Homeless Connect)
- Richmond Division of Family Practice
- Richmond Food Bank Society
- Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Friends Society
- Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition
- Richmond Public Library
- Richmond School District
- Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Richmond Society for Community Living

- St. Alban’s Outreach and Advocacy
- The Kehila Society of Richmond
- The Salvation Army
- The Sharing Farm Society
- Touchstone Family Association
- Turning Point Recovery Society
- Urban Bounty
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- WorkBC

City Council Advisory Committees

Feedback and insight was gathered from City Council Advisory Committees to support the development of the Collaborative Action Plan:

- Richmond Child Care Development Advisory Committee
- Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee
- Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
- Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee

Resident Focus Groups

Resident focus groups were hosted by a number of Richmond-based community service organizations, the Richmond Public library and the City of Richmond. Focus group participants included the general public, residents with lived/living experience, volunteers who support various community programs that deliver services to residents at risk of or living in poverty, and Richmond School District administrators and counsellors. The following community programs and organizations hosted a focus group:

- Gilmore Park United Church: Community Meals programs
- Richmond Advocacy and Support Committee
- Richmond Centre for Disability
- Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition
- Richmond Public Library: Youth session
- Richmond School District: Colts Young Mom’s Program
- The Salvation Army: Richmond House Emergency Shelter
- Touchstone Youth RESET program
- City of Richmond

Appendix B: Related Strategies and Initiatives

To facilitate a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction, the City has incorporated actions aimed at supporting residents living on low-income and increasing social inclusion throughout its strategic planning documents. Examples of the City's plans and strategies that align with and support the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond are outlined below.

Richmond 2041 Official Community Plan

Richmond's 2041 Official Community Plan (OCP) cites the City's commitment to social equity and inclusion and to building on social assets and community capacity to reduce and prevent poverty in the community through the following actions:

- *Ensure that social factors are considered, in conjunction with economic and environmental factors, in City planning and decision making.*
- *Work with senior levels of government, external agencies, and community partners to better understand the extent and needs of households in poverty and support collaborative efforts to prevent and address poverty in the community.*
- *Continue to participate in joint planning and networking initiatives with community partners (e.g. Richmond School District, Vancouver Coastal Health, Metro Vancouver, non-profit agencies).*
- *Maintain strong networks with developers, the business community, and community agencies, collaborating as appropriate to address social issues.*

Richmond Social Development Strategy 2013–2022

The Social Development Strategy identifies social sustainability as a key component to advancing social equity and inclusion in the community. The following Social Development Strategy actions are furthered through the development of the Collaborative Action Plan:

- *Improve understanding of the characteristics and challenges of low income residents in Richmond.*
- *Support initiatives to help individuals and families move out of poverty, specifying the roles that the City and other partners and jurisdictions can play in pursuing viable solutions (e.g. job readiness programs, affordable housing measures).*

- *Strengthen the City’s already strong collaborative relationship with Vancouver Coastal Health, consulting on emerging health care issues facing the community, advocating for needed services, partnering on priority community and social development initiatives, and soliciting input on the health implications of key City planning matters.*
- *Strengthen the City’s already strong collaborative relationship with the Richmond School District, consulting with the district on emerging children, youth and education issues facing the community, advocating for needed programs, and partnering on priority community and social development initiatives.*

Richmond Community Wellness Strategy 2018–2023

The Community Wellness Strategy identifies innovative approaches to impacting wellness outcomes for Richmond residents and is a partnership between the City Vancouver Coastal Health Richmond and the Richmond School District. The three focus areas that are most related to enhancing supports for residents at risk of or living in poverty and promoting social equity:

- *Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.*
- *Enhance physical and social connectedness within and among neighbourhoods and communities.*
- *Enhance equitable access to amenities, services and programs within and among neighbourhoods.*

Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) 2050 Strategic Directions

The CEEP 2050 Strategic Directions, endorsed by City Council on January 2020, will guide detailed actions in the final plan that collectively aim to achieve a 50.0% reduction in community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 and 100% by 2050. The plan is currently under development and will support the City’s equity, affordability and sustainability goals, including addressing specific areas of concern related to households at risk of or living in poverty, such as energy poverty. The two strategic directions most related to the Collaborative Action Plan are:

- *Accelerate deep energy retrofits to existing residential, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings and shift to low-carbon heating and cooling using in-building systems or district energy.*
- *Accelerate current OCP objectives for compact, complete communities throughout Richmond, with a range of services, amenities and housing choices, and sustainable mobility options within a five-minute walk of homes.*

ArtWorks: Richmond Arts Strategy 2019–2024

The Richmond Arts Strategy serves as a guide for decision-making to empower ideas, people and resources around a shared vision to advance the policies, programs and services needed for the arts to thrive in Richmond. The three objectives that support actions related to supporting increased inclusion in the community, strengthening under-represented voices and reducing barriers to participation are:

- *Develop or expand opportunities to directly support individual artists, cultural organizations and venues that provide low and no cost public program delivery.*
- *Encourage and increase programming that involves work by Musqueam and other Indigenous artists.*
- *Invite diverse groups, including those typically underrepresented, to participate in the telling of their story in the Richmond context, through creative engagement and art.*

Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019–2024

The Recreation and Sport Strategy guides the planning and delivery of recreation and sport opportunities in the City. The aim of the Strategy is to build on the strong and successful foundation already present in Richmond to address the new and diverse interests of stakeholders and to encourage all citizens of every age to enjoy the benefits of an active and involved lifestyle. The two actions most related to the Collaborative Action Plan are:

- *Conduct a study on barriers to sport and recreation participation in identified neighbourhoods or communities and take action to reduce barriers accordingly (build on learnings from the City Centre Active Communities Project).*
- *Work with sport organizations to ensure that individuals with financial hardships are directed to either the City of Richmond's fee subsidy program, Richmond KidSport or Jumpstart for assistance.*

The City of Richmond also addresses priority areas of community needs through the development of plans and strategies that respond to the specific needs of vulnerable or at risk populations. The Collaborative Action Plan will work in conjunction with these documents to holistically address the broad range of factors that contribute to reducing and preventing poverty in Richmond. These Plans and Strategies include:

Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy 2017–2027

The Affordable Housing Strategy guides the City's response in creating and maintaining safe, suitable, and affordable housing options for Richmond's residents. The strategy focuses on supporting vulnerable populations through the development of increased transitional and supportive housing, non-market rental housing, and low-end market rental units through five strategic directions:

- **Strategic Direction 1:** *Use the City's regulatory tools to encourage a diverse mix of housing types*

- *Strategic Direction 2: Maximize use of City resources and financial tools*
- *Strategic Direction 3: Build capacity with non-profit housing and service providers*
- *Strategic Direction 4: Facilitate and strengthen partnership opportunities*
- *Strategic Direction 5: Increase advocacy, awareness and education roles*

Richmond Homelessness Strategy 2019–2029

The Homelessness Strategy is an action-oriented framework intended to guide City and stakeholder involvement in homelessness initiatives that support experiences of homelessness in Richmond being rare, brief and nonrecurring by 2029 through five strategic directions:

- *Strategic Direction 1: Prevent pathways into homelessness*
- *Strategic Direction 2: Support residents who are experiencing homelessness*
- *Strategic Direction 3: Provide pathways out of homelessness*
- *Strategic Direction 4: Foster collaboration among community partners*
- *Strategic Direction 5: Communicate, research and monitor homelessness*

The 2017–2022 Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy

The Richmond Child Care Needs Assessment and Strategy guides the City's approach, in collaboration with other stakeholders, to address the need for quality, affordable, accessible child care spaces in Richmond through seven strategic directions, the directions that most relate to the Collaborative Action Plan are:

- *Strategic Direction 2: Creating and supporting child care spaces*
- *Strategic Direction 3: Undertaking advocacy*
- *Strategic Direction 4: Improving accessibility and inclusion*
- *Strategic Direction 5: Collaborating and partnering*

Cultural Harmony Plan 2019–2029

The Cultural Harmony Plan guides the City's approach in enhancing cultural harmony among Richmond's diverse population and works to support increased inclusion in the community and increased opportunities for newcomers to engage in all areas of community life. The actions most related to the Collaborative Action Plan are:

- *Review the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report and explore opportunities for Richmond to respond.*
- *Participate in community initiatives that seek to develop mechanisms for responsive action against incidents of racism.*
- *Develop City-wide translation and interpretation guidelines to expand the engagement of multilingual communities.*

- *Work with immigrant-serving agencies to identify and reduce barriers faced by immigrants in accessing volunteer and employment opportunities with the City of Richmond.*
- *Explore and implement mentorship and internship opportunities targeted to recent immigrants within the City.*

The Seniors Service Plan: Active and Healthy Living 2015–2020

The Seniors Service Plan sets the goals and actions for services and programs for seniors in Richmond to the year 2020 and focuses on developing effective, meaningful and appropriate services, programs, and opportunities for seniors in Richmond. The City is currently in the process of developing a new 10 year Seniors Strategy. The three actions that most relate to the Collaborative Action Plan are:

- *Work with Community Associations to expand outreach to vulnerable populations.*
- *Incorporate the needs of low-income seniors in subsidy and pricing to enhance access to programs.*
- *Develop a network among key stakeholders, community partners, and the City that focuses and advances a systems view of service delivery.*

2015–2020 Youth Service Plan: Where Youth Thrive

The Youth Service Plan identifies priority program and service areas for Richmond youth, and provides the City with a strategic approach to make decisions about youth-related matters. It is intended to guide the City's approach to the development and implementation of youth programs and services in Richmond. The four actions that most related to the Collaborative Action Plan:

- *Identify opportunities to provide more low cost, no cost programs and services to youth.*
- *Identify transportation needs to access youth programs and services, particularly in outlying areas of Richmond.*
- *Enhance youth life skills and build career training into programs and services for youth.*
- *Develop additional opportunities for low-income youth by improving access to programs and services and by connecting them to existing low cost/no cost programs and services (such as Recreation Fee Subsidy Program).*



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