

Minister Briefing: Poverty

Date: October 31, 2013

Attendees: Minister Stephanie Cadieux
DM Mark Sieben
ADM Bev Dicks
ED Mark Armitage

Background:

- While the pilots are running in the seven original communities (Prince George, Stewart, New Westminster, Surrey, Port Hardy, Kamloops and Cranbrook) the poverty consultant positions in Prince George and Port Hardy are vacant; recruitment is underway.
- The poverty file is under the leadership of Bev Dicks, ADM, Provincial Office of Domestic Violence and Strategic Priorities. Kathy Berggren-Clive, Director, is dedicated to the initiative and since assuming the role has established a close working relationship with the poverty consultants both individually and as a team. The team is scheduled to meet in-person in the New Year.
- The team is focused on:
 - Developing a brochure promoting the program
 - Raising the profile with Service Delivery Areas
 - Increasing community profile of the Initiative – increase referrals

Family and Youth Partnership:

- Staff recently met with Tammie Currie, Executive Director of Operations with the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) to discuss the Family and Youth Partnership (FYP) and potential opportunities for support and overlap of the two initiatives.
- Communities involved in the FYP are: Prince George, Vancouver, Kelowna, Surrey and Victoria. There was agreement to align staff in Prince George and Surrey as well as further profile the FYP program with MCFD Executive of Service to increase awareness and referrals.
- Staff also discussed arranging meetings with MCFD's Executive Directors/Managers to improve knowledge, relationships and referrals with the Youth Partnership programs in– Prince George, Kelowna and Victoria.

Monthly Reporting:

- The team is committed to collect and report on data on a monthly basis.
- Staff have met with the Modelling, Analysis and Information Management Branch to discuss the need for monthly reporting on performance indicators and outcomes.

- Before being able to report on specific outcomes staff will collect data. Much is still to be discussed however they are hoping to develop an initiative dashboard by January 2014, with data collection running until May 2014, providing the ability to produce a comprehensive report with indicators and outcomes in the summer of 2014. In the mean time they have proposed a similar format to FYP reports, with data collection and reporting being standardized.

Update on UBCM:

- Most recently, staff met with UBCM on October 21, 2013 to provide an update and overview of the initiative. The Minister and ministry's interest in working in partnership with UBCM was reiterated.
- The Healthy Communities Committee will be meeting on November 21, 2013; this is their first meeting since the UBCM convention. The Chair is Al Richmond. There will be a further larger delegation meeting in January/February.
- Some key partnerships underway connected to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Pilot program (Family Youth Partnership; Nurse Family Partnership; Community Profile Development) will be highlighted.
- Areas for discussion include: Provincial Steering Committee and a Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Federation of Community Social Service of BC:

- At the October 25, 2013 Quarterly Meeting, NDP Critic for MSDSI – Michelle Mungall presented on Poverty and called for a provincial poverty reduction plan.
- MLA Mungall was critical of BC for being only one of two provinces without a poverty reduction strategy
- MLA Mungall referenced the Minister's comments in Estimates to release a report on Poverty.

First Call Advocacy Coalition:

- Will be releasing the 2013 Poverty Report Card on November 2013 (release will happen shortly after November 20th which is National Child Day and for BC it is BC Child and Youth Day).
- The coalition remains highly critical of the MCFD Poverty Strategy.

Opportunities/Next Steps:

- Focus will be places on raising the pilot project the profile both internally and externally.
- Establish the project clearly as a strategic initiative – profile it with MCFD.
- Develop greater uniformed clarity on roles/responsibilities on the consultants – community development and direct work with families.
- Establish closer working relationship with UBCM and municipal leaders at a community level.
- Development of promotional information including referral criteria.
- Disciplined data collection and reporting.
- Look for opportunities to partner at a community level; with MCFD and across ministers.
- Develop a 2013 status report for public release.

Poverty Reduction Strategy FACT SHEET

OVERVIEW:

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is a joint initiative, with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Healthy Communities Committee and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), aimed at designing innovative services, within current fiscal climate, that meet the needs of low income families vulnerable to poverty. The project focuses on families with children living in poverty.

KEY FACTS:

- In April 2012, UBCM and the MCFD jointly announced the piloting of Community Poverty Reduction Strategies in seven communities across the province: Port Hardy, New Westminster, Surrey, Kamloops, Cranbrook, Prince George and Stewart. These communities were recommended by the UBCM to reflect a mix of metro, urban, rural and remote communities across B.C.
- MCFD Community Poverty Strategy consultants are working in the seven communities to develop Community Teams through forging partnerships with local government, community service agencies and businesses.
- In each community, the consultants work with community partners to develop Community Action Plans for addressing community issues that prevent residents from moving out of poverty.
- The action plans are designed to collaboratively address some of the issues identified as barriers to families leaving poverty in each community. They include specific actions and timelines and are being implemented in partnership with municipal governments and community groups.
- The barriers include education, childcare, transportation, food, employment, housing, health coordination and awareness of community services.
- In addition to the community work, public service staff are also working directly with families to further understand their individual needs, connect them with supports and to develop personalized paths out of poverty.
- Once a family agrees to be involved, they work with the consultant to develop individual plans for addressing the barriers they face to moving out of poverty. This involves prioritizing needs and identifying timelines, actions required, options for support and providing ongoing support to accomplish the goals identified in the plan.
- In Prince George there are 13 families enrolled who have developed an action plan to begin to address health, financial, and housing and employment barriers.
- In Surrey the 7 families enrolled in the program are working on health and employment challenges and strengthening their connections to the community.
- In New Westminster there are 7 families enrolled with action plans and their plan is to work on their housing, health and culture and language barriers.
- In Cranbrook, Port Hardy and Stewart the enrollment is smaller, with a total of 4 families enrolled to work on employment and health barriers.
- In Kamloops the 3 families who are enrolled are addressing the access to services and employment barriers.

- The project depends on partnerships between the provincial and municipal governments, local community organizations, service providers and business representatives to develop strategic, measurable plans focused on reducing poverty, mitigating its effects and supporting services for low income families.
- In February 2013 MCFD, working with UBCM ,organized a forum to review the project to date and develop recommendations moving forward.
- From the forum, the poverty reduction strategy work will be expanded and built into the core work of MCFD family services teams and included into service delivery expectations.
- This shift will embed the Poverty Reduction Strategy within the work of MCFD teams, raising the profile of the work within MCFD and ensuring continuity and stability for the strategy. It is also part of a broader movement towards multidisciplinary teams that work in partnership with local agencies and communities.
- Embedding the strategies into practice will occur in stages and coincide with the expansion of Communities of Caring into communities throughout B.C.

DELIVERY MECHANISM:

- This is a provincially delivered program for specifically identified communities; however, it will be migrated to delivery mechanisms specific to each Service Delivery Area (SDA).
- 23 communities are currently engaged in the strategy with plans in place to see communities across all 47 MCFD Local Service Areas engaged by the end of 2013/14.

FINANCIAL FACTS:

- No new resources are committed to the project; however, staff support and facilitation as well as tools for sharing information and collecting data will be provided to support community effort.
- Community project may be supplemented with provincial policy as finances allow.

APPROVALS:

Approved by [name, ADM, Division] - [date approved]

Data Verification: NA

Financial Verification:

CROSS REFERENCE