LONDON FOR ALL

A Roadmap to End Poverty

MARCH 2016

“The goal of these recommendations is for London to reach its full potential by ending poverty in one generation”

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LETTER TO MAYOR

Dear Mayor Brown,

After more than six months of research, study and community consultation, we are pleased to present to you our final report, “London for All: A Roadmap to End Poverty”. We thank you for the opportunity to work with fellow citizens to help effect real and lasting change in our community.

WHY NOW?

Some say this challenge has always existed and some may even ask, “Why now? What makes anything different this time?” There is an undeniable urgency to addressing poverty in London now before it becomes even more entrenched. Despite the best efforts of many in our community, the barriers stubbornly persist. At 17%, London’s poverty rates eclipse provincial levels and, while it’s true that our economy has exhibited promising signs of recovery, that recovery has still not reached our most vulnerable citizens.

But today, more than ever before, we have a better understanding of the causes and impacts of poverty. The Provincial and Federal governments have begun to focus more and more on the issues surrounding poverty and, what’s more, they recognize the important role that municipalities play in the everyday lives of their constituents.

The overarching focus of the Panel has been to develop a deeper understanding of the community-wide impacts of poverty and opportunities for change. While poverty affects individuals, it is not merely an individual problem. We all pay a price, both in the real dollar costs of healthcare and social services and in the emotional and spiritual burden that the existence of poverty places upon us.

THESE ARE COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations contained in this report are not any one individual’s recommendations nor do they come from any particular group of individuals. They are grounded in the best available research, the Social Determinants of Health, the good work already happening in London and across the country, and are the result of extensive public consultation.

As a Panel, we embarked on a process seeking to gain broad public input in order to build momentum towards solutions. Panel members attended nearly 100 different meetings and we heard from over 1,000 Londoners. We learned that thousands of London children go to school every day without having had a decent breakfast because their families have to choose between paying rent and buying healthy food. We learned of continued inequities that limit some Londoners’ ability to reach their full potential. We learned that the double-edged sword of the skills gap means there are chronically unemployed workers in London even as jobs remain unfilled because employers can’t find workers with the necessary skill sets.

This report contains 112 recommendations in total. Deciding which priorities to focus on is a difficult task. What is perhaps more difficult is deciding which ones to leave out. London City Council knows this challenge well.

> The recommendations contained in this report are a means to an end, a goal: that the City of London will reach its full potential by ending poverty in one generation. This is a lofty goal, an aspirational goal, we know that, but based on solid evidence and based on results that have been achieved in other cities, we know too that it is an achievable goal.

IMPORTANT WORK IS ALREADY UNDERWAY

This Panel recognizes that there are an array of programs and services in London that address poverty. The intention of this report is not to replace them, but rather to look for ways to strengthen and improve upon them. Additionally, we are aware that a single report alone could never hope to solve a problem as complex as this one. However, we are confident that this report presents an important step on the path towards ending poverty in London.

This Panel would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the many passionate, hard-working Londoners, community organizations, nonprofits and faith-based groups who continue to dedicate so much of their time and talent towards addressing poverty in all of its complexity. We also recognize Council’s dedication of millions of dollars toward new and enhanced programming for poverty reduction demonstrates that addressing poverty is a high priority. Finally, we would like to recognize the staff from the City of London who provided us with outstanding support throughout our mandate.

LONDON BELONGS TO ALL OF US

Going forward, continued leadership – from you, from City Council and from those in London’s Business, Public and Nonprofit sectors – will be crucial in ensuring that this work is successful.

In order to support the execution of these recommendations, we have proposed next steps. Perhaps the most important of these is that a commitment be made to prioritize the voices of people with lived experience with poverty. Exclusion and stigma play a big role in the damage that poverty inflicts upon people’s lives. People living in poverty have a great deal to offer and empowering the marginalized will be an important component in our community’s healing.

Like you, Mr. Mayor, we want to build a great city and a great city is one that includes everyone - rich and poor, young and old, newcomers and longtime Londoners. A great city is one in which all of us have a true sense of ownership and belonging, and where all citizens can come together towards a common goal. It is only by working together that we will more effectively address how we fill gaps, remove barriers and help end the cycle of poverty for future generations of Londoners.

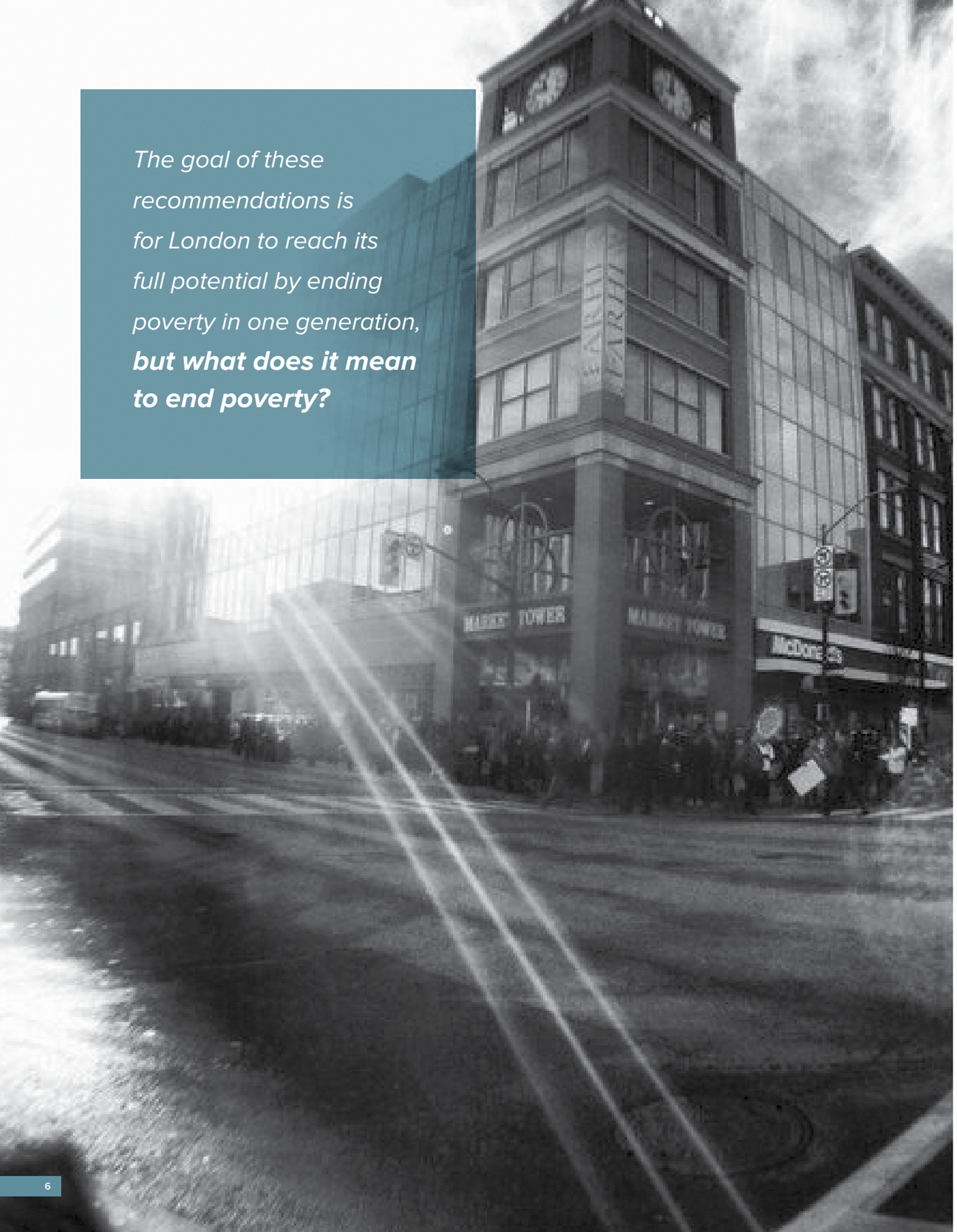
Co-chairs of Mayor’s Advisory Panel on Poverty:

Maureen Cassidy, Deputy Mayor,
City of London

Dr. Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer
of Health and Chief Executive Officer,
Middlesex-London Health Unit

On behalf of the Panel:

- Vanessa Ambtman-Smith, *Aboriginal Health Lead, South West Local Health Integration Network*
- Dr. Helene Berman, *Professor and Associate Dean (Research), Faculty of Health Sciences, Western University; Co-Director, Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion*
- Dharshi Lacey, *Diversity Program Manager, Pillar Nonprofit Network*
- Andrew Lockie, *Chief Executive Officer, United Way London & Middlesex*
- Dr. Abe Oudshoorn, *Assistant Professor, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing, Western University; Chair, London Homeless Coalition*
- Glen Pearson, *Co-Director, London Food Bank; Board Member, London Poverty Research Centre*



The goal of these recommendations is for London to reach its full potential by ending poverty in one generation, ***but what does it mean to end poverty?***

INTRODUCTION

The Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty was convened on September 16, 2015 and given a six-month mandate to develop recommendations on what more the community could do to address poverty in London, Ontario. The recommendations in this report are built on the foundations of the Panel's approach, which was rooted in: the Social Determinants of Health; the best available research; good work already happening in London; and deep engagement with over 1,000 Londoners *(see Appendix B for a full discussion of the engagement process and Appendix E for a list of resources consulted)*.

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY

Poverty is a complex issue that has no single cause. Our sense of what poverty "means" must at all times be approached with a mindset of humility and an understanding that each person experiences poverty differently. Each person's story is unique and a product of multiple complex, interrelating causes.

Poverty is a human rights issue

If we are going to make real change, we must talk about human rights when we talk about poverty. Human rights are the basic rights every person has, inherently and universally, to live with safety and dignity. These rights include, but are not limited to: the right to work; the right to adequate food; and the right to housing.

Canada has signed on to a number of international human rights conventions that impact the approach we take to counteracting poverty in our community, including:

> ***"Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible."***[1]

- *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1970)*
- *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)*
- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1981)*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1991)*
- *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2010)*[2]

1 http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Pages/WhatareHumanRights.aspx
2 http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/abt-apd/icg-gci/ihrl-didp/tcp.html

On a life without poverty...

"With my children it would allow me to be able to have a means to offer them things that I just cannot do now. It doesn't mean unrealistic things just normal every day things. It would have a sense of comfort to allow me to return back to work and would reinstate our family's freedom and options for the future."

These are important conventions, but others exist that are relevant to poverty reduction, such as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*.

Within Canada, we have defined rights through the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (1997) and *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, as well as a number of laws at the provincial level.

Canada's adherence to these conventions extends an obligation and an opportunity through all levels of government and community. The call for universal human rights compels us, legally and morally, to ensure an equitable, inclusive society that provides enough for all.

Understanding poverty through a rights-based approach isn't just about ideals or obligations; it is about effectiveness. Through a shared understanding of how international conventions are applied at the local level, we will have a mandate for change at the scale we need. Successful implementation of the recommendations relies on a community understanding of Canada's obligations to ensure basic human rights and the ways in which the rights-based approach impacts how we think about and work on this issue.

Populations in London at higher risk of poverty:

- children and youth
- lone parent families, particularly those led by women
- older adults
- the working poor
- people with disabilities
- people with mental health issues
- Indigenous peoples
- newcomers
- ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups
- women
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer populations

Poverty is a community issue

Building on our international obligations, we must recognize that poverty is about our community. Our entire community. Poverty impacts all of us, because ***a community experiences poverty and cannot reach its potential when people lack or are denied the economic, social, or cultural resources to participate.***

Poverty impacts our society because it excludes. Individuals living in poverty are more likely to experience social isolation and disconnection from others in the community, increasing stigma and further entrenching the challenges that make exiting poverty difficult. Poverty also impacts our society because we have a continued culture of stigma toward people living in poverty. This stigma targets people living in poverty directly, and is also affected and reinforced by attitudes toward particular groups and communities in our city.

Poverty is an economic sustainability issue

Poverty costs us financially. At the community level, poverty has economic impacts because individuals and families living in poverty are less likely to work and more likely to draw on emergency and social services. While local data does not exist, an economic analysis estimates the provincial cost of poverty is $10.4 to $13.1 billion annually[3]. In 1996, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples[4] estimated the cost of "doing nothing" at $7.5 billion annually across Canada. In addition to the moral imperative to end poverty, there is also a strong economic incentive to do so.

Because we are all affected, we are all in this together. Every Londoner has a role to play in the ownership of the challenge and the solutions.

3 http://www.oafb.ca/assets/pdfs/CostofPoverty.pdf
4 https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/1974/6874/1/RRCAP5_combined.pdf

Poverty is an equity issue

Poverty impacts everyone, but it impacts people differently and for different reasons. The recommendations are about ending poverty for everyone; this means we must acknowledge that some groups and communities are more likely to experience poverty today because of deeply embedded social and structural inequities.

But this is not just about history. The ongoing legacy of systemic discrimination and racism continue to influence our current system of laws, our institutions, and our culture. As a result, many people in the community are denied opportunities to reach their full potential. We know, for example, that the lasting effects of colonialism contribute directly to economic challenges and income disparity for Indigenous[5] peoples in London.

This is not about blame. This is about acknowledging the uncomfortable truths as a necessary step toward achieving our goal of ending poverty. These truths include the existence of continued discrimination, racism, and sexism in our city. These challenges aren't unique to London, but if we don't address them, we can't reach our goal of ending poverty. Indigenous peoples, newcomers, women, and LGBTQ[6] populations (among many others) experience poverty at higher rates and are subject to the harmful effects of stigma and discrimination. We also need to recognize the existence of pay inequities among employed persons because of discriminatory institutions and practices.

An equity lens must be used to understand the impacts of these recommendations on various groups and communities. Such understanding takes time and reflection, which is why diverse leadership is so important for ongoing implementation. This is not easy work, but if we can understand poverty through a lens of equity, we can reach a place of mutual trust and respect between all communities who call London home.

Poverty is about real people - families, citizens and neighbours - who cannot participate in everything London has to offer.

In London...

17% of individuals are living in poverty

24% of children are living in poverty

41% of Indigenous peoples are living in poverty

For more facts and figures, see Appendix D.

5 The term "Indigenous" is used in this report as an inclusive term that creates space for self-definition by individuals and communities who consider themselves related to and/or having historical continuity with peoples predating the colonial period of what is now Canada. The term encompasses First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
6 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer

IT IS TIME TO ACT

We can't wait any longer

Panels have been struck before, recommendations developed, plans made. Even with the best of intentions and efforts, we haven't been able to bring about the big changes we are looking for. What makes things different this time?

London urgently needs to address poverty. Our poverty rates are higher than the provincial averages. More than 62,000 Londoners live with poverty. We were hit hard by the 2008 recession, and many of us continue to struggle. In recent times, we had the highest unemployment rate of all big cities in the country.

What makes things different this time? Our community is different. Though we have more to learn, we have a better understanding of the causes and impacts of poverty. Provincial and federal governments are increasing their attention to the issue. Locally, London is fortunate to have so many passionate, intelligent people working on addressing poverty. Our community is rallying around a growing resolve that "it ends here".

The creation of the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty was a way to bring even more attention to this issue and focus the efforts and energy of the community. This is our city. We want to build a great city, but we will only do it if it includes all of us.

It is no longer enough – and indeed, it never has been – to say we wish poverty weren't a problem in London. Words and action need to align. People from every neighbourhood and every sector need to step forward and take action. Many London residents, advocates, organizations, and businesses are already doing this, and we need to build on this energy and do more.

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF YOU WEREN'T LIVING IN POVERTY?

"That would be hard to answer because I don't know. I've always wanted a home, a home my children and grandchildren can come to. But I'm not giving up on that yet. I'll find out what's out there when I get out there. Having a safe and secure home - that's what's important to me. Once I have that I won't have to move again."

What kind of London do we want?

We want a community that recognizes its challenge with poverty and its ownership of solutions. We want a community that responds to the international call for dignity, equity and human rights by building an inclusive community for, and with, each other. We want a community where those on the margins are empowered, supported, and able to influence decisions that affect their lives. We want a community built on trust and mutual respect where everyone is loved and finds a sense of belonging.

This sets a bold focus, but it isn't just an aspiration. We must plan appropriately to achieve it. Using 20 years as the length of a generation and the Low Income Measure[7] as a measure of poverty, this means that *more than 3,100 Londoners will need to exit poverty every year for the next 20 years* to end poverty. We know that other measures exist and the selection of the right measures will be important for understanding our progress, but this number gives us a sense of the scale of change we need. It will be tough, but living in a community with poverty is tougher.

Deep research and engagement with Londoners has led to the development of a comprehensive set of recommendations (listed in Appendix C) on what more we need to do to address poverty. The fullness and depth of the recommendations suggests that if we can implement them successfully, we will build a community in which everyone can reach their full potential and will be able to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of the community.

Importantly, these recommendations are not for any one organization, whether government, non-profit or private sector. This is about a community coming together and saying "We won't tolerate this any longer, and here's what we're going to do about it, together."

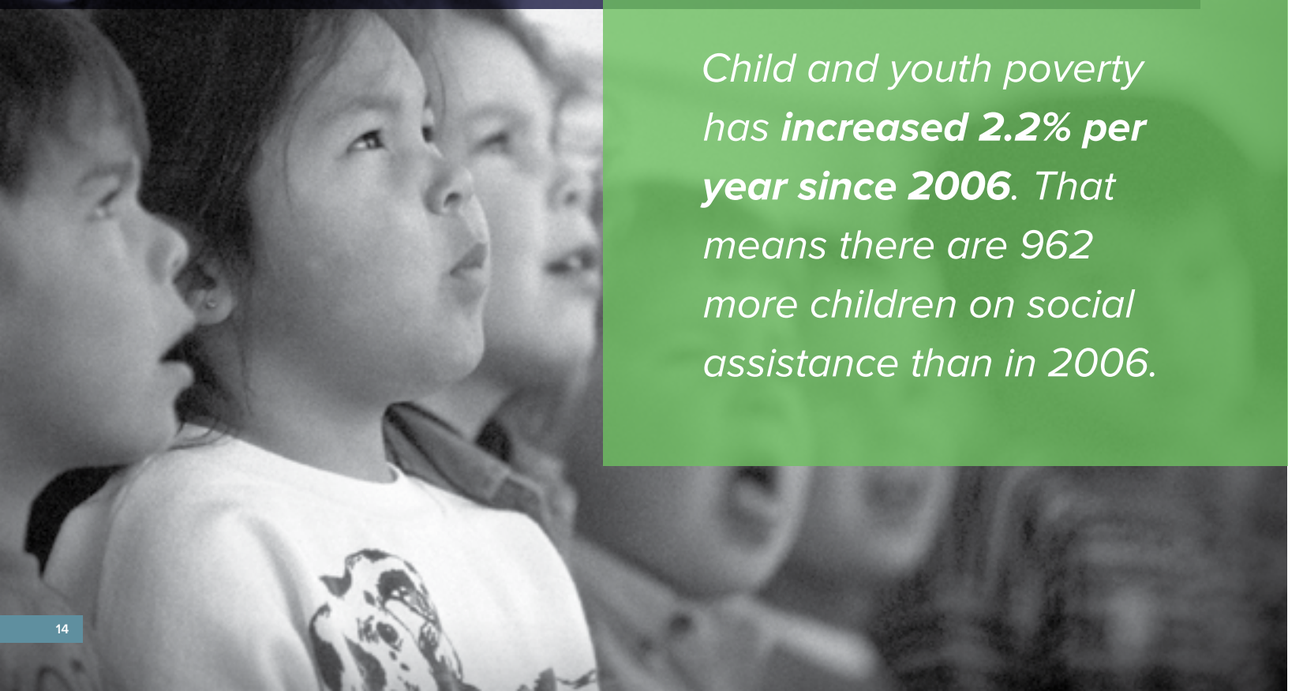
7 http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lim-mfr-eng.htm

IGNITING CHANGE

A 20-year horizon gives us long-term direction, but the urgency of poverty means we have to think about what we can do *now*. The recommendations in this section outline things we can do over the next year that will generate *momentum, commitment, accountability* and *impact*.

The plan to ignite change balances what Londoners have said is urgent, what is achievable in the short-term, and what builds on existing momentum and opportunities in the community. The implementation of each recommendation should reflect the understanding of poverty as a rights issue, an equity issue, and a community issue with economic, social, and cultural dimensions.

The immediate action plan is divided into eight sections: changing mindsets; income & employment; health; homeless prevention & housing; transportation; early learning & education; food security; and system change. The full list of recommendations, comprising the “roadmap” in its entirety, is available in Appendix C.



*Child and youth poverty has **increased 2.2% per year since 2006**. That means there are 962 more children on social assistance than in 2006.*

CHANGING MINDSETS

We want to build a stronger community. Changing mindsets and attitudes is the foundation for a culture shift to a community that sees the importance – and possibility – of ending poverty. More and more, Londoners are standing up and saying that they are not willing to settle for the status quo.

What we can do in the next 12 months

1. **Develop a campaign that educates and engages the community on poverty.** We know that London is a caring community, but many people have existing ideas about poverty that may not reflect its complexity. Awareness builds understanding, and understanding builds relationships. This incites a shift toward an inclusive community built on trust and mutual respect. The campaign will focus on the following elements:

    a. Outlining poverty’s complexity and impacts from rights, community, and equity perspectives
    b. Counteracting stigma associated with poverty
    c. Demonstrating the cost of maintaining the status quo
    d. Encouraging Londoners to engage in solutions and providing resources to help make it happen

2. **Grow existing awareness and engagement initiatives.** Organizations are actively implementing awareness initiatives in London that increase understanding of the root causes of poverty and break down assumptions and stigma we all carry with us, whether service provider or resident, and regardless of income level. When we pair this with opportunities for community members from all backgrounds to engage with, and learn from, each other, we are developing real opportunities for all to reach their collective potential. While these programs must be grown thoughtfully - validating the expertise of residents lived experience with poverty, reflecting the principles of equity, and informed by careful evaluation - we know they can make a difference. Let’s grow them.

3. **Increase the number of organizations providing Indigenous Cultural Safety training.** Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action report on residential schools, there is increasing momentum in the community to provide Indigenous Cultural Safety training to staff. Indigenous Cultural Safety training seeks to build empathy by incorporating cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competency training, as well as self-reflection on power imbalances in society. We should applaud those organizations that are already undertaking this training and ask them to serve as champions to encourage other organizations to do likewise.

4. **Increase the number of organizations providing Cultural Competency training.** Recognizing the growing ethno-cultural diversity in London, there is increased awareness that organizations need to enhance their capacity to work effectively across cultures. Training is focused on understanding difference and how our own biases can influence our ability to facilitate successful integration of newcomers in our community. Similar to the above, we should applaud those organizations that are already undertaking this and ask them to serve as champions to encourage other organizations to do likewise.

5. **Collaborate with school boards to build on existing resources that help students understand the impacts of poverty and to reduce stigma.** If London is going to reach its full potential in a generation, we need to start now with future leaders in our community. There is already significant work happening at the school board that we can build on to help change mindsets for the next generation.

What changes will we see?

- More references in traditional and social media to rights, equity, and community, representing a shift in public dialogue and a better understanding of poverty
- More people trained in programs that increase understanding of poverty's causes and impacts, and more people building supportive relationships with their fellow community members
- Increased number of organizations providing Indigenous Cultural Safety training, translating into more culturally safe environments and services for Indigenous people
- Increased number of organizations reporting higher retention of diverse staff and board members, increased representation of diverse groups in leadership, and more inclusive programs and services

ON LIVING IN POVERTY...

"It makes you feel really empty, it's like an empty feeling, yes there are people helping us but it does not take away the void of loneliness. The loneliness comes with trying to break a cycle, when you leave a certain way of life and want a better future there are things you leave behind. To be able to do it right, these are choices we need to make."

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

Although poverty is not only about income, inadequate income is a key element of poverty. From an economic perspective, adequate income and employment are pathways out of poverty, and employment can be a particularly empowering route. Economic and labour market forces are large and complex, but there is much we can do in London to support a strong local economy and increased opportunities for Londoners to achieve their potential through adequate income and the right to work.

What we can do in the next 12 months

6. **Use London's Community Economic Roadmap to accelerate skills training programs that meet local labour market needs.** Economic development, job creation, and poverty reduction are all part of the same conversation. In London, we have people in need of employment and employers in need of people. Building on existing energy in the community, we can bring together the business, non-profit, government, and education sectors to identify labour market gaps and training programs for Londoners seeking work that can meet employers' needs.

7. **Become a Basic Income Guarantee pilot site.** Basic Income Guarantee – with appropriate supports - is a universal approach that ensures everyone has sufficient income to meet their basic needs. Basic Income Guarantee is gaining traction and has support from across the political spectrum because it has strong economic and social rationales. The Province of Ontario is currently exploring communities in which to pilot a Basic Income Guarantee. London has often served as a test market for new ideas, so we are well-suited to be a pilot site. While the outcome is not assured, it is dramatic: elimination of income-based measures of poverty.

8. **Develop and implement hiring practices aimed at increased diversity.** Building on the awareness campaign designed to change mindsets, developing diverse hiring practices reflects the recognition of structural discrimination and the need for a focused approach to counteract it. Development approaches include: developing a forum for employers to learn from each other on diverse hiring practices; recognizing what employers are already doing with respect to diversity; and making resources available to workplaces interested in adopting more intentional diversity perspectives.

9. **Implement social procurement policies at public institutions.** Drawing on existing models, public institutions can set an example to other organizations by developing and introducing social procurement policies that consider social value in addition to economic value for services provided.

10. **Establish the Living Wage figure for London.** The movement toward a Living Wage Community is a longer term goal. In the short term, we can establish London's Living Wage figure to build on and bring focus to the conversation as we continue to encourage employers to recognize the value of paying a Living Wage.

What changes will we see?

- More Londoners in training programs that prepare them for employment
- London is (or in the running to be) a Basic Income Guarantee pilot site
- More employers demonstrating diverse hiring practices
- The development of a social procurement policy at public institutions
- The establishment of London's Living Wage figure
- Increased number of Londoners in sustainable employment

HEALTH

The health of individuals, families, and communities is impacted by the causes and impacts of poverty. The comprehensive recommendations in Appendix C were developed according to the Social Determinants of Health, which provides a holistic understanding of the ways in which poverty impacts every area of health. This is a big subject to tackle; the single recommendation in this short-term plan reflects the urgency and importance of addressing mental health and addictions challenges in London.

What we can do in the next 12 months

11. **Create a coordinated local mental health and addictions strategy.** Mental health and addictions are distinct but related challenges with multiple causes and impacts. Our community is fortunate to have resources that address mental health and addictions, but a coordinated response is needed to account for the complexity of these issues. We need to leverage the momentum in our community and invest in a coordinated mental health and addictions strategy that is responsive to the health needs of Londoners.

What changes will we see?

- A coordinated local mental health and addictions strategy that is health-based, evidence-informed, and developed with community members with lived experience with poverty who have the power to make decisions on outcomes that affect them.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & HOUSING

Housing is among the most fundamental of our basic needs and rights. The London community must provide safe, affordable and supported housing, and end chronic homelessness within 10 years. We know it can be done - we have seen the example of Medicine Hat, Alberta, a community that chose Housing First and is well on the way to eliminating homelessness in their community. London has both a *Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan*[8] and a *Homeless Prevention System Implementation Plan*. We need to continue to use these plans to build safe, adequate, and accessible housing in London.

The *Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan* and the *Homeless Prevention System Implementation Plan* provide the context for the following recommendations that we can target to make tangible change over the next year.

What we can do in the next 12 months

12. **Build a culture of practice around effective implementation of the Housing First approach.** Housing First, with appropriate supports, is a foundational principle of London's *Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan*[9]. Many organizations are well-versed in the approach, but we must ensure that our service system translates theories and principles into competent practice in order to realize the full benefits of Housing First.

13. **Engage landlords in keeping more people housed.** When Londoners shared their recommendations for housing, they emphasized the importance of working with landlords to keep more people housed. Increased emphasis on engagement of landlords and other housing partners can create a more collaborative approach to housing and in turn generate innovative ideas to support tenancy.

14. **Invest in housing allowances to support flexible, permanent housing stability for individuals and families.** Housing allowances benefit individuals and families by providing increased stability in their housing; this creates space and security for people to move away from crisis mentalities and begin planning for pathways out of poverty.

15. **Implement strategies that assist in housing women at risk of or experiencing homelessness.** We know that women are a population at increased risk of living in poverty. Women are more likely to be lone parents, to be at risk of partner abuse, and to have limited - and lower-paying - employment opportunities. Housing strategies for women are critical. We need to support existing collaborative strategies aimed at supporting women across the housing continuum.

8 https://www.london.ca/residents/Housing/Housing-Management/Pages/HomelessPreventionandHousingPlan.aspx
9 https://www.london.ca/residents/neighbourhoods/Pages/Homeless-Prevention-System.aspx

16. **Implement strategies that support housing youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.** Youth face increased risk of poverty. We must have a specific and immediate focus on youth in order to have effective early intervention and rapid rehousing.

17. **Leverage funding and invest in the regeneration of existing London and Middlesex Housing Corporation (LMHC) properties.** Some LMHC housing properties are aging and require redevelopment. Through the proposed actions of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), key stakeholders - including current residents – should be engaged in the development of plans to enhance housing and create additional affordable housing options.

What changes will we see?

- Broad, effective Housing First practices embedded in the work of organizations working on homelessness in London
- Strategies that reduce the number of landlords evicting people living with low income from rental properties
- Increased number of individuals and families achieving housing stability
- Effective implementation of women- and youth-focused housing stability strategies that seek to move people from homelessness to housing
- Tangible plans for redeveloped LMHC properties

> *"Being able to afford certain things for my kids. Being able to afford a nice home. A place for them to call home. Being able to afford to go back to college."*

TRANSPORTATION

When people talk about the impacts of poverty, transportation comes up often. This is not just about "getting around town". High quality, affordable transportation helps individuals get to what they need, such as healthcare appointments, childcare, and jobs. Transit also positively impacts the socio-cultural dimensions of poverty by providing opportunities for increased engagement in community life for people who could not otherwise get around the city. The *Shift*[10] transit strategy is an opportunity to understand public transit not only as a way to move people around town, but as a poverty reduction strategy that connects people with the opportunities they need.

What we can do in the next 12 months

18. **Reduce transit-related costs for people with low income.** Transit alleviates the impact of poverty by helping residents get to appointments and access needed services (medical appointments, social services, etc.). Transit also helps people exit poverty by connecting them to education, skill development and employment opportunities. Transit pricing and subsidy programs should be designed to use all available resources in a way that maximizes opportunities for Londoners living with low income.

19. **Engage all stakeholders, including businesses and London Transit Commission, regarding timing, routes, and accessibility.** It is important that the public transit system connects Londoners to services and employment opportunities that are otherwise inaccessible. The solution doesn't rest with a single organization, which is why engagement of all key stakeholders is important.

20. **Allow children under 12 to ride public transit free.** Families living with low-income face additional transit costs for children. Allowing children under 12 to ride free helps more families that use public transit get to where they need to go. This strategy is deliberately universal; public transit should not be a stigmatized method of transportation, and a vibrant, well-used transit system is an important part of building a healthy and inclusive community.

What changes will we see?

- A transit model that reduces costs for people with low income as much as possible, allowing for increased access to programs and services for Londoners living with low income
- An understanding of the Shift transit strategy as a way to connect Londoners to opportunities that will help them exit poverty
- Free public transit for children under 12 that encourages ridership and reduces the cost burden for London families

10 http://www.shiftlondon.ca

EARLY LEARNING & EDUCATION

Investment in early years and education that ensures children get the best start in life has dramatic downstream impacts for the community. By focusing our efforts here, we begin to build supportive, inclusive life pathways that can stop the next generation from living in poverty.

What we can do in the next 12 months

21. **Increase the number of licensed childcare spaces.** Quality childcare and early learning opportunities help provide young children with the best possible start in life. Increasing the number of childcare spaces will provide more opportunities for parents to access this vital resource.

22. **Reduce the wait time to receive childcare subsidy.** Quicker access to childcare subsidy can mean many things for parents. It can mean less time worrying about who is going to look after their children. It can mean the difference between being able to accept a job or not. It can mean knowing their child is going to have important early learning opportunities that position them for better outcomes down the road.

23. **Demonstrate active use of an equity lens in childcare quality strategies.** Childcare providers are already working to integrate cultural and diversity perspectives into their practices. Early learning is also a gender equity issue because it facilitates women's participation in the work force and allows them more control over life circumstances.

What changes will we see?

- More licensed childcare spaces
- Reduced wait times to receive childcare subsidy
- Increased demonstration of equity perspectives in childcare

"I just turned 50... It's so important for me to get my education. And it's so important for me that I'm not embarrassed."

FOOD SECURITY

Like housing, food is one of our most fundamental of basic needs. Food also has vital economic, social and cultural (and indeed, spiritual) dimensions.

Food insecurity is one of the tragedies of poverty, and emergency food programs such as food cupboards, food banks, and soup kitchens are a necessary interim measure. Over the long term, an effective approach to poverty would eliminate the need for these.

Interest in food has increased in recent years and the topic is approached from a number of perspectives: food access and the right to food, health, agriculture and agribusiness, and the local food movement, to name a few. London can be a "food city", one in which we grow, process, share and eat locally.

What we can do in the next 12 months

24. **Support development of the London & Middlesex Food Policy Council.** The comprehensive recommendations include many food security-focused recommendations. Each recommendation by itself may make a small difference, but a coordinated, collective approach to implementing them can have dramatic impacts. The momentum and energy of this issue is gathering around the London & Middlesex Food Policy Council. Organizations and individuals interested in food as it relates to poverty should engage with and support the Food Policy Council.

What changes will we see?

- Strategies developed through the Food Policy Council that relate to food security, the right to food, and London becoming a "food city"

SYSTEM CHANGE

London is fortunate to have a large number of organizations and individuals working to address the causes and the impacts of poverty; however, this can also create challenges in coordinating efforts to holistically "wrap around" individuals who could benefit from a variety of supports.

What we can do in the next 12 months

25. **Review supports and services to understand which to scale up and which to stop.** If we are faithful to our desire to support people exiting poverty, we need to be relentless in pursuing effectiveness. Resources are not unlimited; we need to be able to say "this didn't work" or "this didn't work well enough" and reallocate resources to those strategies that are making the biggest different for those who need it most.

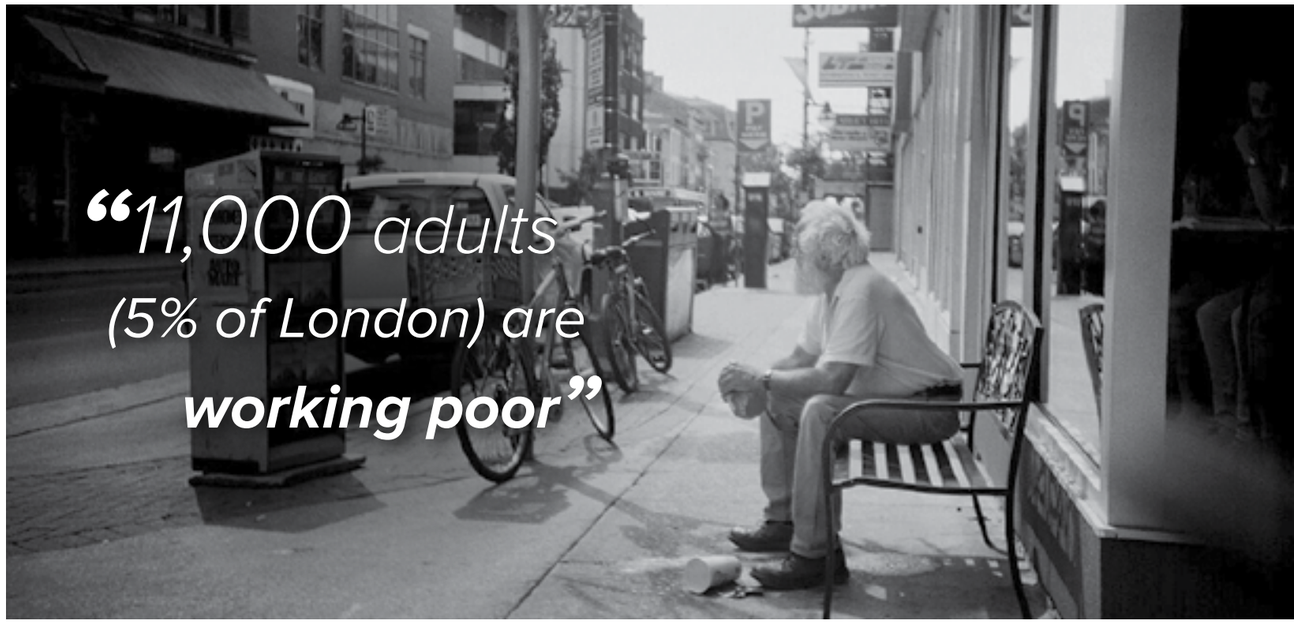
26. **Bring poverty-focused planning tables together to coordinate, collaborate, and streamline efforts.** In line with the previous recommendation, we need to collaborate and coordinate, putting effectiveness first and deciding how, as a system and community, we need to organize ourselves to maximize the impact we want to have.

27. **Engage people with lived experience in democratic processes and institutions.** True system change requires strategies that increase participation of people with lived experience with poverty in democratic processes and institutions so that they can help shape the future of the community. Strategies can focus on increasing: voter registration and voter turnout; participation in public meetings; and opportunities on boards.

What changes will we see?

- A clear understanding of which initiatives and strategies should be scaled up
- A coordinated, collaborative, and streamlined system of planning tables and working groups

IMPLEMENTING LASTING CHANGE



London is ready for big change, but success will require support from our entire community. Panel members are keen to identify how they can be helpful in the implementation of the recommendations. But not all changes will happen overnight. We need an "implementation body" to carry the conversation forward by bringing partners together, developing and overseeing implementation plans, and ensuring ongoing evaluation and accountability for the work.

Setting a firm structure at this point is premature. The recommendations were developed through deep engagement with the community over many months. How we go about making the recommendations happen should be developed in a similar way. This section therefore proposes a set of principles and an approach for how implementation can unfold.

In the end, it is up to the talents and energies of the people in the group to decide the best way to go about the work, particularly as knowledge, circumstances, and opportunities change over time. The proposals in this section may be seen as a start.

Principles for the implementation body

- People with lived experience with poverty are included as key decision-makers at every level
- Members are drawn from all areas of the community and appropriately reflect diversity with respect to gender, sexuality, age, ability, culture, and race
- Rights-based, community-based, and equity-based understandings of poverty are used to oversee the implementation of the recommendations
- The implementation body "lives" in the community and has autonomy to speak to all levels of government
- Members hold each other, and the community, mutually accountable for the implementation of the recommendations
- Members are respectful of Indigenous methodologies of data collection and interpretation
- Evidence-informed planning and assessment is used in all work
- Members will develop work plans with appropriate measurement that will provide milestones for progress

Approach to developing the implementation body

Because poverty is a community issue, we believe the implementation of the recommendations is best managed in partnership with, but outside of, municipal government. That said, the City of London is an important organization within the community and has demonstrated its support in the development of these recommendations; the City of London can help spark implementation by bringing together diverse voices and sectors, including people with lived experience with poverty, to support an initiative that will guide the implementation of the recommendations. This organization would be responsible for:

- Convening stakeholders across London to build relationships and ignite change
- Engaging with the community in the development of the implementation body using an approach that aligns with the principles outlined above
- Creating momentum by overseeing the recommendations for the first year
- Supporting the ongoing implementation of the recommendations

This approach aligns with the principles identified above. It is also a call to organizations (whether non-profits, government, funders, or businesses) and individuals to answer the call that Londoners have made. This is a whole-of-community problem and it needs a whole-of-community response.

MEASUREMENT

Measuring our progress on poverty is complex. While we know poverty is always about money, it's never just about money. We need a way to understand how we are doing as a community that reflects a more inclusive understanding of poverty's economic, social and cultural dimensions, and its foundations in human rights and equity. The proposed approach includes two complementary measures: the Low Income Measure and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

Low Income Measure

People living with income below the Low Income Measure have income that is less than half of the median income in Canada. This is about income inequality, where poverty is measured in relation to community norms and standards. Using the Low Income Measure obliges us to remember that, for all our work on the social and cultural dimensions of poverty, many people in London live with inadequate income to meet their basic needs – the economic realities of food, housing, clothing, and other costs.

More information on the Low Income Measure:
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0011x/2012001/notes/low-faible-eng.htm

Canadian Index of Wellbeing

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing tracks changes in eight quality of life categories or "domains" including community vitality, democratic engagement, education, environment, healthy populations, leisure and culture, living standards, and time use. Each domain has eight separate indicators. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing gives us a broader understanding of the overall health of our community.

More information on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing:
https://uwaterloo.ca/canadian-index-wellbeing/sites/ca.canadian-index-wellbeing/files/uploads/files/Canadian_Index_of_Wellbeing-TechnicalPaper-FINAL_0.pdf

As the implementation emerges, some adaptation of these measures may be needed to align with our understanding of poverty. These measures need to be coupled with equity impact assessments to have a clearer understanding of how the recommendations will impact different groups in different ways. Measurement should also consider different, non-monetary understandings of income (such as the value of animals acquired through hunting or trapping in some Indigenous communities, or resources gained through bartering of services).

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

The challenge before us is big, and the road is long. But this community is ready for change. We are ready to turn our energy into action and begin walking this road together.

Ending poverty means a community that thrives, with more qualified workers, a stronger economy, less financial stress on health and social systems, and less crime. This isn't just about poverty. We're talking about building a great community. For a community to be truly great, it must be great for everyone. Ending poverty means saying, 'I see you, neighbour. How can I help?' It means saying, 'Let's work together'. It means recognizing that a full life is a human right. A stronger London in a generation and a greater London in your lifetime: that's the promise of ending poverty in our community.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

Equity - People from diverse groups gaining equal opportunity to the use of goods, services, programs, facilities, public spaces and participation in social, economic, cultural and political life. It requires the removal of systemic barriers and the accommodation of differences so that individuals can benefit equally.

Ethno-cultural and ethno-racial - the shared characteristics unique to, and recognized by, a community. This includes characteristics such as cultural traditions, ancestry, language, national identity, country of origin and/or physical traits. To the extent that religion is inextricably linked to the group's racial or cultural identity, it can also be recognized as a defining characteristic.[11]

Health equity - all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives. Health inequities are those that are avoidable, unfair, and unjust; they are affected by social, economic, and environmental conditions.[12]

Indigenous - The term "Indigenous" is used in this report as an inclusive term that creates space for self-definition by individuals and communities who consider themselves related to and/or having historical continuity with peoples predating the colonial period of what is now Canada. The term encompasses First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

Racialization - "the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life."

11 http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/chrts/plcy/cps/cps-023-eng.htmland
12 http://healthequity.sfsu.edu/content/defining-health-equity

APPENDIX B: APPROACH TO DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mandate of the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty:

1. Develop a shared understanding of how to address poverty effectively in London
2. Map efforts currently underway to address poverty in London
3. Identify gaps and areas requiring significant action
4. Engage local stakeholders in dialogue on gaps and approaches to address poverty
5. Develop a set of recommendations to better coordinate our collective efforts to address issues related to poverty more effectively throughout London and the areas requiring significant action

The approach to developing recommendations was rooted in: the best available research; the Social Determinants of Health; good work already happening in London; and deep engagement with Londoners.

Initial research

September 16, 2015 - November 12, 2015

The development of recommendations began by reviewing research and highlighting the approaches and recommendations that looked most promising and would ensure the work was evidence-informed. Londoners provided additional research throughout the process to add to this initial work. A list of resources consulted is outlined in Appendix D.

Initial work also included a scan of poverty-focused initiatives and planning tables active in London. The scan provided an understanding of London's promising approaches, key stakeholders, and projects with momentum.

Engagement Phase 1: Building a shared understanding

September 16, 2015 – November 12, 2015

Engagement with stakeholders began at the outset through informal, targeted conversations with groups and individuals focused on addressing poverty in London to learn how they understood poverty and how they approached their work. Through 15 group conversations and countless individual conversations, an initial sense of London's collective approach to poverty began to take shape, which was shared with the community in the second phase of engagement.

Engagement Phase 2: Gaps, barriers, and solutions

November 12, 2015 – December 10, 2015

The second phase of engagement sought broad public input on: the shared understanding of poverty (an initial definition, goal, and framework for the recommendations); gaps and barriers to addressing poverty; and solutions to poverty in London.

Multiple approaches were used to gather feedback from the community to reflect the variety of ways in which Londoners would prefer to contribute. These approaches are summarized in the table below.

Approach	Date(s)	# of participants
Community Conversation (launch event) – public event for Londoners to come together for dialogue and to provide feedback	November 12, 2015	~ 100
Online – online survey for Londoners wishing to provide feedback digitally	November 12 – December 10, 2015	32
Partner-hosted conversations – resources provided to community partners that allowed them to host their own conversations with staff and/or residents	November 12 – December 10, 2015	~700*
Delegations – opportunity to provide formal presentations to panel members	December 4 & December 9, 2015	10
Community Conversation (closing event) – public event for Londoners to come together for dialogue and to provide feedback	December 10, 2015	~70

**32 conversations were scheduled by community partners with approximately 700 participants in total.*

Some of the participant numbers are estimates because of the fluid nature of the consultations. While participants were not asked whether they had lived experience with poverty, many chose to self-identify. Further, many partner-hosted conversations were explicitly for residents with lived experience with poverty. Participation in this engagement phase came from diverse individuals and organizations, including those with lived experience with poverty.

While the official engagement period ended December 10, some conversations occurred beyond this date. All conversations were considered in the development of the draft recommendations.

Throughout December 2015 and January 2016, the results of the engagement were analysed, themed, and used alongside research to develop comprehensive draft recommendations that reflected input from across London.

Engagement Phase 3: Reviewing the draft recommendations

February 8, 2016 – February 26, 2016

The focus of the third phase of engagement was to receive feedback on the direction of the draft recommendations. Because the recommendations were comprehensive, Londoners were asked to prioritize them by identifying:

- which recommendations were most urgent (those that need to happen right away);
- which recommendations were most important (those that will have the biggest impact, but may not happen quickly); and
- whether any recommendations were missing.

Similar to the second phase of engagement, multiple approaches were used to gather feedback from the community to reflect the variety of ways in which Londoners would prefer to contribute. These approaches are summarized in the table below.

Approach	Date(s)	# of participants
Online – online survey for Londoners wishing to provide feedback digitally	February 8 – February 26, 2016	168
Partner-hosted conversations – resources provided to community partners that allowed them to host their own conversations with staff and/or residents	February 8 – February 26, 2016	~175*
Community Conversation – public event for Londoners to come together for dialogue and to provide feedback	February 23, 2016	~ 70

**18 conversations were scheduled by community partners with approximately 175 participants in total.*

In addition to these conversations, panel members presented the draft recommendations to a number of large groups.

The results of all engagement feedback and all research were incorporated into the development of the final report.

APPENDIX C:
COMPREHENSIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in this report are built on the foundations of the Panel's approach, which was rooted in: the Social Determinants of Health; the best available research; good work already happening in London; and deep engagement with over 1,000 Londoners. The complexity of poverty's causes and impacts means that there is often overlap between categories.

1.0 CHANGING MINDSETS

FIRST 12 MONTHS

1.1 Develop a campaign to educate and engage the community on poverty that
- gathers and shares stories of people with lived experience with poverty;
- counteracts stigma toward, and recognizes the strengths of, Londoners living in poverty;
- confronts mental health stigma and its relationship to poverty
- demonstrates how the status quo is harmful to all of us, and is ultimately more costly;
- encourages community ownership of developing solutions to poverty in London; and
- provides resources for Londoners to learn about how they can help their neighbours

1.2 Grow existing awareness and engagement initiatives

1.3 Increase the number of organizations providing Indigenous Cultural Safety training

1.4 Increase the number of organizations providing Cultural Competency training

1.5 Collaborate with school boards to build on existing resources that help students understand the impacts of poverty and to reduce stigma.

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

1.6 Strengthen relationships and increase partnerships between municipal leaders, Indigenous peoples and community partners to create an Indigenous poverty strategy

1.7 Create a "Made in London" campaign that encourages residents to think and buy local in order to support the local economy and increase local employment

1.8 Publicly acknowledge support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action's recommendations and use the findings to educate Londoners and address systemic racism and discrimination

1.9 Strengthen programs to counteract violence against women and support National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

2.0 INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

FIRST 12 MONTHS

2.1 Use *London's Community Economic Roadmap*[13] to accelerate skills training programs that meet local labour market needs

2.2 Become a Basic Income Guarantee pilot site

2.3 Develop and implement hiring practices aimed at increased diversity

2.4 Implement social procurement policies at public institutions

2.5 Establish the Living Wage figure for London

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

2.6 Support the implementation of the *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario*[14] recommendations, including linking social assistance rates to inflation and allowing individuals to retain more of their assets before accessing social assistance

2.7 Advocate for adequate, liveable rates for people accessing Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program

2.8 Advocate for adequate, liveable rates for older adults accessing social assistance and pension programs, including:
- Canadian Pension Plan
- Old Age Security
- Guaranteed Income Supplement
- Guaranteed Annual Income System

2.9 Evaluate provincial minimum wage levels in the context of the Low Income Measure and use as a tool to address poverty where appropriate

2.10 Promote the business case for employers to pay a Living Wage and acknowledge those who are already doing so

2.11 Urge Federal and Provincial partners to create more employment training programs using an equity lens to target specific demographics with increased barriers to work (e.g. persons with disabilities, persons with mental health or addictions challenges, etc.)

2.12 Support provincial efforts to enhance legislation to support workers in maintaining employment, such as provincial Bill 177, which provides survivors of sexual or domestic violence with up to 10 days of paid leave to deal with the harm they experienced

2.13 Encourage employers to consider skills and knowledge in the absence of credentials (e.g. diplomas and degrees)

2.14 Work with employers to increase flexibility in workplace for those with family responsibilities including basic benefits and sick time

13 https://www.london.ca/business/Resources/corporate-investments/Pages/Community-Economic-Road-Map.aspx
14 http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/documents/en/mcss/social/publications/social_assistance_review_final_report.pdf

2.15 Collaborate with employers to close the wage gap for Indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQ, differently abled, and racialized communities

2.16 Support initiatives aimed at increasing employment opportunities for newcomers in London, such as:

- advocating for recognition of non-Canadian education, credentials, and work experience;
- promoting networking opportunities for newcomers;
- increasing awareness of the existence and harmful effects of newcomer exploitation through the “informal economy”, where newcomers are paid too little or not at all;
- expanding employment initiatives focusing on “soft skills” (communication, interpersonal skills, etc.); and
- increasing employer awareness of cultural and religious holidays as a way to enhance cultural competency in the workplace.

2.17 Advocate for the elimination of the cost of applying to have a criminal record expunged to remove a financial barrier for people looking to find work

2.18 Promote and invest in opportunities for entrepreneurs living with low income, such as microloans

2.19 Create more supports for Londoners looking to develop new social enterprises

2.20 Provide supports to address bad credit by collaborating with the financial sector to provide banking alternatives and credit counseling, eliminating the need for predatory lending

2.21 Reorganize individual social assistance funds, subsidies and vouchers to make it easier for people to access resources

2.22 Reduce clawbacks for people moving from social assistance to paid employment

2.23 Bring service providers together to develop a plan that coordinates supports for people transitioning from social assistance to work or school

2.24 Review job creation strategies in all sectors to ensure a focus on full-time, permanent work with adequate pay

2.25 Advocate for increased enforcement of child support payments

3.0 HEALTH

FIRST 12 MONTHS

3.1 Develop and implement a coordinated local mental health and addictions strategy, collaborating with Southwest Local Health Integration Network and other key stakeholders

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

3.2 Reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction and create a campaign to support connecting people with appropriate services

3.3 Advocate for extended health and dental benefit programs, including Ontario Drug Benefit and Non-Insured Health Benefit, for a longer period of time for those transitioning off social assistance

3.4 Expand local no-cost dental programs for Londoners living with low income

3.5 Connect primary care providers accepting patients with Londoners who need care and live with low income including primary care

3.6 Working with the South West Local Health Integration Network, use health equity lens to increase access to care for vulnerable people

3.7 Advocate for the expansion of Community Health Centres[15]

3.8 Support implementation of proven outreach-based family support program

4.0 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & HOUSING

FIRST 12 MONTHS

4.1 Build a culture of practice around effective implementation of the Housing First approach

4.2 Engage landlords in keeping more people housed

4.3 Invest in housing allowances to support flexible, permanent housing stability for individuals and families

4.4 Implement strategies that assist in housing women at risk of or experiencing homelessness

4.5 Implement strategies that support housing youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness

4.6 Leverage funding and invest in the regeneration of existing London and Middlesex Housing Corporation properties

15 For more on Community Health Centres, see https://www.aohc.org/community-health-centres

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

4.7 Continue to implement London's *Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan*[16] which includes increasing the stock of affordable housing and supportive housing

4.8 Increase physical accessibility in affordable housing

4.9 Support mixed income and intensification housing development policies to avoid creating large areas with low-income housing

4.10 Enhance community safety in social housing

4.11 Create a coordinated response with supports and protections for vulnerable people living in the community

4.12 Continue to support the evolution of emergency shelters to improve diversion, rapid housing, and specialization

4.13 Expand the capacity of the Housing Stability Bank, which provides emergency rental and utility assistance

4.14 Expand supportive housing approaches for people with disabilities

4.15 Connect with healthcare to work with older adults with complex needs to develop attainable housing strategies responsive to their needs, creating spaces for those who are residing in hospital or do not qualify for long term care

4.16 Partner with Indigenous community to create housing plan

4.17 Coordinate available supports for people transitioning between housing options

4.18 Implement strategies to assist with start-up costs of housing (furniture, moving, household items)

4.19 Encourage organizations (e.g. faith organizations, social entrepreneurs) to invest in attainable housing to increase housing supply

4.20 Clear the social housing waitlist and reinvest resources in housing that keep the waitlist clear

4.21 Encourage private sector to increase supply of attainable rental housing

4.22 Streamline the process by which affordable housing is accessed to help people get housed more quickly

16 https://www.london.ca/residents/Housing/Housing-Management/Pages/HomelessPreventionandHousingPlan.aspx

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

FIRST 12 MONTHS

5.1 Reduce transit-related costs for people with low income through consideration of pricing and subsidy models

5.2 Engage all stakeholders, including businesses and London Transit Commission, regarding timing, routes, and accessibility to help connect people to services, supports, and employment opportunities

5.3 Allow children under 12 to ride public transit free to help families with transit costs and encourage ridership

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

5.4 Increase accessibility of transit for persons with disabilities

5.5 Increase safe, affordable transportation options, such as improved cycling lanes and cycling infrastructure, that serve people who live, work, or seek services in London" at end of sentence

5.6 Explore innovative approaches to transportation, such as rideshare programs

5.7 Introduce discounted bus pass for youth (13 to 18 years old)

6.0 EARLY LEARNING & EDUCATION

FIRST 12 MONTHS

6.1 Increase the number of licensed childcare spaces

6.2 Reduce the wait time to receive childcare subsidy

6.3 Demonstrate active use of an equity lens in childcare quality strategies

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

6.4 Increase capacity of childcare sector to address mental health issues

6.5 Advocate for increased investment by all levels of government in early years education and literacy programming

6.6 Support development of national childcare strategy

6.7 Advocate for increases to childcare fee subsidy for low income families

6.8 Expand elementary school initiatives that increase awareness of all post-secondary options

6.9 Advocate for improved quality of parental leave benefits, including exploration of flexible leave times

6.10 Expand mentorship and support programs for new parents

6.11 Expand matched savings programs to help families save for education

6.12 Create flexible childcare spaces outside of daytime working hours

6.13 Develop a community strategy to eliminate financial barriers for school-based extra-curricular activities

6.14 Implement coordinated approach to education, building on proven projects in London and other communities, to increase high school graduation rates

6.15 Develop a community strategy to eliminate financial barriers to achieving GED (General Educational Development)

6.16 Collaborate with post-secondary institutions to identify ways to support students living in poverty

6.17 Increase availability of financial literacy and "basic life skills" training for all Londoners, including children and youth

7.0 FOOD SECURITY

FIRST 12 MONTHS

7.1 Support development of the London & Middlesex Food Policy Council

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

7.2 Support campaigns that promote healthy, local food

7.3 Until emergency food sources are no longer required, ensure fresh, high quality food is easily available (convenient locations and hours) to those who need it

7.4 Expand programs that support residents shopping and cooking together to save money, such as collective kitchens

7.5 Expand local food literacy programs for all ages to increase knowledge of affordable, healthy food options

7.6 Support local policies and strategies that encourage more community gardens and urban farms on public and private land to provide space for residents to come together, volunteer, and grow their own food

7.7 Work with farmers to provide more fresh food to people who need it most

7.8 Reclaim quality, usable food from grocery stores and restaurants in a cost-effective way

7.9 Increase availability of gift cards, food cards, coupons, price-matching, and fresh food vouchers that provide healthy, culturally appropriate food

7.10 Work with local growers and service providers to distribute seeds and soil during growing season, paired with education on growing food

7.11 Build on research on "food deserts" (areas of the city with little or no access to grocery stores) and support business models that address them (e.g. markets, fresh food in convenience stores, etc.)

8.0 SYSTEM CHANGE

FIRST 12 MONTHS

8.1 Review supports and services to understand which to scale up and which to stop

8.2 Bring poverty-focused planning tables together to coordinate, collaborate, and streamline efforts

8.3 Engage people with lived experience in democratic processes and institutions

BEYOND 12 MONTHS

8.4 Use these recommendations as London's mandate to advocate for policy change from provincial and federal governments

8.5 Build strong, engaged, community-driven neighbourhoods by continuing to implement the *London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy*[17]

8.6 Promote London's "community hubs" (such as Family Centres, resources centres and libraries) and online resources to help families connect to supports

8.7 Develop strategies and services to address unmet needs identified through the review of supports and services

8.8 Identify ways to streamline and simplify access to support

8.9 Strengthen the culture of collaboration across all organizations and sectors

8.10 Research the viability of Neighbourhood Economic Development Corporations that provide community-driven opportunities to access resources that strengthen neighbourhoods and encourage community participation

8.11 Promote charitable gift-giving toward programs with sustained, transformative impacts on poverty

8.12 Build more public gathering spaces (e.g. recreation centres, parks) to increase access to space for unstructured recreation and space for community to come together

8.13 Recognize Londoners' commitment to volunteerism and a caring community and build upon these efforts

17 http://www.london.ca/neighbourhoods

APPENDIX D:
STATISTICS ON POVERTY IN LONDON

This appendix provides data about the low-income population in the City of London. The data are gathered from *Poverty Trends in London*[18] and the *London's Anti-Poverty Strategy Literature Review*[19]. Some data sources are older due to limitations in available data.

WHO IS MOST LIKELY EXPERIENCING POVERTY?

The following populations in London are more likely to be at risk of living in poverty as a result of having low income:

- Lone parent families particularly those led by women
- Children and youth
- Older adults
- Working poor
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer
- People with disabilities or mental health issues.
- Indigenous peoples
- Newcomers
- Ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups
- Women

Further, in London, a 2011 National Household Survey reveals that the prevalence of low income varies across age groups[20]:

20.9% for individuals less than 18 years of age

21.7% for individuals less than 6 years of age

17.3% for individuals 18 to 64 years of age

7.9% for individuals 65 years of age and over

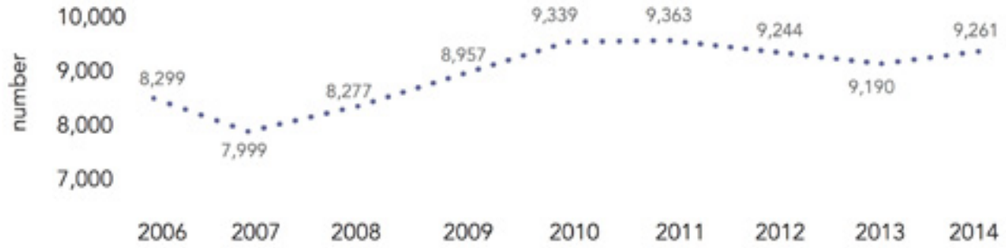
18 http://londoncyn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Poverty-Trends-in-London.pdf
19 https://www.london.ca/About-London/community-statistics/social-issues/Documents/Poverty%20in%20London.pdf
20 http://www.london.ca/About-London/community-statistics/social-issues/Documents/10-%20income%20and%20earnings.pdf

CHILD AND YOUTH POVERTY IS INCREASING

The number of children living in families who are relying on social assistance has been increasing at a rate of 2.2% per year since 2006. By 2014, there were 962 more children on the caseload than in 2006.

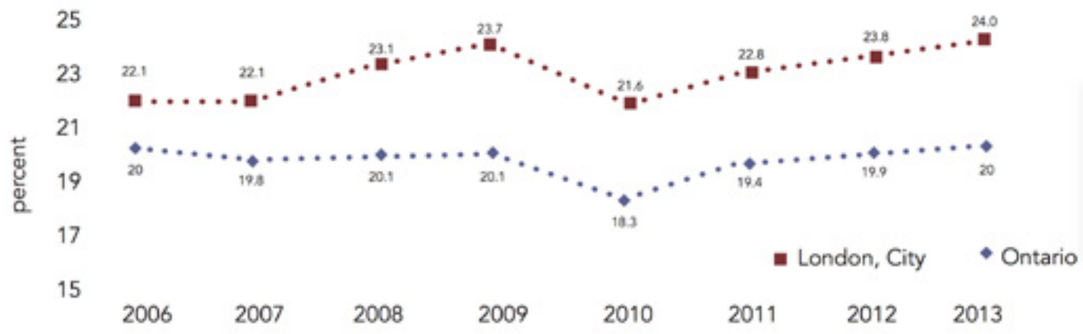
In London, there is an overall upward trend in the number and proportion of children and youth with income below the Low Income Measure. The number of children living in households with low income has been increasing an average of 0.7% per year.

London and Middlesex Social Assistance Caseloads: Children Under 18



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services. Social Assistance Trends Quarterly Report. June.

Children and Youth Below the LIM, After Tax

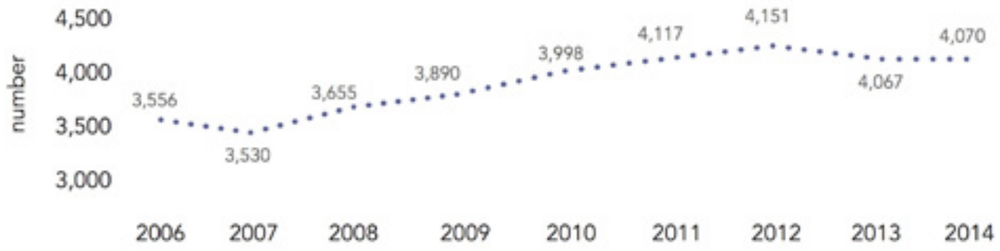


Source: Statistics Canada. Small Area Administrative Data. Table 18 provided through the Community Data Program

POVERTY AMONG LONE PARENT FAMILIES IS INCREASING

The number of lone parent families, the vast majority of which are led by women, receiving social assistance has increased at an average rate of 1.7% per year since 2006. By 2014, there were over 500 more lone parent families receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program than in 2006.

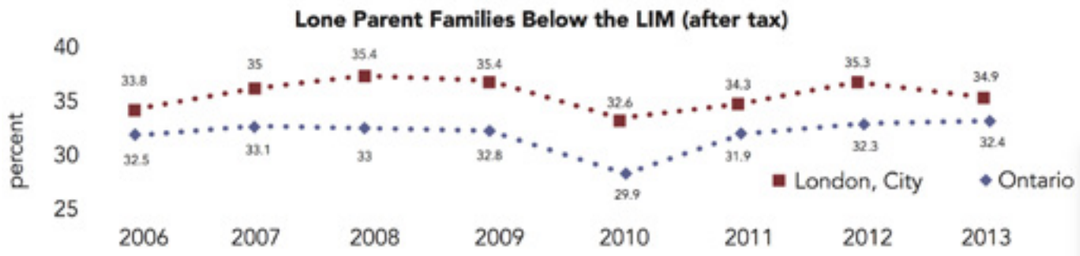
London and Middlesex Social Assistance Caseloads: Lone Parents



Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services. Social Assistance Trends Quarterly Report. June.

In London, the number and percent of lone parents with income below the Low Income Measure has fluctuated over the years; however, the overall trend has been upward. Compared to 2006, in 2013, there are 6% more lone parents with low income. The total number of lone parents increased by 2%.

Lone Parent Families Below the LIM (after tax)



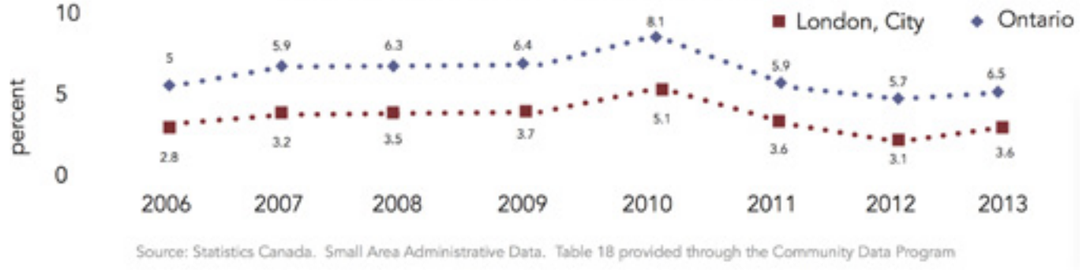
Source: Statistics Canada. Small Area Administrative Data. Table 18 provided through the Community Data Program

POVERTY AMONG OLDER ADULTS IS INCREASING

Since 2006, the number and proportion of older adults living below the Low Income Measure has increased. There are relatively fewer low income older adults in London compared to Ontario.

- Low income rates increased the most for elderly women
- According to tax filer data, 3.5% of Londoners age 65 and older received social assistance in 2010, increasing to 4.8% in 2011 and 2012. On average, seniors received an average of almost $2,900 in social assistance benefits, likely as a top-up to other income received
- Older adults in London had an after-tax median income of $28,430 in 2010, increasing to $29,900 in 2012

Percent of Older Adults Below the LIM (after tax)



Source: Statistics Canada. Small Area Administrative Data. Table 18 provided through the Community Data Program

ROUGHLY 11,000 ADULTS ARE "WORKING POOR"

Working poverty is defined as individuals with an after-tax income below the Low Income Measure (LIM-AT) and earning an annual individual working income of over $3,000.

In 2010 and 2011, roughly 11,000 adults in London were working poor, representing approximately 5% of the population (full-time post-secondary students living on their own are not included in the working poor count). Across Ontario, 5.5% of all adults age 18+ were working poor.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities have higher low-income rates than persons without disabilities in all of the 46 cities examined in the *Urban Poverty Project*. Low-income rates for this population ranged from 14% to 46% compared to low-income rates ranging from 7% to 32% for persons without disabilities[21].

In London, 21% of the population reported having some type of activity limitation or disability on their census form; 23.6% of this group have incomes below the LICO. Persons with disabilities in London comprise 26.9% of the low-income population.

INDIGENOUS STATUS

In reporting statistics on Indigenous people, we are mindful that data limitations exist when measuring urban Indigenous populations. That said, we know that Indigenous people are overrepresented in the low-income population. In one conversation with Londoners with lived experience with poverty, it was noted that over half of the participants self-identified as Indigenous, while the Indigenous population makes up only 2% of the total population of London. We estimate that at any given time, there are at least 10,000 people who self-identify as Indigenous living in London.

In London, 41% of Indigenous people live with low-income. The proportion of Indigenous children age 0 to 14 living below the LICO is even higher at 46.5% (compared to 20.4% of all children age 0 to 14). Nationally, 40% of off-reserve Indigenous children live with low income.

London's Indigenous low income rate of 41% is much higher compared to other municipalities, Ontario, and Canada (ranging from 25% to 34%).

POVERTY AMONG ETHNO-CULTURAL AND ETHNO-RACIAL GROUPS & NEWCOMERS

According to 2011 National Household Survey data, there are 15,165 ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups with low-income in London. Ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups in London are more likely than ethno-cultural and ethno-racial groups to live with low-income. National research indicates that visible minority populations often face many barriers in the job market which restrict access to permanent, skilled and well-paying jobs.

Just over one-fifth (21%) of London's newcomers live with low-income. They make up one quarter (26.6%) of London's low-income population.

21 https://www.london.ca/About-London/community-statistics/social-issues/Documents/Poverty%20in%20London.pdf

According to the *Urban Poverty Project* (2007), even when education is taken into account, "more than one of every five visible minority immigrants with a university education was found in…the poorest 20% of Canadians" indicating that visible minority groups are unable to translate their skills and education into proper compensation, due in no small part to ethnic and racial discrimination".

WOMEN

In 2014, 52% of people receiving Ontario Works in London were women. Lone parent households, the majority of which are led by women, accessing Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program grew by 500 over the period 2008 to 2014.

Pay inequities persist between men and women. The most recent Statistics Canada data (2011) shows that the gender wage gap in Ontario is 26% for full–time, full–year workers. This means that for every $1.00 earned by a male worker, a female worker earns 74 cents.[22] Low income rates increased for elderly women, reflecting "lower wages, more part-time work and career gaps…as well as the effect of longer female life expectancy"[23]

22 http://www.payequity.gov.on.ca/en/about/pubs/genderwage/wagegap.php
23 OECD. Pensions at a Glance 2013. OECD and G20 Indicators. Canada. November 26, 2013

APPENDIX E:
RESOURCES CONSULTED

This is a partial list of resources accessed in the development of recommendations. A vital resource throughout has been the direct contributions of Londoners, whether providing feedback at community conversations, online, through delegations, or through detailed submissions.

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