



# Regional Board Report

**TO:** Regional Board

**FROM:** Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

**DATE:** February 5, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Central Okanagan Wellness & Poverty Reduction Strategy

**Voting Entitlement:** *All Directors – Unweighted Corporate Vote – Simple Majority – LGA 208.1*

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**Purpose:** To request Board support for RDCO staff to work with the Regional Community Leadership Committee to submit a funding application for a UBCM – Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program grant and to further be involved in the development of a regional poverty reduction strategy.

## **Executive Summary:**

In March 2019, the Province of British Columbia released their poverty reduction strategy called TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Mandated through the Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, the strategy set targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in BC by at least 25%, and the child poverty rate by at least 50%, by 2024. This strategy is based on four principles: affordability, opportunity, reconciliation and social inclusion.

The Province has made funding available through UBCM intended to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Staff is seeking direction on preparation of an application for funding that would assist with the development of a regional strategy.

On behalf of the partnering communities in the region, the RDCO would serve as the applicant for a Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Grant for up to \$150,000. Further, the partners are requesting that the RDCO commit a staff liaison to serve on the Regional Community Leadership Committee for the Regional Wellness Strategy development process. A Board resolution supporting RDCO's grant application for this funding is required as part of the application package.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:**

**THAT** the Regional Board receives for information the Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis report;

**AND FURTHER THAT** the Regional Board supports the Regional District's on-going involvement in the development of a regional strategy as a member on the Regional Community Leadership Committee.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:**

**THAT** the Regional Board approves an application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities for a \$150,000 grant for the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Respectfully Submitted:



Todd Cashin  
Director of Community Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Brian Reardon, CAO

*Prepared by: Todd Cashin, Director of Community Services*

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<b>Strategic Plan:</b>	Supporting preparation of the application supports the Regional Board Strategic Priorities 2019-2022 with respect to "Sustainable Communities" to initiate and support efforts to create a healthy built environment in which all people throughout the region enjoy access to a diverse range of housing options, remain safe in the face of emergencies and experience a high quality of life.
<b>Policy:</b>	Supporting preparation of the application complies with the Regional Growth Strategy: Our Health, Our Food, Our Housing.
<b>Legal/Statutory Authority:</b>	Mandated through the <i>Poverty Reduction Strategy Act</i> , the Province has created a poverty reduction strategy called TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy." The intent of the Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program is to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy.

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**Background:****2020 Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program**

In March 2019, the Province of BC released their poverty reduction strategy called TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy. Mandated through the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*, the strategy set targets to reduce the overall poverty rate in British Columbia by at least 25%, and the child poverty rate by at least 50%, by 2024. *TogetherBC* is based on four principles: affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion. These principles guided the priority action areas that form the core of the strategy.

The intent of the Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program is to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy. The Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program is a suite of funding programs intended to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy. Funding is provided by the Province of BC and is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). To support poverty reduction at the local level, the Province has provided \$5 million over three years. The application deadline is February 28, 2020. The two different funding streams available are: Poverty Reduction Plans & Assessments and Poverty Reduction Action.

At the provincial level, BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy *TogetherBC* identifies six priority action areas: housing; families, children and youth; education and training; employment; income supports; and social supports.

### Project History

In 2017, the Central Okanagan Poverty Reduction Committee (COPRC) was established with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy with an upstream focus. Supported by funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership, the committee set the stage for a community-driven, regional approach to addressing poverty.

The COPRC gathered insights from families with lived experience of poverty, provided a systems planning workshop and developed a work plan to guide strategy development. The COPRC determined that there were specific requirements needed to move ahead into strategy development including a poverty analysis, significant community engagement, further involvement of those with lived and living experience of poverty, and a governance structure and sufficient resources to plan and execute a strategy.

With additional grant funding in 2019, the COPRC contracted Urban Matters to create a regional community poverty analysis informed by lived experience and key engagement from stakeholders including Interior Health, municipal governments, local First Nations and the Regional District of the Central Okanagan. The analysis provides baseline data and insights into poverty at the community and regional level, and identifies eight key priorities.

These priorities will help shape the next phase of this project, the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Key stakeholders involved in the analysis reconvened in January 2020 for the presentation of the report, and those present agreed that pursuit of a regional strategy is valuable to each community.

### Alignment

A regional focus provides considerable benefits to Central Okanagan communities. A regional strategy provides for efficiencies in resources, engagement processes and advocacy. Through the City of Kelowna's Journey Home process, the community identified the need for a regional approach to complex social issues, as people move throughout the region for services, employment, childcare and housing. A regional strategy can create an action plan on policies and structures at the regional level, while building capacity within each community to address their unique needs and priorities.

This strategy is complementary to many action areas within the Regional Growth Strategy priorities, including the development of a Regional Housing Strategy project, identified in Community Services 2020 workplan. A Regional Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy could run in parallel and provide a synergy with this project.

Further, the strategy aligns with the Regional Board priority of Community Sustainability to initiate and support efforts to create a healthy built environment in which all people throughout the region enjoy access to a diverse range of housing options, remain safe in the face of emergencies and experience a high quality of life.

A Regional Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy would also align with other priorities and strategies identified by our partner communities, such as Community Child Care Planning in the region, the Regional Transportation Master Plan, the City of Kelowna's Journey Home Strategy and Housing Needs Assessment.

### UBCM Funding

This collaborative grant application would be with the District of Lake Country, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, the City of Kelowna and the Regional District of the Central Okanagan and would be used for the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The application deadline for this grant funding is February 28, 2020. The maximum grant available is \$150,000.00 and applicants will be advised of the status of their application within 60 days of the application deadline.

If the funding application is approved in May 2020, the Regional Partnership Committee on Poverty will work in partnership with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan to provide community direction, oversight and feedback throughout the strategy development process.

The Regional District has been fortunate to receive UBCM grants recently for EOC Upgrades, ESS Equipment, and Floodplain Mapping. The Regional Board recently passed a resolution supporting a RDCO application for UBCM's evacuation route planning funding stream and floodplain mapping. Staff does not anticipate that this application will impact other previously submitted applications as the funding is from different streams.

### **Financial Considerations:**

As the primary applicant, the Regional District of the Central Okanagan will accept responsibility to apply for, receive and manage the grant funding on behalf of the regional partners. The RDCO will assume responsibility for the completion of the project, reporting requirements and maintaining proper fiscal management.

### **Organizational Issues:**

Should the funding request be approved, the RDCO would be responsible for working with the Regional Community Leadership Committee to complete and submit the application. And if the funding application is successful, the RDCO would also participate on the Regional Community Leadership Committee for the development of the strategy. This would require a staff liaison for the duration of the strategy development project (approximately one year) to provide regular updates to the Regional Board.

Find attached the terms of reference for the Regional Community Leadership Committee which will help guide the strategy development and includes representation from the partner municipalities and service organizations that work in this sector.

Attachment(s):

- Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis

- Regional Community Partnership Committee - Terms of Reference