

Compilation of priority actions
to reduce and eliminate poverty in the NWT
2010-13

Introduction:

Participants from communities across the NWT took part in a number of workshops and round tables and a formal consultation on poverty in the last three years. They identified priorities, goals and objectives for action for their communities. These priorities are included in the six reports listed below.

The No Place for Poverty workshop in 2010 and the Targeting Poverty workshop in 2013 used a 'dot' voting system to rank importance of recommendations. The number of votes cast is in brackets.

Below is an attempt to compile the priorities identified and group them according to the five pillars of the anti-poverty strategy.¹ The numbers after the statements refer to the report(s) in which the recommendations appeared.

The reports are:

1. No Place For Poverty Workshop Report (2010)
2. What We Heard from Northerners About Poverty (dated August 2011, tabled Feb. 2012)
3. Anti-Poverty Strategy Round Table – Hay River (June 2012)
4. Anti-Poverty Strategy Round Table – Inuvik (October 2012) – restated Hay River actions
5. Targeting Poverty Workshop Report (2013)
6. Anti-Poverty Roundtable (2013) – report not yet available, but there are notes on priorities

Priorities by pillar:

Pillar 1 – Children and Family Support

¹ Building on the Strengths of Northerners, (Tabled 2013)

- Implement and fund a quality, accessible, and affordable early childhood program. (1, 3, 6)
- Follow the Quebec model for accessible, affordable childcare (10 votes). (1)
- Improve pay and streamline training for early childhood workers. (1)
- Every NWT community will offer a range of family resources and staff to support children's development. (3)
- A variety of nutrition programs will be available to children and families in all NWT communities. (3)
- Homes in the NWT will be violence-free. (3)

Short-term goals (4)

- Expand prenatal/postnatal programs.
- Expand the number of school healthy food programs (breakfast and lunch).
- Expand the community garden programs.
- Improve access to daycare subsidy.

Medium-term goals (4)

- Increase core funding for youth centres.
- Expand on programs for youth.
- Community based counselling for families and residential school survivors.
- Mentoring/role model program for young people.
- Expand the number of family resource centres.
- Expand workplace daycare and before/after school programs.
- Marketing campaign to change attitudes on family violence.
- Improve the quality of day care worker programs.
- GNWT employer of choice – lead by example and create day care spaces for workers.
- Expand healthy family program.

Long-term goals (4)

- Increase salary/training opportunities for childcare providers.
- Debt reduction/financial planning program.
- Every community will have a family resource centre.
- Establish universal daycare.
- Expand early learning programs in all communities.
- Improve employment standards to provide for sick leave.

- **Short-term priority:** Implement a living wage specific to each NWT community by 2014. (14 votes) (5)
- **Long-term priority:** Implement and fund a quality, accessible, and affordable early childhood program (based on the Quebec model because this model works). (45 votes) (5)
- **Other short-term priorities (5)**
- Train a workforce of early childhood educators to be ready to take new jobs created in early childhood programs. Fund Aurora College in the next budget to run the program. Target 20 grads per year for 4 years. (3 votes)
- Increase core funding for early childhood development incrementally by 25% over the next four years to achieve the Quebec model, while recognizing varied work hours and the need for workers to make a living wage. (1 vote)
- Implement an educational/awareness program for youth of child-bearing age to teach parenting skills. Pilot the program in 10 communities within the next 3 years. (1 vote)
- Pilot a government-funded home-based outreach program to assist parents in need in the same 10 communities. (as above)
- By September 2014, revamp child and family support policies to give priority to housing, adequate nutrition and mental health services as required for families.
- **Other Long-term Priorities (5)**
- Ensure that every family is adequately housed and has food on their table. (1 vote)
- Put a community-based food security program in place to ensure healthy food.
- Ensure that all parents are equipped to raise healthy and happy children.

Pillar 2 – Healthy Living and Reaching our Potential

- Improve food security with public policy. (1)
- Make addictions treatment aftercare available in every community. (1)
- Make grade school education more relevant. (1)
- Look at net income instead of gross income for all social programs (5 votes). (1)
- Focus on social issues such as mental health, addictions, residential school impacts, and gambling (4 votes). (1)
- Subsidize traditional foods not alcohol (1 vote). (1)
- Review income thresholds (1 vote). (1)

- Barriers to learning will be known and resources allocated to promote self-sufficiency. (3)
- Appropriate local supports will be in place to reduce addictive behaviours and support mental health. (3)
- Standards for quality education will be followed in all NWT communities. (3)
- A cohesive approach with more opportunities and partnerships for pre-employment training, life skills, and literacy development will be available throughout the NWT. (3)

Short-term goals (4)

- Link to the mental health strategy already established.
- Research/plan day programs for persons with disabilities.
- Healthy foods in all schools.
- Modularize ALBE courses.
- Explore role model programs.
- Delivery of life skills and financial life skills training.
- Establish a community services/productive choices database.

Medium-term goals (4)

- Tax credit for adult fitness.
- No cost (free) smoking cessation program.
- Return to work legislation.
- Realistic food subsidy programs.
- Increase kids sport programming.
- Increase the number of effective youth programs.

Long-term goals (4)

- Detox treatment centre for all communities.
- Drug and alcohol programs in all communities.
- Tax incentive for healthy lifestyles.
- Review drug/alcohol laws.
- Provide financial support for ALBE students.
- Health workers in every community.
- **Short-term priority:** Provide more school-based prevention and awareness programs (preschool to Grade 12) on such issues as alcohol and drugs, family violence, and teen pregnancy. (21 votes) (5)
- **Long-term priority:** Provide core and multi-year funding to community agencies so as to reduce the 'bureaucratic' burden. (6 votes) (5)

Other Short-term Priorities (5)

- Support on-the land camps.
- Fund workshops on mental health/healthy living.
- Fund community-based initiatives.
- Fund and encourage the use of varied communications approaches/tools.
- Increase support services to communities including mental health, rehabilitation, child services, and parenting and life skills.
- Fund adult learners so they can develop as individuals.
- Train service providers and front-line workers.
- Provide outreach workers/services and community specific web-based information to improve access to services.
- Review per capita funding for schools so small schools are not penalized.
- Provide role models/mentoring for children and youth.
- Promote parent and school engagement and accountability.

Other Long-term Priorities (5)

- Integrate government programs and services at the community level.
- Reduce alcohol/drug abuse and family violence.
- Better integrate inmates back into the community.

Pillar 3 – Safe and Affordable Housing

- Pilot the Housing First public housing model. (6)
- Increase supply and quality of housing units. (1, 2)
- Address housing issues, namely review affordable housing including rent structure; cap rents; support home ownership; increase access; and increase transitional housing for all in need (17 votes) (2)
- Increase program flexibility to allow people to get out of debt (11 votes). (2)
- Linkages will be made to the 2011 shelter review, *Building for the Future: Northern Solutions for Northern Housing*, to advocate for changes that benefit low-income people/families. (3)
- Tax incentives, subsidies, and other initiatives will be provided to increase the stock of affordable housing and overcome barriers in market communities. (3)

- Community housing plans will support new uses, repairs, renovations and other ways to better use existing housing stock to meet current needs. (3)
- In small communities without market housing, construction standards will be enforced, access to home repair programs will be easier and more understandable, and funding will be available to repair and purchase existing houses. (3)
- Local housing organization staff will increase support to tenants with arrears. (3)
- Incentives will be increased to enable seniors to stay in their own homes. (3)
- All tenants will be provided with opportunities to learn about their rights under the *Residential Tenancies Act*. (3)
- The *Residential Tenancies Act* will be amended to put time and percentage limits on rent increases. (3)
- Shelter programs and advice will be available to people 16 -19 years of age. (3)
- Efforts will be made to remove the stigma and cultivate a sense of ownership and pride among people living in public housing. (3)
- The federal government will be lobbied to extend the exit deadline and re-engage in the provision of social housing. (3)
- Additional skill development and training for local contractors/trades people will be provided. (3)
- Builders will be encouraged to develop a variety of rental housing types and sizes including emergency and transitional housing. (3)
- The *Residential Tenancies Act* will be amended to better meet tenant's needs and realities. (3)

Short-term goals (4)

- Increase support to tenants in arrears (credit counselling) to help them get out of debt.
- Expand the Arctic Energy Alliance programs.
- Provide training to people to maintain their own homes.
- Tax incentives to provide more rental units and upgrade existing ones.
- Shelter advice for youth 16-19 years of age in all communities.
- Develop transitional housing 16-19 years of age.
- Develop incentives to encourage housing tenants to have pride in their homes and to conserve energy.

Medium-term goals (4)

- Develop standards for emergency shelters.
- Increase core funding for emergency shelters to enable them to be open 24/7.
- Develop transitional (supported) housing for 16-19 years delivered by NGO on contract.
- Introduce flexible qualifications for social public housing that help people remain housed.
- Introduce legislation to limit rent increases by unit, per year.

Long-term goals (4)

- Research and plan ways to allow elders/persons with disabilities to stay in their home rather than go into long term care.
- Review residential tenancy act.

Short-term priority: Pilot the 'Housing First' public housing model. (25 votes) (5)

Long-term priority: Put 'system navigators' in place in each community to facilitate access to appropriate housing and other services. (5 votes) (5)

Other Short-term Priorities (5)

- Change or adapt housing policies to reflect current community realities. (4 votes)
- Put legislation in place to allow for secondary suites to provide more housing options.
- Support foster and group homes.
- Educate people in need about housing options and responsibilities.

Other Long-term Priorities (5)

- Invest in more transitional housing programs.
- Encourage greater flexibility in building designs to better meet local needs.
- Invest in more short-term emergency shelters.

Pillar 4 – Sustainable Communities

- Implement a living wage specific to each NWT community. (1, 4, 6, 7)
- Put in place policy/legislation on living wage (9 votes). (1)
- Implement food security measures (9 votes). (1)
- Recognize the role of labour (5 votes).(1)
- Invest revenue from resources in fighting poverty (5 votes). (1)

- Reflect culture in programs (4 votes). (1)
- Have community-specific programs to meet community-specific needs (3 votes) (1)
- Review the tax structure to reduce income gaps (2 votes). (1)
- Remove barriers and subsidize traditional harvesting (2 votes). (1)
- Use traditional healing/cultural camps (1 vote). (1)
- NWT communities will have the capacity to produce a percentage of their food requirements. (3)
- A community-specific living wage based on community-specific costs of living will be effective January 1, 2013. (3)
- Socio-economic impact and benefit agreements will have 50% northern hire targets that are enforced and measured. (3)
- Participation in the traditional economy will be increased. (3)
- Research and plans will identify ways to create viable local 'green' jobs in NWT communities. (3)

Short-term goals (4)

- Institute "No Wrong Door" approach.
- Increase the number of community gardens and kitchens.
- Increase local food production.
- Increase access to "small economy" (business, traditional economy, etc.).
- Increase individual access to banking.
- Address barriers to employment for government jobs.
- Increase minimum wage index to cost of living.
- Establish labour bank in each community.

Medium-term goals (4)

- Increase the number of effective community sustainability plans.
- Ensure socio-economic agreements are reaching northern hire commitments.
- Increase number of community wellness plans.
- Review programs to make sure they are appropriate to market/non market communities

Long-term goals (4)

- Support implementation of community sustainability plans and community wellness plans.

Short-term priority: Support traditional economies (harvesting, arts/crafts, tourism, food production) through training, marketing, and

supply networks. (11 votes) (5)

Long-term priority: Create an NWT Aboriginal anti-poverty table with community tables. (29 votes) (5)

Long-term priority: Offer supports throughout the early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary continuum to encourage attendance and success (e.g. counselling and relationship building). (10 votes) (5)

Other Short-term Priorities (5)

- Install community coordinators/consultants/managers to support local initiatives. (1 vote)
- Invest new program funds to address service gaps.
- Support social cohesion at the community level (through communications, working together, supporting traditional values and beliefs).
- Develop local harvesting and production plans in every community (to reflect cultural perspectives and the traditional economy).
- Increase the flexibility of program guidelines to reflect community needs and build community capacity.
- Support initiatives in Aboriginal and public governments and the private sector that stop the leakage of spending and jobs from communities.
- Offer family planning courses/workshops in financial management.
- Fund proven programs in ways that support the integrity of activities and clients.
- Support the development of regional and territorial harvesting and food production plans.
- Support the empowerment of community and Aboriginal governments to make decisions and implement their own solutions.

Pillar 5 – Integrated Continuum of Services

- Create a Poverty Secretariat to focus anti-poverty efforts, provide accounting for the cost of poverty and change the tax structure to close the gap between high and low incomes. (1)
- Establish a secretariat for the anti-poverty strategy (7 votes) (1)
- Improve communication within/between government departments. (1)
- Form partnerships among government/public organizations, business and NGOs (8 votes). (1)
- Change social policies (1 vote). (1)
- Revamp current programs to improve responses to poverty (1 vote). (1)
- Improve communications among programs (1 vote). (1)
- Program barriers create dependency and keep people in poverty. (2)

- Legislation will be enacted to establish a publicly accountable independent secretariat to monitor and address policy integration, gaps, and conflicting issues. (3)
- The anti-poverty strategy will be reviewed every three years to ensure successful implementation. (3)
- Coordination, communication, and access to programs/services will be increased.
- Intergovernmental arrangements between Aboriginal and public governments at municipal, regional, and territorial levels will be in place and involve where appropriate, NGOs and business partners. (3)

Short-term goals (4)

- Establishing through legislation a Secretariat under the Department of Executive.
- Establish partnerships with Aboriginal and community governments to create a one window/no wrong door.
- Community development capacity in each community.
- Develop and pilot case management protocols among agencies.
 - 3 communities in 2 years
 - 5 communities in medium term
 - All communities in long term
- Conduct gender/cultural/disability analysis on existing services.
 - Establish process in short term
 - Pilot in medium
 - Do it – long term
- Monitor strategy regularly and report on success every year.
- Information Fairs for NGOs and service providers.
- Client Information Fairs.
- Promote the philosophy of working together.
- Increase the role of the government service officers.
- Maintain caseworker support as income assistance is terminated.
- Increase support to interagencies by hiring a full-time coordinator
- Road Map of Services
- Every community have an effective interagency that can act as a system navigator.

Medium-term goals (4)

- Develop and pilot case management protocols among agencies (i.e ATIPP rules, etc.).
- Annual focus groups with people living in poverty on what's working and not working.
- Gradually decrease the amount of income assistance (not cut-off) as an individual gains employment to aid in transition.
- Tie income assistance rates to the cost of living rates.
- Allow income assistance clients to keep more assets.

No long-term goals (4)

- **Short-term priority (5):** Where appropriate, amalgamate all local social and economic committees and provide core funding to NGOs on a multi-year basis. (21 votes)
- **Short-term priority (5):** Within an integrated continuum of services that best serves grassroots people, clarify what 'partnership' means and how it can work (e.g. community driven programs that are fair, transparent, and designed by/for the community and supported in policy and with funding from all orders of government). (11 votes)
- **Long-term priority(5):** Guided by a 'systems navigator' or coordinator, pursue an integrated case management approach ('right from the start') that involves relevant and necessary agencies and the client. (8 votes)

Other Short-term Priorities (5):

- Define and map community priorities.

Other Long-term Priorities (5):

- Always give priority to community strategies over short term policies so communities can address specific issues and local needs. (1 vote)

Goals that don't fit under existing pillars

- Create an NWT Aboriginal anti-poverty table. (5)
- Provide education about and awareness of poverty to create community buy-in for solutions. (1)
- Politicians provide leadership on poverty. (1)
- Strengthen political will (3 votes). (1)
- Empower communities (10 votes). (1)
- Raise awareness of poverty (9 votes). (1)

NO PLACE for Poverty

- For community data, use northern statistics that matter/not market measures (2 votes) (1).
- Implement a process for frontline workers to critique public policy (2 votes). (1)
- Consider replicating elements of the Newfoundland-Labrador model (1 vote). (1)
- Define poverty (1 vote). (1)
- Focus on holistic systems for success (1 vote). (1)

-Compiled by Julie Green, January 2014