

Task force targets root causes of poverty in Edmonton

A community-led initiative focused on poverty in Edmonton has come forward with a bold strategy that aims to eliminate poverty in our city in a generation.



The EndPovertyEdmonton task force, co-chaired by Mayor Don Iveson and Bishop Jane Alexander released its [strategy](#) on September 18. It contains 28 priority recommendations that task force members believe, working with the community and other orders of government, are a starting point to eliminate poverty in Edmonton.

"Poverty affects the lives of more than 100,000 Edmontonians every day, including 33,000 children. That's not acceptable," says Mayor Iveson. "Our goal is to live in a community where the children of a child born today will not experience poverty. The case for ending poverty can be made from business, human rights and public opinion perspectives."

"The passion to move people from poverty to prosperity is inspiring and together we can make this goal a reality," says Bishop Alexander, of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton. "The rates of Edmontonians, especially children, living in poverty, and the physical and emotional effects it has on them, are too high. This is the time to shift the conversation and help all citizens thrive."

EndPovertyEdmonton brings together front-line social services agencies, educators, health care practitioners, Aboriginal Edmontonians, newcomers, government agencies, the business sector and faith communities, to seek new solutions to end poverty in our city. The task force also drew on the wisdom and experience of 200 volunteers from all walks of life to help with the development of the priority recommendations.

EndPovertyEdmonton has compiled an initial community strategy which will be presented to Edmonton City Council on September 22. It includes five defining features:

- Honour the Treaty spirit
- Change attitudes
- Start a movement
- Tackle root causes
- Lever local partnerships

Of the 28 priority recommendations, the 22-person task force identified six key areas – or "game changers" – that represent an important place to start and can make a significant difference to those living in poverty:

- Eliminate racism
- Livable incomes
- Affordable housing
- Accessible and affordable transit
- Affordable and quality child care
- Access to mental health service

Another critical element identified is the need to build a grassroots community movement, under the EndPovertyEdmonton banner, ensuring all Edmontonians see they are part of the solution to ending poverty.

EndPovertyEdmonton is looking for Edmontonians to share ideas and join the conversation on Twitter [@endpovertyeg](#) and on the [EndPovertyEdmonton](#) Facebook page.

Over the fall, the task force will connect with Edmontonians to hear to what they have to say about the recommendations and, where appropriate, fine tune them before bringing the final report back to City Council in December for approval. Work is underway to develop a 10-year implementation plan by spring 2016.

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