July 2012

The Government of Alberta’s Social Policy Framework

A Discussion Paper

Written by: Alina Turner, Vice-President Strategy
Darren, Thorncliffe

Darren’s walls are full of the artwork he did while going through Fresh Start’s Keys to Recovery program. The Calgary Homeless Foundation has teamed up with Fresh Start to ensure people completing this program have affordable housing. "It was great to know I was going to be ok when I left," he explains.

From living out of his car to a well-kept apartment in Thorncliffe, Darren credits getting his life back to sobriety.

He’s resumed his work as a journeyman painter, reconnected with family, is pursuing his interest in music, art and film-making, and most importantly, gets to be a great father.

This quiet home with amenities close by and a playground for his young son is ideal.

“I have made choices to straighten out my life. I take pride in my home.

It’s more than what I had and I’m not going to take it for granted.”

“I can’t put it into words, but thank you. It’s incredible. So much good has come out of it, and it keeps getting better.”
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** .......................................................................................................................... 1  
   - Focus on Social Exclusion........................................................................................................................ 1  
   - Target Vulnerable Populations ............................................................................................................. 1  
   - Rely on Key Principles ............................................................................................................................ 1  
   - Create Measurable Goals and Actions ................................................................................................... 2  

B. **INTRODUCTION** .................................................................................................................................... 3  

C. **LEARN FROM SUCCESS** ..................................................................................................................... 4  

D. **SEVEN KEY PRINCIPLES** .................................................................................................................... 6  
   - Focused and targeted ............................................................................................................................. 6  
   - Person-centered ..................................................................................................................................... 6  
   - Measurable ............................................................................................................................................. 6  
   - Evidence-based ...................................................................................................................................... 6  
   - Efficient and cost-effective ...................................................................................................................... 6  
   - Led by local communities ....................................................................................................................... 6  
   - Systems approach .................................................................................................................................. 7  

E. **UNDERSTANDING TARGET POPULATIONS** ..................................................................................... 8  

F. **POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION** .................................................................................................. 11  

G. **THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION** ......................................................................... 13  
   - Domestic violence ................................................................................................................................. 13  
   - Homelessness ........................................................................................................................................ 13  
   - High school drop-out rates .................................................................................................................... 13  
   - Health .................................................................................................................................................... 13  
   - Justice ................................................................................................................................................... 13  
   - Employment/unemployment .................................................................................................................. 14  

H. **PREVENTION** ...................................................................................................................................... 15  

I. **PROPOSED TARGETS AND TIMELINES** ......................................................................................... 17  

J. **PRIORITY ACTIONS** ............................................................................................................................. 18  

K. **WORKS CITED** .................................................................................................................................... 24
A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF), as the lead implementing agency of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Calgary (10 Year Plan), has a key vantage point on social policy and the implementation experience.

Focus on Social Exclusion
The focus of the CHF’s input is to reduce social exclusion for Albertans. Social exclusion is the experience of vulnerable groups dealing with interrelated social issues, including poverty, homelessness, child abuse, domestic violence and interactions with the justice, child intervention, health and income supports systems. Increasing the social inclusion of vulnerable Albertans increases their quality of life, improves the well-being of communities, leads to reduced public systems costs and reinforces Alberta’s economic prosperity.

Target Vulnerable Populations
To maximize impact from limited resources, those in greatest need must be targeted. Research pinpoints that individuals who are socially excluded are those living in core housing need, experiencing persistent poverty and abuse, and interacting frequently with public systems. Some of the impacts of this social exclusion are poor health, low participation rates in the labour market and civil society, involvement with the justice system and addictions.

The Social Policy Framework must tackle social outcomes from the most vulnerable target populations. These include:
- children and youth;
- low income families, particularly lone parents;
- seniors;
- people with disabilities;
- Aboriginal people; and
- newcomers.

Rely on Key Principles
The CHF’s experience implementing the 10 Year Plan can be applied to any number of social issues. The progress toward ending homelessness has been based on applying seven key principles. These same principles should be applied to the Social Policy Framework to ensure that it is:
1. focused and targeted;
2. person-centered;
3. measurable;
4. evidence-based;
5. efficient and cost-effective;
6. led by local communities; and
7. based on applying a systems approach.
Create Measurable Goals and Actions

Critical to the 10 Year Plan process has been committing to measurable goals and clear actions. The constant monitoring of progress toward these goals breaks down barriers and aligns efforts towards a common vision. By having clear action steps, there is accountability and transparency of roles and responsibilities.

The CHF recommends the following goals for a Social Policy Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Eliminate chronic poverty by 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eliminate chronic homelessness by 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decrease the infant mortality and low birth rates to 3% within 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce the rate of child maltreatment investigations by half to one per 1,000 children by 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal children receiving intervention services and in care by 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eliminate the number of infants born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) by 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reduce the rate of domestic violence by 50% to 3.8% by 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase the rate of high school graduation to 85% by 2022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The CHF recommends the following actions for a Social Policy Framework.

- **Support community leadership** on the delivery of social services.
- **Develop a social service system of care** that ensures Albertans experiencing or vulnerable to social exclusion have the supports to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.
- Ensure multi-year contracts and **appropriate funding** to implement interventions successfully.
- Implement community-based **information systems** throughout the social service system, prioritizing key intervention points for the most vulnerable with mainstream systems.
- Invest in strategic **research** to improve implementation.
- **Prioritize the most vulnerable** for services, particularly those experiencing multiple forms of long-term social exclusion interacting with corrections, health care, child intervention (including domestic violence), the homeless-serving system and addictions treatment.
- Develop a **coordinated, local entry system** for those experiencing vulnerability that includes building common intake, triage and assessment and leveraging a shared information system.
- Strengthen families and individuals with **high-quality services** and community reintegration supports.
- Increase capacity of the **non-profit sector** to respond to client needs through training and professional development.
- Create opportunities for the most vulnerable to obtain **adequate incomes**.
- Develop **targeted emergency prevention** and community interventions to stabilize those at imminent risk for becoming vulnerable.
- Continue public funding of **rent supports**, targeting vulnerable populations.
- Leverage **Family Care Clinics** to ensure a holistic approach to vulnerability prevention is in place.
- Continue to support efforts to end **homelessness**.
- Deliver quality **affordable and supportive housing** for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the building of sustainable communities.
- Develop collaborative, innovative and **sustainable funding mechanisms** for affordable housing and supports, independent of public funding leveraging social finance options.
B. INTRODUCTION

Our province is one of the best places in the world to do business, and Albertans enjoy one of Canada's highest standards of living. However, there are many in our communities who have not had the opportunity to benefit from the strength of our economy. As people continue to migrate to Alberta, we must build the physical and social infrastructure to support the growth caused by a booming economy.

Alberta's social services system is not keeping up with current demands, as evidenced by high rates of domestic violence and child abuse, poverty, homelessness, crime and barriers to access quality child care, health and addiction services.

These social policy challenges bear a quality of life and economic cost. Untreated addictions and mental illnesses drive health care and justice spending. The cumulative cost of homelessness costs taxpayers billions of dollars. A siloed and uncoordinated provincial government response to these issues wastes millions of dollars as vulnerable people are recycled through expensive systems like police services, jails, hospitals, addiction treatment and emergency shelters.

In June 2012, the Government of Alberta launched its consultation process “Speak. Share. Thrive.” to develop a Social Policy Framework. Broadly, the aims of the Framework are to “guide the future of Alberta’s social policies and programs – things like childcare, employment, housing, and poverty; issues that affect all Albertans.”

This engagement process offers a timely opportunity for public discussion about the current needs of Albertans. Collectively, Albertans support the need for change, with an emphasis on putting families first. Albertans want a safe, healthy and thriving environment: they want a good place for their children to grow-up. Establishing a stronger social infrastructure in Alberta also encourages economic growth, public safety, positive health outcomes and effective resource allocation.

The Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF or the Foundation) is the lead implementing agency of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Calgary (10 Year Plan). As such, the Foundation plays a central role in the development and management of Calgary’s homeless-serving system of care – the structured service delivery system for Calgarians at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Creating this coordinated system has demanded a number of actions, including the implementation of common measures of performance and service quality, coordinated entry for clients, a shared information system and rigorous, evidence-based program design, evaluation and monitoring processes.

The request from Human Services for input regarding the Social Policy Framework is an opportunity to share the CHF’s experience implementing the 10 Year Plan. The success of the provincial and Calgary 10 Year Plans in reducing homelessness and shelter bed use, while also achieving cost-savings and overall quality of life improvements for clients are well known (see State of Homelessness Report 2012). In this discussion paper, we offer input as it pertains to developing the Social Policy Framework, inciting further discussion, and ultimately assisting Albertans to have a high quality of life.
C. LEARN FROM SUCCESS

We will focus our input on reducing social exclusion for Albertans. Social exclusion describes the experience of vulnerable groups dealing with a multitude of interrelated social issues including poverty, homelessness, child abuse, domestic violence and repeated interactions with the justice, child intervention, health and income supports systems. Focusing on increasing the social inclusion of these groups will not only increase the quality of life for the most vulnerable Albertans, but it will also improve the well-being of communities, lead to reduced public systems costs and reinforce economic prosperity in the province.

By contrast to social inclusion, social exclusion describes the structures and dynamic processes of inequality among groups in society. Social exclusion refers to the inability of certain groups or individuals to participate fully in society due to structural inequalities in access to social, economic, political and cultural resources.

In particular, social exclusion occurs in the realm of economics, civil society, social goods (such as housing), and participation. Social exclusion is a broader concept than poverty, which usually refers to low income. It refers to situational issues such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, bad health and family breakdown, which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

We know certain groups, such as those living in core housing need, experiencing persistent poverty and abuse, and having frequent interaction with public systems, are more vulnerable to social exclusion and its impacts. Some of the impacts of this social exclusion are poor health, low participation rates in the labour market and civil society, frequent involvement with the justice system and addictions.

The scope of the Social Policy Framework is vast, touching every Albertan in some way. While its benefits should reverberate across the social and regional spectrum, without focus, the Framework will most certainly fall short. Like the 10 Year Plan, the Framework must prioritize vulnerable populations for immediate action. We do not suggest these populations be the sole focus, but rather systematic steps be taken to point resources to vulnerable populations first and then expand to other populations.

Social policy frameworks are not a new concept internationally or within Canada; in fact, Nova Scotia (“Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric”) and Newfoundland and Labrador (“Newfoundland and Labrador Strategic Social Plan”) both tried to articulate a vision and strategy to achieve comprehensive social outcomes. Despite their efforts, a lack of implementation focus, resources and processes resulted in dilution and, at times, abandonment of the frameworks. Alberta must learn from these efforts and ensure significant interventions are developed to prioritize a limited number of concrete goals. By keeping to targeted actions and interventions, the Government of Alberta will be able to mobilize the resources to address the most complex, long-standing and serious social deficits. Successfully helping the most vulnerable populations ultimately improves the quality of life for all Albertans.

Alberta can learn from the experience of other jurisdictions. The United Kingdom’s (U.K.) approach to reducing poverty and social exclusion produced significant results for specific target groups, such as children and older people. In 2004 to 2005, there were about 800,000 fewer children and one million fewer pensioners living in low-income households compared with 1996 to 1997, and child poverty was reduced by 23%.

In Ireland, a nation that has experienced both economic success and the global recession, the rate of sustained poverty has been reduced significantly. The initial target set in 1997 was to reduce the number of people who were found to be “consistently poor,” which ranged from 9% to 15% in 1994, to under 5% to 10% over the period from 1997 to 2007. As this target was met early on, a revised target for the period from 2007 to 2016 has been set to reduce consistent poverty to between 2% to 4% by 2010 and to eliminate it entirely by 2016.
Both the U.K. and Ireland benefited from strong economic and employment growth, which likely contributed to success in reducing poverty and social exclusion. The employment rates for lone parents, older workers and people with disabilities have been rising. Access to employment by lone parents seems also to have been facilitated by an increase in child care spaces. The goal of the government is for all children aged three to 14 to have access to affordable child care by 2010.\textsuperscript{ix}

The U.K.’s action plan to increase social inclusion aims to:

- enhance labour market participation of those who can work;
- make returning to work advantageous for those currently receiving social benefits;
- support and promote financial security for families;
- protect the most vulnerable; and
- improve access to high-quality public services and mobilize all relevant bodies. \textsuperscript{x}

The cornerstone of Ireland’s approach has been a focus on key priority groups with targeted areas of action:

- children: education and income support;
- people of working age and people with disabilities: employment, participation and income support;
- older people: community care and income support; and
- communities: housing, health and integration of migrants. \textsuperscript{xi}

A number of measures are being implemented to improve coordination and delivery at the local and national level. This includes a Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group to support linkages between various stakeholders at both levels and submit reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion chaired by the Irish Prime Minister. \textsuperscript{xii}
D. SEVEN KEY PRINCIPLES

The commitments set out in the proposed Framework should be ambitious and challenging. Its implementation should lead to greater coordination and integration of structures and procedures across government and communities, as well as improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms.

Based on the CHF’s experience leading the implementation of the 10 Year Plan and what has been learned from other jurisdictions on reducing social exclusion, we recommend that the following key principles be applied to the Social Policy Framework.

Focused and targeted
Without a clear focus on priority populations, the impact of the Framework in implementation will be severely limited and diluted. Based on research and best practices on social issues including homelessness, poverty, core housing need, child abuse, domestic violence, health and public safety, we recommend a targeted focus on those most vulnerable to social exclusion be applied using a lifecycle perspective (children, adults, older adults) with special emphasis on the needs of people with disabilities, the chronically poor, the homeless, Aboriginal people and newcomers.

Person-centered
Though the development of the Framework is being spearheaded by Human Services, we know that social issues are not limited to the mandate of this ministry. A person-centered approach to social policy and program development and implementation should focus on the needs of the individual rather than the mandates of established public systems.

Measurable
With a clear focus on the most vulnerable, strategies should be developed to make a meaningful impact within set timelines to move the needle on priority issues. We recommend a number of targets that if addressed, would make a visible, lasting change for those impacted and for our communities.

Evidence-based
There is a need to ground the Framework in evidence-based practice and knowledge from best practices. Implementation should consider the role of research and evaluation to ensure outcomes are achieved and a process for continuous improvement is established. Where collective measures demonstrate little progress towards targets, strategies should be revised in real time.

Efficient and cost-effective
We need to fundamentally reform the role of the government in Alberta. Albertans want a smaller, more efficient government that puts communities in the driver’s seat and lives within its means. Albertans are entrepreneurs who can find creative new ways to improve their communities. Operating funding to implement the Framework should be limited to the current funding envelope for existing services indexed to inflation and population growth. At the same time, new investment in affordable housing should be made to keep up with needs – yet this should be done incrementally. New ways of generating funds should be pursued with particular consideration of social finance. We should challenge ourselves to improve outcomes without additional costs to Albertans by finding more efficient means of delivering services and reinforcing interdepartmental collaboration and community-based delivery.

Led by local communities
The implementation of the Framework should be driven by communities. The leadership on the delivery of community services should shift to communities, as they know best what they need to meet the diverse
needs of their localities. Localizing the broad goals of the Framework requires a new way of conceptualizing social planning and service delivery. We encourage government to work with communities to develop province-wide targets and measures, while supporting leadership around implementation closest to those impacted. Communities can determine the best and most effective ways of achieving targets, directing resources and mobilizing people.

**Systems approach**

An essential step in implementing the Framework is developing a systematic approach to service planning and delivery. Based on the goals and priorities set out in the Framework, each community must undertake an exercise to ascribe a clear function and structure to the social services system of care. The key components of this system must be articulated and communicated; each component will need to have clear functions and attributable, measurable outcomes, with shared definitions and information systems. These components must be coordinated by a lead organization to drive the provincial and local community goals in implementation, ongoing planning and strategy development. The governance mechanism of this system must also be articulated and aligned to the provincial and community mandate around social outcomes.
E. UNDERSTANDING TARGET POPULATIONS

Actions and suggested targets are outlined as a starting point for further discussion. We believe that significant interventions are required to prioritize a small number of high level goals. These targeted actions and interventions are designed to mobilize resources to address long-standing and serious social deficits, with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of all Albertans.

There are a number of reasons to focus on those most vulnerable – those facing multiple forms of social exclusion and long-term poverty, in some instances inter-generational. First, this is the population who is in most need of focused resources. They are likeliest to experience the cumulative impacts of sustained poverty and social exclusion as they relate to health, employment, educational attainment and child development outcomes. This is the population who has disproportionately more interactions with our public systems: child intervention, corrections, health and homelessness.

Second, as we progress into our fifth year of implementing the 10 Year Plan, we have learned that there are benefits to wider society by supporting the most vulnerable. As an extreme manifestation of social exclusion, homelessness, particularly chronic homelessness, results from many compounding factors including a history of abuse in childhood, current domestic violence experiences, lack of family and social support, poverty and low levels of education.

Based on a refined understanding of populations experiencing social exclusion putting them at risk for homelessness, we have a much better handle on the number and characteristics of this group. First, this group is much smaller than previously believed and follows predictable patterns into vulnerable situations. Homelessness doesn’t happen to ‘anyone.’ It is likelier to occur when a predictable combination of risk factors is present and a number of protective factors are absent.

Preliminary results from more than 700 surveys of at risk Calgarians participating in the Homeless Asset and Risk Tool study confirm the following social exclusion factors exacerbate the risk for homelessness.

- Forty-six per cent had a recent experience with a physical or mental health issue.
- Thirty-one per cent had spent time in an addictions facility in the last five years, of those 23% did not have access to safe, stable housing when they were discharged.
- Thirty-two per cent had spent time in a medical facility in the last five years, of those 17% did not have access to safe, stable housing when they were discharged.
- Twenty-one per cent had spent time in a correctional facility and more than 33% of those did not have access to safe, affordable housing upon their release.
- Twenty-five per cent of respondents were Aboriginal; 76% of them had a direct experience with residential schools and 34% recently migrated from a reserve to Calgary.
- About 8% reported being newcomers to Canada.
- Seventy-seven per cent have little to no support from family or friends and 65% do not have family to rely on to help with financial or housing support.
- Fifty per cent had a previous episode of homelessness; 45% of those had an episode of homelessness before the age of 18.
- Forty-two per cent experienced family abuse as a child and had one or more parents with an active addiction.
- Twenty-two per cent were involved with child intervention services and 85% of those did not receive support for safe, stable housing in those interactions.
- Sixty-four per cent were suspended from school in their youth and 50% lived with family conflict and/or bullying.
- Thirty-five per cent lived in homes that relied on social assistance.
Thirty-three per cent of youth participants (ages 15 to 24) were recently **kicked out of their homes** and 44% were single parents.

Fifty-six per cent of youth participants say their **parents do not take an interest** in their activities and 78% have **not accessed supports** from a youth-serving agency for stable housing.

Sixty-five per cent of adult women participants had a history of **domestic violence** and 59% grew up in homes where there was violence. Thirty-one per cent had their children removed by authorities; 19% had been victims of sexual assault.

University of Calgary Faculty of Social Work research findings also identified protective factors that moderate the risk for homelessness, which generally centered on economic, social and human capital (healthy social relationships, education, access to affordable housing and adequate income).

The compounding individual and contextual risk factors experienced by particularly vulnerable people are not limited to those who fall into homelessness. Looking at those who experience homelessness, child abuse and criminal justice involvement demonstrates the overlapping factors that characterise the experiences of vulnerable groups. A predictable downward spiral takes place where there are high rates of, "teen pregnancy, high-school dropout, violent crime, imprisonment, poverty and other factors."xvi The following overlapping risk factors for homelessness and imprisonment currently exist in Alberta:xvii

- poverty related challenges including lack of training, high school attainment and employability;
- mental and physical health needs;
- housing needs;
- family support and reconnections needs; and
- interpersonal conflict.

We also know Alberta faces particular challenges to improving outcomes for our most vulnerable:

- In urban areas, 10.3% of Albertans lived in **core housing need.** xviii
- Every month in Alberta 60,000 people use **food banks** and 43.7% of those assisted by food banks are children.xix
- Average **household debt** in Alberta is the highest in the country, with $157,700 compared with the national average of $114,400.xx
- Ten per cent of Albertans were living in **poverty** – up from 6% in 2008.xxxi
- Just over 13% of **children** are living in poverty – up from 7.1% in 2006.xxxii
- Our **infant mortality** rate is 5.9%,xxxiii while the **low birth weight**xxxiv rate is 6.6%. xxxv
- **Intervention services** were received monthly by 12,300 children and youth under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement in 2010-11.xxxvi
- One in seven children live in **lone parent families** – a rate that doubled over the past two generations.xxxvii
- The 2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect found there were 12,300 **child maltreatment** investigations (3.1 per 1,000 children in Alberta). This number does not include cases unreported or cases that were screened out.xxxviii
- Fifty-eight per cent of children receiving intervention services and 66% of those in care were **Aboriginal.** xxxix
- An estimated 23,000 Albertans are living with **FASD,** with an additional 360 infants born with FASD every year in Alberta.xxx
- Alberta **domestic violence** rates in 2009 were 7.6%; 2.3 points higher than the national average.xxxi
- Twenty per cent of Albertans experience a **mental illness** in their lifetime.xxxiii
- As many as 10% of those over 15 years of age may be dependent on **drugs or alcohol.** xxxiv
• Nineteen per cent of Albertans reported some form of disability; 47% in the case of those over the age of 65 in 2008.xxxiv

• The violent crime rate was 15% above the national average at 1,476 incidents per 100,000 in 2010.xxxv

• High school graduation rates in Alberta were 74.1% in 2011.xxxvi

• Employment rates for off reserve Aboriginal people were 60.2% compared to 70.0% for non-Aboriginal people in 2011.xxxvi
F. POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

During her 2012 campaign, Premier Redford committed to develop a strategy to eliminate poverty in Alberta. A focus on those most vulnerable to social exclusion can make a measurable impact on poverty. Again, a deliberate and targeted approach is needed to achieve this.

In 2008, The Government of Canada reported that 9.4% of Canadians lived below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO); however there was considerable turnover in the low-income population on a yearly basis. Of the one in five Canadians experiencing poverty during a six-year period between 2002 to 2007, 40% only lived in poverty for one year and 21% lived in poverty for two years. Only 11% lived below the poverty line for the entire six years.

Similarly, The City of Calgary concludes that most of those in Alberta who find themselves in the low-income population are only intermittently poor.

"Between 2002 and 2007, over half (57%) of those who were in poverty during that time period were poor for less than two years. During that period of time, 83% of the population was never poor, 14% were intermittently poor and only 3% were chronically poor (five years or more)." xxxviii

It is essential that we distinguish those who have low incomes for periods in their lives from those who are consistently living in a state of deprivation. Studies have shown the impact of this long-term experience is poor health, the inability to maintain employment, low educational attainment, low child development and low civic participation. In other words, those who experience sustained and inter-generational poverty are also likelier to experience multiple forms of exclusion in our society.

"Poverty is not transferred as a ‘package,’ but as a complex set of positive and negative factors that affect an individual’s chances of experiencing poverty, either in the present or at a future point in their life-course. The factors influencing an individual’s likelihood of being poor include both the ‘private’ transmission (or lack of transmission) of capital and the ‘public’ transfer (or lack of transfer) of resources from one generation to the next. These can be positive or negative." xxxix

The key risk factors identified for people to grow up in poverty/life cycle of poverty include:

- parental poverty;
- parental social assistance use;
- neighbourhood disadvantages;
- social isolation; and
- labour market conditions.

The least well-off families do not have the same chances as children from less poor households of becoming economically secure. xl Children from poor families have less access to material resources (food, shelter and health care) and also less access to community resources (good schools, safe...
neighbourhoods and adequate governmental services) than children in families with adequate economic resources.\textsuperscript{xli}

Studies have shown that children’s economic futures are substantially affected by family and neighbourhood disadvantages.\textsuperscript{xlii} Children move in and out of poverty during childhood. This experience of childhood poverty does not necessarily lead to adult poverty.\textsuperscript{xliii} A study traced 1,000 American children aged one to four in 1968 for 15 years. It found that over the period, while one in three children spent at least one year in poverty, five percent of the entire sample and 15 percent of children, who were poor at any time during childhood, were in poverty for 10 years or more. These chronically poor children were either poor for the whole of their childhoods or moved in and out of poverty but with only short periods above the poverty line.\textsuperscript{xliv}

Few longitudinal studies exist quantitatively tracking poverty rates between generations. However there is substantial research demonstrating the correlation between childhood poverty and adult poverty, particularly as it relates to the lack of opportunity or access to education, employment and health – all of which can contribute to chronic poverty.

Research has also demonstrated that particular subgroups are vulnerable to intergenerational poverty. These include:

- lone parent families;
- Aboriginal people;
- people with disabilities;
- those facing health challenges, including addictions;
- unemployed (particularly over a long term); and
- single adults.

Recognizing this, we strongly encourage the Social Policy Framework to have a specific focus on targeting the most vulnerable in our communities. This is where a systematic approach to policy and service delivery can achieve a measurable impact on poverty, particularly if an intentional focus on chronic and intergenerational poverty is in place.
G. THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

As in the case of homelessness, social exclusion bears an economic cost to society. Increased health problems and need for health care, reduced high school completion, reduced labour force participation, demand for more early childhood and special education services including child service involvement, additional demands on the criminal justice system and costs associated with the provision of income and social supports are just some of the areas impacted.

Domestic violence
Alberta has the highest rate of domestic violence in Canada, with estimated costs of basic health supports such as emergency room visits, walk-in-clinics, health testing and addictions counselling, and basic non-health supports (legal aid, social assistance and employment insurance) totalling $600 million in the past five years. With a domestic violence rate of 7.6% or 11,875 cases annually, the per-woman cost is estimated at $13,162 per year.

Homelessness
Research demonstrates that it costs less to provide appropriate housing and support to a person at risk of or experiencing homelessness compared with providing that same person with short-term and ongoing emergency and institutional responses. Most studies indicate those people with the highest needs incur system costs of $100,000 or more per year. This is two to three times higher than the cost of providing housing and support. People experiencing long-term homelessness tend to touch government-funded systems, such as the judicial system, hospitals and emergency shelters much more frequently than people who have housing. The Government of Alberta estimates that if the province "continues its current approach of simply managing our current homeless population, it's estimated that the Alberta government will incur costs of $6.65 billion over 10 years."

High school drop-out rates
Children who drop out of high school are more likely to end up in low paying jobs, experience repeated incidences of unemployment and earn less money over their lifetime. The Conference Board of Canada estimated the issue of high school drop-out costs $4 billion in forgone income, tax revenues and other costs to society, including crime and income support. Research shows that in Calgary about 120 to 200 young people fail to complete high school every year, with a total lifetime cost per person of $37,560. The total cost for Calgary then is between $4.5 million to $7.9 million. However, this number represents a single cohort and thus is repeated each year for young people who are exposed to poverty and drop out of high school.

Health
The Canadian Population Health Survey found a high degree of income-related health inequality. Children who grow up in poor households have lower birth rates, are hyperactive or obese, are more likely to have a lower functional health, are less likely to participate in organized physical activity at school, and are 2.5 times more likely to drop out of high school. In the Provincial Government Poverty Costs (2012) Report, poverty-related health care costs are estimated to be $1.2 billion.

Justice
Corrections Canada incurs costs of $100,000 per year for maximum security offenders. Public Safety Canada reports the recidivism rate for male offenders leaving federal incarceration to be between 40% and 48%. As a result of a lack of affordable housing options, employment opportunities and community supports, inmates return to their communities socially excluded, engage in high risk and or criminal behaviour and return to incarceration. This cycle adds to criminal justice costs, as well as total economic opportunity losses. The Government of Alberta estimates annual crime costs of $560 million.
Employment/unemployment

A large scale study from the U.K. which analyzed youth unemployment found that with a youth unemployment rate of 9% in 2005 the productivity loss to the economy was estimated at 10 million Euros per day. In addition, the correlation between unemployment, poverty and crime led researchers to suggest associated costs as a result of youth unemployment of about 1 billion Euros due to youth crime.iii

This position is supported from demographical data from U.K. prisons, which suggest inmates are 13 times more likely to have been in care as a child and 13 times more likely to have been unemployed.iv
H. PREVENTION

We know from our experience in homelessness that the families and individuals we serve are often being served by multiple systems simultaneously. They are clients of the homeless, criminal justice, health, child intervention systems, etc. at the same time. Unfortunately, these systems are often working at cross-purposes, without common performance targets and measures and are often unable to share basic information about shared clients.

The most impactful way to realign this disjointed approach is to apply a person-centered approach to policy development and implementation, as well as program planning and delivery. Departmental delineations have resulted in a bifurcated service system, where government services and their non-profit counterparts continue to work in silos to the disadvantage of those in need.

The Framework should address social policy from a person-centered perspective. We know that poverty and social exclusion impact Albertans across the lifespan and we also know that certain populations need particular interventions that are tailored to their needs. To this end, we propose the Framework tackle social outcomes from a person-centred, lifespan perspective and focus on the most vulnerable populations, which include:

- children and youth;
- low income families, particularly lone parents;
- seniors;
- people with disabilities;
- Aboriginal people; and
- newcomers.

A targeted approach to social exclusion prevention can be more precisely applied towards those likeliest to be vulnerable. Further, findings point to the need for alignment in social service and policy efforts with an aim to alleviate vulnerability risks. Funders and public systems, such as corrections, health, child intervention, domestic violence, addictions treatment and education, can better target interventions collaboratively for the most vulnerable Albertans who likely touch all of these systems at some point.

Better targeting and collective planning at the community level will ensure maximum impact for those in need, as well as reductions in system use and costs. At the individual and family level, improved health, education, public safety, housing stability and well-being outcomes can be achieved.

The restructuring of the Government of Alberta’s Human Services Ministry presents a unique opportunity to address prevention at the systems level. The child intervention, domestic violence, income supports and homeless-serving systems can better interact to mitigate the flows into homelessness in the first place.

We recognize the enormous gains achieved by the merger of Human Services and continue to emphasize that it is the on-the-ground implementation of this direction that will ultimately result in real impacts in our communities. At the same time, we must remember that Human Services is but one of the ministries whose accountabilities impact social policy. The Social Policy Framework must speak to all ministries and in particular:

- Aboriginal Relations;
- Culture;
- Education;
- Energy;
- Enterprise and Advanced Education;
- Environment and Sustainable Resource Development;
• Health;
• International & Intergovernmental Relations;
• Justice and Solicitor General;
• Municipal Affairs;
• Service Alberta; and
• Treasury Board and Finance.

We have a significant opportunity presented to us by Premier Redford’s approach to centralized policy development. We strongly urge the Policy Coordination Office and the Standing Committee on Families and Communities become fully engaged in the development and implementation of the Social Policy Framework. A significant learning from Ireland is that social policy is a key economic strategy. Premier Redford’s priorities for Alberta’s economic future, resource stewardship, families and communities strongly indicate the government’s commitment to Alberta’s long-term prosperity by investing in social infrastructure and human capital.
I. PROPOSED TARGETS AND TIMELINES

This section will propose several potential areas of focus for the Social Policy Framework. Actions and suggested targets are outlined as a starting point for further discussion.

We believe significant interventions are required to prioritize a small number of high-level goals. These targeted actions and interventions are designed to mobilize resources to address long-standing and serious social deficits with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of life of all Albertans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Current Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate chronic poverty by 2017.</td>
<td>Between 2002 and 2007, 3% of the population was chronically poor (five years or more).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate chronic homelessness by 2018.</td>
<td>There are an estimated 3,000 chronically homeless individuals in Alberta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease the infant mortality and low birth rates to 3% within 10 years.</td>
<td>Infant mortality rate is 5.9%, while the low birth weight rate is 6.6%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the rate of child maltreatment investigations by half to one per 1,000 children by 2022.</td>
<td>The 2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect found there were 12,300 child maltreatment investigations (3.1 per 1,000 children in Alberta).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the proportion of Aboriginal children receiving intervention services and in care by 25%.</td>
<td>Fifty-eight per cent of children receiving intervention services and 66% of those in care were Aboriginal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate the number of infants born with FASD by 2022.</td>
<td>An estimated 23,000 Albertans live with FASD, with an additional 360 infants born with FASD every year in Alberta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the rate of domestic violence by 50% to 3.8% by 2017.</td>
<td>Reports from 2009 indicate Alberta’s domestic violence rate is 7.6%; 2.3 points higher than the national average.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the rate of high school graduation to 85% by 2022.</td>
<td>High school graduation rates in Alberta were 74.1% in 2011.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
J. PRIORITY ACTIONS

a) **Support community leadership** on the delivery of social services.

The implementation of the Framework should be driven by communities. Localizing the broad goals of the Framework requires a new way of conceptualizing social planning and service delivery. While we strongly encourage government to work with communities to develop province-wide targets and measures, the leadership around implementation must be kept closest to those impacted. No one community is the same; thus, no one implementation can fit all. As in the case of 10 Year Plans, it is best for the province to play the role of an enabler and supporter of local leadership, rather than a top-down driver.

Communities can determine the best and most effective ways of achieving targets, directing resources, and mobilizing local citizens, service providers, private sector and those impacted by the issue. On the homelessness file, the government employed a Community-Based Organization model where non-profits like the CHF or Homeward Trust in Edmonton, and municipalities took on the lead coordinating role.

A new challenge presented by the scope of the Framework is the need to realign pre-existing community governance structures. A cursory list includes: boards of education, health regions, child and family services associations, homeless-serving systems, etc. Even the regional boundaries of these entities are not aligned, least of all their mandates, targets, operating principles and processes, and performance metrics.

Communities will need to work with the Government of Alberta to develop strategic implementation plans aligned with the Social Policy Framework and its high-level targets using a public, multi-stakeholder process. Stakeholders will include, but are not limited to: police, education, child intervention and Alberta Health Services.

The role of the province moving forward should be to support communities in their efforts to reduce risks and increase assets for social exclusion at the individual, community, system and macro-levels. In this approach, government and communities would tackle the following issues: education, health, social assistance and income, employment, housing, safety, access to basic needs, civic engagement and volunteerism.

b) **Develop a social service system of care** that ensures Albertans experiencing or vulnerable to social exclusion have the supports to achieve and maintain a high quality of life.

Government and non-profit partners can work together to develop and implement a more coordinated system by establishing common information systems, creating service quality standards, applying a shared evaluation framework and streamlining reporting. As this work is done, it is expected that the community will be better able to direct existing resources to the areas in most need and reduce duplication.

A key step in implementing the Framework is developing a systematic approach to service planning. This entails an exercise in ‘sense-making’ out the vast array of programs and services delivered by government bodies or their contracted service providers. Based on the goals and priorities set out in the Framework, each community must undertake an exercise to ascribe a clear function and structure to the social services system of care. The key components of this system must be articulated and communicated to stakeholders. Each component will in turn need to have clear functions and attributable, measurable outcomes. These components must be coordinated by a lead organization to drive the provincial and local community goals in implementation.

This entails ongoing planning and strategy development to adjust to changing conditions. The governance mechanism of this system should also be articulated and aligned to the provincial and community mandates around social outcomes. The approach of working through multiple decision
making bodies is not effective to achieve social outcomes in a coordinated fashion. The CBO-model used to address homelessness could be an effective model for coordinating social services at the community level.

Further, targets and benchmarks that cut across services should be articulated and measured against on an ongoing basis. Simply put, the goals and outcomes of the Framework need to apply across services and ministries. These must be reinforced throughout the service delivery mechanism – whether departmental performance targets and annual reports, or those of non-profit service providers.

c) Ensure multi-year contracts and **appropriate funding** to implement interventions successfully. To achieve goals set out in the Framework, agencies need adequate, predictable funding to hire qualified staff, implement best practices and monitor outcomes. Wherever possible, communities charged with implementing local plans should have multi-year program contracts subject to annual performance reviews.

Nevertheless, funding should be limited to the current funding envelope for existing services indexed to inflation and population growth. The Government of Alberta should consider performance-based contracting for communities and organizations whereby exceptional performance is rewarded.

d) Implement community-based **information systems** throughout the social service system, prioritizing key intervention points for the most vulnerable with mainstream systems (corrections, justice, health care, child intervention, domestic violence and addiction treatment).

Another priority action is to develop and implement shared information systems across the service delivery system. The real and perceived barriers presented by information protocols need to be resolved. A coordinated system requires aligned data elements and data sharing mechanisms.

A shared information system will serve as the backbone of the social service system. It should provide real-time data on the characteristics and needs of vulnerable Albertans and the effectiveness of interventions. By improving the quality and availability of information, the shared information system will make access to and coordination of services to those at risk of or experiencing social issues easier and more effective. Calgary’s Homeless Management Information (HMIS) system is an illustration of this approach.

Each community should be required to have a Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy (FOIP) compliant Social Services Management Information System. These systems will be used to coordinate local service delivery, track performance and report to the province and the public. The Government of Alberta will define data, technology, and privacy/core system requirements, but permit each community to use the systems. All relevant provincially-funded systems (police, Solicitor General, AHS, child and homeless services, etc.) will be connected to local systems. Personal information would only be shared with the informed consent of individuals.

To enable this, the FOIP Act should be amended, if necessary, to allow public bodies and non-profit agencies greater freedom to share personal information to improve service delivery. Individual privacy will be protected through an informed consent process.

Successfully leveraging the information will result in improved services and outcomes for those at risk of or experiencing social exclusion. There is also a need to address various funders’ reporting requirements to balance transparency and accountability with the administrative burden on non-profit agencies who work with a number of different funders. A common evaluation and reporting mechanism through the information systems will help coordinate and streamline reporting.

e) Invest in strategic **research** to improve implementation.

The role of research is to accelerate the system’s efforts by applying best practices, improving understanding of social exclusion and vulnerability, identifying system gaps and developing public
policy to achieve targets. We strongly urge the government to work with academic and policy researchers and the community to develop a common Research Agenda and a Research Network to share and improve knowledge.

f) **Prioritize the most vulnerable** for services, particularly those experiencing multiple forms of long-term social exclusion interacting with corrections, health care, child intervention (including domestic violence), the homeless-serving system and addictions treatment.

Common definitions and assessments are necessary to define target populations. The size of the population experiencing social exclusion in Alberta is not well known, thus a first step is to understand the scope. It is known, however, that this group is highly vulnerable, harder to engage and requires appropriate levels of support because of the complex issues they face. At the local level, communities may choose to prioritize particular segments of the vulnerable population, however, the Government of Alberta should develop standard definitions province-wide.

As aforementioned, the needs of particular sub-groups require particular attention, namely:

- **Vulnerable youth:** By better coordinating mainstream services and enhancing supports for youth, a focused vulnerable youth strategy should be developed to address health (mental and physical) and addiction issues, particularly for youth in care and those experiencing homelessness. Youth leaving child intervention services should be equipped with the appropriate resources to be successful in their transition. Measures to reduce the proportion of students with serious literacy issues in primary schools in disadvantaged communities should be introduced, employing wraparound early intervention supports for students identified as at risk.

- **Aboriginal people:** Aboriginal people have greater barriers in accessing help from mainstream systems; this and their unique needs merits development of a strategy to meet their specific service requirements. The strategy should build cultural reconnection into the social service system to ensure the provision of safe and culturally appropriate supports.

- **Those experiencing domestic violence:** A targeted domestic violence strategy focused on prevention needs to be developed and implemented to address Alberta’s high rates of domestic violence and abuse.

- **Seniors:** Our aging population will continue to challenge social infrastructure planning and delivery. Continued and increased investment in community care services and supportive housing for older people, including home care, will help support them to live independently in the community for as long as possible.

- **Newcomers:** Recognizing Alberta’s ongoing need for immigrants, a renewed strategy aimed at achieving the integration of newcomers in our society should be developed in light of current economic realities. As a first step, resources for the provision of teachers for language supports in the education sector and access to other public services through translation of information and supports should be improved.

g) Develop a **coordinated, local entry system** for those experiencing vulnerability that includes building common intake, triage and assessment and leveraging a shared information system, similar to Calgary’s HMIS.

People at risk or experiencing social exclusion should be able to access help easily. There needs to be points of entry (intake) at locations where people come into contact with mainstream systems, such as emergency shelters, hospitals, police stations, government service locations and offices of non-profit service providers.

Along with easy access to help, vulnerable and at risk groups need consistent intake, triage and assessment processes. This will streamline access in a consistent manner across diverse programs. The shared information system will enable consistency.
At the local level, communities can best determine how a coordinated intake system should be implemented: the role of Government is to ensure local flexibility, while communities realize provincial and local priorities.

h) Strengthen families and individuals with high-quality services and community reintegration supports.

In connection with the common intake and assessment process, agencies and government departments working with vulnerable people should put in place programs appropriate to a range of needs using consistently high-quality service standards.

Social inclusion over the long term requires integration into and support from the broader community. The social services system needs to engage the community to help people become self-sufficient and then contribute as active members of society. The government should reinforce local implementation of high-quality services through the development of provincial standards of practice to hold service delivery agents accountable.

i) Increase capacity of the non-profit sector to respond to client needs through training and professional development.

Government needs to support non-profit agencies in their work to address social exclusion. This includes ongoing development of skills, particularly for those working with the most vulnerable populations who have complex needs. Post-secondary courses for those working with these populations should be enhanced.

The Government of Alberta should also support the agencies as they implement common standards of care. Along with skills development, the province can work with local communities to create and implement a competitive salary and benefit framework for non-profit agencies.

j) Create opportunities for the most vulnerable to obtain adequate incomes.

Income for the poor has not kept up with the cost of living in Alberta; particularly for housing. The most vulnerable Calgarians receive Income Supports or Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH). These supports are difficult to access and are not enough to cover the cost of rental accommodation.

For the most vulnerable who are unable to work, the increase in income payments for AISH recipients was a very positive step. Unfortunately, Alberta Works Barriers to Full Employment recipients remain precariously housed and in poverty due to inadequate incomes. The Core Shelter Allowance for a single person unable to work is $323 and the Core Essential Benefit is $408, bringing the total benefit to $731 per month or $8,772 annually. Conversely, the 2012 Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT) for a one bedroom apartment in Calgary in 2012 is $36,500. For those on AISH receiving a monthly benefit of $1,588, affordability still falls short by $17,444 annually.

This requires a re-examination of the current core shelter allowance provided to Income Support recipients based on current housing costs. The Government of Alberta should increase the amount of these supports, remove regulatory barriers to these benefits to make them more accessible and develop criteria so financial supports are prioritized to the most vulnerable.

It is important to link people with existing employment opportunities and training and develop additional training, education and work programs. A special focus on those with long-term use of income assistance is needed. An active case management approach that will support those on long-term social assistance transition into education, training and employment should also be implemented. Allowing higher earning exemptions for this group will also increase their engagement in employment and improve their quality of life.
k) Develop **targeted emergency prevention** and community interventions to stabilize those at imminent risk for social exclusion.

Emergency prevention resources should be targeted to those who are most vulnerable. Having data that shows paths into and the factors contributing to social exclusion will guide targeted prevention efforts.

Research can also help identify the communities where large numbers of vulnerable people live. In these specific neighbourhoods, there is an opportunity to work with community groups towards prevention.

l) Continue public funding of **rent supports**, targeting vulnerable populations.

The Government of Alberta’s rent supports and homelessness emergency prevention initiatives dedicated $44.4 million to 15,500 Alberta households in 2009-10. Rent supplements directed at landlords provided another $30.8 million to over 4,700 households in 2009-10. For less than $4,000 per household, these initiatives prevented the homelessness of more than 20,000 Albertans in one year. We recognize the rent supplement budget has decreased significantly since then. Given the added pressure brought on by high migration and a shrinking rental vacancy rate, we strongly recommend the reinstatement of this initiative.

As sufficient affordable housing stock is built (directing capital to those requiring long-term, high level support), rental supplements should go to those requiring short-term, lower level support.

m) Leverage **Family Care Clinics** to ensure a holistic approach to vulnerability prevention is in place.

Family care involves a well-rounded understanding of a family’s needs – not a simple focus on physical health needs. In the U.K., health visitors are frequently used to make contact with families who might be struggling with issues of domestic violence, severe poverty, abuse and/or neglect. Such visits are critical to developing a positive relationship with families and often act as a support and referral service. Health visitors perform a vital service for: (i) Alberta Health Services (ii) children’s services (for monitoring infant and child well-being and developments)\(^{lxxvi}\) and, (iii) for housing services (where re-housing efforts may be initiated through referrals prior to homelessness).

Establishing effective links and maintaining positive relationships with other local organizations can achieve this multi-agency approach. Health visitors are well positioned to take a key role in identifying families in need and to support referrals to other services. By rethinking the role of community-based health care, we can leverage such resources to also address social exclusion.

n) Continue to support efforts to **end homelessness**.

Alberta remains the only province committed to ending homelessness in our country. The results of the targeted efforts of the Government of Alberta, community-based organizations, federal and private sector partners, the faith community and the private sector have demonstrated not only significant improvements in the quality of life for clients and communities, but also cost-savings.

We strongly encourage the Government of Alberta to include its commitment to ending homelessness as part of its Social Policy Framework. As an extreme manifestation of social exclusion, homelessness remains a critical focus for social policy. The targets and timelines of Alberta’s Plan are sound measures. Communities province-wide are reducing shelter use, targeting the chronically homeless and reducing the burden on our public systems (corrections, health, etc.).

We are encouraged by the creation of the Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness to lead the implementation of Alberta’s 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness. The ability of this body to influence higher level systems issues, such as discharge planning from health care (including addictions treatment), corrections and child intervention is critical to success. We have a significant opportunity to slow the flow into homelessness with diversion and discharge planning. This would significantly impact our ability to better target high system users.
o) Deliver quality **affordable and supportive housing** for those who cannot afford to meet their own housing needs and to underpin the building of sustainable communities.

The incidence of core housing need\(^{xvii}\) in Alberta was 10.3%, while the median shelter-cost-to-income ratio\(^{xviii}\) was 43.8%. More than half (at 53.5%) of lowest-income households experienced core housing need in 2008.

A focus on Albertans who are experiencing persistent core housing need will ensure those in highest need have access to the supports (income assistance, affordable housing, case management, etc.). A targeted approach focused on developing affordable housing options to reduce the number of Albertans in persistent core housing need will ensure measurable impact on the flow into homelessness, quality of life for served families and overall community wellbeing.

While no benchmark for Alberta for persistent core housing need could be obtained, using the Canadian figure of 8.6% of households, the Social Policy Framework could focus on reducing the incidence of persistent core housing need as a key outcome of a targeted affordable housing strategy.

p) Developing affordable rental housing in Alberta going forward should:

- prioritize capital investment to the most vulnerable (those experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness and consistent core housing need) reflective of community need;
- prioritize economically efficient investments;
- ensure appropriate supports are in place for operations;
- take a portfolio approach by delivering new units and rent supplements;
- build non-profit agency capacity to own and operate housing;
- make the most efficient use of existing non-market housing stock;
- implement provincial standards for affordable housing; and
- develop and implement policy changes that encourage an increase in overall affordable housing stock, including market rental.

q) Develop collaborative, innovative and **sustainable funding mechanisms** for affordable housing and supports, independent of public funding, by leveraging social finance options.

Government and community need to work together to find new ways to get the private sector to invest in developing affordable housing, particularly in Calgary. The goal is to create stable and long-term revenue to ensure continued development of affordable housing. There is the opportunity for social finance to bring additional funding models to the table, particularly leveraging affordable housing. This can significantly increase capacity to deliver the necessary affordable and permanent supportive housing units.

The Government of Alberta should introduce Social Impact Bonds, to allow private investors to invest finances in programs that save taxpayers’ money. The return on investment is generated by the share of savings realized by government. For example, investors could put up money for a housing program that reduces prison use. The cost saved by a demonstrated reduction in recidivism would be shared by the investor and the taxpayer.
K. WORKS CITED

9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Given a better understanding of the risk factors that precipitate homelessness, the original scope of homelessness prevention, which was considered 72,195 Calgary households that are low income earners and spending more than 30% of income on shelter, can be revisited.

15. Leslie Tuttty, Cathryn Bradshaw, Catherine Worthington, Bruce MacLaurin, Jeanette Waegemakers Schiff, Jennifer Hewson, Dorothy Dooley, “Preliminary Analysis only from Phase 2 of the HART Research Project, Full Analysis Ongoing, 2011.
17. According the Integrated Justice Services Project (IUSP) report (Schutte & Thompson, 2010) risk factors for justice system recidivism in Alberta are remarkably similar, “Being overly punitive with sanctions has been found to increase recidivism rather than decrease it. Feedback from stakeholders and offenders in Alberta with regard to treatment needs and service gaps were very similar. Offenders identified needing assistance obtaining employment, housing, government ID, an Alberta Health card, income support, transportation, and clothing. Stakeholder feedback identified the need for more services and programming focused on addictions, personal development (e.g. anger management, parenting, and employment), income support, and vocational training and education” (Schutte & Thompson, 2010).

22. Ibid.

xxiii Low birth weight is an indicator of the general health of newborns, and a key determinant of infant survival, health and development. Low birth weight infants are at a greater risk of dying during the first year of life, and of developing chronic health problems.


xxiv Ibid.


xxxix Ibid.

li Government of Alberta, “Poverty Costs…”


lxi The Alberta Secretariat For Action on Homelessness, “A Plan For Alberta…”
https://osi.alberta.ca/osicontent/Pages/Factsheets/InfantMortalityRateforAlbertaandAlbertaHealthServicesContinuumZones.aspx

Low birth weight is an indicator of the general health of newborns, and a key determinant of infant survival, health and development. Low birth weight infants are at a greater risk of dying during the first year of life, and of developing chronic health problems.


Ibid.

Bruce Maclaurin and others, “2003 Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect...”


Government of Alberta, “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder...”

Lisa Wells, Casey Boodt, Herb Emery, “Preventing Domestic Violence in Alberta...”


Child protection social workers in the UK often rely on Health Visitors to engage with a family. This approach is useful as many families feel threatened by a visit from child protection authorities whereas a visit from a health visitor is considered ‘less threatening’ and a softer approach. For more information about homelessness and the role of health visitors, please see: http://england.shelter.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/263250/Health_visitors.pdf

The CMHC core housing need indicator classifies those who could not afford suitable and adequate housing in their locality as being in housing need. Using this measure allows for a better understanding and differentiation between those who spend more than 30% of income on shelter for prolonged periods of time.


Average shelter-cost-to-income ratio (STIR) refers to the proportion of total before-tax household income spent on shelter. The shelter-cost-to-income ratio is calculated for each household individually by dividing its total annual shelter cost by its total annual income.

Main Office
O'Neil Towers
Suite 308, 925 7 Ave SW
Calgary, AB T2P 1A5
Phone: 403 237 6456
Fax: 403 262 2924
Website: calgaryhomeless.com
Email: info@calgaryhomeless.com