

***Planning and Collaboration***

**Revelstoke Poverty Reduction Strategy (June 2012)** – a comprehensive look at poverty and affordability in Revelstoke and **Action Plan (October 2013)** – [www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org](http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org)

**Snapshot of the State of Poverty in Revelstoke Report (February 2018)** – Indicator project in partnership with the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute.

**Poverty Reduction Working Group** – established in October 2013, the purpose of the working group is to:

- Track progress on local poverty reduction initiatives and implementation of the recommended actions in the strategy and action plan;
- Support the capacity of community-based organizations to implement programs and projects directly related to poverty reduction;
- Build community-wide awareness and support for poverty-related issues in Revelstoke;
- Act as a poverty reduction 'think tank', brainstorming ideas and building community partnerships to act on those ideas;
- Apply for project and program-based funding when available and appropriate;
- Measure and evaluate outcomes and report back to the Social Development Committee and City Council.

***GOAL #1 - Information sharing, networking and communication***

- Ongoing participation in Vibrant Communities Canada 'communities of practice' teleconferences.
- Revelstoke included in CBT's regional membership in Vibrant Communities Canada (2014 - 2018). Representation/attendance at National Conference (Ottawa 2015, Edmonton 2016, Hamilton 2017).
- Representation/attendance at Western Cities Summit (Vancouver 2018).
- Linking in with provincial organizations like BC Poverty Reduction Coalition & Living Wage for Families BC.
- Supported establishment of VCC's BC Community of Practice, acting Co-Chair.

**Raising awareness**

- Presentation in Nelson (April 2014)
- Presentation to local Chamber of Commerce & Rotary Club (May 2014)
- Presentation at Union of BC Municipalities annual convention (Sept 2014)
- Series of articles in the Revelstoke Times Review newspaper (one per week Sept – Nov 2014)
- Presentation to local medical advisory team (Nov 2014)
- Living Wage Update Report – article in the Times Review newspaper (Jan 2015); posted on Social Development website
- Presentations to City Council and subsequent City of Revelstoke endorsement of the Cities Reducing Poverty Charter (March 2015); article in the Revelstoke Times Review newspaper
- Revy Vibes video production; article in Revelstoke Current (March 2015, <https://youtu.be/p16sLciZ1Ss> )
- Participation & presentation at the Poverty Reduction National Summit in Ottawa (May 2015)
- BC Poverty Reduction Coalition Workshop held locally (October 2015)
- 2 day visit & tour of Revelstoke initiatives with Jackie Tegart MLA (BC Govt' liaison to MCFD poverty reduction initiative) and Kathy Berggren-Clive (Director of the same) (April 2016)
- Annual Columbia Kootenay Boundary Regional CED Forum hosted by Revelstoke Community Futures "Understanding the Economics of Poverty Reduction" (May 2016)
- Participation on Columbia Basin Regional Poverty Reduction Working Group along with other communities working on poverty reduction in the region.
  - o Group plenary at AKBLG annual convention on "Why Community-based Poverty Reduction Makes Good Sense" (April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

- Group workshop at Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation’s annual convention on “Why Community-based Poverty Reduction Makes Good Sense” (Sept 21 2017)
- National webinar for Tamarak (Nov 2’ 2017) – *Measuring Up to Poverty Reduction in Rural BC* – can be viewed at <http://vibrantcanada.ca/blogs/natasha-pei/recording-online-measuring-poverty-reduction-rural-bc>
- Informative workshop series – BC Housing (January 2017), Culture of Poverty (Feb 2017), Volunteer Income Tax Program (Feb 2017).
- Facilitated (federally-endorsed) consultation towards a Federal Poverty Reduction Strategy (Feb 2017).
- Facilitated (provincially-endorsed) consultation towards a Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy (March 2018)

## **GOAL #2 - Access to resources**

- Poverty Intervention Tool (Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice) – updated with Revelstoke contacts and information; distributed to local physicians and service providers (Nov 2014).
- Planning and coordinating series of community conversations on how we can best support those who are most isolated and vulnerable in our community – ongoing (Early Childhood Development Committee, Revelstoke Literacy Action Committee, OC, Revelstoke CYMHSU LAT, etc.)
- CBAL: Production of a series of “Making Cents” financial literacy guides based on ‘life events’, including: *Parents and Families*: having children; *Youth and Youth Adults*: starting your first job and moving out on your own; *Retirement*: living in retirement; *Everyday Living*: information relevant to every age group – development of financial literacy resources website <http://revelstokefinancialliteracy.weebly.com/>
- CBAL establishes ‘free money fair’ at bi-annual Children’s Clothing Exchange to increase uptake of Canada Learning Bond & RESP programs.
- Local service providers continue to assist residents with application forms & access to programs and services – ‘off the side of their desks’ + continuation of Social Justice Advocate position at Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society.
- Canada Revenue Agency workshop series for Revelstoke Secondary Students, New Immigrants, Seniors, and Families with Children on tax credits & benefits (April 2018). RCU financial literacy workshops (e.g. disability tax credits) – ongoing.

## **GOAL #3 - Affordable rental and emergency housing**

- Construction of 24 new subsidized housing units for seniors & disabled (8 at Moberly; 16 at Mt. Begbie Manor).
- Municipal policies in place to promote the development of secondary suites; set aside & contribute land for affordable housing projects; 50% or waive dcc charges for affordable housing projects; preserve mobile home parks; consider rental housing conversion only when vacancy rate is above 4%.
- City Department of Community Economic Development & Community Futures contributed staff time in support of the Revelstoke Community Housing Society (RCHS) meetings and project development to 2018.
- Rev Community Housing Society – through BC Housing/CBT Affordable Housing Partnership constructed 12 new subsidized rental housing units for low-income residents of all ages, including families. The City of Revelstoke provided the land in-kind. Project completed & units rented March 2016.
- RCHS confirmation of funding to construct an additional 21 units (spring 2018) – CBT / BC Housing.
- RCHS completed an Emergency Shelter Feasibility Plan (Dec 2014) (see [www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org](http://www.revelstokesocialdevelopment.org)) In 2017, initial groundwork done to establish BC Housing’s Extreme Weather Response Program in Revelstoke.

## **GOAL #4 - Income security**

- Volunteer Income Tax Program – first offered in 1997, continues to date - volunteers assist lower income residents to complete tax returns for no cost, at community-based locations such as the Seniors’ Centre, seniors’ residences, and the Food Bank.
- In February 2014, the City of Revelstoke Social Development Committee, in partnership with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, received CBT Social Grants funding to do a Financial Literacy project: This is a two-year

collaborative project to coordinate, plan, develop and implement programs and resources that translate a wide range of targeted financial information and advice; Canada Learning Bond initiative (Nov 2015).

<http://revelstokefinancialliteracy.weebly.com/>

- Living Wage Initiative – worked with Revelstoke Credit Union to update living wage calculation. Produced a written report, published online (Jan 2015). Calculation update (April 2017, 2018).
- University of BC Okanagan ‘Community – University’ Partnership research project looked at the potential benefits and barriers to businesses paying a living wage, including economic implications. Visit <http://icer.ok.ubc.ca/publishing/icerpress.html>

#### **GOAL #5 - Low cost transportation options**

- The City of Revelstoke, in partnership with BC Transit, implemented changes to the local transit system effective December 2012, making transit routes more efficient and user-friendly. The City also donates free bus passes to food bank coordinator as well as Revelstoke Secondary School.
- Seniors Volunteer Medical Transportation Program – free transportation to out of town medical appointments for those who have no other options. Currently over 120 clients and 20 volunteer drivers registered with the program.
- Early Childhood Development Committee Access Contingency Fund assists parents in need to get children to programs and services (provision of gas cards, taxi passes etc).

#### **GOAL #6 - Individual and community-wide food security**

- Revelstoke Food Resiliency Charter was developed by a grassroots collaborative. Endorsed by Revelstoke City Council in February 2014.
- In November 2013 the City of Revelstoke received funding (Real Estate Association of BC) to complete a Food Security Strategy, guided by a steering committee made up of key stakeholders. Completed October 2014; Food Security Coordinator hired to facilitate implementation (hosted by Community Connections). Food Recovery Feasibility Study and Pilot Program completed in 2016, 2 years of funding to continue this growing project secured.
- A growing Local Food Initiative branched off from parent organization (North Columbia Environmental Society) – now has a coordinator and is working on expanding food resiliency-related projects and programs, including: film series, intergenerational learning (e.g. canning workshops); expanding community garden sites (e.g. in partnership with Revelstoke Visual Arts Centre including fruit and nut trees); working with food bank (e.g. ‘plant a row + grow a row for neighbours in need’ program); celebration of local food culture [www.revelstokelocalfood.com](http://www.revelstokelocalfood.com)
- Revelstoke Food Bank continues to build awareness of need & program delivery for vulnerable residents. Demand for Food Bank services continues to increase each year.
- United Church continues ‘Soup and a Smile’ program; collaboration between local churches initiated ‘Free Pasta Dinner’ Friday night program in winter 2014/15 season; continues to date.
- Free Community Christmas Dinner for any resident on Christmas Day continues (20 years).
- School District 19 partners with parent and student volunteers to deliver free breakfast programs in the Elementary schools.

#### **GOAL #7 - Early childhood development**

- Revelstoke Early Childhood Development Committee – established in 2003. One of BC’s first Early Years Centres. Involves:
  - o Comprehensive planning & annual goal-setting.
  - o Well-established multi-sector partnerships, including School District & Community Connections.
  - o Focus on inclusive, universally accessible programming complete with healthy foods.
  - o Early intervention as a high priority (3 year old fair, Ages & Stages questionnaires, etc).
  - o Free resources and assistance with subsidy application forms.

- Tracking child care spaces and increasing with need.
- Free Children’s Toy & Clothing exchange/Early Years Fair 2x/year
- Support for training child care providers in latest developmental learning & infant/toddler.
- Support for parents (‘father-friendly initiative’, high level speakers, one on one).
- Support for immigrant families – funding acquired for extra staff enables regular staff to work one on one and develop relationship with families, when need arises.
- Access contingency fund.
- Canada Learning Bond initiative (in partnership with Financial Literacy project).

### **GOAL #8 - Literacy**

- Revelstoke Literacy Action Committee – established in 2005. Includes:
  - Community-based literacy coordination.
  - Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (universally accessible) programming.
  - Comprehensive planning & annual goal-setting.
  - 2 year Financial Literacy project (see above under ‘Income Security’).
  - Advocacy for continued local access to adult upgrading.
  - Bursaries to cover tuition fee costs for lower income students (Okanagan College Revelstoke Centre).
  - Strong partnership with local WorkBC office to enable access to EI & disability related training programs and subsidies.

### **GOAL #9 - Social Inclusion**

- The City of Revelstoke Core Program – enables low income individuals and families free access to the Arena and Aquatic Centre, and 50% off all city-run Parks and Recreation programs. In March 2017, City Council approved changing eligibility criteria from LICO to LIM.
- Youth Access Fund (est. fall 2014) removes financial barriers for youth access to sports, recreation, and cultural events and programs – facilitated by City of Revelstoke Youth Liaison.

### **GOAL #10 - Clothing, footwear, basic necessities**

- Bi-annual Free Children’s Clothing exchange sponsored by the ECD Committee.
- Women’s Clothing Exchange now occurs once/year (e.g. May 2018).
- Revelstoke Credit Union established emergency fund in 2017 to assist families in crisis with emergency expenses (e.g. dental surgery) – service provider referral only.

### **Coming Up!**

- In January 2018 the City of Revelstoke was awarded 3 years of funding through the Vancouver Foundation’s new poverty reduction funding stream to continue implementation of the poverty reduction strategy. Areas of strategic priority include food security, community literacy, early childhood development and increased coordination capacity to support additional projects (e.g. capacity building for RCHS, support for Housing Needs & Demand Assessment).

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