

DRAFT
RECOMMENDATIONS
MAYOR'S ADVISORY PANEL ON
POVERTY

MAYOR'S ADVISORY PANEL ON POVERTY: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

February 2016

These draft recommendations represent a direction for our community to move to reach its full potential. This direction is not new; we listened to hundreds of Londoners, who pointed us to compelling research, new ideas, and the important work already happening in London. This community has momentum. We see it as our job to bring the many viewpoints together into one place.

We share these draft recommendations with the knowledge that there is more work to do. The final recommendations document will say much more about how we understand poverty, how we go about making the recommendations happen, and how we measure our progress as a community.

We are asking you to tell us whether these draft recommendations represent the right direction for London. If we work together to make them happen, will we see the change we want to see?

The draft recommendations include both short-term and long-term recommendations. Short-term recommendations are those that don't need a lot of "new money" or big system changes (e.g. provincial or federal policy changes). We can start making the short-term recommendations happen now. Long-term recommendations generally need additional planning, advocacy, and resources.

We included a lens of equity in three ways by: using existing research on poverty and equity to develop recommendations; calling for an equity lens in the implementation structure; and identifying targeted strategies for specific communities. We will need to better understand the impact these recommendations will have for indigenous, gendered, LGBTQ, ability, age, socio-economic, and ethno-cultural populations (among others). These understandings go beyond the timeline of the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty's mandate, which is why the inclusion of diverse voices and an equity lens is so important for ongoing implementation.

Thank you for sharing your experience and wisdom with us.

The Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty

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INSTRUCTIONS

Please take the time to read through the draft recommendations.

At the end of each section, there is space for you to let us know if any more recommendations should be added to that section. Please feel free to focus on the sections that interest you most.

After you have read through all the recommendations, you will be asked to share your top 5 choices for the most *urgent* recommendations – those we need to tackle first. You will also be asked to share your top 5 choices for the most *important* recommendations – those that will make the biggest impact.

If you have any questions or need additional information on the draft recommendations or the Mayor’s Advisory Panel on Poverty, please email povertypanel@london.ca.

PART A: CULTURE SHIFT

We understand poverty as a community-level challenge. To begin addressing poverty as a community, we need to think differently and act collectively. Some recommendations in this “culture shift” aren’t about affecting poverty directly. What they are about, however, is community-building and building an even more caring and compassionate London.

1.0 CHANGING THE WAY WE THINK

SHORT TERM

1.1 Acknowledge that the system we have developed falls short of helping many people exit poverty and can sometimes trap them in it; it will continue to fall short until we decide to change it

1.2 Acknowledge that prosperity in life is not determined by individual choice alone; it is influenced heavily by circumstance and opportunity (e.g. stable home life, healthy food, access to good education)

1.3 Engage Londoners with lived experience to gather and share stories of the community and the impacts of poverty

1.4 Conduct more workshops, such as *Bridges out of Poverty*, to raise awareness and build community understanding of poverty

1.5 Develop a sustained social awareness campaign that:

- eliminates stigma toward, and recognizes the strengths of, Londoners living in poverty;
- demonstrates how the status quo is harmful to all of us, and is ultimately more costly;
- encourages community ownership of developing solutions to poverty in London; and
- provides resources for Londoners to learn about how they can help their neighbours

LONG TERM

1.6 Build a poverty-sensitive culture in all work environments by developing training tools that include the perspectives of, and where possible mentorship by, people with lived experience

1.7 Strengthen relationships and increase partnerships between municipal and indigenous leaders to work collaboratively to address poverty within indigenous communities

1.8 Strengthen relationships and increase partnerships between local and indigenous organizations to work collaboratively to address poverty within indigenous communities

1.9 Provide cultural safety / cultural competency training for all service providers to increase capacity to provide services with indigenous communities and other vulnerable / marginalized populations

1.10 Collaborate with school boards to develop new poverty-focused curriculum-related resources to help students understand the economic, social and health impacts of poverty, and to reduce stigma associated with people experiencing poverty

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

2.0 CHANGING THE WAY WE LIVE

SHORT TERM

- 2.1 Support the continued implementation of the *London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy*
- 2.2 Continue to develop neighbourhood action plans for all London neighbourhoods using a community development approach
- 2.3 Promote and expand key existing initiatives, such as *Circles*, as opportunities for Londoners to connect with, mentor, and support other Londoners
- 2.4 Recognize Londoners' commitment to volunteerism and a caring community and build upon these efforts

LONG TERM

- 2.5 Create a "Made in London" campaign that encourages residents to think and buy local in order to support the local economy and increase local employment
- 2.6 Continue to develop strategies to increase voter turnout among underrepresented populations
- 2.7 Accelerate the development of more public gathering spaces for community to come together
- 2.8 Promote charitable gift-giving toward programs with sustained, transformative impacts on poverty

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

3.0 CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK

SHORT TERM

3.1 Develop an implementation plan for the recommendations that:

- fosters collaborative leadership with people with lived experience that respects their expertise and gives opportunities to influence decisions
- uses equity lenses, including indigenous, gender, LGBTQ, ability, age, socio-economic, and ethno-cultural to assess the impact of each recommendation on these populations
- includes the private sector, governments and funders as partners

3.2 Invest resources needed to create and support the ongoing implementation structure for these recommendations

3.3 Use these recommendations as London’s mandate to advocate for policy change from provincial and federal governments

3.4 Review the poverty-focused tables, networks and strategies and determine how to coordinate and streamline efforts effectively

3.5 Promote London’s “community hubs”, such as Family Centres, resources centres and libraries as places to help families connect to supports and develop a related online portal

LONG TERM

3.6 Scale up supports and services that have been proven to be effective in the reduction or elimination of poverty (see Section B) and stop what isn’t effective

3.7 Building on the results of 3.4, strengthen the culture of collaboration across all organizations and sectors

3.8 Develop strategies that increase service providers’ capacity to provide individualized supports that respond to people’s unique circumstances

3.9 Encourage London organizations (including the municipality, hospitals, and post-secondary institutions, school boards, London Police Service, etc.) to purchase services from organizations that employ individuals with barriers to employment

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

PART B: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

The following recommendations use categories associated with the social determinants of health, with the addition of transportation. The recommendations are organized according to economic, social, and cultural dimensions. We acknowledge that there is significant overlap between all categories and dimensions and that people experiencing poverty are impacted in different ways.

ECONOMIC

4.0 INCOME AND INCOME DISTRIBUTION

SHORT TERM

4.1 Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for London to be a Basic Income Guarantee pilot site

4.2 Support further increases to provincial minimum wage

4.3 Advocate for increases to Canada Pension Plan

4.4 Advocate for increases to Ontario Works as recommended by the provincial Social Assistance Review Commission

4.5 Advocate for the replacement of predatory lending and provide supports to address bad credit by collaborating with the financial sector to provide banking alternatives

LONG TERM

4.6 Promote the business case for employers to pay a living wage

4.7 Recognize the growing collaboration of organizations working to pay a living wage

4.8 Encourage implementation of zero-interest loan programs for Londoners demonstrating need

4.9 Collaborate with employers to develop strategies to close the wage gap for indigenous, gendered, LGBTQ, differently-abled, and ethno-cultural populations

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

5.0 UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB SECURITY

SHORT TERM

5.1 Promote and invest in opportunities for entrepreneurs living with low income (e.g. *ImpactLoan*)

5.2 Implement *London's Community Economic Road Map* to promote a stronger local economy

5.3 Bring together business, non-profit, government, and education sectors to develop coordinated skills training programs that meet local labour market needs

5.4 Encourage employers to consider ability in the absence of credentials (e.g. diplomas and degrees)

5.5 Promote on-the-job training programs

5.6 Advocate for the elimination of the cost of expunging criminal records

LONG TERM

5.7 Develop strategies to encourage employers to hire locally

5.8 Support diverse hiring practices by:

- developing a community of practice
- providing incentives for employers
- recognizing what employers are already doing with respect to diversity

5.9 Create more supports for Londoners looking to develop new social enterprises

5.10 Develop programs that provide “soft skills” employment training

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

6.0 EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING CONDITIONS

SHORT TERM

- 6.1** Support provincial efforts to strengthen employment standards
 - 6.2** Advocate for paid personal days for working families
 - 6.3** Develop coordinated “transition to work” strategies that provide wraparound supports for people exiting social assistance
 - 6.4** Develop coordinated “employment with supports” strategies to help people keep employment
-

LONG TERM

- 6.5** Assess job creation strategies through a quality lens to increase the availability of full-time, permanent work with adequate pay
- 6.6** Increase sustainable employment through better pay and benefits
- 6.7** Design pathways to employment for individuals with complex issues including homelessness, addictions, and mental health challenges

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

SOCIAL

7.0 EARLY LIFE

SHORT TERM

- 7.1 Advocate for increased investment by all levels of government in early years education and literacy programming
- 7.2 Support development of national childcare strategy
- 7.3 Advocate for affordable, quality childcare
- 7.4 Integrate cultural safety lens in childcare quality strategies
- 7.5 Support implementation of proven outreach-based programs, such as the *Nurse-Family Partnership*
- 7.6 Advocate for more licensed childcare spaces in London
- 7.7 Advocate for increases to childcare fee subsidy for low income families

LONG TERM

- 7.8 Create flexible childcare spaces outside of daytime working hours
- 7.9 Expand mentorship and support programs for new parents

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

8.0 EDUCATION

SHORT TERM

- 8.1 Expand elementary school initiatives that increase awareness of post-secondary options (e.g. *REACH* program)
- 8.2 Develop strategies to increase supports for people with learning disabilities
- 8.3 Advocate for more financial assistance for post-secondary tuition fees in Ontario
- 8.4 Expand RESP matched savings programs to help families save for education
- 8.5 Increase availability of financial literacy and “basic life skills” training for all Londoners, including children and youth
- 8.6 Expand mentorship programs for individuals with lived experience who are returning to school
- 8.7 Advocate for appropriate actions to ensure that every elementary and high school student in London can succeed no matter what school he/she attends

LONG TERM

- 8.8 Implement coordinated wraparound approach to education, building on proven projects in London and other communities (e.g. *Pathways to Education*, *MAPP program*)
- 8.9 Develop a community strategy to eliminate financial barriers for school-based extra-curricular activities
- 8.10 Develop a community strategy to eliminate financial barriers to achieving GED

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

9.0 HEALTH SERVICES

SHORT TERM

- 9.1 Develop and implement a coordinated local mental health and addictions strategy
- 9.2 Advocate for an expanded Ontario Drug Benefit program
- 9.3 Expand free local dental programs such as *Healthy Smiles*
- 9.4 Connect primary care providers accepting patients with Londoners who need care and live with low income
- 9.5 Advocate for increased health and dental benefit coverage for people receiving social assistance
- 9.6 Advocate for extended health benefits for a longer period of time for those transitioning off OW and ODSP
- 9.7 Advocate for the expansion of Community Health Centres

LONG TERM

- 9.8 Working with the Southwest Local Health Integration Network, use health equity lens to increase access to care for vulnerable people
- 9.9 Reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and addiction and encourage seeking help

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

10.0 HOUSING

SHORT TERM

- 10.1** Continue to implement London's *Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan*
- 10.2** Support the *London Plan's* call for mixed income and intensification housing development policies
- 10.3** Promote London becoming a Housing First community, including training assistance for agencies and supports for residents to achieve successful housing outcomes
- 10.4** Engage landlords, utility companies, and banks to develop a coordinated strategy that keeps more people housed
- 10.5** Work with older adults to develop attainable housing strategies responsive to their needs
- 10.6** Coordinate community assets to develop strategies focused on housing youth, women and girls

LONG TERM

- 10.7** End chronic homelessness in 10 years
- 10.8** Enhance social housing standards to improve safety
- 10.9** Invest resources needed to clear the social housing waitlist
- 10.10** Eliminate the waitlist system and reinvest resources in housing that keeps the waitlist clear
- 10.11** Streamline the process by which affordable housing is accessed
- 10.12** Developed coordinated wraparound supports for people transitioning between housing options
- 10.13** Expand the capacity of the Housing Stability Bank
- 10.14** Increase long-term investment in housing / housing supplements
- 10.15** Increase supply of attainable rental housing
- 10.16** Implement strategies to assist with start-up costs of housing (furniture, moving, household items)

10.17 Through the Housing Development Corporation, support the regeneration of social housing units across the community

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

11.0 TRANSPORTATION

SHORT TERM

11.1 Include a lens of poverty in the development of the *Shift* transit strategy

11.2 Engage London Transit Commission and businesses regarding timing and routes to allow more Londoners to seek employment in harder-to-access areas of the city (e.g. industrial areas)

11.3 Expand innovative approaches to transportation, such as rideshare programs

11.4 Support safe, affordable transportation options, such as improved cycling lanes and cycling infrastructure

11.5 Change public transit subsidy to an income-based model available to all low-income adult Londoners

LONG TERM

11.6 Introduce discounted bus pass for youth

11.7 Allow children under 12 to ride free

11.8 Increase the availability of para-transit

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

12.0 FOOD INSECURITY

SHORT TERM

12.1 Expand programs that support residents shopping and cooking together to save money, such as *Food Families* and collective kitchens

12.2 Expand local food literacy programs for all ages

12.3 Support local policies that encourage community gardens and urban farms

12.4 Support campaigns that promote healthy, local food

12.5 Support implementation of the London & Middlesex Food Policy Council

12.6 Expand sites and programs that accept *Harvest Bucks* fresh food voucher program

12.7 Increase availability of emergency food sources (locations and hours)

12.8 Work with farmers to provide more fresh food to emergency food sources

12.9 Develop strategy to reclaim usable food from grocery stores and restaurants

LONG TERM

12.10 Increase availability of gift cards/food cards that provide healthy, culturally appropriate food for people accessing emergency food sources

12.11 Work with food banks and resource centres to distribute seeds and soil during growing season

12.12 Recognizing the diligent work done by researchers and community partners on the presence of food deserts, support business models that address food deserts (e.g. markets, fresh food in convenience stores, etc.)

12.13 Implement breakfast/lunch programs in London schools

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

13.0 DISABILITY

SHORT TERM

13.1 Advocate for liveable disability pensions

13.2 Promote that some individuals on ODSP are capable of working and want to work

LONG TERM

13.3 Increase physical accessibility in affordable housing

13.4 Work with employers to expand strategies for people with employment barriers to find work

13.5 Expand supportive housing approaches for people with disabilities

13.6 Increase the availability of para-transit (see recommendation 11.8)

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

14.0 SOCIAL SAFETY NET

SHORT TERM

14.1 Advocate for changes that allow individuals to retain more of their assets before accessing social assistance

14.2 Provide coordinated wraparound supports through transition periods (e.g. shelter to housing, social assistance to work, incarceration to home)

14.3 Support the full implementation of the *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario* recommendations

LONG TERM

14.4 Continue to support the evolution of emergency shelters to improve diversion, rapid housing, and specialization

14.5 Reduce clawbacks for people moving from social assistance to paid employment

14.6 Reorganize individual social assistance funds, subsidies and vouchers to make it easier for people to access resources

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

15.0 SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion is a key impact area. Many strategies that address social exclusion are included in Part A: Culture Change, above. Additional strategies are below.

SHORT TERM

15.1 Invest in the *Circles* program to help more Londoners work together to address poverty (see recommendation 2.3)

15.2 Provide subsidized, structured recreation opportunities for Londoners living with low income

LONG TERM

15.3 Develop strategies to increase access to technology and close the ‘digital divide’ in London

15.4 Raise awareness of services and supports and reduce stigma to make it easier for people to ask for help

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

CULTURAL

Poverty impacts everyone, and these recommendations are designed to address poverty universally. However, we know that some communities experience higher-than-average rates of poverty. No single factor explains all conditions for all people, but some communities have historical or structural challenges that would benefit from targeted strategies.

16.0 INDIGENOUS

SHORT TERM

16.1 Use an equity lens in the development of the implementation structure for these recommendations to assess the impact on indigenous communities

16.2 Include leadership of indigenous persons in implementation structure

16.3 Promote inclusion of indigenous leadership in networks and organizations addressing poverty

LONG TERM

16.4 Strengthen relationships and increase partnerships between municipal and indigenous leaders to work collaboratively to address poverty within indigenous communities (see recommendation 1.7)

16.5 Strengthen relationships and increase partnerships between local and indigenous organizations to work collaboratively to address poverty within indigenous communities (see recommendation 1.8)

16.6 Provide cultural safety / cultural competency training for all service providers to increase capacity to provide services with indigenous communities and other vulnerable / marginalized populations (see recommendation 1.9)

16.7 Support policies that connect indigenous communities to educational opportunities

16.8 Use the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to educate Londoners and address systemic racism and discrimination

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

17.0 GENDER

SHORT TERM

17.1 Use an equity lens in the development of the implementation structure for these recommendations to assess the impact on gendered communities

17.2 Include leadership of women in implementation structure and recognize the value of gender diversity

17.3 Invest in the implementation of *London's Community Plan Regarding Street Level Women at Risk* and support the implementation of *Homes 4 Women*

17.4 Strengthen violence prevention programs

17.5 Advocate for gender income parity

17.6 Advocate for increased child support enforcement from noncomplying parents

LONG TERM

17.7 Support employment training programs in sectors underrepresented by women

17.8 Work with employers to increase flexibility in workplace for those with family responsibilities

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

18.0 RACE

SHORT TERM

18.1 Use an equity lens in the development of the implementation structure for these recommendations to assess the impact on ethno-cultural communities

18.2 Include leadership of diversity in implementation structure

18.3 Increase employer awareness of cultural and religious holidays

18.4 Advocate for credential recognition for international newcomers

18.5 Provide support for initiatives aimed at reducing the high incidence of poverty among racialized groups (Canadian-born and immigrant) in London, such as recognition of non-Canadian education and work experience

LONG TERM

18.6 Develop programs that provide “soft skills” employment training (see recommendation 5.9)

18.7 Support policies that connect ethno-cultural communities to educational opportunities

What recommendations need to be added to this section, if any?

URGENT AND IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Please help us understand what recommendations are most urgent and important by answering the following questions.

What are the **top 5 most urgent** recommendations to address poverty in London?

These are recommendations you think our community needs to tackle first. Pick from all the recommendations and list the numbers (e.g. "2.2", "12.10") in the spaces provided. You can add comments in the box provided.

Comments:

What are the **top 5 most important** recommendations to address poverty in London?

These are recommendations that you think will have the biggest impact. Pick from all the recommendations and list the numbers (e.g. "2.2", "12.10") in the spaces provided. You can add comments in the box provided.

Comments:

What other feedback do you have for the panel?

Comments:

WHAT'S NEXT

The Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty is asking Londoners to provide feedback on the direction of the draft recommendations. The panel will then incorporate the feedback to develop a final set of recommendations, including a proposed implementation structure.

Thank you again for your contribution to addressing poverty in London. We believe this community is ready for big change and we believe that, together, we can make it happen.