

PARTICIPANT GUIDE:

MAYOR'S ADVISORY PANEL ON POVERTY

PANEL'S OVERVIEW

On September 16, Mayor Matt Brown established the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Poverty. He asked us to take six months to develop recommendations on what our community needs to address poverty more effectively. The panel is working closely with the community to develop recommendations and will present the recommendations to the Mayor by the end of March 2016. The work will include:

- Developing a shared understanding of poverty in London;
- Mapping efforts currently underway to address poverty in London;
- Identifying gaps and areas requiring significant action;
- Engaging local stakeholders in dialogue on gaps and approaches to address poverty; and
- Developing a set of recommendations to better coordinate our collective efforts to address issues related to poverty more effectively throughout London and the areas requiring significant action.

PANEL MEMBERS

- Vanessa Ambtman-Smith, South West Local Health Integration Network
- Helene Berman, Western University, Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion
- Maureen Cassidy, City of London
- Dharshi Lacey, Pillar Nonprofit Network
- Andrew Lockie, United Way London & Middlesex
- Christopher Mackie, Middlesex-London Health Unit
- Abe Oudshoorn, Western University & London Homeless Coalition
- Glen Pearson, London Food Bank & London Poverty Research Centre

ENGAGEMENT

Hearing from with community members is the foundation of the panel's approach. We want to hear from anyone with passion and commitment to addressing the problem, particularly community members with lived experience. There will be two community engagement phases:

- November & December: community feedback on the shared understanding of poverty; gaps, barriers, and solutions
- January & February: check-in with community; are recommendations on the right track?

TODAY'S CONVERSATION

Today's conversation has two goals:

- 1) Get community feedback on the Shared Understanding of Poverty**
- 2) Gather the community's input on gaps, barriers, and solutions to poverty in London**

As you read through the questions below, provide your thoughts on the attached feedback form, if you are using one. If you don't have a feedback form, you can provide your answers in an email to povertypanel@london.ca.

1. SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY

Panel members have been researching best practices and speaking with people across the city to understand how London thinks about and addresses poverty. These conversations have contributed to the panel's first goal, *Developing a Shared Understanding of Poverty in London*.

The first goal of today's conversation is to get feedback on the shared understanding of poverty. Feedback from the community will lead to an improved understanding of how we address poverty in London.

Panel's proposed definition of poverty:

"A community experiences poverty and cannot reach its potential when people lack or are denied the economic, social, or cultural resources to participate."

Poverty affects individual and families most directly. We have heard, and we believe, that poverty also affects the entire community. Because of this, we all have a role to play in developing solutions. Further, while poverty is associated with lack of money and resources, it is not just about money. We have to think about social and cultural issues as well.

Panel's proposed goal:

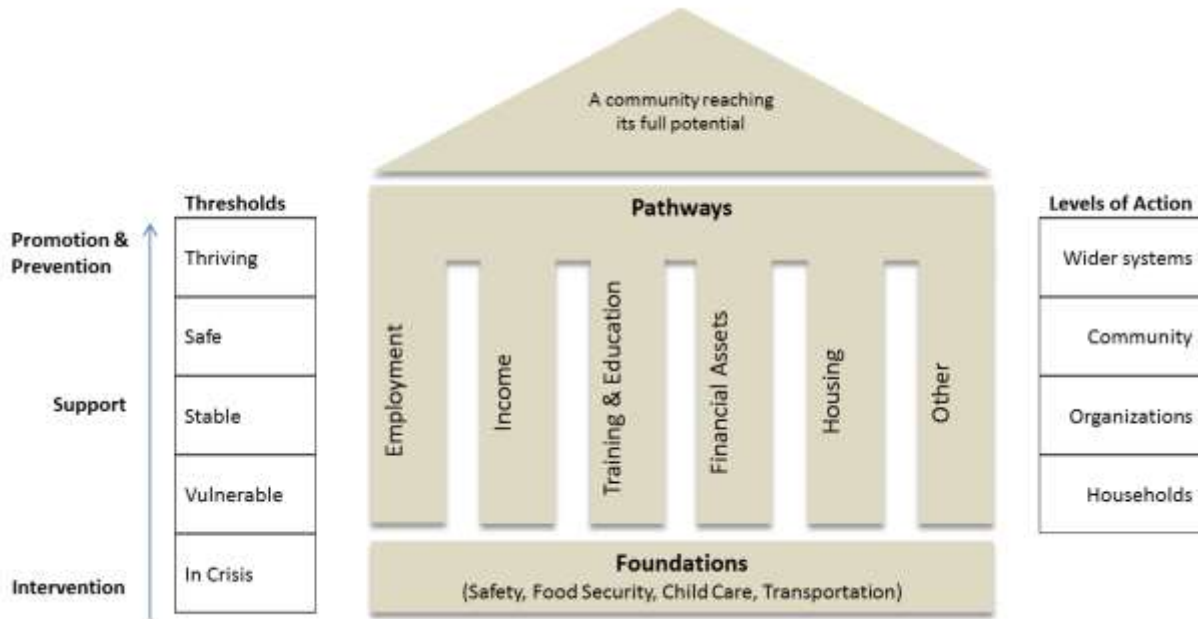
"London becomes a community reaching its full potential by ending poverty in one generation"

We want recommendations that help London become a community reaching its full potential, and we believe this is only possible if our community includes all Londoners. We want recommendations that start this city on a path to ending poverty in one generation. We will be working with others to figure out the best way to measure our progress on this goal.

Framework:

The following framework is a tool to help us think about all the complexity, root causes, and impacts of poverty. If it looks complicated, that’s because it is. Poverty is a complicated issue that requires a comprehensive strategy.

Framework for Understanding Poverty



We think this framework is useful because:

- The “thresholds” idea reminds us that people experience poverty differently and need different supports depending on where they are
- It shows a difference between “foundations” – critical resources needed to survive – and “pathways” – various ways people can take to forge their path out of poverty
- It suggests that everyone has a role to play in making change, from households, to organizations, to the entire community and wider systems

Questions on the shared understanding of poverty

- Does the definition reflect your view of poverty? What do you like about it and what would you change?
- Is the goal the right goal for this community?
- Does the framework make sense? Do you agree with the pathways and foundations?
- What other feedback do you have on how to view the issue of poverty?

2. GAPS & BARRIERS

Many groups have conducted research on gaps and barriers and have developed recommendations for addressing poverty. We want to build on that research to develop recommendations made for London.

Gaps and barriers can exist at many levels. They may be personal, they may be about missing programs and services in the community, or they may be “big picture” gaps and barriers at the level of society.

Listening to Londoners, we have already learned about a number of gaps and barriers in our community:

- Cost of basic needs: housing, food, transportation, etc.
- Lack of jobs / precarious employment
- Difficulties exiting social services
- Lack of coordination between governments
- Short-term approaches to fixing the problem
- Stigma and negative assumptions about people living in poverty
- Isolation and exclusion

Questions on gaps and barriers

- What additional gaps and barriers exist in London that prevent people from exiting poverty?
- Are any gaps and barriers unique to London?

3. SOLUTIONS

We want to build on existing recommendations for addressing poverty. We don't want to do work that has already been done. We are interested in identifying solutions that are appropriate to London and reflect its unique strengths and opportunities.

Thinking of solutions is not easy. We are starting the conversation today, looking for your early ideas on what this community can do differently to address poverty. This conversation will continue over the months to come.

Questions on solutions

- What should we do differently in London to address poverty?
- What solutions will work best, given London's strengths and opportunities?

4. OTHER QUESTIONS

Other questions

- What other questions should the panel be asking the community?
- What else would you like to share with the panel?

NEXT STEPS

The panel will collect and review the feedback received from all conversations. The feedback will be used to improve the shared understanding of poverty and to begin the development of recommendations. We will host another Community Forum on December 10, 4pm-6pm at Goodwill to close this engagement phase.

In early 2016, we will share the results of this engagement phase as well as our early recommendations to ask the community if we are on the right track.

More information:

- www.london.ca/povertypanel
- povertypanel@london.ca

THANK YOU