

### ***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)

**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.

### ***Information sharing, networking and communication***

- Ongoing participation in Vibrant Communities Canada 'communities of practice' teleconferences
- Linking in with provincial organizations like BC Poverty Reduction Coalition & Living Wage for Families BC

#### **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); linked on [www.vibrantcanada.ca](http://www.vibrantcanada.ca)
- Emergency Shelter Feasibility Study – article in the Revelstoke Mountaineer (April 18, 2015)
- Participation & presentation at the Poverty Reduction Summit in Ottawa (May 2015)
- Local posting of BC Poverty Coalition's 'poverty myth busters' posters – ongoing
- Dialogue with the Columbia Basin Trust and communities working on poverty reduction in the region – ongoing.

### ***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.
- Production of a series of 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 – in progress.
- Local service providers continue to assist residents with application forms & access to programs and services; continuation of Social Justice Advocate position at Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society.

### ***Affordable rental and emergency housing***

- 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%; inclusionary zoning contributions for larger developments.
- City Department of Community Economic Development contributes staff time in support of the Revelstoke Community Housing Society (RCHS) meetings and project development.
- In December 2012, RCHS was successful in their application to the BC Housing/CBT Affordable Housing Partnership, and received approval to proceed with development plans to construct 12 new subsidized rental housing units for low-income residents of all ages, including families. The City of Revelstoke is providing the land in-kind. After much planning, RCHS hopes to begin construction this spring. Target for completion is Dec 2015.
- In February 2014, RCHS received funding through the Columbia Basin Trust Social Grants Program to complete an Emergency Shelter Feasibility Plan. The plan is now complete. Proves the need, data can be used moving forward. Overarching recommendation is to include supportive services.

### ***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 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.
- Living Wage Initiative – worked with Revelstoke Credit Union to update living wage calculation. Produced a written report, published online (Jan 2015). Currently, working with University of BC Okanagan 'Community – University' Partnership research project to look at the potential benefits and barriers to businesses paying a living wage, including economic implications.

### ***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).
- In September 2013, the Revelstoke Early Childhood Development Committee in partnership with Community Connections Society, initiated a new program - Reaching Out to Community Kids – Community Connections social workers work with families and children who are having difficulty with school and preschool attendance, providing one on one capacity-building and transportation (e.g. in the home, in the morning before school starts). Families are referred to the program by teachers and child care/preschool workers.

### ***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 continued***

- 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: 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)
- Revelstoke Food Bank continues to build awareness of need & program delivery for vulnerable residents.
- United Church continues ‘Soup and a Smile’ program; collaboration between local churches initiated ‘Free Pasta Dinner’ Friday night program (winter 2014/15); Community Christmas Dinner for any resident on Christmas Day continues (20 years).

### ***Early childhood development***

- Revelstoke Early Childhood Development Committee – established in 2003. Has recently become 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
  - o Tracking child care spaces and increasing with need
  - o Support for training child care providers in latest developmental learning & infant/toddler
  - o Support for parents (‘father-friendly initiative’, high level speakers, one on one)
  - o 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

### ***Literacy***

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

### ***Social Inclusion***

- Community Link Program run by Community Connections Revelstoke Society - provides increased social inclusion and links to employment opportunities to individuals with self-identified disabilities or learning differences; focuses on incorporating individuals in both pre-existing and new events within the community to promote self-confidence, work eligibility and healthy life style choices.
- 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.
- Youth Access Fund (est. fall 2014) removes financial barriers for youth access to sports, recreation, and cultural events and programs – partnership between the City of Revelstoke Youth Advisory Committee & Revelstoke Community Foundation.
- Safe Spaces Revelstoke Society (est. Jan 2015) – support for LGBTQ residents.

For more information, contact Jill Zacharias, City of Revelstoke Social Development Coordinator

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