

Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

Presentation to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,
Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit
Advisory Committee

September 27, 2021



Poverty in Toronto

- Nationally, Statistics Canada reports that Canada's official poverty rate was 10.1% in 2019, down 0.9 percent.
- Preliminary Statistics Canada analysis from 2020 suggests that COVID-related pandemic benefits may have offset the impacts on income for many families. However, poverty in Toronto is consistently more prevalent than elsewhere in the country, with a rate of poverty that is roughly 1.8 times higher than the national rate according to the 2017 Canadian Income Survey, with one in five Torontonians below Canada's official poverty line.
- For 2019 the poverty threshold for the Toronto region (Census Metropolitan Area) was calculated to be \$49,304 for a family of four. This threshold is the third highest in the country, after Vancouver and Calgary.
- It is expected that poverty may have grown among Indigenous, Black, racialized and other equity-denied communities, such as women and people with disabilities, many of whom are essential workers.
- With Statistics Canada currently conducting the 2021 Census, a precise update on the rates of poverty in Toronto will be forthcoming as soon as Statistics Canada begins releasing data. This is currently scheduled to occur in mid-2022.

LGBTQ2+ Lens on Poverty

- Statistics Canada reports that LGBTQ2+ Canadians may be more economically vulnerable during the pandemic
 - In 2018, one-third (33%) of LGBTQ2+ Canadians found it difficult or very difficult to meet their needs in terms of transportation, housing, food, clothing, participation in some social activities and other necessary expenses, compared with just over one-quarter (27%) of non-LGBTQ2+ Canadians. LGBTQ2+ Canadians were also less likely to be able to handle sudden, unforeseen expenses of \$500 than non-LGBTQ2+ Canadians (11% versus 7%).
- Prior to the pandemic, LGBTQ2+ Canadians (27%) were twice as likely as their non-LGBTQ2+ counterparts (13%) to have experienced some type of homelessness or housing insecurity in their lifetime

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210615/dq210615a-eng.htm>

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is a 20-year plan to make Toronto a city with **opportunities for all.**

In Toronto, poverty is:

- Created by systemic barriers
- Gendered, racialized, and geographically concentrated
- A shared responsibility

More info: toronto.ca/povertyreduction

SIX AREAS OF INTERVENTION



Housing Stability



Service Access



Transit Equity



Food Access



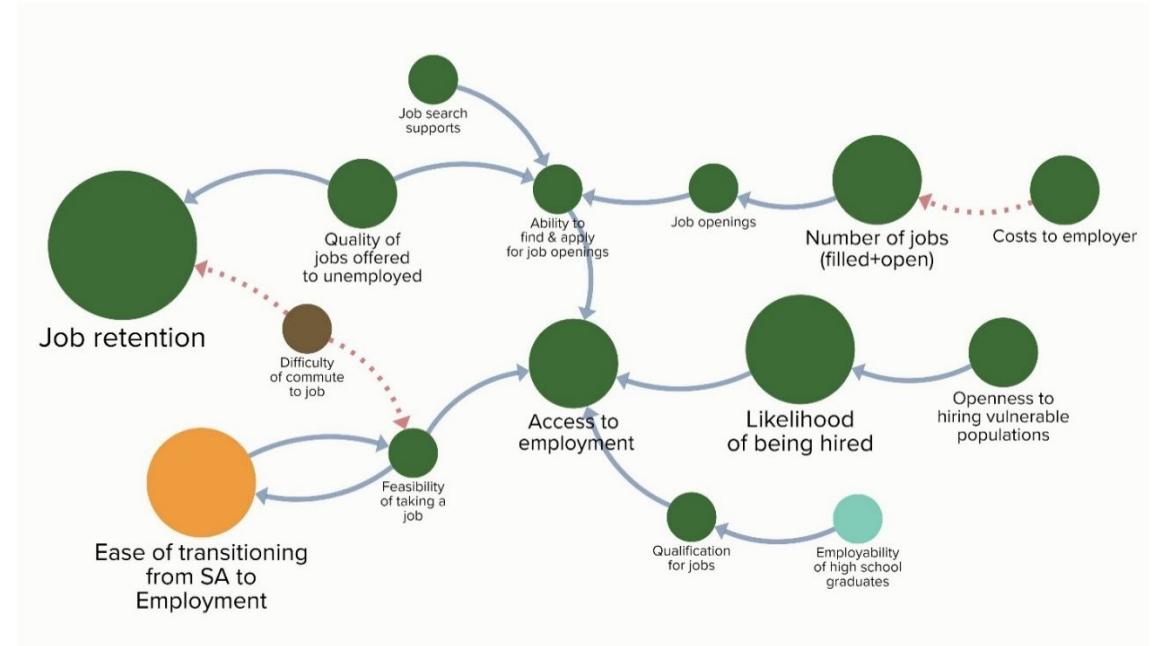
Quality Jobs & Living Incomes



Systemic Change

Systems Design Approach

- Poverty is not linear. It is a result of multiple, interacting factors embedded within a larger system.
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Office has adopted a systems approach to tackling poverty in Toronto.
- Systems thinking focuses on how different constituent elements of a system interact to produce specific outcomes.



City of Toronto Levers

- **Service Provision:** new or enhanced services for residents that have a direct impact on mitigating the effects of, or reducing the number of people in poverty.
- **Policy and Regulation:** revisions to or development of policies and regulations that shift practices or creates an enabling environment to improve outcomes for residents living in poverty, including engaging in advocacy to other orders of government for policy or regulatory changes.
- **Funding:** grants and other supports (e.g. assets, in-kind, deferred revenue) that incubate new ideas or sustain supportive programs, services and initiatives that improve the outcomes of residents living in poverty.
- **Leadership:** establishment or implementation of best practices, including change management and government modernization initiatives, that improve services for and outcomes of residents living in poverty.
- **Stewardship:** facilitating, convening, and establishing partnerships that drive systemic change or transformation that benefit residents living in poverty.
- **Purchasing and Investment:** leveraging existing operating spending, or capital infrastructure investment to improve social and economic outcomes of communities.

Current Status

- The City of Toronto is currently implementing the 2019-2022 PRS Action Plan, which contains 89 activities to be completed by the end of 2022.
- Currently 23 activities have been completed or reassessed (e.g. determined to be duplicative and merged with other activities)
- 48 activities are in progress
- 18 activities are deferred to future years, primarily due to COVID-19 related disruptions
- Between 2015, when the Poverty Reduction Strategy was first adopted and 2020, the City of Toronto invested a total of \$282M (gross), \$186M (net) in new and enhanced services to support poverty reduction. In 2021, the staff recommended operating budget included an additional \$8.1M (gross), \$4.5M (net) in new and enhanced services.



Housing Stability

Recommendations

1. Improve the quality of all affordable housing
2. Assist low-income individuals and families to secure and maintain affordable housing
3. Increase the supply of affordable housing

Note: Actions related to Housing Stability are being carried out under the purview of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

Service Access and Coordination

Recommendations

4. Increase service access and availability
5. Improve access to high quality programs for children and youth

Transportation Equity

Recommendations

6. Make transit more affordable for low income residents
7. Improve transit services in the inner suburbs

Food Access

Recommendations

8. Eliminate hunger
9. Increase access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food

Quality Jobs and Livable Incomes

Recommendations

- 10. Improve the quality of and access to income supports
- 11. Create employment opportunities for low-income groups with high unemployment rates
- 12. Improve the quality of jobs

Systemic Change

Recommendations

13. Leverage the economic power of the City to stimulate job growth, support local businesses, and drive inclusive economic growth
14. Create a seamless social support system
15. Coordinate and evaluate the implementation of the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy
16. Engage City Staff and residents on poverty reduction efforts
17. Dedicate funding to poverty reduction actions



Thank You

For more information, or if you have any further questions, feel free to contact us at :

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www.toronto.ca/povertyreduction