

Report to Council



**Date:** February 24, 2020  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** Central Okanagan Wellness Analysis and Poverty Reduction Strategy Application  
**Department:** Active Living and Culture

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Active Living & Culture, dated February 24, 2020, that outlines the Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis and Poverty Reduction Strategy application.

AND THAT Council endorse the collaborative partnership with the District of Lake Country, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, the Regional District of the Central Okanagan, and the Southern Interior BC United Way, to develop a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Strategy.

AND THAT Council endorse the collaborative application to the Union of B.C. Municipalities' Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Grant for \$149,000 for the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Strategy with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan being the primary applicant to apply and manage the funding on behalf of the partnering communities.

**Purpose:**

To present Council with information on the Central Okanagan Wellness Analysis and the next steps towards the development of a regional Poverty Reduction Strategy including a collaborative partnership and application for UBCM funding.

**Background:**

In 2017, the Central Okanagan Poverty Reduction Committee (COPRC) was established with the goal of developing a regional poverty reduction strategy with an upstream focus. The City of Kelowna has had staff representation on COPRC since its inception.

Supported by funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Central Okanagan Early Years Partnership, COPRC set the stage for a community-driven, regional approach to addressing poverty. Key activities included gathering insights from families with lived experience of poverty, providing a systems-planning workshop and developing a work plan to guide strategy development. Through this work COPRC determined that there were specific requirements needed to build the foundation prior to moving forward with a strategy development including a poverty analysis, significant community

engagement, further involvement of those with lived and living experience of poverty, governance structure design, and sufficient resources to plan and execute a strategy.

With additional grant funding in 2019, COPRC contracted Urban Matters CCC in a consultant role to create a regional community poverty analysis (Attachment 1: Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis) informed by Lived Experience and key engagement from stakeholders including Interior Health, municipal governments, local First Nations and the Regional District of the Central Okanagan.

The analysis provides baseline data and insights to better understand wellness and poverty in the Central Okanagan while recognizing the unique differences in each community. The Wellness Analysis highlights opportunities, including the alignment with the BCTogether: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy, and identifies eight key priorities for the Central Okanagan. These priorities will help shape the next phase of this project, the development of a Central Okanagan Wellness and Poverty Strategy. Key stakeholders involved in the analysis reconvened in January 2020 for the presentation of the report and endorsed a partnership approach to the pursuit of a regional strategy.

A regional focus provides considerable benefits to Central Okanagan communities including efficiencies in resources, engagement processes and advocacy. Through the City of Kelowna's Journey Home Strategy development process, the community identified the need for a regional approach to complex social issues, recognizing that people move throughout the region for services, employment, childcare and housing. A regional strategy can create an action plan on policies and structures at the regional level, while building capacity within each community to address their unique needs and priorities.

At the provincial level, BC's Poverty Reduction Strategy *TogetherBC* identifies six priority action areas: housing; families, children and youth; education and training; employment; income supports; and social supports. To support poverty reduction at the local level, The Province has provided \$5 million over three years. The Regional District of the Central Okanagan has agreed to submit a collaborative application to UBCM for a Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program grant of \$149,000 to support the strategy development process.

As the primary applicant, the Regional District of the Central Okanagan (RDCO) will accept responsibility to apply for, receive and manage the grant funding on behalf of the regional partners. They will assume responsibility for the completion of the project, reporting requirements and maintaining proper fiscal management.

United Way, Southern Interior BC (UWSIBC), has been acting as the convener and chair of the COPRC and will continue in this role. In addition, UWSIBC will act as the convener of the collaborative partners and through a Memorandum of Understanding with the RDCO, will oversee and supervise the work related to the development of the Wellness and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

If the funding application is approved in May 2020, a Regional Partnership Committee on Poverty will be formed based on a formal application process to work in partnership with the Regional District of the Central Okanagan and the COPRC to provide community direction, oversight and feedback throughout the strategy development process.

**Discussion:**

Addressing poverty is critical for building a healthy community for all. And focusing on addressing poverty has never been more critical or timely for our region as it is now. As all levels of government are recognizing the growing numbers of people facing poverty in our communities all across Canada, and across our province, strategies have been developed at the national and provincial levels.

Canada's first Poverty Reduction Strategy, *Opportunity for All (2017)*, has the bold vision of a Canada without poverty, because we all suffer when our fellow citizens are left behind. British Columbia's first ever poverty reduction strategy, *TogetherBC*, recognizes the power of collective action to make life better for people. It honours the commitment of British Columbians who, for years, have been advocating for government to take action on a challenge that the strategy boldly suggests is solvable.

The Central Okanagan Wellness Analysis provides insight to help understand poverty and its impacts across the Central Okanagan, and within our individual communities. It also provides a foundation for the development of a regional poverty reduction focus. It highlights the opportunity for collective action to work towards making life better for everyone in our communities, with eight key priorities identified for collective action:

- Upstream focus
- Community activation during strategy development
- Reconciliation
- Youth poverty and wellness
- Regional housing and homelessness
- Transportation
- Isolation and inclusion
- Child development and care

**Conclusion:**

As all layers of government are recognizing the critical need to address poverty, the timing for the development of a Central Okanagan strategy to address poverty could not be more timely. As the Central Okanagan Wellness Analysis indicated, poverty is growing in all of our communities. The Journey Home process demonstrated the need for, and the power of, working collaboratively across the region. With all the municipalities at the table, the development of the strategy will provide opportunity to build additional partnerships, and through a lens of lived experience develop a regional strategy focused on reducing poverty and creating healthier communities for all our citizens.

**Internal Circulation:**

Divisional Director, Active Living and Culture

Divisional Director, Financial Services

Communications Manager

Communications Advisor

Policy and Planning Manager

Sustainability Coordinator

**Considerations applicable to this report:**

***Financial/Budgetary Considerations:***

A grant application in the amount of \$149,000 will be submitted to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Grant by the Regional District of the Central Okanagan on behalf of the partner municipalities. Matching funding is not a requirement of the grant; however, individual partnering communities are being asked to provide in-kind contributions through assignment of staff resources to participate in the planning and development of the strategy. In addition, municipalities may choose to contribute small funding amounts through existing funding programs to leverage additional funding, but this is not a requirement.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

***Legal/Statutory Authority:***

***Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:***

***Existing Policy:***

***Financial/Budgetary Considerations:***

***External Agency/Public Comments:***

***Communications Comments:***

Submitted by: S. Wheeler, Social Development Manager

Approved for inclusion:



J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living and Culture.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Central Okanagan Community Wellness Analysis

Central Okanagan Community Wellness and Poverty Reduction PowerPoint