



## STAFF REPORT

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**DATE:** January 31, 2023 **FILE:**

**TO:** Chair and Directors,  
Regional Board

**FROM:** David Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**RE:** POVERTY REDUCTION PLANNING & ACTION GRANT APPLICATION

### **PURPOSE/PROBLEM**

To consider a grant application to develop a regional poverty reduction strategy and action plan.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program was designed to help local governments in reducing poverty at the local government. It was developed to support the province's *TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy*. The program is currently accepting its fourth annual application intake with a deadline of March 17, 2023.

Conversations with the Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness, and the Strathcona Food Hub, have supported the need for a Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan. A plan would help to identify, prioritize and collaborate on community poverty reduction efforts. Development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy would also build upon recent projects such as the Strathcona Food Security Hub, data from regional housing needs assessments, point in time counts, transportation studies, as well as engagement with SRD communities to create actionable, collaborative priorities to help reduce poverty within the region.

The creation of a regional poverty reduction plan would also enable non-profits and community organizations the ability to apply for other grants that require the community or regional district to have a poverty reduction plan.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. THAT the report from the Chief Administrative Officer be received.
2. THAT an application of up to \$150,000 be submitted for Stream 1 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program to develop a regional poverty reduction strategy and action plan, and

THAT the Regional District serve as the primary applicant which will be responsible to apply for, receive and manage the grant funding on behalf of the project partners including interested member municipalities.

Respectfully:



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David Leitch  
Chief Administrative Officer

**BACKGROUND**

The UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program is currently accepting its fourth annual application intake with a deadline of March 17, 2023. This program was developed to support *TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy*. This provincial strategy has targets to reduce poverty across BC and is based upon four principles: affordability, opportunity, reconciliation and social inclusion.

The intent of the program is to support local government in reducing poverty at the local level. There are 2 program streams, Stream 1: Poverty Reduction Plans and Assessments and Stream 2: Poverty Reduction Action. There have been 3 previous intakes for the program. Stream 2 projects will be prioritized over Stream 1 for this intake. However, communities must have a Poverty Reduction plan in order to apply for Stream 2 projects. The lack of a poverty reduction plan has inhibited local organizations the ability to access Stream 2 funding and other funding programs where a Poverty Reduction Plan would support organizations grant applications.

Under the grant program, a local Poverty Reduction Plan must address one or more of six priority action areas which include: Housing and Homelessness, Supports for Children and Families; Education and Training, Employment, Income Supports and Social Supports.

A wholistic approach to addressing poverty reduction would be considered in the development of a plan. Early discussions with potential grant partners suggest a regional application should have an emphasis on two of the provincial priority action areas; housing and social supports (food security, transportation, warming/cooling solutions).

A Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan would build upon the findings of:

- regional housing needs assessments,
- Campbell River & District Coalition to End Homelessness, Regional Housing Survey Project,
- Point-in-Time counts (a community measure of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness),
- regional transportation feasibility study,
- Labour Market Partnership project and
- the work of social service agencies supporting vulnerable populations.

Through collaboration with the City of Campbell River, the Coalition to End Homelessness, the Strathcona Community Health Network, and several community social service agencies, the Regional District has previously been successful in attracting grant funding under the UBCM Strengthening Communities program. Implementation of that program was done through the work of more than 13 community organizations. A similar approach and collaborative effort would be required in the development of the Poverty Reduction Plan grant application and implementation. Through the development of the Poverty Reduction Plan, the SRD will continue to build relationships with key sectors of the community including First Nations, businesses and social agencies. Building upon current projects and recent data a comprehensive strategy with actionable items would help coordinate the efforts of multiple organizations and track progress.

The development of a successful strategy will include engagement with local First Nations, Indigenous organizations, social service provider agencies, school divisions, businesses, health agencies, and individuals with lived experience.

The creation of a Poverty Reduction Strategy aligns with the Board's current strategic plan to identify and support initiatives to improve the health and well-being of our communities.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. THAT an application of up to \$150,000 be submitted for Stream 1 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program to develop a regional poverty reduction strategy and action plan;  
AND THAT the application be done in partnership with interested member municipalities;  
AND THAT the Regional District serve as the primary applicant which will be responsible to apply for, receive and manage the grant funding on behalf of the project partners.
2. THAT an application be submitted to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program to develop a poverty reduction plan for the 4 electoral areas only.
3. THAT the Regional District decline to submit an application to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program at this time.

**RISKS**

The Poverty Reduction Planning & Action Program application guide states that Stream 2 Poverty Reduction Action will be prioritized over Stream 1.

The implementation of actions within a Poverty Reduction plan do not fit within a current SRD service and would require fulsome collaboration with community partners to be successful.

There is a short turnaround time to develop a grant application allowing less than 6 weeks to submit.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy would be fully funded under the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. Should the application be successful, the SRD Financial Plan will be amended accordingly to include the grant amount and corresponding expenditures.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL/REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

A regional approach to poverty reduction may support and encourage organizations and service agencies to deliver services beyond the municipal boundaries of Campbell River. Participation and engagement of First Nation communities located in the SRD boundaries and Indigenous Organizations who provide services to communities will be critical to the success of a poverty reduction action plan. A decision to formally partner and participate in a regional plan is scheduled to go before the City of Campbell council on February 9, 2023,

Both the provincial and federal government have poverty reduction strategies with targets to reduce poverty levels. It is anticipated that continued provincial and federal funding will be available at the local level to assist these levels of government in reaching their targets.

***Prepared by: Renée LaBoucane, Manager, Strategic Initiatives***