



ALLAboard:

Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy

Introduction

In Manitoba, we believe all people deserve a high quality of life and the opportunity to realize their potential. Poverty reduction is an important part of our plan to build our economy and our communities. However, poverty reduction is more than just sound economic development. Taking action to reduce poverty is the right thing to do.

The solutions to poverty lie with all Manitobans: all levels of government, businesses, community groups, educators, and citizens, striving together for a strong, successful province. **ALLAboard** is a strategy for the whole province – urban centres, rural areas, and northern Manitoba.

ALLAboard builds on the past decade of poverty reduction initiatives in Manitoba. It brings together successful initiatives that help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion, while creating new initiatives to build on our past successes. **ALLAboard** is the Manitoba government's renewed commitment to action.

In 2009, 9.7 per cent of Manitobans lived in low-income. While this is too high, it's important to note that significant progress has been made in the past decade. In 2000, the rate was 10.8 per cent. This means that in 2009, there were 6,000 fewer Manitobans living in poverty than in 2000.

Because of systemic barriers, some Manitobans are more likely to live in poverty. They include women (10.1 per cent), single parents (24.2 per cent) and Aboriginal Manitobans (17.2 per cent). We also know that newcomers and persons with

Our Vision for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion

We envision a future where people are socially included, connected to their communities, participating in the economy and contributing to our province.

Poverty is complex and goes beyond having enough money to live each day. We will work to create the conditions that allow people to participate fully in society as valued, respected and contributing members.

Everyone benefits from a society that helps all individuals to participate, and to prosper.

disabilities (12.7 per cent) are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty than other Manitobans. Our **ALLAboard** strategy addresses these discrepancies through targeted programs and initiatives.

Poverty is not just about money – it is also about social exclusion. Social exclusion happens when people are discouraged or blocked from fully participating in society because of barriers such as unemployment, poor housing, lack of accessible options, family breakdown, addictions, mental illness, outdated beliefs about their capabilities and discrimination. These barriers can keep people from accessing the benefits, resources and opportunities they need to participate more fully in their communities and reach their full potential.

Values & Guiding Principles

- We recognize that poverty is complex and requires long-term solutions that get at root causes.
- We will focus on building policies and programs based on evidence, and invest in what works.
- We recognize certain groups of Manitobans bear a greater burden of poverty and social exclusion than others (ex: women, single parents, Aboriginal Manitobans, newcomers, persons with disabilities).
- We understand the complex relationship between poverty and social exclusion – poverty contributes to social exclusion and social exclusion can lead to poverty.
- We need several approaches to address all angles: preventing people from falling into poverty; reducing the number of people living in poverty; and improving the lives of those living in poverty.
- We recognize the importance of supporting Manitobans as they achieve income stability and move towards financial independence.
- We need to build partnerships with other governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, communities and individuals to achieve our goals. As part of this, we are working in partnership with the non-profit sector to reduce red tape and make it easier for agencies to provide valuable services to Manitobans. This will give agencies the financial stability and flexibility to focus on providing services.

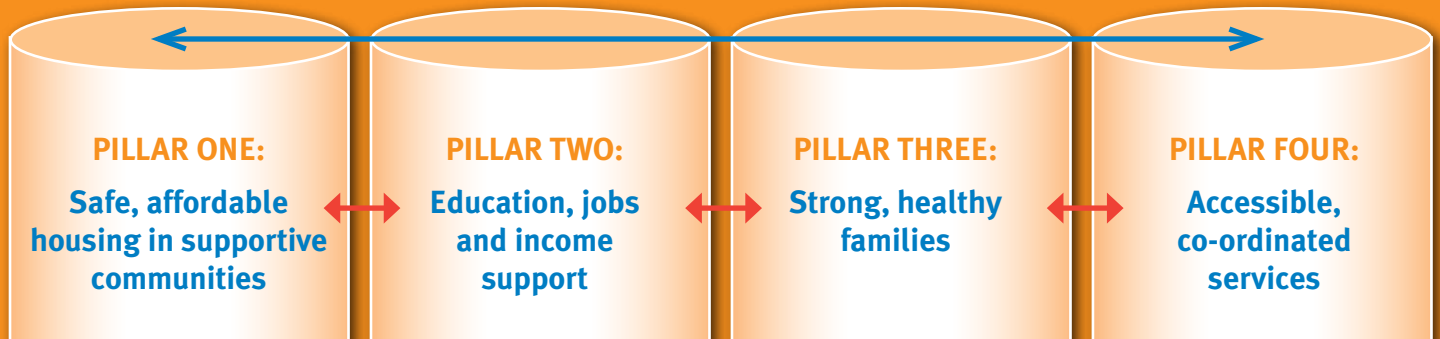
Reducing Poverty in Manitoba: Progress So Far

- fewer Manitobans living in poverty – a decrease of 6,000 (from 2000 to 2009)
- increased minimum wages to help the lowest income earners and their families – Manitoba's minimum wage is currently at \$10/hour and will increase to \$10.25/hour on Oct. 1, 2012
- more people working – Manitoba's provincial unemployment rate in 2011 was 5.4 per cent, compared to 7.4 per cent for all of Canada
- an increase in funded child care spaces – 11,000 new spaces funded since 1999 – importance of good child care in helping parents get and keep jobs
- fewer barriers to employment (ex: Rewarding Work Health Plan) – helps Manitobans transitioning from income assistance to work
- Children's Opticare – helps with the cost of eyeglasses for children living in low-income families
- strong Pay Day Loan legislation and enforcement – protects low-income Manitobans from unfair practices
- RentAid – provides more assistance for low-income renters



Framework

Based on feedback from Manitobans across the province, the ALLAboard framework is supported by four linked pillars:



PILLAR ONE: Safe, Affordable Housing in Supportive Communities

We recognize the need for adequate, affordable housing for individuals and families to move out of poverty. Strategic investments in housing stimulate the economy, promote community and economic development, enhance social well-being, and improve our infrastructure for future generations.

Key actions and initiatives since 2009 include:

- HOMEWorks! Long-term Housing Strategy
- HOMEWorks! Homeless Strategy
- The Winnipeg Regeneration Strategy
- Neighbourhoods Alive!
- Lighthouse & SafetyAid programs
- Aging in Place / Long-Term Care Strategy

Homeless Strategy

Manitoba has developed housing projects for homeless individuals, which are accompanied by outreach and support services to maintain a stable tenancy. Based on a HOUSING FIRST approach, these services connect homeless people to permanent housing and health and social supports.



PILLAR TWO: Education, Jobs and Income Support

We recognize the need for strategic investments in our people through education, training, and employment programs and supports. Key actions and initiatives focus on skills, literacy, transitions from unemployment to work, education and training opportunities, and income supports.

Manitoba is currently implementing several long-term projects in this area:

- Rewarding Work – programs that support Manitobans as they move from income assistance to employment
- marketAbilities initiatives – supports for persons with disabilities to help them find employment
- Let's Make a Better Deal™ – Manitoba's five-year plan for stronger consumer protection
- Bright Futures Fund – encourages at-risk students to stay in school and pursue college and university
- Training for Tomorrow Scholarship Program – encourages women to enter math, science and technology college training
- ACCESS programs at universities and colleges – academic, personal and financial support to provide opportunities for under-represented Manitoba groups to access post-secondary education



Rewarding Work in Education

This community internship program supports up to 120 people in culturally appropriate, community-based training to become certified education assistants (EA) or child care assistants (CCA). This program helps more low-income, newcomer and Aboriginal people get the training they need to work in important jobs in schools and child care centres.

The 11-month EA training began in July 2011. CCA training sessions began in September 2011.

PILLAR THREE: Strong, Healthy Families

We recognize that strong and well-functioning families are better able to raise physically and emotionally healthy children who are safe and secure, successful at learning, and socially engaged and responsible.

Manitoba has a strong foundation of strategies and initiatives addressing a wide range of topics promoting the well-being of families and children. Examples include:

- Healthy Child Manitoba
- Family Choices: Manitoba's Five-Year Agenda for Early Learning and Child Care
- Changes for Children: Strengthening the Commitment to Child Welfare Action Plan
- Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy
- Reclaiming Hope: Manitoba's Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Manitoba Women's Health Strategy
- The Northern Healthy Foods Initiative
- Children's disABILITY Services
- Thrive! Manitoba's Autism Strategy
- The Age-Friendly Intergenerational Initiative
- ManitobaParentZone.ca
- Grants to agencies supporting low-income families in their communities



The Triple P Parent Line

The Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) Parent Line offers Manitoba parents free, confidential, non-emergency, parenting support, based on the Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

The Parent Line is open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday to Friday. Parents, guardians or caregivers can call this line at 204-945-4777 or toll free at 1-877-945-4777 (in Manitoba).

PILLAR FOUR: Accessible, Co-ordinated Services

We aim to ensure that Manitoba government services are: responsive to the needs of individuals, families and communities; co-ordinated; and integrated across departments. This way, all Manitobans can easily access the information and supports they need to reach their full potential.

Key actions to date include:

- ACCESS centres – bringing health and social services together under one roof
- Connecting Employment Manitoba and Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) – getting Manitobans direct access to the supports they need to transition from EIA benefits to employment and financial independence
- Manitoba Children and Youth Opportunities – a new provincial department dedicated to children and youth, with a focus on preventing crime by giving kids access to educational, recreational and mentorship opportunities
- MYTEAM: Manitoba Youth Transitional Employment Assistance Mentorship – helping youth transition from child welfare services to successful adulthood
- Consolidated Specialized Services for Children and Youth with Disabilities – an innovative, one-stop rehabilitation centre that offers integrated special services for children and youth with disabilities
- Striving for no dead-ends in education, by working with schools, colleges and universities so students get credit for the work they do, wherever they complete their degrees; taking action to ensure all high school students have education and training options to keep them in school until they are 18



ServiceLink

ServiceLink is an on-line tool that helps Manitobans identify their eligibility for family services and housing benefits and services.

The website can be found at: <http://web6.gov.mb.ca/FSHServiceLink/en/index>

Key Priorities: 2012 - 2016

As we move into the next four years of the **ALLAboard** strategy, the direction is clear. **Manitoba's goal is to make progress on our set of indicators in each year of this strategy.** We believe the 21 indicators together provide a more accurate picture of poverty in our province than any single measure could.

We are living in tough economic times. Making progress will be a challenge. Partnerships with the federal, municipal and First Nations governments, businesses and community agencies will need to grow. It is going to be hard work, but Manitoba is committed to taking action against poverty.

To meet our goal, we have identified seven priority areas that the **ALLAboard** strategy will focus on over the next four years. They are:

1. Building Blocks for Employment
2. Targeted Supports for Those Most in Need
3. Food Security
4. Housing
5. Closing the Gap for Aboriginal Manitobans
6. Creating Opportunities for Youth
7. Early Childhood Development and Parenting Supports





Priority 1: Building Blocks for Employment

The best route out of poverty is through a well-paying job. Therefore, a key priority of the Manitoba government is expanding job, education and training opportunities. Manitoba continues to focus on building opportunities by helping workers during labour market transitions, providing access to apprenticeship programs and supporting infrastructure projects with an emphasis on training and employment, and providing more opportunities for Manitobans to learn and train in their own communities.

Priority 2: Targeted Supports for Those Most in Need

Some Manitobans are already living in low-income. Others are at a higher risk of living in low-income. This may be because they face complex, multiple risk factors. Maybe they receive income assistance. Maybe they are struggling with addiction, physical or mental health issues. Maybe they face access barriers because they were born with a disability or acquired one later in life. Research shows that poverty impacts men and women differently, and

these differences need to be considered when exploring solutions and actions. People are also at greater risk of living in low-income when they experience times of change or transition. These “trigger points” include major life changes like having children, getting separated or divorced, becoming an adult, transitioning from child welfare services, losing a job or becoming ill. Seniors may also experience low-incomes and limited opportunities for social inclusion. Our strategy includes targeted programs and services to help those most at risk.

Priority 3: Food Security

Food security exists when all people at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Food and Agriculture Organization, 1996).

Food security is important to all Manitobans. But not all citizens have the same access to affordable, healthy food in this province. Along with access to food, all Manitobans require access to safe, clean water.

Priority 4: Housing

Shelter is a basic human need and housing provides a stable base to help individuals, communities and the economy thrive. Families and individuals who have good quality, stable, affordable, accessible housing have an improved quality of life. Housing is at the centre of well-being. It is a key part of helping individuals, families and communities realize their full potential.

Priority 5: Closing the Gap for Aboriginal Manitobans

Many Aboriginal Manitobans face unique challenges that require targeted supports and services. Manitoba is committed to addressing the gaps in well-being between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Manitobans.

Priority 6: Creating Opportunities for Youth

An important part of poverty reduction and social inclusion is allowing and supporting youth to become socially connected, engaged and supported by their community.

Young people need access to recreation, arts and education. They need a safe place to live. They need jobs. They need love and support. They need a sense of community. We want our youth to be well-educated to secure a strong future. We will focus on innovative ways to help our youth overcome barriers and challenges so they can reach their full potential.



Priority 7: Early Childhood Development and Parenting Supports

Manitoba's children deserve the best possible start in life. Recent research supports the fact that healthy, early childhood development is a key factor in determining success later in life. Quality child care is an excellent opportunity to provide early childhood education and ensure all children have the same chance for healthy development.

Strong communities and involved parents contribute to learning and help students to succeed academically and socially. When links among school, families and the local community are strong, children do better. Families create the base for children to become self-sufficient and responsible adults, which supports social inclusion. As part of the strategy, Manitoba will continue to strengthen its accessible, early-learning, child care, and early childhood development programming, and provide innovative programs and supports for parents.

ALLAboard Pillars: Building Blocks to Success

	Objectives:	Indicators:
<p>PILLAR ONE: Safe, Affordable Housing in Supportive Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Manitobans have access to safe, adequate and affordable housing. To ensure that people living in Manitoba communities and neighbourhoods are well supported, leading to greater social inclusion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Total units of social and affordable housing supported by Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC). New households served through MHRC programs and services. Households in Core Housing Need. Sense of community belonging.
<p>PILLAR TWO: Education, Jobs and Income Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that more Manitobans participate in high school, post-secondary and adult education, and are prepared to participate in the labour market. To ensure that Manitobans have financial security through work, and access to income supports as needed. To ensure that the number of Manitobans living in low-income is reduced. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Graduation rates. Participation in adult learning programs. Employment rates. Average weekly earnings. Minimum wage rates. Low-income rates. Income inequality. Post-secondary education participation.
<p>PILLAR THREE: Strong, Healthy Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Manitoba children and families are emotionally and physically healthy, safe and secure, socially engaged and responsible, and have access to supports that allow them to reach their full potential. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Early Development Instrument scores. Availability of child care. Children in care. Teen birth rates. Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL) by income quintile. Prevalence of chronic disease by income quintile.
<p>PILLAR FOUR: Accessible, Co-ordinated Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Manitoba government services are accessible, co-ordinated and integrated across departments. To ensure that Manitobans have access to information and supports that are responsive to their needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Average monthly number of people receiving co-ordinated home care services. Continuity of physician care. Number of people using Access Centres.

Conclusion

Issues contributing to poverty are complicated. They require creative ideas to improve programs and services that enable Manitobans – those currently living in low-income and those at risk of falling into poverty – to live independently and with dignity.

Each fiscal year, Manitoba will release a budget statement. It will outline our annual plan to achieve our goal to make progress on all our indicators. We will also release an annual report discussing the progress we have made towards reaching that goal.

We recognize the important work already being done to support people living in low-income. Community agencies and individual Manitobans work hard to support their friends, neighbours and fellow citizens. They are integral to the work of reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion.

It is going to be hard work, but we are committed to taking action against poverty and improving social inclusion for Manitobans. We invite all Manitobans to join us in this work.



