



# BUILDING POVERTY SOLUTIONS: IDEAS FOR ACTION

## KEY LEARNINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY - 2018



# OVERVIEW

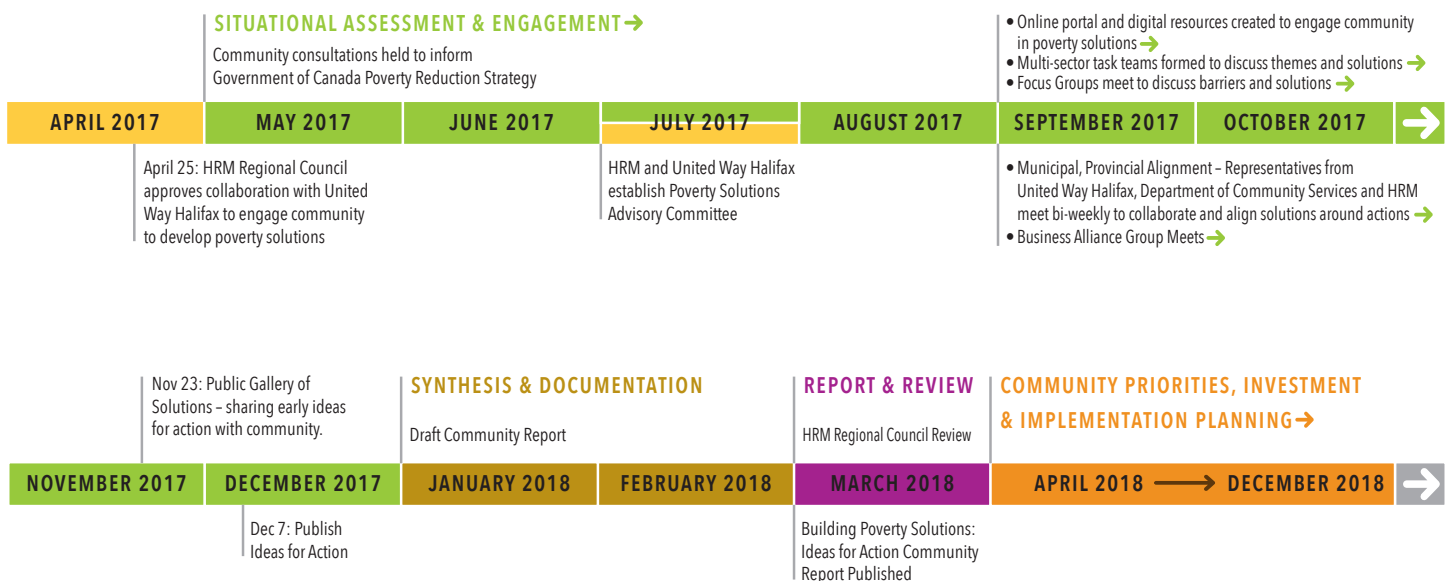
When United Way Halifax and the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) joined together to tackle the issue of poverty, we set out with a bold vision: to create a poverty-free Halifax, filled with compassion and opportunity, where everyone lives a life with dignity.

We embarked on an ambitious scope of work over a very short eight-month time frame. With a bias for action, we started by focusing on ways to engage HRM residents for positive community change. We researched and built on the great work that was already happening in our community and in others. We also took steps to ensure we facilitated a process that was inclusive so many diverse voices from all parts of our municipality (rural, suburban and urban) could be at the table.

The **Building Poverty Solutions: Ideas for Action Community Report** is an important marker in the ground. It builds on the work that came before us and provides a broad and comprehensive understanding of the state of poverty in HRM. This community report is not a strategy to end poverty in HRM; rather it represents the many voices and ideas of over 1,100 participants who took part in our multi-sector task teams, focus groups and public discussions.



## ENGAGING HRM IN POVERTY SOLUTIONS TIMELINE



# HIGHLIGHTS

## THE CASE FOR SUPPORT

- ➔ Support for ending poverty is strong in HRM. 92% believe that poverty is a priority.
- ➔ Poverty costs us all. It is estimated that poverty costs our province \$1.5-\$2.2 billion.

## POVERTY IN HRM

- ➔ 58,830 people live in poverty in HRM, using the Low Income Measure After Tax (LIM-AT). The range and rate of poverty varies by community and neighbourhood. When comparing 12 different communities within HRM, the LIM-AT rate ranges from 7% to 33%.
- ➔ 14.8% (LIM-AT), HRM's average rate of poverty is slightly higher than the national average of 14.2% and lower than Nova Scotia provincial average of 17.2%.

### INDIVIDUALS' POVERTY RATE (LIM-AT),

by Neighbourhood in Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia (2015)

HRM (14.8%)

Dartmouth North (33.6%)

Fairview (30.3%)

Spryfield (28.7%)

Preston Area (22%)

HRM Rural East (19%)







- ➔ Most people living in poverty are employed – they are the working poor. Using Statistics Canada's (2016) latest data for HRM, 28% of the labour force is earning under \$15/hour. Some of these individuals and families are working more than one job and are not able to make ends meet.
- ➔ People at higher risk for poverty include: female and lone parent families, children, youth in care, people with disabilities, racialized groups and Indigenous people, recent immigrants, LGBTQ2SIA+ community, people with mental illness or addiction to substances.

## DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PROCESS

- ➔ We learned from many in our community who are doing great work already and have been passionate champions for change in our HRM community.
- ➔ 1,139 people contributed to 129 Ideas for Action. This participation included 6 multi-sector task teams, 13 focus groups, community meetings, business alliance, representatives from municipal, provincial and federal government, and an online engagement forum.
- ➔ Approximately 38% of people who participated in the engagement process self-identified as currently living in, or having had experiences of poverty.

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

- ➔ The 129 Ideas for Action are organized under seven important focus areas for change:

-  Quality Jobs and Livable Incomes
-  Transportation
-  Food Security
-  Homelessness and Housing
-  Services Access for Health and Well-Being
-  Education and Learning
-  Systemic Change

Some ideas are focused on addressing immediate needs, while others are focused on root cause and building pathways to prosperity.

"From coast to coast to coast, in communities large and small, urban and rural, municipalities are the order of government closest to people's lives. Their local solutions are helping tackle national challenges – from growth and productivity to climate change – and are building a more livable, competitive Canada."

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

## LEARNING THROUGH DISCOVERY

We learned a lot through the engagement process.

We learned from many thoughtful and passionate voices of individuals who share our commitment to eliminating poverty in all its forms throughout our community. We were humbled and honored by the collective wisdom and experience of those who contributed to this report.

Knowing it was of critical importance that this work be led by the diversity of voices in our community including individuals with lived experience, we learned how to effectively engage, listen and build understanding. While there was diverse representation among our Advisory Committee, task teams and focus groups, we also acknowledge we didn't hear from everyone. Our ongoing work is to strengthen our relationships and broaden the conversation. This is particularly true for the important, and historically silenced, voices of our Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities.

We also learned how to be respectful and inclusive in our engagement efforts and support the pace and scope of change. While some members of our communities want to move swiftly, and take immediate action given the level of need in HRM, others want to slow down to build trust and capacity within our communities.

We also learned from, and will continue to build on, the good work that has already been started in our community. There is no need to re-invent the wheel. We have a talented and passionate community with many assets which can be used as a foundation to advance poverty solutions.

## ENDING POVERTY TOGETHER

It takes a lot of work, ideas and commitment to build a prosperous and inclusive community. This report includes 129 ideas for action, some of which have far-reaching implications for all orders of government, all sectors and the community as a whole. This reflects our belief it will take all of us to end poverty. Effective and sustainable solutions will require collaboration from many groups and organizations, cooperation from all orders of government, and the endorsement and support from the public at large.

Our next steps will be to assess, prioritize and plan. In some areas, HRM and United Way Halifax have the relationships, tools, resources and authority to lead the way. In others, we must collaborate with other partners to counter poverty, promote inclusive economic growth, and ensure a prosperous community for all.

Now it's your turn. As you review and discuss this report, please think about how you can help – leading your networks and organizations to be champions for change. Here are just a few ways you can do this.

- ➔ Stand up and speak up about the issues of poverty in our community. Do so with your friends, family, elected representatives, and employers. We all have a role to play and the more voices we raise for change, the better.
- ➔ Think about how you can implement practices in your workplace to combat precarious employment, isolation and discrimination.
- ➔ Contribute as a volunteer and donor to programs that are making a difference for others.
- ➔ Remember that everyone has a story and greet everyone you meet with compassion and understanding, not judgment or distance.

Visit [unitedwayhalifax.ca](http://unitedwayhalifax.ca) to find information and resources you can use to advocate and educate about the issues, engage in the solutions and stand with us to end poverty in Halifax.

**HALIFAX**

