

NEWS RELEASE

CommUNITY input identifies 10 poverty themes

Ladysmith, May 31, 2021 – The CommUNITY Together to End Poverty Hw-nuts'-ulwum (As One) project is releasing a Summary of Public Engagement that identifies 10 common themes related to poverty that have come out of a series of opportunities to hear from the public about the impacts of poverty experienced by residents of Ladysmith and Stz'uminus.

The ten priority themes that emerged, not prioritized in any particular order, are Public Transportation, Food Security, Addressing Stigma, Racism and Discrimination, Access to Education and Employment Options, Adequate Income Supports and the Means to Make Ends Meet, Affordable Housing and Adequate Living Conditions, Access to Mental Health and Addiction Services, Mental Discomfort and Stress, Access to Health Care Services, and Physical Health & Wellness.

While all of these themes are interconnected, we heard that limited or a lack of public transportation options is an issue that makes most of the other impacts experienced all the more challenging.

“Ladysmith was once a small town but it’s growing and we don’t have all the services we need here in town. For example, if a person needs specialized medical care or equipment, it means a trip to Duncan or Nanaimo for appointments. This may be an inconvenience if you have a car and money for gas, but if you live on a fixed income and have to rely on limited public transportation to get to those appointments it may result in not getting the care that you need.” Alexis Stuart, project Working Group member.

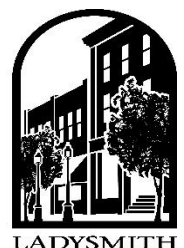
The 10 poverty themes come from what we have heard so far during the first phase of community engagement. It draws on the input gathered through a poverty reduction questionnaire, interviews by local peers with lived experience and reflections shared from residents who participated in a series of Poverty Challenges.

By releasing this Summary of Community Engagement, we are looking to hear back from the public to ensure the main themes have been accurately captured and to continue to gather ideas on how we can work together to end poverty at a local level.

Public feedback about the Summary can be shared through a new survey that is posted on the [project website](#) and on [PlaceSpeak](#) until June 13th, 2021.

A CommUNITY effort

The information and ideas gathered throughout the CommUNITY Together to End Poverty Hw-nuts'-ulwum (As One) project will lead to the creation of a local Poverty Reduction Plan that will identify strategies for tackling the underlying causes of poverty by engaging with those who have lived experiences as well as with those who have not. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the solutions.



The project is guided by a working group of community-based organizations that are championing the engagement process. Members of the working group includes local representatives from the Ladysmith Resources Centre Association (LRCA), Stz'uminus Health, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Vancouver Island, First Nations Health Authority, Stz'uminus Primary School, Island Health, Our Cowichan Health Network, Nutsumaat Lelum Child Care Centre, School District 68, the Town and Social Planning Cowichan.

For more information, to review the Summary and participate in the survey, go to www.communitytogethertoendpoverty.ca.

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