

How to Raise Awareness about Poverty

There are many activities you can do in your school and your local community to raise awareness about poverty and inequality in BC and to get people involved in taking action. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. **Sole Challenge:** Ask students and teachers (and others in your local community) to sign up to give up one thing on a particular day that they may not have if they were living in poverty: make-up, cell-phone, food, shoes, etc.
(From Princess Margaret Secondary, Surrey)
2. **Collect signatures** for the petition for a poverty reduction plan for BC (download and print the *Petition*)
3. **Write to your local MLA** or arrange a meeting with them in their office or in your class room and tell them BC needs a poverty reduction plan (use the *Sample Letter* as a template)
4. **Welfare Food Challenge:** Ask students and teachers (and others in your local community) to commit to a week of eating only what they can buy based on what a person on welfare gets for one week, which is just \$26 (see *Welfare Food Challenge* for more details).
5. **Show *Poor No More***, a great documentary feature film about the working poor in Canada (ask a teacher to get a copy from the BC Teachers' Federation)
6. **Set up an obstacle course** for students to complete and give them a bottle of water as their prize to show that some people in BC, especially Aboriginal communities, don't have easy access to tap water
(From Princess Margaret Secondary, Surrey)
7. **Present to your Parents Advisory Council** on the need for a poverty reduction plan (use *The Time is Now* slideshow as a resource)
8. **Spread the word** through FaceBook, Twitter and other social media networks (use the *Sample Tweets* to help)
9. **Organize a community event** with local speakers who live in poverty and those who work for local community organizations advocating for those in poverty

10. **Set up displays** around your school, make posters and banners to put up in your school and community, design T-shirts, and more
11. If your school runs a Food Bank drive, **give out Food Bank thank you cards** to donors to ask them to send a message to the government (use the *Food Bank Thank You Card* or design your own)
12. **Do the Inequality String demonstration** in your school or local community (see the *Lesson Plan* for more details)
13. **Dress up as a homeless person** and sit at a busy foot traffic intersection with a sign that tells people about poverty in BC, for example, “1 in 7 children live in poverty. What can you do? Check out bcpovertyreduction.ca.” Give out leaflets and talk to people walking by about the issue.
(From Moscrop Secondary, Burnaby)
14. **Do a flash mob** in your school or local community