

Guide for Poverty Reduction Survey

This survey is intended to reach people who are not able to attend the provincial government's poverty reduction consultations happening until the end of March. We need to hear from a diverse range of people about the challenges they are facing with the high cost of living and the recommendations they have for government to make a meaningful difference in their lives through strong policy actions. Thanks for your help in doing this important outreach!

This survey can be administered in person using paper copies or online with a portable device at: <https://goo.gl/forms/7l34y4jdtUseyasw1>

Please send completed surveys to info@bcpovertyreduction.ca by March 23. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition will collate the responses and make a submission to the provincial government by the final consultation deadline on March 30.

Tips

- ◆ Always be friendly, polite and respectful
- ◆ Offer another time if now doesn't work, perhaps after their shift, but move on quickly if they don't have any time
- ◆ Never go canvassing alone – always go with at least one person and stick together; let others know where you are going and when you plan to be back
- ◆ If a security guard asks you to leave the location, follow their instructions; if they seem friendly, you could always ask them if they would have time to fill out a survey after their shift!
- ◆ Have resources on hand to direct people to services, the local food bank or other free/low cost food
 - The City of Vancouver's Leisure Access Program: <http://bit.ly/2HZNE6n>
 - Greater Vancouver Food Bank Locations List: <https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Location-Schedule-with-closures-on-back-Nov-15-2017.pdf>
 - Vancouver Rent Bank: <http://www.niccss.ca/VRB>
 - Vancouver Coastal Health's Food Asset Maps: <http://www.vch.ca/public-health/nutrition/food-asset-map>
- ◆ To encourage participation, at the beginning of the survey, let people know that you are offering gift cards to those who answer the questions. At the end, give them the card with a big thank you for their time (email info@bcpovertyreduction.ca for gift cards)
- ◆ Try to have a conversation not just be limited to the questions; draw on their previous answers to expand other responses e.g. if they have told you they have children, ask about their ability to put their kids in activities
- ◆ For some questions, people may need prompting due to difficulty imagining alternatives to the current system. For example, some families may not consider child care "a challenging cost" because the licensed child care system seems so out of reach.
- ◆ Encourage them to give their contact information so that we can follow up with them to send them the report and see if they're interested in getting further involved but also make them aware that it's completely optional

Where to Go

Target areas where low-income people will be, for example, working at the food court in a mall, accessing the food bank, or looking for work at temp agencies or labour-ready offices. If you're a service providing agency, consider offering the survey at your programs. Here are some addresses to get you started:

Express Employment Professionals
103-2973 Glen Drive
Coquitlam, BC V3B 2P7
See more locations at:
<https://workforce.expresspros.com/locations/state/British-Columbia>

People Ready
605 Carnarvon St.
New Westminster, BC V3M 1E3
See more locations at:
<http://www.peopleready.com/market>

Labour Unlimited
10447 King George Hwy
Surrey, British Columbia
See more locations at:
<http://www.labourunlimited.com/>

Constructive Labour Solutions
1686 12th Ave. E
Vancouver, BC V5N 2A3

Guildford Town Centre
10355 152 Street
Surrey, BC V3R 7C1

Coquitlam Centre
2929 Barnet Hwy
Coquitlam, BC V3B 5R5

Pacific Centre
701 W Georgia St
Vancouver, BC V7Y 1G5

Metropolis at Metrotown
4700 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 4N2

Oakridge Centre
650 W 41st Ave,
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2M9

Facts

To help with prompting participants for full answers, here are some facts about the realities of poverty:

- ◆ People may be able to pay their rent but are forced to live in moldy, old housing because they can only afford cheap rents or they may be sharing with many family members or roommates to make it work
- ◆ Many health issues are caused by poverty including diabetes, cancer, heart conditions, mental health and addictions issues, etc.
- ◆ People may have a job that pays an adequate hourly wage but does not provide enough hours to make ends meet or ensure job security through salary and benefits
- ◆ Many sources of income are clawed back from welfare e.g. earned income over \$400 for a single person, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability, etc.; welfare is increasingly hard to access because of many arbitrary rules
- ◆ Welfare is currently only \$710 per month for a single person and \$1133 for a person with a disability, far below the poverty line
- ◆ The minimum wage is currently only \$11.35 per hour. The government has recently made a commitment to increase it to \$15 per hour, but not until 2021, leaving workers in poverty for far too long
- ◆ BC's employment standards are threadbare and do not provide adequate protection for workers e.g. the minimum shift length has been reduced to 2 hours, overtime is often not paid appropriately, and workers are often misclassified as contractors while working basically as employees, etc.
- ◆ Without rent control on the unit, landlords have an incentive to evict tenants so that they can increase the rent as much as they like
- ◆ Currently in BC, rich people and businesses are not paying their fair share of taxes; in fact, lower-income people pay more tax as a share of their income

Do you have time to answer a few questions for this survey? It's about the challenges people are having with the high cost of living. We're giving a grocery card to people who can take the time to answer our questions.

The provincial government is currently holding consultations across BC about what should be included in their poverty reduction plan, but we're worried that the government's not talking to the right people: like you.

Which statements do you feel apply to you?

(tick as many as apply)

I feel secure in my finances.

I'm barely making ends meet.

I'm overwhelmed with the cost of living.

What are the most challenging costs you face?

(prompts: rent; childcare; food costs; debt; tuition fees etc.)

What impact do these costs have on your life?

(prompts: living in substandard/overcrowded housing; working multiple jobs; skipping meals; don't use or don't feel comfortable with current childcare; family stress; health issues etc.)

What is/are the source(s) of your income?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income assistance (welfare) | <input type="checkbox"/> Work (seasonal, odd jobs) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Pension |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WCB/employment insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work (full-time) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work (part-time, casual) | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't want to share |

What are the challenges with _____ [that source/these sources of income]?

(prompt: too low; not enough hours; clawbacks; accessing the system etc.)

How many people are you supporting with this income?

(prompt: parents, children, grandparents, family outside of Canada etc.)

What sacrifices have you had to make due to the cost of living?

(prompt: not socializing; not putting kids in activities; not filling prescriptions, skipping meals; postponing bills etc.)

Are there any supports and/or services that you would like to see or wish were improved?

(prompt: government supports such as city leisure access card, child benefits; food bank, community meals etc.)

Do you support the following recommendations for the provincial government?

(check for support, leave blank for no support)

- Make sure people on welfare and disability assistance receive enough to make ends meet.
- Increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers by January 2019.
- Enforce employment standards (like shift lengths, paid overtime etc.)
- Commit to building at least 10,000 affordable homes per year.
- Implement rent control on the unit and other tenant protections.
- Make sure everybody has access to affordable, quality child care including free child care if you make less than \$40,000 per year.
- Cover dental, optical care, and prescription drug coverage.
- Reduce post-secondary tuition fees by 50% and have grants (not loans) for those who need it.
- Make sure rich people and businesses pay their fair share of taxes.
- Other _____

What is the best way for us to reach you?

- Email: _____
- Phone: _____
- Social Media (choose which ones)
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Snapchat
 - Other
- Posters in the Community: _____

I'd like to stay involved with advocating for a strong poverty reduction plan.

- Yes

Consent:

Initials I give permission to the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to use my information anonymously in a submission to the government which will be posted publicly.

Initials I give permission to the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition to use my information and my name in a submission to the government which will be posted publicly.

Name (if second box is initialled)

Demographic Information (optional):

Age 15-30 30-60 60+

Gender _____

Race/Ethnicity _____

Where do you live? _____

Survey Conducted:

Date _____

Time _____

Location _____