

EndPovertyEdmonton Evaluation

RECOMMENDATION

That the November 15, 2021, Citizen Services report CS00812, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Council is being informed of the EndPovertyEdmonton evaluation related to upcoming budget discussions and speaks to the accountability of funding provided to support eliminating poverty in our community.

Executive Summary

- EndPovertyEdmonton launched in 2016 to steward the vision of eliminating poverty in a generation and developed a Road Map to achieve this vision.
- City Council approved a five-year investment to support this work, including operating funding for EndPovertyEdmonton, which ends in 2021.
- Administration undertook an evaluation of the EndPovertyEdmonton initiative and the implementation of the Road Map actions.
- The five recommendations from the evaluation will be used to develop ongoing expectations and reporting requirements to ensure accountability of the City's investment.

REPORT

In 2013, City Council created a Council Initiative for the elimination of poverty which later became the Mayor's Task Force on Poverty Elimination. The task force brought together community members to identify actions aimed at reducing poverty in the community and led to the development of End Poverty in a Generation: A Strategy (Attachment 1). These actions were aligned to six game-changers: eliminate racism, liveable incomes, affordable housing, accessible and affordable housing, affordable child care and access to mental health and services and addictions support.

In December 2016, City Council approved funding for the launch of EndPovertyEdmonton to steward the vision of eliminating poverty in a generation. The task force developed a community

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plan, known as the Road Map to Guide our Journey, based on the strategy (Attachment 2). The Road Map contained five strategic goals and 35 broad-based actions, that in many cases were for partners, such as the City of Edmonton, to take on, not EndPovertyEdmonton itself.

EndPovertyEdmonton is not a registered organization; it is based on a collective impact model. The governance structure includes an executive director, a secretariat, a stewardship roundtable, as well as a few collectives to advise on specific aspects of the work, such as funding or work with the Indigenous communities. The secretariat was created to convene, coordinate and broker innovative partnerships, advocate for policy change, and build the capacity of Edmontonians to take action to end poverty. Additionally, the stewardship roundtable was created as the leadership table for the community collaborative, providing oversight to the Road Map and reporting progress back to the community at large. The United Way of the Alberta Capital Region has been the fiscal agent/backbone organization during this time.

Members of City Council and Administration have been part of the EndPovertyEdmonton Stewardship Roundtable and Administration participates on the Investment Collective and at many of the collaborative tables working on actions.

Evaluation Recommendations

In 2021, Administration conducted an evaluation of the EndPovertyEdmonton initiative and the implementation of the Road Map actions (Attachment 3). The evaluation process consisted of a document review including EndPovertyEdmonton documentation and reporting as well as existing poverty data and academic research. Interviews with various stakeholders were completed.

The evaluation resulted in five recommendations:

1. Setting clear priorities - EndPovertyEdmonton should prioritize a smaller number of systems and policy-related issues that are more commonly believed to have larger impacts on the systemic barriers faced by those experiencing poverty.
2. Strengthen evaluation - EndPovertyEdmonton needs to strengthen its evaluation systems to track and report on progress both as a partner in and as a collective responding to poverty.
3. Review governance structure - EndPovertyEdmonton, with its partners, needs to review the governance of this community collaborative to ensure clear roles and responsibilities throughout the structure.
4. Strengthen funding agreement with United Way - The funding agreement and the memorandum of understanding between the City, EndPovertyEdmonton and the United Way should be strengthened to create a more effective relationship and help manage risks and responsibilities.
5. Include people with lived experience - EndPovertyEdmonton should explore ways to include people with lived experience in a thoughtful and respectful manner. While working on systemic problems it is important that those experiencing poverty have a voice at the table.

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Next Steps

Administration has met with EndPovertyEdmonton to review the results of the evaluation and will continue to work with the partners involved to develop a plan to address each recommendation. These expectations will be part of any funding or partnership agreements moving forward.

Budget/Financial Implications

A total of \$9.85 million in tax levy funding was allocated to implement the EndPovertyEdmonton Road Map from 2017 to 2021. The City provided EndPovertyEdmonton with \$.75 million in operational funding in each of the five years from 2017 through 2021 for a total of \$3.75 million. The remaining \$6.1 million in funding was allocated to a variety of community initiatives to support EndPovertyEdmonton's work on the action items outlined in the Road Map. As EndPovertyEdmonton is an initiative but not a legal entity, funding for this initiative is done through an agreement with the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region.

No further funding is approved from 2022 onwards. An unfunded service package for ongoing funding will be brought forward for City Council's consideration during the Fall 2021 Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment deliberations.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

The EndPovertyEdmonton evaluation involved research of poverty reduction initiatives and best practices, as well as a documentation review of past annual reports, a collective impact evaluation completed by EndPovertyEdmonton and reporting from partners who are responsible for the Road Map actions. Sixteen interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as representatives from the secretariat, the stewardship roundtable, the investment collective, and staff responsible for some of the specific road map actions outlined in the strategy. These interviews aimed to collect feedback on EndPovertyEdmonton from various perspectives to help inform recommendations for improvement.

GBA+

The EndPovertyEdmonton Strategy was implemented to mitigate and address the barriers experienced by those living in or at risk of living in poverty in Edmonton. The Road Map actions were designed to address populations that are disproportionately impacted by systemic barriers resulting in poverty, including access to childcare, transportation, education and job training, elimination of racism, culturally specific community-based support and access to basic needs.

Statistics Canada established the Market Basket Measure as Canada's Official Poverty Line. The measure is based on the cost of a basket of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, and other items for individuals and families representing a modest, basic standard of living. Using this measure as an indicator of poverty, approximately 10 percent of Edmontonians currently live in poverty.

When poverty is approached with an intersectional lens, it demonstrates that while many who are Indigenous, a visible minority, have a disability, or are seniors, are at a greater likelihood of

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experiencing poverty. Within these categories, women, girls and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, two-spirit, and plus (LGBTQ2S+) individuals disproportionately experience impacts of poverty.

Many immigrants and newcomers experience underemployment because their credentials are not fully recognized and experience barriers in accessing education, employment, and support. There are also compounding issues of racism and discrimination that add additional barriers to those who are new or appear to be new to the city or country.

Equity Measures:

- The City of Edmonton is not capturing, nor is it responsible for the collection of city-wide data as it relates to housing, income, employment, food security, etc.; however, Administration will continue to work with partners to monitor impacts on poverty metrics. Seeing targeted efforts at those impacted the most will be critical to addressing the systemic issues facing Edmontonians.

ATTACHMENTS

1. End Poverty in a Generation: A Strategy
2. End Poverty in a Generation: A Road Map to Guide our Journey
3. EndPovertyEdmonton Evaluation Report 2021