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35 Years In: Manitoba Needs an Anti-Poverty Strategy that Works Manitoba Child and Family Poverty Findings and Recommendations November 2024

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA - The most recent data, 2022 taxfiler, once again demonstrates that child and family poverty is on the rise in Canada and in Manitoba. Manitoba is once again the province with the highest rates of child poverty for both under 18 and under 6 categories. Winnipeg Centre remains the urban federal riding with the highest rate while Manitoba is home to a total of 3 of the 'top' ten federal ridings with the highest rates. There remain unacceptably high rates throughout the province.

“As the provincial government is getting ready to roll out its poverty reduction strategy, we hope they will engage with us on the findings and the proposed solutions in this report. Our recommendations are not a comprehensive list but offer some small, intermediate and large actions the province can commit to now, and then again, of course at budget time.” Dr. Sid Frankel, Campaign 2000 National Steering Committee, Senior Scholar, University of Manitoba

“In Manitoba, the percentage of children living in food insecure households rose from 25.7% in 2022 to 32.6% in 2023. Children and adolescents living in food insecure households are more likely to be hospitalized, visit the emergency room, require day surgery, and access health services for mental or substance use disorders, compared to their food secure counterparts.” Dr. Natalie Riediger, Associate Professor, Department of Food and Human Nutritional Sciences, University of Manitoba

“Every day, we see the need growing in our community and the desperation that unmet needs bring about. There have been some positive movement from the government but when the situation has been allowed to get this bad, we need much more. If we all want less crime, then let's make sure people have what they need.” Mary Burton, Zoongizi Ode

“We have experienced a 27% increase in requests since 2021. We are expecting to exceed 21,000 requests this year serving tens of thousands of adults and children. We have even moved away from providing the traditional Christmas dinner because people are having so much trouble just meeting basic needs.” Shawna Bell, Christmas Cheer Board

“Just like everyone, we see the needs continue to rise. The stats we provided for this report are just the tip of the iceberg. Our upcoming Voices report, to be released in December, has stories

that prove resiliency but also heartbreak. Why do we demand resiliency from so many when there is so much to go around?” Meaghan Erbus, Harvest Manitoba

““Education got us into this mess and education will get us out of it.” So said the late Murray Sinclair. His message was clear that all Canadians were subjected to this mess, not just stolen children placed in Residential Schools. For over 100 years, the ‘education’ Indigenous children received about themselves, that denigrated and disparaged them, was also taught throughout the public education system. Today, that mess of an education is slowly reversing course, but we have a ways to go. We need education and all the colonial systems to work for the people they are meant to serve, not against them. We know there are better ways to educate and care for our children and we need the commitment to implement them.” Jordan Bighorn, Community Education Development Association

“It is clear that income inequality is alive and well in Manitoba. The richest decile possessed 22.6 times the income of the lowest decile. Inequality is greater in Manitoba than in Canada as a whole in which the richest decile earned 18.2 time more than the income of the lowest decile. It is clear we need an equity lens on taxes at all three levels of government.” Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg

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Campaign 2000 is a national coalition that monitors progress and setbacks to end child and family poverty in Canada. It was initially formed to hold the federal government to its 1989 unanimous motion in the House of Commons to end child poverty by the year 2000.