

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MANITOBA

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.

This report is focused on the situation in Manitoba. Even with the federal Canada Child Benefit and using both the federal and provincial governments' preferred and more forgiving poverty measure, the Market Basket Measure, Manitoba ranked 4th in both overall and child poverty in 2016. However in 2018, there was an increase of 7% in overall poverty and 19% increase in child poverty. The report demonstrates that at this rate it will take 697.5 years to end child poverty in Manitoba.

*"Here we are in 2020 and the best data shows that 85,450 kids were left behind"- **Kate Kehler, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.** "These kids and their families were in crisis before COVID-19, are hurting even more now with all the closures or service reductions in the community supports they rely on and will be even worse off when the rest of us come out of this. It is time that all levels of government commit everything they can, stop kicking the poverty can down the road for someone else to pick up, and end poverty."*

*"Child poverty does not exist in a vacuum. The report demonstrates that poverty is both racialized and gendered. We know there are links between child poverty and MMIWG. We cannot continue to allow First Nations children in Manitoba to be set up to fail." - **Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs***

*"Despite promises from the government to end child poverty, the only thing I see is the government and government services punishing families for being poor. This needs to change." - **Cora Morgan, First Nations Family Advocate, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.***

*"In times of economic growth, government policy directs most of its fruits to the richest Canadians. Poor kids get platitudes." - **Sid Frankel, Faculty of Social Work, U of M.** "In recessions we are told that there is not enough money for child poverty reduction. So, poor kids are always at the back of the line. That's why it would take 697.5 years to eliminate child poverty in Manitoba at the current rate of progress. This has to change. Poor kids must have first call on government resources during the pandemic and in the recovery."*

The report not only details the data but provides lived experience expertise and solutions based in much needed system and societal changes. Most importantly, there needs to be true alignment between all levels of government to ensure that what one level does, another does not undo any progress. For example, the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit is meant to benefit families with children. In Manitoba, the CCB is collected in general revenue by the province for all children in Child and Family Services. This practice only began in 2006 and there has been a subsequent dramatic increase in children taken into care from 6,000 to 11,000.

*"A state of emergency has been declared across the province due to COVID-19 but the fact is that too many kids and their families have already been in such a state for far too long. Our provincial government is absorbing federal funding meant to go directly to kids and families affected by CFS - this keeps those kids in care, and those dollars going into Manitoba's general revenue. We need every level of government to work together, stop pointing fingers and commit to sustained and conscious systemic actions so kids don't ever have be hurting and hungry again." - **Michael Redhead Champagne, Community Organizer***

*"The COVID 19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced, and Manitoba families need help now more than ever to ensure no child goes hungry," said Keren Taylor-Hughes. "We feed 25,000 kids every month but now school and daycare closures have ended access to daily food for hungry kids – and demand has gone up 30%. We need the Government of Manitoba to help us feed kids today, and to invest in a provincial school breakfast program to improve the health and academic outcomes of Manitoba's children and their families in the future." - **Keren Taylor-Hughes, CEO Harvest.***

*"The provincial government just announced it is going to give up \$75 million dollars in PST on home and business insurance. I know everyone has taken a hit but some to a much lesser degree than others." - **Damon Johnston, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg** "These one size fits all solutions will not address the inherent inequity and racism in our systems that trap people in poverty. Imagine what that money could do if a laser focus was put on the supports needed for people in poverty rather than someone who has the resources already to recover."*

*"The provision of universal, high quality, public system of child care is one of the most effective public policy mechanisms. As repeatedly demonstrated in studies of the Quebec model, a universal, public model of child care can increase women's participation in the workforce, reduce child poverty and ensure the well-being of children. If we are serious about tackling child poverty we need to provide the services required to lift parents over the welfare wall, which means access to universal, affordable, accessible and high quality child care." - **Brianne Goertzen, Board member of Child Care Now and Child Care Coalition of Manitoba.***

*"Research and evidence shows that strong public policy, with targets, timelines and accountability can reduce and even end poverty. However, the Manitoba government is moving in the wrong direction by removing accountability mechanisms in the Provincial Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Act. Manitoba's children deserve so much better." - **Molly McCracken, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba***

I work with the Ethnocultural Council of Manitoba-Stronger Together Inc; one of the largest and most diverse ethnic organizations in the Country. Listening to individuals' stories and aspirations, most of these people came to Canada owning nothing, but now working so hard to starting over new life. They need the society to propel them beat poverty, however. Programs like after school programs, and healthy lunch programs at schools are not only critical for the reduction of poverty among newcomer children, but also could improve the education outcomes for Manitoba. This should be considered as a long term investment for these children and for all Manitobans.
Reuben Garang, Ethno-cultural Council of Manitoba

We cannot afford having poverty derail newcomer families and individuals from the path of integration. If we do not give the issue of poverty our full energy and attention, newcomer children and their families will not realize their full potential in their new home Canada. Offering our support to reduce child poverty would benefit us all, as the Arabic adage goes “no one has ever become poor by giving” - **Hani Ataan Al-ubeady, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg**

Even before the current COVID-19 crisis, food insecurity among Manitoba's families was on the rise, with 1 in 7 Manitoba households struggling to afford food. Poverty and precarious employment have always been among the root causes of food insecurity. Now more than ever, we are seeing the importance of secure, adequate and shame free income in addressing household food needs. - **Rob Moquin, Food Matters Manitoba**

“All levels of government need to give a hard look at how we are expecting people in poverty to survive. This report shows that in single parent households, a full 1 in 6 kids lives in poverty. And that is in so-called 'normal' times. The COVID-19 crisis will only exacerbate the experiences of poverty for these families. We need comprehensive poverty reduction strategies, with reliable measurement and bold targets and timelines, as well as important policy interventions such as livable incomes, quality public childcare, community-based mental health services, social and affordable housing options, and community economic development initiatives. This would help ensure families, parents, children, and all community members would not just survive, but thrive.”
- **Michael Barkman, Make Poverty History Manitoba**

“Poverty traumatizes children and youth and their families. It creates pathways that lead away from what is needed to thrive. Community wisdom is deep, empathy borne of experience is healing. Listening and supporting alternatives guided by community will always strike a deeper chord.” - **Phil Chiappetta, Rossbrook House**

“Basic Income Manitoba advocates that everyone has enough income to ensure they have their basic needs met. The evidence demonstrates that people thrive on these programs and go on to achieve better education levels and contribute to society. Child poverty must be ended so we can move on to a society that includes everyone.” - **Paul Walsh, Basic Income Manitoba**

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