

4. FUNDING

Ensure that community-based organizations are sufficiently funded to effectively respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

Manitobans have a long history of taking innovative and strategic action in their communities to reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. Community-based organizations (CBOs) across the province are successfully providing access to child care services, settlement services, housing, local food, nutrition and food skills, financial literacy and capital, education and training, cultural reclamation and healing, and many other much needed services that enable marginalized people to overcome their barriers and develop capacity. CBOs are providing important prevention services to individuals and families before and after involvement in the child welfare system and justice system.

These community-based solutions are needed in addition to strong government programs and public services. Many CBOs lack the consistent and sustained core funding they need to take innovative, strategic, and sustained action through a comprehensive approach. For example, some women's and family resource centres are among those CBOs that are the lowest funded, despite the unique and critical services they offer. There is no short-term or one-size-fits-all solution for transforming social and economic conditions. CBOs correspondingly require long-term and flexible funding. There is a growing interest in some jurisdictions in exploring the use of social impact bonds, which involve the private sector in the funding and delivery of social services. However, others raise concerns and caution governments against embracing the model as a solution to scarce public funding, and reinforce the need for ongoing funding and service delivery by the public sector.¹¹⁹ We recommend the following actions:

4-1. Provide community-based organizations with adequate, flexible, and long-term funding (three to five years) that enables the delivery of programming that is high quality, holistic, and responsive to changing community needs.

Short-term funding from multiple sources creates an administrative burden that leaves CBOs with less time to ensure deliverables are met through programming. Furthermore, short-term funding tends to provide insecure and low-paying jobs with inadequate benefits that make it difficult to attract and retain enough qualified staff. Understaffing leads to stress and burnout, and high turnover diminishes organizational capacity and stability. Short-term funding also leads to interruptions and/or terminations to successful programs that are still needed in the community to address ongoing needs. When programs terminate prematurely, it can become difficult to effectively evaluate their impact.

The Province of Manitoba has responded to some of these challenges with the introduction of the Non-Profit Organization (NPO) Strategy. Participating community-based organizations entered into three-year funding agreements through the strategy to provide stable and predictable funding. The Strategy also intended to provide an integrated reporting mechanism to reduce the administrative burden associated with reporting to multiple funders. While many CBOs have responded favourably to the Strategy, more can be done to ensure its objectives are met.

The Province of Manitoba should further acknowledge the expertise and good value of CBOs by building on the NPO Strategy to provide sufficient funding to CBOs that are reducing poverty in their communities. Through the Strategy, the Province of Manitoba should enter into three to five year core funding agreements with more CBOs that deliver comprehensive and long-term programming that responds to changing community needs. Agreements should reflect the an-

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nual increased cost of program delivery and enable CBOs to hire and sustain adequately trained staff in order to ensure the provision of high quality service.

4-2. Increase financial support to Neighbourhoods Alive! to allow neighbourhood renewal corporations to scale up their community revitalization activities.

Neighbourhoods Alive! supports designated urban communities in taking a long-term, comprehensive, community-led approach to neighbourhood revitalization by providing multi-year core and project-based funding. Neighbourhoods Alive! recognizes that each neighbourhood has its own unique needs, priorities, and opportunities, and that some of the most effective ideas for revitalization come directly from the community in need. Neighbourhoods Alive! offers planning assistance and flexible funding components that enable communities to identify the special needs of their neighbourhood, and then to develop and implement strategies to address them. The initiative supports revitalization initiatives in the following key areas: housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime prevention.

Independent evaluations provide clear evidence that the Neighbourhoods Alive! model has made a significant difference in the revitalization of inner-city neighbourhoods through enhanced housing quality, perceptions of safety, neighbourhood stability, resident empowerment, resident engagement in the community, and overall neighbourhood well-being.¹²⁰

The Province of Manitoba should build on these successes by increasing core funding levels provided to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations so that they can effectively plan and coordinate sustainable neighbourhood revitalization initiatives with their surrounding communities.

4-3. Provide adequate and dedicated funding to Aboriginal-led organizations and organizations working with Aboriginal people for the delivery of programming that integrates decolonization methods.

Many Aboriginal people are disconnected from their cultural heritage as a result of colonial policies purposely designed to assimilate them into a culture based in Western European values. Others have also experienced significant trauma as a result of policies and programs such as residential schools and 'the sixties scoop'. The deep and damaging intergenerational effects of colonization have been well documented.¹²¹ They include depression, poverty, violence, addictions, poor health outcomes, low educational attainment, and a lack of parenting skills.

It is increasingly being recognized that reversing some of the damage that has been done will require a process of decolonization including healing and cultural reclamation that is fully integrated into programming Aboriginal people. Many Aboriginal-led organizations and organizations working with Aboriginal people indicate that this must first be addressed before Aboriginal people can proudly reclaim their Aboriginal identity and move forward.¹²² However, organizations are not provided with specific funding for cultural reclamation and healing from the effects of colonization. The journey of healing from the damage of colonization and the reclaiming of Aboriginal identity can be long and painful—this slow and often non-linear process is difficult for funders to understand and fit into their mainstream measurement tools, which are designed for quick and tangible results.¹²³

The Province of Manitoba should provide adequate and dedicated funding to Aboriginal-led organizations and organizations working with Aboriginal people, for the delivery of programming that integrates decolonization methods such as cultural reclamation and healing. The province should work with these organizations to develop appropriate eligibility criteria that ensures funding is provided to organizations that integrate decolonization methods that are based on established best practices.

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