



Welcoming & Inclusive Communities  
Together we shine

## **“It Starts with Me”**

Communities are strongest when they bring together a diverse set of voices, perspectives and backgrounds. (St. Albert Social Master Plan)

**Continuing in 2017, we are featuring a series of ‘snapshots’ intended to help you learn more about the people in our community and workforce who risk exclusion.**

The **Snapshots** are to help you learn more about the people in our community and workforce who risk exclusion. Each snapshot is about a specific group, but there is diversity within each one of these groups. As our awareness campaign progresses, more snapshots will be added.

These Snapshots are not all-encompassing and may not include all people who risk exclusion. How a group of people identify themselves will expand far beyond a snapshot. Also, each of us could identify with more than one group, and our individual personalities make each person unique.

## **Breaking Down the Barriers for Low Income Residents**

Canadians that are most likely to be living in poverty for long periods of time are: single people aged 45-64, single parents, recent immigrants (those living in Canada for less than 10 years), people with disabilities and indigenous people. (The government of Canada calculates the number of low income residents through Statistic Canada)

Although the median after-tax income of households in St Albert was \$93,722 in 2015, there were 8,095 residents considered low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax. (Stats Canada, 2015).

## **How can I be an ally?**

An ally is a person who supports an individual or group to be treated equitably and fairly. It includes taking action to ensure everyone has equal access to resources and benefits.

“It’s not differences that divide us. It’s our judgements about each other that do”. ~Margaret J. Wheatley

### **Learn about the challenges low income residents face, for example:**

Many individuals are denied housing based on their low socioeconomic status, if they are recipients of social assistance, or have formerly experienced homelessness. When denied housing on these grounds, individuals have stated this being a direct precursor to needing to seek emergency shelter accommodation. (Homeless Hub, 2017)

The Alberta Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in the area of residential and commercial tenancy. Tenants are protected from discrimination based on these grounds:

- race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender (including pregnancy and sexual harassment), gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, **source of income** or sexual orientation

[https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/other/tenancy/what\\_to\\_know/Pages/info\\_protected\\_grounds.aspx](https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/other/tenancy/what_to_know/Pages/info_protected_grounds.aspx)

## Believe in a person's ability to get out of poverty:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the challenges a person faces who is experiencing poverty; low-income does not mean low-effort.
- Build meaningful relationships with people living in poverty. Do what is usual when meeting someone new- ask about interests and family. Find common ground.
- Practice a strengths-based approach. Tell them many times, in many ways, that you believe in them, and you know they have skills and talents.
- Help people feel a sense of 'belonging'. Assist in connecting people to those with similar interests. We are not defined by only one component in our lives; people living in poverty deserve to have fulfilling interests. Think volunteering, rock club, reading club, cooking.....
- Paperwork! Assist if asked, with filling out paperwork (applications for services, programs, training, post-secondary education).
- Create a dialogue about poverty. Open a discussion in your organization, club or volunteer role about poverty. Challenge your friends and family's assumptions about poverty.
- Collaborate and strengthen partnerships. Poverty is complex and requires a comprehensive, communitywide approach. Connect with other people, businesses, and organizations in your neighborhood who can help.

**"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." ~Henry David Thoreau**

### Acknowledgements

- <http://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/legal-justice-issues/discrimination>
- [Breaking the Iron Cage: Helping People in Poverty Move Forward https://volunteerbridge.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/breaking-the-iron-cage-helping-people-in-poverty-move-forward.pdf](https://volunteerbridge.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/breaking-the-iron-cage-helping-people-in-poverty-move-forward.pdf)

## October 17<sup>th</sup> is International Day of the Eradication of Poverty

"Answering the Call of October 17 to end poverty: [A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies](#)"



## To Learn More:

- [Alberta Human Rights](#) to learn more about Protected Areas and Grounds under the Alberta Human Rights Act
- [Breaking Down the Barriers for Low Income Residents](#) from the St. Albert Public Library
- Community & Social Development, City of St. Albert – [Diversity and Inclusion](#)

### Acknowledgements:

