



**The Continuing Journey of Enough for All:  
*A Year of Learning and Progress***

**2015 Evaluators Report**

**February 2016**

**Report Prepared For:**  
Vibrant Communities Calgary

**Prepared By:**



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## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

- E4A:** Enough For All  
**I2A:** Ideas to Action  
**VCC:** Vibrant Communities Calgary  
**UWC:** United Way of Calgary and Area

### Conditions of Collective Impact

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Common Agenda</i></b></p> <p>All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon agenda.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Shared Measurement</i></b></p> <p>Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Mutually Reinforcing Activities</i></b></p> <p>Participants' activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Continuous Communication</i></b></p> <p>Consistent and open communication is needed across all players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Backbone Support</i></b></p> <p>Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization, staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.</p>

### Roles of Backbone Support:

- a) Guide the vision and strategy
- b) Support aligned activities
- c) Establish shared measurement practices
- d) Build public will
- e) Advance policy
- f) Mobilize funding

## Endorsement from the *Enough For All* Impact and Evaluation Committee

In the spring of 2015, the Enough for All (E4A) Impact and Evaluation Steering Committee was formed with the mandate to support the development and delivery of an annual community report on the progress of the aspirational goals of E4A, and Vibrant Communities Calgary's value as the backbone organization. Committee members were actively involved in the recruitment and selection of external evaluators responsible for developing a framework for evaluating the collective impact of E4A, as well as assessing the effectiveness of Vibrant Communities Calgary as a backbone organization. Our committee is made up of a cross-section of community volunteers and representatives from various organizations with an interest in ensuring the success of the E4A strategy.

After reviewing this Year One report from the external evaluators, we find ourselves both humbled by all that has been accomplished and encouraged by the path going forward. We are especially appreciative of the response of the external evaluators in addressing the diverse components of the E4A strategy. This includes supporting Vibrant Communities Calgary as a backbone organization in order to create the foundation needed for understanding and implementing a long-term developmental evaluation.

Quentin Sinclair  
Chair, Enough for All Impact & Evaluation Steering Committee

*A kaat stoo yii iitoo ka kwoopa ki itto maa tai tsopa* is the translation of this report title in Blackfoot, meaning, *one year of learning and going forward*. 2015 is year one of a four-year implementation plan of the Enough for All (E4A) poverty reduction strategy, with Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC) as the backbone support to the E4A strategy. The key roles of being a backbone are:

- g) Guide the vision and strategy
- h) Support aligned activities
- i) Establish shared measurement practices
- j) Build public will
- k) Advance policy
- l) Mobilize funding

Although the next four years are guided by an implementation strategy, the expectation is that this work will endure beyond four years. The E4A strategy is the culmination of a collaborative community effort involving a significant number of diverse stakeholders coming together and leveraging their efforts to address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. E4A establishes the directional framework for poverty reduction in Calgary and provides a framework for a 'systems' approach to reducing poverty. It is a

The evaluative approach of the first year is primarily developmental, thus the report serves a dual purpose:

1. To highlight progression and learning in year one of the on-going implementation of E4A.
2. To highlight significant developments towards the E4A goals to reduce poverty with VCC as the backbone to the E4A strategy.

### E4A Goals

1. Everyone in Calgary has the Income and Assets Needed to Thrive
2. All Aboriginal People Are Equal Participants in Calgary's Prosperous Future
3. All Calgary Communities Are Strong, Supportive and Inclusive
4. Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources

comprehensive approach to leverage and strengthen “Calgary’s extensive network of services, our sense of community and our can do attitude.”<sup>1</sup> The E4A strategy will create solutions to individual, community and structural pathways into poverty. This requires a collective impact approach that will apply evidence-based practices to influence changes to public policy, engage Calgarians in solutions, and ensure efforts are adaptable and reflective of the diverse and varied needs of people experiencing poverty.

This first year of reporting is a harvest of learnings that speak to the achievements, challenges and complexities of aligning to the goals of E4A. With this harvest, we go forward into year two with greater clarity, capacity and curiosity. It is anticipated that over the next three years, VCC’s role of backbone to the E4A strategy will be fully aligned and supported by the development of a collective impact evaluation framework. Measureable outcomes will be demonstrated and balanced with emergent learnings that are inherent in collective impact work.

Reducing poverty in Calgary is a long-term endeavour requiring equal parts tenacity, innovation and patience. The four E4A goals are the constant compass of this collective impact work. The collective impact approach ensures that all current actions, emergent efforts, and strategies are aligned with these goals. The poverty reduction work that has been tracked and included in this report demonstrates alignment with and progression of the E4A goals, yet there are also generative learnings from the challenges that deepen the adaptive nature of this collective work.

#### Aspirational Outcomes of Enough For All

- By 2018, Calgarians consider reducing poverty to be a high priority.
- By 2023, 90% of all people living in Calgary are at or above the 125% of Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) rates
- By 2023, 95% of all people living in Calgary are at or above Statistics Canada’s Low-Income cut-off (LICO) rates.

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<sup>1</sup> *Enough for all: unleashing our communities’ resources to drive down poverty in Calgary. Final Report of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative.* P.1. May 2013. The City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary and Area.

**Successes: What has changed since the implementation of E4A?**

It is recognized that there has been an abundance of hours of collective effort that have gone on before this year which have significantly contributed towards the E4A goals. The noteworthy adaptation this year is identifying alignment among the E4A goals and VCC as its backbone.

In 2015 there were numerous activities and outputs associated with the varying efforts such as committee work, working groups, and strategy groups (These activities and collective efforts are listed in detail in the full report). It is important to acknowledge the downturn in Calgary’s economy in 2015 and its influence on poverty rates. At 7%, Calgary’s unemployment rate is the highest it has been since 2010<sup>2</sup> and many Calgarians have growing anxiety about job security<sup>3</sup>. However, E4A partners remain steadfastly dedicated. As one partner stated: “We need this plan now more than ever... and we are as committed as ever to advancing the work.”

**Key Successes in 2015**

- ✓ Alberta Child Benefit
- ✓ Financial Empowerment
- ✓ Minimum/Living Wage
- ✓ Poverty Reduction Strategy for Aboriginal People
- ✓ Truth and Reconciliation Circles
- ✓ Public Awareness
- ✓ Community Hubs
- ✓ Community Economic Development
- ✓ Childcare First
- ✓ Fair Entry
- ✓ Mobilizing Research
- ✓ User Friendly Justice System

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, Labour Force Characteristics: Employment and Unemployment

<sup>3</sup> Mercer Survey: Inside Employees’ Minds



The following are highlights of significant achievements in 2015 intended to show a 'line of sight' between them and the E4A goals:

#### **E4A Goal 1:**

##### ***Everyone in Calgary has the Income and Assets Needed to Thrive.***

The intention of this goal is to build capacity in the area of economic stability, primarily through improved financial futures and asset building.

#### Alberta Child Benefit

- The Government of Alberta: Alberta Child Benefit is a new tax benefit that will place \$195M back into the households of vulnerable Albertans and their children. It is estimated that 235,000 children in Alberta and 75,000 in Calgary will benefit from this initiative. This was achieved because of the advocacy efforts of multiple groups including E4A stakeholders.

#### Financial Empowerment Collaborative

- The United Way of Calgary and Area, Momentum, Bow Valley College, City of Calgary, Province of Alberta and VCC collaboratively developed and launched the financial empowerment strategy. Calgarians received more than \$1.7M in tax returns and hundreds of people have benefited from access to government benefits, have opened Registered Education Savings Plans and accessed low interest loans as alternatives to the payday loan system. Financial empowerment reduces financial vulnerability helping move and keep Calgary households out of poverty.
- The *Rise of the Cash Store* influenced changes to municipal policy to curb the proliferation of payday lenders who predominantly target working poor. The Rise of the Cash store aims is to develop alternative services for financially vulnerable people.

#### Support for Basic Needs

- The Basic Needs Fund, through United Way of Calgary and Area, provides short-term support to people experiencing financial crisis in the context of living on a low-income. In 2015, the four agencies delivering the program in Calgary collectively served 1310 people. After three months of receiving basic needs funding:
  - 70% of clients reported that the program enabled them to overcome a temporary financial crisis.
  - 70% reported the funds helped to stabilize them in a crisis.
  - 95% of clients reported that since receiving the basic needs financial support, their situation had improved three months following the crisis.

### Minimum and Living Wage

- VCC and E4A partners participated in collective conversations to influence the increase in Alberta’s minimum wage to \$11.20 in October 2015 and to \$15 per hour by 2018.<sup>4</sup>
- A Living Wage is the amount of income an “individual or family needs to meet their basic needs... maintain a safe, decent, dignified standard of living, save for the future... and devote quality time to family, friends and community.”<sup>5</sup> In 2015, the living wage calculator was updated to \$17 per hour with benefits or \$18.15 without benefits.

### **E4A Goal 2:**

#### ***All Aboriginal People Are Equal Participants in Calgary’s Prosperous Future***

### Poverty Reduction Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples

- Significant progress has been made as a result of establishing a full-time Aboriginal Strategist position and a part-time Aboriginal Advisor position within VCC. Subsequently, community and cultural leaders have been engaged to form an Aboriginal Advisory Committee. This Committee will launch a strategic plan in 2016 that will apply an Aboriginal worldview for engagement, public awareness and poverty reduction to address poverty for Aboriginal peoples.

"Through A tso tsi ka ki maan (Blackfoot phrase translating to combined effort), Indigenous Calgarians will be heard, recognized and given the opportunity to have input into poverty reduction efforts. Relationship building is key to working with Indigenous peoples."  
- Aboriginal Advisory Committee

### Truth and Reconciliation Circles

- Two reconciliation circles were held in the first year and were facilitated by an Elder. Stakeholders who attended gained an increased understanding of the impacts of colonization and residential schools and how these affect poverty. The reconciliation circles have been pivotal in shifting understandings of intergenerational trauma and strengthening empathy for healing as essential to poverty work. Several organizations have requested invitations to attend.

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<sup>4</sup> Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour. Retrieved from: <http://work.alberta.ca/employment-standards/minimum-wage.html>

<sup>5</sup> Living Wage Basics. Retrieved from: <http://www.vibrantcalgary.com/vibrant-initiatives/living-wage/living-wage-basics/>

### **E4A Goal 3:**

#### ***All Calgary Communities are Strong, Supportive and Inclusive***

The intention of this goal is to strengthen support networks and create opportunities for shared efforts to address poverty related issues.

#### Public Awareness

- A grant for \$300,000 was received from the Calgary Foundation to launch a city-wide public awareness campaign in 2016.
- 20 media interviews were held in 2015 that included discussions of E4A.
- Poverty Talks played an instrumental role in leading community forums and conversations to raise awareness and share information about available resources. On the International Day to Eradicate Poverty, the group partnered with the Disability Action Hall and the Calgary Ability Network to build awareness about federal policy issues and encourage voter participation.
- The Peer Support group issued a survey to local agencies to assess current knowledge of peer support and its role in poverty reduction. Results are leading to a pilot project for 2016.

#### Community Hubs

- The Community Hubs Collaborative was formed in 2015 and initial organization members included the City of Calgary, United Way of Calgary and Area, Calgary Foundation, Federation of Calgary Community, the Calgary Public Library and the Interfaith Council. While the Collaborative spent most of 2015 creating its strategic direction, the United Way of Calgary and the City of Calgary continued to promote the development of community hubs in six neighbourhoods around the city, including Bowness and Forest Lawn. The work has been focused on engaging residents as well as partnership building with local organizations and groups with a vested interest in a community gathering spaces.

#### Community Economic Development Neighbourhood Strategy

- This strategy outlines the work of City of Calgary Community Social Workers in “supporting neighbourhoods to foster community economic development towards the vision of strong neighbourhoods where everyone has the assets and income needed to thrive”<sup>6</sup>. Six key results and strategic actions have been identified to increase income, employability, support financial inclusion, promote vibrant businesses and social enterprises and foster economic capacity.

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<sup>6</sup> Community Social Work Program: Community Economic Development Neighborhood Strategy. p. 3

#### **E4A Goal 4:**

##### ***Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources***

The intention of this goal is to streamline access to services and information about available resources to increase access to supports for low income individuals and families.

#### Childcare First Strategy

- VCC in partnership with the Women’s Centre and First 2000 Days Network are engaged with a consultant to select and convene a Steering Committee and outreach plan to develop an evidence-informed Strategic Roadmap™ that provides a comprehensive plan to increase the quality, affordability and accessibility of developmentally-appropriate care for children before entering Kindergarten.

#### Fair Entry

- Fair Entry launched in May 2015 with the slogan “income should not be a barrier.” The intent of Fair Entry is to improve access to services and programs for low income Calgarians. The City of Calgary now has a single-entry application where approved Calgarians can access all fee assistance programs available to them without having to prove their income level numerous times. 35,000 applicants have been approved through the Fair Entry program since May 2015 (full year target is 75,000).

#### Research and Data

- 25 academics and researchers have committed to generating and supporting knowledge mobilization of ‘best-practice’ research on poverty reduction. Further, significant progress has been made to coordinate access to available data sources. Capacity to influence policy change and develop shared measurement tools are dependent upon access to emergent and foundational research and data. Ambrose University has agreed to work with E4A partners on a research project to define child poverty in Canada.
- The Justice Sector Constellation, has embarked on a research initiative to identify penalties for infractions related to bylaws in Calgary that have a disproportionate impact on low-income individuals. The project has two elements of research: legal analysis of by-laws and the social science analysis. Elizabeth Fry is the acting fiscal agent for the project, a researcher has been secured and funding has been pursued with the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

#### User-friendly Justice System

- The Justice Sector Constellation has been actively working on several initiatives to improve accessibility and navigability of the legal system. Active projects include: Legal Information vs. Legal Advice project, Database Integration project, Collaboration with Educators project, and Service Provider Capacity Building Project. It is important to note that Calgary’s E4A strategy is the only initiative of its kind in Canada that has a distinct working group dedicated to creating solutions where justice and poverty intersect.

## What were the primary challenges in 2015?

### 1. Secondary Suites

In the spring of 2015 VCC presented before City Council on the importance of secondary suites rezoning to increase access to affordable housing opportunities. Additionally, VCC participated with a group of advocates in a broad call for letters of support to City Counsellors. While the motion passed first reading, it was subsequently not passed. Strong citizen opposition to changing the secondary suites legislation proved a significant barrier to advancing this goal in 2015. Further consultation and the development of an adapted strategy to advocate for city-wide secondary suites policy will continue in 2016.

### 2. Financial Literacy Implementation was Delayed

Collective work can be complex and requires extensive time and effort. While this initiative continues to be prioritized, efforts to implement the Financial Counselling component were delayed. Bow Valley College has assumed a leadership role and curriculum and a training program will be launched in 2016.

### 3. Business Community Engagement

Strategically engaging the business community in poverty reduction efforts is key to the success of the E4A strategy. However, the precariousness of Calgary's economy cannot be ignored. Efforts in 2016 will include strategies to assess and develop an appropriate approach to engage Calgary businesses and business leaders into collective work.

### 4. Public Awareness

While social media coverage of E4A increased by more than 30% in 2015, a city-wide campaign to engage Calgarians will not be initiated until 2016. The acquisition of the Calgary Foundation grant in the latter part of 2015 will expedite the launch of Calgary's campaign in the first half of 2016.

### 5. Managing Stakeholder Expectations

2015 was a transition year for E4A partners and stakeholders. A significant shift was required for VCC as the backbone organization and for partners as 'business as usual' efforts moved towards collective impact. Consistent and transparent communications, capacity building, coaching and strategic planning were necessary to help establish shared agreement and clear guidelines for reporting and expectations.

## **What are the opportunities for 2016?**

The final decision regarding key strategies and priorities for 2016 will be determined by the VCC Board of Directors in consultation with E4A partners. However, the following suggestions are offered by the Evaluators to inform priority setting:

1. Public awareness and doing business differently

2016 will see the launch of a far and wide reaching campaign to engage Calgarians into awareness and actions towards reducing poverty. Inclusion of peer support and the Poverty Talks group as key partners in this campaign will ensure the voices of lived experience inform this work. Prioritizing this campaign and leveraging corresponding opportunities that may result from it (e.g new partnerships, increased E4A profile) may create the most significant opportunity to realize progress toward the E4A goal “all Calgary communities are strong, supportive and inclusive”.

2. Advocacy and policy development

The initiation of the Alberta Child Benefit will have a direct impact on income levels for families with children and should not be understated. In 2016 there is an opportunity to leverage and build upon this success with the Calgary Social Policy Collaborative convened by VCC, Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and the United Way of Calgary. Launching a policy agenda and advocacy/government relations strategy will help to influence public policy decisions at the local, municipal, regional, provincial and national levels (e.g. legislation, regulations, by-laws, programs and administrative practices)<sup>7</sup>. Policy change is critical to successful realization of E4A goal to ensure “everyone has the income and assets needed to thrive.”

3. Mobilize and leverage resources

Mobilizing funding is one of six roles a backbone organization plays in advancing collective impact work. This suggestion is not recommending that VCC prioritize fundraising, rather it is focused on E4A partners working collaboratively to leverage existing resources and identify areas that need enhancement. If E4A partners coordinate and target funds from a variety of sources this could lead to better coordination of services, common priorities and strategies that can advance the goals of E4A, in particular “everyone in Calgary can easily access the right supports, services and resources.”

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<sup>7</sup> Max Bell Foundation definition of public policy: <http://www.maxbell.org/what-we-do>

4. Continued support for the Aboriginal Poverty Reduction Strategy

Significant progress was made in 2015 with convening an Aboriginal Advisory Committee and beginning development of a poverty reduction strategy specific to the needs of Aboriginal people. Given the disproportionate number of Aboriginal individuals and families who struggle with poverty and social exclusion, it is recommended that E4A partners support the implementation of the Strategy with dedicated resources (time, talent, treasure). These should be aligned with and help advance the recommendations that are developed. This is an explicit link to advancing the E4A goal that “Aboriginal people are equal participants in Calgary’s prosperous future.”

5. Strengthen project partnership and co-branding

A final suggestion is directly related to enhancing the capacity of VCC as a backbone organization and towards advancing a collective impact approach to E4A. In 2016 the developmental evaluators will lead a collaborative process to advance agreed upon shared measurement of population level outcomes. These will lead to the launch of a collective impact evaluation framework of E4A and VCC’s role as the backbone organization. This also creates opportunities for shared language, common messaging and alignment of existing program funding amongst E4A partners. This is a critical step in being able to consistently and cohesively report annually on progress towards E4A goals.

### **In Summary**

There are three aspirational population level outcomes articulated of the E4A strategy:

- By 2018, Calgarians consider reducing poverty to be a high priority.
- By 2023, 90% of all people living in Calgary are at or above the 125% of Statistics Canada Low-Income Cut-off (LICO) rates
- By 2023, 95% of all people living in Calgary are at or above Statistics Canada’s Low-Income cut-off (LICO) rates.

Many successes towards advancing the goals, which will also lead to the outcomes of E4A, have been realized in the first year of implementation. These include continued work on community hubs; strengthened and new partnerships and relationships; changes to policies, like the Alberta Child Benefit and the Rise of the Cash Store; implementation of the Fair Entry program; development of a research network to advance best practices and

shared data to measure progress; several initiatives to streamline access and reduce barriers within the justice system; and the progress toward developing an Aboriginal Poverty Reduction Strategy.

These achievements in 2015 will positively influence the goals and outcomes. It is important to underscore that this first year of evaluation was primarily developmental. The intent of highlighting the developmental process (the second purpose of this report) is to establish a foundation that will enable the creation of a comprehensive collective impact evaluation framework and will ensure population level outcomes are feasible and can be measured.

“Being involved with the ‘Enough for All Strategy’ has meant many things on many levels to me. I have lived in poverty for many years. During those times I didn’t realize the implications of what poverty meant on an overall community’s health. When I became homeless, I began to study and have conversations with my peers about poverty. This work to reduce poverty is vitally important to Calgary and the quality of life for ourselves, our children and grandchildren. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in all the events and discussions regarding this important issue.”

*-Poverty Talks Participant*

Several themes emerged in the first three months of the developmental evaluation (September 2015 – December 2015). The two highlighted here are centred on enhancing communications, clarity and transparency. These themes are high level observations and are primarily focused on explicating the capacity of VCC's role as backbone agency to the E4A strategy:

1. There is a need for continued work to create a shared and accepted understanding of the backbone role and how it relates to collective impact. Progress has been made, however, continued discussion and clarity is needed amongst E4A partners to ensure the work moving forward is aligned with multiple expectations and that there is adequate capacity and support to realize E4A goals.
2. Clarifying roles of partners and stakeholders within a collective impact model would create greater transparency and expectations for VCC and stakeholders involved in the E4A strategy.



The collective impact journey to achieve the E4A goals continues in 2016 within the intense reality of a dampening economy marked with thousands of job losses and potential decreases in government spending. This will bring individuals and families who were previously not near to poverty to its edge, and those within poverty, more deeply into it. Now is the time in Calgary that a continuing collective poverty reduction strategy is so profoundly needed.

## SECTION 1: Report Context

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The *Enough for All (E4A)* is a community-led poverty reduction strategy in Calgary. The E4A strategy represents the culmination of collaborative community effort involving a significant number of diverse stakeholders working together to address the root causes of poverty in Calgary. With the completion of the E4A strategy in 2013, the key questions of stewardship were raised. Options for stewardship of the E4A strategy were explored, including the City of Calgary, UWC, creating a new organization, or transitioning the E4A

strategy to an existing organization. In 2015, three main partners: the City of Calgary, United Way of Calgary and Area, and Momentum signed a four-year memorandum of agreement to move stewardship of the E4A strategy to Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC). VCC was chosen because it had established a reputation and history of community-based, collaborative work to reduce poverty. Because of this capacity, it was determined that VCC had the greatest potential to engage a collective impact approach to poverty reduction through being a ‘backbone’ organization to the E4A strategy. This marked a unique start to a collective impact effort because it required VCC to *transform* into being a backbone agency, while simultaneously orienting and aligning itself the E4A goals.

The first major task of the transition was the development of a four-year implementation plan: *From Ideas to Action (I2A) 2015-2018* which was completed in April 2015. The Ideas to Action kept the original vision, mission, values and goals of the E4A strategy, and added additional focus areas for each E4A goal.

### This report contains:

- Key successes of the E4A strategy
- Activity mapping of VCC’s backbone role and alignment with E4A goals
- Key evaluative learnings and challenges
- VCC’s theory of change as a backbone agency (building a strategic framework for evaluation)
- Considerations for the second year of implementing the E4A strategy

The transition of the E4A strategy to VCC included adding staffing capacity and prioritizing staff projects to align with the E4A goals. The intent is for VCC to work collaboratively with funders, stakeholders and community groups to “guide and implement poverty reduction initiatives and advocate for long-term strategies that address root causes of poverty in Calgary.”<sup>8</sup> Poverty in the E4A strategy is described as: “The condition of a human being who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power to acquire and maintain self-sufficiency while being able to be an active participant in society.”<sup>9</sup> The E4A strategy is anchored in four goals that serve as a guide to all collective impact efforts:

- Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets needed to thrive
- All Aboriginal people are equal participants in Calgary’s prosperous future
- All Calgary communities are strong, supportive and inclusive
- Everyone in Calgary can easily access the right supports, services and resources

In September 2015, Developmental Evaluators were hired to assess both the progress of the E4A strategy in its first year and VCC’s role as backbone to E4A. The purpose of this report is twofold: to highlight progress on the E4A goals since its transition in January 2015, and secondly, to highlight the VCC’s development and as a backbone organization.

The report is organized as follows: Section 2 includes a mapping exercise and highlights noteworthy outputs and activities to the E4A goals, Section 3 includes a description of the process and purpose of developing a VCC theory of change to inform the evaluation framework and includes conclusions from the evaluators. There are also three Appendices, Appendix 1: “Milestones, Outputs and Stories” is a detailed and comprehensive description of collective work in 2015 to influence attitudes, systems, policy and strengthen Calgary’s network of services and non-profit capacity, Appendix 2 is a description of the conditions of collective impact and finally, Appendix 3 includes the developmental evaluation process from year 1.

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<sup>8</sup> *From ideas to action: The four-year implementation plan for the Enough for All poverty reduction strategy (2015 – 2018)*. April 2015. Calgary

<sup>9</sup> *Enough for all: unleashing our communities’ resources to drive down poverty in Calgary. Final Report of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative*. May 2013. The City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary and Area.

## Section 2: Moving the Needle To Reduce Poverty

During the first year of being a backbone agency to the E4A strategy, VCC had a dual function: to develop and solidify its role as a backbone agency, while at the same time supporting the mobilization and alignment of existing work towards E4A goals. This meant that since much of year one required investment in development evaluation it is hard to demonstrate many measurable outcomes. There are however, several activities and outputs to report on that are indicators of achievements. In this year there are key achievements to highlight that show a direct line of sight to the E4A goals.

Central to the development of the forthcoming collective impact evaluation framework, will be explicating, aligning and measuring how these activities and outputs are fulfilling the goals of E4A and deepening collective impact of poverty reduction.

### Mapping Activities and Outputs to E4A Goals

Determining the relationship between the actions and the outcomes is a central function of the evaluation. In order to unpack the line of sight between successes and the E4A goals, the evaluators conducted a mapping to show which activities align with each of the E4A goals. Further analysis will occur in 2016 to determine *how* these activities link to the E4A outcomes and the development of consistent evaluation tools to gather and analyse the data. It will be necessary to build an evaluation framework to assess how much and in what ways each of the identified projects is reducing poverty in Calgary (*See Appendix 1 for a detailed listing of all actions and activities in 2015*).

#### E4A Goals

1. Everyone in Calgary has the Income and Assets Needed to Thrive
2. All Aboriginal People Are Equal Participants in Calgary's Prosperous Future
3. All Calgary Communities Are Strong, Supportive and Inclusive
4. Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources

**Alignment with E4A Goals:**

***Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets need to thrive.***

**&**

***Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources***

<b>Significant Change</b>	<b>Indicators of Change</b>
<p>The United Way of Calgary and Area, Momentum, Bow Valley College, City of Calgary, Province of Alberta and VCC collaboratively developed and launched the financial empowerment strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Calgarians received more than \$1.7M in tax returns and hundreds of people have benefited from access to government benefits.</li><li>• 56 loans were provided during the first phase totalling \$70,580.</li><li>• Estimated monthly savings for loan recipients of \$416/month on interest (based on difference between 12% APR for Cash Crunch and average 400% APR for payday loans).</li><li>• Cash Crunch is a pilot program that was launched in April 2015. It is a partnership between a private philanthropist, First Calgary Financial and Momentum to provide a more affordable alternative to payday loans. Cash crunch provides an alternative lending option for small loans rather than people with limited or no financial resources paying high interest rates that only further their debt.</li></ul>

**Alignment with E4A Goals:**

***Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets need to thrive.***

**&**

***Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources***

<b>Significant Change</b>	<b>Indicators of Change</b>
<p>The Basic Needs Fund, through United Way of Calgary and Area, provides short-term support to people experiencing financial crisis in the context of living on a low-income. In 2015, the four agencies delivering the program in Calgary collectively served 1310 people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In 2015, the four agencies delivering the program in Calgary collectively served 1310 people. After three months of receiving basic needs funding:</li><li>• 70% of clients reported that the program enabled them to overcome a temporary financial crisis.</li><li>• 70% reported the funds helped to stabilize them in a crisis.</li><li>• 95% of clients reported that since receiving the basic needs financial support, their situation had improved three months following the crisis</li></ul>

**Alignment with E4A Goals:**

*Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets need to thrive.*

**&**

*All Calgary communities are strong, supportive and inclusive*

**&**

*Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources*

Significant Change	Indicators of Change
<p>The Government of Alberta: Alberta Child Benefit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new tax benefit that will place \$195M back into the households of vulnerable Albertans and their children. This was achieved because of the advocacy efforts of multiple groups including E4A stakeholders. It is estimated that 235,000 children in Alberta and 75,000 in Calgary will benefit from this initiative.</li> </ul>
<p>Stakeholder Integrated Strategic Alignment to E4A goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YWCA engaged in a strategic planning process that recognized and acknowledged alignment with their strategic plan and three of the E4A goals.</li> <li>• The Calgary Homeless Foundation and VCC are working together to formalize alignment between the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness and E4A.</li> </ul>

**Alignment with E4A Goals:**

***Everyone in Calgary has the income and assets need to thrive.  
&  
Everyone in Calgary Can Easily Access the Right Supports, Services and Resources***

<b>Significant Change</b>	<b>Indicators of Change</b>
<p>Fair Entry launched in May 2015 with the slogan “income should not be a barrier.” The intent of Fair Entry is to improve access to services and programs for low income Calgarians. The City of Calgary now has single-entry application where approved low income Calgarians can access all fee assistance programs available to them. Five programs are currently included: No Cost Spay/Neuter, Property Tax Assistance, Recreation, Calgary Transit Low Income Passes and for low income seniors, the CityLinks and reduced rate transit pass. This is a key implementation strategy of the City’s Fair Calgary policy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 35,000 applicants have been approved through the Fair Entry program since May 2015 (full year target is 75,000)</li><li>• 11% of applications have been submitted through the newly implemented online portal; 70% are in-person and 20% are mail/fax.</li></ul>



**Alignment with E4A Goals:**

***All Aboriginal People Are Equal Participants in Calgary's Prosperous Future***

<b>Significant Change</b>	<b>Indicators of Change</b>
<p>Significant progress has been made as a result of establishing a full-time Aboriginal Strategist position and a part-time Aboriginal Advisor position within VCC. Subsequently, community and cultural leaders have been engaged to form an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, which meets monthly. This Committee is developing a strategy plan in 2016 that will apply an Aboriginal worldview for engagement, public awareness and poverty reduction specifically related to addressing poverty for Aboriginal peoples.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two reconciliation circles were held in the first year and were facilitated by an Elder. Stakeholders who attended experienced increased understanding of the impacts of colonization and residential schools and how these impact poverty. The reconciliation circles have been pivotal in shifting understandings of intergenerational trauma and strengthening empathy for healing as essential to poverty work.</li><li>• Calgary Homeless Foundation requested that VCC support them to develop and improve its internal cultural competency and Aboriginal stakeholder engagement strategies.</li><li>• Two champions from the business community have indicated support for advancing the Aboriginal Strategy.</li><li>• \$7500 in in-kind support mobilized to support the Aboriginal Strategy.</li></ul>

<b>Alignment with E4A Goals:</b>	
<i>All Calgary communities are strong, supportive and inclusive</i>	
<b>Significant Change</b>	<b>Indicators of Change</b>
Mobilizing resources to support increasing understanding of poverty	VCC and partners successfully facilitated the acquisition of a \$300,000 grant from the Calgary Foundation for a public awareness campaign. This campaign will engage Calgarians' to become aware of and involved in advancing poverty reduction through volunteering and participating in advocacy and prevention activities. The campaign will also help combat racism by sharing and celebrating the rich history and culture of First Nations people and communities.

It is important to underscore that this first year of evaluation was primarily developmental. The intent of highlighting the developmental process (the second purpose of this report) is to establish a foundation that will enable the creation of a comprehensive collective impact evaluation framework in 2016 that will measure progress of population level outcomes. These efforts will also lead to a process to determine the 'effectiveness' of activities and outputs and their impact on outcomes.

### Section 3: Becoming a Backbone Agency

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In 2015, VCC underwent a change in community role. Their mandate shifted from a grassroots, advocacy group to a collective impact approach to poverty reduction and being a backbone organization to the E4A strategy. E4A is intended to be a community ‘owned’ plan being guided by VCC, yet led through a unique collaborative partnership between VCC, the City of Calgary, United Way of Calgary and Area (UWC) and Momentum. In some cities, poverty reduction strategies are led by the municipality. Calgary’s plan, because of its shared stewardship approach, creates unique opportunities for co-branding, access to resources, leveraging of partnerships, and shared learning and knowledge mobilization. For example, because the UWC and the City are funders of social programs, (many of whom are working on poverty reduction), some of these social programs can align their language, can report on similar outputs and potentially share data that is already being collected as shared poverty reduction outcomes. Further, the partners leverage their expertise to support research, policy development and advancement and strategies for community and government relations.

VCC staff have embraced the shift in role and identity but the evaluators felt that VCC required further support in regards to clarity and direction of collective impact work, particularly in terms of continued prioritizing and alignment to the E4A goals. Given the complexity of poverty, combined with the comprehensive nature of collective impact, it is critical to focus on building partner and stakeholder understanding of how these two areas are aligned. The evaluators also felt there would be value in engaging in internal strategy development and planning to ensure the daily work was relevant, strategic, purposeful and well aligned with the expectations of the E4A strategy.

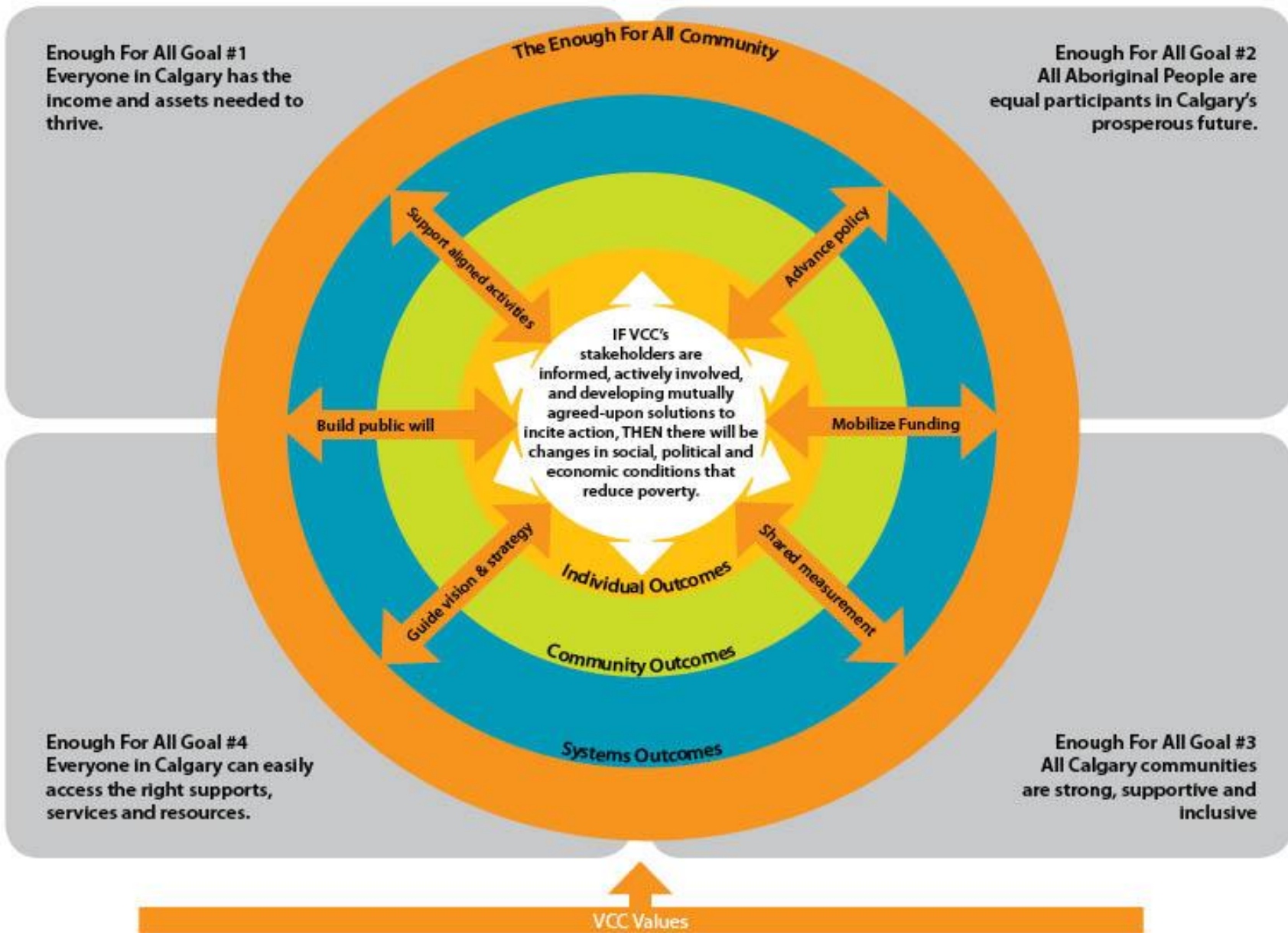
To this end, the evaluators facilitated two sessions to develop a ‘working copy’ theory of change (based on the logic model already developed), to map the daily ‘tasks’ towards their new role as a backbone, and to further discussion regarding governance, capacity and ultimately outcomes.

## **VCC Backbone Theory of Change**

One of the first learnings in the developmental evaluation process was the need for VCC to have a robust theory of change that would define and articulate its work as a backbone organization, and secondly, to aid in identifying the ways in which the backbone work aligns with the E4A goals. The transition of VCC becoming a backbone agency required that VCC have its own theory of change that would make explicit its outcomes and strategies as a backbone. This is not to replace the E4A logic model, but to ensure they inform each other. This will become clearer with the development of the collective impact evaluation framework in 2016.

The development of a VCC backbone theory of change was a crucial course adaption in the first year. Early in the year VCC developed a logic model, which the evaluators used to *inform* the development of a theory of change. It is recognized that this theory of change is a 'working model' to enable staff to anchor their work to a change statement, when making decisions about which initiatives to join, which to decline and to enable the evaluators to develop a fulsome and relevant collective impact evaluation framework.

The following illustration is the working draft of the *VCC Backbone Theory of Change*. It is intended to show what should change via its backbone strategies, the levels of outcomes, and the relationship to the E4A goals. The theory of change will be further developed in 2016 to identify the outcomes and how they align with and support E4A goals.



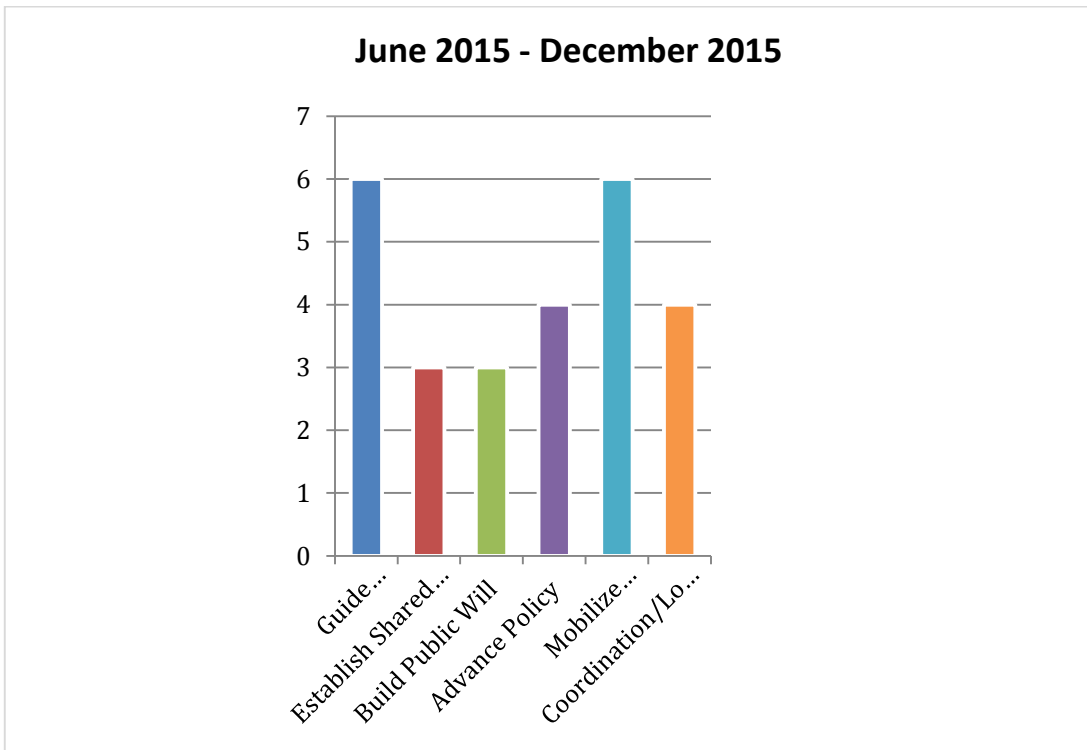
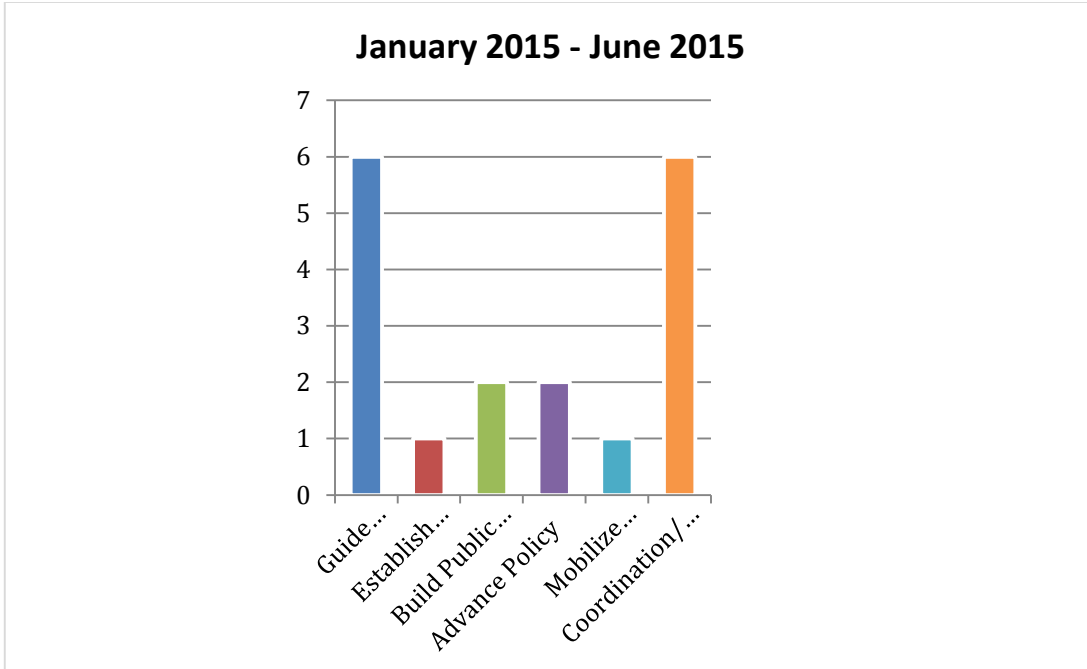
## **Mapping VCC Backbone Work to E4A Goals**

As a backbone organization, utilizing a collective impact approach, VCC plays the following roles:

1. Guide the vision and strategy
2. Support aligned activities
3. Establish shared measurement practices
4. Build public will
5. Advance policy
6. Mobilize funding

The following two charts are meant to illustrate where emphasis is currently being placed in regards to VCC staff projects and daily activities as they do or do not align with the goals of E4A. The charts important tools for decision making in terms of assessing current strengths as well as opportunities and priorities for the coming year.

The work is shown over two parts of the year indicating the change in distribution of emphasis or priority in each of the backbone roles. While the third and fourth quarter of the year saw VCC continuing to identify and convene various poverty reduction stakeholders, community ownership was being demonstrated through active leadership of working groups and committee chairs/conveners and large organizational strategic plans being aligned with E4A goals. Additionally, in quarters three and four, at least one working group (Financial Empowerment Collaborative) developed an evaluation framework including shared data components, and began collecting and reporting on outcomes and activities related to its collaborative and contributing to the evaluation of the E4A strategy.



In the last two quarters of 2015, public policy work increased with VCC co-leading alongside the Social Policy Collaborative, as well as helping to advance change in the areas of payday lending and access to city services. Under the direction of the Women & Poverty working group, VCC helped spread

awareness and increased its participation in advocacy for a national inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous women, recognizing violence against women and children, and racism, as a result of systemic oppression, and the related community, and personal poverty.

A major advancement in the success as a backbone was achieved in quarter four with VCC's successful proposal for funding on behalf of the Public Awareness Task Force. The role of guiding the vision and strategy and supporting aligned activities continues to reflect the bulk of VCC's work, as is appropriate in a collective impact initiative, particularly early in its lifecycle. As the evaluation framework is developed in 2016, consideration will need to be paid to the amount of time spent in coordination and logistics and what level of capacity is needed in this area to enable greater time to be spent on the primary backbone roles.



## Section 4: Considerations Going Forward

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A significant amount of work has been done to clarify the roles and expectations of VCC staff and community partners this first year. VCC staff have been ‘active conveners’ in their efforts to solidify partnerships and collaborative initiatives, to build solid foundations for research, policy and advocacy efforts and leverage resources. The intent for year two is to build on the learnings from year one, and focus on projects and collaborative initiatives that will have the greatest impact toward realization of E4A goals.

### Conclusions from the Developmental Evaluators

“Developmental evaluation offers a process for periodic reflection---systematically looking back and seriously looking ahead---to gauge progress, harvest important lessons and rigorously examine what’s working and what’s not. Developmental evaluations supports standing still as foundation for the next move forward.”

- Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman and Michael Quinn Patton

Several learnings emerged in the first three months of the developmental evaluation. These learnings are the evaluators’ observations of the ‘big picture’ and these learnings help create a framework to assess successes and areas for further development of backbone roles. It will also help guide the development of the evaluation framework in the first half of 2016 to more adequately measure outcomes of E4A.

Issue	Rationale
Changing socio-economic and political context	Changes in government create opportunities to capitalize provincially and nationally to advance progressive policy changes and align/increase funding for poverty reduction. However, the sustained drop in oil prices will affect government budgets, and will have an impact on local and provincial unemployment rates and likely poverty rates.

Issue	Rationale
<p>The complexity of transitioning the E4A strategy to VCC</p>	<p>VCC experienced a major transition in 2015 becoming the backbone agency to the E4A Strategy. With any transition there is ambiguity. Stakeholders of E4A, including VCC staff, funders and Board of Directors needed time and strategic discussion to clarify the shift to collective impact and the expectations of the backbone role. Progress has been made, however continued discussions and education is needed to ensure the work moving forward is aligned with the new expectations, that roles and responsibilities are solidified, and that there is adequate capacity.</p> <p>Clarifying the role of the Board (stewardship) and other stakeholders within a collective impact model would create greater clarity and expectation for VCC and stakeholders involved in E4A.</p>
<p>The need for greater shared understanding and capacity building of Collective Impact and the role of a backbone within it</p>	<p>During this first year, there was a gap between daily tasks and projects of VCC and the overarching goals/expectations of E4A. This is natural effect of experiencing a major transition of becoming a backbone agency and what is most important is to respond and adapt. There initially was much discussion of whether VCC was a backbone for poverty reduction or for the E4A strategy. Development of a theory of change, and generative discussions to align projects and tasks with E4A goals and the backbone roles, helped to clarify organizational strategy and to bridge this gap. Progress has been made, however, more work will be needed in 2016 to continue to identify alignment between VCC as backbone and the E4A goals.</p>
<p>Contextualizing the E4A strategy with other poverty reduction plans</p>	<p>Several provinces and dozens of municipalities across Canada have implemented poverty reduction plans. Many, several years before Calgary's Plan. There was a recognized need to contextualize the E4A strategy with other initiatives to learn and complement. Not to say 'we should do what they do', but because we can learn, build and adapt.</p>

Issue	Rationale
<p>Ensuring strategies are cognizant and reflective of the varied and diverse needs of vulnerable Calgarians.</p>	<p>While anyone can experience poverty, initiatives should reflect the needs of vulnerable populations including women, seniors, children and youth, people with disabilities and immigrants.</p> <p>Supports for the implementation of the Aboriginal Poverty Reduction Strategy should continue to be prioritized.</p>

## Appendix 1: “Milestones, Outputs and Stories”

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### Impact Area: *Influencing Public Attitudes*

**Milestone statement:** By 2018, Calgarians consider reducing poverty to be a high priority.

**Contribution towards milestone this year:** This year, the collaborative was successful in acquiring a \$300,000 grant from the Calgary Foundation to develop and launch a public awareness campaign about the effects of poverty and a call to citizen action. Additionally, pro-bono creative services from Evans Hunt and C & B Advertising were secured and represent a significant investment towards this milestone.

**Relevant Outputs:** Public Awareness Task Force comprised of representatives from: Brookfield Residential, Calgary Economic Development, Momentum, VCC, YWCA, United Way, and the City of Calgary, met 24 times in 2015; drafted a terms of reference for it’s work to 2018; secured pro-bono creative services for a 2016 public awareness campaign launch, drafted and submitted a proposal for funding and presented and engaged the Calgary Foundation. Additionally, representatives of the group met with members of the Calgary Rotary to initiate a conversation to mobilize further resources in 2016 to support the public awareness campaign. For the second year, Mayor Nenshi declared October as Poverty Reduction Month in Calgary. Six community events were held.

Additional Outputs: VCC and Poverty Talks, hosted three events and community conversations:

**Feed a Million Pancake Breakfast-** 200 people attended, community stakeholders presented on food security issues. Eastside Victory Outreach & the Disability Action Hall partnered with PT to deliver the event. Impact- both Poverty Talks & the Disability Action Hall gained a presence the Greater Forest Lawn Area and helped facilitate connections between people with lived experience, service providers in the area and advocacy efforts. This presence led to an invite to host a booth at Sunrise Community Link’s annual pancake breakfast; over 400 people attended and approximately 100 people conversed with members of Poverty Talks. Eastside expressed a desire to partner with PT in 2016 should they wish to host the event again.

**Poverty Talks Annual Gathering-** Approximately 80 people attended this event. Using the conversation café format, 19 groups presented information about the their efforts to address poverty in Calgary; whether through policy efforts, raising awareness, supporting CED, encouraging peer support or building

connections. People with lived experience were able to learn more about available resources and provide feedback to the presenters.

**International Day to Eradicate Poverty, We Vote-** Poverty Talks partnered with the Disability Action Hall and the Calgary Ability Network to build awareness about federal policy issues connected to poverty-related issues and to encourage voter participation. Legal Guidance Calgary, Samara Canada, Councillor Pincott & Roy Bear Chief offered presentations or resources for the approximately 35 people in attendance. CBC Calgary interviewed participants and aired a feature on event on their provincial newscast. Participants were asked to write a message to the next Prime Minister, which Poverty Talks has forwarded to the PM's office, along with a request to be consulted as the federal government develops a national poverty reduction strategy.

**Peer support:** the group has met monthly for the past year. A research study was conducted in early 2015 to define peer support and its implications for poverty reduction. The working group developed and issued a brief survey to 20 local agencies in June 2015 to assess understanding of peer support and use of peer support models in serving vulnerable clients, and to determine whether these organizations assess client poverty in any way. 11 agencies responded. The range of understanding and implementation of peer support models in serving their clients varied significantly and most of the organizations don't ask about the person's state of poverty beyond their annual income/source of income. The group plans to develop and implement a peer support for poverty reduction pilot project in 2016.

**Awareness of the Urban Aboriginal Experience:** VCC Aboriginal Strategist & Aboriginal Advisor and other VCC staff, alongside members of the Aboriginal Advisory Committee, wrote 7 blogs regarding Urban Aboriginal issues related to poverty; were featured as key speakers at the Syrian Welcoming Ceremony; and the October E4A Community Conversation.

**Media interviews/mentions – 20.** This includes a television interview regarding the new Alberta Child Benefit, and a television interview regarding changes to minimum wages in Alberta and the need for a living wage. Also included is a radio interview regarding poverty and the experiences of women in Calgary and support for a Federal Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Aboriginal Women & Girls.

## **Impact Area: *Influencing Systems***

**Milestone statement:** Everyone in Calgary has the Income & Assets needed to thrive; Everyone in Calgary can easily access the right supports, services, and resources; All Aboriginal People are equal participants in Calgary's prosperous future.

**Contribution towards milestone this year:** The VCC/E4A Aboriginal Advisory Committee, working in partnership with VCC and the Impact & Evaluation Steering Committee helped to select the E4A Evaluators with a focus on Indigenous ways of knowing, and to support the application of an Aboriginal worldview lens to the work across the E4A implementation; the Women & Poverty group (formerly the Women's Issues Constellation) was reconvened to influence the application of a gender lens across the work of the E4A implementation; The Compassionate Food Dignity Collaborative was convened and includes some seemingly disparate stakeholders who have agreed upon and are focussed on advancing a common agenda to eventually decrease reliance on the local Food Bank, and to develop diverse and alternative options for food access for Calgarians; VCC and the Calgary Homeless Foundation began the work of aligning the Ideas to Action Implementation plan and VCC 2016 Operations Plan, and the Plan to End Homelessness and the CHF 2016 Operations Plan; The YWCA aligned its 3 year strategic organization plan with the goals and strategies of the Enough for All strategy; the initial work and stakeholder engagement to support a city-wide childcare strategy was begun; the Justice Constellation was successful in a number of areas outlined in the outputs below; E4A under the stewardship of VCC became a partner and support in the Homeless Person's Charter of Rights launch vis a vis the Calgary Homeless Foundation; VCC participated in the city convened Affordable Housing Coalition making recommendations for improving sector coordination; VCC was invited as a contributor on behalf of E4A to the Finance Minister's budget consultations, as well as to the AB government's change in policy related to minimum wage, and advocated and submitted recommendations to the AB government helping to advance the implementation of the new AB Child Tax benefit to support lower income families.

### **Relevant Outputs:**

- VCC initiated a foundational partnership with First 2000 Days Network and the Women's Centre to engage with local consultants on the development of a "Childcare First Strategy" that would result in a Strategic Roadmap™ to guide the community in improving the quality, affordability and accessibility of child

care in Calgary. VCC undertook extensive research, community outreach and stakeholder identification for this project. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the three foundational partners, a workplan finalized with the Consultants and fundraising initiatives began.

-This year VCC, with Aboriginal Advisory Committee began developing an implementation plan for the Aboriginal strategy for poverty reduction. Through extensive outreach, VCC staff recruited 10 additional members to the Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

- VCC wrote a letter of support as a community partner and research project advisory committee member for Ambrose University's Poverty Institute, supporting the University's success in receiving a grant to conduct a research project to define child poverty in Canada. This is an important academic/community partnership as it allows VCC to leverage resources in the area of research and knowledge development, as well as potential access to students to help advance the work of E4A in a cost effective manner.

- VCC engaged the local research community into a poverty related research network with the intention of inviting the academic and research community in supporting knowledge mobilization and best practises related to poverty reduction. 25 researchers representing broad population based research experience, three local universities, and the AB Government (AB Health) have joined the network. VCC and the Public Awareness Task Force issued a request to the network to conduct a research project in 2016-2018, regarding changes to public attitudes about poverty as a result of the public awareness campaign.

- User-friendly legal system: Calgary's poverty reduction strategy is the only strategy that we are aware of that has a working group dedicated exclusively to seeking opportunity and solutions in the area where Justice and poverty intersect. Projects undertaken in 2015 by the Justice Sector Constellation to create a user-friendly legal system included:

- Researched the impact and feasibility of a Courthouse Greeter program at Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.
- Legal database integration: Developing agreement amongst stakeholders to consolidate the 3 major legal databases in Alberta into one (InformAlberta / 311)
- Service Provider Capacity Building Project: Funding obtained in 2015 to develop and pilot training for service providers and intermediaries of potential legal issues in clients. A Justice Sector Referral survey was carried out in November 2015.
- Legal Advice vs. Legal Information: Resource materials have been developed, and the first presentation was given in October.

- Collaboration with Educators Project: 3 proposals were submitted to University of Calgary Curricular Services Learning Development Studies Program, and all three approved. The projects are 1) Survey Results Analysis, 2) Form Literacy Review, and 3) Measurement of the collaboration. The projects will be completed by students and finished by May 2016.

### **Impact Area: *Influencing policy***

**Milestone statement:** Calgary City Council will vote to expand allowance of secondary suites; Calgary City Council will vote to increase access & affordability of public services including transportation; Everyone who needs a service can access it within a timely manner, regardless of income and Calgarians only need to tell their story once when accessing services. The City of Calgary will review and adjust bylaws to decrease the concentration of Payday lenders in vulnerable communities. We intend to influence the AB government to advance policy to support a living wage

**Contribution towards milestone this year:** VCC led and collaborated a community response to advance the allowance of secondary suites in 4 Calgary communities. The Rise of the Cash Store committee led a significant advocacy effort to affect city bylaws related to payday lending business locations.

**Relevant Outputs:**

- Implementation of the Alberta Child Benefit
- Organized a letter writing campaign to Calgary city councillors to approve changes to secondary suites bylaws/city planning processes. VCC organized presentations to city council, including those from people with lived experience, and VCC presented to city council in support of a pilot rezoning for secondary suites in three Calgary communities. Unfortunately our efforts were unrewarded however, this opportunity highlighted VCC's leadership potential to convene and advance policy discussions and the learning's have helped adapt and influence approaches to future policy debates.
- VCC continued its leadership role in policy discussions related to living wage. Working in partnership with the United Way, VCC updated the Living Wage calculator for 2015, and released the new Living Wage rate October 1, 2015.
- VCC was invited to consult on the Alberta government's implementation of the minimum wage policy in 2015



- Financial empowerment - the Rise of the Cash Store Committee, convened by Momentum to address the negative impact of payday lending lobbied City Council to change its land-use bylaws to create minimum distances between payday lending businesses. Poverty Talks was actively involved in both municipal and provincial efforts to reduce the negative impact of fringe financial services. VCC was invited as representative of E4A on a City of Calgary led taskforce to address the issue from a policy, business and community perspective. To date, the City of Calgary has approved changes to its land use bylaw and is working with the banking industry and community advocates to identify additional actions, including influencing provincial legislation.

- E4A including VCC, along with members of Poverty Talks, actively participated in Fair Calgary Community Voices to ensure the City of Calgary's low-income subsidies programs can be easily accessed, are equitable and affordable. Members of the coalition actively lobbied City Council to approve a sliding fee scale for its subsidy programs and to specifically create more affordable transit fees for low-income Calgarians.

### **Impact Area: *Strengthening Network of Services***

**Milestone statement:** Everyone who needs a service can access it within a timely manner, regardless of income  
Calgarians only need to tell their story once when accessing services

**Contributions towards milestone this year:** The City of Calgary developed the Fair Entry System; VCC representing Enough for All became a member of the Calgary Homeless Foundation's Coordinated Access & Assessment Steering Committee; VCC convened a number of community stakeholders in a discussion regarding development of a coordinated referral system and "one story" process. The Community Hubs Collaborative was formed in 2015 and initial organization members included the City of Calgary, United Way of Calgary and Area, Calgary Foundation, Federation of Calgary Community, the Calgary Public Library and the Interfaith Council. While the Collaborative spent most of 2015 creating its strategic direction, the United Way of Calgary and the City of Calgary continued to promote the development of community hubs in six neighbourhoods around the city, including Bowness and Forest Lawn. The work has been focused on engaging residents as well as partnership building with local organizations and groups with a vested interest in a community gathering spaces.

**Relevant Outputs:**

- City of Calgary Fair Entry System was implemented in spring 2015; the CHF Coordinated Access & Assessment Steering Committee met 5 times before the CHF determined further work on the system and process was required before the committee could continue. The Steering Committee was dissolved in fall 2015. The coordinated referral system/one story group met a number of times early in the year; however, in response to the work the CHF is leading around a coordinated system and with a future vision to build upon that system, the group was dissolved. WeEmploy, a local business with the resources to provide an infrastructure to support such a system remains interested and committed to participating in this goal in the future.

**Impact Area: *Strengthening the Capacity of Nonprofits***

**Milestone statement:** We intend to influence increased collaboration for collective impact across all sectors to advance the goal of poverty reduction in Calgary. Resources are mobilized to support the implementation of poverty reduction tactics and projects. Stakeholders take ownership of the Enough for All strategy and share in its successful outcomes, challenges, and learnings.

**Contribution towards milestone this year:** A Implementation Leadership Council representing all active areas of work under Enough for All and intersecting community plans and systems was convened and agreed to meet ongoing for the next year. Work is ongoing to engage additional funding institutions/foundations as formal partners in E4A. The intention is to create a specific fund for poverty reduction efforts that organizations can apply for and use specifically for poverty reduction efforts. A poverty research network was convened and will support non-profits in their work to identify best practises in poverty reduction programming and interventions. VCC staff provided consultation, input, and connections for non-profit organizations seeking to improve/enhance their Aboriginal understanding.

**Relevant Outputs:**

- 25 poverty reduction leaders representing all the working/project groups and constellation groups of the Enough for All strategy are meeting on a quarterly basis and sharing updates, challenges, and outcomes of their respective work in an effort towards increased collective impact.
- 25 community, academic, and government researchers met to review and discuss the Enough for All strategy.
- The Enough for All Strategy & Plan to End Homelessness are being aligned.

- 2 organizations have requested support in building their capacity for Aboriginal cultural awareness and competencies.
- 1 Sharing & Reconciliation circle was held and led by Elder Reg Crowshoe with support from VCC and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee and included some Enough for All stakeholders from Poverty Talks, as well as VCC board and staff, and members of the MOA partnership.

## Appendix 2: Conditions of Collective Impact

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Collective impact is an approach designed to address immense and complex social issues, such as poverty. It is based in the spirit and realization that no single organization can successfully address the complexities and diverse levels of a social issue. Collective impact efforts themselves can be complex and it is critical for all those involved to be open to and engaged in “an ongoing progression of alignment, discovery, learning and emergence.”<sup>10</sup> Collective impact is a continuous unfolding and alignment of work in which the leaders of collective impact are required to balance intentional outcomes with emergent solutions. VCC’s role in the collective impact work of reducing poverty is instrumental as it is the backbone support to the implementation of the E4A strategy. Within the five key elements of collective impact work, a backbone structure is essential

“When properly put into motion, the process of collective impact generates emergent solutions toward the intended outcomes under continually changing circumstances. - John Kania and Mark Kramer (2013). *Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity*. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

At the core of VCC’s backbone role is the aligning of the collective work to the four E4A goals. The following illustration shows the collective impact approach for achieving the E4A goals and VCC’s role as backbone to this work: To be an effective backbone organization, you do not need a large team. Rather, the imperative is to ensure that ‘who you have’ (staff skills, appropriate partnerships), ‘what you do’ and ‘how you do it’ is efficiently and appropriately targeted for the greatest impact. Using collective impact and ‘backbone’ as a framework, staff work as ‘active conveners’ to ensure the ‘right people, at the right time are doing the right work’ towards implementing the E4A strategy.

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<sup>10</sup> John Kania and Mark Kramer (2013). *Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity in Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

***Common Agenda***

All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon agenda.

***Shared Measurement***

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

***Mutually Reinforcing Activities***

Participants' activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

***Continuous Communication***

Consistent and open communication is needed across that any players to build trust assure mutual objectives and create common motivation.

***Backbone Support***

Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone fir the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

### Appendix 3: Notes on Developmental Evaluation Process

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Several hundred stakeholders across multiple sectors and from diverse organizations were involved in the development of E4A. With VCC stewarding the E4A strategy, ensuring that the E4A strategy continues to be community-based and owned is essential. Thus, a collective impact approach is being used to support and mobilize the E4A strategy with VCC as a backbone to the community impact approach. Although VCC has existed since 2006 the transition of the E4A to them is new. Given this, year one for VCC was a year of intense adaptation. Prior to the adoption of the E4A strategy, VCC functioned as a collaborative model, which is different than being a backbone to a large-scale collection impact effort. In year one, VCC focused on understanding, developing and articulating its backbone role within a collective impact model.

In 2015 VCC was in a “in a state of continuous development and adaptation”<sup>11</sup> and this creates an ideal environment for DE. To pass over the essential foundation of development and design in year one would have been detrimental to the following three years of collective impact work. September 2015 – January 2016 was an ideal time, developmentally, for VCC to address and work through key strategic and process developments required to transition to being a backbone organization. In the context of evaluation, investing in the development of a theory of change of VCC in its backbone role was fundamental to preparing for a collective impact elevation framework in Year 2 that will involve collecting data based on outcomes and indicators.

DE is not about measurement; it is abundant in inquiry, critical thinking and development and being able to adapt based on on-going learnings. DE requires a deep understanding of the nuances and particulars of the daily work of an

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<sup>11</sup> J.A. A. Gamble, (2008). A developmental evaluation primer.  
[http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/Developmental\\_Evaluation\\_Primer.pdf](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/vc/Developmental_Evaluation_Primer.pdf)

organization in relation to the overall strategic intent. “Developmental evaluation focuses on the relationships *between* people and organizations over time, and the problems or solutions that arise from those relationships. Rather than render definitive judgments of success or failure, the goal of developmental evaluation is to provide an on-going feedback loop for decision making by uncovering newly changing relationships and conditions that affect potential solutions and resources.”<sup>12</sup>

To do this requires evaluators being steeped in the work of VCC. The evaluators participated in conversations, meetings and led strategic sessions with a diversity of committees and working groups including:

- Impact and Engagement Steering Committee,
- VCC staff and Board of Directors,
- VCC Funders: United Way and The City of Calgary,
- Financial Empowerment Collaborative
- Aboriginal Advisory Committee,
- Public Awareness Committee
- Data for Good, and the VCC Research Network

The primary evaluative intention within the first three months was to assess *how*, and in *what ways*, VCC is operating as a ‘backbone’ organization for the implementation Plan. In so doing, we can assess alignment, strengths and accomplishments as well as identify areas for future growth and development. The intention of DE for year two (2016) is to inform the development and implementation of a collective impact evaluation framework that will support the emergent and intentional work of VCC and its partners towards poverty reduction.

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<sup>12</sup> John Kania and Mark Kramer (2013). *Embracing Emergence: How Collective Impact Addresses Complexity*. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

From September 2015 – December 2015, the DE was targeted towards learning and contextualizing early learnings to:

- Develop an organizational theory of change,
- Clarify roles and responsibilities,
- Identify successes and challenges,
- Propose strategic priorities.

In the first three months the DE team:

- Met with VCC staff and Board of Directors,
- Attended several committee and working group meetings,
- Attended VCC and collaborative events,
- Conducted interviews with current and past E4A stakeholders,
- Reviewed relevant Vibrant Community and poverty reduction reports, documents and papers,
- Facilitated a ‘mapping exercise’ to find alignment and gaps between VCC daily work and organizational backbone roles,
- Facilitated the development of a theory of change and strategic planning process to guide the DE framework.

Inquiry is a steadfast element of the DE process, thus the evaluators attended two learning labs<sup>13</sup> alongside the VCC staff and Board team. This assisted in gathering insights about organizational capacities in collective impact and backbone work. There are four learning labs planned for the 2015-2016 year. The learning labs focus on collective impact topics of governance, advocacy, backbone alignment and pathways of change. Another example of evaluator participation is attending the ‘Community Conversation’ to gain insight on the level of engagement of particular communities and groups with E4A. These kinds of engagement are central to the DE process

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<sup>13</sup> The learning labs are led by coach Mark Cabaj of *Here to There* Consulting



