
Developing a Social Policy Framework for Alberta Discussion Guide

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DRAFT

Government of Alberta ■
Human Services

Mandate

Premier Redford has ushered in a new approach to thinking about and addressing social policy in Alberta. The Premier mandated the Minister of Human Services to lead the development of a social policy framework for Alberta to guide the alignment and potential redesign of social policy and programs in order to achieve better outcomes for children, families, individuals, and communities. A social policy framework for Alberta will be comprehensive, reflect our shared societal values, and guide our collective efforts to support all Albertans to attain a high quality of life. The framework will communicate Alberta's social policy direction to the public, both within and beyond our borders.

By February 2012, an outline of the purpose and core elements of a social policy framework – along with an approach to its development – will be prepared. A developed framework is anticipated by fall 2012.

Purpose

Alberta has a comprehensive system of supports for Albertans in need. Over time, this system has developed a wide variety of programs for individuals and families. This system is not always easy to access or understand. As well, some practices and structures have not adapted with Alberta's changing demographic make-up. As our population ages and becomes more diverse, its needs and priorities are shifting. A current social policy framework is required to address this reality, and will consider:

- **The vision and values that guide social policy in Alberta:** key concepts may include self-reliance, dignity, equal opportunity, shared responsibility, and community cohesion.
- **Roles and responsibilities:** of governments, communities, private and non-profit sectors, families, and individuals.
- **Context:** population diversity, the needs and aspirations of Albertans, and the factors that impact Albertans' ability to achieve their desired quality of life.
- **Potential solutions and new directions:** innovations that will empower and enable Albertans to participate fully in their communities.
- **Desired social outcomes:** these could include improved income security, increased social inclusion (e.g. participation in community life), improved health outcomes, and stronger families.

A social policy framework will guide the development of services that respond to the evolving needs of Albertans throughout their lives. A clearly articulated framework will also help align actions across sectors, both within and outside of government. If we want to do better for Albertans, we need to consider how existing policies and programs serve the whole person.

Key Questions:

- What do you see as the purpose of a social policy framework for Alberta?
- What are the respective roles of government(s), communities, individuals, and business in achieving a quality of life to which Albertans aspire?
- What kind of society do you want for yourself, your family and community?

Scope

The social policy framework will span Ministries and policy domains beyond the mandate of Human Services. It will support more integrated and coordinated services that address the continuum of needs of vulnerable Albertans across the range of income levels. Relevant policy domains could include employment and income security, housing, protection of vulnerable people, supporting children and families, Aboriginal Albertans, seniors, Albertans with disabilities and newcomers to the province.

Key Question:

- What social and economic issues should be included in the framework?

Proposed Approach

Developing a social policy framework for Alberta will be an inclusive process that addresses the perspectives of Albertans, community leaders, service delivery partners, and other government departments. The resulting framework must have broad community ownership. Meaningful public dialogue that balances a diverse range of viewpoints will be integral to developing a meaningful, framework.

Key Questions:

- Social programs are delivered by government, communities, and non-for-profit organizations across the province. How would you like to be engaged during this process?

Achieving Success

A successful framework will provide tools to make decisions around the system that service Alberta's disadvantaged. The framework will be the start of a dialogue between, individuals, agencies, and community organizations to ensure that those Albertans who need help are able to access it. In addition, the social policy framework will enable a common foundation for government and its partners to evaluate, measure, and report progress in achieving the desired outcomes for families, and communities, in particular those Albertans facing hardships.

Key Questions:

- How would you define success?
- How should we measure success?

Comments can be forward to the following contact persons:

Shannon Marchand Assistant Deputy Minister Social Policy Framework Phone: 780-422-0194 Email: Shannon.Marchand@gov.ab.ca	Lora Pillipow Executive Director Social Policy Framework Phone: 780-422-2816 Email: Lora.Pillipow@gov.ab.ca
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