

Thrive Strategy | Revive Thrive | Communities Ending Poverty Leadership Table

Prepared for the City of Williams Lake, for May 6, 2025.

Introduction

“Poverty is not just about income — it’s about access, dignity, and being able to live and participate fully in community life.”

The Social Planning Council (SPC) has spent the last several years supporting the transition from strategy to action. This report shows how the Thrive Poverty Reduction Strategy has evolved into measurable, community-led initiatives — with a clear line of sight to long-term impact. Many of these actions connect across multiple pillars, showing the power of coordination and community leadership.

This year marks SPC’s 30th anniversary, three decades of building capacity, fostering collaboration, and supporting community well-being in Williams Lake and the surrounding area. Many of these actions connect across multiple pillars, showing the power of coordination and community leadership.

Key Moments in SPC’s Journey

- **1995** — Individuals come together to address systemic issues; SPC is founded
- **2012** — City signs fee-for-service partnership agreement with SPC
- **2018** — Thrive Poverty Reduction Strategy launched by SPC Board
- **2021** — SPC partners with United Way BC to launch the Central Cariboo Food Hub
- **2022** — Seniors Independence Support Project begins through UBCM grant
- **2023** — Thrive Strategy reignited; Poverty Awareness Video launched
- **2025** — Celebrating 30 years of community leadership; launching Revive Thrive Pop-Up Events

Pillar-by-Pillar Progress with Cross-Pillar Impact

Pillar	Key Initiatives	Status	Also Contributes To...
Financial Security & Employment	Day Labour groundwork, financial coaching, Basic Income advocacy, Social Enterprise planning	✅ ⚠️ Initiated	Housing (preventing eviction via income), Inclusion (employment for people with barriers), System Access (referral support)
Housing & Homelessness	Rent Bank pilot (returned to province), Rent Supplement access, Affordable housing advocacy	✅ Initiated & Transitioned	Financial Stability, Mental Health (reduced crisis), Navigation (application support)
Food Security	Central Cariboo Food Hub, Nourishing Connections, School & rural food planning	✅ Ongoing	Health (nutrition), Learning (skills & workshops), Inclusion (food sovereignty), Awareness (public events)
Lifelong Learning & Literacy	Just in Time Tutoring, Future Forward, Adult upskilling, Parenting supports,	✅ Initiated & Sustained	Employment, Youth Wellbeing, Food (school tie-ins), Community Belonging
Health & Wellness	Navigation Training (40+ staff), Mental Health destigmatization, TRU workshop delivery, Seniors Support (increasing service access / social connection)	✅ Ongoing	Education (workshops), System Access (referrals), Public Attitudes (stigma shift), Seniors Wellbeing
Transportation	Transit models under discussion	🔄 On Hold	N/A – Identified for future planning and inter-agency collaboration

Cross-Cutting Strategy: System Navigation & Awareness

While not a standalone pillar, system navigation plays a central role in advancing every Thrive pillar. SPC has led several initiatives that make it easier for people to move between supports, find the help they need, and feel safe accessing services:

Connecting Dots, Building Awareness	Community meetings, info sharing, social media engagement, poverty awareness video, navigation training	✅ Ongoing	All pillars — this is the bridge that connects people to supports across housing, food, mental health, etc.
--	---	-----------	---

- Trauma-informed Community Navigation Training (40+ providers trained)
- Referral and Service Awareness initiatives through forums, newsletters, and partner networks
- Poverty Awareness Video & Campaign reducing stigma and shifting public understanding
- TRU training adaptation (in partnership with Silvia Dubray) to embed navigation practices in future frontline professionals

These efforts enable success in housing, food, health, employment, and education — by making the system easier to access and trust.

Real Examples of Cross-Pillar Impact

- **Food Hub → Health + Learning:** School food access → better learning + reduced family stress
- **Rent Bank → Mental Health + Financial Stability:** Preventing eviction reduces crisis load + need for emergency supports
- **Navigation Training → Everything:** Trauma-informed staff can help people access services across *all* pillars
- **Poverty Awareness Campaign → Policy & Perception Shift:** Increases public understanding → builds support for housing, food access, and mental health investments
- **Seniors Support → Health + Financial Literacy + Social Connection:** Helping seniors access services, manage finances, and rebuild social networks after the pandemic
- **Just-in-Time Tutoring → Education + Youth Wellbeing + Family Stability:** Boosting academic success, mental wellness, and reducing stress for families

Outcomes at a Glance (2021–2025)

Area	Outcome
Rent Bank	9 loans totaling \$14,000, 23 people housed
Rent Supplement Support	138 individuals reached, 19 directly supported with applications
Food Hub Support	533 individuals served; 977 hampers, 400+ meals/week redistributed
Navigation Training	6 workshops, 40+ service providers + 12 school staff trained
Poverty Awareness Reach	Facebook reach up 144% in 2024, newsletter opens 39–48%, Click Through Rates up to 11%, video views 226
Literacy & Tutoring	Just in Time Tutoring: 93 students supported (42 elementary, 32 secondary, 19 middle school students)
Seniors Support	721 adults assisted; 967 office visits; 7 volunteers = 386 hours; 153 referrals; 19 workshops (212 attendees); 24 collective community meetings attended

Broader Context & Commitment

- SPC is part of Tamarack’s Western Canada Leading Canada’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, connecting local action to national systems change
- Work aligns with Tamarack’s Indicator Mapping Framework, demonstrating short-, medium-, and long-term impacts
- SPC’s core role is to build capacity, coordination, and leadership across sectors

» Looking Ahead

In Progress:

- CEP Leadership Table established 2024
- Hire Revive Thrive Facilitator to continue building relationships, momentum and lived experience advisory team
- Revive Thrive pop-up events (Fall/Winter 2025 and 2026)
- Shared evaluation indicators
- Library-based rural food access pilot with CRD
- Continued partnerships for Indigenous food sovereignty
- Hosting a combined SPC 30-Year Anniversary Celebration, Annual General Meeting (AGM), and Community Forum to wrap up the year and recognize community efforts

Opportunities:

- Strengthen partnership with the City of Williams Lake
- Secure core funding to sustain coordination and innovation roles
- Reinforce upstream approaches to poverty reduction across all pillars

Closing Reflection

We're not the ones delivering every program — we're the ones helping people come together to make those programs possible.

As we continue this work, our goal is to build a Williams Lake where everyone has what they need to thrive — not just survive.

We sincerely thank the City of Williams Lake for its continued support and collaboration and invite you to stay closely engaged as we grow these efforts together.

We would also like to sincerely acknowledge the City's past support, particularly its critical role in enabling key initiatives through UBCM funding — including the Seniors Support Project, Just-in-Time Tutoring, and the Poverty Reduction Awareness Video. The City's collaboration helped bring these programs to life and provided vital transitional support. We are grateful for these contributions and look forward to strengthening our partnership even further.

In 2025, SPC is proud to celebrate 30 years of community leadership, partnership, and commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive Williams Lake — one connection at a time!

We also want to acknowledge support from the Cariboo Regional District, PG Prosperity Fund (Province of BC), and Tamarack Community.