

# Make Your Mark on Poverty

An Initiative of United Way of the Alberta Capital Region

## TEACHER GUIDE

Before you begin completing the Dentons Make Your Mark (DMYM) application, we recommend reviewing this information to assist with planning your project and evaluation.

### **About United Way of the Alberta Capital Region**

United Way looks at the big picture in order to deliver a coordinated network of services and programs to address a range of needs for children and families who are struggling. By bringing together partners and strategies, we are mobilizing collective action to create pathways out of poverty.

Please play this [30 second United Way explainer](#) video for your students to learn about our work.

### What is Poverty:

There are many definitions of poverty and we encourage teachers to have a dialogue with students in order to create a robust understanding amongst students about what poverty is, and what it isn't. We have provided some examples below as a starting point for this conversation.

***Poverty is a lack or denial of economic, social and cultural resources to have a quality of life that sustains and facilitates full and meaningful participation in the community.***

*(Source: EndPovertyEdmonton)*

***Poverty can mean a lot of different things. The simplest definition is that a person doesn't have enough money for food, clothing and shelter. But poverty can also mean not having a good job or being able to go to school or to the doctor. It can mean feeling unsafe or excluded or like you don't have opportunities in life to be happy."***

*(Source: 'On Our Street - Our First Talk about Poverty' by Dr. Jillian Roberts and Jaime Casap)*

### Discussion Points to consider:

What kind of resources do people have that makes our lives better?

- Social – family and friends who love and support us;
- Health – access to medical care and nutritious food;
- Environment – clean air, safe home;
- Other areas to consider may include Mental, Emotional, Spiritual, ...

### ***How you define a problem impacts how you solve it.***

- How do you define poverty?
- What does poverty look like in your community?
- What causes poverty? (Consider demographics, working poor, generational, situational, etc...)
  - It may be helpful to consider what happens if someone lost their job, got very sick, experienced a house fire, became addicted to drugs, worked but didn't earn enough to pay the bills, grew up with very little, etc...
- Who would you like to focus on helping and how? (seniors, youth, adults, neighbours, marginalized communities, etc.)
- When, where, who needs to be involved?
- What needs to be included in the project budget?
- What kind of impact do you hope your poverty project will have?
- How will you know it was successful?

### **Evaluate Your Ideas:**

- Does this response maintain the dignity of the people you are trying to help?
- Have you sought feedback from a local service agency on your project idea to see if it will help meet current needs?
- Are adjustments required to the original plan based on what you learned?

### **Evaluating Your Work:**

If you are successful in receiving funding to support your project, you will be required to provide information on the outcome of your project. In order to determine how successful your project was, an evaluation will give you feedback on what worked well and what could be improved if the project was to occur again. Examples of project evaluation questions may be:

- What changed as a result of our project?
- What feedback did we get from those people we helped?
- What did students learn from their involvement in this project?

**In addition to your own evaluation questions, United Way has a mandatory evaluation question for DMYM projects.**

### **AFTER the project concludes, ask students:**

1. Are you more aware of issues people are facing related to poverty in your community?
2. In what ways, if any, could you continue to get involved in addressing social issues in your community?

Please report on the number of youth surveyed and how many of them displayed greater awareness of

social issues in the community. Remember to include this information in your final report, which is due in spring 2020.

**Other Resources:**

<https://www.myunitedway.ca/>

<https://www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/>

<https://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/>

*Thank you for your interest in DMYM. If you have any questions about DMYM, please contact Annette Malin at [amalin@myunitedway.ca](mailto:amalin@myunitedway.ca) or 780-443-8333.*