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THE PROJECT TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA ON ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST EQUITY-DESERVING GROUPS IN ALBERTA

2023

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Acknowledging Indigenous Territory and Peoples
Shift wants to acknowledge that our team members live across Turtle Island in what is today known as Canada. We acknowledge that the places we call home have deep ties to the Indigenous Peoples that have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We also acknowledge that colonial actors and institutions perpetually deny Indigenous Peoples their rights to self-determination and sovereignty and these institutions must be challenged and changed. Shift is committed to the advancement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Suggested Citation
Litviniuc, A., & Wells, L. (2023). *Recommendations for the Government of Alberta on advancing social inclusion to prevent violence against equity-deserving groups in Alberta.* Calgary, AB: The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence.

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NOTE TO READER

This report is part of a series of research briefs designed to inform the Alberta Primary Prevention Framework (APPF) Policy Collaborative, whose goal is to help the Government of Alberta and the IMPACT collective identify strategies and actions for primary prevention of domestic and sexual violence. In addition to this report on advancing social inclusion for primary prevention, we have developed two other reports to help the Government of Alberta address the root causes of domestic and sexual violence: one on decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty[1] and another on advancing gender equality.[2] These three reports should be read together as they are interrelated and indispensable for moving upstream to prevent violence before it starts.

The report below explains why social exclusion is one driver of domestic and sexual violence and how advancing social inclusion will contribute to stopping violence before it starts. It can serve as an evidence-based provincial plan for preventing violence against equity-deserving groups in Alberta. Using evidence from 290 research and policy documents by 70 Canadian policy actors, such as think tanks, policy institutes, and non-profits working on social inclusion and violence prevention, the report synthesizes a comprehensive suite of recommendations in the areas that equity-deserving groups themselves see as important for their inclusion and safety. The advantage of such an approach is that it centres the needs and voices of equity-deserving groups and reproduces a wide range of recommendations that stem directly from their lived experiences.

At the same time, there are some limitations. This report focuses on changing the cultural and structural factors that exclude equity-deserving groups from equal participation and make violence against them possible. Future research should focus on disrupting the trajectory of representatives of various equity-deserving groups towards perpetration. Furthermore, the recommendations tend to be pragmatic rather than truly transformative (i.e., focused on reducing suffering in the short term rather than on ensuring people's long-term thriving). Many of the recommendations reiterate measures for which communities have been advocating for decades, such as pay equity, safe workplace conditions, and free quality childcare. While progress has been achieved in implementing some of these measures, including by the Government of Alberta, many of the traditionally promoted actions for social inclusion remain to be fully adopted in Alberta.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, this report can serve as an important first step toward addressing the root causes of violence and preventing domestic and sexual violence against equity-deserving groups here in Alberta. To make the best use of this report, we encourage each government ministry to review it and select the recommendations based on their mandate and the populations on which their policy and investments focus. Before implementing any recommendations, we strongly urge the Government of Alberta to consult with equity-deserving groups to prioritize the most critical measures based on their lived experiences and adapt them to the current context in Alberta.

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1.0 Introduction

This report focuses on strategies and recommendations for bolstering social inclusion of equity-deserving groups (EDGs) to prevent domestic and sexual violence.

> An equity-deserving group is "any group of people who, because of systemic discrimination, face barriers that prevent them from having the same access to the resources and opportunities that are available to other members of society, and that are necessary for them to attain just outcomes."[3]

Various EDGs are disproportionately affected by domestic and sexual violence. In addition to women and girls, immigrants, Black and racialized Canadians, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities, other groups include youth who are gang members, inmates in correctional facilities, sex trade workers, temporary foreign workers, and women in hypermasculine and male-dominated occupations. Upstream prevention of violence against different EDGs requires targeted strategies. Due to our project's time and budget constraints, we have consulted with our partners (the Government of Alberta [GoA] and the IMPACT collective) and research committee and focused our Alberta Primary Prevention Framework (APPF) Policy Collaborative research on children and youth, women, Black Canadians and other racialized groups, 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, unhoused people, seniors, and residents of rural and remote communities. We address primary prevention of violence against children and youth[4] and women[5] in separate reports supporting the APPF.

Although government policy often treats Indigenous Peoples as an EDG, Indigenous members of the APPF and our research committee maintain Indigenous Peoples should not be considered an EDG because they have a unique history and different trajectories toward domestic and sexual violence. Therefore, Indigenous Peoples and EDGs require distinct primary prevention efforts: the cornerstone of prevention for Indigenous Peoples is advancing Indigenous sovereignty and reclamation of land, identity, language, and culture, while the cornerstone for EDGs is eliminating social exclusion and discrimination based on age, ability, racialized background, gender expression, and other demographic characteristics. Therefore, we have engaged in a parallel research process in partnership with three Indigenous researchers/leaders and eight Elders and Knowledge Keepers to articulate the root causes of violence against Indigenous Peoples and identify Indigenous-specific primary prevention recommendations, which is summarized in a separate report.[6]

The present report begins by explaining what we mean by primary prevention. We then define social inclusion and identify its benefits and the negative outcomes of its opposite—social exclusion—which EDGs systemically face. Following this, we explain the connection between social exclusion and domestic and sexual violence, particularly how it translates into higher risks for EDGs to experience violence. The report concludes by listing upstream approaches and

solutions that the GoA can adopt to continue supporting EDGs so that they experience greater social inclusion and, as a result, live a life of dignity, justice, and belonging that is violence-free.

2.0 What is primary prevention?[*]

> **Primary prevention** means changing the structural and cultural conditions that create opportunities for perpetrators to commit violence, while eliminating risk factors and building protective factors to stop the initial perpetration of domestic and sexual violence.
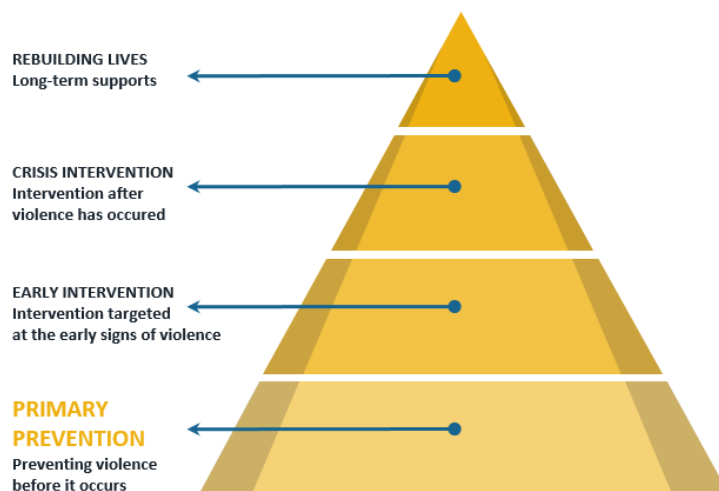
Primary prevention is long-term social change work that should involve every citizen.[7] "If we want to stop producing perpetrators of violence, we must transform the institutions, laws, policies, and practices (i.e., structures) and beliefs, values, and social norms (i.e., cultures) that create or enable them."[8] Primary prevention is a unique and crucial way of addressing domestic and sexual violence because it is our chance to promote safety and wellbeing instead of having to repair the damage after violence has occurred.

Primary prevention involves upstream efforts to improve social conditions so that perpetrators have no opportunities to inflict violence on anyone in the first place. When we miss our chance for primary prevention, secondary and tertiary prevention come into play (See Figure 1). When the risk of violence is already present, we implement initiatives that mitigate that risk through early interventions, known as secondary prevention. When violence is already happening and people are in crisis, we implement initiatives to stop violence through crisis intervention, known as tertiary prevention. Tertiary prevention also involves rebuilding the lives of both survivors and perpetrators. Survivors receive long-term supports that help them heal, improve their health, find safety, and access all the necessary resources, such as housing, education, employment, and social networks. Perpetrators also receive supports to help them take responsibility for the harm they have caused, "be accountable, heal, repair, and prevent the transmission of violence across generations."[9]

Advancing social inclusion will change the structural and cultural conditions that produce opportunities for perpetrators to victimize equity-deserving Albertans and, therefore, must be a top priority in the GoA's primary prevention efforts.

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[*] This definition was adapted with permission from various research reports that were written to support the development of the Alberta Primary Prevention Playbook. Please follow this link for the most recent definition https://preventdomesticviolence.ca/our-work/public-policy/alberta-primary-prevention-playbook/

Figure 1: The primary prevention pyramid

REBUILDING LIVES
Long-term supports

CRISIS INTERVENTION
Intervention after
violence has occured

EARLY INTERVENTION
Intervention targeted
at the early signs of violence

PRIMARY
PREVENTION
Preventing violence
before it occurs

3.0 What is social inclusion and why does it matter?

In this section, we define social inclusion, explain its benefits, and describe the link between a lack of social inclusion and domestic and sexual violence, demonstrating our argument with Canadian data.

3.1 Benefits of social inclusion and the costs of its absence

> **Social inclusion** is a multidimensional process for ensuring inclusive, accessible services and civic, social, economic, and political opportunities for everyone so that each individual, regardless of background, can actively participate in decision-making and achieve their full potential.[10]

Social inclusion results in a wide range of social and economic benefits for individuals, such as increased workplace productivity, better employment outcomes, and improved mental and physical health.[11] Since social inclusion reduces the rates of domestic and sexual violence for individuals, this also translates into benefits for communities and society as a whole, for example, through reduced costs of social services that violence perpetrators incur on our systems.[12] An inclusive society that takes full advantage of its diversity tends to be more innovative, creative, dynamic, resilient and prosperous.[13]

However, many groups in Canada continue to experience social exclusion, or a systemic inability to participate fully in economic, social, political, and cultural life due to not being valued equally, having less power and decision-making opportunities, and lacking access to resources.[14] Therefore, these groups are known not only as EDGs but also as equity-denied groups.[15,16] They

have emerged because our cultures (i.e., norms, values, and beliefs) and structures (i.e., laws, policies, and practices) are based on worldviews that reinforce inequality, domination, exploitation, and violence against people who do not belong to privileged groups.[17] As a result of the systems of oppression upon which our society is built, targeted forms of discrimination have been directed against EDGs: sexism and misogyny against women; racism against racialized groups; Islamophobia and antisemitism against religious minorities; xenophobia against immigrants; homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia against 2SLGBTQIA+ communities; ableism against people with disabilities; ageism against children, youth, and seniors; and classism against poor and unhoused people.

Just as social inclusion offers significant benefits to individuals and communities, social exclusion results in significant costs. EDGs experience isolation, poor mental and physical health, lower educational and employment outcomes, lower wages and lifetime earnings, and higher rates of poverty and homelessness.[18,19] These result in losses for the entire society: higher social spending, lower tax revenues, reduced gross domestic product (GDP), and less human capital wealth.[20]

3.2 Lack of social inclusion and violence against EDGs

Social exclusion is related to violence. Just as gender inequality (i.e., exclusion based on gender) is linked to gender-based violence, social exclusion based on social identities is linked to domestic and sexual violence.[21] Studies have clearly demonstrated that perpetrators inflict higher rates of violence[22] on women and other EDGs and that violence against them is more frequent, severe, and life changing[23] compared to socially included groups.

There are two interrelated factors that promote social exclusion and make violence against women and other EDGs possible.

- At the level of culture, our society popularizes negative and stereotypical representations of EDGs, questioning their worth and portraying them as inferior to privileged groups. These representations are used to rationalize and justify violence against them.
  - o Entertainment, mass media, and social media are rife with texts and images that are blatantly or covertly anti-Black, racist, Islamophobic, antisemitic, or xenophobic; sexist, homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic; ableist; ageist; or classist.
  - o Equity-deserving groups internalize these negative and stereotypical representations and inflict violence on their fellow members. For example, due to internalized homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, 67% of women from the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities have experienced at least one type of intimate partner violence compared to 44% of heterosexual women.[24]
- At the level of institutions and systems, our society does not offer EDGs the same social, economic, political, and civic opportunities, which leads to poor outcomes, such as poverty, homelessness, poor health, and social and geographic isolation. Perpetrators use these factors to control, coerce, and victimize EDGs.[25] For example:
  - o Due to the intersection of anti-Black racism, other types of racism, xenophobia, and sexism, Black, other racialized, immigrant, and refugee women are

overrepresented in precarious, low-paying jobs,[26] which often force them to work inconvenient shifts. Due to low income, many women use public transit to get to work, spending much time in public places. Perpetrators exploit this factor to victimize racialized women, leading them to experience more sexual harassment in public that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable than non-racialized women (35% versus 31%, respectively).[27]

o Due to homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, 27% of 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians, compared to 13% of their non-2SLGBTQIA+ counterparts, have experienced some type of homelessness or housing insecurity in their lifetime.[28] While living on the street, over 37% of women and 41% of non-binary and trans individuals have experienced sexual assault.[29]

o Due to ableism, people with disabilities and seniors are often discriminated against in the labour market. For example, over the past decade, more people with disabilities left than entered the workforce across all sectors, with nearly double the number of people leaving the workforce than entering it in 2020.[30] Furthermore, the more severe the disability, the worse the discrimination: people with severe disabilities are more likely to be unemployed than people with mild disabilities (69% versus 24%) and to live in poverty (28% versus 14%).[31] Perpetrators exploit unemployment and poverty to control women with those with disabilities. For example, although women with disabilities only make up about 15% of all Canadian women, they have experienced 45% of all reported incidents of violent crime against women in Canada.[32]

o Due to ageism, long-term care homes for seniors are often under funded and the staff working there are overworked, underpaid, and often underqualified.[33] The lack of proper infrastructure, policies and procedures, and capacity building creates conditions where perpetrators have opportunities to victimize. In 2019, 11% of all senior victims of police-reported violence were victimized in a nursing or retirement home, with 15% of survivors sexually assaulted (20% of women and 5% of men).[34]

o Due to classism, residents of rural and remote communities face more poverty and unemployment, but have fewer services, including mental health and addiction services, to address the negative impacts of these challenges.[35,36] These social problems, together with geographic and social isolation and more rigid social norms, increase the threat of violence. As a result, women living in rural areas are 75% more likely to experience intimate partner violence than urban women.[37]

While these numbers are shocking, they are conservative estimates of the true scale of domestic and sexual violence in Canada, since both are severely under-reported to official institutions.[38] Nevertheless, they demonstrate that social exclusion and inequitable outcomes create opportunities for perpetrators to victimize EDGs at higher rates. Therefore, violence prevention efforts must include advancing social inclusion in laws, policies, and practices within our systems and institutions.

The next section outlines recommendations on how the GoA can contribute to the social inclusion of EDGs to prevent violence through legislation and policy reforms.

4.0 How can the GoA advance social inclusion of EDGs to prevent violence?

Legislation and policy reforms are important tools to prevent violence because they can change social norms that normalize violence,[39,40] inequality,[41] and exclusion[42,43,44,45] and reduce systemic and structural opportunities for perpetrators to victimize and harm others, e.g., by improving women's and other EDGs social status and outcomes in all communities, institutions, and systems.[46,47]

Table 1 below outlines our suggestions for an *Alberta Social Inclusion Plan to Prevent Violence against EDGs*. We outline strategic priority areas, complimentary goals, and tangible strategies that can move the needle on achieving social inclusion and stopping violence before it starts.

Table 1: Alberta Social Inclusion Plan to Prevent Violence against Equity-deserving Groups.

Priority Areas	Goals	Strategies
Safe and socially inclusive laws, policies, social norms, attitudes, and practices.	Change cultural and structural factors, such as laws, policies, and social norms to promote and reinforce social inclusion.	Create a safe and socially inclusive legislative and policy environment.
		Change social norms, attitudes, and practices related to EDGs to increase their safety and social inclusion.
Health and wellbeing.	Reform the health care system to eliminate health disparities and inequalities in other social determinants of health, such as housing, food, amenities, and services.	Ensure EDGs' access to safe and inclusive health care services.
		Ensure EDGs' access to housing, food, basic amenities and services, and safe environment.
Economic participation and financial security.	Reform the educational system and labour market to ensure educational, employment, and economic equality.	Promote EDGs' education for labour market participation.
		Increase EDGs' labour market participation.
		Improve EDGs' financial security.
Safety in systems of sorrow.	Reform the child welfare and criminal legal systems to prevent EDGs' trauma and victimization.	Protect the safety and equity of EDGs in the child welfare system.
		Protect the safety and equity of EDGs in the criminal legal system.
Monitoring and evaluation of impact and change.	Leverage data and research to ensure social inclusion and safety.	Invest in data collection, research, and monitoring and evaluation systems to support the implementation of this plan.

The following section expands on each priority area by identifying specific actions to implement the social inclusion plan.[†] Under each strategy, we first identify the recommendations reflected in all the reviewed policy reports that will improve social inclusion of all EDGs, then outline the recommendations pertinent to specific EDGs.

4.1 Priority Area 1: Safe and socially inclusive laws, policies, social norms, attitudes, and practices

Goal: Change cultural and structural factors, such as laws, policies, and social norms that promote and reinforce social exclusion

Strategy 1: Create a safe and socially inclusive legislative and policy environment

Actions for legislative inclusion of all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Adopt anti-oppression as an overarching governmental approach to align all laws, policies, and programs with the goal of eradicating racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, classism, and all other forms of discrimination, committing stable funding for anti-oppressive initiatives.[48,49]
- Require all public service, government-funded organizations, and partners to adopt anti-oppression policies and procedures for social inclusion of all specific EDGs[50,51] and mandate compulsory capacity building on how to promote social inclusion for each EDG among decision-makers and frontline workers.
- Amend the Alberta Human Rights Act's definition of discrimination to include systems of oppression and systemic discrimination of all specific EDGs[52] and replace the Act's corrective approach to discrimination based on individual redress for human rights violation with a proactive approach for systemic change.[53]
- Amend the Alberta Human Rights Act's time limit for making complaints from one year to five years, allowing claimants to ask for further extensions in extenuating circumstances.[54]

Establish:
- An anti-oppression and anti-discrimination specialist position for each EDG in all ministries (e.g., anti-racism and anti-ageism specialists).[55]

Fund:

[†] This research project identified hundreds of recommendations and actions to advance social inclusion. Not to overwhelm the readers, we have selected pragmatic actions for this report. Additional recommendations can be found on Primary Prevention Playbook website along with the 13 research reports developed to support the APPF collaborative.

- Comprehensive third-party reviews of all existing provincial legislation, policies, guidelines, etc., using an intersectional lens to ensure they promote social inclusion of all specific EDGs[56] and do not have unintended harmful effects. [57]
- The Alberta Human Rights Commission to increase access, decrease wait times, prevent, and respond to discrimination, social exclusion, and hate crimes more effectively.[58]For legislative protection of racialized groups' safety.

Legislate to:
- Limit the activities of white supremacist groups (e.g., by allowing registrars to prevent white supremacist groups from registering as a society and by prohibiting violent white supremacist rallies on provincial property).[59]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan with sections for specific racialized groups, especially on anti-Black racism,[60] an Anti-Islamophobia Strategy and Action Plan,[61] and an Antisemitism Strategy and Action Plan, to create pro-active anti-discrimination and social inclusion measures.

Actions for legislative inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals

Legislate to:
- Officially adopt the term "2SLGBTQIA+" to prioritize Two-Spirit inclusion and reflect diverse identities that are often erased,[62] and explicitly define all the 2SLGBTQIA+ groups based on their own most recent definitions, ensuring that trans, Two-Spirit, non-binary, and self-identified women are included into the working definition of "women" in all legislation.[63]
- Amend all family-related legislation to make it 2SLBGTQIA+ inclusive.[64]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial 2SLGBTQIA+ Strategy and Action Plan to increase social inclusion in areas where 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals face discrimination, such as education, health care, poverty reduction, housing and homelessness, the criminal legal system, sports and recreation, and trans and intersex rights.[65]

Establish:
- A provincial 2SLGBTQIA+ Advocate office, similar to the federal one.[66]

Actions for legislative inclusion of people with disabilities

Legislate to:
- Introduce a unified comprehensive Provincial Accessibility Act[67] to supersede the current patchwork of legislation;[68] establish an active duty to accommodate and help people with disabilities to file human rights complaints under one act.[69]

- Amend all legislation with references to disability by replacing the definition of disability based on one's ability to work with a clear rights-based definition based on one's functioning in society[70,71] and inclusive of underrepresented and invisible disabilities and episodic health conditions.[72]
- Introduce mandatory accessibility codes and built environment standards based on Universal Design Principles.[73]
- Introduce accessibility licensing for businesses and the hospitality industry, buildings, and public spaces,[74] ensuring these requirements apply to all professional, residential, and community spaces.[75]
- Introduce mandatory accessibility standards for public and private services, including customer service and access to goods and services.[76,77]
- Introduce legally recognized "independent" and "interdependent" decision-making capability of people with mental disabilities.[78]
- Amend government procurement and contracting procedures to increase compliance with accessibility standards.[79]

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive provincial Disability Strategy and Plan[80] to make Alberta fully accessible to people with disabilities, including undocumented, invisible, and episodic disabilities, by a realistic deadline.[81,82]
- A Disability Services Charter of Engagement with the Alberta disability sector to create a common vision and rules of engagement.[83]

Establish:
- A Ministry focused on comprehensive policy making and service provision for people with disabilities.[84]
- An independent Accessibility Advisor position to oversee accessibility legislation and policy recommendations.[85]
- An independent commission for periodic independent accessibility audits of public spaces[86] and government budgets to ensure government investment promotes rather than hinders accessibility;[87] reviews of legislation, policy, and practices using a robust disability lens;[88] and streamlining federal, provincial, and municipal programs for people with disabilities to create a comprehensive, coherent, and user-friendly system.[89]

Actions for legislative inclusion of unhoused people

Legislate to:
- Introduce a "duty to assist" requiring relevant orders of government to ensure that any youth under 25 and EDG either at risk of being unhoused or currently unhoused receives urgent hands-on supports to remain housed or quickly become re-housed.[90]
- Introduce a "duty to refer" requiring all professionals (e.g., teachers, coaches, community workers, and service providers) who engage with youth under 25 and EDGs to determine

whether an individual is at risk of becoming unhoused or is unhoused and refer them through warm transfer to relevant services.[91]

- Repeal legislation that criminalizes homelessness[92] (e.g., laws that allow for arbitrary removal of homeless people from public spaces; vagrancy; malicious destruction or removal of unhoused people's private property).[93]

Establish:
- An independent commission for periodic independent audits of definitions and metrics of housing affordability and homelessness in legislation, policy, and programming,[94] and audits of progress on appropriate housing for specific EDGs.[95]

Actions for legislative inclusion of seniors

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive provincial Seniors' Strategy and Plan[96] reflecting all the issues that affect seniors and outlining measures for different age groups and EDG seniors, who age more rapidly.[97]

Establish:
- An Accessibility and Age-friendliness Advisory Committee comprising people with disabilities and seniors to consult with the government on social and built environment policies and programs.[98]

Actions for legislative inclusion of residents of rural and remote communities

Legislate to:
- Adopt a rural lens[99] to all government investments, assessing how they impact rural residents.[100]

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive Rural Development Strategy and Plan,[101] including a green infrastructure plan for rural Alberta,[102] using a place-based approach to respond to rural diversity[103] and prioritize underperforming regions and communities,[104] and integrating the principles of social, economic, and environmental justice for sustainable rural futures.[105]
- A comprehensive Digital Strategy for Rural and Remote Communities[106,107] with context-specific strategies for providing digital services to all residents and institutions[108] and pricing benchmarks for broadband services.[109]

Establish:
- A Ministry of Rural Development.[110,111]

Expected outcomes of strategy 1

- *Provincial legislation and policy that promote social inclusion and protect specific EDGs from discrimination and exclusion.*
- *Proper governance structures to support knowledge creation and translation into better legislation and policy for social inclusion.*

Strategy 2: Change social norms, attitudes, and practices related to EDGs to increase their safety and social inclusion

Actions for improved safety of all equity deserving groups

Fund:
- Regular provincial opinion polls on specific EDGs and attitudes to specific forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism, ableism, and ageism)[112] to monitor attitudes and guide strategies and investments.
- Regular education campaigns and initiatives against specific forms of discrimination (e.g., racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia),[113] teaching the public and members of specific communities and institutions how they can prevent discrimination and improve social inclusion of specific EDGs.[114]
- Education campaigns and initiatives that educate Albertans about the impacts of social exclusion on specific EDGs, including its link to domestic and sexual violence, and teach Albertans how to intervene safely when witnessing discrimination and how to report hate crimes against themselves and others.[115]
- Education campaigns and initiatives, including mass media, culture, and entertainment products, that promote EDGs' positive representations[116] and showcase their achievements and contributions to Alberta and Canada.[117]

Mandate:
- All ministries and government-funded organizations to fund and participate only in initiatives and events that promote social inclusion of all EDGs.[118]

Actions for improved safety of racialized and religious EDGs

Fund:
- Education campaigns and initiatives that prevent and mitigate the risks of racist, anti-Black, Islamophobic, antisemitic, and xenophobic white supremacist groups and political movements.[119] Focus on initiatives for boys and men at risk of radicalization to white supremacist violence.

Mandate government officials to:
- To publicly denounce white supremacist groups and political movements as a threat to Alberta's values and community safety when relevant,[120] and to demonstrate support for racialized and religious groups when racist, anti-Black Islamophobic, and antisemitic events happen in Alberta or Canada.[121]

Actions for improved safety of people with disabilities

Fund:
- Educational campaigns that challenge the stigma associated with disability[122] and promote a positive reframing of disability,[123] explaining how the concept of disability is shaped by social and built environments and not only medical conditions.[124]
- Education campaigns normalizing/mainstreaming accommodations for people with disabilities, including episodic health conditions,[125] in society, systems, institutions, and communities.[126]

Actions for improved safety of seniors

Fund:
- Education campaigns against ageism,[127] stigma of dementia and cognitive impairment,[128] elder abuse and neglect,[129] to promote positive and healthy views of aging[130] and the value of seniors,[131] including older workers.[132]

Expected outcomes of strategy 2
- *Improved unbiased and socially inclusive norms and attitudes toward all EDGs.*
- *Increased support for anti-oppression, equity, and social inclusion among Albertans.*
- *Increased understanding of how social inclusion can disrupt pathways to domestic and sexual violence.*

4.2 Priority Area 2: Health and wellbeing of EDGs

Goal: Change cultural and structural factors, such as laws, policies, and social norms that promote and reinforce social exclusion

Strategy 3: Ensure EDGs' access to safe and inclusive health care services

Actions for safe and inclusive health care for all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Amend the Alberta Health Act to:
  - Guarantee culturally appropriate, gender-responsive, age-friendly, accessible, and affordable care for specific EDGs.
  - Require all medical professionals to receive pre-clinical and clinical training in specific EDG health issues (e.g., health issues disproportionately affecting Black Canadians, unique health issues of 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, appropriate care for people with disabilities, and seniors' care).[133,134,135]
  - Require all medical professionals to receive pre-clinical and clinical training in anti-oppression (e.g., anti-racism, anti-Black racism, anti-ableism, and anti-ageism).[136]
  - Increase accountability for health care providers who discriminate against EDGs.[137]

- o Implement special proactive measures to protect people with disabilities, unhoused and poor people, and seniors from being pressured into harmful decisions when accessing health care (e.g., coerced abortions, coerced sterilization, or "end of life" decisions).[138]
- Reduce the age at which youth can advocate for themselves in the health care system (e.g., so that youth under 16, especially 2SLGBTQIA+ and unhoused youth, can access physical and mental health and addictions services without parental consent).[139]
- Allow self-referral and service provision without a provincial health card for 2SLGBTQIA+ and unhoused individuals, especially youth.[140,141]

Design and implement:
- A provincial Health Strategy with sections for physical and mental health, addictions services, and suicide prevention[142] for each specific EDG, their unique health and wellness challenges and needs (e.g., a Gender-Affirming Care Strategy for trans and gender diverse individuals[143,144] and an Intersex Rights Strategy outlining standards of care that value bodily autonomy of intersex individuals[145]), and targeted strategies and resources for meeting those needs.[146,147]
- A provincial Prevention and "Re-enablement" Strategy focusing on health promotion and prevention (e.g., education campaigns on managing episodic health conditions and on healthy aging,[148] falls and injury prevention programs,[149] and initiatives for improving seniors' mental health[150]), "habilitation" of people with disabilities, and "re-enablement" of seniors, including through free/subsidized wellness programs and nutrition advice.[151]
- A better health care visit funding model to allow for longer visits due to more complex health needs among people with long COVID-19 and COVID-19 complications, people with disabilities, seniors, and residents of rural and remote communities travelling for medical appointments less frequently.[152]

Establish:
- An independent audit committee comprising various EDGs to implement independent third-party equity audits in clinics, hospitals, and other health care institutions to ensure appropriate services for all EDGs[153] (e.g., accessibility of health care institutions,[154] information available in plain language[155] and Sign language,[156] or availability of age-friendly services).
- A system to ensure every EDG member has access to a family physician.[157]
- A position of a patient advocate or systems navigator to help youth, people with disabilities, seniors, and EDGs with complex health needs access timely and appropriate health care.[158]

Fund:
- The development of socially inclusive health care for specific EDGs and capacity building of health service providers to deliver culturally appropriate, gender-responsive, accessible, and age-friendly health services. For example, by:

- o Offering scholarships and grants for additional training and research in EDG-specific health topics, such as geriatric medicine[159] and psychogeriatrics.[160]
  - o Offering affordable housing and jobs for families of physicians willing to practice in underserved communities or in rural and remote areas.[161]
  - o Hiring more health care professionals from diverse EDG backgrounds (e.g., from various ethno-cultural and racialized groups, trans and intersex, professionals with disabilities, and professionals with lived experience of homelessness).[162]
  - o Funding EDG-focused networks for medical professionals to contact experts and communities for guidance and information.[163]
  - o Expanding the Alberta Provincial Nominee Program to increase the number of qualified nurses and personal support workers for people with disabilities and seniors.[164]

- Low-barrier community-based health hubs, offering integrated interdisciplinary health services[165] based on various approaches delivered by various experts[166] in conjunction with other essential human services for specific EGDs (e.g., unhoused people or people at risk of homelessness in underserved communities[167] or people with disabilities).[168]

- Free essential prescription drugs, effective non-drug therapies for chronic conditions,[169] medical equipment and aids,[170] personal care items, and assistive technology for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, unhoused people, and seniors.[171,172] Offer top-up or gap coverage for other EDGs.

- Free holistic, anti-oppressive, and trauma-informed mental health services for specific EDGs[173] with regular screenings for depression, anxiety, and other conditions,[174] and additional counselling services after traumatic events and hate crimes against EDGs that occur locally, nationally, and globally.[175] Ensure that distress call lines are staffed with trained counsellors specializing in specific EDG issues and mental health.[176]

- Free rehabilitation, physiatry, occupational therapy, and other care supports on a medical-needs basis.[177]

- Targeted comprehensive culturally appropriate, non-reparative and gender-responsive, accessible, and age-friendly sexual and reproductive health services for specific EDGs,[178] especially for those whose sexuality is often ignored, such as people with disabilities and seniors, and free family planning for youth, unhoused people, and residents of rural and remote communities.[179]

- Comprehensive addictions services targeting EDGs' specific needs, including safe, inclusive, and user-friendly injection sites, detox, treatment, and rehabilitation centres, services, and programs.[180,181]

- The development and provision of safe, innovative telehealth medicine.[182]

- Investment into mobile health services, such as mobile clinics, roving services,[183] and workplace outreach health programs;[184] and workplace-based health clinics and community-based health care hubs to provide health care to hard-to-reach EDGs, especially in rural and remote communities,[185, 186] where there is a lack/fragmentation of health and social services.[187]

- EDGs' priority access to the upgraded, robust medical records and prescription system,[188] Connect Care, to allow medical professionals access patients' accurate and complete medical history.[189]
- Education campaigns on Advance Care Planning (e.g., procedures in case one becomes incapable of consenting to or refuses treatment or personal care, to ensure everyone can rely on trusted individuals who will not abuse them).[190]
- Free, quality respite services for unpaid/informal caregivers of EDG children and youth, people with disabilities, and seniors.[191]

Expected outcomes of strategy 3
- *A strong health care sector specializing in the physical and mental health of specific EDGs and offering culturally appropriate, non-reparative, gender-responsive, accessible, age-friendly, and affordable services.*
- *Increased agency, safety, and inclusion of EDGs in the health care sector.*

Strategy 4: Ensure EDGs' access to housing, food, basic amenities and services, and a safe environment

Actions for safe housing and environment for all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Recognize the right to adequate, affordable housing as a human right,[192] adopt the definition of affordable housing as housing with shelter costs that are equal to or less than 30% of total after-tax household income,[193] and integrate the Housing First approach that provides unconditional permanent housing to unhoused people.[194]
- Amend the Real Estate Act and other relevant legislation to address systemic housing inequality[195] and limit housing financialization (i.e., using housing to generate wealth and as investment). For example, by:
    - Limiting large-scale acquisitions of urban land and housing stock[196,197] that drives up the prices and depletes the stock of naturally occurring affordable housing.[198]
    - Banning real estate investors from leaving housing stock and units empty,[199] especially when rental vacancy is low.[200]
    - Mandating requirements for private developers to include affordable housing units[201] or to pay into a fund for developing affordable housing elsewhere in the community,[202] to replace any affordable units they destroy, and create mixed-income housing and neighbourhoods.[203]
    - Mandating regulatory measures to ensure that zoning, planning, and development do not result in segregation into under-served and marginalized buildings and communities.[204]
- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act and other relevant landlord-tenant legislation (e.g., Minimum Housing and Health Standards) to strengthen tenants' rights to safe, affordable, accessible, age-friendly housing.[205] For example, by introducing:
    - Stronger proactive protections for specific EDG tenants.[206]

- o Effective, pro-actively enforced bans on landlords' requests for information that is not legally required for a tenancy contract.[207]
  - o Mandatory rent caps and regulations[208,209] so that rent reflects current incomes and living costs in the province.[210]
  - o Municipal landlord registries[211] and mandatory housing education for landlords.[212]
  - o Easy-to-use, enforced, and effective complaint mechanisms and penalties for landlords who do not maintain safe, adequate, and clean housing.[213]
  - o Bans on full-time, entire-home, short-term rental businesses, and limits on the use of housing stock for short-term rental businesses, such as Airbnb, implementing the principle of "One host, one rental" and developing effective mechanisms to enforce this legislation.[214]
  - o Mechanisms to ensure better enforcement of laws protecting tenants' rights.[215]
- Amend provincial building and zoning codes[216] and all relevant legislation to implement mandatory standards for accessibility[217] and age-friendliness (including dementia-friendliness), in all residential and public built environments.[218] Age-friendly zoning should allow flexible housing arrangements such as secondary, in-law, and garden suites, laneway housing, home-sharing, and intergenerational co-housing models.[219,220,221]
- Strengthen provincial housing standards to ensure that all newly built residential and public housing is adapted to the impact of climate change (e.g., energy-efficient construction methods, adopting electrically powered appliances and heating and cooling systems, locating housing near public transit, and designing and building housing that is resilient to disasters).[222]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan[223] with sections for each specific EDG[224,225,226] that would reflect the type of discrimination that they face related to housing.[227]
- An attainable homes and rent-geared-to-income housing program for specific EGDs,[228,229] ensuring that housing is located in neighbourhoods with low crime rates, high average income,[230] and next to public transit.
- A comprehensive provincial Emergency Preparedness, Disaster Management, and Climate Change Mitigation Strategy[231] with sections addressing the challenges of specific EDGs (e.g., an effective system for collecting and transferring identifying information and medical histories to facilitate effective tracking, relocation, and care of single people, people with disabilities, seniors, and people in rural and remote locations during an emergency,[232] evacuation plans for long-term care facilities, and guidelines for community organizations working with people with disabilities and seniors).[233,234,235]

Establish:
- An independent committee of legal scholars, experts in housing and homelessness, and representatives of EDGs to review the existing legislation, policy, and programs on housing and homelessness[236] (e.g., accessibility and age-friendliness audits of buildings

and public infrastructure to identify gaps and develop strategies for upgrades)[237,238] and advise the government on housing needs of specific EDGs.[239]

- An office of Provincial Housing Advocate/Ombuds with demonstrated expertise in anti-oppression to advocate for Albertans' housing needs,[240] examine housing-related complaints, and recommend measures for addressing housing system failures.[241]
- A robust monitoring system to oversee funding investments into housing for EDGs,[242] track the outcomes of EDG housing and homelessness initiatives,[243] and monitor housing discrimination (e.g., through random and targeted checks and annual report cards).[244,245]

Fund:
- Annually re-costed rent and utilities supplements for low-income Albertans,[246] especially those at imminent risk of eviction,[247,248] and boosted income supports for very low-income EDGs so that they spend even less than 30% of their income on housing.[249]
- Free legal advice and representation, landlord mediation, and case management supports for EDGs.[250]
- Free public transportation for low-income EDGs.[251]
- Low-barrier, culturally appropriate, gender-specific and responsive, accessible, and age-friendly homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing based on the Housing First model for specific EDGs, focusing on individuals at the intersection of multiple EDG identities,[252,253,254] including non-traditional populations (e.g., single fathers with children)[255] and people with pets.[256]
- Physical infrastructure projects in underserved communities predominantly populated by EDGs to increase their safety, social interactions, and inclusion.[257]
- The development of safe, reliable, accessible, and age-friendly urban public transit based on the "door-through-door" approach, which assesses the ease of accessing one's destination from one's location.[258]

Actions for safe housing and environment for seniors and people with disabilities

Legislate to:
- Universally adopt accessible and age-friendly building and infrastructure design by default.[259]
- Implement comprehensive measures that can help seniors age in place[260] by:
  - Funding innovative housing arrangements for seniors[261] (e.g., home share projects, co-housing, and naturally occurring retirement communities).[262]
  - Guaranteeing rent supplements and sufficient income supports for remodelling, retrofitting, and renovating homes to be age-friendly and accessible.[263]
  - Funding the development and dissemination of assistive technology that can facilitate ageing in place and independent living,[264,265] and subsidizing seniors' access to the required technology and digital infrastructure (e.g., connectivity with sufficient bandwidth and Wi-Fi).[266]
- Gradually phase out for-profit residential long-term care,[267,268] allocating all new long-term care beds licenses entirely to non-profit providers.[269]
- Amend the Residential Tenancies Act to ban the eviction of tenants over the age of 65.[270]

- Mandate all care institutions and community organizations working primarily with seniors and people with disabilities, as well as organizations focusing on disaster and emergency response, to mitigate the risks of natural disasters and emergencies for EDGs, for example, by:
    - Establishing emergency plans and protocols for specific EDGs with particular needs (e.g., people with cognitive disabilities, seniors in long-term care, residents of remote areas).[271,272]
    - Creating registries of people with disabilities and seniors for emergency responders to prioritize their search and rescue during an emergency.[273]
    - Organizing disaster and emergency response services (e.g., post-disaster check-ins on EDGs who live alone or far from relatives, providing repairs for people with disabilities and seniors).[274]
    - Mandating capacity building for all emergency response personnel in anti-oppressive trauma-informed age-appropriate response services.[275]
- Mandate a disability impact assessment of major resource projects to understand and address the impacts on people with disabilities.[276]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial Long-term Care Strategy outlining mandatory standards of excellence in care, staff capacity-building requirements,[277] facility and staff accreditation requirements, upgraded physical infrastructure guaranteeing privacy and safety,[278,279] infection prevention and control standards, minimum staffing levels,[280] and pay and benefits comparable to those at publicly funded hospitals[281] to attract and retain highly qualified staff[282] and guarantee seniors' health and safety.[283]
- A provincial Transition to Home and Community Care[284] to develop a provincial integrated team model of "Care at Home" as the primary model of care for aging in place[285,286] (e.g., organizing geriatric multi-disciplinary hubs where primary care and home care providers, local community support services, and paramedics cooperate to meet all seniors' medical, social, and personal care needs)[287,288] since many seniors prefer to age at home.[289]

Mandate:
- Institutions, organizations, and businesses to allocate more accessible parking spots.[290]

Fund:
- Robust income supports and tax credits for individuals and organizations to undertake accessible and age-friendly improvements of private homes, public buildings, and infrastructure,[291] public and private transportation services,[292] and public spaces and natural areas,[293] including dementia-inclusive public spaces.[294]
- Initiatives to increase seniors' social participation by facilitating their public transit use (e.g., peer travel-training programs[295] to raise seniors' awareness of and willingness to use public transit,[296] public education campaigns and capacity building for public transit service providers to protect the rights of seniors and people with disabilities on public transit proactively,[297] or formal evaluation of transportation accessibility and age-

friendliness to ensure compliance with codes, address complaints, and integrate best practices).[298]

Actions for safe housing and environment for residents of rural and remote communities

Legislate to:
- Amend the provincial funding model of rural and remote communities to provide predictable long-term funding for rural housing and infrastructure that usually costs more than in urban centres.[299]

Develop and implement:
- A Rural Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Recovery Strategy and Plan, covering the full spectrum of predicted climate change impacts on rural communities and addressing individual rural communities' vulnerabilities.[300]

Fund:
- Attainable homes and affordable housing programs for young professionals to attract and retain highly skilled workers and their families in rural and remote communities.[301]
- Initiatives that mitigate the impacts of natural resource exploration in mining, oil and gas, forestry, and agriculture on rural residents' health and wellbeing and climate change.[302]
- Initiatives that reduce pollutants,[303] improve water quality and wastewater management,[304] and implement green infrastructure projects[305] for rural resilience to climate change.[306]
- Safe, accessible, and age-friendly inter-community transportation options[307,308] (e.g., grants for community shuttles and supporting van services or cooperative rideshare programs,[309] and reduced-cost taxis).[310]

Actions for food security of all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Liberalize hunting and fishing licensing restrictions to help EDGs, especially rural residents, improve nutritional security through hunting and fishing.[311]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial Food Security Policy with a strategy to address food insecurity among specific EDGs, especially in rural areas.[312]

Fund:
- Proven and innovative approaches to food security (e.g., community and household gardens and greenhouses,[313] food collectives, non-profit-corporate partnerships)[314] to improve access to affordable nutritious food for EDGs.[315]
- Subsidies for smaller growers, especially in rural and remote communities, to purchase and utilize land to meet local consumption needs.[316]

- Educational campaigns on practical ways to improve community and family food security[317] (e.g., Indigenous and intergenerational food knowledge-sharing initiatives,[318] and initiatives that teach communities hunting and fishing).[319]

Actions for safe and adequate services for all equity deserving groups

Develop and implement:
- A provincial Systems Integration Strategy and Action Plan to facilitate individuals' smooth transitions among systems and institutions[320] and to implement a "One Beneficiary, One Case" policy for all government services so that people, especially from EDGs, do not fall through the cracks.[321]
- A provincial Caregiver Strategy and Plan[322] to formally recognize unpaid/informal caregivers of children, people with disabilities, and seniors and provide them with formalized government support to reduce stress, poverty, and opportunities for violence.[323, 324]
- A provincial Strategy, Code of Conduct, and Plan to Eliminate Harassment, Abuse, and Discrimination in Sport, with special provisions for inclusion and non-discrimination of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, people with disabilities, and seniors.[325]

Establish:
- A provincial Sports Inclusion Task Force to oversee policy and program implementation to end anti-2SLGBTQIA+ bias and discrimination in sport at the recreational, community, and professional level.[326]

Fund:
- An integrated system of care providing community-based, holistic, trauma-informed, anti-oppressive wraparound services for EDGs affected by any social problems (e.g., poverty, homelessness, and addictions),[327, 328] through service hubs offering walk-in "one-stop" supports under one roof[329] or community adult care hubs with co-located respite supports, adult day programs, and childcare to promote intergenerational inclusive communities.[330]
- Technology-facilitated social services for hard-to-reach EDGs[331] and provide free access to technology (e.g., cell phones, laptops, and data plans) to increase EDGs' socialization and counter isolation.[332, 333 334]
- Initiatives that provide free in-home services (e.g., parenting supports for racialized parents with many children; meal preparation and housework for trans and gender-diverse people recovering from gender reaffirming surgeries; respite services for caregivers of people with disabilities and seniors)[335,336] and community opportunities for socialization (e.g., seniors' wings in community centres, recreational spaces that offer free access to the Internet and technology in rural areas,[337] and postal workers' check-ins with rural seniors).[338]

Expected outcomes of strategy 4
- *Increased access to safe, appropriate, accessible, and age-friendly housing for all EDGs.*
- *Improved access to nutritious food for all EDGs.*
- *Increased safety from natural disasters and emergencies for all EDGs.*
- *Increased access to basic amenities and services for healthy lives and social integration of all EDGs.*

4.3 Priority Area 3: Economic participation and financial security of EDGs

Strategy 5: Promote EDGs' education for labour market participation

Actions for education of all equity deserving groups

Amend educational curricula to:
- Adopt an explicit anti-oppressive lens, replacing Eurocentrism with inclusion of Black, racialized, and non-Christian religious groups,[339,340,341] making it 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive[342] and accessible.[343]
- Introduce mandatory social-emotional learning, healthy relationships, comprehensive sexual education (including mandatory 2SLGBTQIA+[344] and disability[345] inclusive sexual education), and life skills teaching (including teaching students how to avoid becoming unhoused or getting quickly re-housed).[346]
- Integrate youth perspectives to make it more relevant for self-identified educational needs and preferences.[347]

Legislate to:
- Require educational institutions to accommodate all students, for example, by:
  - Offering group-specific cultural and religious accommodations for racialized and religious EDG students and staff (e.g., time off for religious holidays, dietary accommodations, dress code, and prayer rooms).[348]
  - Creating 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusive and affirming environments, policies, practices, and infrastructure.[349,350]
  - Adopting as default the Universal Design for Learning (i.e., a collaborative approach to instruction and assessment that promotes participation for all learners, including those with diverse needs[351]) and amending all education programs to be truly inclusive and integrated.[352]
  - Providing students with disabilities with free assistive technology required for their studies.[353]
  - Developing and implementing targeted strategies to facilitate transitions from school to community life for students with disabilities.[354]
  - Developing and implementing targeted strategies to help homeless youth to re-enter education and training.[355]
- Remove punitive policies and practices[356] (e.g., suspension and expulsion policies that disproportionately affect racialized students and students with disabilities) and adopt a harm reduction approach.[357]

Mandate all educational institutions to:
- Adopt, regularly assess, [358] and update[359] anti-oppression, safety, and social inclusion policies, procedures, teaching methods,[360] implement capacity building for administration, teachers/academics, staff, and students,[361] and establish effective discrimination complaints and response mechanisms,[362] developed in consultation with EDGs.[363]
- Collect socio-demographic data to monitor students' outcomes to improve the educational attainment of EDGs[364] and boys.[365]
- Hire more principals, teachers, school staff,[366] and academics[367] from EDGs and with lived experiences of marginalization.

Fund:
- Reduced class sizes to improve the educational attainment of all students, especially EDG students[368] (e.g., students for whom English is not their first language, students from low income families who often get less academic support at home due to parents' busy work schedules, and students with disabilities)[369] and boys.[370]
- School hubs established in partnership with community agencies serving specific EDGs to provide necessary services and supports at school[371] (e.g., mental health services by highly qualified professionals trained in anti-oppression and allyship, cultural competency, and trauma-informed approaches),[372] and afterschool programs and community-based groups to promote social inclusion and model positive behaviours.[373]
- Targeted scholarships for postsecondary education, internships, and summer jobs[374] for EDG students to enter occupations where they are underrepresented[375] and inclusive community employment during high school years and outside of school hours for youth with disabilities to facilitate their social integration.[376,377]
- Rural education quality assurance,[378] e.g., by upgrading the infrastructure, leveraging technology for teaching and learning,[379] and offering special conditions to attract and retain highly trained educators.[380]

Expected outcomes of strategy 5
- *Increased ability of education system to meet the needs of EDG children and youth.*
- *Increased safety and inclusion of EDG children and youth into the educational systems.*
- *Improved educational participation and attainment among EDG children and youth.*

Strategy 6: Increase EDGs' labour market participation

Actions for labour market participation of all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Amend the Occupational and Health Standards to:
  - Mandate safety and anti-oppression policies, procedures, and capacity building for leadership, management,[381] and staff.[382, 383]

- o Improve the safety and regulatory culture across sectors, especially in dirty, dangerous, difficult, or demeaning jobs.
- o Replace the internal responsibility system (IRS) for ensuring workplace safety with more robust industry-specific monitoring and evaluation.
- o Introduce easy-to-use effective complaint and response mechanisms, including administrative disciplinary measures for employers for inequitable workplace practices.[384]

- Amend the Employment Standards Code to:
  - o Introduce pay equity legislation to eliminate wage disparities[385] and set better wage standards, including commitment to regular re-costing of minimum wages.[386,387]
  - o Improve employees' access to benefits (e.g., by requiring employers in dirty, dangerous, difficult, or demeaning jobs to pay benefits; limiting the probation period during which benefits are unavailable; and helping small- and medium-size employers pay benefits through tax incentives, subsidies, and free services).[388,389]
  - o Explicitly guarantee necessary reasonable workplace accommodations and accessibility and age-friendliness adjustments to increase EDGs' labour market participation.[390] For example, by:
    - ▪ Cultural[391] and spiritual [392] accommodations, such as dress code exemptions and dietary requirements.
    - ▪ Streamlined processes for updating gender transitioning employees' information and documentation,[393] and gender inclusive facilities and events.[394]
    - ▪ Accessible medical spaces for employees with disabilities, mental health issues, and seniors.[395]
    - ▪ Disability-related accommodations, such as plain language detailed job ads,[396] providing pre-interview assessments, offering interview questions in advance, and allowing employment support staff to be present at the interview,[397] job carving, flexible scheduling, and matching shifts to public transit.[398]
  - o Introduce mandatory paid sick leave provisions across sectors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and increased illness rates.[399]
  - o Reduce the costs and bureaucratic barriers to employment by eliminating requirements for non-essential documents, certificates, and references, including police record checks (unless it is essential for hiring or keeping an employee [400]), which disadvantage recent immigrants, trans individuals who recently transitioned, people with disabilities, seniors, and people with criminal records,[401] and improve the recognition of international educational credentials[402,403] and work experience.[404,405]
  - o For people with disabilities, gradually phase out sheltered work to ensure they have access to decent jobs and are properly paid.[406]

- Introduce a Caregiver Act to provide unpaid/informal caregivers with workplace accommodations, leave benefits, health training, respite care, and financial supports.[407]

Develop and implement:

- A Decent Jobs Strategy and Plan to promote the creation of safe, secure, and stable well-paying jobs across sectors[408] (e.g., by modelling investing in job quality and social inclusion as an employer; collecting data and promoting "employers of choice" that create good jobs; using government communication channels to build employers' commitment to decent jobs; using government role as a purchaser of goods and services to incentivize employers to create good jobs; and investing in projects that leverage technology to improve the quality of jobs).
- A Labour Market Data Strategy to collect data on labour market discrimination[409] and EDGs' representation,[410] disaggregated by sector, occupation, and job.

Establish:

- A review committee comprising representatives of all EDGs to assess all employment-related legislation and policy to identify and close equity and social inclusion gaps regularly.[411]

Fund:

- Technology-facilitated approaches to defining, assessing, developing, and utilizing skills (e.g., Artificial Intelligence-based skill assessments) to reduce unemployment and underemployment among EDGs.[412]
- Digital infrastructure,[413] including locally owned broadband initiatives,[414] and better access to high speed networks,[415] including the cost of Internet connection[416] and technology[417] for low-income women and EDGs, especially in rural communities, to help them find remote work.[418]
- Expanded high school-based vocational education, reskilling and upskilling initiatives, on-the-job and demand-side training, micro-credentialing, productivity-enhancing technologies, and investments in digital skills for EDGs, especially low-skilled workers and workers without post-secondary education.[419]
- Immigrant-focused bridging programs for regulated and unregulated occupations[420] (e.g., retraining paths for skilled immigrants to obtain Canadian-equivalent qualifications, internships and work-integrated learning, and occupation-specific language training).[421]
- Targeted start-up funds, capital, grants and subsidies, mentorship,[422] and help with creating business plans and navigating the regulatory and tax systems[423] to boost entrepreneurship among EDGs, especially racialized groups, people with disabilities, seniors, and residents in rural communities.
- Innovative employment opportunities, such as supported employment, worker cooperatives, social enterprises, and partnership initiatives between young and senior entrepreneurs.[424] for frequently discriminated EDGs, such as recent immigrants and refugees, unhoused people, people with disabilities, and seniors.[425]
- A provincial certification system and a registry of businesses owned by EDGs to enable individuals and organizations procure goods and services from EDGs[426] and fund education campaigns encouraging supplier diversity programs.[427]

- Education campaigns for employers on implicit bias and initiatives that help employers ensure their staff reflects the population rates for Alberta's EDGs (e.g., "one-stop-shops" for employers interested in hiring EDGs that will match employers with community EDG organizations to provide them with information and practical support;[428] and free services for job-matching, job coaching, and wrap-around supports for people with disabilities).[429]
- Education campaigns and initiatives that build employers' motivation and capacity to create safe and fair workplaces free from discrimination, harassment, prejudice, and bias[430] (e.g., by establishing workplace equity committees to develop, review, monitor, and evaluate safety and inclusion policies and procedures;[431] and implementing third-party equity and social inclusion audits of hiring, professional development, and promotion practices[432]).
- Culturally appropriate, affordable, and accessible quality licensed childcare with flexible hours to allow parents to work, focusing on low-income neighbourhoods.[433,434]

Actions for labour market participation of residents of rural and remote communities

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive strategy to diversify rural investment[435] beyond agriculture and farm-based programs,[436] (e.g., investing in rural tourism and special events[437] and developing regional branding to attract business, professionals, workforce, and young families,[438] and invest into renewable resource industries).[439]

Expected outcomes of strategy 6
- *Increased access to decent jobs for all EDGs.*
- *Increased representation of EDGs in leadership and management positions.*

Strategy 7: Improve EDGs' financial security

Actions for financial security of all equity deserving groups

Legislate to:
- Ensure annual re-costing of all social assistance rates to reflect the real costs of living.[440,441,442]
- Allow low-income/at-risk EDGs to access several types of social assistance that they qualify for without reducing their rates (i.e., unbundle all income supports)[443] and allow them to work and receive social assistance without reducing their rates[444] (e.g., unbundle[445] disability benefits from salaries).[446,447]
- Improve the eligibility criteria, the ease of applying for[448] and timeliness of obtaining social assistance, ensuring all EDGs can access them without fear of discrimination.[449,450]
- Mandate capacity building on anti-oppression and EDGs' systemic discrimination for decision-makers who develop social assistance programs, devise eligibility criteria, and application protocols, as well as professionals who make individual decisions on social assistance.[451]

- Adopt a social justice approach to taxation, for example, by:
    - Adjusting the tax brackets to make the provincial taxation system more progressive and favourable for low-income earners.[452]
    - Introducing an increased annual wealth tax and inheritance tax on large fortunes to use the revenue for redistributive programs.[453]
    - Providing annually re-costed tax incentives associated with parental leave, caregiver's leave, and childcare.[454]
    - Equalizing tenants and homeowners through property taxation legislation amendments.[455]

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy, with sections focusing on specific EDGs.[456]
- A mandatory protection and reporting policy and protocols for organizations serving people with disabilities and seniors (e.g., government agencies, banks, and financial firms) to implement financial abuse protection measures (e.g., requiring a Trusted Contact Person on file for all clients; training staff on signs of mental decline and financial abuse; and collecting data on suspected mental decline and elder abuse and neglect)[457,458,459] and notify organizations that can protect them.[460,461]
- A wage subsidy model for precarious workers, especially displaced rural workers (e.g., incentivize employers through payroll tax cuts or incentivize workers to accept jobs that pay less than their previous jobs through wage top-ups).[462]

Fund:
- Education campaigns to remove stigma of social welfare,[463] to inform EDGs about available programs,[464] and establish system navigators to help EDGs maximize social assistance.[465]
- Targeted social assistance programs for groups at higher risk of violence, usually overlooked in policy (e.g., trans and gender diverse individuals recovering from gender affirming procedures[466,467,468] and people in nonstandard employment).[469]
- "Baby bonds" for wealth-deprived EDGs (i.e., publicly funded trust accounts for children from the most income and wealth-disadvantaged backgrounds to claim upon reaching adulthood).[470]
- Student debt forgiveness schemes for low-income EDG students.[471]

Actions for financial security of people with disabilities

Legislate to:
- Change the label of "AISH" to more appropriate language, for example, Alberta Disability Income Supports.[472]
- Increase accessibility to social assistance (e.g., by introducing lifetime eligibility for people with permanent disabilities[473] and creating expedited entry tracks for people with episodic health conditions)[474,475] and expand the range of supports, services, and devices covered under provincial disability support programs,[476] ensuring they cover both easily

costed expenses and those that are not easily itemized or costed (e.g., higher utility charges for heating, air conditioning, or electricity required for medical assistive technology).[477]

- Increase the amount of tax credits and eliminate restrictions on what can be claimed as a deduction or a credit by people with disabilities or their caregivers.[478]

Actions for financial security of residents of rural and remote communities

Develop and implement:
- A comprehensive fiscal policy for rural Alberta to increase financial resilience[479] (e.g., by improving rural tax bases by cutting corporate and industry tax breaks[480] and rural insurance costs by recalculating assessments based on rural rather than urban conditions and risks.[481]

Expected outcomes of strategy 7
- *Increased financial security among EDGs, including those at the intersection of multiple EDG identities.*
- *Improved coverage of groups within EDGs more vulnerable to poverty but often overlooked in policy and programs.*

4.4 Priority Area 4: Safety of EDGs in Systems of Sorrow

N.B. We call child welfare and criminal legal systems "systems of sorrow" due to their harsh conditions and high rates of violence that people involved in them experience.

Strategy 8: Protect the safety and equity of EDGs in the child welfare system

Actions for safety and equity of all equity deserving children in the child welfare system

Legislate to:
- Allocate guaranteed funding to support families of Black and other racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ children, parents and children with disabilities, unhoused parents and children, families in rural and remote communities, and families struggling with mental health and addiction to prevent children from becoming involved in the child welfare system (e.g., through income supports, affordable housing, mental health and addiction services, and parenting programs).[482]
- Amend the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act to allow children in foster care to remain in care until at least 25 or until graduation from their first post-secondary institution.[483]

Mandate all child welfare institutions to:
- Adopt anti-oppressive policies and practices against racism, particularly anti-Black racism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, and ableism, in strategic plans, performance

plans, and other organizational documents, and mandate ongoing anti-oppression capacity building for all management and staff.[484]

- Hire EDG professionals at all levels (e.g., Black and other racialized specialists for court-ordered or recommended psychological or parenting capacity assessments of racialized parents; 2SLGBTQIA+ professionals; professionals with disabilities and lived experience of homelessness).[485]

- Ensure racial, religious, and cultural matching of foster care placements and adoptions when care by kin is impossible and build foster and adoptive parents' capacity to parent 2SLGBTQIA+ children and children with disabilities.[486]

- Establish protocols to keep Black and other racialized children in the same school or community they used to belong to prior to entering the welfare system to prevent isolating them in communities with little racial diversity.[487]

- Establish a resource directory with culturally appropriate and accessible products and services for Black and other racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ children and children with disabilities in care to be used by staff, volunteers, and caregivers.[488]

- Implement rigorous disaggregated data collection and case analysis to identify whether racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, or ageism inform reports of child maltreatment.[489]

- Establish a quick and easy-to-use complaint system to help children, youth, and families report discrimination based on racialized status, religious, belonging to the 2SLBGTQIA+ community, or disability in the child welfare system.[490]

Expected outcomes of strategy 8
- *Reduced need for the child welfare system due to reduced poverty and increased family supports.*
- *Increased safety and equity of EDGs in the child welfare system.*

Strategy 9: Protect the safety and equity of EDGs in the criminal legal system

Actions for the safety and equity of all equity deserving groups in the criminal legal system

Legislate to:
- Mandate ongoing capacity building for law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and corrections' staff in implicit bias, anti-oppression, socio-emotional learning, trauma-informed approaches, and mental health basics.[491,492,493]

- Ensure that police destroy all historic carding data,[494] regularly purge non-conviction records,[495] and limit the disclosure of non-conviction information to situations where it is necessary and relevant.[496]

- Amend Alberta's Corrections Act to ban solitary confinement in provincial corrections facilities.[497]

Develop and implement:
- Alternative forms of ensuring institutional, community, and public safety and crime prevention (e.g., replace School Resource Officers, who are sworn law enforcement

officers, with social workers and psychologists in schools; replace Peace Officers policing public transit with social workers, transit ambassadors, and elevator attendants).[498,499]

- A Provincial Diversion Strategy, providing options for pre-police, pre-arrest, pre-charges, and pre-trial diversion strategies, and alternatives to incarceration.[500]
- A provincial corrections strategy to reduce incarceration rates of racialized groups,[501] people with mental disabilities,[502] unhoused people, and people with addictions, and to improve the conditions in provincial corrections, including effective complaint mechanisms for inmates whose rights have been violated.[503]
- A provincial strategy to increase police violence accountability,[504] achieve zero deaths by police across the province,[505] and increase the impartiality of investigations of serious incidents involving police (e.g., by using non-government funded civilian investigators trained in anti-oppression and anti-racism rather than seconded police investigators on Alberta Serious Incident Response Team).

Fund:
- Free legal clinics[506] for specific EDGs on issues that affect them (e.g., racial profiling by police, housing discrimination of trans individuals and people with disabilities, and financial abuse of seniors).[507]
- Free legal representation of people on AISH, people with mental health disabilities, and unhoused people in case of criminal legal system involvement.[508,509]
- Anti-oppressive, culturally appropriate, gender-responsive, accessible, and age-friendly corrections services,[510,511] including infrastructure and programming for inmates' mental health needs.[512]
- Targeted initiatives that support the reintegration of EDG offenders after release from provincial corrections.[513]

Actions for protection of racialized and religious groups from the criminal legal system

- A provincial strategy to prevent police racial[514] and religious[515] profiling,[516] reduce the over-policing of racialized communities and over-representation of racialized groups in the criminal legal system. For example, by:
  - Diversifying the police workforce.
  - Mandating ongoing capacity building in anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-Islamophobia,[517] and bias-free policing, and social-emotional learning and trauma-informed approaches.[518]
  - Adopting proactive diversion strategies, such as intersectional analysis when deciding on charging; keeping young people of out of detention centres whenever possible; and working with school and community partners to find solutions that avoid incarceration or criminal charges for youth.[519,520]

Actions for protection of people with disabilities from the criminal legal system

Legislate to:

- Provide free, immediate access to mental health professionals and advocates[521] for people in a mental health crisis or with mental disabilities when dealing with police or judiciary.[522]
- Compulsory videotaping of all police interactions with people in a mental health crisis or with mental disability.[523]
- Ensure all remand facilities and custodial officials screen detainees for mental disabilities and address their needs.[524]
- Ensure full accessibility of all courts within provincial authority.[525]

Mandate:
- Capacity building for law students, lawyers, and judges about the ethical and practical issues of representing clients with mental disabilities and how to connect to agencies that can help them better represent their clients.[526]
- Active recruitment of police officers from educational programs such as nursing, social work and/or programs related to supporting people with mental health disabilities.[527]

Establish:
- An independent committee of mental disability experts to monitor and improve the performance of the criminal legal system in dealing with cases that involve mental disability.[528]
- A position of special advocates in corrections to help inmates with mental health disabilities adjust to prison.[529]

Fund:
- Initiatives and pilot projects that help people with cognitive disabilities to exercise their legal capacity.[530]
- Mental health units to respond to 911 calls involving mental health crises staffed with mental health professionals and not involving police unless there is a clear public safety threat.[531]
- Specialized mental health courts based on therapeutic jurisprudence and restorative justice principles using teams specializing in mental disability.[532]

Expected outcomes of strategy 9
- *Reduced contact of EDGs with the criminal legal system.*
- *Increased safety and equity of EDGs in criminal legal system.*

4.5 Priority Area 5: Monitoring and evaluating impact and change

Strategy 10: Invest in data collection, research, and monitoring and evaluation systems to support the implementation of this plan

Actions for improved data collection, research, and monitoring and evaluation for all equity deserving groups

Mandate:
- All public service, government-funded organizations, and partners to collect, analyze, report, and act on properly disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data on all specific EDGs[533] and their outcomes in all systems and institutions to identify systemic discrimination and disproportionate gaps in service provision.[534] Ensure demographic categories and questions on surveys are developed in consultations with specific EDGs[535] to ensure accuracy and relevance.[536]

Develop and implement:
- A provincial social inclusion index to monitor progress across sectors and industries.[537] Map social exclusion across systems and sectors, such as education, employment, cultural, religious, sports, and other community organizations.[538]
- A monitoring system for ongoing discrimination of EDGs[539] and institute regular audits of social inclusion in systems and structures (for example, EDGs' representation in leadership positions across sectors).[540] Report to the public annually on government social inclusion priorities, initiative impacts, and change.

Fund:
- Grants, procurement contracts, and other incentives to encourage all organizations to develop the capacity for and to engage in collecting, analyzing, and using data for better services and outcomes for EDGs.[541,542,543]
- Evaluations of programs and services for EDGs that promote better outcomes and increased social inclusion.[544,545,546]
- Research that identifies barriers to social inclusion and generates innovative ideas for better outcomes for Albertan EDGs across systems and sectors, including education, employment, financial security, health, and housing.[547,548,549]
- Research on the unique pathways to domestic and sexual violence for specific EDGs,[550] especially those at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression,[551] funding researchers from those groups.[552]

Expected outcomes of strategy 10
- *Improved data and research on EDGs' social participation across sectors in Alberta.*
- *Increased willingness and ability of all organizations to monitor EDGs' outcomes and increase social inclusion.*

5.0 How can the GoA support the implementation of the proposed social inclusion plan?

To achieve success in advancing social inclusion to prevent violence, the GoA can focus on the following steps:
1. **Develop and implement an anti-oppressive equity framework** to guide its work, with specific goals related to the rights and unique needs of each EDG. An anti-oppressive approach includes an intersectional lens[553] for designing all policies and programs to

ensure they meet the needs of EDGs,[554] as well as an equity accountability framework to measure progress on anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, solutions- and equity-oriented government legislation, policy, and practice.[555]

2. **Centre the rights and voices of specific EDGs**.[556,557] When adopting laws and policies, creating strategic plans, planning collaborations, and funding programs and services, it is important that the GoA integrate the work of numerous community leaders and activists from EDGs that promote equity, social inclusion, and social change. Other measures for centring equity deserving groups' voices include ensuring that:

   - Specific EDGs are represented in leadership positions across the government.[558]
   - Representatives of all EDGs are part of equity governance committees within the government and lead anti-oppressive work for their specific EDG.[559,560]
   - Hard-to-reach EDGs are engaged in violence prevention through active outreach[561] and are provided with all necessary supports, e.g., reimbursement, compensation, and accessibility accommodations.[562]
   - Specific EDGs set the violence prevention agenda and meaningfully participate in formulating, implementing, and evaluating solutions for violence prevention, relying on their strengths and lived experience.[563]

3. **Adopt a system change approach** that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social inclusion and violence prevention efforts. Steps towards systemic change the GoA can take include:[564]

   - Developing partnerships with other actors *outside* of the government and the anti-violence sector working on social inclusion, for example, the private sector, neighbourhood associations, community centres, youth clubs, and research institutes.
   - Creating a social inclusion systems map, identifying the existing gaps, codesigning the solutions to fill those gaps, assessing the quality of the existing solutions, and integrating and streamlining social inclusion initiatives across Alberta.
   - Working towards systems and services integration to ensure that individuals who access government-funded programs and services receive walk-in "one-stop" access to comprehensive wrap-around supports under one roof where possible,[565] with the ultimate goal being a "One Beneficiary, One Case" policy.[566]
   - Coordinated formal and informal knowledge sharing to identify and disseminate best practices, resources, and tools for social inclusion.

4. **Establish equity governance committees** within the government to lead anti-oppressive work in partnership with specific equity deserving groups.[567,568]

5. **Establish an independent audit and review committee** for periodic, prompt, effective development, and review of all legislation, policy, and programming.[569]

6. **Build the capacity of government officials for social inclusion and equity.** Ensure all decision-makers are trained on anti-oppression and best anti-oppressive practices, unconscious bias, microaggressions, and the history of EDGs in Canada and Alberta for them to understand the root causes of inequity and inequitable outcomes.[570,571]

7. **Adopt a long-term predictable sustainable funding model**[572] that would support social inclusion work without imposing restrictive conditions on it (e.g., removing time limitations and excessive reporting requirements, not tying funding to programs or

government cycles, and allowing for program testing and modifications). Pledge funding to initiatives and organizations whose policies and practices are non-oppressive and inclusive of all EDGs.[573]

8. **Implement employment and workplace equity measures**. As an employer, the GoA can:
   - Hire more members of EDGs, especially for senior leadership roles.[574]
   - Create more high-quality jobs for women and other EDGs (e.g., full-time permanent jobs with benefits).
   - Adopt recruitment and retention strategies that mitigate barriers for each EDG: modify the built infrastructure (e.g., gender neutral washrooms and accessible spaces for people with disabilities and seniors);[575] adjust organizational practices (e.g., simplify the process of updating employee information for gender transitioning employees[576] and introduce supplier diversity programs to purchase from businesses owned by equity deserving groups[577]); and offer job transformations, cultural or accessibility accommodations,[578] and workplace supports[579, 580] (e.g., various types of leave, flexible working arrangements, and technology-assisted work).[581]
   - Implement and regularly review organizational anti-oppression policies and procedures, including workplace harassment and discrimination complaint mechanisms,[582,583] and integrate equity into strategic and programmatic plans and other organizational documents.[584,585]
   - Provide compulsory pre-employment and ongoing trainings in equity, anti-oppression, microaggressions, and history of EDGs in Alberta and Canada for both managers and frontline staff to ensure a safe and inclusive work environment.[586]

By adopting these measures, the government will increase its capacity to carry out effective work for changing the cultural and structural conditions that make domestic and sexual violence possible and serve as a model for other organizations in promoting social inclusion of equity deserving employees.

6.0 Conclusion

Although the recommendations outlined above presuppose numerous legislative changes and require substantial investment, they also promise to address social inclusion to improve the dignity, safety, justice, and belonging of all Albertans, and specifically equity-deserving groups. The Government of Alberta must play a significant role in promoting social inclusion as a policymaker, funder, provider of programs and services, and employer of equity-deserving groups. Ensuring that equity-deserving groups have equitable access to power, resources, and opportunities will mitigate the risk factors that lead to domestic and sexual violence and will contribute to eliminating the root causes of violence.

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