

# Best Practice

## Social Development Division in the Community Services Department

### CONTACT

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### THE PRACTICE

In order to promote citizen well-being, the City of Prince Albert recommended:

- An infrastructure that would be developed to address social issues;
- The development of a well-planned and thought out social development agenda reflecting the needs of the community;
- Programming that is accessible and affordable;
- The Social Development Plan – five pillars of action to improve the community.

### THE PROCESS

The City of Prince Albert explored the work that was already being done in the community and acknowledge the constellation of fine programs and services that already exist. The city examined the nature of various groups that had spearheaded innovated practice in the community to determine the most strategic placement of such coordinated effort.

In order to accomplish these goals, the city created a management position in the Department of Community Services. This position works closely with the community, provincial and federal governments to build strong social capital and cohesion within the community to address complex social issues that facilitate synergy between the social and domestic economy in Prince Albert. The manager engaged in an extensive consultation process with various working groups and coalitions within the community to discern how to create a plan that would promote collaboration, integration of resources and efforts, increased social cohesion and capacity.

### THE RESULTS

The Social Development Plan created in collaboration with council, management, community-based organizations, volunteer groups and government ministries has leveraged \$429,000 for community work and is starting to demonstrate positive outcomes in each of the five pillars of action. To date, the funds have been used to:

- Stabilization of an emergency shelter;
- Support the first phase of a food store in the west flat neighbourhood;
- Successful application for the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System, which will track shelter use;
- Implementation of a number of collective kitchens to promote nutrition knowledge.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The greatest lesson learned by the City of Prince Albert is that there is always room for improvement. The city had many existing programs and services that met the needs of residents, but the hiring of a community service manager has promoted the development of a new social safety net composed of integrated, collaborative, inter-sectoral and professional response systems.