

GUELPH & WELLINGTON  
TASK FORCE FOR POVERTY ELIMINATION

# STRATEGIC PLAN: 2018 - 2021





# “WE HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN. IT’S CALLED DOING THINGS.”

- HERB KELLEHER

## VISION

Poverty will be eliminated in Guelph-Wellington

## MISSION

To work collaboratively, informed by diverse voices of experience, to take local action and advocate for system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty.

## VALUE STATEMENTS

We value **lived experience**. We believe that peers are experts in their own experience and provide important perspectives and a reality check. We are committed to meaningfully involving peers in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our work.

We recognize the intersectionality and interlocking of oppressions and seek to address these realities in our work. We are committed to the principles of **equity, inclusion, and social justice**.

We believe in an **evidence-informed approach**. This includes learning from the lessons found in traditional academic literature, less formal ‘grey literature’ like organizational or government reports, and the lived experience of professionals, service users, community members, and everyone in between.

We understand that being **adaptable** and **responsive** is our advantage. We work with people, communities, and partnerships, and on priority issues, that are complex and always changing. Our impact depends on our ability to anticipate change and adapt and respond in a way that furthers our mission.

# ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK



The **PTF Member Committee** is comprised of a maximum of 40 members representing different sectors and experiences in our community. The Member Committee advises the work of the PTF, provides linkages in the community, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to eliminate poverty.

The **Steering Committee** provides strategic guidance and oversight in the management of the PTF's administrative, human, and financial resources, and communications. The Steering Committee ensures that the mission, vision, and values of the PTF are being effectively followed and identifies and manages community issues which strategically impact the PTF.

The **Research & Knowledge Mobilization Committee** (R&KMb) provides ongoing support to the PTF through research, evaluation & knowledge mobilization efforts.

The **Intersectionality Advisory Committee** provides recommendations, advice, and information to the PTF on adopting an intersectional approach.

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In June 2017, the PTF Member Committee made a unanimous decision to work toward adopting an intersectional approach. In February 2018, the PTF committed to reviewing its organizational structure and membership to better reflect who it aims to work for and to include a broader range of identities. As a result of this work, it is expected that the PTF's Organizational Framework will change before the Strategic Plan ends.



# PATHWAYS

Pathways describe the mechanisms that are used to affect change. The following describes how we deliver on each of our pathways.

## ADVOCATE & INFORM

- Champion and give voice to the need for system and policy change that address the root causes of poverty
- Inform stakeholders and decision-makers about local needs and priorities to influence policy and service design, delivery and evaluation

## COLLABORATE & INVOLVE

- Convene people with diverse skill sets, to address priority issues through collective effort and contribution of expertise
- Identify meaningful opportunities for stakeholders and community members to be involved in poverty elimination efforts in our community

## COMMUNICATE & ENGAGE

- Communicate and educate to increase awareness, shift attitudes, and further priority issues, big ideas, specific policies, community needs, and aspirations

## RESEARCH & MOBILIZE KNOWLEDGE

- Conduct community-based research to enhance shared understandings of complex issues and to inform action and advocacy efforts of the PTF
- Share knowledge to build capacity, inform decisions, policies and system change



# LIVABLE INCOMES

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A **livable income** is the amount of income an individual or family needs to meet basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their community, and save for future needs and goals. Livable incomes can be achieved through employment earnings, as well as government transfers and benefits, such as social assistance.

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## ROOT CAUSES

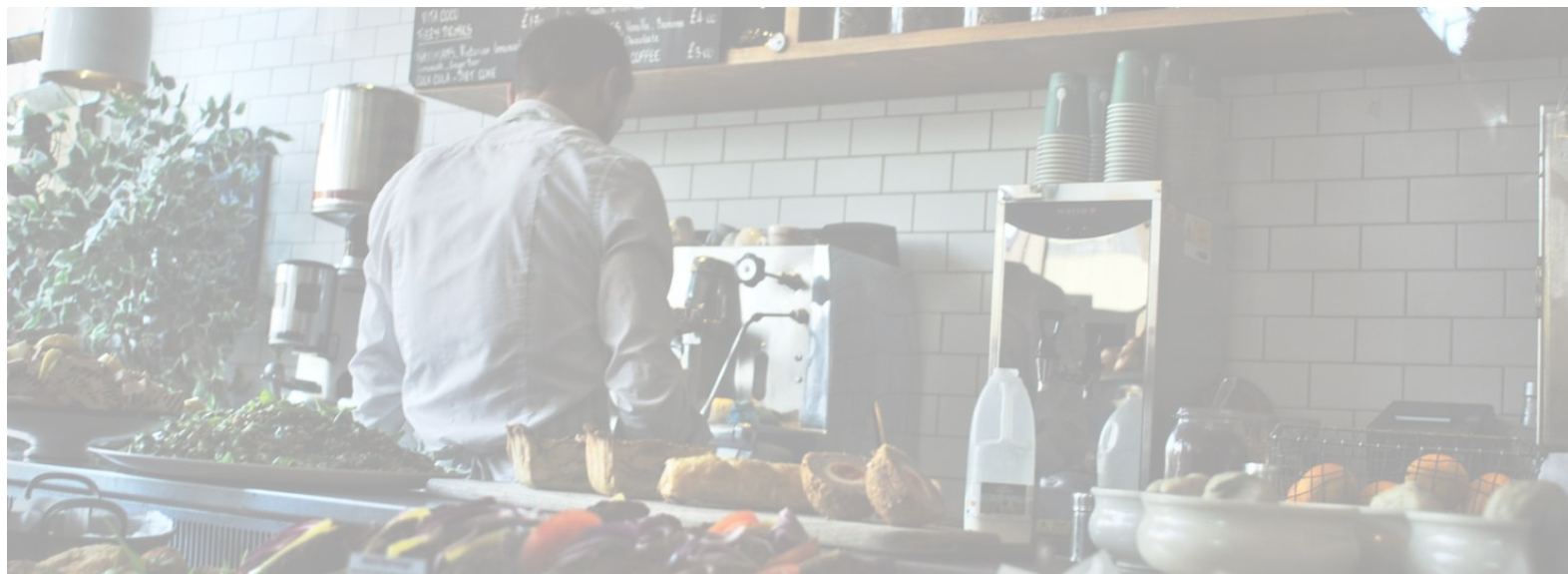
- Inadequate and out-of-date social security system, including social assistance programs
- Historically stagnant minimum wage rates
- Increasing income gap between the richest 10% and the rest of Ontario families

## GROUPS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED

- Indigenous peoples
- Newcomers
- Persons with disabilities
- Unattached individuals aged 45-64
- Lone parents

## MEASURES THAT MATTER

- 9.7% of private households in Guelph-Wellington are living below the Low-Income Measure After-Tax
- The median after-tax income was \$70,728 in Guelph-Wellington in 2015. Median incomes were lowest in Wellington North (\$56,905) and Minto (\$60,658).
- Since 2010, the number of Ontario Works cases has increased by just under 9% in Guelph-Wellington



# DECENT WORK

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**Decent work** sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities to work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all.

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## ROOT CAUSES

- Greater labour market instability, less job security, and more non-standard or precarious work

## GROUPS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED

- Racialized persons
- Women
- Newcomers
- Indigenous peoples
- Persons with disabilities
- Older adults & youth

## MEASURES THAT MATTER

- 5% of the working-age population are working poor in Guelph-Wellington
- Unemployment rate in Guelph-Wellington is 6.1%
- The number of vulnerable workers in precarious work in Ontario in 2014 was between 30-32%



# HOMELESSNESS

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**Homelessness** encompasses a range of physical living situations, including: (1) unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation, (2) emergency sheltered - including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence, (3) provisionally accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, (4) at risk of homelessness, referring to those who are not homeless, but whose economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards.

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## ROOT CAUSES

- Structural factors (economic and societal issues that affect opportunities and social environments for individuals)
- System failures (systems of care and support fail, requiring vulnerable people to turn to the homelessness sector, when mainstream services could have prevented the need)
- Individual and relational factors (personal circumstances)

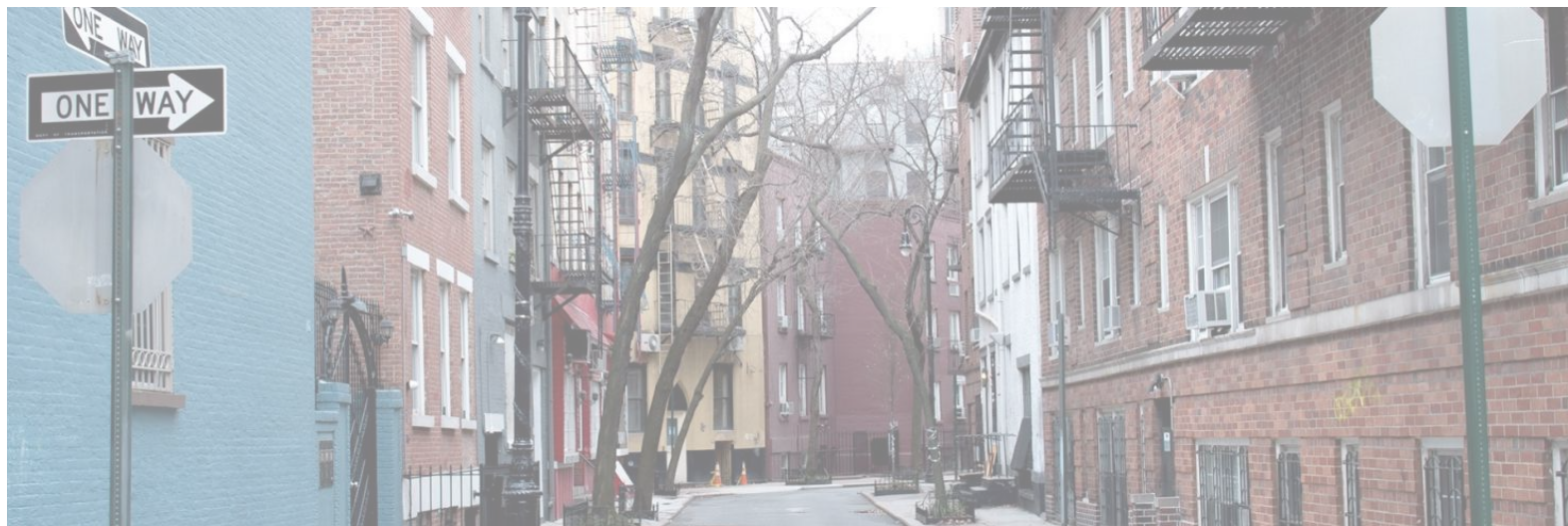
## GROUPS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED

- Indigenous peoples
- Single parent women
- Racialized persons
- Newcomers
- LGBTQ2S youth

## MEASURES THAT MATTER

- 295 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington during a three-day period in April 2016
- 29% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington in 2016 were youth (16-24 years)
- 22% of individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington in 2016 identified as Indigenous or having Indigenous ancestry.





# HOUSING

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In Canada, **housing** is considered affordable if shelter costs account for less than 30 per cent of before-tax income. A household is in Core Housing Need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards.

- Acceptable housing is adequate in condition, suitable in size, and affordable
- Adequate housing does not require any major repairs, according to residents
- Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of resident households

The term “affordable housing” can refer to any part of the housing continuum. The Poverty Task Force focuses primarily on the portion of the continuum from emergency shelters to subsidized housing. The PTF also advocates for affordable market rent for low income community members.

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The percentage of households living in core housing need is affected by some key socio-economic drivers, including:

- Income
- Unaffordable rents
- Lack of affordable housing supply
- Lack of investments in subsidized, affordable, and stable housing



The following groups are overrepresented in core-housing need:

- Seniors
- Social assistance recipients
- Working poor



- In 2011, 10.4% of households in Guelph-Wellington were in Core Housing Need
- In 2017, the vacancy rate in Guelph was 1.2% (3% is considered a healthy vacancy rate)
- Average rent in Guelph was \$1,066 in 2017



# FOOD INSECURITY

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Household **food insecurity** is commonly defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. Experiences of household food insecurity can range from concerns about running out of food before there is enough money to buy more, to the inability to afford a balanced diet, to going hungry, missing meals, and in extreme cases, not eating for a whole day because of lack of food and money for food.

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## ROOT CAUSES

- Low income
- Financial constraints – a lack of money to buy food. When a household is under constraint, they are forced to do something they may not like, such as make the choice between purchasing food or paying the rent.
- Financial vulnerability – the ability to recover from sudden financial shocks, which include sudden and unexpected loss of income and/or a sudden and uncontrollable increase in expenditure.

## GROUPS DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED

Food insecurity is more prevalent among households:

- With children under the age of 18, particularly those headed by single parent women
- That are renting their accommodations
- With unattached individuals, living alone or with others
- Reliant on social assistance

## MEASURES THAT MATTER

- The proportion of households experiencing marginal, moderate or severe food insecurity from 2012-2014 was 17% in Guelph and 9% in Wellington County.
- The cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for a family of four in Guelph-Wellington-Dufferin was \$917 per month in 2017
- A single person receiving Ontario Works would be required to spend nearly 40% of their monthly income to afford a 2017 Nutritious Food Basket



# HEALTH INEQUITIES

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**Health inequities** are health differences that are:

- Systemic, meaning that health differences are patterned, where health generally improves as socioeconomic status improves;
  - Socially produced, and therefore could be avoided by ensuring that all people have the social and economic conditions that are needed for good health and well-being; and
  - Unfair and/or unjust because opportunities for health and well-being are limited.
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The roots of health disparities lie in wider structures of social and economic inequality – in the underlying social determinants of health, including (but not limited to):

- Low income
- Food insecurity
- Job insecurity
- Low level of education
- Housing insecurity



- People who experience marginalization related to social determinants of health such as sexual orientation, poverty, racialization and disability.



- 76% of low-income survey participants in Guelph-Wellington indicated they cannot afford regular oral health care
- 17-20% of repeat visits to Guelph General Hospital emergency department within 30 days are for mental health, and 23-34% are for substance use issues.
- An estimated 1 in 3 Ontario workers don't have health benefits.

