



GUELPH & WELLINGTON TASK FORCE FOR POVERTY ELIMINATION 2017 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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PTF MEMBER COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

CO-CHAIRS

- Raechelle Devereaux, Executive Director, Guelph Community Health Centre
- Helen Fishburn, Senior Director, CMHA Waterloo Wellington

MEMBERS

- Adrienne Crowder, Manager, Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy
- Alex Goss, Manager of Community Investment, City of Guelph
- Andrea Roberts, Director - Child & Family Health, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health
- Andrea Wyshniowsky, Manager - Programs & Services, Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington
- Andrew Seagram, Coordinator - Community Use of Schools Program, Upper Grand District School Board
- Barb McPhee, Community Member
- Brad Evoy, Organizational Coordinator, OPIRG Guelph
- Brenda McGinnis, Constituency Assistant, MPP Liz Sandals
- Brendan Johnson, Executive Director, Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition
- Dana Nuttley, Community Member
- Debbie Bentley Lauzon, Executive Director, Wyndham House
- Debra Nicolson-Elwell, Pastoral Team Leader, First Baptist Church
- Elaine Weir, Certified Bridges Trainer, Circles Initiative of Guelph-Wellington
- Elsa Mann, Team Leader, Outreach Program, Mount Forest Family Health Team
- Gail Hoekstra, Executive Director, Welcome In Drop-In Centre
- Gavin Dandy, Directing Coordinator, The Seed
- George Kelly, Chair, Guelph Wellington Coalition for Social Justice
- Iona Sky, Director of Service, Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County
- Jane Londerville, Wellington-Guelph Housing Committee
- Jane Tuer, Executive Director, Project READ Literacy Network
- June Hofland, City Councillor, City of Guelph
- Jason McCrossan, Community Member
- Jaya James, Executive Director, Lakeside HOPE House
- Kari Simpson, Executive Director, East Wellington Community Services
- Ken Harvey, Manager of Employment Services, County of Wellington
- Lisa Needham, Public Health Nutritionist, Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health
- Hon. Liz Sandals, MPP-Guelph
- Ron MacKinnon, Executive Director, Community Resource Centre of North & Centre Wellington
- Ryan Pettipiere, Director of Housing, County of Wellington
- Sarah Haanstra, Toward Common Ground
- Sandra Cocco, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Guelph-Wellington
- Sheila Markle, Executive Director, Family & Children's Services of Guelph & Wellington County
- Shakiba Shayani, Community Investments Manager, United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin
- Stephanie Ellens-Clark, Manager Planning, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network
- Sly Castaldi, Executive Director, Women in Crisis
- Stuart Beumer, Director of Ontario Works, County of Wellington
- Tina Brophey, Community Member



PRIORITY

INCOME INEQUALITY

BEYOND A LIVING WAGE: EMPLOYER RECOGNITION

On November 23rd, the Poverty Task Force hosted an event with local living wage employers. The event celebrated 10 new employers signing on to the Guelph-Wellington Living Wage Employer Recognition program.

The event also launched a new report from the PTF, *The Impact of Working Poverty on Health & Wellbeing in Guelph-Wellington*. The report notes that 5% of the working-age population in our community meet the definition of 'working poor.' The report demonstrates that working poor individuals struggle to maintain their health and wellbeing. This is particularly true for women, youth and racialized and recent immigrant workers.

Keynote speaker, Amanda Terfloth, Coordinator with the Better Way Alliance, spoke about moving beyond a living wage to advocating more broadly for decent work. Terfloth noted that there are tangible business benefits of moving to a workplace model that incorporates living wages, advance scheduling and secure positions.

TRENDS

- 10.2% of individuals in Wellington County (including Guelph) live below the Low-Income Measure (After-Tax)
- 5% of the working-age population in Wellington County (including Guelph) is working poor
- From 2013 to 2017, the minimum wage was frozen at \$10.25 per hour



GOAL

Everyone in Guelph-Wellington has the income, resources and opportunities to fully participate in the community.

STRATEGIES

- Increase the number of Guelph-Wellington Living Wage Employers
- Provide feedback to Ontario's Basic Income Guarantee Pilot
- Increase understanding and raise awareness about the working poor
- Inform and advocate for Bill 148, Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act
- Support Circles Guelph-Wellington





INCOME INEQUALITY IMPACTS



LIVING WAGE

- In 2017, 10 new employers signed on to the Guelph-Wellington Living Wage Employer Recognition Program.
- The program, launched in 2015, recognizes over 30 local employers representing over 2500 employees that have committed to paying their employees at least a living wage (\$16.50 per hour).

BASIC INCOME GUARANTEE

- To help shape the Government of Ontario's Basic Income Guarantee Pilot, the PTF engaged with local stakeholders to provide input on how the pilot is designed, tested and delivered and provided an official submission.
- In 2017, the Government of Ontario launched a 3-year pilot in Hamilton, Brantford, Brant County, Thunder Bay, and Lindsay.



WORKING POOR

- The PTF Research & Knowledge Mobilization Committee released a report, *The Impact of Working Poverty on Health & Wellbeing in Guelph-Wellington*. The report provides insights into the struggles of the working poor locally and contributes to a growing body of provincial and national research.

BILL 148, FAIR WORKPLACES, BETTER JOBS ACT

- The PTF joined advocacy efforts from across the province in support of Bill 148, which included support for an increase to the minimum wage from \$10.25 per hour, to \$14 per hour in January 2018 and \$15 an hour in January 2019.
- On December 8th, Minister Liz Sandals announced at an event hosted by the PTF that the legislation passed.



CIRCLES GUELPH-WELLINGTON

- The PTF worked together with Circles Guelph-Wellington to host a community conversation with over 80 individuals exploring impacts of working poverty.



PRIORITY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

In February 2017, the PTF, in partnership with the County of Wellington, launched a Coordinated Entry System as part of the 20,000 Homes Campaign. Coordinated Entry is a shared and standardized method for connecting people experiencing homelessness to the resources available.

Coordinated Entry assesses people's housing-related needs, prioritizes them for resources, and links those in need to a range of types of assistance.

In *2016/17 Annual Report: Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes*, it was identified that there were 117 housing placements for high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the By-Name List between April 2016 and October 2017. Of those housing placements, 62% occurred after the CES was launched.

The CES is supported by 10 + agencies in the community that actively identify and support families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

TRENDS

- In April 2016, 295 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness.
- 10.4% of households in Guelph and 6.3% of households in Wellington County live in core housing need.
- The vacancy rate in Guelph is 1.2%, well below the 3% vacancy rate that is considered an indicator of a healthy rental market.



GOAL

Everyone in Guelph-Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home.

STRATEGIES

- Launch a Coordinated Entry System for the Homeless Serving System
- Reduce the number of individuals experiencing homelessness
- Advocate for a National Housing Strategy
- Update and disseminate a Community Cold Weather Response Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness
- Engage individuals experiencing homelessness in conversations about housing and homelessness





AFFORDABLE HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS IMPACTS



BY-NAME LIST & COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

- PTF published *2016/17 Annual Report: Guelph-Wellington 20,000 Homes*. The report is based on data analysis of the By-Name List from the Coordinated Entry System. The report provides comprehensive data on homelessness in the community and allows the 20,000 Homes Campaign to measure results.

ENDING HOMELESSNESS

- The number of high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington decreased 37% from April 2016 to October 2017.
- There were 117 housing placements for high-acuity individuals experiencing homelessness on the By-Name List from April 2016 to October 2017.



NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

- The PTF joined advocacy efforts from across Canada to advocate for a National Housing Strategy. This included providing an official submission to the Government of Canada, informed by community conversations with individuals experiencing homelessness.
- On November 22nd, 2017, Canada's first ever National Housing Strategy was released, committing \$40 billion over 10 years.

COMMUNITY COLD WEATHER RESPONSE PLAN & WINTER SURVIVAL KITS

- The PTF convened key stakeholders to update and disseminate the Community Cold Weather Plan for People Experiencing Homelessness. The plan shares information about emergency shelters and services and programs that offer warm up locations during the day.
- The PTF coordinated stakeholders to pool resources and distribute Winter Survival Kits with blankets, hats, mitts, and other items through police and front-line services.



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

- To inform the work of the PTF, including official submissions to the Government of Canada, feedback on national research projects, and the direction of the 20,000 Homes Campaign, several community conversations were hosted with individuals experiencing homelessness.



PRIORITY

FOOD INSECURITY

MOVING BEYOND FOOD CHARITY

On October 19th, the Poverty Task Force hosted a packed house at Innovation Guelph to explore food insecurity, research, local experiences, and action. The event featured keynote speaker Valerie Tarasuk, Principal Investigator at PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. Tarasuk's research clearly demonstrates that inadequate and unreliable income are at the root of household food insecurity issues.

The event also featured a Theatre for Living Performance. A group of community members participated in a 3-day theatre training with workshop facilitator Zoë Barrett-Wood and shared a performance focused on their lived experience of food insecurity.

A discussion with the events attendees about how to enact change was facilitated by Mike Balkwill, Provincial Organizer with Put Food in the Budget. Attendees were challenged to consider actions they could take to support an income-based response to household food insecurity.

TRENDS

- From 2012-14, 17% of households in Guelph experienced marginal, moderate and severe food insecurity.
- There has been a 27% increase in the cost of food over a 7-year period from 2009 - 2017.
- 70% of those who rely on social assistance are food insecure



GOAL

Everyone in Guelph-Wellington has access to affordable and healthy food in a dignified manner.

STRATEGIES

- Increase awareness of the root causes of household food insecurity among key stakeholders and the general public
- Inform the Government of Ontario's first food security strategy
- Provide support to The Seed Community Food Program
- Advocate for income-based solutions to household food insecurity





PRIORITY

HEALTH INEQUITIES

NON-MEDICAL CRISIS STABILIZATION

In partnership with Toward Common Ground and the Wellington-Guelph Drug Strategy, the PTF invited stakeholders to attend a consultation session on non-medical crisis stabilization.

The session focused on the lack of services in Guelph-Wellington for individuals who are struggling with mental health and/or addiction issues, are in a crisis, and have nowhere to go. In such cases, crisis stabilization is needed to enter or return to housing.

After the event, the PTF, TCG and WGDS continued to support dialogue and action aimed at creating a local response to crisis stabilization.

In October 2017, a successful application to the Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network provided funding for a 3-month pilot project. The pilot includes 2 crisis stabilization beds in the community, supported by several partners.

TRENDS

- 76% of low-income individuals reported that they couldn't afford regular oral health care in a Guelph-Wellington study
- From 2009-2012 people in Guelph-Wellington were more likely to report using illicit drugs when compared to Ontario.
- The wait time for long-term mental health housing in the Guelph area is nearly 6 years.



GOAL

Everyone in Guelph-Wellington has access to affordable health services.

STRATEGIES

- Increase awareness of no- or low-cost oral health care programs in Guelph-Wellington
- Advocate for increased access to affordable oral health care for low-income adults
- Mobilize community response to the need for non-medical crisis stabilization for individuals struggling with mental health and addictions issues.





HEALTH INEQUITIES IMPACTS



INCREASED AWARENESS OF NO- AND LOW-COST PROGRAMS

- The PTF's Oral Health Action Committee developed a no- and low-cost oral health program guide. This resource guide lists available programs in the Guelph-Wellington area. The guide is being distributed at health and social service providers across the community.

ADVOCACY: PUBLICLY FUND ORAL HEALTH CARE

- On March 13, 2017, members of the PTF's Oral Health Action Committee met with MPP Diane Vernile to submit a petition signed by 670 community members in Guelph-Wellington. The petition calls on the provincial government to provide publicly funded oral health care for low-income adults and seniors.



CRISIS STABILIZATION

- PTF partnered with Toward Common Ground and Wellington-Guelph Drug Strategy to mobilize partners to the need for non-medical crisis stabilization
- Pilot project was funded to begin in early 2018 for two crisis stabilization beds



FUNDERS & HOST AGENCY

