

MUNICIPAL ELECTION KIT
2018
- WELLINGTON COUNTY



2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION – WELLINGTON COUNTY

On **October 22nd**, voters will head to the polls to determine mayors, councillors, county councillors and school board trustees. These are important decisions. Municipal Government actions affect the lives of Wellington County residents in many ways.

The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination has prepared this Election Kit to help voters and candidates alike discuss important issues and deliberate on their electoral choices¹.

ABOUT THE POVERTY TASK FORCE

The Poverty Task Force (PTF) works collaboratively, informed by diverse voices of experience, to advocate for system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty.

The PTF is non-partisan and receives important funding from our municipal partners, the City of Guelph and the County of Wellington. We recognize the role we can play in informing elected officials about local needs and priorities to influence policy and service design, delivery and evaluation. We also believe in communicating and educating to increase awareness, shift attitudes, and further priority issues, big ideas, specific policies, community needs, and aspirations. It is our hope that by highlighting these roles during elections, we can help support candidates and voters to be better informed about issues that impact those living in poverty, as well as potential solutions.

COUNTY OF WELLINGTON GOVERNMENT

A County government is a federation of the local municipalities within its boundaries. Counties are referred to as “upper tier” municipalities. Local municipalities (cities, towns, villages, townships) within counties provide the majority of municipal services to their residents. The services provided by county governments are usually limited to arterial roads, health and social services and county land use planning.

The County of Wellington (upper-tier) is governed by a Council comprised of seven mayors and nine ward councillors. The County is the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager. Under municipal leadership, CMSMs deliver Ontario Works, child care, and social housing.

ABOUT THIS ELECTION KIT

This kit provides a general overview of the state of poverty in Wellington County. We then zero in on two significant issues – decent work and livable incomes, and affordable housing. Here we put forward potential solutions and offer a tool to help facilitate conversations between voters and candidates. We’ve also shared some information about voting in our community and resources to help you learn more about the issues we work on. We also provide our contact information in the event that you want to learn more, have a conversation, or share your ideas with us.

¹ This Election Kit is inspired by and adapted from existing guides, such as the Provincial Election Toolkit 2018, prepared by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition.

POVERTY IN WELLINGTON COUNTY

MUNICIPAL ELECTION | 2018

THE STATE OF POVERTY IN OUR COMMUNITY



LIVABLE INCOMES & DECENT WORK

9% OF PEOPLE LIVING IN PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDS IN WELLINGTON COUNTY LIVE IN **POVERTY**

5% OF WORKING AGE INDIVIDUALS IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON ARE **WORKING POOR**. RATES ARE HIGHEST IN **MINTO (5.8%)** AND **WELLINGTON NORTH (6.2%)**

\$70,728 WAS THE **MEDIAN AFTER-TAX HOUSEHOLD INCOME** IN WELLINGTON COUNTY. AN INDIVIDUAL ON **ONTARIO WORKS** RECEIVES **\$8,652** PER YEAR.



HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

325 INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING **HOMELESSNESS** IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON. OF THOSE FROM WELLINGTON COUNTY **88%** OF THOSE IN WELLINGTON COUNTY HAD NOT ACCESSED AN EMERGENCY SHELTER IN THE PAST YEAR.

41% OF RENTER HOUSEHOLDS IN WELLINGTON COUNTY SPENT **30% OR MORE** OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME ON **SHELTER**



FOOD INSECURITY

14% OF HOUSEHOLDS IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN EXPERIENCE **FOOD INSECURITY**

A FAMILY OF FOUR ON **ONTARIO WORKS** WOULD NEED TO SPEND **36%** OF THEIR INCOME ON FOOD TO AFFORD A **NUTRITIOUS DIET**, COMPARED TO **12%** FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR WITH A **MEDIAN INCOME**.

STIGMA WAS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS AS THE **#1** BARRIER TO ACCESSING EMERGENCY **FOOD**



HEALTH INEQUITIES

MENTAL HEALTH, SUBSTANCE USE & ABUSE, AND SUICIDE PREVENTION WERE IDENTIFIED AS TOP 3 HEALTH CONCERNS IN WELLINGTON COUNTY

64% OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING **HOMELESSNESS** IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON REPORTED HAVING BOTH A **MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION ISSUES**

BY GRADE 2, **ALMOST HALF** OF CHILDREN IN WELLINGTON, DUFFERIN, GUELPH WILL HAVE EXPERIENCED **TOOTH DECAY**

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HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

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END HOMELESSNESS IN WELLINGTON COUNTY

1) Update County of Wellington's 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan

In 2013, the County of Wellington developed and released a 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, in accordance with the Government of Ontario's Housing Services Act.

As we meet the mid-point for the plan, we need to reassess - as a community - our key priorities and re-define our goals to meet changing local needs.

2) Invest in homelessness prevention and long-term housing stability

More evidence exists for investments being made in preventing and reducing homelessness rather than solely relying on emergency services as a 'crisis response.'

The County of Wellington needs to continue to support tenants with complex needs to remain housed, and offer a variety of housing options across the housing spectrum.

3) Work closely with government and community partners to develop Permanent Supportive Housing

Local research has identified a need for Permanent Supportive Housing to help end homelessness for those with complex needs.

The County of Wellington Council needs to work closely with partners to aggressively pursue and advocate for the creation of Permanent Supportive Housing in our community.

<p>8,095</p> <p>GUELPH-WELLINGTON HOUSEHOLDS IN CORE HOUSING NEED</p> <p><small>A household is in core housing need if their dwelling is considered inadequate, unsuitable, or unaffordable, and they cannot afford alternative housing.</small></p>	<p> 26</p> <p>AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS AN INDIVIDUAL STAYS IN GUELPH EMERGENCY SHELTERS</p>	<p> # OF INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON</p> <p>325 <small>During a point-in-time count in April 2018.</small></p>
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Core Housing Need, 2016 Census (2016). Statistics Canada. Available here: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/chn-biml/index-eng.cfm>

County of Wellington (2017). 2017 Information Graphic. 10-year Housing & Homelessness Plan Annual Reports. Available here: <https://www.wellington.ca/en/social-services/10-Year-Housing-and-Homelessness-Plan.aspx>

Ellery, Randall (May 2018). Everyone Counts: 2018 Guelph-Wellington Point in Time Count. Available here: <https://www.gwpoverity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Everyone-Counts-2018-Point-in-Time-Count.pdf>

SOCIAL HOUSING

As the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the County of Wellington is responsible for administration and planning of social housing and homelessness programs for Guelph-Wellington.



COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INITIATIVE

The County receives funds under this program from the Government of Ontario to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homelessness.



CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

The Government of Ontario, Government of Canada, and County of Wellington have all made commitments to reducing chronic homelessness.



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LIVABLE INCOMES & DECENT WORK

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SUPPORT LIVABLE INCOMES & DECENT WORK

1) Commit to having the County of Wellington become a certified living wage employer

The Ontario Living Wage Network certifies employers who pay all direct and indirect employees the living wage rate for the region in which they operate. The living wage in Guelph-Wellington is \$16.50 per hour.

The County of Wellington has not yet explored becoming a certified living wage employer.

2) Advocate for system and policy change to help low-income people achieve income security

The County of Wellington Council has unique opportunities to leverage community advocacy efforts. Specifically, Council can demonstrate support for low-income community members to achieve income security. This includes calling on Provincial and Federal Governments to implement adequate social assistance rates, fair working conditions, a \$15 minimum wage, and a basic income guarantee.

3) Fund & implement programs to overcome barriers to transportation

Transportation has been consistently identified as a challenge for families and individuals in Wellington County. An absence of public transit makes getting to work and appointments, as well as participating in community life, very difficult for those without a personal vehicle.

The County of Wellington should explore innovative responses to this issue, and fund and implement solutions.



2016 Census, Statistics Canada (2016). Excludes Guelph. Social Determinants of Health Status Report. Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. Available here: www.wdgppublichealth.ca/data

2016 Census, Statistics Canada (2016). Excludes Guelph. Social Determinants of Health Status Report. Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. Available here: www.wdgppublichealth.ca/data

Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program Beneficiaries (May 2018). Wellington County (including Guelph). Personal communication.

GUELPH-WELLINGTON LIVING WAGE

There are currently 30+ certified living wage employers in Guelph-Wellington, representing a variety of sectors.



BILL 148

In 2017, the Government of Ontario enacted Bill 148 to introduce changes to employment and labour laws. Not all changes have come into effect yet, including the \$15 minimum wage.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION GRANT PROGRAM

This is a new program offered by the Government of Ontario to fund the development of community transportation solutions to address local needs.



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CANDIDATES' REPORT CARD

ATTEND ALL CANDIDATES' MEETINGS, OR CALL YOUR CANDIDATES DIRECTLY AND ASK THESE QUESTIONS.

ASK YOUR CANDIDATE			Knowledge of Issue (✓)	Candidate Response	
	AFFORDABLE HOUSING				
	Will you support our community to reassess key priorities to update the 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan?				
	Will you support an investments in homelessness prevention and long-term housing stability?				
	How will you work closely with all three levels of government to fund Permanent Supportive Housing in Guelph?				
	LIVEABLE INCOMES & DECENT WORK				
	Will you champion having the County of Wellington become a certified living wage employer?				
	How will you advocate for system and policy change to help low-income people achieve income security?				
	Will you support funding and implementing programs to overcome barriers to transportation?				
	FOOD INSECURITY				
How will you work to address the needs of those experiencing household food insecurity? (<i>Household food insecurity is commonly defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints</i>)					
HEALTH INEQUITIES					
How will you work to address health inequities for families and individuals living in poverty?					

GENERAL VOTING RESOURCES

There are excellent resources for voters in Wellington County. You can check to see if you're on the voter's list, add yourself to the voter's list, or update your information. You can also find out:

- What ward you're in
- Voting locations
- Key dates
- Acceptable ID to vote

<https://erinvotes.ca/>

<https://town.minto.on.ca/government/2018-municipal-election>

<https://www.centrewellington.ca/en/township-services/municipal-elections.aspx>

<http://www.get.on.ca/election/default.aspx>

<https://www.mapleton.ca/en/township-services/elections.aspx>

<http://www.puslinch.ca/en/elections/elections-2018.aspx>

<https://wellington-north.com/government/2018-election>

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PTF & PRIORITY ISSUES

The PTF believes in an evidence-informed approach. We regularly conduct community-based research to enhance shared understandings of complex issues and to inform our action and advocacy efforts.

You can find LOTS of resources on our website:

GWPOVERTY.CA

In particular, we encourage you to check out the following reports that are on our website:

- 2018 Guelph-Wellington Homelessness Point-in-Time Count
- The Impact of Working Poverty on Health & Wellbeing in Guelph-Wellington
- Using Emergency Food Services in Guelph-Wellington
- Summary Report: What we know about the Need for Crisis Stabilization



www.gwpoverty.ca

1-800-265-7293 ext. 4359

info@gwpoverty.ca