

Wellington County

2022 Municipal Election Kit



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About the Poverty Task Force

The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination or Poverty Task Force (PTF) works 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.

The PTF is non-partisan and receives important funding from the City of Guelph, the County of Wellington, and our host agency, United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin. We know the role we can play in informing elected officials about local needs and priorities to impact 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 wellbeing. We hope playing this role during elections, helps support candidates and voters to be better informed about issues that impact people living with low incomes, as well as potential solutions.

The PTF created this Election Kit¹ to support people to vote and to encourage discussion about important issues among community members and candidates.

Why vote?

Voting has the power to help create a community where everyone can thrive. Voting in the municipal election gives you a say in who makes important decisions about your community's services, growth and future.

Decisions made by municipal governments have some of the biggest impacts on our daily lives. Municipal governments make decisions about many of the services we rely on such as:

- clean drinking water
- public transit
- roads, sidewalks & bike lanes
- garbage collection & recycling
- snow removal
- economic development
- emergency services (fire, ambulance & police)
- libraries
- parks & recreation
- arts, culture & tourism
- housing
- planning for new developments & enhancing neighbourhoods
- social services
- and much more!

¹ This Election Kit is inspired by and adapted from existing guides, such as A How-To Guide: An Election is Coming – Get Ready! created by Social Planning Toronto & the 2022 Municipal Election Toolkit for Candidates – Social Justice Issues by the Perth Huron Social Research & Planning Council.



2022 Wellington County Municipal Election

Election day is **Monday, October 24th, 2022**. If you live in Wellington County, you can vote for: Mayor(s), Local & County Councillors, and School Board Trustee(s).

County of Wellington Government

The County of Wellington (County) is an “upper tier” municipality. It is a federation of local municipalities within its boundary which are referred to as “lower tier” municipalities. The County is comprised of seven lower tier municipalities:

- Town of Minto
- Township of Wellington North
- Township of Mapleton
- Township of Centre Wellington
- Town of Erin
- Township of Guelph/Eramosa
- Township of Puslinch

The County is governed by a Council comprised of seven mayors and nine ward councillors. They are elected indirectly every four years through local municipal elections. While lower tier municipalities provide the majority of municipal services to their residents, the County plays an important role in providing services, such as county roads, solid waste services, libraries, and planning and development services. As the provincially designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the County also provides social services including childcare, social housing, and income support programmes.

School Board Trustees

School board trustees are community representatives and advocates for public education. They are elected to a four-year term of office and together form the Board of Trustees which governs the School Board. The Board of Trustees set the vision and goals for the school board, develop policies, allocate resources and drive programs and operations in the school board. Trustees can be elected to one of four different school board systems: English public, English Catholic, French public and French Catholic. In Wellington County, this includes:

- Upper Grand District School Board,
- Wellington Catholic District School Board,
- Conseil Scolaire Viamonde.
- Conseil Scolaire Catholique MonAvenir,

All residents vote for trustees in one of the above school boards. You do not need to have children. Decisions made by School Boards impact all of us.



Who can vote?

To vote in the municipal election you must be:

a Canadian citizen

+

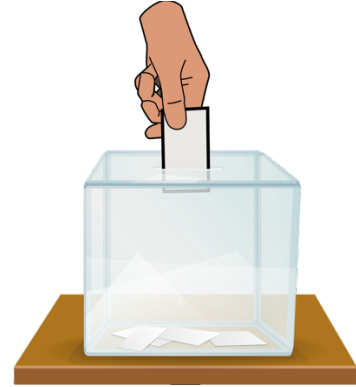
at least 18 years of age or older on voting day

+

a resident in the City of Guelph, or you/your spouse own/rent property in the city

+

not prohibited from voting under any law



General Voting Information

There are helpful resources for voters in Wellington County. Find your municipality's voter information page below. Visit it to learn more about:

- how to vote & what ID you can use
- how to be added to the voter's list if you're not already on it
- what ward you live in
- the candidates you can vote for
- key dates & more!

To learn more, visit the voter information page for your municipality:

- Town of Minto:
town.minto.on.ca/government/2022-municipal-election
- Township of Wellington North:
wellington-north.com/government/municipal-election/2022-municipal-election
- Township of Mapleton:
mapleton.ca/services/council/elections
- Township of Centre Wellington:
centrewellington.ca/en/township-services/municipal-elections.aspx
- Town of Erin:
erin.ca/town-hall/clerks-office/2022-municipal-election
- Township of Guelph/Eramosa:
get.on.ca/township-services/election
- Township of Puslinch:
puslinch.ca/government/municipal-election-2022



Engage with Candidates

Want to learn more about candidates and how they feel about the issues that matter to you? Wondering how you can inform candidates about the needs and issues impacting your community?

Here are some ideas:

- Attend all candidate events or review candidate question and answers
 - You can often find information about these events and resources in your local paper or media source.
- Write or call candidates
 - You can find contact information, like email and phone number, next to candidate names on your municipalities voter information website page.
- If they have one, explore candidate websites and look at their platforms. A platform includes what a candidate supports and what they will commit to if elected.
 - Candidate websites may be found next to candidate names on your municipality's voter information website page.
- Ask questions if candidates or their volunteers knock on your door
 - We included some information about key poverty issues, solutions and questions you can ask in the next section of this guide.



Poverty in Wellington County

Many of the issues people living with poverty experience, such as income inequality, homelessness, and food insecurity are rooted in policy decisions made by elected officials. Voting in an election for the candidates you feel will best address poverty issues is one way you can take action to support eliminating poverty in your community.



Livable Incomes & Decent Work

What is a livable income?

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.

What is decent work?

Decent work is a term coined by the International Labour Organization. It describes work that is fair, stable, and productive. It ensures people have fair wages and working conditions to support economic security and community wellbeing.

What we know...

7.1% of people living in private households in Wellington County **live in poverty**. Poverty rates are highest in Wellington North (12.1%), Minto (10.7%) and Mapleton (9.3%).²

\$18.10 is the Living Wage in Guelph-Wellington.³ It is the **hourly wage a worker needs to earn to meet basic needs**.

Question to ask candidates:

No one should have to choose between paying the rent, buying food or covering the cost of transportation. What action do you support at the municipal level to help address income pressures experienced by people living with low incomes?

Actions that support solutions:

- Invest in and increase access to subsidy programs by basing eligibility on the low income measure
- Invest in increasing affordability, access, frequency and reliability of public transportation
- Champion the importance of paying a living wage and commit to supporting the certification of the municipality or school board as a living wage employer

² Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released July 13, 2022. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

³ The Ontario Living Wage Network and the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. Guelph-Wellington Living Wage Calculation, 2021.



Housing & Homelessness

What is homelessness?

Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate ability to acquire it. Someone who is unhoused may be unsheltered, emergency sheltered or in temporary accommodation.

When is housing affordable?

Housing is considered affordable if shelter costs are less than 30 percent of before tax income.

What we know...

Percent of households in core housing need living in unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable housing: Wellington North (8.9%), Guelph/Eramosa (5.5%), Centre Wellington (5.2%), Mapleton (5.1%), Puslinch (4.4%), Erin (3.3%), Minto (3.1%)⁴

As of June 2022, there were **3398 households waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing** in Guelph-Wellington⁵

As of September 2022, there were at least **146 unhoused individuals** in Guelph-Wellington⁶

Question to ask candidates:

What action and investment will you support to help address the homelessness and housing crisis in this community, so that everyone has an affordable place to call home that meets their needs?

Actions that support solutions:

- Invest in affordable housing and financial incentives to increase availability of affordable housing
- Increase investment to the priorities of the 10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan
- Invest in and fast-track the planning, development and permitting process for affordable housing projects, including waiving development charges and other municipal fees
- Implement a needs based definition of affordable housing to guide programs and policies, and carry out regular housing needs assessments
- Facilitate opportunities to provide free or low-cost suitable land to non-profit developers committed to building affordable housing

⁴ Statistics Canada. 2022. (table). *Census Profile*. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released September 21, 2022.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

⁵ County of Wellington Housing Services. Centralized Waiting List Data, 2022.

⁶ County of Wellington Housing Services. Homelessness By-Name List, 2022.



Oppression & Poverty

Discrimination and systemic oppression contribute to higher poverty rates being experienced by women, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, people of colour, newcomers and people with precarious immigration status. To eliminate poverty we must also address the ongoing harmful impacts and legacy of colonization, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and all other forms of discrimination and stigma.

It is also critical that people with lived experience are meaningfully involved in leading, informing, and evaluating action to ensure change is effective at all levels, including government.

Reported experiencing discrimination in Wellington County⁷:

9 out of 10

Indigenous peoples



7 out of 10

Immigrants and Visible Minorities



Question to ask candidates:

What action will you support to address discrimination and systemic oppression in our community?

Actions that work toward solutions:

- Funding and immediately taking action to deliver on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action⁸, including numbers directed at municipal government: 3, 17, 23, 40, 43, 47, 55, 57, 64, 75, 77, 87, and 88
- Involve people with lived experience of poverty in decision making processes and invest in supports and education to remove barriers to participation in opportunities like committees, running for election, and delegating at Council
- Ensure that services and infrastructure planning intentionally plan for access for community members living with low incomes
- Combat discrimination and racism by taking action at an organizational level and through engaging with and (re)allocating funding to effective community initiatives and support programs that address these issues
- Advocate to higher levels of government to change policy and increase investments in root cause solutions to poverty to improve community safety and increase health and wellbeing for community members living with low incomes

⁷ Natalia Lapshina, Ph.D., Victoria M. Esses, Ph.D. Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST), Western University. Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in Wellington County - An Empirical Study by the Guelph-Wellington Local Immigration Partnership, 2022.

⁸ Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action:

https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf



Food Insecurity

The Food System Resiliency Table⁹ is joining the Poverty Task Force in encouraging candidates and community members in Guelph and Wellington County to discuss what action can be taken at the municipal and school board level to increase awareness of and support solutions to address food insecurity.

What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity is when a household has inadequate and insecure access to food due to not having enough money. It is a serious public health problem that negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health.

What we know...

1 in 10 households in Wellington County reported being **food insecure**¹⁰

Question to ask candidates:

How will you work to address the needs of people experiencing food insecurity in the community?

Actions that support solutions:

- Invest in programs and services, so they are affordable for all residents
- Advocate to higher levels of government to implement policies and programs that ensure adequate income for all (e.g. basic income)

Get in touch with the Poverty Task Force

We hope this Election Kit was helpful for you. If you have any questions about this resource or if you want to learn more about the Poverty Task Force and our work or if you'd like to share your ideas with us, please contact us by emailing: Info@gwpoverty.ca



⁹ Learn more about the Food System Resiliency Table by visiting: <https://foodfuture.ca/thetable/about>

¹⁰ Our Food Future Guelph-Wellington, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health & Toward Common Ground. How COVID-19 impacted food access and food insecurity in Guelph and Wellington County, 2021.

