



Welcome!

Community Advocacy Training: Introduction

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Welcome!

1. Introductions:
 - Name
 - How are you feeling about the training?
 - Why are you here / interested in the training?
2. Caring for ourselves
3. Agenda:

Session 1 Meeting Agenda: Welcome to Community Advocacy Training (CAT)!

Date & Time:	Wednesday, May 21 st , 2025 from 9:00am-1:00pm	
Where:	West End Rec Centre, 21 Imperial Rd South, Community Room 2	
Time	Topic	Presenter
9:00am – 9:20am	Welcome to CAT!	Chelsey Edwards, PTF
9:20am – 9:40am	Introductions • Check-in • Supporting a caring space	Chelsey Edwards, PTF
9:40am – 10:00am	Group agreement	Chelsey Edwards, PTF
10:00am – 10:30am	Group activity: Icebreaker	Maggie Phelan
10:30am – 10:45am	Program Overview & Questions	Chelsey Edwards, PTF
10:45am – 11:00am	Break (15 minutes)	
11:00am – 11:30am	What is the Poverty Task Force & why advocacy?	Dominica McPherson, PTF
11:30am – 12:00pm	What it's like to be involved with CAT and the PTF	Maggie Phelan and Sharon Felker, Peer Mentors
12:00pm – 12:05pm	Closing	Group activity
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Lunch	

Group Norms



Let's get to know each other!

Two truths & a lie



What to expect during our time together:

- Meeting Wednesdays from 9am – 12pm for 6 weeks, except the last session which will be from 9am – 1pm
- **Topics include:**
 - May 28 – Storytelling
 - June 4 – Advocacy & Government Relations
 - June 11 – Public Speaking & Media
 - June 18 – Anti-Oppression
 - June 25 – Putting Your Skills into Action!
- Check-ins & reminders
- Welcome kit & worksheets

Anything else you'd like to learn about?

How can we best support you?

Break



OUR SHARED PURPOSE

Our collaborative work advances system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty.

OUR COLLABORATIVE OUTCOMES

Community members have their long term housing, income, food, employment, transportation, and health needs met.



OUR ULTIMATE IMPACT: POVERTY IS ELIMINATED

Community members experience equitable outcomes, care, belonging, wellbeing, and value in a vibrant community.

Root causes of poverty

To eliminate poverty we must address root causes.

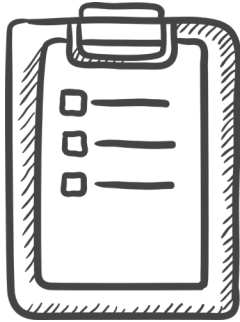
A lack of income due to:

- *Disruptive events* (e.g. migration, job loss, family breakdown, illness)
- *Trauma* (e.g. adverse childhood experiences, domestic violence)
- *Systemic barriers* (e.g. eligibility criteria, low wages, waitlists)
- *Colonization & systemic oppression* (e.g. racism, sexism, classism)
- *Policy* (e.g. universal healthcare gaps, minimum wage, social assistance)

Poverty is not rooted in personal failings or poor choices.

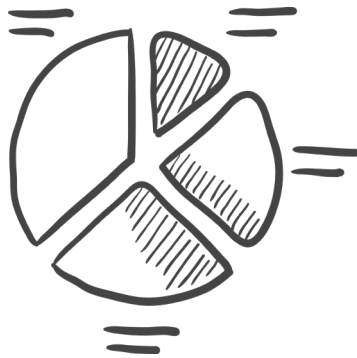


Impacts of Poverty



Poverty impacts everyone

- Human rights impacts
- Wellbeing impacts
- Economic impacts



Who is most impacted...

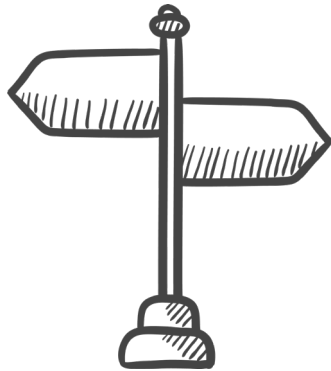
- Indigenous people
- Black people
- People of colour
- People with disabilities
- Lone parent households
- Newcomers
- Children & youth
- Working poor
- Women

What can poverty look like?



Poverty can be...

- Temporary or short term
- Chronic
- Transitional
- Intergenerational



Poverty can look like...

- Income inequality
- Stress
- Lack of opportunity
- Poorer health
- Fewer choices
- Decreased wellbeing
- Barriers

The Poverty Task Force

The
upstream –
downstream
parable



Photo by [Mario Álvarez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

The Poverty Task Force

The Poverty Task Force aims to eliminate poverty, not just manage it or help people cope with it.



OUR VALUES

- Social Justice & Equity • Care & Understanding
- Truth & Respect
- Community & Strength-Based • Passion & Courage

Our upstream approaches are distinct from responding to immediate and individual needs:



Centre intersectional lived experience



Engage in meaningful relationships



Be evidence informed



Apply systems thinking



Identify root causes and be solution focused



Advocate for policy and system change



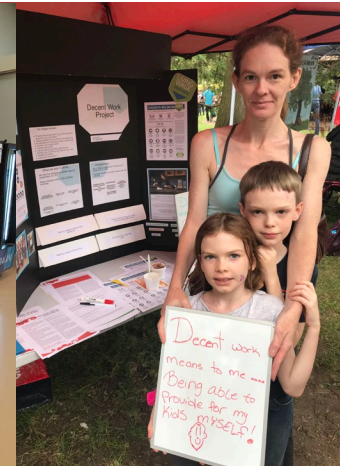
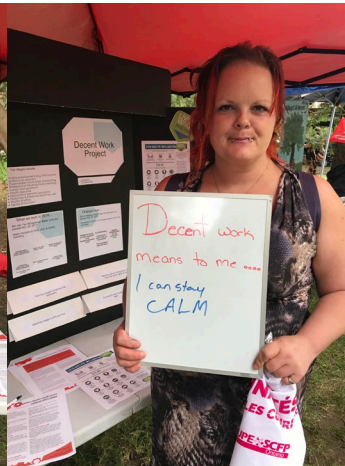
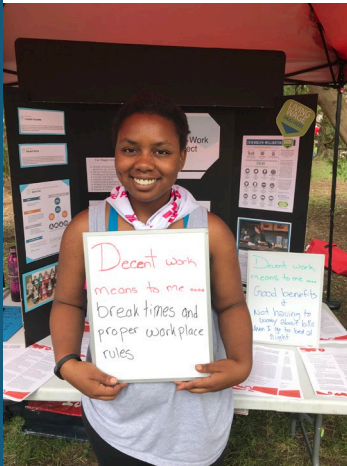
Priority Area: Livable Incomes & Decent Work

Livable Incomes: The amount of income an individual or family needs to meet basic needs, maintain a safe, decent standard of living in their community & save for future needs and goals.

Decent Work: Fair wages & working conditions.

Examples:

- Guelph-Wellington Living Wage: \$21.30/hour
- Increased & improved social assistance
- Basic income



Decent Work & Livable Incomes

In Guelph and Wellington County, too many people are struggling to make ends meet. This election, vote for bold action to ensure livable incomes, decent work and an end to poverty.

Why This Matters...



People do not have enough money for food.

23% of households

are food insecure in our community.³



Poverty is a policy failure. Government action can solve it.



Nearly **1 in 5 children** in Canada were living in poverty. From 2021-2022, child poverty saw its largest increase on record.¹

We need a basic income foundation for everyone.



Ontario Basic Income Pilot (2017-2019) recipients reported improved physical & mental health, reduced stress, & increased employment participation.²

The Cost of living is rising, but people cannot make ends meet.

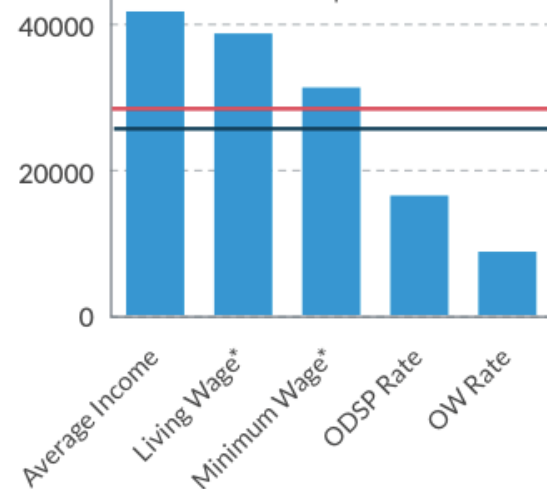
\$17.20/hr Ontario minimum wage

\$21.30/hr Guelph-Wellington Living Wage⁴

Only about **35% of unemployed people** can actually access EI (employment insurance) benefits.⁵

Incomes are too low to live on.

Approximate Income Thresholds - Single Individual in Guelph CMA⁶



— Low Income Measure (> \$28,863)

— Official Poverty Line based on the Market Basket Measure (> \$25,710)

*Calculated based on 35 hours x 52 weeks

Existing federal **income supports** (e.g. Canada child benefit, Old Age Security & the Guaranteed Income Supplement) are **losing their effectiveness** at keeping people out of poverty.¹



Priority Area: Homelessness & Housing

Housing: Considered affordable if shelter costs account for less than 30% of before-tax income.

Homelessness: Includes a range of physical living situations, including: unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated & at risk of homelessness.

Examples:

- Increase investment in affordable housing
- Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY)
- Community efforts to end homelessness



Homelessness & Housing

In Guelph and Wellington County, housing is out of reach for too many.
This election, vote for long-term solutions to the affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

Why This Matters...



No one should fear losing their home.

In a September 2024 poll, **57% of Canadians** feared losing their home, whether owned or rented, if their financial situation were to change.³

Homelessness is a policy failure, not a personal one.

203 people are experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington.¹



Affordable housing is being lost.

For every **1 new home added** Canada is **losing 11** lower-rent affordable homes.²



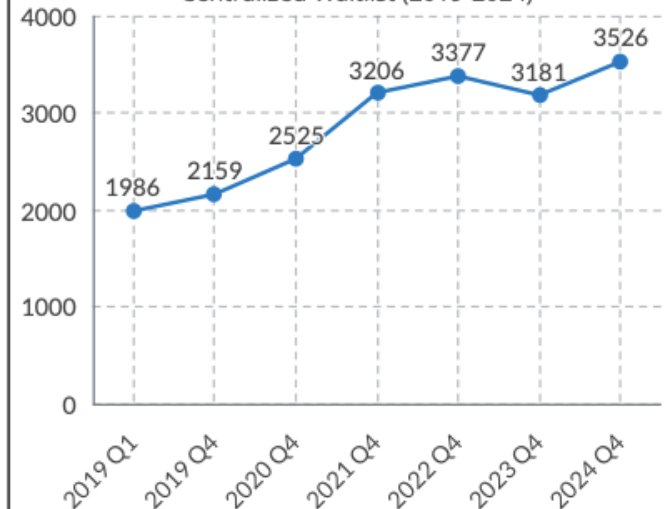
Rent is unaffordable.

0 neighbourhoods in Guelph are affordable for a full-time minimum wage worker to rent.⁴

Need for rent-geared-to-income housing in Wellington-Guelph is increasing.

Since 2019, there has been a **sharp increase** in the number of households on the centralized waitlist. The average wait time is **5 years**, while some households wait for **8+ years**.⁵

Applicant households on the Wellington-Guelph Centralized Waitlist (2019-2024)⁵



What is advocacy?

Advocacy:

- Activity taken by individuals or groups to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.
- E.g. campaigns, support actions, lobbying, awareness building



Why community advocacy training?

Because community organizing is grounded in a vision for social change work that:

- Carries out work from an anti-oppression perspective.
- Sees people as the experts in determining their own lives.
- Values having people affected by an issue being the ones figuring out how to change or transform their situation.
- Strives for ongoing, active relationship building with the community of people affected by an issue.
- Works to get people involved in not only carrying out activities, but in making on-going decisions on plans, strategies and tactics.
- Builds collective power to disrupt dominant power.

Source: Developed by Deena Ladd and Sheila Wilmot



Why Advocacy?

What's It Like to Be Involved?



Small community market has big impact on this low-income building

Offering fresh produce, baked goods and other essentials right from the apartment building, the market has been 'a blessing in disguise' for many residents



Taylor Pace
Oct 15, 2023 12:00 PM



1 / 8 ... Maggie Phelan | Taylor Pace / GuelphToday

Trapped in a never-ending cycle of poverty

More than 3,000 Guelph residents receive payments from the Ontario Disability Support Program; the money can be barely enough to survive, never mind get ahead



Richard Vivian
May 16, 2022 9:55 AM



2 / 3 Sharon, a Guelph resident and QDSP recipient, is left with a post-rent monthly budget of \$321, which has to cover groceries, phone and Internet, home and vehicle insurance as well as gasoline. | Richard Vivian/GuelphToday

Support

Fitt said there are many recently-homeless people living in the same building as her, and "a handful of people that have come from the shelter system ... are making life just that much harder for everybody else that lives here."

"Those people need support," she said. "They've had some really challenging traumatic backgrounds. They need help to deal with that stuff."

Fitt said she has a history of drug addiction, but hasn't used for 35 years. Drugs are different now, she said, and more dangerous.

Increased harm reduction, in need, she explained.

"They are going to get [the drug] psychotic. Or dead."

"Having a transitional space help reduce the problem at i

Poverty Awareness Month: Centring Lived Experience and Community Collaboration to Create Lasting Change



About the Author

Maggie Phelan is a lived expert and advocate involved with the Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. In this capacity, she co-chairs Community Voices, a group for and by people with lived and lived experiences of poverty to come together to learn, share personal experiences, and advocate for change. She also sits on several other committees in Guelph and Wellington to advocate and advise for poverty related issues including The Guelph Wellington Drug Strategy Advisory Committee, Guelph Community Health Centre Client Committee, Wellington Guelph Food System Resiliency Table, County Housing and Homelessness Advisory Table, and about examining intersectional impacts colonialism has in our community and the purpose in giving

Mayor's Event for Mental Health highlights social determinants

It were that simple just to stop using, or to get an apartment, or to get a job, like who would want to sit in this level of discomfort, in this level of palpable pain? Nobody would!

Taylor Pace
Oct 10, 2023 7:00 PM



Maggie Phelan speaking at the Mayor's Mental Health event



Thank you!

Thank you for coming!

Next week...

We will be going over storytelling!

Transit:

Route 10, Paisley

Driving:

Free parking on site at the front of the building

Thank you!

Let's Eat!