

MOVING FORWARD

Recommendations for
Community Action

based on
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS ON POVERTY
IN HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD



**Poverty
Roundtable**
Hastings Prince Edward





Poverty Roundtable

Hastings Prince Edward

Who needs to be involved?

- People who experience poverty
- Community organizations
- Health, social service, faith, justice and labour sectors
- Community & Economic Development departments
- Businesses
- Regional associations
- Schools, hospitals, police
- Financial institutions
- Government (all levels)

For success we need:

- Political will
- Community and citizen participation
- Multi-agency and multi-sector collaboration
- Commitment
- Willingness to address systems and unequal power relationships
- Programs focused on empowerment and that build local capacity
- To be open to continuous learning and to change strategies and tactics based on what we are learning



Our vision is: a community where everyone experiences a standard of living which is sufficient for their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being without compromise of dignity and self-respect.

The community action plan belongs to all of our communities. It is an open invitation for individuals, groups, organizations and all levels of government to get involved. These recommendations are informed by more than 500 people, the majority of whom have experience living in poverty, who took part in Community Conversations on poverty and how to end it in our communities.

PRODUCED BY THE POVERTY ROUNDTABLE HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD



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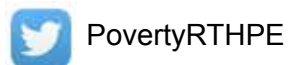
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Poverty Roundtable Contact Information

Christine Durant, Director
65 Station Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2S6
Phone: 613-779-7477
Email: prt@povertyroundtablehpe.ca





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- | | |
|---|--|
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| Bridge Street United Church | North Hastings Community Trust |
| Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre | Peer Support South East Ontario |
| Career Edge | Prince Edward Learning Centre |
| Community Advocacy and Legal Centre (CALC) | Quinte Employment Network |
| Community Care for South Hastings | Quinte Economic Development Commission |
| Community Living Belleville | Quinte West Chamber of Commerce |
| The County Foundation | Quinte West Youth Centre |
| Employment and Income Security Working Group, PRT | Salvation Army |
| Food not Bombs | United Way Hastings & Prince Edward |
| John Howard Society | |
| Hastings Housing Resource Centre | |
| The Hub Child & Family Centre | |



Poverty Roundtable

Hastings Prince Edward

INTRODUCTION

MOVING FORWARD – Recommendations for Community Action is the outcome of Community Conversations on Poverty in Hastings and Prince Edward counties, in which more than 500 community members came together to talk about poverty - their experience of it, what is working, what isn't and how to end it. This is the SECOND report in a series of reports informed by the Community Conversations. The first report *LEANING IN – Community Conversations on Poverty in Hastings Prince Edward*, is a summary of the stories we heard in the conversations. This action planning document, which will guide planning and future considerations for the eradication of poverty in our community, is the second community report on poverty.

Purpose

MOVING FORWARD - Recommendations for Community Action is a document that belongs to all of us who are working to end poverty across Hastings and Prince Edward counties. It provides a wealth of information and suggestions for consideration and action as we move forward. We encourage you to read this document as part of your own commitment and see where you may already be engaging and where you might choose to take action in future. The document provides a roadmap for our communities to work together to address inequities and to become places where everyone can thrive. The variety of suggestions provides food for thought and many possible ways each of us might contribute to ending poverty in our community. Poverty hurts us all – let's take action!

Background

From October 2016 to March 2017, people from a variety of backgrounds participated in Community Conversations on Poverty. Conversations took place at education forums, while gathering information for the Poverty Roundtable's submission to the federal government on the creation of a National Poverty Reduction Strategy, in a north-south dialogue on improving our collective efforts held in Bancroft, in conversations with the business sector, in online surveys, at Loyalist College with students, as well as at seniors' centres. Community organizations and people living in poverty met to discuss how to engage our communities to take action. Conversations took place in Maynooth, McArthurs Mills, Bancroft, Coe Hill, Deseronto, Madoc, Belleville, Quinte West and Picton. Key informants came from social service, health, education, justice, business, municipal government, faith and from the community at large. Of the over 500 people who participated, 400 were living, or had lived, in poverty. Participants in the Community Conversations included single parents, couples with children, low-wage workers, young people, seniors, people with disabilities,

people with mental health issues and addictions, as well as people who were unemployed. The youngest contributor was 10 years old and the eldest in their 80s. Their stories of the root causes of poverty have been captured in a larger report '*Leaning In*', which provides further detail. In addition, a series of reports, each focusing on a specific issue, will be produced.

The Poverty Roundtable HPE emphasizes the participation of people with lived experience of poverty in the creation of the Recommendations for Community Action. We recognize that people with first-hand experience of poverty know what brings about poverty, what is and what is not working, and how poverty can be prevented from happening. By engaging in personal experiences, we can better understand and challenge barriers to poverty reduction and eradication. People with lived experience of poverty are content experts and the report is informed by experts.

About the Poverty Roundtable Hastings Prince Edward

The Poverty Roundtable HPE was formed in 2013 to look at whether there are things we could do, or do differently, to address the causes of poverty and to broaden our capacity to do so by working together. Members include representation from social services, business, government, health, mental health, education, justice, housing, labour, faith, food security, and community members.

The Creating Community Project, Informing Our Poverty Reduction Strategy, is a project of the Poverty Roundtable HPE, funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, to help us take action on poverty in our communities. The Community Conversations were a part of this work, and the Poverty Roundtable is grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation whose support through a Grow Grant made this action plan possible.

OUR VISION IS: a community where everyone experiences a standard of living which is sufficient for their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being without compromise of dignity and self-respect.

OUR MISSION IS: to eliminate the causes of poverty in Hastings and Prince Edward counties by building the capacity of our community to work together to plan for and implement strategic, long term solutions that result in fair and equitable opportunities for all.

Definition of poverty:

People live in poverty when denied the income and resources that support individual choices regarding physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs and when these circumstances exclude them from fully participating in their communities.

Poverty Facts

- In Hastings County, 16.3% of households are low-income and in Prince Edward, that number is 13.5%.
- The prevalence of low income in 13 of HPE's 18 communities is greater than the provincial average of 14.4%
- Belleville is 6th across Canada for the highest rates of urban child poverty at 20.5%¹.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation states that the largest rent increases in Ontario are led by Belleville at 5.9%, followed by Oshawa (5.2%), Hamilton (5.1%), Barrie (4.6%) and Toronto (4.2%).

¹ Statistics Canada. (2016). Census of Population

- In Prince Edward County rent has increased by 38% in ten years. In Hastings County rent has increased by 35% in ten years.²
- In Hastings County there are 1443 households on a wait list for geared-to-income housing.
- Between 2004 and 2010 there were 0 rent-geared-to-income units built in Hastings or Prince Edward counties.
- 45% of low wage workers in Ontario do not have drug and dental benefits.³
- The food insecurity rate for HPE is approximately 10% and may be as high as 14.4%.⁴
- Annual health costs are 23-121% higher in food insecure Ontario households⁵.
- Diabetes rates in HPE are 12% vs 7% across Ontario, asthma rates are 14% vs 7% across Ontario, mood disorders are 15% vs 8% across Ontario⁶.
- 70% of households reliant on social assistance in Canada are food-insecure.⁷
- Due to low wages over 60% of food-insecure households are the working poor.⁸
- Households with children led by female lone parents are especially vulnerable to food insecurity; 1/3 of these households are food-insecure⁹.
In Hastings County 35.5% of single parent families are living in poverty, in Prince Edward County 26% of single parents are living in poverty¹⁰.



² Statistics Canada. (2017). Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no.98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Analytical products, 2016 Census

³ Barnes, Steve et al. (2015). Low Wages, No Benefits: Expanding Access to Health Benefits for Low Income Ontarians. Wellesley Institute: Toronto, ON

⁴ Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (2018). The Real Cost of Eating Well in Hastings Prince Edward Counties in 2017. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health: Belleville, ON

⁵ Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (2018). The Real Cost of Eating Well in Hastings Prince Edward Counties in 2017. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health

⁶ Elton, M, Montgomery, V. (2017). The Social Determinants of Health. A Snapshot of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties August 2017. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health [online] http://www.hpepublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/HPEPH-Social_Determinants_Report_Edited.pdf

⁷ Proof (accessed 2018). Household Food Insecurity in Canada. [online] <http://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

⁸ Proof (accessed 2018). Household Food Insecurity in Canada. [online] <http://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

⁹ Proof (accessed 2018). Household Food Insecurity in Canada. [online] <http://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

¹⁰ Statistics Canada, (2017). Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no.98-404-X2016001. Ottawa, Ontario. Analytical products, 2016 Census



COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Where is action needed to address poverty?

Nine predominant areas stand out:

1. Income & Employment
2. Housing
3. Transportation
4. Health
5. Families & Caregivers
6. Food Security
7. Belonging & Inclusion
8. Rural Poverty
9. Financial Empowerment

We believe these priority areas, identified through the Community Conversations, are key to addressing poverty in Hastings and Prince Edward counties. We believe we can work together to tackle challenges, and that there is interest across communities to initiate action. The recommendations connect with broader and existing community goals for economic prosperity, healthy communities, increased high school graduation and affordable housing.

Each of the nine priority areas is discussed below with one or more desired outcomes, and identification of strategies that have come from the information collected. In addition, suggestions are made as to who needs to be involved and which level of government has responsibility for the area of work. While these suggestions may not be all-inclusive, reviewing them may lead to discussion of additional actions that could be taken.



#1 Income & Employment

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Income security through:

- employment and non-employment sources
- preparation/readiness for employment
- access to opportunities
- retention of secure livable wage jobs
- employer policies that support employee needs
- social assistance programs that assist people to move out of poverty and that are indexed to actual living costs



INCOME & EMPLOYMENT	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Increase incomes				
Incomes from wages should be sufficient to meet living costs.				
Create a universal basic income that is above the low income measure and guarantees an income adequate to meet living costs.			●	●
Increase the working income tax benefit (WITB) and consider enhancement for the working poor.			●	●
Increase the minimum wage to align with cost of living.		●	●	
Advocate for achievement of gender parity in wages.	●		●	●
Work with employers in removing barriers to employment.	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Engage employers in providing mental health support at work: - Help workplaces to build greater awareness, reduce stigma, and foster safe and supportive cultures. - Ensure employers are aware of Addiction & Mental Health resources available in their communities.	●		●	
Engage employers, as well as temporary work agencies, in removing barriers and improving policies and opportunities for people with criminal records.	●		●	●

Advocate for employers to question the relevance of criminal background checks for job descriptions they offer and eliminate when not necessary.	●		●	
Engage employers in advocating for and arranging transportation to and from work.	●	●		
Income security programs	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Changes could enhance the opportunity for people to move out of poverty and to access employment.				
Raise the rates: OW, ODSP, CPP – Disability, EI, OAS, Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), and spouse's allowance. An immediate, significant increase is necessary while the universal basic income program is being developed.			●	●
Reform income security programs, in particular OW/ODSP, to increase voluntary employment participation and reduce poverty: - provide better transition supports and time when moving from social assistance to sole reliance on employment earnings. - remove clawbacks on earnings from employment until people are above the low-income line. - allow recipients to keep assets and prevent temporary circumstances from deepening poverty. - encourage those who cannot work full time to benefit from part-time employment or the opportunity to volunteer.		●	●	●
Review the social assistance system to ensure rules that help and do not penalize recipients. End sudden benefit suspensions.			●	
Ensure effective legal information, advice and advocacy about government income programs and employment rights.			●	
Allow flexibility in application of Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility and reporting requirements, particularly for seasonal employment.				●
Urge policy makers to make improvements in health coverage benefits, dental benefits including dentures, and to work toward provision of universal pharmacare.	●	●	●	●

Work with and award employers	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Working toward a local culture which supports decent and barrier-free work.				
Certify businesses who offer living wages.	●			
Encourage companies to reconsider use of temporary work agencies in favour of direct hiring.	●			
Educate businesses on the benefits of offering skills training and other employee benefits.	●			
Acknowledge good business practices -- identify and champion employers who provide a living wage and exceptional work conditions.	●	●		
Advocate for and involve employers who remove barriers to employment for disadvantaged workers and who can share success stories with other employers.	●			
Encourage workplaces to create hiring practices and policies that recognize the value of experience on par with academic credentials.	●	●	●	●
Economic Development	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Move toward shared prosperity.				
Encourage economic development that focuses on bringing year-round, full-time, above-minimum-wage jobs to the region.	●	●		
Advocate for review of trade agreements' impact on local economies and jobs.				●
Engage both community development and economic development to identify and build on assets, in regions with few employment opportunities.	●	●		
Support municipalities in devising community wealth building activities – ensuring new infrastructure projects benefit marginalized communities in HPE.	●	●	●	
Employment Readiness Programs	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
There is a need for a variety of programming to allow people to participate in the workforce.				
Encourage youth to remain in the area, through youth apprenticeships, jobs, training, and entrepreneurship opportunities.	●	●	●	

Develop a mentorship program around employment and education. Provide programs for those without work experience.	●	●		
Create skill share and bartering programs, such as time banks, skills and time exchanges.	●			
Look at people's skills and consider how their skills can be developed to participate in the workforce. Reintegrate people who have been outside of employment through skills development.	●			
Offer more subsidized job creation programs.			●	●
Support people in low income to become entrepreneurs.	●	●	●	●
Influencing workplace policy and programs	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Encourage formation of cooperatives and co-op businesses.	●			
Advocate formation of worker unions – especially within hospitality and service sectors where support is needed to address workplace policy issues.	●			
Support peer advocate program to educate workers on rights, and support workers in accessing their rights.	●			
Advocate for rights of migrant laborers to be protected by employment standards and treated fairly.	●		●	●
Promote the benefits of developing pension and benefit programs with employers.	●	●	●	
Supports for those with precarious income	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Support people to access tax benefits that are currently available, and enhance tax benefits for people on a low income, e.g. reinstate refundable public transportation tax credit; provide caregiver benefit.	●		●	●
Find a way to prevent evictions related to sudden, unexpected loss of income.	●	●	●	
Address rising costs such as food and hydro, and find a way to stabilize the cost of essentials.	●	●	●	●
Increase rent supplements and housing benefits for those on social assistance and the working poor.		●	●	

Ensure that people with special dietary needs are easily approved and provided with adequate income security benefits to support food purchases.			●	
Many post-secondary students live in poverty. Assemble a council of faculty, staff, and students to identify poverty and propose solutions e.g. information on supports available.	●			
Support students financially so they may complete their education.			●	●

#2 Housing



DESIRED OUTCOMES

Affordable, accessible and appropriate housing, manageable utility costs, and protection from eviction.

HOUSING	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Build it				
Increase affordable housing options.				
Plan for and build more affordable, mixed housing options which include innovative alternatives such as cooperative housing, tiny homes, and intentional communities.	●	●	●	●
Municipal purchase and refurbishment of vacant buildings to create more community housing.	●	●	●	●
Prioritize safety; create safe housing that is free of violence.	●	●	●	
Increase housing options for seniors.	●	●	●	
Rights & Responsibilities	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Ensure people have rights to housing.				
Develop a tenants' rights advocacy group, to be knowledgeable of rights and responsibilities related to housing and refer people to appropriate assistance.	●			
Educate tenants on their rights and responsibilities.	●	●	●	

Work with landlords to increase knowledge of their rights and responsibilities resulting in less discrimination towards people with disabilities, improved property maintenance, and collaborative relationships with tenants.	●	●	●	
Review and query the need for criminal background checks for renters.	●		●	
Policy & Programs	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Promote/ensure adequate policies, services and programs.				
Support independence – connect people who live alone with services to improve health and wellbeing.	●			
Lower or freeze rents.	●	●	●	
Change municipal bylaws to support tiny home builds, the creation of rental apartments and “granny suites”, affordable housing builds and off-grid housing. Amend zoning and severances.		●		
Develop policy for the inclusion of low income units or homes in all new housing development.		●		
Control and regulate short term accommodation rental (e.g. Airbnb).		●	●	
Find a way to assist people with bad credit history to access stable housing.	●	●	●	
Establish access to financing of rent-to-buy options for people living in low income to purchase their home – converting rental to ownership.	●	●	●	
Implement robust wraparound supports for people to become and stay housed, especially for people with mental illness, addictions, and disabilities.	●	●	●	●
Recognize and include emergency shelter as part of the housing continuum, as a stopgap measure for those who find themselves without housing.	●	●	●	●
Ensure the rules for non-profit housing allow for economic transition (e.g. a working adult who is not financially eligible for housing now but will be transitioning to retirement and losing income in the future).		●		

Landlord Engagement	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Encourage landlords to make it easier for people in low income to access apartments.				
Encourage landlords to offer flexibility with how last-month rental deposits are paid (e.g. monthly or quarterly installments, instead of up-front).	●	●	●	
Offer incentives to landlords to support housing for tenants with a disability.	●	●	●	
Cost of utilities	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
For people who were already in low income, rising utility costs have created and deepened poverty.				
Find ways to mitigate the impact of hydro rate increases before they are applied.			●	
Create local energy sources.		●		
Cap and decrease cost of municipal water.		●	●	
Permit off-grid housing.		●	●	

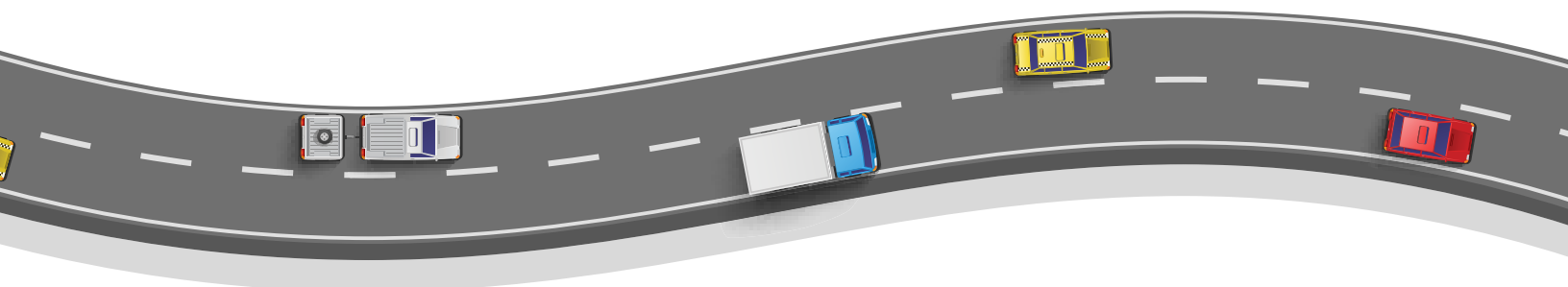
#3 Transportation

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Affordable transportation that facilitates access to services and resources, employment, health, and opportunities for social belonging or community participation.

TRANSPORTATION	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
Urban	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
In urban areas transportation is not affordable and does not always align with routes people need.				
Provide bus passes for people living on a low income.		●	●	
Consult community members on a regular basis for input to adjustment of routes and schedules in order to more effectively meet rider needs.	●	●		

Expand municipal taxi-chit program to low income workers/residents.	●	●		
Rural	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
In rural areas available transportation tends to be purpose-specific, or unaffordable; owning and maintaining a vehicle is cost prohibitive.				
Create rideshare programs and remove barriers to formal rideshare programs (e.g. find a way to address liabilities).	●		●	
Initiate community development or social enterprise initiatives to help low income people maintain cars – e.g. for auto servicing and repairs.	●	●		
Develop car-share programs.	●			
Increase rural transit availability and affordability.	●	●	●	●
Encourage employers to engage in local transportation initiatives.	●	●		
Municipal partnerships for transportation	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Municipalities are in a unique position to create partnerships with each other on transportation.				
Develop relationships among municipalities to work toward regional and intercity transportation – e.g. regular, commuter-oriented routes connecting Quinte West and Belleville.		●		
Utilize school buses in partnership with school boards, private companies and municipalities to support local transport systems within existing transport routes.	●	●		



#4 Health



DESIRED OUTCOMES

People have equitable opportunities to be healthy, and have access to appropriate health care.

HEALTH	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
Access to health care	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Access to health care and spectrum of supports is insufficient to meet needs.				
Adopt universal pharmacare for all Canadians.			●	●
Provide universal dental coverage that includes prevention, treatment, and provision of dentures.			●	●
Expand access to and range of addiction and mental health services.	●	●	●	
Increase breadth and depth of mental health supports in schools, community, and workplaces.	●	●	●	●
Deliver evidence-based suicide prevention programming.	●		●	
Enhancing recovery	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Expand supports for individuals recovering from addictions.	●		●	
Encourage employers to hire people recovering from addictions, or who have mental illnesses or brain injuries, and provide consistent workplace supports for these employees.	●	●	●	●
Health Inclusion	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Promoting understanding and compassion within health care facilities for people with low incomes, who often experience discrimination.				
Educate health professionals in working more effectively and supportively with patients in low income.	●		●	
Create an advocates program to support people in accessing health care.	●		●	
Expand health equity through income screening at medical clinics to identify supports that may be needed.	●		●	

Form a health care advisory council, including members who have lived experience of poverty, to recommend changes and move toward health care that is holistic and supportive of people living on a low income. Ensure that these councils are endorsed by organizational policy.	●	●	●	
Address stigma, discrimination and ensure dignity	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Stigma and discrimination bar people's access to health and health care.				
Work with health care service providers to identify and address stigma people experience when utilizing health services, such as mental health and addiction supports and grief counselling.	●	●	●	
End discriminatory policies and practices under which health practitioners and dentists refuse to provide services to people in low income.			●	●

#5 Families & Caregivers

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Parents and caregivers are supported with income, programs and services that allow them to focus on providing care without fear of poverty.

FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
Economic and employment	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Recognize the need for caregiving, and enhance income and refundable tax credits for caregivers of dependent or ill adults; for kinship arrangements, such as grandparents assuming guardianship of grandchildren; and for parents caring for children with special needs.			●	●
Facilitate return to employment or studies by caregivers.	●		●	●
Offer non-profit debt management and credit supports for caregivers.	●		●	●
Equalize income credits between parents with shared custody of children.			●	●

Services & Supports	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Provide supports and increase awareness of available programs and services.				
Increase addiction and mental health supports.			●	●
Enhance community awareness of programs and services and provide assistance to help families find the right supports.	●		●	
Provide additional supports to children who are leaving foster care as young adults.	●		●	●
Enhance caregiver respite programs.	●		●	
Increase availability of support programs for fathers.	●		●	
Make childcare available for children with special needs to support parents/caregivers with work or studies.	●	●	●	
Make universal low-cost child care available.	●	●	●	
Keeping families together	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Increase supports to keep children with their family and extended family members (e.g. grandparents).			●	●
Investigate ways to work supportively with child welfare services to reduce stigma and improve outcomes.	●		●	

#6 Food Security

DESIRED OUTCOMES

People have access to sufficient nutritious and affordable food.

FOOD SECURITY	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
Access to food	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Navigating the patchwork food system can be a challenge.				
Improve awareness of food and meal programs.	●	●		

Identify the gaps and impacts in different communities that do not have food programs, and expand access to affordable and nutritious food.	●			
Modify rules to accommodate youth access to food banks.	●			
Address schedule limitations of food programs (e.g. no food available on the weekend; shift workers).	●			
Create more wholesale/bulk purchasing options for people with low incomes.	●			
Expand universal food access programs such as the Good Food Box, food co-ops or buying clubs.	●			
Supply low- or no-cost transportation to access food in both urban and rural areas and provide delivery options when necessary.	●	●		
Expand shared gardening projects e.g. grow-a-row; Fresh for All; Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs; and community gardens.	●	●		
Expand lunch and dinner programs.	●			
Create a community food hub, to involve the community in addressing food insecurity and food sovereignty.	●			
Food justice	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Address the issue of 'prison as a form of food security' through raising incomes and providing supports.	●	●	●	●
Encourage food retailers and law enforcement personnel to connect people who are found stealing food with community food programs and other relevant supports (instead of prosecution).	●	●		
Advocate for food as a right. Develop a local food charter.	●	●	●	
Rural issues	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Connect with neighbours, and reinforce a neighbours helping neighbours approach.	●			
Improve access to grocery stores – recognize existence of food deserts and amend them, and ensure ease of access to appropriate and nutritious food sources.	●	●		

Supporting dignity in accessing food	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Consider transitioning from food hampers to grocery cards.	●		●	
Include food bank clients in the planning and decision-making body of the food bank organization.	●			
Create and expand programs that ensure dignity and end stigma; review and eliminate unnecessary restrictions or rules.	●			
Develop ongoing training for food bank staff and volunteers that reflects a commitment to human rights, dignity and trauma-informed practice.	●			
Knowledge, Skills & Social Connection	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Knowledge in food preparation can help people access more nutritious food. Social connection comes out of sharing food together.				
Provide opportunities to enhance cooking and food preparation skills, including canning and preserving.	●	●		
Consider ways to share knowledge of nutritious food and the benefits of making healthier choices.	●	●		
Encourage people to prioritize healthy food items when donating to food banks.	●			
Share recipes as a part of food programs.	●			
Create working bees to help each other out and prepare and preserve food.	●			



#7 Belonging & Inclusion



DESIRED OUTCOMES

When people feel connected, neighbourhood vitality and sense of belonging is increased. Greater participation in community initiatives and in all levels of government is fostered.

BELONGING & INCLUSION		SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
Build community	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal	
Being part of a community helps to increase belonging and reduce isolation. Depression, stress, poor mental health and addictions are strongly connected to the impact of not being part of community.					
Create inclusive community events, festivals, cooking classes, skill-sharing opportunities, gardens, and neighbourhood festivals.	●	●			
Organize neighbourhood events, where people can get to know their neighbours.	●	●			
Increase availability of community facilities such as community centres, social spaces, community use of schools.	●	●			
Hold town halls and conversations to seek community input.	●	●			
Create community owned resources and infrastructure: e.g. farms, energy.	●	●			
Encourage people to look out for their more vulnerable neighbours – assist those who may need some support.	●				
Identify and address community issues, needs and aspirations.	●	●			
Address barriers for people in joining and accessing community	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal	
People may face a number of barriers in being part of community, which leads to additional stress, health issues and social breakdown.					
Support people with criminal records to reintegrate well into community.	●				
Reduce or eliminate fees for pardons.				●	
Welcome new people to the community and build friendships.	●				

Ensure that people with disabilities have the opportunity to participate and feel included in the community.	●			
Increase peer based programs and supports	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Peers and peer based programs have been identified as building strengths, decreasing stress and sharing knowledge on accessing good food and community resources.				
Facilitate organization of informal peer groups and events based on identified common areas of interest.	●			
Consider using peer mentoring for community activities such as repair clinics, or other skills development.	●			
Ensure social service programs do not perpetuate stigma; involve people with lived experience of poverty in the design, implementation and evaluation of social service programs.		●	●	
Increase access to recreation, sports and the arts	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Waive fees for sports, adult education classes, arts programming.	●	●		
Create more opportunities for people to come together – skills sharing, peer programs, sports, meditation, yoga, etc.	●	●		
Increase engagement in government, build relationships with elected officials and promote participation in democracy	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
In order to take effective action on poverty, decisions at all levels of government need to be informed by voices of those who are living in poverty.				
Create municipal participatory budgeting, where the community plays a bigger role in how municipal funds are spent.		●		
Adopt a poverty lens in development of official plans, municipal planning and bylaws: put a stronger emphasis on social infrastructure and community benefit.		●		
Address barriers and ensure the involvement of people living in poverty in government policy and decision-making.		●	●	●
Increase community learning from and through each other	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
A better representation of poverty issues in local media coverage is needed to address stigma, discrimination, disconnection and lack of knowledge about what is happening.				
Work with media representatives to assist in presenting accurate and balanced information about issues related to poverty.	●			
Collaborate with schools and school boards to assist in presenting accurate and balanced information about issues related to poverty.	●		●	

#8 Rural Poverty

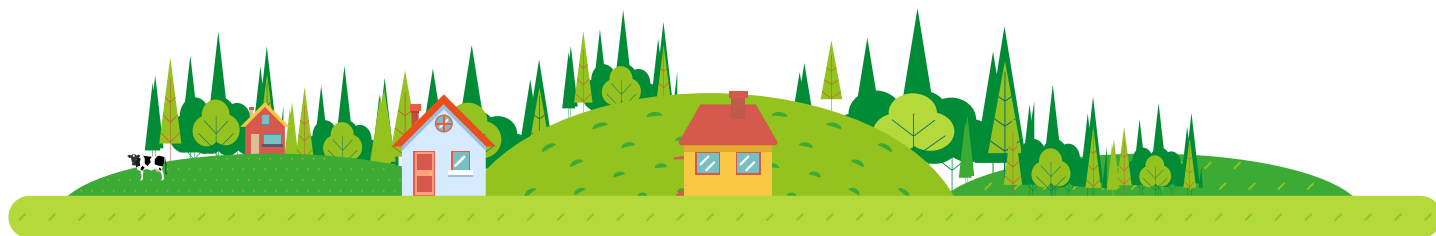
DESIRED OUTCOMES

People in rural areas have improved access to opportunities, services and resources:

- transportation
- affordable utilities
- incentives for young people to remain in rural areas
- health programs and services

Economic decline reversed.

RURAL POVERTY	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Rural Equity				
Support community led development in rural areas.	●	●	●	●
Look for ways to mitigate the higher basic living expenses in rural communities: e.g. heating, electricity, water.		●	●	
Provide support for cottage industry businesses: e.g. selling preserves, crafts, services.	●	●	●	
Increase access to services and funding commitments to rural communities: food, health, social supports, legal services, transportation, and high-speed internet.	●	●		●
Research and outreach to identify and support people who are remote, isolated and in deep poverty.	●			

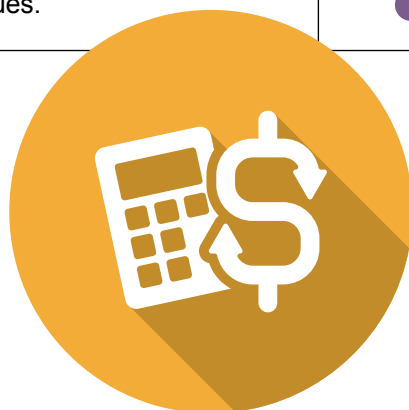


#9 Financial Empowerment

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Improved access to financial services oriented to people in low income. Reduce the need for predatory loan services and high interest credit.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY			
	Community	Municipal	Provincial	Federal
Fair banking and credit				
Create financial instruments and supports for those in low income, including access to low interest credit for emergencies.	●			●
Advocate for financial institutions to provide more flexibility (e.g. low interest overdraft protection, free government cheque cashing) for people living on a low income to access funds and offer assistance in managing borrowing costs, as an alternative to relying on predatory lenders.	●		●	●
Regulate payday lending (interest rates, number and proximity of locations).	●	●	●	
Promote understanding of and access to tax benefits.	●		●	●
Prioritize financial literacy through education in schools and adult education centres.	●	●	●	
Offer non-profit debt management and credit counselling for people with overwhelming debt burdens.	●		●	
Offer free legal advice on debt issues.	●		●	



CONCLUSION

To address poverty, it is important that our communities commit to:

1. Access to human rights: housing, income, food, decent work, health, to be free of violence, as well as addressing stigma and discrimination.
2. The means to access: justice, transportation, training, family supports, services, banking and credit.
3. Participation and influence in community: civic engagement, having a say in decision making with social and health services and all levels of government, a stronger emphasis on community belonging, opportunities to build relationships and address stigma, as well as participation in work: employment, training and education.
4. Address systemic issues: Make changes to economic and social approaches that perpetuate poor wages, precarious work, and discrimination based on socio-economic status, place (e.g. rural areas), gender; as well as discrimination that is based in ageism, ableism and racism.

To implement recommendations, it is imperative that our communities engage. Addressing poverty and implementing the recommendations needs our whole community involved, in particular:

- People who experience poverty
- Community organizations
- Health, social service, justice, faith and labour sectors
- Community & Economic Development departments
- Businesses
- Regional associations
- Schools, hospitals, police
- Financial institutions
- Government (all levels)



The recommendations put forward by communities across Hastings and Prince Edward are up to all of us to implement. We encourage you to use the recommendations to review what you are doing, what you could be doing, to advocate for systemic change and to develop community created solutions.

Putting the recommendations into action will take:

- Political will
- Community and citizen participation
- Multi-agency and multi-sector collaboration
- Commitment
- Willingness to address systems and unequal power relationships
- Programs focused on empowerment and that build local capacity
- To be open to continuous learning and to change strategies and tactics based on what we are learning

Approaches

Human Rights: *a human rights approach to poverty reduction states that human rights are inalienable and universal, and that every human being has, and must be able to access civil, cultural, economic, social and political rights. Ensuring that each person is able to access basic rights and freedoms is essential for people to live with dignity and to participate fully in society.*

Tamarack Institute & Vibrant Communities, (2017). A game changer approach for cities reducing poverty. Brief to HUMA – Poverty Reduction Strategies, p. 4.

Inclusion: *Inclusion incorporates protection from racism and discrimination, availability of stable social support, equitable access to information, services and resources, and opportunity for people to influence decisions that affect them. Inclusion in one's community is essential in reducing vulnerability, promoting self-sufficiency, building resilience, and enhancing power in one's community interactions.*

Tamarack Institute & Vibrant Communities, (2017). A game changer approach for cities reducing poverty. Brief to HUMA – Poverty Reduction Strategies, p. 4.

Trauma informed practice: Poverty is both traumatizing and can be the result of trauma. Approaching poverty through the lens of trauma means meeting people where they are, maintaining human dignity and agency, and acting to support stability and recovery.

Urgency: Urgency is about getting people out of crisis so that people can move to a place of stability quickly.

Eliminating the causes of poverty: Getting in front of poverty means preventing poverty from happening in the first place.

The Poverty Roundtable HPE believes that the community recommendations outlined in this document will provide guidance in our communities for community based, municipal, provincial and federal actions. Poverty is a concern for the health and social well-being of those living in poverty, but it also has an impact on all residents of Hastings and Prince Edward counties. Poverty affects us all and limits our potential to be thriving inclusive communities for everyone. We all benefit when poverty is reduced. Most importantly, reducing poverty will mean we build a community where everyone experiences a standard of living which is sufficient for their physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being without compromise of dignity and self-respect.

povertyroundtablehpe.ca

65 Station Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2S6

PHONE: 613 779 7477

prt@povertyroundtablehpe.ca

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