Poverty Reduction: Moving from Strategy to Action

May 26, 2015 • 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Chris Ballard, MPP
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Lyn Smith
Coordinator, Renfrew County Child Poverty Action Network

Mary Lou Mills
SDOH Public Health Nurse
Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit

Lisa Brown
Coordinator, HC Link

Suzanne Schwenger,
Manager, Health Nexus

RECORDING NOTICE: This webinar is recorded and will be made available to the general public on the HC Link website.
Agenda

Introduction
• Highlights of Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy- Chris Ballard, MPP
• The Face of Poverty in Ontario- Lisa Brown & Suzanne Schwenger

Community examples
• Poverty reduction in Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge-Mary Lou Mills
• Reducing child poverty in Renfrew County- Lyn Smith

Discussion and questions for the panel
Objectives

• Understand the main features of Ontario’s renewed Poverty Reduction Strategy

• Increase awareness about who is poor in Ontario

• Learn about initiatives to address poverty in two different regions of the province.

• Provide an opportunity for participants to share ideas on addressing poverty at the local level.
Chris Ballard, MPP for Newmarket – Aurora

PA to the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy
Realizing Our Potential: Strategy Overview

**Continuing to Break the Cycle for Children and Youth**

**Objectives**
- Building on the foundation of the first PRS, we are recommitting to meet the original target of reducing child poverty by 25 per cent.

**Initiatives**
- Ontario Child Benefit Indexation
- Student Nutrition Program Expansion
- Health Benefits for Low-Income Children and Youth
- Full-Day Kindergarten
- Achieving Excellence/ Closing the Educational Achievement Gap

**Goal/Outcome**
Reducing child poverty and improving all kids’ chances at a better future.

**Moving Towards Employment & Income Security**

**Objectives**
- Helping young people transition to employment and removing barriers that prevent vulnerable Ontarians from securing employment.

**Initiatives**
- Youth Jobs Strategy
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Employment & Training Services Integration
- Employment for Persons with Disabilities
- Social Assistance Reform
- Leveraging Future Investments to Target Vulnerable Groups

**Goal/Outcome**
Helping Ontarians secure employment or rebound from unemployment.

**A Long-Term Goal to End Homelessness in Ontario**

**Objectives**
- Signalling a bold long-term commitment to end homelessness.

**Initiatives**
- Seek expert advice on homelessness-related target, definitions and data collection
- Investment in Affordable Housing program
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
- At Home/Chez-Soi
- Supportive Housing for people with mental health and/or addictions issues

**Goal/Outcome**
No person in Ontario should have to live on the street.

**Using Evidence-Based Social Policy and Measuring Success**

**Objectives**
- Shaping practices to understand where investments provide the most impact in order to make needed adjustments for better returns in the future.

**Initiatives**
- Social Innovation
- Local Poverty Reduction Fund
- Targets and indicators to track progress
- Oversight
- Annual Reporting

**Goal/Outcome**
Efficient spending, more effective programs, and better outcomes for people.
The Face of Poverty in Ontario

Suzanne Schwenger & Lisa Brown - HC Link
Why talk about poverty?

Key social determinant of health

Risk factor for many health conditions, including:
• obesity
• chronic disease
• mental health
Why talk about poverty?

Canadian Medical Association on Health Care Transformation

WHAT MAKES CANADIANS SICK?

50% YOUR LIFE
- Income
- Early childhood development
- Disability
- Education
- Social exclusion
- Social safety net
- Gender
- Employment/working conditions
- Race
- Aboriginal status
- Safe and nutritious food
- Housing/homelessness
- Community belonging

25% YOUR HEALTH CARE
- Access to health care
- Health care system
- Wait times

15% YOUR BIOLOGY
- Biology
- Genetics

10% YOUR ENVIRONMENT
- Air quality
- Civic infrastructure

These are Canada’s Social Determinants of Health #SDOH
Who is poor in Ontario?
Children

13.9% of children

36.8% of children in female led lone-parent families
Unattached Adults

Single Adults

36%
Vulnerable Groups

- People with Disabilities
- Aboriginals
- New immigrants

Legend:
- Red: Above the line
- Blue: Below the line
How big is the problem?

Poverty in Ontario

- Below line
- Above line
Key pillars of income security in Ontario:

- Ontario Works (1995)
- Old Age Security (1927)
Fact-check on social assistance # 1

How much money does a single adult receive each month from Ontario Works (OW)?
Fact-check on social assistance # 2

How much money does a couple with two children receive each month from OW?
### Monthly allowance on Ontario Works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Allowance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single adult</td>
<td>$656 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single adult with 2 kids</td>
<td>$994 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two adults with two kids</td>
<td>$1173 per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Ontario Works (OW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly allowance on Ontario works</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line (in a city)</th>
<th>Gap</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single adult</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$656 per month</td>
<td>$7872</td>
<td>$23 298</td>
<td>$15 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single adult with 2 kids</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$994 per month</td>
<td>$11 928</td>
<td>$35 657</td>
<td>$23 729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two adults with two kids</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1173 per month</td>
<td>$14 076</td>
<td>$43 292</td>
<td>$29 216</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What about people with jobs?

Photo by Christian Schirrmacher https://www.flickr.com/photos/djchris/
Minimum wage
Fact-check on minimum wage

How much does a single adult making minimum wage make per month?
## Working Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Poverty Line</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Single adult working full time (35 hours a week)</td>
<td>$1540</td>
<td>$20 020</td>
<td>$23 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single adult working full time with 2 children</td>
<td>$1540</td>
<td>$20 020</td>
<td>$35 657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two adults working full time (35 hours a week) with two children</td>
<td>$3080</td>
<td>$40 040</td>
<td>$43 292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cost of rent in Toronto

**What does it cost to live in Toronto?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>1-bedroom</th>
<th>2-bedroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avg. market rent:</td>
<td><strong>$876</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,067</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,251</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To afford the apartment, a household must earn at least:</td>
<td><strong>$35,840</strong> per year or: <strong>$17.23</strong> per hour</td>
<td><strong>$42,680</strong> per year or: <strong>$20.52</strong> per hour</td>
<td><strong>$50,040</strong> per year or: <strong>$24.06</strong> per hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Minimum wage earnings:**
- $22,880/year
- $11/hour
- Max rent: $572

**ODSP housing allowance:**
- $479 (single)
- $753 (couple)
- $816 (couple + child)

**OW housing allowance:**
- $376 (single)
- $602 (couple)
- $655 (couple + child)

Prepared by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.
Living Wage

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2015 report suggests that a living wage =

Two adults, each making $18.52 per hour x 37.5 hours a week or $72,241.55 per year
Learning from the Community

Mary Lou Mills

Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit
Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge
Poverty Reduction

Moving the Social Determinants of Health and Poverty Reduction Strategies Forward
Community Partnerships and Poverty Reduction

- Poverty reduction work is complex and requires collaboration to:
  - identify the needs, strengths and weaknesses
  - have a shared vision and to set goals
  - collectively determine the best solutions
  - develop a coordinated & integrated approach
  - identify funding opportunities
Poverty Reduction – Raising Awareness

- **Media promotion** - newspapers, radio & TV
- **Workshops and community presentations**
- **Deputations** to municipal councils
- **Meetings** with MP’s and MPP’s
Myth: Most poor people are lazy and should find a job.

Fact: Many people work full-time at minimum wage. They still do not have enough income to raise their family above the poverty line.

Myth: Poor people don’t have it so bad.

Fact: Low-income families go without the basics of life, are sick more often and live shorter lives.

www.rethinkpoverty.ca
1-866-888-4577

Please Help

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
Reports and Data Sharing are Important to Poverty Reduction

- Measuring and monitoring data
- Identifying priorities
- Advocating for funding and policies
- Engaging stakeholders
Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy

• The province developed the **Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy: Breaking the Cycle** and challenged municipalities to develop their own.

“Municipal governments are closest to their communities and have tools to respond to the needs of communities. We are asking them to show leadership by putting their resources towards poverty reduction.”
**Keys to Success**

**Funding** – Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy: Breaking the Cycle – The Municipal Role in Poverty Reduction & the Community Opportunities Fund

**Social Marketing** – focused on the socio-economic benefits to the municipality

**Examples** - what other communities have done and highlighted the no cost/low cost initiatives
Poverty Reduction Strategy
City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County

- Given funding to develop a poverty reduction strategy
- Councilors from both Haliburton County and City of Kawartha Lakes were assigned to the poverty reduction steering committee
Poverty Reduction Strategy Process

- Poverty Reduction Strategy Steering committee was formed
- Focus groups were held - people living in poverty identified issues, gaps, priorities and made recommendations
- Stakeholders completed surveys
- A literature review was completed
Priorities Identified

• Income & employment
• Housing
• Transportation
• Childcare, early childhood development & education
• Food & basic needs
• Accessing services
• Public awareness, attitudes and advocacy
Poverty to Possibilities Forum

- Survey and literature findings were presented
- Stakeholders interested in being involved were identified
- Steering committee members consult with these stakeholders for their input
Poverty Reduction Strategy
City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County

- The focus is on prevention, reduction, alleviation and resiliency

- It’s a multi-year plan with measureable indicators
Poverty Reduction Strategy
City of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton County

• Recommendations are cross referenced to other plans such as: the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan; the Sustainability Plan; the Official Plans; KL Food Charter - Food Security Action Plan and the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy
# Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Kawartha Lakes and County of Haliburton: Housing Action Plan

**September 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Action Plan Recommendations</th>
<th>Primary role or responsibility?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Meet the affordable housing targets proposed in the Official Plan of the City of Kawartha Lakes of 25% of all new development to be affordable to low and moderate income households while the housing strategy is being completed. Use this as a minimum within the Plan itself and increase the supply of permanent affordable housing options in the County of Haliburton as per local conditions and local economy.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review the &quot;Building Strong Communities: 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan&quot; from a poverty reduction lens and implement its recommendations as appropriate.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Develop innovative policies and programs that promote the development of affordable housing projects such as incentives associated with developmental charges and permitting the development of secondary suites and shared housing.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Pursue opportunities to expand affordable housing stock.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<td>5. Continue to maintain and enhance existing affordable housing stock.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Lobby the provincial and federal governments to renew and/or increase funding for affordable housing, construction, rent supplements, rent relief funding, and homelessness prevention programs; and lobby the federal government to develop a national housing strategy.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Encourage and support community initiatives and programs that address housing needs such as Habitat for Humanity, Places for People, Community Care, Canadian Mental Health Association, etc.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. In partnership with local businesses, organizations, and/or service hubs create/expand and support home building supply depot titles in the community and at landfill sites that accept and sell for a nominal charge donated new, used, or surplus building supplies.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Promote community education on the development of secondary suites, building affordable housing, and creating measure homeowners can take to reduce utility costs and how to do home repairs.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Develop a housing insecure homelessness prevention plan: financial skills coaching and mortgage/rent action; help with need arrears and utilities; referrals to supports for physical and mental health; referrals to employment, training, and educational programs; and legal services.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Establish a central source of affordable housing information and financial support programs, along with a referral service and application assistance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Consider affordable housing needs in all municipal policy-making and land use planning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Develop and enforce by-laws regarding residential property standards, repairs, maintenance, and sale of rental properties.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Dedicate staff lines and resources to monitor population and household projections and growth, identify priority groups and housing needs, research affordable housing options and report to Council on achievement of the recommendations as outlined in the housing component of this strategy and the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Municipal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Successes to Date

• Completed and presented to councils the housing, transportation and food security components of the strategy
• Employment & education, early childhood development & childcare will soon be presented to each council
• Participating in the housing community consultations
Next Steps

- Discussing the provincial funding opportunity for a selected initiative from our poverty reduction plan
- Planning a follow-up workshop with our key stakeholders
Conclusion
Learning from the Community

Lyn Smith

Renfrew County Child Poverty Action Network (CPAN)
Renfrew County Child Poverty Action Network (CPAN)
Renfrew County
Who We Are

✓ A grassroots action-orientated network of 62 agencies/organizations, and over 550 caring and concerned individuals. We act together to address child poverty in Renfrew County.

✓ Formed in 2000 following the release by CYHNEO of the first Report Card on Child Poverty in Renfrew County.
Goals

✓ To increase awareness of the extent and consequences that the effects of child poverty has our community.

✓ To take action to improve the lives of low income children

✓ To eliminate the effects of child poverty in a manner that was empowering and inclusive.

✓ To promote a vision of a Renfrew County where all children belong.
What is poverty?
What is poverty?

✓ Some people think it is sleeping in a car, or on the street.

✓ Like others, CPAN believe in a society where everyone has a decent chance in life and no one is left behind.
How many children live in poverty?

- In Renfrew County we have 2590 children and youth under 17 years old living in poverty.
- On average, the child poverty rate is 12.8%.
- In one community the rate is as high as 28.7%. (36.6% for 0-5)
- Every community includes some children living in poverty. Even relatively well-off communities have children who live in poverty.
Why?

- Precarious Employment
- Lack of decent full-time jobs
- Low educational achievement
- Disability and/or health issues
- Situational
Why does it matter?

✓ Children who grow up in poverty are at greater risk of having poor physical and mental health.

✓ They are also at greater risk of having problems in school.

✓ Poverty can follow them through life!
Why does it matter?

✓ When children do not graduate they are less employable and their children are likely to grow up in poverty.

✓ They are less likely to take part in recreation, the arts and other community events.

✓ And so we all lose.
School

It’s hard to do well at school if you:

✓ Are Hungry
✓ Tired
✓ Don’t have a computer at home, or books to help
✓ You don’t feel included, because you can’t join teams, have hot lunches etc.
✓ Parents cant help because they are working several part-time jobs, or did not graduate
Social Inclusion

We are committed to ensuring that every child in Renfrew County knows the feeling and reality of “belonging in our community.”

We do this by keeping social inclusion at the heart of everything we do.
Social Inclusion

A definition of inclusion:

“To be included is to be accepted and to be able to participate fully within our families, our communities and our society. Those who are excluded, whether because of poverty, ill health, gender, race, or lack of education do not have the opportunity for full participation in the economic and social benefits of society.”

Three Pronged Approach

✓ Practical Assistance

✓ Education

✓ Advocacy
PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

Tools For School
(Previously Backpack Plus)

✓ Helps children and youth from low income families return to school with the tools that they need to learn

✓ Supplies Backpack, School supplies, and shoes

✓ We help hundreds of children and youth annually
Helping to ensure that every child stays warm and dry

Supplies a snowsuit, boots, hat and gloves to each child in need

Collection and Distribution throughout Renfrew County

Typically helps over 300 children and youth (pre-birth to 18yrs)
We noticed that although physical activity was often funded, cultural activity was not. So, *Harmony* was created.

- Pay-it-Forward program
- Open for Youth 12-18 yrs.
- So far we have offered guitar, bucket drumming, vocal, musical theatre, and improv classes. Soon we will begin a visual arts class
- Only limited by imagination and resources available
- Gives youth ownership, and teaches responsibility
- Shows others in the community that *youth can be productive citizens*
- Teaches youth how rewarding volunteerism can be (volunteer community is dwindling)
School Inclusion Program

✓ Gives children-in-need access to hot lunches, agendas, and local school trips

✓ Program is offered in a discreet and confidential manner

✓ Allows all children the reality of fully participating at school

✓ Officially in 7 schools and unofficially in more

✓ We hope to add more schools and do more!
School Inclusion Program

School Lunch Fee Form

Date: __________________________
Please return by: __________________________
Name(s): __________________________________
__________________________________
Food Ordered: Pizza   Hot Dog
How many?    __---_____  X $________  = $_______
❑ Payment enclosed.

❑ I would like my child to be included; I would like to use the School Inclusion Project funds.

❑ I have enclosed $____________ to help another child.

❑ My child will not participate in the hot lunch day.

*** Please place the completed form in an envelope. Thank you! ***
Creating Edible Gardens in schools. Currently we have 7 pilot schools.

Students learn how to grow, and the benefits of healthy nutritious food.

These skills will be brought home, and stay with them through life.

School gardeners can give extra produce to others in need, food banks, soup kitchens.

We are including others in the community. Skills can be passed down generationally and students connect with their community.
Public Education

✓ We feel it is important that others are correctly informed of the reasons why people end up living in poverty, and the implications that it can have on families, especially children.

✓ We like to remind others that at some point we are all at risk of being poor

✓ We like to work with the community to help our community, our neighbours.

✓ When others are in poverty, we all lose!
Public Education

- Presentations
- Media articles
- Quizzes, surveys and handouts
- Publications, such as: Child Poverty in Canada (Patrizia Albanese), I’m Still Hungry (Best Start ON)
Public Education

Social Media

✓ Web Site www.renfrewcountycpan.ca

✓ Facebook www.facebook.com/childpovertyactionnetwork

✓ Twitter @RenfrewCPAN

✓ Poverty Lens Tool (CYHNEO)
Characters are all based on real people from Renfrew County, the game allows people to experience what it’s like to live in poverty by “walking a mile in their shoes”. Every choice has consequences. Great at challenging those who believe that poor people are responsible for their situation!
Games

Poverty Survival Game

The game is truly thought provoking and builds a better understanding of the issues related to poverty, and the tough decisions that low income families have to make in order to survive.
Poverty Jeopardy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty By Community</th>
<th>Poverty at School</th>
<th>Poverty Potpourri</th>
<th>Program and Policy Blunders</th>
<th>Poverty and Health</th>
<th>“Dole” and the dole</th>
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✓ Just like the TV show, fun, and educational.
✓ Teaches groups facts and figures about child poverty in a fun way. Excellent for all ages.
Advocacy

**Political**

- Working alone and with partner organizations we advocate to all levels of government

**Community**

- Working with other organizations/businesses/and others within the county and beyond to help clients in need

- Finding various items needed (i.e. food, diapers, eye glasses, sports equipment, bikes, transportation, washer, dryer etc.)

- Advocating for services when clients have been denied

- Taking our concerns to the media on behalf of clients
Reminding Politicians about their Promise to our Children

Child Poverty Candlelight Vigil

- Held in November to “shed light” on child poverty, out in the dark and the cold where child poverty lives
- Calls on our federal politicians to live up to their commitment, made in 1989 to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.
We believe that

“It Takes a Community to Raise a Child”

And this takes

Collaboration Partnerships Engagement
Collaboration, Partnerships and Engagement

- Alone we are snowflakes unique and fragile
- Together we can be an avalanche
For More Information

Please feel free to:

✔ Visit our website www.renfrewcountycpan.ca
✔ Tel: 613 735 2374 ext. 250
✔ Fax: 613 735 2378
✔ Email: cpan@phoenixctr.com
✔ ‘Like’ us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/childpovertyactionnetwork
✔ Follow us on Twitter: @RenfrewCPAN
Questions/Discussion
Resources

Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

Canadian Council on Social Development
http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/

Campaign 2000 - www.campaign2000.ca

National Anti-Poverty Organization
http://www.napo-onap.ca

Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change
http://accessalliance.ca/community/advocacy/colourofpoverty