

Reducing  Poverty
TOGETHER

POVERTY FACTS

FOR MUNICIPAL LEADERS

Poverty and its challenges – like food security, homelessness, employment, and mental health and addictions-- are complex and escalating concerns in our community.

Reducing Poverty Together, a collaborative of community stakeholders working together on a poverty reduction strategy for Oxford County, wants to hear from you as a newly elected leader in our community.

We want you to know the issues and facts when it comes to poverty. As a local municipal or school board official, your plans and priorities, as well as your understanding of poverty-related issues, will help shape our community moving forward.



REDUCING POVERTY TOGETHER

IN OXFORD COUNTY

The issues

As cost-of-living continues to escalate post pandemic, the gap between the rich and poor continues to widen. This will push more families and individuals, including children, into poverty. To address poverty we need to understand the following realities.

Income

In 2020, 9,930 people in Oxford County (8.3%) fell under the low income measure (LIM-After Tax) threshold—in other words, they were living in poverty. For instance, a person living alone with an income of less than \$26,503 per year is considered to be low income/living in poverty.

Housing

As of June 30, 2022, there were 2,468 households (not individuals) in Oxford waiting for Rent-Geared-to-Income housing. The average length of wait on the list for this type of housing is more than 7 years.

“Market rents” are simply unattainable for low-income households. The average rent in Woodstock was \$1,216 per month for a one bedroom (\$1,036 in London) in October 2021. Consider that the maximum shelter allowance for a single person on Ontario Works is \$390, and for a single person on Ontario Disability Support Program it is \$497.

Food

Demand for food at food programs (food banks, meal programs, etc.) in Oxford County has gone up 60-70% in the last year.

Reducing Poverty Together is a collaborative of community stakeholders (agencies, clubs, individuals, etc.) who are working together to oversee the development and direct the implementation of the Reducing Poverty Together Strategy. We seek to end poverty in Oxford County and improve the quality of life for all.

Employment

Economic growth is being adversely affected by a chronic labour shortage that has resulted in more than 1 million job opportunities in Canada going unfilled. More than 3,000 of those jobs are in Oxford County.

Mental health and addictions

Polling in March 2021 by the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) shows that Ontarians overall are experiencing a significant decline (52%) in mental health— only 35% consider their mental health to be “very good” or “excellent.” This is seen in Oxford, where last year’s COVID-19 Response survey showed a decrease of almost 50% in how people have assessed their mental health since the pandemic began. Living in poverty exacerbates an individual and family’s stress as they may be worrying about things like how to pay their rent, or if they will be able to put food on the table.

You play a role

While some of these issues are not solely local municipal issues, all municipalities play a role in addressing poverty and ensuring quality of life for its citizens. As an elected leader, you have a role to play.

We hope you will take an opportunity to connect about the information in this fact sheet and to discuss how you would work with community partners to address poverty.

For more information, please contact:

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