



Equitable Recovery = A Better Normal

An equitable recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic requires that people with low income, Indigenous people, women, people living with disabilities and other employment barriers have enough income and other resources to recover well.

In 2021, the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force called on all levels of government to prioritize its poverty reduction strategies and to invest in more programs that:

- lift people out of poverty, in a dignified manner, by ensuring they can afford basic needs—such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food, and health care;
- ensure economic barriers – such as daycare, transportation, racial and gender discrimination - are reduced,
- promote full participation in society and equitable opportunities for vulnerable people.

2021 Grey Bruce Poverty Related Data at a Glance

31% increase in number of people using community meal programs
300% increase in meals served in 2021 compared to 2019
27% increase in food bank usage
64 people (Bruce County) and 142 (Grey County) on By Name List
33 fatal opioid overdoses

The pandemic has increased the number of people in our communities who are struggling to afford food, find affordable homes and/or experiencing homelessness. It has also been demonstrated how those struggling with mental health and substance use disorders are more vulnerable to threats in rural communities. A collective response is needed. As an Action Table of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan we have worked hard in 2021 to support partners to meet these basic and strategic needs in our community.

Acknowledgements

We recognize the incredible work that over **52** Poverty Task Force members, volunteers and the staff have done in response to COVID19. A special thank you to the Bruce County, Grey County and the United Way of Bruce Grey for their leadership and support to the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force.

2021 IMPACT

Since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic, the Poverty Task Force's primary focus has been on building relations, coordination and communication with partners. In 2021:

- we supported front line staff and volunteers to respond to the COVID emergency;
- taking a health equity approach, we promoted and supported collective action being taken by partners to support access to services,
- we supported Giiwe Circles and partners to respond to the COVID outbreak and opioid crisis at Saugeen First Nation,
- we participated in the Homelessness Enumeration and Home Take Over Pilot,
- we contributed to the design of research surveys and public consultations on housing, homelessness, precarious living, food insecurity and income insecurity;
- we produced 41 community updates in 2021 (a total of 83 to date) with poverty related data, research findings, resources & services;
- we maintained lists of resources & services on our [COVID 19 Resource Page](#),
- we identified gaps in services in Action Group meetings and took action resulting in new mobile pilot programs,
- we advocated to all levels of government on challenges & barriers for vulnerable people in rural communities under the pandemic with several position papers/calls to action.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2020/2021	PROJECTS	OUTCOME
From Band-Aids to Bridges: moving forward with Community Food Centres	Rural FoodRescue.ca Hub Model Pilot Endorsement of BG Food Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidation of program. Tracking data on foodbrucegrey.com • Set aside in 2021
Striving for Health Equity: access to services	Health Equity Tool Training Oral Health Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training stopped but health equity screening used to analyze gaps • Access to healthcare is a priority under pandemic
From Housing to Homes: prioritizing safe and affordable homes	Rentsafe Survey Giiwe Circles to address Indigenous Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord survey carried out and tenant survey designed • Giiwe Circles carried out
Enough to Thrive On: seeking income security solutions	Income Tax Filing increase Promote living wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations to deliver curbside and mobile Tax Clinics • Precarious work studies
We All Live Here: ensuring diversity, inclusion and engagement.	Deliver Getting Ahead program Community Voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 of 5 planned sessions were completed. • Ad hoc meetings of Community Voices

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX PROGRAM

1,644 calls = 7,227 mins

Heaviest months
Mar (651 calls)
Apr (409 calls)
May (377 calls)

323 texts

785 tax returns filed

PTF Budget Report 2021

Total Grants \$61,752*

Funding went towards:

- Wages & Benefits for full-time Planning Network Coordinator
- PTF Admin/equipment/virtual meeting expenditures
- Tamarack Membership
- Community Voices admin/meeting expenditures
- Website design, updates & maintenance
- Grey Bruce Community Income Tax Clinic phone

Grants from Bruce County, Grey County and the United Way of Bruce Grey.

WHO are we? BRUCE GREY POVERTY TASK FORCE

Multi-sector leadership:

52⁺ of partners **representing**



NON PROFITS

GOVERNMENT

LEARNING
INSTITUTIONS

COMMUNITY
VOICES

COMMUNITY
BASED GROUPS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Virtual Meetings in 2021

6 Bi-Monthly Poverty Task Force
50 Weekly Housing/Homelessness Community of Practice Group
25 Bi-weekly Food Security Action Group
8 Monthly Income & Employment Security/Health Equity Action Group

5 Housing Action Group
Ad Hoc Bridges Out of Poverty Action Group
Ad Hoc Community Voices
12 Project Working Groups & Advisory Committees with extensive invested time

Social Media Platforms

Website: <http://povertytaskforce.com>
Twitter: @BGTaskForce

Facebook: BruceGreyPovertyTaskForce
povertytaskforce@unitedwaybg.com

52+

Partner organizations

1,025

Facebook/Blog subscribers

689

Twitter followers

83

Community Updates

Projects, Networks & Research Collaboration

Rentsafe Project & Advisory Committee
<https://rentsafe.ca/owensound>

Giiwe Sharing Circle Project
<https://mwikwedong.com/program/giwe>

Community Safety & Well-Being Plan Action Table
<https://cswbp-brucegrey.ca/>

Vital Signs Advisory Committee
<https://www.communityfoundationgreybruce.com/impact/vitalsigns/>

Community Ending Poverty/Mentor- Mid-Ontario, Rural Network, Tamarack Institute -
<https://bit.ly/3HKViQf>

Homelessness Enumeration - Grey County/Bruce County Housing/By Name List

Bruce Grey Data Information Sharing Collaborative
<https://bgdisc.ca/>

Precarious Living Study Advisory Committee
<https://www.planningboard.ca/reports/precario/usingstudy/>

Community Drug & Alcohol Strategy Advisory Committee - <https://drugstrategy.org/>

Good Food Box Coordinating Committee

Grey County Age-Friendly Community Advisory Committee

Hometake Over Project
Grey Bruce Health Unit/Grey County Housing

CHALLENGES FOR 2022

Moving into 2022, we continue to seeing an increase in the number of new people accessing food banks, community meal programs and housing support.

The pandemic continues and the crisis has increased the stress on all households. Individuals and families are struggling due to lack of employment, lack of affordable housing and finding money in the budget for food. We are also seeing an increase in the number of people dying of fatal overdoses. In the month of January 2022, we know of at least 5 fatal overdoses (source: YMCA Housing).

While we continue to support new and expanded operations, we are also focused on consolidating short-term efforts into more sustainable programs:

- we shall continue to support a rural foodrescue.ca model and a community gardens network,
- we shall support mobile health outreach efforts to expand its geographic coverage and to integrate with existing services and/or support the return of services that had closed in 2020 or 2021,
- we shall also take the lessons learned from virtual & curbside services to support pilots such as mobile income tax clinics,
- with the experience of CERB and pandemic pay wages we shall build upon the momentum to support a living wage and basic income.

In November 2021, the Poverty Task Force members developed a Collective Impact Framework and each Action Group prioritized their collective actions. These are summarized on the next pages (pages 6 & 7) of this report.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION CALL TO ACTIONS

We are committed to building better relations and to increase members' Indigenous knowledge to allow a new narrative. So while we have named only Giiwe Circles as a specific project, all of our collective impact work will be guided by these OFIFC principles:

- Respect Indigenous culture and spiritualities as a foundation for Indigenous identity.
- Understand and respect Indigenous leadership
- Respond to Indigenous-led community priorities
- Collaborate and co-develop programs with Indigenous communities
- Respect Indigenous Diversity - no pan-Indigenous programming
- Ensure equity for all Indigenous people including women, Two Spirit, Indigi-queer and LGBTQIA+
- Build trust and relations through Indigenous-led sharing circles

2X2 FOR 2022

COLLECTIVE IMPACT ACTION

H

HOUSING SECURITY

Community Conversations/Toolkit
Rentsafe Research/Precarious Living

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



I

INCOME SECURITY

Living Wage Campaign
Income Tax Filing Network

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



V

COMMUNITY VOICES

Bridges Out of Poverty/CV
Giiwe Sharing Circles

1 NO
POVERTY



E

EQUITY TO HEALTHY FOOD

Rural Foodrescue model
Community Garden Network

2 ZERO
HUNGER



S

STRIVING FOR HEALTH EQUITY

Dimensions of Poverty Hub/BGDISC
Access to Health Care Services

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



COLLECTIVE IMPACT FRAMEWORK



**BRUCE GREY
POVERTY
TASK FORCE**
Our Voice is Power

Our collective impact efforts seek to inform policies and support upstream interventions to address poverty-related community issues. Together we have a common agenda, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone infrastructure.

Collective Action

The Poverty Task Force is made up of 52+ organizations that work across priority sectors to reinforce activities that contribute to reducing poverty.

Evidence-informed/best practices

We draw upon best practices examined from a rural context and adapt practices.

Data Driven

We collect local data on social determinants of health, including housing/homelessness, food insecurity, employment and income.

HOUSING SECURITY

Host a series of Community Conversations on Housing and the intersection with poverty.

Develop Housing Conversation Facilitation Tool Kit and materials.

Create safe spaces for meaningful learning to engage communities with data/information and build relationships toward solutions

COMMUNITY VOICES

Ensure the Community Voices group of grounded experts are actively engaged with PTF collective action.

Contribute to programs that empower people and contribute to their life stabilization.

Contribute to Indigenous-led Giiwe Sharing Circles.

FOOD SECURITY

Develop rural food rescue programs to create and strengthen alliances between rural food banks, meal programs, and community gardens to become good food organizations.

Build bridges between Community Gardens and all ethnicities and demographics to enhance diversity and the sharing of food knowledge

INCOME SECURITY

Lead Community Volunteer Income Tax Program Network to identify gaps in service and identify locations “where people are at” to provide more services.

Contribute to a Living Wage Grey Bruce Campaign to engage with employers to reduce precarious employment.

DATA

Contribute to participatory data collection and analysis on poverty-related issues such as housing, precarious work, etc.

Develop M&E strategy for reporting against IMPACT Report baseline. Integrate this with the work of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

HEALTH EQUITY

Contribute to Home Takeovers pilot project in Grey County.

Contribute to Mobile Health Outreach Program to ensure access to services for vulnerable populations.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION CALL TO ACTIONS

We shall build better relations, members' Indigenous knowledge to allow a new narrative. The following OFIFC principles will guide our work:

- Respect Indigenous culture and spiritualities as a foundation for Indigenous identity.
- Understand and respect Indigenous leadership
- Respond to Indigenous-led community priorities
- Collaborate and co-develop programs with Indigenous communities
- Respect Indigenous Diversity - no pan-Indigenous programming
- Ensure equity for all Indigenous people including women, Two Spirit, Indigi-queer and LGBTQIA+
- Build trust and relations through Indigenous-led sharing circles