



Report on the Poverty Reduction Forum, April 4<sup>th</sup> 2013:  
Community Consultation-Based Action Plan  
For The Halton Poverty Roundtable



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## Report on the Poverty Reduction Forum: April 4<sup>th</sup> 2013

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### Background

At the Halton Poverty Roundtable's Poverty Reduction Forum on Thursday April 4<sup>th</sup> at the Oakville Conference Centre, a community consultation took place. The goals of the day were to educate the community on the Social Assistance Review being undertaken by the provincial government and to develop a community action plan. Approximately 200 participants were present, representing various sectors, backgrounds and lived experiences.

While the program for the forum was focused on the recent Commission for the Review on Social Assistance, the many changes that are being proposed, and how these changes will affect recipients of social assistance, this focus facilitated conversations on the many of the contributing factors to poverty. The flyer promoting the forum is attached to this report, as is the event program and group discussion questions.

### Methodology

The intent behind holding a community consultation before creating an action plan was to make sure that all of the endeavours and initiatives that will be undertaken by the HPRT are reflective of community needs, feedback and realities. It also reflects the need for all members of our community to contribute to the task of eradicating poverty in Halton. The responsibility to achieve progress is not solely that of the Roundtable members.

As per the attached group discussion questions at each table participants were given time to reflect, discuss and brainstorm ideas based on the information, stories and thoughts presented throughout the day. The groups then recorded their feedback and presented it to the plenary group. In addition to collecting feedback in this manner, evaluation forms were also distributed, asking participants to provide recommendations for the day. Most importantly over the course of the day every participant was asked: What can you/your organizations do as we move forward? What undertakings are we prepared to make? What will be your/our contribution?

### Milestones and Highlights

Action by the HPRT has already begun. The Roundtable has been engaged in and championed some of the ideas for change that were identified at the forum and will continue to do so. Attached to this report is a brief summary of highlights and milestones for the Halton Poverty Roundtable over the past two years. The highlights section also provides an overview of the direction of the organization, areas of interest as well as achievements.

Going forward, the feedback from the forum will shape the direction for the next year for the Roundtable. Additionally, attached to this report is a commitment form that we encourage anyone who wishes to assist in HPRT's future endeavours and projects to fill out – we welcome volunteers and hope to engage more citizens of Halton in poverty reduction.

## Key Themes and Action Plan

### Awareness & Education; Putting An End To Stigma

Many of the discussions that transpired at the Poverty Reduction Forum began with the need to end the stigma of poverty.

- Action:
  - i. Educate the Halton community about the realities of poverty in this region.
  - ii. Conduct awareness campaigns about issues facing those living in poverty.
  
- Implementation Plan:
  - i. Continue the media campaign that leverages the current social media outlets being used by the HPRT (interactive website and twitter) as well as reaching out to news media outlets. There has been great success in the media campaign to date with the Poverty Series in the Metrolinx newspapers and Post-Poverty Reduction Forum series in the Toronto Star.
  - ii. Host community conversations that bring together different community groups to learn about the issues together, e.g. a workshop on the Income Security as a Key Determinant of Health for health professionals.
  - iii. Engage youth in activities to eradicate poverty through developing awareness campaigns in schools, libraries, community centres.
  - iv. Have “Neighbourhood Walk-Arounds” and community dinners to engage the community, create relationships and help further end stigma.
  - v. Encourage a community wide “Do the Math” campaign.

### Collaborate & Create Partnerships

The importance of building community relationships and partnerships was highlighted throughout discussions at the Poverty Reduction Forum. Specifically mention was made of working on shared initiatives undertaken by organizations doing similar work in poverty reduction. As well, a gap that was identified was the lack of relationships with employers, and the business community. There is a need to start discussions of the barriers of entry/re-entry into the work force, the valuing of lived and volunteer experiences as well as previous work experience and discussing adequate wages.

- Action:
  - i. Create partnerships with other poverty reduction related organizations so as to amalgamate resources and create bigger impact.
  - ii. Begin building relationships with the private sector to spread awareness, garner support and conduct future community conversations and discussions around issues facing those living in poverty.
  
- Suggested Implementation Plan:
  - i. Increase community representation on the HPRT Income Security Working Group.
  - ii. Convene community organizations and groups and individuals for community conversations, education campaigns and for future forums.
  - iii. Assist organizations working on similar initiatives.



- iv. Reach out to the business community and convene conversations around poverty.
- v. Begin a series of breakfasts for the business community, to educate the sector on the issues facing those living in poverty, the role the business community can play to help and start to build potential partnerships.

## Convene & Change

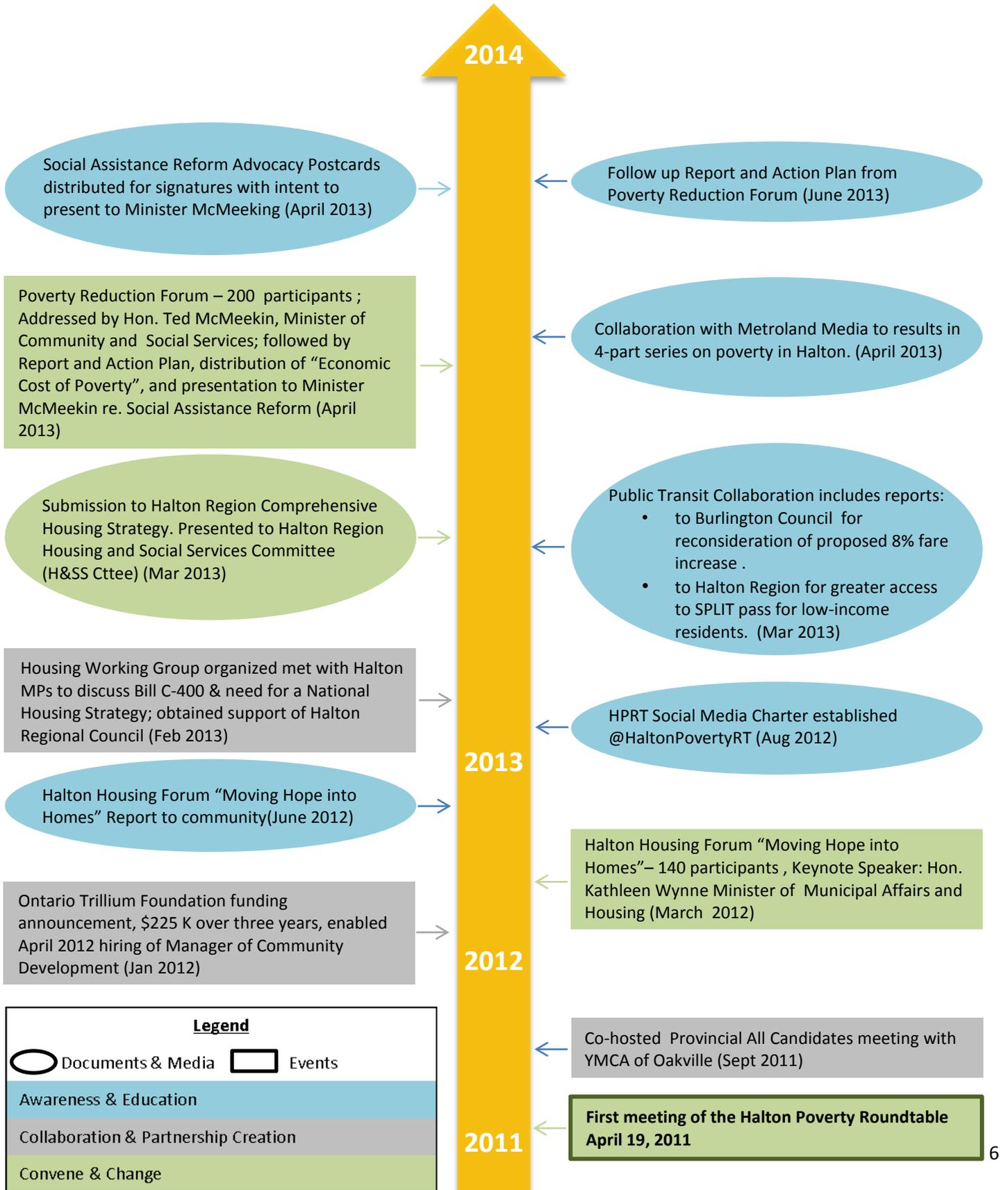
Lastly, one of the main recommendations that came out of the Poverty Reduction Forum was that the HPRT should engage the decision-makers in our community and advocate for long-term systemic change.

- Action:
  - i. Build strong relationships with the elected officials in the Halton region, and all key-decision makers.
  - ii. Partner and align with other poverty reduction organizations to propose changes to systems and policies regionally, provincially or nationally.
- Implementation Plan:
  - i. Convene conversations and provide recommendations for potential changes for the current Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Supports Program in the region
  - ii. Partner with other organizations and hold meetings with elected officials to further those already established relationships and discuss the issues facing individuals living in poverty and systemic changes that are needed.
  - iii. Present proposed changes and recommendations to the Halton Region at Council meetings.
  - iv. Raise awareness and advocate for a Living Wage.

## Conclusion

The Halton Poverty Roundtable thanks all individuals and organizations that took part in help shaping such a productive day. The Poverty Reduction Forum was a chance for the Halton community to come together to listen, learn and discuss – taking the first step in creating an action plan for the HPRT to assist in ending poverty in Halton. The action plan will help in providing direction for the HPRT Income Security working group when creating their annual operational work plan each year, and will act as an accountability piece when reviewing projects and initiatives being undertaken by the group

## HPRT Highlights and Milestones



# Poverty Reduction Forum

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013

9:00 AM-3:00 PM

Oakville Conference and Banquet Centre  
2515 Wycroft Rd. Oakville, ON

[WWW.HPRTPOVERTYFORUM.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://WWW.HPRTPOVERTYFORUM.EVENTBRITE.COM)



HALTON, ON

## EMPOWERING AND BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES IN HALTON

For the Halton Poverty Roundtable, developing and supporting the leadership of those who experience injustice is at the forefront of the way we work. Listening to those who experience injustice must be the first step in formulating a response. This is a key part of the Poverty Reduction Forum.

The focus of the day is on the development of an action plan on Social Assistance for the Halton Poverty Roundtable to lead in Halton, further enhancing poverty reduction strategies in the region.

The forum will be a day that helps the Halton community learn about the recent Commission for the Review of Social Assistance review followed by a panel of members of peer groups who have been active in poverty eradication advocacy. We hope to provide a day that will convene community conversations about income security, bettering social assistance and helping to eradicate poverty in Halton.

### REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Please register by going to: [www.hpirtpovertyforum.eventbrite.com](http://www.hpirtpovertyforum.eventbrite.com).

To register by phone call (905) 635-3131 ext. 302

Lunch will be provided and registration is FREE.

For transportation assistance please contact Anna Kiani [anna@haltonpovertyroundtable.com](mailto:anna@haltonpovertyroundtable.com)

For more information please contact Sabaah Choudhary [schoudhary@haltonpovertyroundtable.com](mailto:schoudhary@haltonpovertyroundtable.com)

**Opening Remarks**  
Marc Hamel, Co-Chair HPRT

**Keynote**  
Jennefer Laidley,  
Income Security Advocacy Centre

**MC & Spoken Word Artist**  
Greg Frankson, aka Ritalin

**Panel Discussion Peer Led Coalitions**  
Put Food in the Budget  
Voices for Change  
Women at the Centre  
Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits  
Stitching Our Own Social Safety Net  
ODSP Action Coalition

**Guest Speakers**  
Paul Bates, DeGroote School of Business  
Honourable Ted McMeekin,  
Minister of Community and Social Services

**Wrap-up**  
June Cockwell, Co-Chair HPRT



## Halton Poverty Roundtable: Poverty Reduction Forum Agenda

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
<b>9:00 AM-9:30 AM</b>	Registration and networking
<b>9:30 AM-9:45 AM</b>	Welcome Address and The Economic Cost of Poverty by Marc Hamel, Co-Chair, HPRT
<b>9:45 AM-10:30 AM</b>	Key Note Address by Jennefer Laidley
<b>10:30 AM-11:30 AM</b>	Panel Discussion with Peer Led Coalitions (introduced by Greg): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put Food in the Budget</li> <li>• Voices For Change</li> <li>• Stitching Our Own Social Safety Net</li> <li>• ODSP Action Coalition</li> <li>• WomenattheCentre</li> <li>• Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits (CAWDB) in Hamilton</li> </ul>
<b>11:30 AM-11:45 AM</b>	Break
<b>11:45 AM-12:45 PM</b>	Breakout sessions; divide the group into working groups to brainstorm action
<b>12:45 PM-1:30 PM</b>	Lunch
<b>1:30 PM-2:00 PM</b>	Report back, the groups will present their main discussion points.
<b>2:00 PM-2:30 PM</b>	Spoken Word performance by Greg Frankson aka Ritalin
<b>2:30 PM-2:40 PM</b>	A reflection by Paul Bates, McMaster University
<b>2:40 PM – 2:50 PM</b>	The Honourable Ted McMeekin, Minister, Ministry of Community and Social Services
<b>2:50 PM-3:00 PM</b>	Closing remarks, June Cockwell Co-Chair, HPRT



## **Poverty Reduction Forum Breakout Session Discussion Questions:**

### **Reviewing:**

What did you hear this morning that resonated with you?  
That moved you?  
That was of value to you?

### **Scanning:**

Who is here? Who is represented?  
What is going on around us?  
In our neighbourhoods?  
In our region?  
In our province?

### **Planning:**

What can we do as a community?  
What can move us forward?  
How can we overcome barriers for progress?

### **Acting:**

What can you/your organizations do as we move forward?  
What undertakings are we prepared to make?  
What will be your/our contribution?

### **Moving Forward:**

How do you want to be involved: do you want to be informed, involved or play a leadership role?

## PEER LED COALITIONS

### ODSP ACTION COALITION

<http://www.odspaction.ca/>

The ODSP Action Coalition is a province-wide network of people with lived experience on Ontario Disability Program, disability organizations, community agencies, anti-poverty groups and community legal clinics. We push for improvements to the ODSP so that people with disabilities can live with justice and dignity

### PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET

<http://putfoodinthebudget.ca/>

The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes every person in Ontario has a right to an income that ensures a person can live a life of health and dignity. PFIB stresses that nutritious food is essential to good health and that social justice occurs when wealth is re-distributed from the wealthy to the poor.

### STITCHING OUR OWN SOCIAL SAFETY NET

<http://stitchingoursocialsafetynet.webs.com/>

The Stitching our Own Social Safety Net campaign was started in November of 2012 by a group of low income psychiatric survivors, along with two agencies in Toronto: Houselink Community Homes and the Dream Team. This group is very concerned about the unraveling of our social safety net. This campaign believes that in order for people to escape poverty, the government must be looking at improving all aspects of the safety net: social assistance needs a lot of improvement for sure, but also, there needs to be safe affordable housing, good schools, affordable post secondary education, affordable daycare, living wage jobs, and an accessible and effective health care system for all.

### WOMENATTHECENTRE

<http://womenatthecentre.com/>

The WomenatthecentrE is a non-profit organization of women survivors of gender-based violence, committed to the eradication of violence against women. As women with the lived experiences, we are committed to documenting and sharing our experiences and lessons learned as a result, which is critical to effecting change in our communities. Our goal is to support the inclusion of and be guided by the voices of women survivors in the work to eradicate violence from women's lives.

### VOICES FOR CHANGE

<http://www.voicesforchange.ca/>

Voices for Change Halton is a grass roots organization whose intentions are simple. We believe in the end of poverty. We believe that shelter, food and dignity are human rights. We believe that poverty in Halton can be eradicated through education, advocacy and activism, working in solidarity with active community partnerships. Our group formed in 2011, supported by Halton Community Legal Services through a grant from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation to build a community based strategy for civic engagement by people with lived experience of poverty, engaged in poverty elimination activities.



## CAMPAIGN FOR ADEQUATE WELFARE AND DISABILITY BENEFITS IN HAMILTON

<http://www.inform.hamilton.ca/record/HAM2663?UseCICVw=82>

Members of the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits (CAWDB) are people who are currently on Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program and others who live with low-income. We represent a cross-section of more than 90,000 people in Hamilton alone. We are mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, grandparents, wives, husbands, children, friends and neighbours. We are people. Since March 2003 when the Campaign began, 95% of our memberships are those who are on social assistance or living with low-income.



## Poverty Reduction Forum Commitment Form

Please take a few moments to reflect on the action plan for the HPRT, as well as your personal interests and expertise, and indicate your level of commitment below:

**1. Please indicate your level of commitment:**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
I am committed to taking on a leadership role as a volunteer for the Halton Poverty Roundtable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am committed to being involved as a volunteer for the Halton Poverty Roundtable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am committed to staying informed with the projects and updates of the Halton Poverty Roundtable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I/my organization can contribute resources (i.e., financial, in-kind, web expertise, supplies, location...) to the work of the Roundtable. Please specify below	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ways I/my organization can support the work of the Roundtable _____		

**2. Please indicate any other supports that you may require to help you participate fully in the initiatives and events of the Roundtable:**

**5. Any comments/suggestions you want to provide?**

**Name (please print)**

**Signature**

**Contact Information**