

**Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN)**  
**Wednesday, January 22, 2020**  
**9am-11:30am, Niagara Falls Public Library**

**Present:** Aidan Johnson (Chair), Glen Walker (Past-Chair), Natalie Chaumont, Holly Anderson, Jen Hay, Ryan Hilimoniuk, Marc Todd, Chris Walsh, Laura Martin, Melanie Wessel, Lori Kleinsmith, Ashley Chiarello, Krista Butters, Jennifer Sauve, Chris Clarke, Cassie Ogunniyi, Deanna Villella, Joseph Viltri, Megan Haan, Anne Watters, Maya Mercier, Mark Newman, Valerie Leitch, Becky Western-MacFayden, Greg Shupe, Kim O'Rourke, Ursula Hudson, Sarah, Catherine Livingston, Carolyn Bones Poley, Angela Browne, Julie Gregory, Joan Christensen, and Rachel Gillmore

Item	Discussion
<b>Welcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting minutes for November 27, 2019, were approved as written</li> <li>• The agenda was approved as written</li> <li>• Introductions around the table</li> </ul>
<b>Coordinating Committee Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current bank account holds \$5,130.46</li> <li>• Reminder to complete membership renewal if you haven't already – NPRN has no membership fee, but donations to NPRN and the work of the Network are welcome</li> <li>• Recruitment               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We are looking for a Lead for the Social Assistance Table                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ You do not need to participate in the larger table, if you wanted to participate in a particular Priority Table instead</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• As part of our work, we need further engagement on our Priority Tables from our Roundtable members, if you have questions or are interested in an issue, please talk to Rachel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If there is an area of interest that you think you would be able to help with, we are happy to have conversations with your organization/community leaders whenever there is a good fit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• New Coordinating Committee Roles, 2020-2022               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All roles acclaimed, as there was no competition                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jennifer Gauthier – Vice-Chair</li> <li>▪ Krystal Snider – Member at Large</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Addition of Past-Chair role to NPRN structure               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved by Melanie Wessel, Seconded by Lori Kleinsmith</li> <li>• New role approved, Glen will continue as Past-Chair for the next year</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<p><b>Update on Brock University Evaluation of Niagara Prosperity Initiative (NPI):</b> Chris Walsh, Research Coordinator, Brock University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have been contracted to assess impact of NPI – connecting with community to gather various perspectives in order to shape the understanding of how NPI has functioned</li> <li>• Looking at processes – what NPI uses to choose, track and follow NPI projects               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact – what impact the projects that have been funded have had on the community</li> <li>• Need – see what need there is in the community and how NPI has fit into that need</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To date have conducted hundreds of interviews with participants, clients, service providers, etc.</li> <li>• Have conducted an environmental scan to understand poverty in Niagara and where people get their information from regarding poverty in Niagara, as well as an academic literature review</li> <li>• Looking to review how NPI reports data and evaluates themselves, as well as how the grants themselves are reviewed by community members and whether it is the best approach</li> <li>• Along with assessing NPI's impact on organizations, etc. this project is assessing the potential impact of NPI's work on people living with a low income in Niagara through a broad telephone survey to a random sample of Niagara residents living below the Low Income Measure (for more information on LIM see here, <a href="https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lim-mfr-eng.htm">https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2012002/lim-mfr-eng.htm</a>)</li> <li>• The evaluation will be consolidated in a report published in January 2021, that publishes findings, expert commentary, and recommendations to the Region regarding NPI and poverty in Niagara</li> <li>• In second half of this year, there will be further community consultations presenting early findings, but the final report will be available to download online, but will also be distributed by NPRN</li> <li>• If you would like more information about this evaluation, please see the project website: <a href="https://brocku.ca/npi-evaluation/">https://brocku.ca/npi-evaluation/</a></li> <li>• If you would like to connect with the NPI Evaluation team to provide input or a request, please email <a href="#">Rachel</a> or <a href="#">Chris</a></li> </ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<p><b>Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy Community Engagement Session:</b> Sandy Dupuis, Manager of Compliance and Community Engagement, Community Services, Niagara Region, and Michelle Johnston, Policy Advisor, Community Services, Niagara Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Here to ensure that the Region's submission to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) is informed by the non-profit sector</li> <li>• Facilitation exercise to gather input regarding: what is working in programming from the provincial government regarding poverty alleviation; what should the province start doing; what is not working?</li> <li>• Community Services is working collaboratively with other stakeholders to develop a submission in the next 60 days. As this work moves toward being presented to council, there will be opportunities to support the submission. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to put forward this submission jointly, and any drafts will be shared to representatives from NPRN prior to submission</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This submission is going forward to MCCSS, and is not an inter-ministerial project, thus it is worth noting that there are key elements (such as transportation) that cannot be addressed solely by this ministry. There is an opportunity to address this gap in the submission that gets put forward.</li> </ul> <p>An online survey is available to give feedback to Ontario Government. Survey is open until March 30, 2020 - <a href="https://engage.ontario.ca/en/engagement-initiatives/developing-new-poverty-reduction-strategy-ontario">https://engage.ontario.ca/en/engagement-initiatives/developing-new-poverty-reduction-strategy-ontario</a></p>
<b>Priority Table Updates</b>	<p>Affordable Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library info sessions have been scheduled from January –March 2020. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Name: RENTING IN NIAGARA- Housing Supports and Tenant Rights</li> <li>○ Description: 2 hour session led by Niagara Poverty Reduction Network and Niagara Community Legal Clinic</li> <li>○ Objectives: 1.Learn about housing programs in Niagara and how to access them; 2. Know your rights as a tenant.</li> <li>○ Topics will include: maintenance and repair issues; common grounds for eviction, the process and amount of notice required; when can a landlord enter a tenant's unit</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Audience for clients or individuals experiencing housing instability and their rights (as presented by Legal Clinic staff)
- NPRN representatives will introduce network, priority table, and available resources at each
- Developing more of a work plan for next steps for Affordable Housing at the next meeting
- All meetings held the first Friday of the month at The Hope Centre, Welland; if you'd like to be added to contact list email Rachel

#### Business Engagement

- New lead of Table, Kim O'Rourke
- Planning to meet in early February
- Looking for input on what next focus should be, along with working to engage possible Living Wage employers – if have ideas, email Rachel

#### Government Relations & Advocacy

- Letters out early January to connect better with municipal elected officials
- Looking to develop closer relationships with government officials
- Have opportunity to present at Ontario pre-budget hearings

#### Health Equity

- Have formerly been focused on HEART project, but now the project is stand-alone and the Health Equity Priority Table is in transition
- Have been doing some preliminary work toward advocacy about mobile screening bus funding being cut
- Currently coordinating working meeting with focus on next steps for the table – if you have ideas, please forward to Rachel or attend the next meeting

#### Marketing & Communications

- Work on social media strategies and website development
- REMINDER: Those with social media accounts (personal and agency based) please follow NPRN on twitter and facebook, and share material as you can

#### Social Assistance

- SARNN has voted to merge into NPRN under this priority table
- Marc Todd will serve as transitional chair
- Group will be focused specifically on ODSP and OW, but will include other financial programs from the province as well
- Looking on how we can advocate on how those programs can be better administered
- Changes coming to Disability definitions, as well as Employment transformation (Niagara is a prototype community)
  - How employment opportunities are rolled out through social assistance will be changed, and we are still waiting to hear who the manager will be for the region
- Social Assistance reform: change in disability, but also rate structure changes – want to look at this as well
- If you are interested in these issues, please connect with Rachel
- First table meeting is February 18th, 1:30pm at Community Care St. Catharines (129 Church St)

	<p>Wages &amp; Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have 34 certified living wage supporters, and a few pending as well</li> <li>• Ongoing expressions of interest from employers in Niagara to Ontario Living Wage supporters</li> <li>• Primarily have seen private sector pursuing this designation, but still hoping to build in the non-profit sector</li> <li>• If somebody is interested in joining the living wage movement, please connect them to RACHEL and she can forward the information on to OLW</li> </ul> <p><i>If you have someone in your organization that could contribute to the Tables, please feel free to link them to Rachel, even if they do not regularly attend the larger NPRN Roundtable meeting</i></p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPI 2020 RFP opens shortly, with information session being held on February 4th in Thorold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For more information, please see <a href="http://www.niagaraprospertyinitiative.ca/">http://www.niagaraprospertyinitiative.ca/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ontario Seniors Dental Program has been launched in Niagara – occurring at Quest CHC and Niagara College <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two main eligibility requirements (65+, and income cutoff of \$19,300 for single; \$32,200 for couple)</li> <li>○ Online Application Link: <a href="https://seniors.accerta.ca/application/en">https://seniors.accerta.ca/application/en</a></li> <li>○ For more information: <a href="https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/dental/seniors-program.aspx">https://www.niagararegion.ca/living/health_wellness/dental/seniors-program.aspx</a></li> <li>○ Can pick up physical application at any community health centre</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tax season upcoming – worth reminding clients to ensure taxes are done in time and tax clinic appointments are booked <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Niagara Folk Arts will be included as site for tax clinics this year</li> <li>○ 211 NOT doing registration for tax clinics, will be able to provide where they are but not register</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Reminders</b></p>	<p>Please mark your calendar for the next meetings: 9:00-11:30 a.m. @NCDSB Offices 427 Rice Rd. Welland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesday, March 25, 2020</li> <li>• Wednesday, May 27, 2020</li> <li>• Wednesday, September 23, 2020</li> <li>• Wednesday, November 25, 2020</li> </ul> <p><b>Transportation assistance available upon request:</b>  Contact Rachel Gillmore for more information, <a href="mailto:info@wipeoutpoverty.ca">info@wipeoutpoverty.ca</a></p>