

NPRN Priority Table Updates

March 25, 2020



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Renting in Niagara Info Series:
 - Info sessions in Welland and Grimsby will be rescheduled.
 - From the sessions that have taken place in Fort Erie, Niagara Falls, Smithville, St. Catharines and Port Colborne we have reached 77 people and the common questions were regarding rent increases, renovations, time that cases at the Landlord and Tenant Board are taking and requirements for repairs.
- Tenant Organizing: this work is being started with MPP Jennie Stevens' staff, we are learning about other models and discussing the coordination of a small roundtable.
- Important info: Ontario has suspended all evictions until further notice.
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-puts-brakes-on-new-eviction-orders-postpones-ones-in-the-works-because-of-covid-19-1.5499926>

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS & ADVOCACY

- Over the past several months, the Government Relations and Advocacy Table has been focused on activities taking place at the provincial level.
- In January, we presented to the Government of Ontario Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs 2020 pre-budget Consultation hearing.
- Lately, table has been focused on the preparation of the NPRN submission to the 2020-2025 Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.

HEALTH EQUITY

Homeless Peer Support Program

- The Homeless Peer Support Program was rolled out in the Niagara Falls Emergency Department on January 9th. The pilot is ready to launch in the St. Catharines Emergency Department, however has been postponed due to COVID-19.
- There are currently two peer support workers who have been trained and working to support individuals. The team is looking for a third member to ensure a diverse representation of peer support workers.
- Staff at the emergency department are very supportive of the program and are very willing to connect potential participants.
- The peer support workers have also had very positive discussions with health care workers about the unique needs and challenges of those who are homeless. There is a sense that these conversations have been positively influencing perceptions of health care workers and how they care for those who are homeless.
- Program has been put on hold during COVID-19.

Screen for Life Program

- The team had many conversations with Screen for Life team regarding the most effective way to encourage the Ministry of Health/ Cancer Care Ontario to reconsider the decision to de-fund the Screen for Life program. Possible ideas included media releases, petitions to legislative Assembly of Ontario and letter to the Minister of Health.
- The team did not have to follow through on these actions because the Ministry of Health decided to re-instate funding for the program, so operations will continue as usual for the program!

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- We are in the process of redesigning the NPRN website:
 - If any members would like to comment on website information they feel if necessary to be added, please send to info@wipeoutpoverty.ca
- We are also looking at possibilities to update the NPRN logo, stay tuned
- We are continuing with the social media campaign, a couple social media posts each month tied to poverty related issues
- We will be creating a new NPRN network brochure in April
- We are in the process of updating the speakers bureau presentation
- PUSH – The Film – postponed until further notice
- We are in search of a new Chair for the Marketing Operations Table as our current Chair is moving out of town in the next few months

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

- The Social Assistance Reform Network of Niagara (SARNN) has decided to merge into a priority table of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN). SARNN has been a network of front line agencies, organizations, individuals and government working together to review social assistance legislation and policies and advocate for progressive change in order to improve the lives of individuals and families living in low income and have been meeting since 1989.
- The **Social Assistance Priority Table** is in the beginning of development, and had their first meeting in February
- The work of this Priority Table will be looking at changes within the Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) as well as other government income / financial programs, and developing strategies to advocate for better solutions in the development and administration of these programs.

WAGES & WORK

- We have recently had three new living wage certifications presented at the Champion level, including Niagara Regional Housing. Living wage certificate presentations/photos will be on hold for the time being