
Niagara Region

REPORT TO: Co-Chairs and Members of Public Health and Social Services Committee

SUBJECT: Update on Poverty Report “A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region”

RECOMMENDATION

That this Committee recommend to Regional Council that:

1. this report be received for information; and that
2. staff be authorized to explore the recommended strategies and prepare a detailed report for subsequent consideration by Committee and Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In Niagara, approximately 14% of the population lives below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO).¹
- The four recommendations made in the report “*A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*” are:
 1. Decrease poverty through advocacy;
 2. Ensure appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty;
 3. Mitigate the negative effects of low income on children and youth through programs and services; and
 4. Monitor progress.
- As detailed in this report, several strategies linked to the recommendations are already in place.
- Progress includes the re-instatement of a bursary program, increased supported housing projects, the potential youth transitional supported housing project, the implementation of the Early Learning and Childhood Plan, and the work of the Niagara Integrated Planning Committee
- The provincial government announced several key initiatives including uploading of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the introduction of the Ontario Child

¹ “A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region”, June 2007 p 5. The LICO measure is a relative calculation as it is based on the percentage of income that individuals and families spend on the basic needs or necessities in comparison with the rest of Canadians. LICO defines poverty as the income level where household needs for food, clothing and shelter, will, on average take a share of pre-tax income that is 20% higher than the average family.

Benefit (OCB) which will result in restructuring of social assistance and savings for Niagara Region.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly associated with this report; however, if staff is authorized to prepare a subsequent report for consideration, financial investment may be \$1.5 million. Possible funding may be available from the anticipated savings resulting from the restructuring of social assistance. This investment represents approximately 4.4% of the total net costs for 2007 of \$34 million, gross costs \$154 million.

PURPOSE

In keeping with the Council Business Plan objective of Community and Social Well Being and the strategic action of “Coordinate a Community-Based Action for Poverty Reduction” and stemming from the recommendations in the report *“Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in the Niagara Region”*; this report has been prepared to:

- a) Highlight systemic policy changes needed at the provincial and federal level
- b) Provide background on poverty reduction initiatives in Canada and other jurisdictions
- c) Inventory current poverty reduction strategies²
- d) Propose local actions and strategies for exploration
- e) Introduce possible funding option.

BACKGROUND

Highlights of Systemic Policy Changes Needed at the Provincial and Federal Level

Local government has a role to play in systemic changes towards poverty reduction. Staff reports can be used to inform and develop Council’s position regarding issues such as:

- a) Increasing the amount of Working Income Tax Benefits
- b) Expanding eligibility for Employment Insurance
- c) Increasing the amount of Ontario Child Benefits
- d) Increasing investment in early learning and child development
- e) Increasing income assistance for food and shelter to lessen the social determinants of health gap
- f) Creating a national affordable housing strategy
- g) Continuing the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS).

² Appendix 1

Poverty Reduction Initiatives in Canada and Other Jurisdictions

The concerted effort by Canadians which began in the 1960's introduced Old Age Security and other fiscal measures that resulted in a dramatic reduction in the poverty rates among seniors.

In 1989, the House of Commons resolved to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000. Campaign 2000 was launched and included the six focus areas of child and family poverty, couples with children, sole support mother families, gap between rich and poor, food bank use and social exclusion.

Some municipalities echoed the provincial and federal commitments and began collecting and measuring indicators of child poverty. The following chart outlines some poverty reduction strategies in other jurisdictions. The chart also outlines Niagara's current position. Should proposed future strategies be implemented, all areas in the framework will be addressed.

Country / Jurisdiction	Strategy Summary	Framework					
		Early Childhood Education & Child Care / Youth	Tax Credits	Improve Health & Education / Monitor	Reduce social exclusion / increase access to services (e.g. housing, transit)	Increase Employment Opportunities	Immigration / Newcomers
United Kingdom (UK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1999, set target to reduce child poverty by half by 2010 and eradicate poverty by 2020 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 1987 established a 10 year national anti-poverty strategy with measures attached 	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of "Combat Poverty & Social Exclusion Act" in 2002. Goal is to achieve one of lowest levels of poverty among industrialized countries by 2013 	✓	✓		✓		
Hamilton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction established in 2005 	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Niagara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities Niagara established in 2002 to focus on poverty reduction Poverty Report commissioned in 2007 by Community Services & Public Health Dept's. -Framework is proposed for 2008-2011 recommendations 	✓		✓		✓	

Current Poverty Reduction Strategies in Niagara

A number of Niagara Region's Mayors and local and Regional Councillors have identified poverty as a priority. Various agencies and communities in Niagara are mobilizing efforts surrounding poverty. Opportunities Niagara was launched to address poverty³. The

³ Appendix 2 details the history and work of Opportunities Niagara

United Way of South Niagara has conducted research and responded to identified neighbourhoods in need of social, financial, and infrastructure investment. The kNOW Poverty group has mobilized a number of awareness programs. As well, numerous religious organizations work to raise awareness regarding this issue.

Following COM 27-2006, Community Services and Public Health staff have been working towards developing a local perspective on poverty. "*A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*" presentation was made to Public Health and Social Services Committee on September 6, 2007.

The report and presentation notes that 14% of Niagara residents, 12.7% of families and 15.6% of Niagara's children live below the LICO. Individuals experiencing the greatest depth of poverty include women and female-led single parent homes. Among those living in poverty, two-parent families have the largest depth of poverty being \$9,900 below the poverty line. There is a relationship between the experience of violence and chronic poverty and in general, the average income of adults who experienced abuse-related trauma is lower than those who did not.

A compelling rationale for investing in strategies to address the cycles of poverty and reducing the impact on the health of Niagara's children has never been clearer. Further, the over-representation of children in Niagara's poverty statistics has significant implications for Niagara's future if not addressed.

Recent Federal and Provincial Policy Changes

In 2007, the provincial and federal governments made strong commitments towards poverty reduction by committing to increase minimum wage to \$10.25 by 2010 and by introducing the Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB). The WITB is intended to be an incentive for low income earners to remain attached to the labour force. Although these two initiatives are modest, they are also a progressive movement towards tackling the issue of the working poor and child poverty.

Within the recent provincial budget, the government announced new investments aimed at Ontario's families, children, and individuals in need, including a new provincially funded, non-taxable Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) for low income families with children under 18 years of age. This benefit, which is 100% provincially funded, will mean a restructuring of social assistance as the children's portion of both Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will be integrated with the OCB. Staff has recently received more information regarding the implementation of OCB and a report to Council is planned for March 2008.

On August 20, 2007, the province also announced that municipalities will no longer be required to share in the costs of the ODSP. This move is meant to reduce the financial burden on municipalities. In 2007, Niagara Region contributed \$34 million towards the total \$154 million ODSP costs.

The two funding changes may allow Niagara the opportunity to reinvest these savings in action towards reducing poverty in our community. Staff will prepare options that will incorporate the best practices of other jurisdiction's approaches to poverty reduction. It is anticipated that the majority of the \$1.5 million should be used to implement strategies that respond to:

- Recommendation 1: Ensure appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty
- Recommendation 2: Mitigate the Negative Effects of Low Income on Children and Youth through Programs and Services

In keeping with the Niagara Region's Council Business Plan, endorsed on December 20, 2007, this report identifies strategies linked with the following Council objectives: responsive Region, community and social well-being, economic prosperity and integrated transportation system.

REPORT

Understanding is the first step towards mitigating the effects and eliminating the root of poverty. The frameworks used to examine the issue and make corresponding recommendations for poverty reduction strategy in Niagara were community impact, impact on the social determinants of health, and experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion, and measures of poverty.

Local Actions and Strategies

Strategies responding to the recommendations made in the "Legacy of Poverty?" report which are currently delivered by Niagara Region are provided in Appendix 1.

The following charts detail proposed local strategies and recommended future local investments and are based on the four recommendations identified in the "Legacy of Poverty?" report as well as best practices from the other jurisdictions noted earlier in this report.

Framework: Community Impact		
Recommendation #1		Future Strategy
Decrease poverty through Advocacy	1. (a) Public Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Niagara Integrated Planning Committee • Align each of the report recommendations with Niagara Regional Council Business Plan
	1. (b) Telling Niagara's Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement the developed marketing / media relations strategy and to work closely with Niagara media and other partners on increasing public awareness about poverty
	1. (c) Region Wide Transportation System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Opportunities Niagara - Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) application for a region-wide transportation system • Continue to participate in the Niagara Job Bus

The experiences and circumstances of individuals affect, and are effected by, their community. Questioning and gaining an understanding of community is critical to change. Examining poverty from this perspective, one “can begin to see the ways cycles of poverty, when left unaddressed, may erode the social fabric and safety of community and the overall health of the community”.⁴

Future strategies linked to implementing the recommendations have already begun. The recently established Niagara Integrated Planning Committee (NIPC) has been supported by the Niagara Region in partnership with many community agencies. Public Health and Community Services have developed and began implementing a marketing and advocacy strategy to share both the results and the recommendations of “*A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region*”. Several speaking engagements and media reports have featured the report. Community Services will also continue to work with Opportunities Niagara in support of the Niagara Job Bus and the application made to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for a region-wide transportation system.

Recommendation #2	Framework: Impact on the Social Determinants of Health	
		Future Strategy
Ensure appropriate and flexible supports which address the broader determinants of health for adults living in poverty	2. (a) Economic Development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with employers to fill emerging labour market needs
	2. (b) Increase people’s access and attachment to education and the labour force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a Community Services Bursary Program where individuals on social assistance can complete their post secondary education ^{New!} Continue to provide Wage Subsidy supports for Early Childhood Educators
	2. (c) Create a local housing strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement recommendations in Housing Strategy ^{5 New!}
	2. (d) Seek ways to better understand diversity in Niagara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Niagara Region’s Respect Equity Diversity Team to engage local newcomer agencies to develop diversity training for staff
	2.e) Increase access to social supports and social capital among marginalized adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local municipalities in understanding current services available in their communities (such as Emergency Energy Fund) so more families have access ^{New!} In connection with Smarter Niagara Planning principles and “understanding the Early Years” research establish a mechanism for investment in community investment plans for identified at-risk neighbourhoods ^{New!}
	2. (f) Contribute to community through volunteer work, involvement in community initiatives and leisure opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop PRO Family program using PRO Kids as the model

⁴ “A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region” 2007. p4

⁵ Niagara Regional Housing Plan, 2007

The link between poverty and social determinants of health increases the need for varied interventions to make a difference. “Poverty can impact access to social support networks, access to social services, children’s health outcomes, and individuals coping skills as well as educational outcomes.”⁶ As detailed in Appendix 1, many initiatives that respond to this recommendation are embedded in the work and mandates of Community Services and Public Health.

The rationale for these recommendations is to address the root causes and contributing factors to generational cycles of poverty and the resulting health implications. These strategies will also mitigate the experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion highlighted in recommendation three.

Recommendation #3	Framework: Experiences of powerlessness and social exclusion	
Mitigate the Negative Effects of Low Income on Children and Youth through Programs and Services	Future Strategy	
	3. (a) Decrease cost of essential supports and services such as housing and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist families to leave social assistance by accessing the Extended Employment Assistance available through Ontario Works legislation ^{New!} Increase the number of breakfast programs ^{New!}
	3. (b) Coordinated and equitable access to parenting resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health – Be a Great Parent Website ^{New!} Develop an integrated inventory of services offered to parents through the Ontario Early Years Centres and Family Resource Centres
	3. (c) Equitable, affordable and subsidized child care, school readiness and recreation and leisure programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of families that receive partial fee subsidy for child care while maintaining supports for low-income earners
3. (d) Recognize the varying degrees of need across Niagara’s 12 municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide funding to each local Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council to respond to child poverty in their community ^{New!} Provide funding to “at-risk” youth through youth serving agencies (e.g. Fort Erie Youth Pilot) ^{New!} 	

Of the recommendations contained within this report, the third one is focused directly on the lives of children living in poverty. To feel autonomy and control, one must experience connection to others. “People must see themselves as citizens, with rights and abilities to express opinions and acquire resources they need.”⁷ Strategies will require strengthened partnerships and increased coordination and planning across sectors and among stakeholders.

⁶ ibid p4

⁷ Lee, Bill. Pragmatics of Community Organization, 1997.

Recommendation #4	Framework : Measures of Poverty	
Monitor our Progress	Future Strategy	
	4. (a) Develop comprehensive Niagara Region-wide approach to assessing data and indicators of poverty and social inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support the Niagara Integrated Planning Committee, support Niagara Observatory ^{New!} • Support the development of Niagara Integrated Community Planning team in conjunction with Brock University and Regional Planning develop, metrics mapping, and research on Niagara's capacity • Develop reporting mechanisms linked to each of the strategies in this report

This framework is “used to define who lives in poverty and who does not.”⁸ The rationale for this recommendation is not only to celebrate success towards the goal of decreasing poverty in Niagara but also to increase community’s understanding of the relationship between the strategies used and the outcomes achieved.

Building on the four overarching recommendations identified in “*A Legacy of Poverty?*” report, new strategies are identified for implementation and success measures by 2011. This coincides with Council’s Business Plan timeframes and will contribute towards making Niagara a better place to “work, live and play”.

Funding Option

Within the recent provincial budget, the government announced new investments aimed at Ontario’s families, children and individuals in need, including a new provincially funded, non-taxable Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) for low income families with children under 18 years of age. The OCB is intended to increase the income of low income families by ensuring that families continue to receive children’s benefits when parents leave social assistance for employment and by allowing families in receipt of social assistance to keep a larger portion of benefits as their earnings increase. Families with a net income of up to \$20,000 a year would receive the full OCB amount which will grow from \$250 per child in 2007 to \$1,100 in 2011. The children’s portion of social assistance will be integrated with the OCB which is 100% provincially funded. Staff has recently received more information regarding the implementation of this benefit and a report to Council is planned for March 2008.

On August 20, 2007, the province also announced that municipalities will no longer be required to share in the costs of the ODSP. This move is meant to reduce the financial burden on municipalities. These changes will occur in three phases:

- Effective January 1, 2008, the province will assume responsibility for 100% of the cost for the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) Program for both OW and ODSP recipients.
- Effective January 1, 2009, the province will assume responsibility for 100% of the administrative costs for the ODSP.
- Over the two years of 2010-2011, the province will move from paying 80% to 100% of the costs of the benefits of the ODSP.

⁸“ A Legacy of Poverty? Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region”. P 4

In 2007, Niagara Region contributed \$34 million towards the total \$154 million ODSP costs. Investment of \$1.5 million represents approximately 4.4% of these expenses. Staff recommends further exploration of the strategies noted in this report in order to prepare a more detailed report to Committee and Council based on the summary below:

Recommendation	Strategy	Proposed Investment
1. Advocacy	1. Support Niagara Integrated Planning Committee 2. Align report recommendations with Council Business Plan 3. Media exposure 4. Opportunities Niagara's application for region wide transit system 5. Job Bus participation	\$75,000 (5%)
2. Adult Support based on Social determinants of health	1. Employment to labour market sectors 2. Education bursary ^{New!} , wage subsidy 3. Housing supports ^{New!} 4. Diversity training ^{New!} 5. Increase access to services (Emergency Energy Fund) 6. Community Investment for at-risk neighbourhoods ^{New!} 7. PRO Family program ^{new!}	\$600,000 (40%)
3. Children and Youth Services	1. Extended Employment Assistance ^{New!} 2. Expand knowledge about parenting ^{New!} 3. Inventory of services offered at OEYC and Resources Centres 4. Increase fee subsidy 5. Fund Mayor's Youth Advisory Councils to respond to poverty in their community ^{New!} 6. Fund services that respond to "at-risk" youth	\$750,000 (50%)
4. Monitor	1. Support Niagara Integrated Planning Council 2. Support Niagara Observatory ^{New!} 3. Enhance sharing of regional plan 4. Develop reporting mechanism linked to each strategy	\$75,000 (5%)

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Appendix 1 Current Public Health and Community Services Strategies linked to Recommendations
 Appendix 2 Opportunities Niagara – Summary of History and Strategies

Update on Poverty Report "A Legacy of Poverty?
 Addressing Cycles of Poverty and the Impact on Child Health in Niagara Region" (Appendix 1)

FRAMEWORK: COMMUNITY IMPACT					
Recommendation: #1					
Decrease Poverty Through Advocacy					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
1A <i>Public Policies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMSSA – policy advocacy • FCM – policy advocacy • SARC – political/policy advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOH policy advocacy • Working with Sick Children's Hospital to include pediatric social issues in Ontario medical school curriculum, • co-editor of issue of 'Pediatrics and Child Health' devoted to poverty • local advocacy via media, community groups re: child poverty in Niagara 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OMSSA – policy advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Children's Charter-localizes Niagara's commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niagara Integrated Planning Committee
1B <i>Telling Niagara's Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAEO success stories • SAEO representation on Literacy, FEMC, NTAB, Housing • Partner initiatives to assist people in poverty e.g. Community Forum for Service providers in NF's – gap analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Niagara Children's Planning Council – policy advocacy • Poverty issues education for staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services success stories • Early Years Niagara Children's Planning Council- policy advocacy • Local School Boards- policy advocacy through presentations to Niagara's four school boards 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing and advocacy strategy
1C <i>Region-wide transportation system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Bus contract and number of people who have obtained and maintained employment as a result of transportation being provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Bus - mobile public health clinic in cooperation with community agencies providing the homeless, vulnerable and geographically isolated persons in Niagara Region with health services 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities Niagara – Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) application

FRAMEWORK: IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH					
Recommendation: #2					
Appropriate And Flexible Supports Which Address The Broader Determination Of Health For Adults Living In Poverty					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
2A <i>Economic development initiatives</i>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage subsidies paid to Early Childhood Educators through Children's Services contracts with child care agencies 		Link investment of employment funding to identified labour market sectors
2B <i>Increase people's access and attachment to education & the labour force</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Job Placements (EJP) Community Placements Supports to Employment Program (STEP) Full Time Employment Benefits Advanced Child Care Payments Other Employment Assistance Activities Benefit (Formally Employment Start Up Benefits) Sector Placements e.g. Manufacturing, Production, Self Employment Basic Ed/Literacy training and educational supports to provide greater job skills Addiction Services to address life skills challenges and provide coaching supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) and School Health Secondary program work with adolescent mothers to link them to resources to complete high school education (AFSSN, LEAP, subsidized childcare) Community Mental Health links clients with long term and severe mental health issues to appropriate employment/education supports and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Care Fee Subsidy Family Resource Centres 		SAEO bursary program Children's Services Wage subsidy supports
2C <i>Create a local housing strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong liaison with Niagara Regional Housing, Community Cares, Project Share Homelessness Initiative funding initiatives Support to daily living programs Hostel C/M's to assist with transition from hostels to more permanent housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link clients at risk of homelessness with housing supports (Niagara Regional Housing, Community Cares, YWCA, Hannah House, Elijah House, Project Share) Community Mental Health nursing support to a homelessness initiative (that provides housing and mental health supports to individuals with serious mental illness who 			

FRAMEWORK: IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH					
Recommendation: #2					
Appropriate And Flexible Supports Which Address The Broader Determination Of Health For Adults Living In Poverty					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
		are homeless or at risk for homelessness).			
2D <i>Provide diversity training for staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAEO Diversity Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Diversity Working Group Diversity presentation/education provided to all PH staff at PH Education Day Dec 2006 Staff education re: poverty and its impacts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Diversity Committee 	
2E <i>Increase access to social supports & social capital among marginalized adults</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LEAP/Youth Programs- emphasis on developing social capacity i.e. Resiliency, 40 Developmental Assets, Work with youth to stay at school, transition to work world, address mental health issues Newcomer C/L's – emphasis on literacy, links with multi-cultural centres, immigration assistance Addiction Services – develop social competencies to address life skills barriers, utilize NADAS as central partner to assist client to work on issues of addiction that prevent ability to engage in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Mental Health program provides direct supports and links to those with long term mental health challenges to improve quality of life, reduce need for hospitalization via case management, assertive community treatment, mental health services for the elderly, early intervention in psychosis HBHC, Health Bus work with new immigrants, isolated and vulnerable populations to link to supports and services re: housing, health, social assistance, parenting, education Medical Surveillance program for infectious diseases for recent migrants Sexual Health Clinic services to migrant workers, recent immigrants and marginalized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child care supports such a resource teachers, subsidized child care, parenting. Newcomer child care supports at immigration centre Aboriginal Parent/Child Resources Centre and child care supports 		Niagara Integrated Planning Committee

FRAMEWORK: IMPACT ON THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH					
<i>Recommendation: #2</i>					
<i>Appropriate And Flexible Supports Which Address The Broader Determination Of Health For Adults Living In Poverty</i>					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
		adults (STD testing, treatment, birth control) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide health education and screening for tuberculosis at Thorold Detention Centre • Provide health education for hepatitis at New Port Treatment Centre • Vaccination services to recent immigrants • Migrant workers health and safety information provided annually during migrant worker housing inspections 			
<i>2F</i> <i>Contribute to community through volunteer work, involvement in community initiatives and leisure opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Participation to allow for gaining employment experience, employer contacts, update references for employment 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pro Kids program to allow low income children to participate in recreational/cultural events 		

FRAMEWORK: EXPERIENCES OF POWERLESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION					
<i>Recommendation #3</i> <i>Mitigate The Negative Effects Of Low Income On Children And Youth Through Programs and Services</i>					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
<i>3A:</i> <i>Decrease cost of essential supports & services such as housing and food security</i>		1) Essential health supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Bus • The Children In Need of Treatment (CINOT) dental program • Ontario Works Mandatory Dental Program for Children – shared program with Community Services • Oral Disease Prevention Program • Birth control offered (sold) at cost by Sexual Health program 2) linking clients to food security supports such as Community Care, Project Share, Healthy From the Start, Out of the Cold 3) CDIP produces Nutritious Food Basket report annually, in conjunction with Community Services 4) CDIP links with Savoury Sampling Food Bank program, dieticians work with food banks on school nutrition programs, links with Niagara Nutrition Partners and Community Gardens Initiative			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutritious Food Basket participation and reporting

FRAMEWORK: EXPERIENCES OF POWERLESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION					
Recommendation #3					
Mitigate The Negative Effects Of Low Income On Children And Youth Through Programs and Services					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
3B: <i>Co-ordinated & equitable access to parenting resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with Children's Services for assistance with subsidy, address developmental concerns of children Supports to LEAP clients for Learning and Parenting and other social supports School Boards – Engage with school counsellors to address gaps in youths school life, coordinate service provision and collaborate with youth on problem solving Work with local child welfare agency management for transition of child to Temporary Care, ensure training of staff for SAEO and FACS on roles and responsibilities to ensure proper supports and services are provided to children/youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Babies Healthy Children program helped to form and are part of the Community Infant-Preschool Services Team in Niagara, working with Speech Services Niagara, IEPT, NPCC, NCYS, Contact Niagara, Bethesda and FACS to optimize, coordinate and guide service delivery for families with children 0-6 The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program: universal postpartum contact/home visit, high risk home visiting program Nobody's Perfect– targeted parenting program for high risk families HBHC high risk prenatal classes for teen/single women Links to community parenting programs and supports (CAPC Brighter Futures, OEYC's, AFSSN, Healthy from the Start, FACS Niagara, Hannah House, Elijah House, Bethlehem Place) Parent Talk Information Line – staffed by public health nurses, providing parenting information, support, referrals, and linkages to parenting resources in parenting workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Resource and Early Years Centres FACS –work with agency through contract for early learning & parenting centres, child care fee subsidy, resource teacher supports Work with community agency through contract for parenting supports Work with Early Years Niagara Planning Council on parenting strategies and supports 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Learning and Childhood plan

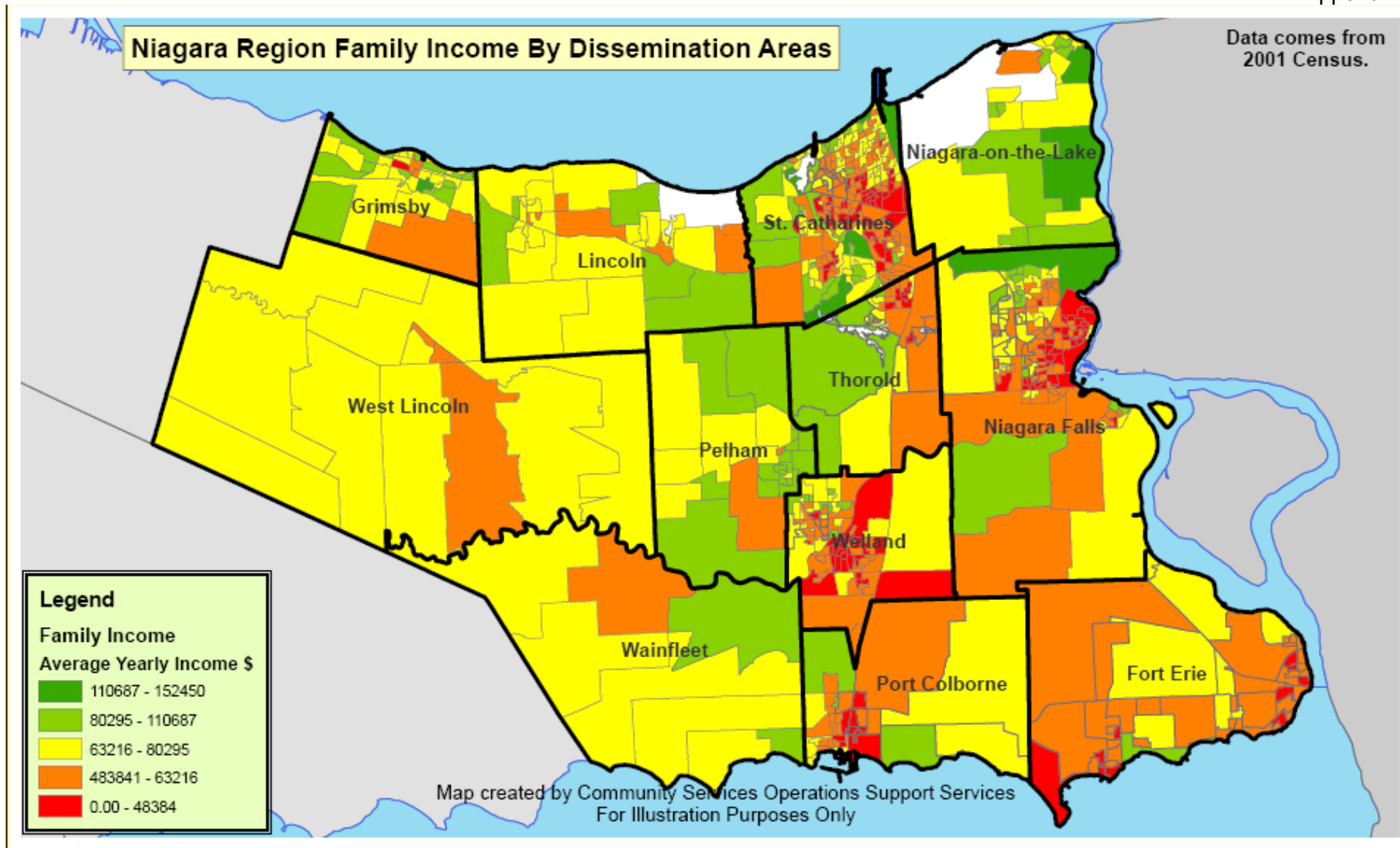
FRAMEWORK: EXPERIENCES OF POWERLESSNESS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION					
Recommendation #3					
Mitigate The Negative Effects Of Low Income On Children And Youth Through Programs and Services					
	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
3C <i>Equitable, affordable & subsidized child care, school readiness & recreation & leisure programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct coordination with Children's Services for subsidized child care and resource teacher supports 	Niagara <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prenatal class fees on a sliding scale Be a Great Parent information campaign/website Lead role on Niagara Children's Planning Council HOPE parents' group re: ADHD support facilitated by School Health Elementary PHN 2003-2008 Injury Prevention Program via Healthy Babies program distributed approximately 1,800 child safety products (CSP) to low income/at risk families in Niagara. CSP included cribs, high chairs, kitchen booster seats, safety gates, outlet plugs and strollers along with fact sheets on these items and Keeping Children Safe at Home booklets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of subsidized licensed and informal child care through Children's Services Resource teacher supports for children with special needs or deemed at risk Pro Kids – provision of recreational and cultural financial supports to allow children/youth to participate in their community Early Years Centres/ Resource Centres- child development emphasis, parenting supports and workshops, resource teacher supports 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Learning and Childhood plan
3D <i>Recognize the varying degrees of need across Niagara's 12 municipalities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIS maps of client population in Niagara are used to assist in determining targeted program, services and SAEO locations Local planning for homelessness preventative strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Health – using ISCIS, EDI, census data , GIS mapping with SHARE unit, DAC to analyze need and target services across municipalities SHARE unit provides data analysis/support to guide Public Health programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GIS maps of early learning and parental Niagara Understanding the Early Years research project- Early Development Instrument (EDI) results provide understanding of local neighbourhood needs and required services e.g. Empire School project working on improving literacy levels of 7 to 13 year old children and their families 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Erie Youth Pilot and Emergency Water Fund Supported Transitional Housing pilot – St. Catharines

FRAMEWORK:

MEASURED POVERTY

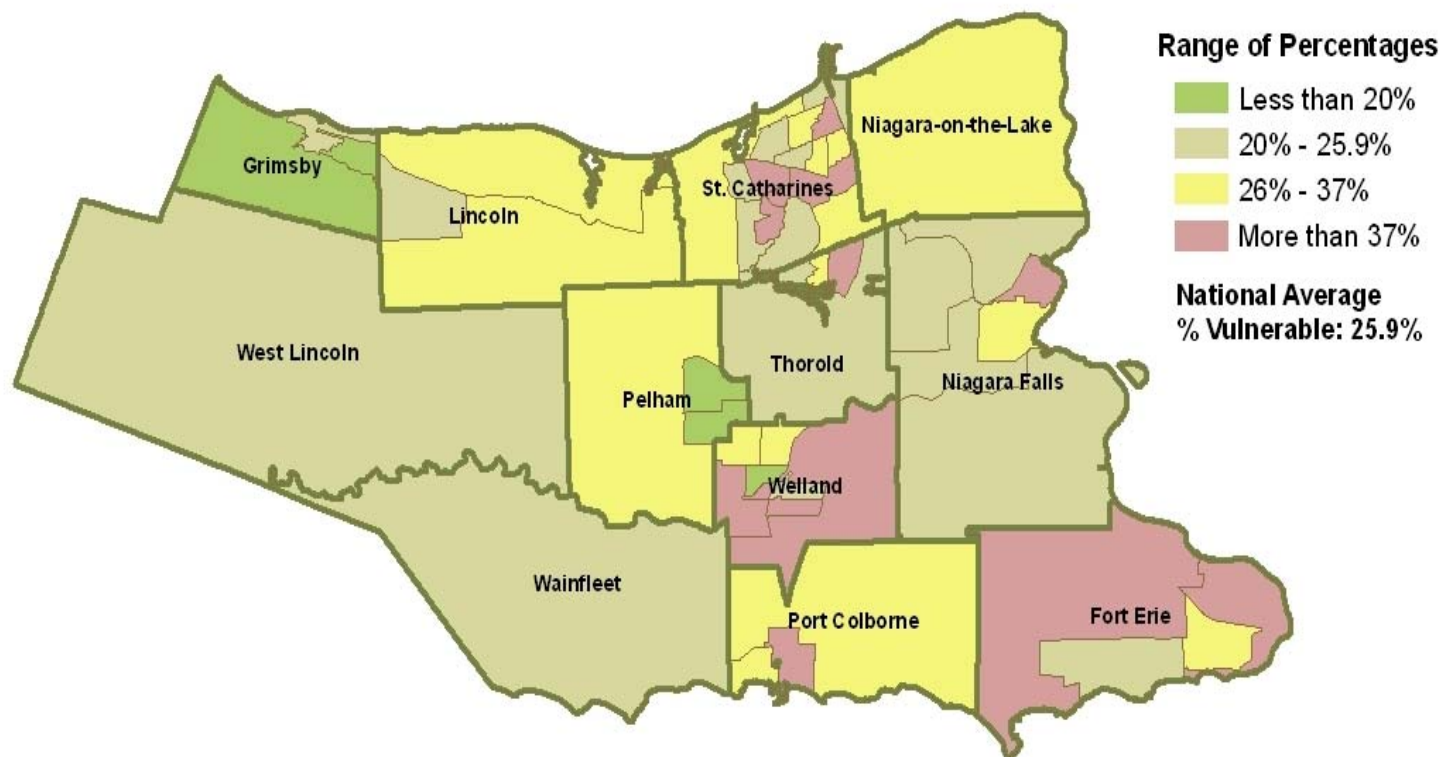
**Recommendation #4
 Monitor Our Progress**

	CURRENT RESPONSE				FUTURE STRATEGY
	SAEO	Public Health	Children's Services	Region Wide: Includes NRH and Opportunities Niagara	
<p>4A <i>Develop comprehensive Niagara Region-wide approach to assessing data & indicators of poverty & social inclusion</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial outcome based measures – people becoming more prepared for employment, people becoming employed, people increasing their earnings Caseload statistics of Benefit Units and looking at time on assistance Client surveys to obtain feedback on effects of programs, services and supports Community Partner surveys to obtain feedback on how programs support mutual case planning and foster positive outcomes for clients Focus groups e.g. LEAP, Housing SARC provides political and social awareness of issues of poverty in Niagara along with it's advocacy role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using ISCIS, census, EDI data to understand degree of need across municipalities, including SES and other social determinants of health DAC, HBHC working with Understanding the Early Years research project New Ontario Public Health Standards include emphasis on use of epidemiological data to guide service delivery (SHARE unit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the Early Years Research project maps areas where children are at risk for learning Provide data to Early Years Planning Council for 2008 Report on Children's Rights Enacted: a status report on how Niagara's children are doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Social Responsibility provides criteria for work done in and for the community and in work methods and practices for Niagara Region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niagara Integrated Planning Committee

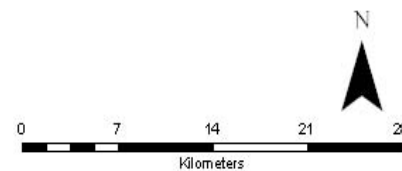


% of Vulnerable Children by Neighbourhoods in Niagara Region

(Vulnerable: Children who scored below the 10th percentile on one or more readiness to learn domains)



Data Sources
EDI Data: UEY & Offord Centre for Child Studies, 2006
Amalgamated Neighbourhoods: UEY & Public Health, 2007/03
Base Map Features: Region of Niagara, 2006
Produced by: UEY & Offord, 2007
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Opportunities Niagara – Summary of History and Strategies

- Appendix 2

Opportunities Niagara is an organization created in Niagara to respond to poverty by highlighting community understanding and working towards undoing the effects of poverty. Board members include representatives from the public (Regional Councillor and Commissioner Community Services), business and non-profit sectors. The approach was part of a national strategy aimed at building comprehensive, multi-sectoral initiatives to reduce poverty. In its initial work plan⁹, Opportunities Niagara aimed to:

- Influence an audience of key stakeholders in poverty reduction
- Provide community support by developing and implementing multi-sectoral approaches and initiatives for poverty reduction in Niagara
- Collaborate with other Niagara efforts related to overall economic, social and community development.

In response to these goals, Opportunities Niagara has continued to support, broker, facilitate and lead various initiatives. These include:

- Progressive Employment Relationship Campaign (PERC) completed an impressive research strategy that resulted in the research on *living wage* as well as the functional education and awareness campaign.
- Long Term Shelter Committee, a transitional housing model has been developed and received political and financial commitment to implement in the City of St. Catharines through Niagara Region – Community Services.
- Making Ownership a Reality, invoking the interest of two corporate partners (Meridian and Royal LePage) to offer working families caught in the ‘rent cycle’ a no-money down option to secure their first home.
- Affordable Housing Development, seeded from the ‘home run’ Bethlehem Housing Project which launched in the spring 2007.
- Supporting Habitat for Humanity by brokering relationships and providing access to properties for Habitat’s expansion of units for 2007 and beyond.
- Wraparound Niagara will develop a vibrant network of localized Community Mobilization Teams across the Niagara region that provide effective community supports through the use of the Wraparound process for person/families with children, youth, or adults with multiple, complex needs.

⁹ Opportunities Niagara – Untying the Knots, Connecting the Dots, May 2006