



Elgin St. Thomas
Coalition to
End Poverty

POVERTY TO
POSSIBILITY

City of St. Thomas Candidate Guide

Get to know your candidates!

Get to Know Your Candidates

An informed community is a stronger community. The Elgin St. Thomas Coalition to End Poverty believes that when voters have access to clear information about the issues that matter most, they can make more informed decisions at the ballot box.

To help support informed voting, we invited all registered candidates to respond to four questions focused on issues related to poverty, housing, affordability, and community well-being in Elgin County and St. Thomas.

This package contains the responses we received from candidates, along with a brief overview of the Coalition's priorities. Our goal is not to endorse any candidate or political party, but to provide voters with information that may help them better understand where candidates stand on issues that affect our community.

All certified candidates are listed in this package. Where responses were submitted, they are included as provided by the candidate. Blank sections indicate that no response was received by the submission deadline.

We encourage you to review the responses, learn more about the candidates, and most importantly, participate in the democratic process by voting.

Together, **informed voters** help build a stronger, more equitable community for everyone.



Scan Here
for more info!



Elgin St. Thomas Coalition to End Poverty

Our Vision: Elgin St. Thomas is a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive because no one lives in poverty.

Visit our website for more information: povertycoalition.ca

Candidate Questions & Responses

Lori Baldwin-Sands, St. Thomas



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| <p>1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.</p> <p>Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?</p> | <p>I support The City of St. Thomas taking on a leadership role adopting a living wage policy across city departments setting an example for retail, service and commercial enterprises across the community. We also have a responsibility as an employer of students, to those who rely on summer wages to support them throughout the school year. In doing so, we create an environment where graduating St. Thomas residents will return home after their school terms to help build the city as a place they want to live, work and play.</p> |
| <p>2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.</p> <p>How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?</p> | <p>The city employs a Housing Acceleration Co--Ordinator who brings all opportunities to council to partner and make alliances with those building and expanding housing stock now and in the future. Our Planning Department is engaged with meeting both private and public developers to continue to enhance housing stock with taxation support and support from gaming \$ received. In addition, I have already met with and worked with outside investors on opportunities to layer funding with incentive programs that exist within the city such as Community Improvement Projects, Affordable Housing options, etc. to bring exciting new opportunities to this community.</p> |
| <p>3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.</p> <p>How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?</p> | <p>Harvest Hands has shown great leadership across the region to address food insecurity. Our own food bank receives donations while helping members of our community. The faith based groups that supply home cooked meals at various times throughout the month are well received by the community. Programming offered by volunteer groups at the Grace Cafe and at Indwell operate on a daily basis with private supports and funding. The Gleaner program run under leadership of volunteer and faith based groups brings fresh, local produce to those in need from city owned community gardens and regional local farms. All pieces must work together and I support enhancements that will be provided in the future. In the past, organizations took on a leadership role with the city.</p> |
| <p>4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?</p> | <p>Recently, council was invited to provide updates to the master plan for transit. In this document, I provided many ideas and best practices from other communities to improve the system for users. We keep getting better, but, more work needs to be done for regional transport and connecting with the new industrial and employment areas of the city.</p> |

5	Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?	Yes
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Candidate Questions & Responses

James (Jim) Herbert,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

A living wage is the hourly wage a worker needs to cover basic expenses plus being able to participate in our community. Living Wage employer's are accountable employers that actually pay their workers a living wage. A living wage allows families to put food on their table, keeps their families healthier, allows their families to be properly clothed and in the long term, have an investment in our community.

The above reasons are why, yes, I would support a Living Wage for our community.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

Our Social Service department, led by Heather and Danielle, have put together a team that deals with many of the social issues that are common in most Cities. They have all the tools to deal with social issues. These include:

1) streamline approvals 2) Protect Tenants from evictions 3) have dedication funding 4) a partnership with Indwell and the YMCA have proved very beneficial to reducing homelessness

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

Food insecurity basically means that a person or family does not have enough food or the right kind of food to make their daily needs. Main reason is that the cost of food is more than families can afford. Suggestions might be for the City:

1) help fund the food bank 2) the city could help families behind in rent payments 3) ensuring that parents have a job and a well paying job 4) assisting with medications and medical bills 5) suitable lodging 6) help with employment 7) work with builders by offering incentives that would allow for lower rents.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

The City has hired a Consultant to do a major review of our Master Plan for transportation. The Consultant just made a presentation to Council with many suggestions to improve our service.

New routes, longer times, more buses etc. have been suggested. The new Council will need to address these changes and suggestions as these will surely affect the overall budget.

Personally, I have discovered a "transit app" that can be downloaded on your phone which informs you many things: location of bus, arrival time to your stop, if the bus has been cancelled maybe to a breakdown etc. However this app must be purchased and I am suggesting that the "transit app" be purchased by the City so it becomes FREE for the rider. I believe that this is a great investment and incentive for increasing ridership.

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- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Gary Clarke,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

It sounds like a reasonable and fair way to help families prosper but I would need to hear more information about how it may affect small businesses in St Thomas before endorsing it.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

Housing remains a priority for me and I will use all the tools we have to continue our aggressive plan to end homelessness. We also need more diverse, accessible and affordable housing especially for our seniors over the next term of council.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

I think we could provide more leadership in the area of urban farming. Community gardens are a great starting point. Also adding fruit trees to our annual tree give away is a possibility.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

We are in the middle of a transit review and it should provide areas for consideration. I agree that transit is important.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Geoff Mountenay, St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I would support this as a goal to aim for the council. I believe that we can be leaders in the community and show that this can work in St Thomas. It would need to be phased in over time to make sure we can meet the growth we expect to see but it would be something that I would support.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

This is a big issue. I believe that we need to tailor affordable housing to the people not based off market rates. We have fantastic builders that can partner with us to make sure our affordable homes/apartments are close to transit, groceries and pharmacies. By adjusting the rates to the people we can also help people keep up with bills, save for a car or home purchase.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

I would promote more areas with community gardens. I would also post free plans for a raised garden bed on the city website to promote backyard gardens. Through the library I would host classes and seminars for garden tips and tricks. Through the city, I would partner with our garden centers to do a spring drive on garden mix to help get people started and energized.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

I think St Thomas has improved the bus system in the past few years. Obviously as we grow we will need to expand transport to other areas like Powerco and Sandymount. These might require a dedicated bus that will drop/off pick up shortly before and after shift change. I believe we can partner with our small business and local clubs to provide additional advertisement opportunities by doing sponsored rides/donations.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Earl Taylor,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I fully support the Certified Living Wage proposal since it allows employees to have sufficient income to support a healthy life and contribute to their community.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

St Thomas has built one of our Strategic Plan initiatives around Housing For Everyone and continues to find ways to house those who need and want housing. We have approved the Additional Residential Units program and expanded the Community Improvement Plan community wide to assist and encourage owners to develop new units. I support finding ways to turn unused or under utilized properties into housing as well as purchasing properties such as the Balaclava Street school for conversion to housing.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

As a city, we are not in the food supply business. However, there are many volunteer groups like Helping Hands and the Food Bank that do a great job of collecting and distributing food that would normally have gone to waste. As a city, for example, we have provided funds to assist in the expansion of the Food Bank to better serve their goal. As new proposals arrive, I will support their initiatives as best we can.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

As a city, we have created a transit system that works as best as it can using the resources allocated to it. However, like everything, improvements are always possible. In a recent Transit survey, it's been determined that improvements are needed and I've voiced my opinion that the current system needs to expand its coverage area, coverage timing, to keep the costs reasonable, improve response times, adding more transit shelters and improve its overall efficiency. St Thomas spends, in some cases, almost 50% less on transit than many similar sized cities. If our residents approve and desire this increase in spending for transit improvements, then I will push for these expansion and efficiency improvements.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Steve Wookey,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I would need to know a lot more about the cost of being a part of the program, the commitments of it, and the way a living wage is calculated (ie: assumes a two person household, etc?) in order to answer this question. We have a positive relationship with employee bargaining units and have negotiated satisfactory collective agreements and I am confident that we treat our employees fairly in both salary and working conditions. Some part time temp roles will not be living wage, such as the summer parks staff where I worked while in university.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

St. Thomas is using incentives and partnerships to provide more affordable housing. An example of this is where the City is the lead tenant and pays the rents and then, essentially sublets out units at reduced rent. Builders like this because they know they will get their rent (no arrears) and tenants get lower rents.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

Food deserts are a big challenge. If the only food that is available is from a convenience store, you can't eat in a healthy way. I want all people and families to have access to a full service grocery store near them. Grocery stores are limited in where they can open because they require an amount of land that is expensive and largely not available within the city, at this time. The best we can do is provide what the next question is asking.....

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

Whether you a person who chooses not to drive, can't drive, or cannot afford to drive, we need a transit system that works. I think, inevitably, we need to do a pilot project involving 25 cent fares and see what happens. At this point, ridership pays for about 1/3 of the cost of the system. We have made positive changes in the last 8 years. But let's try something out of the box and see. As the city becomes more densely built, we will have the economies of scale (ie: more riders per square acre of city) to run more routes. Progress only comes with change.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Christopher Staddon, St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I would support this. When politicians make more than living wage, the government quickly becomes a tool to amass power and wealth. Instead of what it is/should be, a tool to improve the community, and help those who can't help themselves.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

I believe it's time for St. Thomas to step up and start building government subsidized housing to be rented to those of us who need it the most, and have nowhere else to go. Rent would be set at the cost of maintenance/utilities, and no more.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

I would support building a pilot program government run grocery store with subsidized pricing on the essentials, such as milk, bread, eggs, etc. And I would expand our farmers markets to be as open and accessible to as many people as possible.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

I would remove our call in advance bus system with regular busses that come every 15 minutes or less with tickets that costs to no more than \$1 per person. And I would help reintroduce our train/tram transit system on our dozens of kilometers of already existing, yet unused, railroads.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Joan Rymal,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I would support looking more closely at what St. Thomas can provide. We would need to look at the existing wage structure, union contract implications and impact on taxes.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

St. Thomas Social Services works well with Community agencies to assist in providing programs as noted above, such as affordable home ownership, Homelessness services, Rent supplements. We need to continue to work with agencies and developers with the Housing Affordable Grant program to keep increasing our affordable projects. Recently, 3 new projects were announced for the City - 1. The YWCA St. Thomas - Elgin towards the construction of 40 new affordable units on Hiawatha, focusing on Seniors, 2. Eastwood Housing Corporation for 2 new affordable units, and 3. the Congregation of the United Church for 35 affordable units. These projects, when funded through the federal Affordable grant program, do not require any tax contribution from the City's rate payer so it's really a win-win for the Community.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

Continue to promote the Food bank. We have to be careful with zoning and licensing to ensure food is handled, prepared and distributed safely. Encourage more nutrition and food preparation events to assist people in preparing nutritious meals - using the new Kitchen at the Horton Market is an ideal place for this type of program. Also co-ordinating events with the Public Health unit as they have great nutritional and dietary information.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

We need to really look at our transit and increase the service provided, both through vehicles and additional or extension of routes. The On-demand service in the evening is very popular, but only one bus is assigned to these hours. We do need to add additional transportation and consider smaller buses/vans or even electric vehicles to help offset fuel costs. Parallel service is also a very high demand service and many users need the service to access medical appointments so this service needs to increase.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Kyle Yates,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I support the idea of St. Thomas becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer. I'd support directing staff to report on what certification would require, which City positions or contracted services currently fall below the regional living wage, and what the annual cost would be. I think it's worth pursuing, to ensure that the jobs we provide in the city pay enough to allow those workers to live here.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

I fully support using municipal tools to address the need for affordable housing. I'm supportive of the idea of co-ops, and allowing developments on leased municipal land (such as Project Tiny Hope). As a renter myself, I'm supportive of rent supports and caps as well as tenant protections against absentee landlords. I also would like to work with local developers to ensure that there are affordable and smaller sized houses being built in newer neighbourhoods to get away from the unaffordable homes we see being built today.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

I support amending the Official Plan to allow small grocery stores, farmers markets, and urban agriculture in more places. There are many neighbourhoods in town that don't have easy access to a good grocery store. The City of St. Thomas currently has a community garden program, I support expanding it and adding more gardens.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

A large part of my platform is taking a look at our transit system and improving it. I support a pilot program for free buses, at the very least a north-south and east-west corridor through town, to make riding the bus an easy and free option for anyone who needs it. I also support investment and revitalization of our paratransit service, so residents who have disabilities don't have to wait unnecessarily long for a ride to where they need to be. We should have true transfer stops that connect routes to each other to ensure our buses are convenient, and we should expand our bus routes to service new neighbourhoods and our industrial areas.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Jeff Kohler,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Before supporting or denying our municipality becoming Certified Living Wage Employer I would like to meet with the Chamber of Commerce and find out their perspective on what impact this decision could have on their membership. Most of the city wages already exceed the threshold but before bringing the rest inline I would want to make sure there were no unforeseen negative impacts because of it.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

I will continue to promote the benefits of our Community Improvement Plan and continue to encourage partnerships with private investment to increase our housing inventory. We plan to remain a national leader in this area.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

We will continue to provide space for retailers in new subdivisions hoping that the private sector will see the benefit to locate there. I will also make sure that we continue to support organizations like Harvest Hands and our Food Bank.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residence equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

We are currently undertaking a transit master plan using public input. We have made many positive changes prior to this but the goal will be to increase ridership so we can expand routes, hours and include regional transportation as well.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

Candidate Questions & Responses

Kay Vaughan,
St. Thomas



- 1 Living wages help people meet basic needs and strengthen local communities. Municipalities can show leadership by becoming Certified Living Wage Employers. Six municipalities in Ontario have already taken this step.

Please tell us why you would or would not support St Thomas/your municipality becoming a Certified Living Wage Employer?

I truly believe we need to have a stable living wage. This is a huge contributing factor to some of our homelessness, or why multi-family situations are happening.

- 2 It is projected that our region will need significantly more affordable rental and supportive housing over the next 10 years. Municipal tools such as land use, partnerships, rent supports, and tenant protections can help address this need.

How would you use municipal tools and resources to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

I believe you nailed it with the things we need to utilize but I'm not sure I 100% agree that building something on every piece of green space or open space is right. We need space to come together as a community. Whether that is from walking our dog, throwing a ball with our kids or friends or just having a break on the grass. More jobs and lower housing costs would be the best way to fix that. But again it's not about big builders making money and charging Toronto pricing on units.

- 3 Food insecurity is growing in our community, driven by low incomes and limited access to affordable food.

How would you use municipal planning, zoning, licensing, and funding to improve access to affordable food?

Utilize the food recovery companies that already exist right here in our city.

- 4 Affordable, reliable transit helps people get to work, school, appointments, and other essential services. Transit is a public service that should serve all residents equitably. What would you do to improve transit service and keep it affordable and accessible?

High school students ride free with their student cards promoting the transition for them to get to and from work. Seniors have the option to utilize their seniors discount at set times and dates. And Ontario works steps forward to continue to give the bus passes to those who need it.

- 5 Would you support the principles outlined above if elected?

Yes

ELGIN ST. THOMAS COALITION TO END POVERTY

*Working together. Creating change.
Building a community where everyone thrives.*



OUR MISSION

The Elgin St. Thomas Coalition to End Poverty is a community alliance whose mission is to work collaboratively to eliminate poverty in our communities through sustainable solutions.

OUR FOCUS:

Seven interconnected action areas that address the root causes of poverty and create lasting change.



Transportation



Housing



Income Support



Pathways to Employment



Community Connectedness



Amplifying Community Voices



WHO IS INVOLVED?



Diverse Membership Open to municipal leaders, front-line service providers, local business and government representatives, healthcare professionals, and passionate citizens.



Lived Experience Coordination committees and working groups actively center the voices of individuals with lived and living experiences of poverty.



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

2018

Transportation Leadership Workshop

2019

Deputation to City Council around a Living Wage

2020

Vulnerable person task force in response to COVID-19 pandemic

2021

St. Thomas Elgin Symposium on women's experiences of homelessness

2022

All Candidates Forum during the federal election

2023

Community Forum on local experiences of homelessness

2024

Community Consultation Symposium on Poverty – local challenges and opportunities for poverty reduction

2026

Social Issues are Business Issues – spotlight on housing stabilization



Annual flag raising at City Hall for the International Day to Eradicate Poverty as well as participation in Living Wage education, announcements and celebration of local certified living wage employers.

COMMUNITY SUCCESSES



BUILT FOR ZERO

Members participate in this ambitious, data-driven initiative to end chronic and veteran homelessness through a centralized, coordinated access system. The region successfully ended veteran homelessness, hitting rigorous "Functional Zero" metrics.



HOUSING STABILITY MILESTONES

Through the Built for Zero framework, St. Thomas-Elgin achieved a recognized Quality By Names List and has successfully supported hundreds of individuals and families in transitioning out of homelessness. New housing investment and development by Indwell, Eastwood Housing, Fresh Start Support Services and YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin along with additional shelter beds created at The Inn.



FOOD PROVIDERS NETWORK

Formed to address local food insecurity, coordinate emergency meals, food bank resources, and grassroots food distribution.



POVERTY AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

The coalition shares strategic social media updates and advertising campaigns featuring local statistics and stories to reduce stigma and promote positive change.



HISTORIC POVERTY REDUCTION

The St. Thomas and Elgin County region successfully reduced its overall poverty rate by **50%** in the last 10 – 15 years.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

- CTV – Heartbeat Away from Homelessness
- The Spec – St. Thomas Supports Day to Eradicate Poverty
- St. Thomas Today – Day Long Consultation aims to transform poverty to possibility
- Living Wage Ontario Network
- Coalition to End Poverty Facebook



*Stronger together.
Poverty to Possibility.*

By working collectively, listening to lived experience, and investing in sustainable solutions, we can build a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.