



Elgin St. Thomas
Coalition to
End Poverty

POVERTY TO
POSSIBILITY

West Elgin 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.

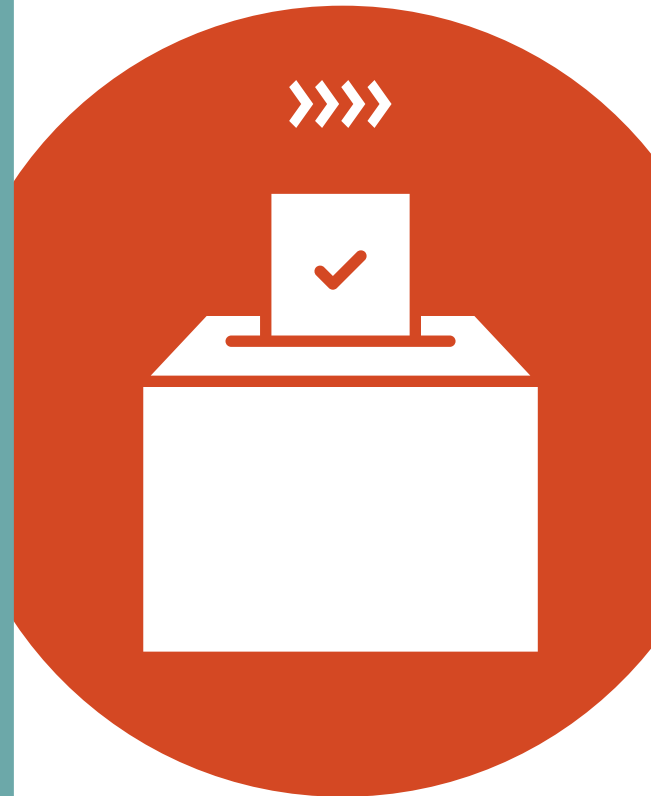
We encourage you to review the responses, learn more about the candidates, and most importantly, participate in the democratic process by voting.

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

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



Scan Here
for more info!



Candidate Questions & Responses

Bernie Wiehle,
West Elgin



- 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.

Yes

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.

New developments need to have a mix with some elements of "affordable housing". Advocate for and support any projects for more Seniors housing and geared for income type housing.

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.

Support small grocery stores, variety stores and local markets.

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?

Rural municipalities struggle with providing public transit since the costs are large and the client base small. Support must be for those in need most, seniors, people with health issues. Our municipality has a small transit system for those people. This service can be expanded if there is the need.

- 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.*



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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.

