



safe & well

OXFORD COMMUNITIES

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Monday, June 23rd, 2025

10:00 a.m.

This meeting will be held virtually - contact Sarah Hamulecki if you require the link

1. Call the Meeting to Order
2. Review of Agenda for meeting of June 23rd, 2025
3. Review of Minutes of May 26th, 2025 meeting ([attached](#))
4. Business Arising from the Minutes
 - Area Municipalities DEI Charter follow-up – Norwich
 - 2025 Summit: Final location and date
 - Use of Space Policy
 - Canadian Index of Well-Being Survey
 - Oxford County Grant Program
 - Updated Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
5. Action Coalition Updates (Round Table)
 - Oxford Housing Action Collaborative – on hold
 - Rebecca Smith will be in attendance to discuss reinstating this Collaborative
 - Oxford Mental Health & Addictions Network - Peter Heywood (no update)
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Coalition - Ayesha Sajid ([attached](#))
 - Domestic Abuse Resource Team – Ashley Brown ([attached](#))

6. Next Steps & New Business:

- Household Food Insecurity: Strategies for Local-Level Implementation – Kendall Chambers, SWPH ([attached](#))

7. Upcoming Meeting Dates – Oxford County Administration Building – Room 129:

- July 28th
- August 25th
- September 22nd
- October 27th
- November 24th – Warden Ryan, B. Martin and S. Hamulecki will not be in attendance
- December 22nd

8. Adjournment



10:00 a.m.

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DISPOSITON: Motion Carried

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

- Area Municipalities DEI Charter follow-up – Norwich
 - The destruction of a pride flag at a Norwich school was discussed.
 - The County CAO has been in discussions with the new Norwich CAO to advise of the request to adopt the Charter.
 - Warden Ryan will consider making another delegation to Norwich Council on the matter.
- 2025 Summit: Location and date determination
 - S. Hamulecki is investigating three locations further and will determine the final location in June.
- Use of Space Policy Update
 - The draft procedure has been shared with area municipalities for input.
- Canadian Index of Well-Being Survey
 - Approximately 900 responses have been received thus far.
 - The survey closes June 15.
 - The Committee was encouraged to continue promoting the survey to assist with the response rate.
- Oxford County Grant Program
 - The application period closes August 30.
- Updated Community Safety and Well-Being Plan
 - The RFP was awarded to Strategy Corp. S. Hamulecki will be meeting with them in early June.

5. Action Coalition Updates (Round Table)

- Oxford Housing Action Collaborative (TBD)
 - The Committee discussed the need to reinstate this Collaborative now that Oxford County's Homelessness Response Strategy is complete. A follow-up will be included on the June 23rd, 2025 agenda.
- Oxford Mental Health and Addictions Action Coalition (Peter Heywood)
 - A comprehensive refresh of the Oxford County Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy is set to begin this year, marking a significant step toward addressing substance use challenges in the region. This initiative aims to enhance existing strategies and develop a more effective framework that

reflects the community's evolving needs. The process is expected to conclude by December 2025.

- Southwestern Public Health will lead this effort and work closely with the Action Coalition, other stakeholders, and community members to ensure a broad and inclusive approach.
- A key part of this renewal will be incorporating a mental health scope, recognizing that there is not always a direct causal relationship. This component will require additional time and resources to ensure its thorough development, and it is anticipated to be completed by September 2026. The aim is to create a more integrated strategy that addresses substance use and strengthens mental health support within the community, promoting overall well-being for residents of Oxford County.
- Members of the Action Coalition have agreed to include "Housing for All, 2024-2033" as a key strategic document. This plan will guide decision-making over the next decade and inform the Action Coalition's priorities and actions.
- The OCCDAS website will be transformed from a multi-page to a single-page webpage to better highlight the Action Coalition's work. This decision aims to streamline website maintenance while continuing to promote the Coalition's mandate, membership, and key priorities.
- The \$459,830 investment over three years in Oxford County Community Health Centre to expand its Oxford Sexual Assault Services was highlighted, which supports victims of sexual assault.
- The Planet Youth application for Public Health Agency of Canada Grant Stream 2 funding has been filed.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Coalition (Ayesha Sajid)
 - Chelsea Martin attended the last DEI Action Coalition Meeting to discuss the effects of climate change on equity-seeking groups for Oxford County's Climate Action Plan.
 - A DEI Postcard explaining DEI's connection with the Ontario Human Rights Code has been drafted. Coalition members have provided suggestions on the draft, and a final version will be developed.
 - The DEI Action Coalition webpage has received further updates and improvements.
 - The Action Coalition members recommend recognizing June as Pride Month on the webpage and sharing a link to the Oxford Pride website. The Coalition is considering setting up a table at the Pride Family Day event, but is working to determine the purpose, messaging, and availability of its members.
 - A. Sajid requested that consideration be given to providing a stipend or honorarium to the Action Coalition members, similar to some Committees of Council. Warden Ryan suggested the discussion be tabled with the CAO's Office to ensure process and consistency. P. Heywood commented that the Oxford Mental Health and Addictions Action Coalition provides a stipend to volunteers.

- Domestic Abuse Resource Team (Ashley Brown)
 - DART continues to undergo a restructuring process to strengthen its ability to respond to high-risk cases of femicide in Oxford County. As part of this work, progress is being made on the community training plan, with only a small number of table members still needing to complete 'Make It Our Business' and BSAFER risk assessment training.
 - The recent federal grant application to support the table's development was unsuccessful. One region in Ontario was funded under this proposal, which included funding for evaluation by the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children (CREVAWC) at Western University. That evaluation will be accessible to all and will support continued efforts to make high-risk response a priority for both municipal and federal funding.
 - DART continues to engage in prevention, awareness, and advocacy. Workshops are regularly facilitated at Brightside Youth Hub, teaching teens about healthy relationships, setting boundaries, and preventing human trafficking. Half-day workshops are also delivered at the Women's Employment Resource Centre, helping service users understand intimate partner violence, early warning signs, safety planning, and community supports available to them.
 - The annual Snapshot is still in development. This year's focus is shifting toward a more iterative, story-driven approach that centers the voices of member agencies and better reflects the realities and priorities in our community. This storytelling model will help strengthen advocacy efforts and ensure the final product is useful to all members.
 - May is Sexual Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, and an online campaign with educational posts, resources, and conversation starters has been launched. Resources have been shared through our meetings and listserv to encourage engagement across sectors.
 - The Anti-Human Trafficking Story Walk has been launched, timed with Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. This community-based awareness initiative features an interactive walking route through downtown Woodstock, incorporating a survivor-informed story and local resources for individuals seeking to exit exploitation. The online map and accompanying resource guide have garnered over 100 views to date. The protocol and resource guide can be viewed on Instagram or by emailing amaddress@ingamohomes.com.
 - Strangulation and elder abuse have been identified as growing concerns for lethality in our region. These will be focus areas for community education and prevention strategies, particularly in terms of cultural awareness and risk recognition. Together, we can build a community that responds earlier, listens more deeply, and prevents more lives from being lost.

6. Next Steps & New Business

- Household Food Insecurity Municipal Primer
 - P. Heywood inquired if the Committee would be interested in hearing a presentation from SWPH about this Primer.
 - The Committee agreed that the presentation would be helpful ahead of the new Plan being developed.

7. Upcoming Meeting Dates – Oxford County Administration Building – Room 129

- Next meeting on June 23rd
 - A. Humphries and R. Wilkinson are not available to attend.

8. Adjournment

Resolution No. 4 Moved by: R. Wilkinson
 Seconded by: P. Heywood

RESOLVED that the Safe and Well Oxford Steering Committee meeting adjourn at 10:44 a.m.

DISPOSITON: Motion Carried



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OXFORD COMMUNITIES

Action Coalition Update

Meeting Date:	June 23 rd , 2025
Action Coalition:	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Coalition
Representative:	Ayesha Sajid
Update:	<p>Pride Family Day, the DEI Action Coalition participated and had a table at the event. Coalition member Joanna and staff member Julie Middleton volunteered to attend the event. Handouts on Tips on Inclusive Communication, along with the Canadian Index Survey, were distributed. Community members were asked to share what DEI means to them on a canvas painted with Pride colors. Treats and DEI stickers were also distributed.</p> <p>In previous DEI Action Coalition meetings, concerns were brought forward from the community regarding some recent interactions with local police services. So, I contacted WPS and OPP to pass along the feedback. After conversing with Rod and Tony and focusing on the Coalition members' interests, we plan on inviting police services to our meeting in September.</p> <p>After the June meeting, the DEI Action Coalition will resume to meet in September.</p>



Action Coalition Update

Meeting Date:	June 16th, 2025
Action Coalition:	Domestic Abuse Resource Team (DART)
Representative:	Ashley Brown
Update:	<p>DART continues its restructuring process to enhance our ability to respond to high-risk femicide cases in Oxford County. While we enter our usual summer slowdown, DART will maintain regular meeting times and use the coming months to focus on important internal discussions, most notably, exploring how the MARAM high-risk table and the Situation Table might align. The goal is to reduce duplication by sharing knowledge and resources while maintaining the distinct purpose of each. These conversations will unfold throughout the summer, with formal community updates expected in September.</p> <p>The operational side of DART has found a strong rhythm, incorporating program updates and a “concerns and trends” discussion into each meeting. Starting in the fall, these insights will be shared at the leadership table to ensure that emerging issues identified on the frontlines can inform strategic responses at a broader level.</p> <p>One concern identified recently by several partner agencies is the rise in strangulation cases, particularly among youth. In response, the DART operations committee will engage in training on this issue and co-develop a public awareness campaign. The group will determine the most effective target audience and outreach strategy to ensure the campaign is trauma-informed and impactful.</p> <p>As part of our broader community training plan, DART hosted a B-SAFER risk assessment training on June 10th. This training plays a critical role in preparing our femicide prevention table. Following this session, only a small number of table members remain untrained, marking significant progress toward our goal of consistent, coordinated risk assessment practices.</p> <p>DART’s outreach efforts also continue to grow. We hosted booths at both GrowGirls and Oxford Pride, engaging directly with community members and expanding our social media following. Online, we are currently participating in a live #WeBelieveSurvivors campaign focused on raising awareness around sexual violence and the justice system in light of the</p>

	<p>ongoing OHL sexual assault case. The campaign has resonated deeply, encouraging public dialogue and survivor support.</p> <p>Lastly, our anti-human trafficking work is advancing following the successful launch of our survivor-informed Story Walk during Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. The next phase of this initiative will focus on developing a secondary protocol—a directory of extended care services that may support individuals wishing to exit exploitation, including trauma-informed yoga therapy, equine therapy, and other longer-term healing modalities.</p>
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Household Food Insecurity: Strategies for Local-Level Implementation

Safe and Well Oxford Communities
June 23, 2025

Kendall Chambers, Registered Dietitian



What is 'household food insecurity'?



- Food security means that everyone can access enough food that is affordable, culturally preferable, nutritious and safe¹
- Household food insecurity (HFI) is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints²
- In 2023: 25.9% of households in SWPH region were food insecure³

Which households are most vulnerable to HFI?

- **Total income:** Lower or unreliable incomes; limited financial assets²
- **Source of income:** In 2021, **52.8%** of Ontario households reliant on social assistance as main form of income experience food insecurity²
- **Homeownership & housing costs:** Food insecurity higher for renters vs. homeowners²
 - Affordable housing: less than 30% of a household's before-tax income⁴

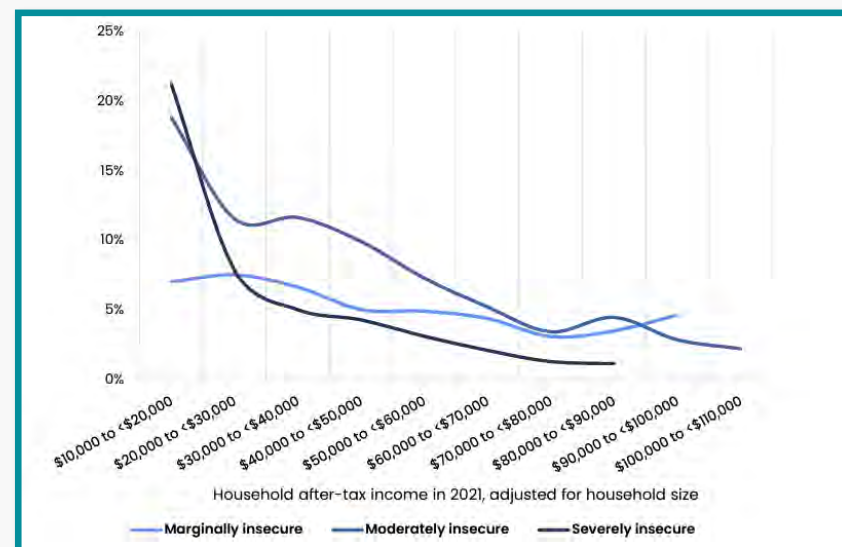


Figure 1: Household food insecurity by household income (Canada, 2021)

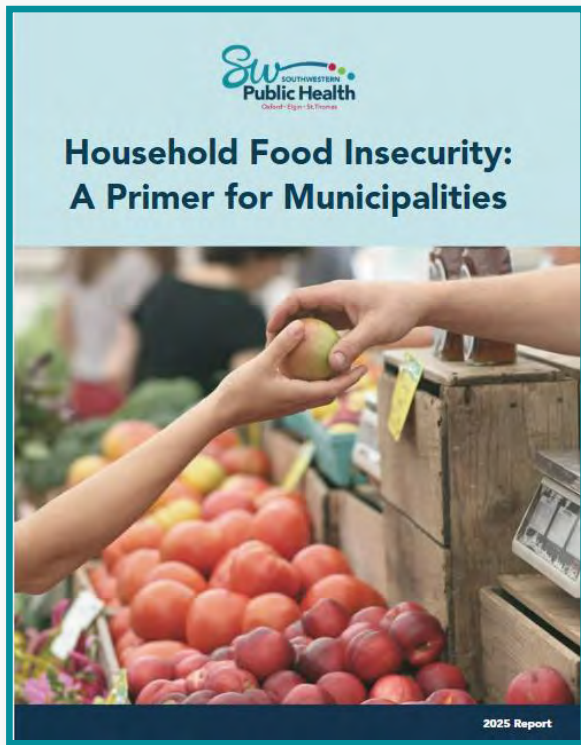
Source: Li, Fafard St-Germain, Tarasuk. (2023) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2022.

The impact on our community's health



- Children and teens are more likely to experience:
 - poor overall health⁵
 - mental health conditions⁶
 - developmental and behavioural problems⁶
 - chronic health conditions⁵
- Adults are more likely to experience:
 - poor mental, physical, and oral health⁷
 - mental health conditions^{7,8}
 - chronic diseases^{7,9}

Household Food Insecurity: A Primer For Municipalities



- New resource to support local action on household food insecurity
- Divided into two section:
 - **Income-based strategies** to address root causes
 - **Affordability-focused strategies** to reduce financial strain

1. Raise awareness about household food insecurity and its connection to income

Addressing Food Insecurity and Poverty

In Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas

2023 Report

Food Affordability in Oxford, Elgin, and St. Thomas: 2024 SWPH Income Scenarios

Southwestern Public Health monitors food affordability in Oxford, Elgin, and St. Thomas using the Ontario Nutritious Food Basket survey. The table below compares different household income scenarios with the cost of food and rent in the region.

	Family of 4, Ontario Works	Family of 4, Full-time Minimum Wage Earning	Family of 4, Median Ontario Income (after tax)	Single Parent with 2 Children, Ontario Works	One Person, Ontario Works	One Person, Ontario Disability Support Program	One Person, Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement	Single Pregnant Person, Ontario Disability Support Program
Total Monthly Income ¹	\$2908	\$4507	\$9685	\$2670	\$881	\$1465	\$2069	\$1505
Average Monthly Rent ²	1 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	1 Bedroom	1 Bedroom
	\$1683	\$1683	\$1683	\$1479	\$959	\$1186	\$1186	\$1186
Monthly Food Cost ³	\$1231	\$1231	\$1231	\$920	\$426	\$426	\$307	\$452
Monthly Income Remaining for Other Expenses	-\$6	\$1593	\$6771	\$271	-\$504	-\$147	\$576	-\$133
% of Income for Rent	58%	37%	17%	55%	109%	81%	57%	79%
% of Income for Food	42%	27%	13%	34%	48%	29%	15%	30%

- Foundational strategy that frames food insecurity as an income problem
- Considerations:
 - Use local data (e.g. food affordability reports)
 - Engage community partners in awareness efforts
 - Promote long-term, income-based solutions
 - Declare food insecurity an emergency (e.g., Toronto, Kingston, Brantford)

2. Create or support a municipal poverty reduction strategy



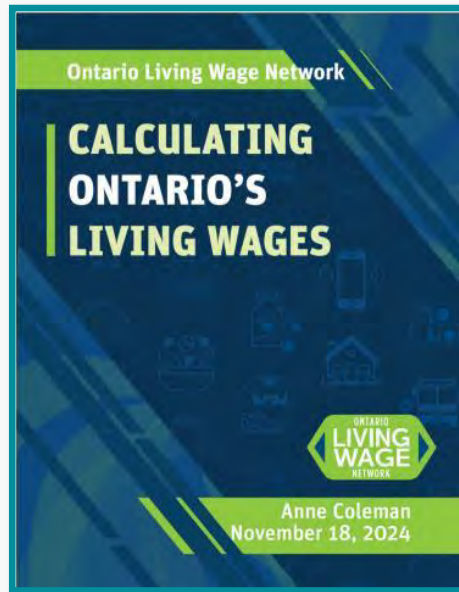
- Provide a local framework for poverty reduction efforts and are aligned with provincial and federal efforts ²
- Considerations:
 - Fund implementation of strategy actions
 - Prioritize food and housing insecurity in budgets
 - Engage people with lived/living experience Funding to implement actions from a Poverty Reduction Strategy
 - Higher amounts of funding for food and housing insecurity

3. Provide leadership and support to local food insecurity & poverty reduction partnerships

- Strengthen collaboration through local partnerships and networks
- Considerations:
 - Exploring forming a local food council partnership
 - Support efforts of local poverty coalition (e.g. endorse letters)
 - Collaborate to identify local priorities for action
 - Join existing partnerships or working groups
 - Provide funding for specific initiatives or actions



4. Support living wage certifications



Ontario Living Wage Network, 2024

- Paying a living wage benefits employees, employers, and the community ^{10,11}
- Considerations:
 - Become a certified Living Wage employer
 - Encourage local business to become certified Living Wage employers
 - Provide support for local businesses (e.g., public recognition, practical guidance, marketing incentives)

5. Support free income tax filing clinics for households who need them the most



The graphic features a central white circle with the text "People helping people" and an icon of three stylized figures. This circle is surrounded by a blue background with various white icons: a person at a computer, a document, a heart, a hand holding a heart, a person with a heart, and a person with a heart. The entire graphic is framed by a blue border.

Free tax clinics

Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), community organizations host free tax clinics where volunteers complete tax returns for people with a modest income and a simple tax situation.

- Filing income taxes is essential to be eligible for subsidized housing and receiving all federal government benefits and credits
- Considerations:
 - Promote clinics and recruit volunteers
 - Offer free space and/or subsidized transportation
 - Support systems navigation and referrals
 - Coordinate and expand clinics (e.g., super clinics, virtual options)
 - Advocate for simplified tax filing for those living with a low income

6. Participate in conversations with the provincial government on income supports

- Current provincial income supports (e.g., OW, ODSP, minimum wage) often fall short of meeting basic needs²
- Considerations:
 - Engage in conversations to:
 - Align minimum wage with living wage
 - Increase OW and ODSP rates to reflect cost of living
 - Index OW to inflation and expand income exemptions for OW recipients
 - Engage in dialogue around basic income initiatives
 - Support local partnerships in their policy engagement efforts
 - Join municipal voices endorsing basic income



7. Participate in conversations with the federal government on income supports

- Current federal income supports (e.g., Canada Child Benefit (CCB), Canada Disability Benefit (CDB)) may not fully meet the needs of households living with a low income²
- Considerations:
 - Engage in conversations to:
 - Expand the CCB for families living with low incomes and those with older children
 - Enhance the CDB, including automatic enrollment and increased benefit amounts
 - Collaborate with provincial government to explore basic income models
 - Support local partnerships in their policy engagement efforts
 - Join municipal voices endorsing basic income



8. Support affordable housing

- High housing costs can reduce the resources available for other essentials, including food
- Considerations:
 - Update local land use planning policies to support a range of affordable housing options
 - Encourage diverse housing types, tenures and densities within urban areas.
 - Collaborate with provincial and federal governments on housing strategies and funding.
 - Invest in assisted supportive and below market housing.
 - Participate in conversations on rent control, vacancy control and tenant protections.



9. Improve affordability and accessibility of local public programs and services

- Public transit & subsidized transportation options
- Affordable and accessible childcare options
- Discounted or subsidized recreation activities
- Systems navigation support
- Co-location of services



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Thank you!

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