



**DUFFERIN
COUNTY
EQUITY
COLLABORATIVE**

2023 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Equity is impacted by many factors, and this was clear in 2023. Policy and service changes, economic uncertainty, and national crises compounded inequity in 2023.

The Dufferin County Equity Collaborative (DCEC) responded to a homelessness crisis, a new employment landscape, and an unprecedented food security and health equity crisis. These efforts are summarized in the 2023 DCEC Report to the Community.

We recognize equity is key to the success of our community. As Co-Chairs, we would like to thank our members! Their efforts are a constant reminder of the great potential in our community, and everyone in it.

Anna McGregor

Director - Community Services



Heather Hayes

Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

DCEC.ca

VISION

Every Resident of Dufferin County will have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

MISSION

A collaborative broad base of stakeholders who are working together to improve the quality of life of Dufferin County residents.

The Dufferin County Equity Collaborative (DCEC) formed in 2018. It was created when the Dufferin County Poverty Reduction Task Force and the Local Health Integration Network Sub-Collaborative recognized they could benefit from combining their skills and knowledge.

The tables joined and held their first meeting on December 13th, 2018. The collaborative is composed of:

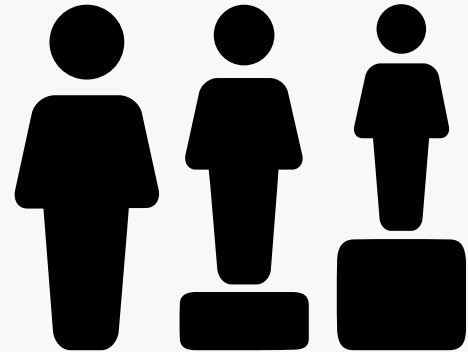
- Human Service Providers
- Decision Makers
- Community Leaders

VOTING MEMBERS

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Alzheimer Society of Dufferin County | • Headwaters Communities In Action |
| • Canadian Mental Health Association Peel-Dufferin | • Headwaters Health |
| • Catholic Family Services Peel Dufferin | • Hospice Dufferin |
| • Choices Youth Shelter | • Muslims of Dufferin |
| • County of Dufferin | • Orangeville Foodbank |
| • Dufferin Area Family Health Team | • Services and Housing in the Province |
| • Dufferin Child and Family Services | • Town of Orangeville |
| • Family Transition Place | • United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin |
| • Friends and Advocates Peel | • Upper Grand District School Board |
| • Georgian College | • White Owl Native Ancestry Organization |
| • Habitat for Humanity | • Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin |

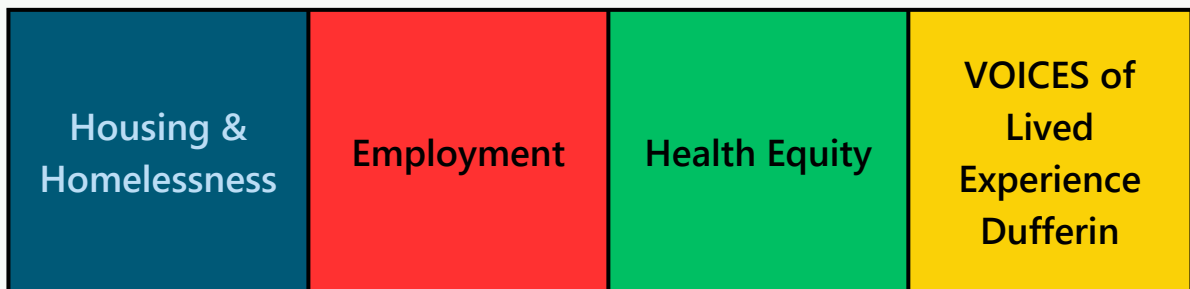
WHY EQUITY?

To achieve equity, we need to understand the obstacles that hinder performance and potential in our community. By providing measured supports and resources we can assist in this process. Equity is a complex, subjective, and personal subject. Acknowledging and acting with this in mind is crucial to our work at DCEC. We often ask our community and our Collaborative:



- What would help you get where you need to go?
- What is in the way?
- What is your experience with equity and your story in Dufferin County?

CURRENT PRIORITY AREAS



We acknowledge the complexity of equity, and the numerous obstacles that hold back individual potential. The Collaborative has agreed upon and identified four areas in our community that we believe are priorities.

Where We Have Been

Nov. 2015

- Dufferin Housing Poverty Forum was held. Importance was placed on establishing a local Poverty Task Force and local strategy.

Feb. - Oct. 2016

- First meetings on poverty reduction and first two DC MOVES Forums.
- Consultant was hired to create an environmental scan of poverty in Dufferin. Early results were discussed at the Forum.
- Pillars of Community Well-being, Poverty Reduction, and Resource Sharing were set.

Nov. - January 2017

- The pillars were presented to County Council, along with a request for funding.
- Formalized structure of DC MOVES was established as well as the pillars.
- The DC MOVES leadership table was formed with members of Public Health, Georgian College, HCIA, and County of Dufferin.

Feb. - Nov. 2017

- Consultant completed Reducing "Poverty in Dufferin County: A Proposed Strategic Framework."
- Dufferin County Poverty Reduction Task Force (DCPRTF) held its start-up meeting and became members of Cities Reducing Poverty and wrote letters to Province on Housing & Income Security Reform.

May - June 2019

- Work completed by groups.
- Conducted six-month review meeting in June. Reviewed each group's progress to date.
- Revealed the DCEC logo, social media, and website.

Feb. - April 2019

- Group chose three areas of focus.
- Survey and vote on actions for roadmap.
- Started Tamarack Institute - Vibrant Communities - "Getting to Impact" program.
- Reviewed actions for priority areas. Invited members to join a working group for one of the areas.

Sept. - Dec. 2018

- The two poverty groups joined.
- New TOR presented. Moved away from DC MOVES leadership.
- New name Dufferin County Equity Collaborative (DCEC) adopted.
- County of Dufferin and Public Health became co-chairs.
- DCEC launch meeting.
- Review of TOR by attendees and call to membership.
- Review of new draft of roadmap and priorities.

Jan. - May 2018

- Community Poverty Reduction Summit was held. Elaine Capes became DC MOVES Coordinator.
- Finalization process underway for roadmaps and inventory of agency actions.
- Connected with CW-LHIN.
- Questions raised on TOR and connection to DC MOVES.
- Discussion of joining DCPRTF and CW-LHIN Poverty Sub Collaborative.

Sept. - Dec. 2019

- Largest "Bridges Out of Poverty" workshop in Dufferin was held (94 attended).
- Attended the 2019 Cities Reducing Poverty Ending Poverty in Canada event.
- The County proclaimed Oct. 17 as the "International Day for the Eradication of Poverty" in Dufferin.
- Released the 2018/2019 Report to the Community.

March - Dec. 2020

- COVID 19 disruption.
- Despite the challenges of the pandemic, DCEC continued to make progress on areas of inequity in Dufferin.
- Headwinds and tailwinds of the pandemic explored.
- Released the 2020 Report to the Community.

Jan. - Dec. 2021

- DCEC continued virtual meetings.
- Many partners experienced service disruptions due to the pandemic.

Jan. - Sept. 2022

- 2021 Report to the Community released.

November 2022 - May 2023

- DCEC resumed in-person meetings.
- 2022 Report to the Community released.

CREATING CHANGE

Pathways to Change

Advocating, Informing, and Building Awareness

- Championing and giving a voice to the need for system and policy changes that reduce inequities.
- Increasing public, influencer and decision-maker awareness and will.
- Informing key parties about local needs and priorities to influence policy, and service design, delivery, and evaluation.



Minimizing Service Barriers

- Defining the boundaries, actors and relationships in the system and providing service from a system lens.
- Understanding service access through a client, patient, etc. perspective.
- Responding (to needs and designing system accordingly) from the client perspective.



Innovating Solutions

- Informing planning and decisions through evidence.
- Creating or adjusting programs, services, and practices.
- Recognizing and acting on opportunities to make immediate change to improve services.



Speak Our Language

Impact

- The effect outcomes have on our overall vision.



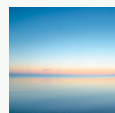
Outcomes

- Actions, behaviour changes, etc., by key system actors that contribute to our goals (i.e.: increase the awareness of housing and homelessness issues with local decision makers).



Horizons

- Crisis Management
- Recovery
- Transformation



They can happen all at the same time, or we may shift back and forth between these horizons for the next few years.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

GOAL: All members of the community will have equitable access to safe and affordable housing.

Planned Outcomes	Realized Outputs & Outcomes
Increase community awareness and understanding of homelessness, the lack of safe and affordable housing in our community, and the impact these issues have on our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dufferin County Communications Manager issued media release. Dufferin County calls on the province to prioritize housing and homelessness. Working group shared these posts in their network. County Council joined Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in calling for increased collaboration to increase housing supply and tackle homelessness.
Increase access to affordable housing options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ed Peterson, Founder of Tiny Homes Association, gave a presentation to the Working Group that was attended by County Planning, Economic Development, and Building staff.
Increased access to safe and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 Recipients received COHB. 11 Asylum seekers/refugees received COHB. SHIP opened 236 First St. in May 2024 which provides 27 permanent, supportive housing units. Residents began moving in as of May 22, 2024, and the site is expected to reach full occupancy by the end of June 2024.
Increase access to safe and affordable home ownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eden Grodzinski from Habitat for Humanity gave a presentation on Tiny Homes. There is interest at all levels of government, but funding is not currently available.
Municipal Comprehensive Review.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation from Planning and Economic Development staff of the Municipal Comprehensive Review. A number of opportunities were presented.
Increased initiatives to help obtain and maintain safe and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 clients graduated from the RentSmart program. Ability to compensate landlords for damage to their rental units through CATSHED.

EMPLOYMENT

GOAL: All members of the community will have equitable access to meaningful employment opportunities with the ability to achieve economic well-being.

Planned Outcomes	Realized Outputs & Outcomes
Increase awareness of challenges employers and employees face in Dufferin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Planning Board (WPB) launched Findyourjob.ca. This houses the Local Labour Market Insights Report. The report allows anyone to access wage, skills, and benefit data. Employers can sign up for customized labour market data. • Free online tool: Where to? Mapping Immigrants' and Non-permanent Residents' Settlement in Canada - The Conference Board of Canada • As part of WPB's IRCC application to bring the Workplace and Immigrant Network (WIN) to Dufferin County in 2025, WPB and Polycultural are meeting end of April to discuss the landscape of immigrants in Dufferin: challenges, how WIN and Polycultural can support immigrants living in Dufferin (maybe returning to work in Dufferin). • WPB is also doing some research in 2024 to get an idea of the immigrants working outside Dufferin (age, gender, period of arrival, occupations, industry) and what re-attraction of talent could look like to support Dufferin employers.
Increase awareness and access to local skills training, vacation and apprenticeship opportunities for new to the labour market or career changers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2023, Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) and Career Education Council (CEC) Dream Dufferin event had 800 attendees. • CEC Career Pathways back in person as well as other events and Speakers Bureau. • ECE workforce strategy conducted by County.
Identify employment-based quality of life priorities for Dufferin County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WPB launched Findyourjob.ca. This houses the Local Labour Market Insights Report. The report allows anyone to access wage, skills, and benefit data. Employers can sign up for customized labour market data. • Investigating Living Wage for Dufferin County and DCEC as a group member for certification.

HEALTH EQUITY

GOAL: All members of the community will have equitable access to resources for health, and to receiving care that is person-centred.

Planned Outcomes	Realized Outputs & Outcomes
<p><u>Food Insecurity Group</u> Expand coordination between food services and others. Consult with Partners with Lived Experience to expand equitable access to food in ways that do not stigmatize. Prioritize most vulnerable populations (e.g. those with health-related dietary needs; rural/lack of transportation; single mothers).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dufferin Food Access Guide updated and circulated, with a QR code for easy access to latest file on MyDufferin.ca (4th edition). • Advised partners to swap from coupons or food baskets in offices to grocery cards to reduce stigma. • Connected Westminster Church with Orangeville Food Bank to help prepare foods for vending machines. • Outreach to other kitchens and volunteers. • Connected with local landowners interested in growing for food banks or providing space for low-income families to grow. • Income Security for Food Insecurity campaign on in Dufferin until April 30. • Set up seed library in Orangeville. • Westminster United Church is offering free seniors lunch socials and edible landscaping (pick'n'eat). • Town of Shelburne - Economic Development to encourage food bank donations when polling businesses.
<p><u>Period Products Group</u> Conduct environmental scan to determine potential partners, funding, and awareness for free period products across Dufferin. Prioritize locations based on feedback from Partners with Lived Experience consultants and high populated buildings/facilities. Coordinate conversation with potential partners to maximize locations and joint awareness campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations and information gained from Period Ontario, Town of Orangeville (Red Movement), and Dufferin County. Procured costs for dispensers and products (ongoing). Have an up-to-date list of where free products will be available in Dufferin. Identified some funding opportunities to tap into if DCEC members want to provide free period products in their organizations. The group may take on a coordinator and advocacy role rather than a distribution role.

VOICES OF LIVED EXPERIENCE DUFFERIN

GOAL: The community will enact real change and consult Voices of Lived Experience Dufferin on equity issues.

Planned Outcomes	Realized Outputs & Outcomes
Creation of a PWLE group/Network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed. A group was established with 6 original members. A couple of members have left and new ones added. The group has 5 members as of the end of 2023.
Development of the group's capacity to offer insights and opinions on initiatives or programs impacting PWLE in Dufferin County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed. The group has discussed experiences with programs and aspects of living in poverty, read and discussed extensive research and developed informational materials including recommended actions for organizations to take. Custom consultations have also been completed on specific issues.
Establishment of a working document or framework of engagement through the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. The framework outline has been completed and three of the 12 Chapters have been fully developed and documented.
Understanding of grassroots network creation, including group dynamics, processes, and leadership methodologies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. There is knowledge within the management team and partners regarding grassroots, collaborative processes and participatory initiatives. Within the VOICES group this understanding is developing.
Peer support enhancement with increased opportunities for interaction, access, and leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. Peer support has been identified as a crucial feature for service delivery. Various opportunities are being considered but have not yet been activated.
Inclusion in decision-making processes concerning people living with poverty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. A consultation process has been established and successfully utilized 3 times. Based on feedback from DCEC organizations, the group is considering additional methods for accessing PWLE for support in decision-making.
Preservation of team cohesion despite recent challenges, including member resignation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team has experienced multiple set-backs including a member's resignation, an interruption in funding support and a pause in the meeting routine.

VOICES OF LIVED EXPERIENCE DUFFERIN

GOAL: The community will enact real change and consult Voices of Lived Experience Dufferin on equity issues.

Planned Outcomes	Realized Outputs & Outcomes
Emphasis on building trust and safety within relationships as foundational for effective group work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships within the group are strong, supportive and mutually empowering. Relationships and trust between the group and DCEC organizations are developing via the framework and the group is considering ways to evolve these interactions and build trust with agency partners.
Acknowledgment of the time needed for the group to coalesce, develop leadership skills, and establish its voice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The management team has acknowledged the pace of the group and offered support and patience as they forged their path to building group cohesion, self-directed progress and productivity on their own terms during this establishment phase.
Recognition of the project's evolutionary nature and the importance of sustainability planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback has been shared between the DCEC members and the VOICES group through the Coordinator to express expectations, an eagerness for more access and more flexible and efficient options for consultation. Trust- and relationship-building continue.
Commitment to cultivating strength over time before engaging with the wider community effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed. VOICES has developed a high degree of internal strength and cohesion as a group. This supportive core has made some feel strong enough to engage more actively outside of VOICES.
Emphasis on countercultural paradigms within internal structure, unraveling capitalistic & oppressive structures, and fostering a participatory process unique to the group's dynamics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In progress. VOICES has developed a unique process that is truly led by people with lived experience. How this translates into productive dialogue and influence on systems and changes in services is a work in progress.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

From the Warden

On behalf of the County of Dufferin, I am pleased to present the 2023 DCEC Report to the Community.

In 2023, equity remained a primary community priority and very much aligns to the County of Dufferin Strategic Plan. This report illustrates the crucial work underway in Dufferin, and the ongoing collaboration required to advance equity.

I would like to thank DCEC and its partners. I am incredibly thankful for their vital service to our community and its most vulnerable.

Darren White

Warden



APPENDIX

BI	Basic Income
BNL	By-Name List - real-time list of all people experiencing homelessness, who want to be linked to services and work with service providers.
CAB	Community Advisory Board
CAT	Coordinated Access Table
CATH	Coordinated Access Transitional Housing Program: provides those who are identified as chronic on the BNL with a transitional unit for up to three months.
Chronic Homelessness	Refers to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness AND who meet at least 1 of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have a total of at least 6 months (180 days) of homelessness over the past year. • they have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past 3 years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months (546 days).
CHHAP	Chronic Homeless Housing Allowance Program - ongoing financial supplement paid by the County to the landlord or eligible renter (from the BNL) to help them offset rental costs.
COHB	Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit
CSWB	Community Safety and Well-being

APPENDIX

CW- LHIN	Central West - Local Health Integration Network
DAFHT	Dufferin Area Family Health Team
DBOT	Dufferin Board of Trade
DCEC	Dufferin County Equity Collaborative
DC MOVES	Dufferin County – Managing Organizing Validating Engagement Strategy
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
HCIA	Headwaters Communities in Action
HHCC	Headwaters Health Care Centre
Impact	The effects of outcomes that contribute to our vision.
OHT	Ontario Health Team
OPHI	Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative
Outcomes	Actions, behavior changes, etc., by key system actors that contribute to our goals (i.e. increase in decision makers awareness of equity).
Output	The number of people or items produced by an action.
OW	Ontario Works
PWLE	Partners With Lived Experience

APPENDIX

SHIP	Services and Housing in the Province
TOR	Terms of Reference
WPB	Workforce Planning Board