

Wellbeing Waterloo Region

Annual Progress Report - 2019

Introduction

Wellbeing Waterloo Region (WWR) is a community-led collaborative initiative where members work together across sectors to improve the wellbeing of residents in Waterloo Region. WWR's members come from all parts of Waterloo Region, representing local residents with various lived experiences and over 70 organizations.

Vision – What We Aspire To

A community where everyone thrives and no one is left behind.

Mission – Why We Exist

We are a diverse network working together differently to make transformational change in community wellbeing. We are able to impact wellbeing together in a way that we are unable to alone.

Mandate – What We Do

We CARE:

Connect our community to leverage assets, increase alignment, and meet challenges to wellbeing.

Amplify existing efforts to support transformation in community wellbeing across the region.

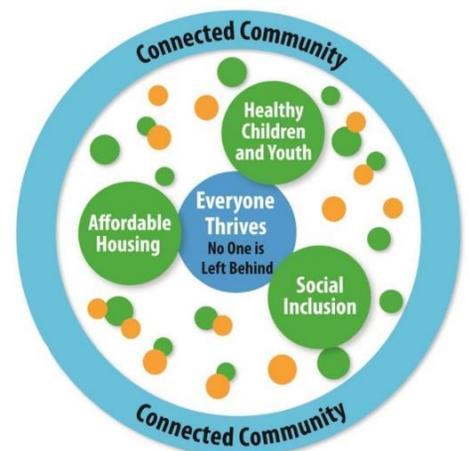
Respond actively and continuously to the needs and priorities of the community.

Educate our network to address inequities and create the conditions where everyone can thrive.

Enabling Structure – How We Work Together

WWR's enabling structure is informed by [The Connected Community Approach](#) (CCA). The focus of CCA is on changing and strengthening local systems, including the ways residents, service providers, and community leaders work together. CCA is different, yet complementary to services that offer direct support to community members. CCA seeks to effect the following outcomes:

1. Increased capacity to develop solutions to community based issues
2. Increased nimbleness and agility
3. Increased participation of community partners and residents
4. Increased cross-sector collaboration
5. Decreased duplication
6. More effective use of funds
7. Enhanced relationships and increased opportunity to learn from one another
8. Increased social and economic opportunities¹



¹ For more on CCA's theory of change, please visit ConnectedCommunities.ca and read "[The Connected Community Approach: A Theoretical Framework](#)" (2017).

WWR's enabling structure activated in February, 2019. The structure is comprised of [seven interconnected groups](#) with diverse membership, focused both on WWR's three big idea areas – Affordable Housing, Social Inclusion, and Healthy Children and Youth – and on supporting the initiative's overarching goals and functions.

Big Idea 1 – Affordable Housing: Everyone has a place to call home

There are two streams of work happening in the Affordable Housing big idea area: efforts to end chronic homelessness in Waterloo Region, and building readiness to move to a transformative affordable housing focus.

Efforts to end chronic homelessness in Waterloo Region

Priority objectives (2019)

1.1: Communicate to engage the community in the actions and the story of ending chronic homelessness.

1.2: Fundraise to support people experiencing chronic homelessness to be housed.

1.3: Increase landlord engagement to increase the number of private market rental units.



ALL IN 2020 is a partnership between the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG) and WWR to end chronic homelessness in Waterloo Region. In 2019, ALL IN 2020 reached several key milestones:

- ALL IN 2020 dispersed \$90,000 to people experiencing chronic homelessness.
- [#LipOffKW](#) – an annual lip sync battle fundraiser – lent its support to ALL IN 2020 at its November 7th event at the Apollo Theatre.
- A special screening of the documentary PUSH was hosted December 5th by ALL IN 2020 and community partners – Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, Cambridge and North Dumfries Community Foundation, and Power Shift WR. The film spoke to the need for affordable housing worldwide and the idea of housing as a right vs. an asset.
 - Special thanks to Ryan Pettipiere, Director of Housing, Region of Waterloo; Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, City of Kitchener; Aleksandra Petrovic, Executive Director, Social Development Centre Waterloo Region; and Martine August, Assistant Professor, University of Waterloo, School of Planning, who participated in an engaging panel discussion after the film.
- Initiated the “Housing Hero” campaign through a series of Record ads designed to engage the community, featuring six prominent community leaders.

- Instituted a new ALL IN 2020 digital communications strategy which included the development of a [website](#), Facebook account, Twitter profile, and Instagram feed.

Building readiness to move to a transformative affordable housing focus

Priority objective (2019)

1.4: Build readiness to move to a transformative affordable housing focus.

In April 2019, WWR's Connectors Hub voted to form a strategic alliance with Leadership Waterloo Region (LWR), and Waterloo Institute of Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR). This alliance supports WWR's objective to build readiness in the area of affordable housing. So far, here is what has taken place:

- LWR's Community Leadership Development Program adopted the issue of affordable housing for its 2019/2020 class project.
- An Affordable Housing Café took place October 17th with members from WWR, LWR, WISIR, and many diverse participants to further the dialogue on affordable housing. The LWR class of 2019 heard varied perspectives on the issue of affordable housing to inform their work.
- Two more Affordable Housing Cafés are currently being planned for 2020.



Participants at the Affordable Housing Café, October 2019.

Big Idea 2 – Social Inclusion: Everyone is welcome and can belong

This big idea is about working to create in Waterloo Region a community movement that embraces diversity, seeks equity, prevents social isolation, and enables everyone to belong.

Social Inclusion Catalyst Group

Priority objectives (2019)

3.1: Develop and implement equity and bias awareness training with follow-up actions for Wellbeing Waterloo Region working groups.

3.2: In partnership with the community and organizations, host a series of “Insights into Inequities” to create awareness, and understand what is getting in the way of wellbeing issues such as racism, homophobia, sexism, ableism, classism, etc.

3.3: Create a social inclusion movement that removes barriers, and acknowledges and celebrates our diversity

3.4: Profile isolation and loneliness as a wellbeing issue.

Over 2019, the Social Inclusion Catalyst Group worked to move the Social Inclusion Big Idea actions forward through various projects:

- Developed and implemented equity and bias awareness training for members of the WWR network. Trained over 400 people with follow-up actions being identified for 2020.
- Created and launched the online [30 Day Challenge](#) to promote continuous learning about equity and First Nations, Métis, Inuit cultural awareness.
- Supported the first “Insights into Inequities” event in partnership with the Coalition of Muslim Women. Over 60 people were in attendance and future events are being planned with different partner groups.
- In collaboration with Bridges to Belonging, hosted and promoted two sessions of the “Enhancing Belonging” workshop with John Lord of the New Story Group
- Created and disseminated a variety of resources that promote equity, inclusion and belonging, namely the new Challenging Systemic Barriers digital training series with Kike Ojo, as well as posters, calendar events, and newsletters about how to acknowledge various cultural celebrations and support one another during significant events.
- In collaboration with the Measurement and Monitoring working group, members discussed some of the disaggregated data from the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey (2019) and identified potential actions related to social isolation.



Participants at the Social Inclusion meeting July, 2019.

First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle

Priority objectives (2019)

3.5: Provide safe facilitation and spaces for conversations that acknowledge the impacts of colonization and support actions that will promote reconciliation and support wellbeing.

3.6: Continue to support an Indigenous Advisory Circle that is resourced to provide networking support, advice and input on Wellbeing Waterloo Region actions as well as services and programs in Waterloo Region.

3.7: In collaboration with the Indigenous community, implement training, education and tools to the working groups of WWR on Indigenous culture and history, the impacts of colonization as well as provide opportunities for reflection on how to work towards reconciliation.

In 2019, the First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle reached several key milestones:

- Developed public resource materials to educate community members on Indigenous culture and protocols. These materials, such as the WWR Territorial Acknowledgements Protocol, support the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, as well as community members’ reconciliation efforts and knowledge-building.

- Offered perspectives on all working groups on First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of being, reminding the groups of the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.
- Local Elder Lois MacDonald provided guidance for the Connectors Hub and at numerous WWR events and meetings to ensure meaningful intentions were set.
- Piloted two-day educational training, “Journey Toward Reconciliation” for the working groups of WWR on Indigenous culture and history and the impacts of colonization.
- Mapped the gaps and assets in services for wellbeing involving First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Waterloo Region. Discussed the need for data collection to consider the Indigenous context.
- The [Indigenous Community Consultations report](#) continues to inform the actions of the WWR network through its insights on the calls to action identified through one-to-one meetings with Indigenous leaders and allies in fall 2018.



Participants at “Journey to Reconciliation,” November, 2019.

Big Idea 3 – Healthy Children and Youth: All children and youth have the foundation they need to thrive and reach their potential

Children and Youth Planning Table

Priority objective (2019)

2.1: Determine direction on next steps for the Healthy Children and Youth working group once we know the outcome of the Smart Cities application.

The initial focus of this work was to support the Smart Cities proposal until the outcome of the Smart Cities competition was known. Now that we have received the news that Waterloo Region was not successful in its application, conversations to determine focus and next steps will occur in 2020 in partnership with the Children and Youth Planning Table. The following will be discussed as potential areas of focus based on data and community input:

- Early child development (Early Development Instrument scores - EDI)
- Mental health
- Sense of belonging
- Bullying
- Literacy levels
- High school graduation rates

Working Groups

The objectives and actions of WWR's working groups below support the initiative's overarching goals and functions.

Communications and Engagement

Priority objectives (2019)

4.1: Create and support channels for ongoing information, input and engagement of the Wellbeing Waterloo Region network.

4.2: Support and/or promote campaigns and events that promote equity, reduce isolation, support inclusion and strengthen belonging through a variety of media channels.

4.3: Assist networks that experience exclusion to mobilize and engage in WWR.

4.5: Research and develop grant proposals to help sustain WWR.

This group creates opportunities and actions to intentionally engage community members and partners, and focuses on strengthening individual, organizational, and network connections. It also develops strategies and implements actions to ensure that the diversity of our community is reflected in the involvement of WWR, and helps to engage and rally the general public in the wellbeing work. In 2019, the group accomplished the following:

- Conducted the Internal Communications Needs Assessment for all WWR working group members to obtain input on the most effective ways to facilitate communication between all the sub-groups of WWR. Many of the Communication and Engagement group's subsequent actions were grounded in this data, including the creation of a bi-monthly Internal Update and Annual Progress Report (i.e. this document).
- Developed and implemented a variety of communication methods to leverage partnerships and reach a broad spectrum of citizens, including the [WWR website](#), [community calendar](#), [email subscription service](#), [Instagram feed](#), and print materials (i.e. bookmarks, post cards, etc.)
- Created and supported campaigns and events designed to promote equity, reduce isolation, support inclusion, and strengthen belonging through a variety of media channels (e.g. [30 Day Challenge](#)).

- Hosted a fall forum for all WWR working groups in support 'On the Table' by Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation (KWCF), and Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation (CNDCF). Approx. 70 people attended and Anne Gloger from the Centre for Connected Communities gave a keynote address: "[Connected Communities from the Inside Out](#)."
- Developed a discussion guide and provided feedback on WWR's upcoming digital training series titled Challenging Systemic Barriers: The Equity Lens.



WWR members at our 'On the Table' event September, 2019.

Measurement and Monitoring

Priority objectives (2019)

5.1: Monitor, track and report on community wellbeing to inspire action.

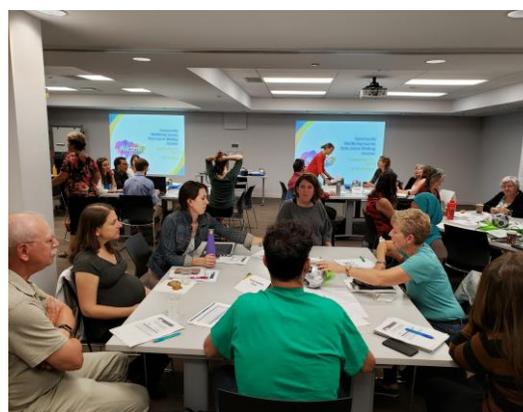
5.2: Identify gaps in wellbeing data and develop methods to address these gaps in culturally appropriate ways.

5.4: Create opportunities to share data and survey results and progress in ways that turns data into knowledge, action and community engagement.

5.5: Support and provide coordination for the Community Wellbeing Survey results conducted by the CIW.

This group provides direction on the overall measurement system of WWR, and helps track WWR actions to ensure their integration within the measurement framework. This group also provides guidance on WWR's progress-reporting process and tools to ensure accountability, transparency and engagement of our community. In 2019, the group accomplished the following:

- Created documents to facilitate knowledge, understanding, and application of the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey data, including the "[Prompt for Discussion](#)", which highlights top findings and comparisons with other data sources, and "[Profile of Survey Respondents](#)," which highlights survey and census demographics.
- Began to disaggregate data from the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey in order to better understand health inequities in our region.
- Held data sense-making sessions to identify gaps in the survey participants and develop suggestions to address these gaps.



The Measurement and Monitoring working group's data sense-making session - September, 2019.

- Hosted a presentation from the Canadian Index of Wellbeing focused on disaggregated data from the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey. The data focused on three groups: (1) low income residents – those residents with annual incomes under \$30,000; (2) younger residents – those aged 16 to 29 years; and (3) residents living with a disability or chronic illness that limits their ability to participate in the community.
- Created a scan of “who is doing what” with the survey data, which will be helpful for planning deeper dives, aligning data analysis efforts, avoiding duplication of work, and understanding the gaps in data analysis.

Steering and Oversight Groups

Connectors Hub

Priority objective (2019)

6.1: Provide oversight and ensure integration for the overall directions of the collective work of Wellbeing Waterloo Region.

The Connectors Hub made several key decisions in 2019 to provide oversight and ensure integration of the overall directions and work of WWR:

- Formed a strategic alliance between WWR, Leadership Waterloo Region (LWR), and Waterloo Institute of Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR) to support work on Strategic Objective 1.4 under the “big idea” area of Affordable Housing: *1.4 Build readiness to move to a transformative affordable housing focus.*
- Agreed unanimously (100%) to support conversations about WWR “reimagining” itself in partnership with Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRPCPC).
- Agreed unanimously (100%) that all WWR working groups will utilize the Territorial Acknowledgement suggestions provided by WWR’s First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle.

Systems Change Champions

This group receives, identifies, and advocates for changes to policies and processes at various levels of government and within other sectors, keeping a “pulse” on the overarching system. In 2019, the group met twice to do the following:

- Discussed the emerging shifts happening in our community that impact wellbeing. Members agreed that in times of uncertainty we need to make sure we take care of the most pressing priorities – services and each other.
- Agreed rethinking the status quo is necessary to minimize the impacts. We can deal with disruption in new and innovative ways.
- Discussed WWR’s role in the upcoming Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans legislated by the Province of Ontario, due at the end of December 2020.

Next Steps

- Discussions continue between WWR and Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council about potential models for merging and reimagining the two initiatives.
- Backbone staff recently submitted a grant proposal to the Government of Canada's Anti-Racism Action Program in support of WWR's equity actions for 2020. The outcome will be known in spring, 2020.
- WWR's "Challenging Systemic Barriers: The Equity Lens" video series has been launched through a pre-release to members of the WWR working groups. Further events to launch the video series to the public will take place in the new year.
- WWR has adapted and changed direction as the feedback, processes and contexts of our work have evolved. This has allowed us to be responsive to community needs and priorities. A "Pulse Check" is being conducted for all WWR working group members to provide feedback on the first 12 months of the initiative's enabling structure. WWR will continue to evaluate its actions and work plan as it continues to grow.
- The collaborative will also need to pay attention to legislative requirements from the Province to develop a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, and refresh the WWR plan as needed.

Province of Ontario Legislation – Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans

As of January 1, 2019 the Province has legislated municipalities under the [Police Services Act](#) to develop and adopt Community Safety and Wellbeing (CS & WB) Plans. These plans are to be developed in partnership with a multi-sectoral advisory committee comprised of representation from the Police Service Board and other local service providers in health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services. Additional requirements are also outlined in the legislation pertaining to consultations, contents of the plan, and monitoring, evaluating, reporting and publishing the plan.

Communities across the province are at varying levels of readiness to develop and implement their CS & WB Plan. Because of the work that has occurred to-date with the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Waterloo Region Police Service, and Wellbeing Waterloo Region, our community is in a good position to develop a CS & WB Plan. The next steps will be to integrate, align, and add to the existing work of the Crime Prevention Council, Waterloo Region Police Service and Wellbeing Waterloo Region to meet the legislative requirements by January 1, 2021.

To learn more about the legislation, visit the [Province of Ontario Community Safety and Wellbeing website](#).

Backbone Team

WWR's backbone team is comprised of 2.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members who coordinate, plan, communicate, and engage the community on behalf of the initiative as a whole.

You can connect with any of our backbone staff by emailing wellbeingwr@regionofwaterloo.ca.

WWR groups	Backbone staff assigned
ALL IN 2020	Cheryl Grove – lead backbone
WWR strategic alliance with Leadership Waterloo Region (LWR) and Waterloo Institute of Social Innovation and Resilience (WISIR)	Cheryl Grove and Lorie Fioze – co-lead backbone
Healthy Children & Youth Catalyst Group	N/A – Children and Youth Planning Table
Social Inclusion Catalyst Group	Cynthia Martin – lead backbone Lorie Fioze – support
First Nations, Métis, Inuit Advisory and Advocacy Circle	Julie Hill – lead backbone Cynthia Martin – support Lorie Fioze – support
Communications and Engagement Working Group	Emma Dunn – lead backbone
Measurement and Monitoring Working Group	Cheryl Grove and Lorie Fioze – co- lead backbone
Connectors Hub	Cynthia Martin – lead backbone Lorie Fioze – support
Systems Change Champions	Lorie Fioze – lead backbone Cynthia Martin – support
Co-conveners' community of practice	Rotate backbone staff
Funders	Lorie – lead backbone
Design Team	Lorie – lead backbone