Community-University Research Partnership:
The Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination and the Research Shop
Patricia Altass, Research Shop, University of Guelph

The Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Formed in 2009, this community initiative is composed of concerned and affected residents, organizations, business, all levels of government, the research community, and others working together to move poverty reduction issues forward.

The Research Shop
A portal between community and university research needs. Since 2010, Research Shop interns and staff have been working with the Poverty Task Force (PTF) to carry out research that helps inform policy and practice.

Project Manager and Embedded Researcher
Since 2010, PhD student Trish Altass has been an active member of the Research, Learning and Evaluation Working Group of the Poverty Task Force, helping to scope research projects and develop research questions. In addition to sitting as an embedded researcher, Trish acts as a project manager, working with Research Shop Interns to help develop research skills, edit and review intern reports and support the report writing process.

Research Shop Interns
An interdisciplinary team of Masters Students who work on short term (rapid response) research projects to be utilized by the working and action groups of the Poverty Task Force. Interns also have the opportunity to be part of the Research, Learning and Evaluation working group and present their work to the larger Poverty Task Force as well as the other working and action groups.

Rapid Response Reviews
Rapid response projects are typically quick (3-6 week) scans of the scholarly and grey literature to answer research questions from the Poverty Task Force. Examples of rapid response research carried out by Research Shop interns for the Poverty Task Force includes:
- Food Accessibility in Guelph and Wellington
- Food Expiration Dates
- Food Security and the Role of Collective Kitchens.
- Resulting in opening of Community Kitchens
- Energy Poverty
- Warming and Cooling Centers
- Resulting in Extreme Weather Emergency Plan
- Housing Benefits
- Guaranteed Annual Income
- Living Wage
- Affordable Public Transit
- Intersection of Health, Transportation and Poverty
- Presentation to City Council and collaboration with PTF result in creation and implementation of a Low Income Bus Pass in Guelph

Larger Research Projects:
- The Community Research Project: Exploring Economic Hardship in Guelph report outlines a community based research process that took place in Guelph and Wellington County during the winter, spring and summer of 2010. For this project, community members with lived experience of poverty were trained to work as community researchers in order to identify gaps in services and programs and issues with accessing services and programs for those living in poverty.

Research request leading to rapid response project

Rapid Response Process:
1. PTF submits research requests to PTF coordinator
2. PTF Coordinator creates research request in coordination with project manager
3. Project manager and Research Shop staff support interns during the research process
4. Interns write first draft of rapid response report
5. Report reviewed by project manager and PTF coordinator; revisions carried out in collaboration with interns and reviewed by working group
6. Report used by PTF Working Groups to inform policy and practice

Research Shop Embedded Researcher and Project Manager

This report was used during public delegations to City Council during the 2011 budget deliberations. Following the presentation of the report, the Mayor and City Council decided to take the opportunity to introduce an affordability-based pass program in Guelph.

City of Guelph staff invited members of the Poverty Task Force to work with city council on refining the program. In response to that work, the Interns sub-committee of the Poverty Task Force have been engaging with the research

The purpose of the Research, Learning & Evaluation Working Group is to conduct research and provide learning and evaluation opportunities that support the activities of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

Rapid Response Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Request:</th>
<th>April 26th, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study:</td>
<td>Affordable Transit Pass Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of research</td>
<td>Structured interviews (report format not required – table of questions and answers sufficient)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Research Question(s):
- (X) What is the cost of the program calculated?
- (Kingston only): When you began the Municipal Fee Assistance Program, did you consider all components (affordable transit pass, weekly and monthly tickets) at the same time? If yes, what are the advantages and challenges to this set up?
- (Kingston only): Do recipients of the affordable transit pass program receive a debit card to their Ontario Water?
- (Guelph, Wellington): Do recipients of Ontario Works receive anything to assist with the cost of transportation? How would you like the City of Guelph to protect the affordability of transit pass programs?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for children and youth?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for mobility? 
- (Kingston only): Do administrators of the program charge a fee?

Research Purpose and Objectives:
- What you are trying to better understand? What do you need to know before you move to an actionable decision? How will the research findings be used? What are the expected outcomes of the project?

The Community Research Project:
The Community Research Project: Exploring Economic Hardship in Guelph report outlines a community based research process that took place in Guelph and Wellington County during the winter, spring and summer of 2010. For this project, community members with lived experience of poverty were trained to work as community researchers in order to identify gaps in services and programs and issues with accessing services and programs for those living in poverty.

The purpose of the Research, Learning & Evaluation Working Group is to conduct research and provide learning and evaluation opportunities that support the activities of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

Rapid Response Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Request:</th>
<th>April 26th, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study:</td>
<td>Affordable Transit Pass Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of research</td>
<td>Structured interviews (report format not required – table of questions and answers sufficient)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Research Question(s):
- (X) What is the cost of the program calculated?
- (Kingston only): When you began the Municipal Fee Assistance Program, did you consider all components (affordable transit pass, weekly and monthly tickets) at the same time? If yes, what are the advantages and challenges to this set up?
- (Kingston only): Do recipients of the affordable transit pass program receive a debit card to their Ontario Water?
- (Guelph, Wellington): Do recipients of Ontario Works receive anything to assist with the cost of transportation? How would you like the City of Guelph to protect the affordability of transit pass programs?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for children and youth?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for mobility? 
- (Kingston only): Do administrators of the program charge a fee?

Research Purpose and Objectives:
- What you are trying to better understand? What do you need to know before you move to an actionable decision? How will the research findings be used? What are the expected outcomes of the project?

The Community Research Project:
The Community Research Project: Exploring Economic Hardship in Guelph report outlines a community based research process that took place in Guelph and Wellington County during the winter, spring and summer of 2010. For this project, community members with lived experience of poverty were trained to work as community researchers in order to identify gaps in services and programs and issues with accessing services and programs for those living in poverty.

The purpose of the Research, Learning & Evaluation Working Group is to conduct research and provide learning and evaluation opportunities that support the activities of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

Rapid Response Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Request:</th>
<th>April 26th, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study:</td>
<td>Affordable Transit Pass Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of research</td>
<td>Structured interviews (report format not required – table of questions and answers sufficient)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Research Question(s):
- (X) What is the cost of the program calculated?
- (Kingston only): When you began the Municipal Fee Assistance Program, did you consider all components (affordable transit pass, weekly and monthly tickets) at the same time? If yes, what are the advantages and challenges to this set up?
- (Kingston only): Do recipients of the affordable transit pass program receive a debit card to their Ontario Water?
- (Guelph, Wellington): Do recipients of Ontario Works receive anything to assist with the cost of transportation? How would you like the City of Guelph to protect the affordability of transit pass programs?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for children and youth?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for mobility? 
- (Kingston only): Do administrators of the program charge a fee?

Research Purpose and Objectives:
- What you are trying to better understand? What do you need to know before you move to an actionable decision? How will the research findings be used? What are the expected outcomes of the project?

The Community Research Project:
The Community Research Project: Exploring Economic Hardship in Guelph report outlines a community based research process that took place in Guelph and Wellington County during the winter, spring and summer of 2010. For this project, community members with lived experience of poverty were trained to work as community researchers in order to identify gaps in services and programs and issues with accessing services and programs for those living in poverty.

The purpose of the Research, Learning & Evaluation Working Group is to conduct research and provide learning and evaluation opportunities that support the activities of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

Rapid Response Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Request:</th>
<th>April 26th, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of Study:</td>
<td>Affordable Transit Pass Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of research</td>
<td>Structured interviews (report format not required – table of questions and answers sufficient)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Research Question(s):
- (X) What is the cost of the program calculated?
- (Kingston only): When you began the Municipal Fee Assistance Program, did you consider all components (affordable transit pass, weekly and monthly tickets) at the same time? If yes, what are the advantages and challenges to this set up?
- (Kingston only): Do recipients of the affordable transit pass program receive a debit card to their Ontario Water?
- (Guelph, Wellington): Do recipients of Ontario Works receive anything to assist with the cost of transportation? How would you like the City of Guelph to protect the affordability of transit pass programs?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for children and youth?
- (Kingston only): Do you have an affordable transit pass option for mobility? 
- (Kingston only): Do administrators of the program charge a fee?

Research Purpose and Objectives:
- What you are trying to better understand? What do you need to know before you move to an actionable decision? How will the research findings be used? What are the expected outcomes of the project?

The Community Research Project:
The Community Research Project: Exploring Economic Hardship in Guelph report outlines a community based research process that took place in Guelph and Wellington County during the winter, spring and summer of 2010. For this project, community members with lived experience of poverty were trained to work as community researchers in order to identify gaps in services and programs and issues with accessing services and programs for those living in poverty.

The purpose of the Research, Learning & Evaluation Working Group is to conduct research and provide learning and evaluation opportunities that support the activities of the Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.