



## **Strategic Plan 2020-2023**

December 2020

## **Together Against Poverty Society**

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## Introduction

Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS) is the largest anti-poverty organization on Vancouver Island. TAPS works to impact people's lives in ways that honour and promote human rights, justice, and a healthy sustainable community. TAPS is a recognized leader and resource for citizens, community groups, and social agencies attempting to reduce poverty. TAPS provides education and advocacy services to over 7,000 people across the Capital Region and Southern Gulf Islands annually.

TAPS was established and registered as a Society in 1989, receiving charitable tax status in 1994. TAPS is a non-profit society whose membership is open to individuals or groups concerned with the preservation of civil society, the social justice movement, and the eradication of poverty.

TAPS works:

1. To better the lifestyle and living conditions of people living in poverty through legal advocacy and public legal education.
2. To make the general public aware of the problems of people living in poverty and of ways in which the general public can assist in solving them.
3. To collaborate with other community groups and social service providers to improve the lives of people living in poverty.
4. To provide training for people living in poverty as well as the community groups and organizations that assist them to enable them to advocate for themselves and for their members.

TAPS works to achieve these four areas by providing the following supports and services:

- ❖ Advocacy services in the areas of income assistance, federal and provincial disability benefits, employment standards, and tenancy including information, summary advice, negotiation, and/or representation to persons of no, low, or fixed incomes;
- ❖ Volunteer based programs that assist with the preparation and filing of applications for provincial disability, and with the filing of income tax;
- ❖ Identifying, researching, and addressing issues related to poverty with particular emphasis on those issues that affect the local community; and
- ❖ Public Legal Education seminars, participation at public events, and media communications.

## Strategic Direction

**Vision:** All citizens will have an adequate income to allow them to meet their needs and to live with dignity.

**Mission:** To better the lives of persons living in poverty through legal advocacy and public legal education.

**Values:** At TAPS we:

- ❖ Believe that the causes of poverty are in the social, economic and political institutions of our society – not the “failings” of the individual.
- ❖ Listen to the voices and perspectives of people who live in poverty.
- ❖ Know that change is possible.
- ❖ Value the role of civil society.
- ❖ Enable people of all backgrounds to work together to address the fundamental causes of poverty.
- ❖ Treat everyone fairly and with respect.
- ❖ Acknowledge the importance of social justice for all.

## Strategic Priorities:

1. High quality legal advocacy services
2. Law reform and systemic advocacy
3. Community representation
4. Organizational capacity and financial stability
5. Organizational profile
6. Building community power

## **Strategic Priorities 2020 to 2023**

### **Strategic Priority 1: High quality legal advocacy services**

*Goal 1.1: Provide accessible, timely and strategic face to face services by skilled and knowledgeable legal advocates.*

Strategy 1.1.1 – Continue to strengthen the culture of collaboration and consultation amongst the staff team.

Strategy 1.1.2 – Engage in training and professional development opportunities to build staff skills and knowledge.

Strategy 1.1.3 – Continue to build an organizational culture where staff ask for support when they feel overwhelmed and management encourages measures that promote sustainable workloads.

*Goal 1.2: Strengthen existing services by strategically addressing service gaps.*

Strategy 1.2.1 – Explore extending our legal services to include Employment Insurance issues.

*Goal 1.3: Enhance staff ability to conduct work outside the office.*

Strategy 1.3.1 – Create a policy for staff that will support the ability to work and delivering service outside of the office.

Strategy 1.3.1 – Explore what types of resources would be required to support staff working outside the office.

### **Strategic Priority 2: Law reform and systemic advocacy**

*Goal 2.1: Increase the capacity of legal advocates to engage in system reform.*

Strategy 2.1.1 – Continue to build the structure and processes for staff to engage in systemic reform, including project based strategic planning.

Strategy 2.1.2 – Provide the training and supports for staff to engage in system reform, including training related to media communications, public speaking, and government relations.

*Goal 2.2: Build the capacity of the organization to take on systemic reform initiatives.*

Strategy 2.2.1 – Build relationships/connections with other social service providers, community groups, and government officials in order to support organizational systemic advocacy strategies.

Strategy 2.2.2 – Engage in research partnerships in order to better inform system reform strategies.

Strategy 2.2.3 – Explore the role of the Board in supporting and engaging in system advocacy.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Community representation**

*Goal 3.1: Create a more welcoming organization for Black, Indigenous and People Of Colour (BIPOC) staff, volunteers and clients.*

Strategy 3.1.1 - Increase representation of BIPOC throughout the organization with volunteer and staff recruitment.

Strategy 3.1.2 – Create opportunities for our work to build awareness of the systemic racism BIPOC face.

Strategy 3.1.3 – Employ an Indigenous consultant to determine how best to deliver our services in an accessible and culturally appropriate manner.

Strategy 3.1.4 - Explore internal policy and practice revisions and modifications to office environment as needed to increase the comfort of BIPOC.

*Goal 3.2: Strengthen relationships with Indigenous leadership, communities and service providers.*

Strategy 3.2.1 – Increase collaboration with organizations that serve Indigenous communities.

Strategy 3.2.2 - Explore opportunities for TAPS to contribute to or participate in community-based work already undertaken by Indigenous communities or Indigenous-focused organizations.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Organizational capacity and financial sustainability**

*Goal 4.1: Build an effective staff and volunteer structure to achieve organizational priorities.*

Strategy 4.1.1 - Expand the administrative capacity of the organization through increased staffing in the area of reception/intake.

Strategy 4.1.2 - Develop a professional development plan that takes into account organizational needs and staff needs/interests.

Strategy 4.1.3 Strengthen the financial and bookkeeping services available to the organization through increased staffing.

*Goal 4.2: Expand the organization's donor program through a strategic fundraising strategy.*

Strategy 4.2.1 – Formalize a donor engagement and stewardship strategy for monthly donors.

Strategy 4.2.2 – Build a planned giving strategy.

Strategy 4.2.3 – Work with the Board to support the implementation of the fundraising plan.

## **Strategic Priority 5: Organizational profile**

*Goal 5.1: Being the trusted voice on legislated poverty*

Strategy 5.1.1 - Build relationships with journalists and major local and national media outlets in order to be seen as the 'go to' organization on legislated poverty issues.

Strategy 5.1.2 – Work to increase our media presence outside the Capital Regional District, focusing on regional outlets across Vancouver Island as well as provincial media.

*Goal 5.2: Ensure consistent messaging and branding for TAPS.*

Strategy 5.2.1 – Complete rebranding and ensure that new branding information is included on all TAPS promotional materials.

Strategy 5.2.2 – Create an accessible and reliable website for TAPS which is integrated with our email client and donor/member databases.

## **Strategic Priority 6: Building community power**

*Goal 5.1: Expand and enhance public education and community outreach activities.*

Strategy 5.1.1 - Integrate the lived experiences of people living in poverty into all public education and outreach activities.

Strategy 5.1.2 – Ensure the voice of clients are shared through Taproot.

*Goal 5.2: Further refine how TAPS engages in and supports direct action.*

Strategy 5.3.1 – Develop a process for determining when and to what end TAPS supports and/or engages in direct action.