

GTA CLINIC TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

Monthly Newsletter

September 2013

Call for research on best practices

The GTA Transformation Project will be looking at international research and best practices for poverty law services to build on our existing literature review. Our current bibliography of research already reviewed is posted on our website - www.GTAclinics.ca. We would love to hear from you about any literature and articles that you know of that will help with this project. Email us or give us a call with anything you think is missing or to let us know of any information you'd like us to focus on.

Data Gathering Begins

Data gathering for the GTA Transformation is underway.

Since the Government changed the form for the 2011 Census, the data collected is not as helpful as the previous Census. A combination of 2011 Census data and 2010 Tax filer data will be used for most of the analysis as it will provide a fairly strong picture about where new immigrants are settling. When it is helpful, we will use the 2006 Census data to augment the other data we have.

Data will explore issues like low incomes, immigration rates and find the areas in the GTA that have the highest concentration of those circumstances.

The project will map the data and will overlay geographic data like the location of social housing and transit.

Additional data to be explored for their potential inclusion will include data on refugees, mental health survivors, Ontario Works and ODSP recipients.

A data subcommittee of the Steering Committee has been struck, with representatives from across the GTA. The subcommittee will discuss what data will be included in the data analysis of the project.

Project Workplan

The GTA Transformation Project will be working hard over the next several months to meet our project deliverables. In order to make sure that we respect the time needed to get this right, our project timelines may shift. Here's a breakdown of our current workplan.

Deliverable	Steering Committee meeting
Data gathering of Clinics	October
Key informant interviews	
Staff and client focus groups	November
Key informant interviews	
Data analysis of Clinics	December
Literature review	
Review of existing models	January
Model development	
Key informant interviews	February
Infrastructure review, including IT, HR	
Transition planning	March

Introduction to Low Income Population Data

Low income population statistics will be referred to in various contexts as we go through the GTA Legal Clinics Transformation Project. This article is an introduction to the concept, as requested by the Steering Committee.

LICO

The statistic generally used to represent the low income population in an area is Statistics Canada's "low income cut off" statistic or LICO. Statistics Canada defines LICO as "the income below which a family is likely to spend 20 percentage points more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family." If the average family spends 43% of its before tax income on food, shelter and clothing, then the low income cut off will be families spending 63% or more of income on those necessities. That is the basic definition – the actual calculation is fairly complex and includes regression analysis. Fortunately, the data is not complex to use.

There are separate LICO's for seven family sizes (from single persons to families of seven or more) and five community sizes (from rural areas to urban areas of 500,000 or more). This results in 35 LICO figures which are actual dollar figures. An individual or family which is below the LICO figure for the particular family size in the particular community size is considered "low income". As Toronto, York and Peel are all communities of over 500,000, we are only concerned with the seven family size LICO's for that size of community: \$23,298 for a single person.

LICO is a measure of the population which is significantly less well off than the average population – it is not intended to be a measure of "poverty". While this may not be a perfect definition of poverty, it is the best available and the most statistically reliable. In the absence of any accepted definition of poverty, the LICO figures are regularly used by analysts as a shorthand for "low income population" and are used by the Transformation Project.

Other Measures

Other poverty measures include the Low Income Measure (LIM) which is 50% of the median household income and the Market Based Measure (MBM) which is intended to measure the minimum you need to buy food, shelter and clothing. LIM is just a measure of median incomes with no relation to what is needed to survive. MBM is a measure of absolute abject poverty. LICO is a relative measure of poverty – indicating those who are significantly worse off than the average. So far, it has been the preferred measure.

Currency of Data

All figures in this article are from the 2006 census and are thus out of date. During that time we have been through a recession. As well, there has been significant population growth in some areas of the GTA. Between the 2006 census and the 2011 census, the population of York Region has grown 16%, the Region of Peel has grown 12% and the City of Toronto has grown 4.5%. The LICO percentages may have also changed, so the change in the low income population needs to be calculated.

The GTA Transformation Project will use updated 2010 and some 2011 data, which has become available just recently.

How do I have a say?

If you are involved with a Clinic, talk to your Clinic's Steering Committee representative about what's happening. If you work at a Clinic you'll be asked to have direct input. If you live in an affected community, we'll be seeking people to participate in interviews and focus groups to give us their guidance, let us know you'd like to participate. And if you just have a really great idea, send us an email at info@GTAclinics.ca.

You can stay on top of all the progress by visiting our website www.GTAclinics.ca, and have input through there as well. In the meantime, we will be putting out this newsletter once a month to let you know what's been happening.

Thanks for taking an interest in the GTA Clinic Transformation Project.