

NIAGARA PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

2008-2013



Goals of the NPI:

- Guide and direct investments on identified initiatives to alleviate poverty in neighbourhoods across Niagara
- Advocate for change that will reduce and prevent poverty in the community
- Develop and enhance collaborative relationships between stakeholders
- Engage people living in poverty in meaningful ways to ensure that investments reflect need

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*Strengthening
Neighbourhoods in Need*

Since 2008, the Niagara Prosperity Initiative has been addressing the needs of people living in poverty and enhancing the ability of communities to work together toward reducing poverty.

The NPI is a partnership among Niagara Region, the non-profit sector and the private sector. It uses a neighbourhood-based approach to addressing poverty, investing in areas of Niagara most in need.

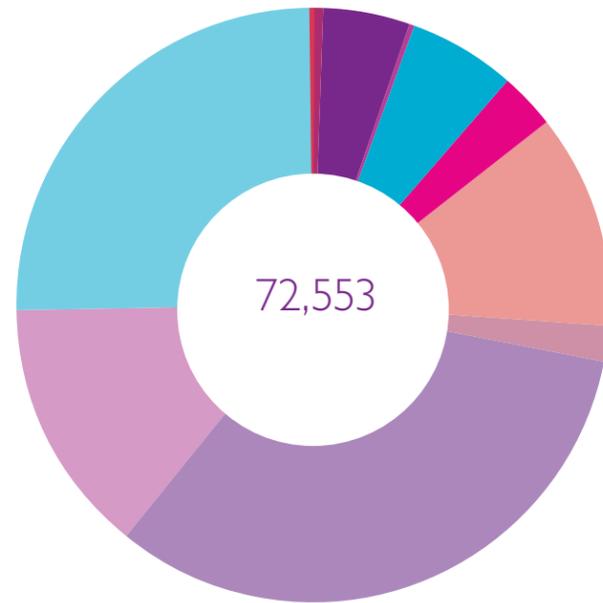
During the past 5 years, more than 200 projects delivered by more than 60 community agencies have been funded by Niagara Region through the NPI.

Is the NPI working?

Feedback from Niagara residents helped by NPI projects indicate the strategy is making a substantial difference in the lives of individuals. As well, the NPI is evaluated based on the improvements in assets in 5 key areas. NPI Project Investments increase assets in these key areas:

- Personal Assets** inner resources such as improving self-esteem and self-confidence
- Physical Assets** basic material goods and services such as food, shelter, transportation and child care
- Social Assets** relationships and networks
- Human Assets** skills, knowledge, education and health
- Financial Assets** income, savings and sources of financial security

NPI Projects, 2008 - 2013 People Served



● Assistance with Shelter	194
● Research / Education	394
● Transportation Initiatives	3,378
● Job Specific Skills Training	265
● Personal Needs	4,177
● Community Gardens	2,099
● Back-to-School Programs	8,489
● Life Skills Programs for Adults	1,554
● Access to Food	23,701
● Community Networks Development	10,066
● Educational Programs for children/youth	18,237
Total	72,553

Where have we invested?

Educational Programs for children and youth – \$2,279,728
People served: 18,237

A clear emphasis of the NPI is on the next generation with more than 40 projects focused on improving the lives of children and youth. Projects included leadership training, summer and after-school programs, tutoring programs and arts and reading programs.

Community Networks Development – \$1,742,163
People served: 10,066

Increasing the capacity of neighbourhoods to address poverty through public engagement and other community-building initiatives is another key strategy to promote prosperity in low-income areas. More than 30 community development projects have been funded.

Access to Food – \$912,045
People served: 23,701

Nearly two dozen projects were funded to increase access to food and education about healthy eating behavior and nutrition.

Life Skills Programs for Adults – \$602,908
People served: 1,554

Personal and professional development is a core poverty-reduction strategy employed by the NPI. Projects included training programs in a wide range of areas, such as Safe Food Handling Certification, sewing, cooking, financial planning, parenting, public speaking, assertiveness and self-empowerment.

Back-to-School Programs – \$575,366
People served: 8,489

When winter clothing and back-to-school benefits were removed from social assistance in 2008, the NPI worked with community agencies to help prepare families and children for a good start to the school year.

Community Gardens – \$323,232.38
People served: 2,099

The NPI has invested in nine community gardens in Niagara. These initiatives are beneficial in building community, creating food sources, and educating people of all ages about cooking and nutrition.

Personal Needs – \$303,630
People served: 4,177

The NPI is focused both on meeting immediate needs as well as longer-term solutions to poverty. To assist those in need of basic personal items, the NPI has funded projects enabling residents to access items such as phone service, winter clothing and boots, laundry vouchers, appliances, furniture and other household items.

Job Specific Skills Training – \$289,115
People served: 265

Projects delivered by five agencies provided skills training in several areas, including clerical, food safety, food preparation, literacy, computers, customer service, public-speaking and entrepreneurship.

Transportation Initiatives – \$182,738
People served: 3,377

Transportation is routinely identified as an issue among Niagara's poor and low-income residents. Eight organizations delivered programs that provided bus passes and other transportation services to enable children, youth and adults to participate in daily activities of life.

Research / Education – \$99,435
People served: 394

The first step in ending poverty is to understand what poverty is. The NPI provided funds to a number of organizations to enable staff to participate in conferences, seminars and workshops that examined poverty and related issues. It also funded projects, such as The Rowing the Boat Together project, creating opportunities for front-line community service workers to collaborate, share knowledge, learn and network.

Assistance with Shelter – \$70,000
People served: 194

In 2008 and 2009, NPI funding was distributed to community agencies across the region to assist with the Emergency Energy Fund. The assistance is used to prevent cut-off of hydro and heat, helping people stay in their homes.