



## **Strategic Plan 2017-2020**

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**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 6,000 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 and public awareness.
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. In cooperation 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 disabilities benefits, employment standards and tenancy information including information, summary advice, negotiation and/or representation to person of no, low or fixed incomes;
- ❖ Training for low income persons and community groups and organizations in order to better advocate for themselves or for their members;
- ❖ Identifying, researching and addressing issues related to poverty with particular emphasis on those issues that affect the local community; and
- ❖ Working in cooperation with other community groups and social service providers in advancing poverty issues.

## Strategic Direction

- Vision:** All citizens will have adequate resources 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
3. Organizational capacity
4. Organizational profile
5. Building community power
6. Financial stability

## **Strategic Priorities 2017 to 2020**

### **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 - Recognizing that the high intensity and high volume of work can lead to burnout, encourage a staff culture where staff can monitor and restrict caseloads if necessary.

*Goal 1.2: Build direct relationships with other service providers in order to strengthen their capacity to address the needs of clients.*

Strategy 1.2.1 – Expand public legal education to service providers and clients.

Strategy 1.2.2 – Continue to provide information and legal education through Taproot.

*Goal 1.3: Prioritize the expansion and realignment of services in order to better serve underserved populations and address related issues.*

Strategy 1.3.1 – Work to ensure services are accessible and appropriate for Indigenous people affected by poverty.

Strategy 1.3.2 – Work to better serve seniors who are affected by poverty.

Strategy 1.3.3 – Expand supports into human rights and other related areas.

### **Strategic Priority 2: Law reform**

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

Strategy 2.1.1 - Provide the space and opportunities for staff to engage in system reform.

*Goal 2.2: Build the capacity of the organization to take on/support public interest law cases.*

Strategy 2.2.1 - Explore hiring a public interest lawyer to support the development of this service area within TAPS.

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

Strategy 2.2.3 – Work with allies/networks across the province and country engaged in law reform and strategic litigation.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Organizational capacity**

*Goal 3.1: Establish an appropriate and functional physical presence in the community.*

Strategy 3.1.1 - Identify new office space that will support the growth of the organization as well as allow for potential co-location with other aligned organizations.

Strategy 3.1.2 - Re-examine internal systems and structures to ensure optimum efficiencies, particularly in the areas of IT and data management.

*Goal 3.2: Build an effective staff and volunteer structure to achieve organizational priorities.*

Strategy 3.2.1 - Regularly review the HR/staff structure of the organization.

Strategy 3.2.2 - Expand the administration capacity of the organization through increased staffing in the area of administration/reception.

Strategy 3.2.3 - Develop a professional development plan that takes into account organizational needs and staff needs/interests.

### **Strategic Priority 4: Organizational profile**

*Goal 4.1: Being the trusted voice on legislated poverty on Vancouver Island.*

Strategy 4.1.1 - Build relationships with journalists and all major local and national media outlets.

Strategy 4.1.2 - Work with researchers and other community partners to ensure that information is reliable and up to date.

Strategy 4.1.3 - Increase the profile of TAPS through strategic community events.

Strategy 4.1.4 - Build relationships with Indigenous communities on the Island and explore ways to partner on poverty alleviation.

*Goal 4.2: Ensure consistent messaging and branding for TAPS.*

Strategy 4.2.1 - Develop a communication policy, including identification of key messages for the organization.

Strategy 4.2.2 - Identify and train staff and volunteers who will act as spokespeople for the organization.

Strategy 4.2.3 - Develop a consistent brand for the organization, including letterhead, business cards, email signatures and other related materials.

Strategy 4.2.4 - Expand TAPS' social media presence in order to support awareness and education objectives.

## **Strategic Priority 5 – 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.

*Goal 5.2: Build the capacity of the community to engage in self-advocacy.*

Strategy 5.2.1 - Support the development of peer run organizations and groups, such as the Tenant Legal Action Project and the Retail Action Network.

*Goal 5.3: 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.

## **Strategic Priority 6 – Financial stability**

*Goal 6.1 – Build a financial strategy that will solidify existing and build new and diverse revenue sources for the organization.*

Strategy 6.1.1 - Explore shared services and co-location models to enhance financial sustainability.

Strategy 6.1.2 - Continue to work with existing funders to support the work of TAPS.

Strategy 6.1.3 - Explore new funding partnerships to expand the support of TAPS services and supports.

*Goal 6.2 – Expand the organization's donor program through a strategic fundraising strategy.*

Strategy 6.2.1 – Build a donor engagement and stewardship strategy for monthly donors.

Strategy 6.2.2 – Build a planned giving strategy.

Strategy 3.2.3 – Work with the Board to support the implementation of the fundraising plan.