



# APM 2019 Annual Report

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## Anti-Poverty Ministry

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## Mission Statement

**Rooted in God's radical love,  
expressed through  
compassion and action,  
the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry  
advocates and educates  
with and for  
those seeking  
social and economic justice.**

## **REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

I have been privileged to chair the Anti Poverty Ministry for the last two years. I continue to be amazed by the impact this ministry has on the community both in terms of client impact but also larger scale awareness of issues relating to those living in poverty.

2019 was another busy year for our staff, and we as a Board did our best to support their endeavours. We lost a few Board members this year so we have been working hard to replenish those numbers. Our priorities continue to involve securing stable funding to ensure that our staff are able to continue in their important work towards the eliminating of poverty in our province.

Our staff members Peter Gilmer and Bonnie Morton continue to do a fabulous job of providing advocacy, education and a voice for social justice on behalf those living in poverty in Saskatchewan. Both will receive much deserved honorary doctorates from St. Andrews College in the spring of 2020. We are proud of both of them and their accomplishments. We also wish to thank our 2019 human justice and social work students: Kelsey Walchuk, Patricia Obeng, Oleksandra Tymchuk, Elise Paquin and Randy Laronde. Through these practicum placements, we provide valuable experience to local human justice and social work students while at the same time receiving much needed assistance with the ongoing operation of the ministry.

We greatly appreciate all the support we receive from Knox-Metropolitan United Church here in Regina, as well as from our other support partners, The United Church of Canada, the Living Skies region, and our monthly givers, without whom we would not be able to function.

The Anti-Poverty Ministry is a social justice ministry, unlike any other in our province. Supporters and donors are supporting more

than just a charity but are blessed to be part of an ongoing process of making real change for people living in poverty in this province. If you would like to become part of this work, please visit our website at [antipovertyministry.ca](http://antipovertyministry.ca), to find out how you can help. If you would like to explore becoming a member of our Board, please contact me or either of our staff members at the APM office.

Respectfully submitted,

Kate Berringer, Chair

## **STAFF REPORT**

The work of the Anti-Poverty Ministry (APM) is done in three areas: individual advocacy, public education and social justice. Here are some of our activities in each of these areas in 2019.

### **Individual Advocacy**

Individual advocacy involves providing support for low-income people and households to ensure that they are receiving those benefits that they are entitled to and that they are being treated fairly by the institutions that they are dealing with. APM attempts to mediate conflict between individuals and institutions so that there are mutually agreed upon resolutions, but we do represent clients through the appeal processes which are in place to resolve conflicts.

A majority of our individual advocacy casework involves responding to decisions made by the Income Assistance and Disability Services Division of the Ministry of Social Services. Since the closure of the Welfare Rights Center in 2011, we are the only community organization with a mandate to provide this service.

Our income security advocacy includes handling income assistance cut-offs and denials, underpayments and

overpayments, shelter and utility coverage, as well as special household , medical, travel, dietary and disability needs.

APM continued to handle a high number of cases related to difficulties covering rent in 2019. We also dealt with many cases related to the new Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program which come into effect in July. SIS is replacing the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and the Transitional Employment Allowance.

In total, APM handled an all-time high 2,428 cases in 2019. This represented a ten percent increase over 2018 and the eleventh consecutive year of over 2000 cases. We successfully resolved a significant majority of these cases. This does not mean that persons necessarily received everything that they would have liked but that their situation was made better after having made contact with our office.

APM is also a food bank referral agency and intervenes to help people meet immediate needs such as food, shelter and clothing. We help navigate systems and refer people to appropriate services. APM also provides pastoral care for persons who are dealing with issues or crises that are not advocacy or charity related. In all of our casework we seek to uphold the dignity of those requesting our help. We also maintain strict confidentiality.

During the past year, the APM staff conducted four advocacy training workshops for volunteers, clients, ministry personnel, service providers and practicum students. Two of these workshops were provided through the Life Long Learning Center. These workshops develop advocacy skills in the community and help us keep up with the demand for this service. We present a recognized certificate to those who take the workshop and provide 30 hours of advocacy service.

## **Public Education**

Public education involves providing educational workshops and producing educational resources on anti-poverty issues. Our public education campaign is aimed at the provincial public, with a focus on faith-based, community and educational groups and institutions as well as interested individuals.

Within the faith community, APM conducted 29 anti-poverty services of worship in the past year. We also give presentations to outreach and social justice committees, youth groups and confirmation classes as well as ecumenical and multi-faith groups and gatherings

In the wider community, APM provided many workshops on a range of poverty issues to community and youth groups, women's shelters, labour unions, service providers and a broad cross section of post-secondary classes. Our office acts as an anti-poverty resource center and we remain a media resource on poverty issues. APM was quoted on over 40 occasions through interviews and press conferences.

APM co-led a systemic advocacy workshop attended by 40 participants for the University of Regina Community Research Unit's Toolkit Series.

APM facilitated two social work and two human justice practicum placements in 2019. We expect a similar number of placements in 2020. We also supervised a work placement through the Neil Squire Society.

In 2019, APM continued distributing its Low-Income Anthology. This anthology of 20 stories allowed APM clients to tell their stories in an anonymous way. It is being used to sensitize church members, decision makers and the general public on the struggles faced by low-income people. It also shows the resilience of the people seeking our support and many victories

over significant barriers.

A key public education activity continues to be APM's monthly study circles with low-income volunteers and activists. These study circles offer low-income people the opportunity to discuss poverty concerns that affect their lives. While our staff may provide resource materials or line up speakers, the topics are decided upon and often led by the group. In 2019 our circles included discussions of advocacy tactics, supplementary health care coverage, earned income exemptions and our raise the rates (income assistance) campaign. These study circles influence APM's public policy and tactical direction. They are also a meaningful way for low income people to connect with and empower each other.

### **Social Justice**

Social justice work involves anti-poverty activism and lobbying as well as community consensus building around key issues. It also includes joint projects and campaigns with community partners.

APM frequently makes presentations to politicians and other government representatives. We know that there are many powerful interests which carry considerable influence in policy-making circles. The concerns of low-income people and the issues of the anti-poverty movement must also be heard by decision makers. In the past year, APM has met with the Minister and senior officials of Social Services. We have also met with the Leader of the Opposition, the Opposition Caucus and the Critic for Social Services as well as the Mayor of Regina.

APM chairs End Poverty Regina and is active with Poverty Free Saskatchewan. These are networks of organizations and individuals concerned about poverty issues. In the past year they have been involved in campaigns to increase income assistance rates and earned income exemptions as well as raise concerns about the new SIS program.

Over the past 23 years, APM has identified key anti-poverty proposals through extensive consultation with low-income people and community groups dealing with poverty issues. These proposals fall under the categories of adequate income security benefits, a living wage, quality and affordable housing and childcare, equity initiative and fair taxation. We continue to promote these proposals along with our call for an Act to End Poverty in Saskatchewan which would ensure basic social and economic rights committed to under international law.

APM networks with many organizations at the local, provincial and national levels. Locally, this includes involvement with several church and community groups. At the national level Bonnie Morton is on the board of the Court Challenges Program and was recently elected the President of Canada Without Poverty (Canada's national poor peoples organization)

#### **RAPM STAFF**

##### **Peter Gilmer**

##### **Designated Lay Minister**

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Master of Theological Studies, Human Rights Summer College, 32 years advocacy experience, 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial Medal Recipient. [\*\*rapm@sasktel.net\*\*](mailto:rapm@sasktel.net)

##### **Bonnie Morton**

##### **Designated Lay Minister**

Bachelor of Human Justice, Certificate in Dispute Resolution and Mediation, 34 years advocacy experience, 1991 Keith Couse Award, 1999 YWCA Woman of Distinction, 2001 Helen Prize Winner, and 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial Medal Recipient, 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. [\*\*bonnie.morton@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:bonnie.morton@gmail.com)

<b>Anti-Poverty Ministry</b>	<b>2019 Actuals</b>	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2020 Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Donations</b>			
<b>Churches &amp; Other Groups</b>	14,087	9,200	12,000
<b>Gift in Kind - Rent</b>	12,600	12,600	12,600
<b>Individual Donations Pledge</b>	14,920	14,400	18,180
<b>Individual Donations - Other</b>	7,446	9,000	7,200
<b>NGOs &amp; Community Orgs</b>	427	300	0
<b>Total Donations</b>	49,480	45,500	49,980
<b>Fees for Service</b>	600	270	540
<b>Fund Raising</b>	2,293	1,000	1,460
<b>Grants</b>			
<b>Endowment Fund</b>	6,636	6,000	6,700
<b>G.Murray and Edna Forbes Fdtn</b>	15,000	15,000	15,000
<b>Saskatchewan Conf</b>	22,500	0	0
<b>United Church M&amp;S</b>	30,650	30,650	30,000
<b>Other</b>	809	0	20,328
<b>Total Grants</b>	75,596	51,650	72,028
<b>Interest Income</b>	5,337	1,200	1,200
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>133,306</b>	<b>99,620</b>	<b>125,208</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Board of Director's Expenses</b>	298	200	250
<b>Fund Raising Expenses</b>	17	140	0
<b>Insurance</b>	424	375	425
<b>Ministry &amp; Personnel</b>	0	250	250
<b>Office</b>	1,518	1,560	1,560
<b>Payroll Allow/Reimbursement</b>	1,703	2,640	2,640
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>	154,253	154,634	157,727
<b>Rent - Knox Met UC</b>	12,600	12,600	12,600
<b>Telephone &amp; Internet</b>	2,151	2,221	2,169
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>172,964</b>	<b>174,620</b>	<b>177,621</b>
<b>Net</b>			
<b>Income</b>	<b>(39,658)</b>	<b>(75,000)</b>	<b>(52,413)</b>