



RAPM 2020 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 three years. This has been an interesting year, to say the least. APM has faced both challenges and opportunities as a result of the global pandemic.

Our staff has been challenged immensely this year in terms of seeking safe ways to provide client service while following Covid guidelines. Not only has Covid affected the way in which advocacy assistance is provided, as is often the case with changes in government policy, the pandemic and its economic impact has affected the type and volume of individual advocacy cases that AMP encountered this past year. The staff have done remarkably well addressing these challenges.

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. We also wish to thank our 2020 human justice and social work students: Qafia Siasang, Folake Oteju, Morgan Walter and Ahmereen Salim. 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.

As always, 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, the G. Murray and Edna Forbes Foundation

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, 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 2020.

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 Disabilities Services Division of the Ministry of Social Services. Since the closure of the Welfare Rights Centre 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, shelter and utility coverage, underpayments and overpayments, as well as special household, medical, travel, dietary and disability needs.

APM handled a high number of cases related to people trying to gain and maintain benefits from the new Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program. SIS is replacing the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and the Transitional Employment Allowance. We also handled many cases related to the claw back of the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) from provincial income assistance programs.

Due to Covid-19 precautions a vast majority of our client casework was conducted by phone only. One of the problems this created was getting the signatures for client consent for release of information required by social services.

APM handled 2,167 cases in 2020. This marks the twelfth consecutive year of handling 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 also acts as a referral agency and intervenes to help people meet immediate needs such as food, shelter and clothing. We 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 three advocacy training workshops for volunteers, clients, ministry personal, service providers and practicum students. 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 that take the workshop and then 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 ten 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 labour groups, service providers, women's shelters and a broad cross section of high school and post-secondary classes. Our office acts as an anti-poverty resource centre and we remain a media resources on poverty issues. APM was quoted on over 40 occasions through interviews and press conferences. This included a story on CBC's The National on the provincial claw back of CERB benefits and a Leader Post editorial on the need for an Act to End Poverty in Saskatchewan. It also involved press statements in relation to the 2020 provincial election campaign.

APM was represented on the steering committee of SaskForward who produced the video "A Message from Saskatchewan's Future." This video looked at how environmentally and socially just policies implemented today, including an Act to End Poverty, could make for a bright future in 2030.

APM facilitated a human justice and two social work practicum placements in 2020. We also supervised a Faculty of Arts Internship and a work placement through the Neil Squire Society.

In 2020, APM continued distributing its Low-income Anthology. This anthology of 20 stories allowed APM clients to describe their experiences 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 educational 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 2020 our circles included discussions of disability performance art, the impacts of COVID-19 and recent provincial poverty statistics. 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 Opposition Caucus and Critic for Social Services as well as making two presentations to Regina City Council.

APM chairs End Poverty Regina and is on the Steering Committee of Poverty Free Saskatchewan. These are networks of organizations and individuals concerned about poverty issues. In the past year, End Poverty

Regina has been involved in campaigns for more civic funding for the City of Regina's Plan to End Homelessness and ending the provincial claw back of CERB.

Since 1997, 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 initiatives 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 has included involvement with several church and community groups. At the national level Bonnie Morton chairs the Equity Sub-Committee of the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues. She is also 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, 33 years advocacy experience, 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial Medal Recipient. **rapm@sasktel.net**

Bonnie Morton

Designated Lay Minister

Bachelor of Human Justice, Certificate in Dispute Resolution and Mediation, 35 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**

Anti-Poverty Ministry	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals	2021 Budget
Income			
Donations			
Churches & Other Groups	14,087	7,655	6,000
Gift in Kind - Rent	12,600	13,000	13,000
Individual Donations Pledge	14,920	17,620	21,000
Individual Donations - Other	7,446	9,761	13,360
NGOs & Community Orgs	427	0	0
Total Donations	49,480	48,036	53,360
Fees for Service	600	45	200
Fund Raising	2,293	0	0
Grants			
Endowment Fund	6,636	6,742	6,700
G.Murray and Edna Forbes Fdtn	15,000	15,000	15,000
Saskatchewan Conf	22,500	0	0
United Church M&S	30,650	30,000	30,000
Other	809	0	14,900
Total Grants	75,596	57,742	66,600
COVID-19 Subsidy	0	31,246	0
Interest Income	5,337	2,432	2,700
Total Income	133,306	133,500	122,860
Expense			
Board of Director's Expenses	298	398	200
Fund Raising Expenses	17	993	0
Insurance	424	424	424
Office	1,518	1,064	1,500
Payroll Allow/Reimbursement	1,703	867	2,440
Payroll Expenses	154,253	158,450	163,104
Rent - Knox Met UC	12,600	13,000	13,000
Telephone & Internet	2,151	2,168	2,192
Total Expense	172,964	177,364	182,860
Net Income/(Loss)	(39,658)	(43,863)	(60,000)