



RAPM 2021 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 Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry for the last four years. As we continue to negotiate the complexities of providing services in the midst of a pandemic, I give all the credit in the world to our fantastic staff who have done such a commendable job in carrying out the mission of the ministry. Bonnie Morton, after many decades of service with the ministry, retired in December of 2021. Bonnie helped to shape the current vision and mandate of RAPM. It is because of her dedication and perseverance that RAPM has been able to make so many strides towards the elimination of poverty in our community over the last several decades.

Peter Gilmer continues to offer his expertise in a full-time role on our staff, and he is joined by a new part-time staff member, Colleen Taylor. We are so thankful to have Colleen join us. In 2021, we were also blessed by the assistance of our practicum students: Danielle Christie, James Struthers and Courtney Cross.

RAPM is **unique**. When it comes to social justice, we believe in the call to action. We provide more than just charitable support to people experiencing poverty; we seek to provide them with hope. We believe that change is possible and this fuels our determination to call for change to legislation and policies that keep people in poverty.

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, whom I like to call our RAPM heroes, without whom we would not be able to provide these services. Working towards the end of poverty requires patience and determination but it also requires the support of our community.

We are always looking for more RAPM heroes. 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 RAPM office.

Respectfully submitted, Kate Berringer,
Chair

STAFF REPORT

The work of the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM) is done in three areas: individual advocacy, public education and social justice. Here are some of our activities in each of these areas in 2021.

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 engaging with. RAPM 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 income and asset verification and exemption cases. We help people with the eligibility assessment process for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) as well as accessing special needs.

RAPM handled a high number of cases related to people trying to gain and maintain benefits from the new Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) program. Since September 1, 2021, SIS has completely replaced the Saskatchewan Assistance Plan and the Transitional Employment Allowance. This has led to a growth in cases related to rental and utility arrears as well as loss of special needs due to the inadequate benefits and provisions.

RAPM handled 2265 cases in 2021 of which we successfully resolved the vast majority. 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.

RAPM 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 the appropriate services.

RAPM 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 RAPM staff conducted three advocacy training workshops for volunteers, clients, ministry personnel, 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

RAPM's public education work 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, RAPM conducted twelve anti-poverty services of worship in the past year. We also gave presentations to congregational, ecumenical and multi-faith groups and gatherings.

In the wider community, RAPM provided many workshops on a range of poverty issues to community and labour groups and a broad cross section of high school and post-secondary classes. Our office acts as an anti-poverty resource centre and we are a media resource on poverty issues.

2021 marked an all-time high for media coverage for RAPM as we were quoted on almost 70 occasions through interviews, events and rallies. Much of this coverage related to problems with the SIS program but included many other issues as well as coverage related to our 50th Anniversary and the Honorary Doctorates received by staff.

RAPM facilitated two practicum placements through the Faculty of Social Work in 2021. We also supervised a full year internship through the Meadville Lombard Theological School.

In 2021, RAPM continued distributing its Low-Income Anthology. This anthology of 20 stories allowed RAPM 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 strength of the people seeking our support and many victories over significant barriers.

A key educational activity continues to be RAPM's monthly study circles with low-income volunteers and activists. These study circles offer low-income people the opportunity to discuss poverty concerns that impact their lives. While our staff may provide resource materials or line up speakers, the topics are decided upon and often led by members of the group. In 2021 our circles included discussions about SIS, Guaranteed Liveable Income and international comparisons of inequality and social policy. These study circles influence RAPM's 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.

RAPM 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, RAPM 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 presentations to the Community Wellness Committee and Regina City Council.

RAPM chairs End Poverty Regina and is on the Steering Committee of Poverty Free Saskatchewan. These are networks of organizations and individuals working on poverty issues. In the past year, RAPM has worked with these organizations as well as with Living Skies Regional Council of The United Church of Canada to campaign for reforms and adequacy measures for the SIS program.

RAPM is active in the Disability Income Support Coalition (DISC), which has been working with the Government of Saskatchewan on the development of the SAID program. Most recently we have been represented on the DISC Benefits Committee, which is working on adequacy measures for SAID.

Since 1997, RAPM 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.

RAPM 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 was President of Canada Without Poverty (Canada's national poor people's organization). Bonnie is also the Chairperson of the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues, which assists low-income people challenging social and economic human rights violations in our court systems. In 2021, Bonnie was asked to work with other leaders on monitoring Canada's policy development around the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. After 34 years of exceptional ministry and advocacy work, Bonnie retired from RAPM at the end of 2021. Joining RAPM as an Anti-Poverty Support Worker is Colleen Taylor. Colleen brings over 30 years in human service and social movement experience to this position.

RAPM STAFF

Peter Gilmer

Designated Lay Minister

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Master of Theological Studies, Doctorate of Divinity (honoris causa), Human Rights Summer College, 34 years advocacy experience, 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial Medal Recipient. **rapm@sasktel.net**

Bonnie Morton (retired Dec/21)

Designated Lay Minister

Bachelor of Human Justice, Doctorate of Divinity (honoris causa), Certificate in Dispute Resolution and Mediation, 36 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.

Colleen Taylor (hired Dec/21)

Anti-Poverty Support Worker

Bachelor of Arts (Sociology),
Bachelor of Social Work

Anti-Poverty Ministry	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Budget
Income			
Donations			
Churches & Other Groups	7,655	8,865	10,200
Gift in Kind - Rent	13,000	13,000	13,000
Individual Donations Pledge	17,620	17,155	16,800
Individual Donations - Other	9,761	35,346	9,300
NGOs & Community Orgs	0	5,000	0
Total Donations	<u>48,036</u>	<u>79,366</u>	<u>49,300</u>
Fees for Service	45	420	180
Fund Raising	0	1,130	0
Grants			
Endowment Fund	6,742	6,859	6,800
G.Murray and Edna Forbes Fdtn	15,000	12,500	15,000
United Church M&S	30,000	30,000	32,500
Other	0	0	15,000
Total Grants	<u>51,742</u>	<u>49,359</u>	<u>69,300</u>
COVID-19 Subsidy	31,246	31,176	0
Interest Income	2,432	741	2,700
Total Income	<u>133,501</u>	<u>162,192</u>	<u>119,380</u>
Expense			
Board of Director's Expenses	398	605	300
Fund Raising Expenses	993	646	0
Insurance	424	477	500
Office	1,064	1,831	1,593
Payroll Allow/Reimbursement	867	888	2,820
Payroll Expenses	158,450	164,299	114,767
Rent - Knox Met UC	13,000	13,000	13,000
Telephone & Internet	2,168	2,247	2,400
Total Expense	<u>177,364</u>	<u>183,993</u>	<u>135,380</u>
Net Income/(Loss)	(43,863)	(21,802)	(16,000)