



Building an online anti-poverty community



www.povnet.org

Tools, news and resources for advocates, community workers, marginalized communities and the general public in British Columbia and Canada.

PovNet is funded by:



What is PovNet?

PovNet provides online tools that facilitate communication, community and access to information around poverty-related issues in BC and Canada.



Website

Our website is a clearinghouse of links to current legal information on poverty law subjects, as well as hundreds of helpful organizations and essential resources.



PovNetU

Our online courses for advocates, community and settlement workers are facilitated by experienced advocates and offer rich opportunities for learning and collaboration.



Mailing Lists

Our private email lists facilitate invaluable connections between advocates and community workers. They and cover a number of issues relevant to anti-poverty advocacy work.



Outreach & Networking

We work to ensure that our community stays connected and informed via newsfeeds, popular social networking tools, collecting feedback from the communities we serve and several multimedia projects.



“ PovNet is like having
all the advocates and poverty law
professionals in the province,
and their combined expertise, in your
office, on call, and ready to help.

PovNet helps me serve more people,
more efficiently, and allows me to offer
my skills and experience to others
looking to provide the same efficiency
and excellence of service. ”

~ A PovNet user



Our Board of Directors

PovNet's board of directors represent the anti-poverty community throughout British Columbia. Its current member organizations include:

- BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
- BC Library Association
- BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- BC Teachers Federation
- Clicklaw
- Community Legal Assistance Society
- End Legislated Poverty
- defender of rights
- REACH Multicultural Family Centre
- SPARC BC
- Tenants Rights Action Coalition
- MOSAIC
- Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services



Our Team

PovNet's team includes a full-time executive co-ordinator and a part-time training co-ordinator, as well as contract technical support, web content maintenance and facilitators for online courses.



Penny
Executive Co-ordinator



Kara
Web Content Maintenance



Nicky
PovNetU Training Co-ordinator



Mosa
Technical Administration

Our Website



Online Resources

PovNet's website hosts thousands of up-to-date links and resources that are organized and described to help you find the info you need.



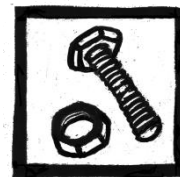
Keep up-to-date

See current blogs, reports, news stories, newsfeeds, campaigns and more.



Find practical info

Get links to applications and forms, government info, FAQs, directories, guides and more.



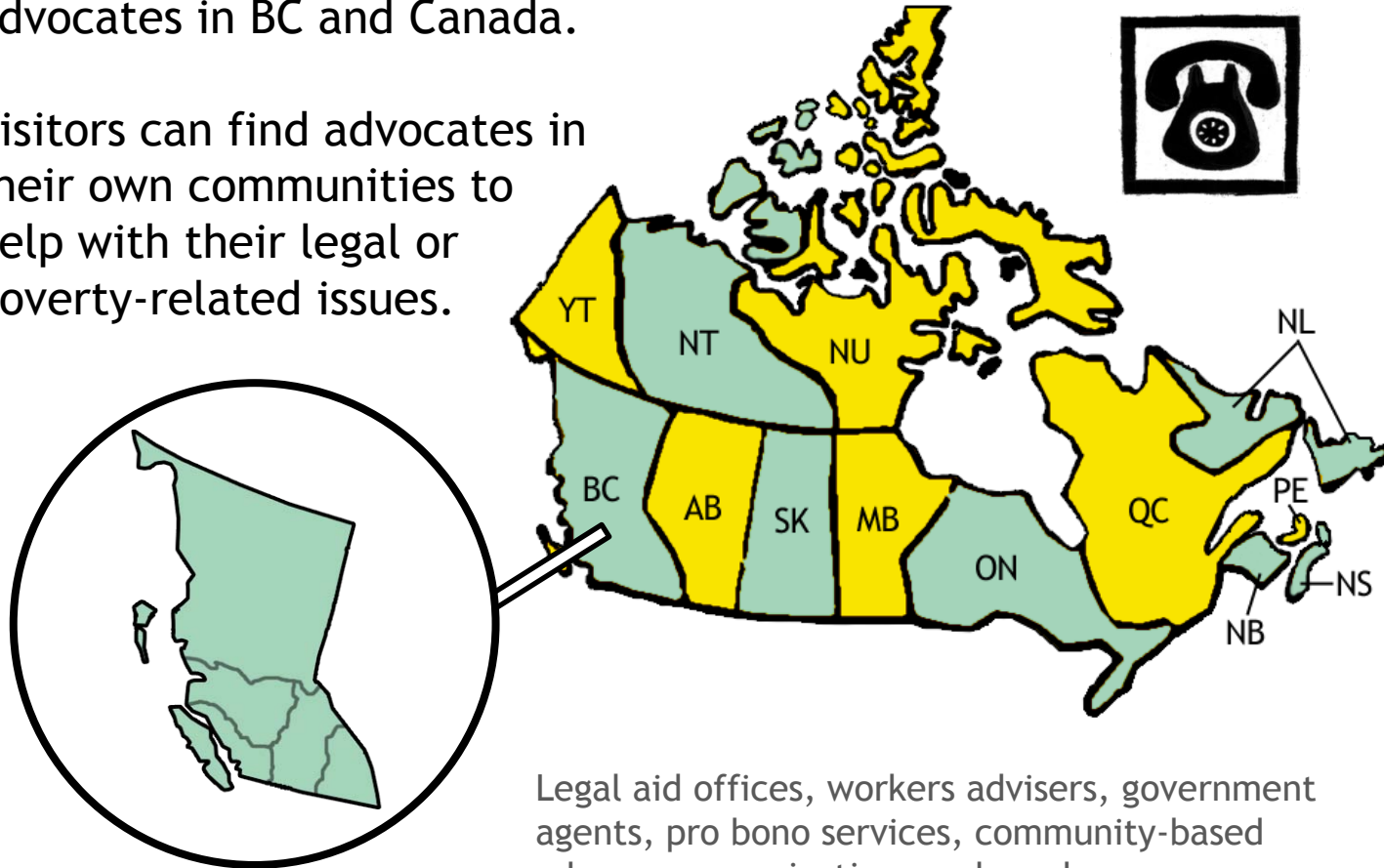
Research an issue

Browse by issues and filter resources for your province or territory.

Find An Advocate

PovNet hosts an up-to-date and widely-used directory of advocates in BC and Canada.

Visitors can find advocates in their own communities to help with their legal or poverty-related issues.



Legal aid offices, workers advisers, government agents, pro bono services, community-based advocacy organizations and much more...

“ I use the
Find an Advocate
map, which is a
great way to refer
people to other
services in BC. ”

~ A PovNet user



Community Connections

PovNet's website is a great place to find out about what poverty-related projects are happening in Canada and BC.



Calendar

Workshops, conferences, arts events, forums and more!

Job Board

Job postings from the anti-poverty and social justice community



Community Listings

Campaigns, polls, petitions, volunteer postings and more!

Make
connections
in your
community

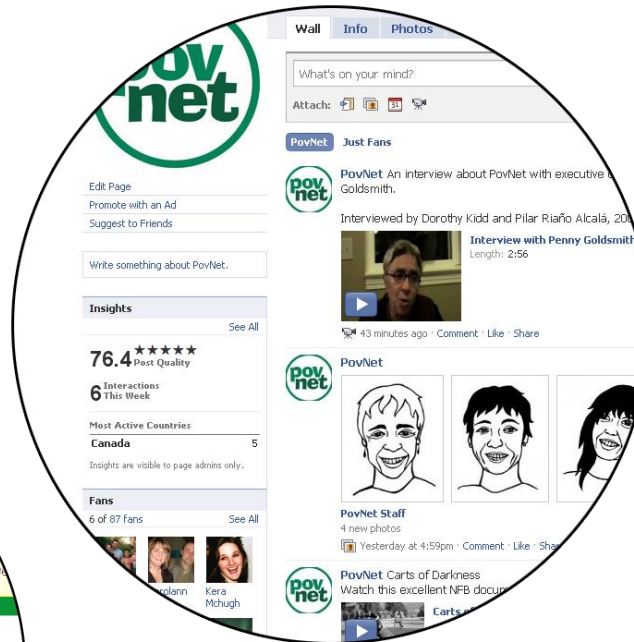
Find out
where and
how you can
get involved

Social Media

Along with our many web tools, PovNet also makes use of several preferred and easy-to-use social media applications to make sure our community stays connected and up-to-date all the time.

Facebook

Become a fan of PovNet! See who else is in our network, share links about poverty issues with friends, browse our photos and videos and leave us comments.



RSS



Syndicate
our newsfeed using
your preferred RSS
viewer

Photos, videos,
interviews and
more...



Twitter

Follow PovNet's
Twitter feed and get
short, daily updates about news
and resources of interest.



Website Facts



On weekdays, our website is a busy place. We get between 600 and 800 visitors each day, most of whom find what they are looking for!



PovNet's website won 2nd Place in the 'Georgia Straight Best of 2008', in the Local Activists Website category.



PovNet started in 1997, and our website has undergone many changes since then! We are pleased to announce a new site design in the works for 2010.



PovNetU



What is PovNetU?

PovNetU (<http://povnetu.povnet.org>) is a collection of online courses for anti-poverty advocates in BC.

The courses are intended to be a useful and cost efficient way of improving the skills and knowledge of advocates and people who need to advocate for themselves.



You can expect our courses to:

- be accessible and easy to navigate
- include descriptions of learning goals and expectations
- encourage group collaboration and participation
- include knowledgeable feedback from experienced facilitators
- provide up-to-date links and info and breakdowns of procedures
- offer practical experience and real-life examples

Our Courses

PovNetU is the home of six full courses for advocates, and is always growing. Each course is about 4 weeks long, and involves a significant time commitment from learners.

- **Introduction to Advocacy**
- **PWD Appeals**
Helping People With DisAbilities Qualify
For The Benefits They Deserve
- **Residential Tenancy Level I**
Tenants' Rights and Obligations
- **Residential Tenancy Level II**
Resolving Disputes
- **Employment Insurance Level I**
- **Be Your Own Advocate**



We are also offering a new self-paced mini course:

- **Basic Business Letter Writing**

Our Facilitators

Courses are facilitated by experienced advocates who provide our learners with constructive feedback and useful information every step of the way.

PovNetU facilitators...

- encourage learners to participate, challenge themselves, complete assignments and achieve their learning goals.
- take their valuable time to carefully read and respond to everything their learners are saying and doing.
- help make sure course content, links and exercises are up-to-date and useful.
- make sure their learners feel comfortable asking questions and receiving constructive feedback on their work.



Learning Tools & Strategies

PovNetU makes use of the technology available to us when planning ways to allow participants methods of engaging and evaluating their work, but we don't let it get distracting.

User Profiles

Learners and facilitators are encouraged to complete their profiles to help get to know one another.

Multiple Choice Quizzes

Learners get immediate feedback and suggestions and have several chances to self-evaluate their work.



Personal Assignments

Learners complete private assignments, where they receive one-on one-feedback.

Discussion Forums

Learners engage in facilitated discussion for a multi-faceted view of course topics.

Getting Comfortable

Facilitators also connect with learners via telephone calls, mail-out packages and icebreaker exercises.

“ Did I mention how much I appreciate the intuitive and ‘twit-proof’ nature of your computer entry systems?

I took another on-line course which was a huge pain just to figure out how to submit assignments. I know this course also uses Moodle but at least you don't rub our noses in it. ”

~ A PovNetU learner



A Peek Inside

Course content is presented in a straightforward way, with clear and numbered topics that are revealed to learners as they progress through the course materials. Each topic builds on the last.

The screenshot shows the PovNetU website interface. The header includes the logo and the text 'Online Courses for Anti-Poverty Advocates'. The user is logged in as 'Participant2 Test'. The main content area is titled 'WELCOME TO The Residential Tenancy Course' and 'Level I: Tenants' Rights and Obligations'. It includes a sidebar with 'My courses' (Basic Business Letter Writing, Employment Insurance, Introduction to Advocacy, PWD Appeals, Residential Tenancy Act - Level 1) and 'Administration' (Profile). The main text describes the course's purpose and structure, mentioning Level II and III. A graphic of a house with an arrow pointing up is shown. The page number '1' is visible at the bottom.

This circular inset shows a 'Personal Assignment - Book 3' titled 'Before the Tenancy Begins'. The text explains that this is where learners start to learn about the residential tenancies in British Columbia. It mentions that learners will need to set aside a chunk of time to clear their desk and put their phone on hold before beginning. A link is provided to 'Click on the link to Book 3, Before the Tenancy Begins going.' Below the text are links for 'Before the Tenancy Begins', 'Discussion Board - Book 3', and 'Personal Assignment - Book 3'.

This circular inset shows a discussion board thread titled 'Hello'. The thread starts with a post by 'Tish Lakes' on Thursday, 18 June 2009, at 10:25 AM, saying 'Hello back! Hoe you will enjoy the course. Tish'. It then shows a reply by 'Jeannie Owens-Wallace' on Thursday, 18 June 2009, at 02:56 PM, saying 'Hi Theresa, Nice to know we are in the course together. 😊'. A third post by 'Diane Brennan' on Sunday, 21 June 2009, at 07:02 PM, says 'Hi Theresa, glad to see you posting. Tell us a bit about yourself'. Each post has options to 'Show parent', 'Edit', 'Split', 'Delete', and 'Reply'.

This circular inset shows a section titled 'Preparing the R4R'. It includes a graphic of a house with an arrow pointing up. The text explains that the Reconsideration package contains a brief description of the denial and following that is the five-page assessment from the Health Assistance Branch (HAB). The HAB assessment details the reasons for denial. It then asks learners to compare what HAB was written with what the doctor wrote in the original application. It also mentions that learners should ask their client to complete the BCCPD Daily Living Activities checklist on page 9 of the BCCPD Helpsheet #2. The section ends with a list of tasks: 'Make sure your client understands that it is not essential that they actually receive the assistance they need; it is only necessary to show the assistance is "required".' and 'Before sending the client away to complete the list, discuss with them, how the assistance and supervision will be provided.'

Feedback From Learners

Check out some of the valuable feedback we receive from our learners letting us know we are on the right track.

“ I found the **immediate, thoughtful and constructive feedback** from the facilitators very helpful.

Being to be able to see other participants answers on discussion questions was a real plus as well. It gave me the opportunity to see **a diversity of opinions and approaches.** ”

“ The course has made me more **comfortable researching the issues.** I am **more aware** of the resources that are out there and am **more familiar** with the various sections of the **Residential Tenancy Act.** ”



“ It's been great to have the **concrete, knowledgeable feedback and encouragement** by experienced advocates.

Another important consideration made by the instructors is that we were given the **time to negotiate our workloads** and work on the course... I had the time to really pay attention to each chapter. ”

“ The whole course was **incredibly helpful** as I am brand new to the disability process. I feel **confident** that I can now assist my clients who want help with the **disability application**. ”

Mailing Lists



Our Mailing Lists

PovNet hosts confidential email lists for advocates, community & settlement workers in the anti-poverty community.

These lists provide a forum for discussing cases, sharing strategies & identifying and working on systemic issues that arise in the pursuit of access to justice.

PovNet hosts lists in British Columbia about:

- Welfare
- Housing
- Mental health
- Workers' rights
- First Nations and Aboriginal issues
- Debt
- Employment questions

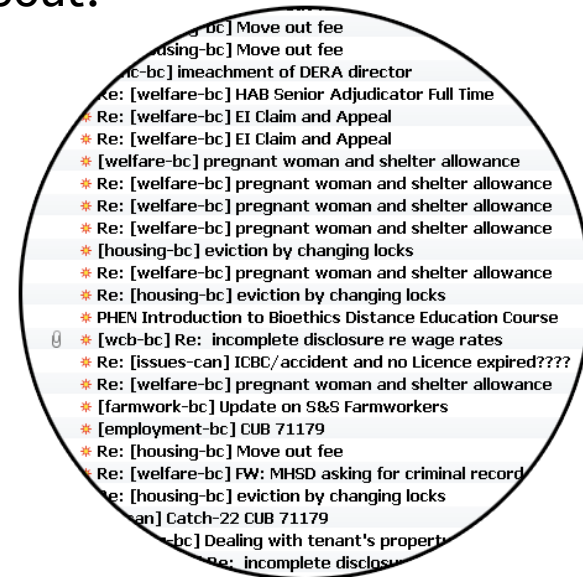


Diverse Discussion

We also provide a home for national lists about:

- Canada Pension
- Employment Insurance
- Older adults

There is a general issues list that is very popular, and a forum for advocates in the northern parts of all provinces and the territories across the country.



“ The lists give me a bird’s eye view of issues across the province so I can have a sense of when an issue is systemic. ”

~ A PovNet list subscriber



“ This list keeps me functioning in my job. I have learned far more from being part of the list than any workshops combined.

The **networking, shared experience/knowledge, support, camaraderie and diverse points of view** are invaluable... It's imperative to our survival and positive health that PovNet continue. ”

“ There is just **no better way of finding answers** to questions related to poverty. ”

“ They keep me abreast of **legislative changes, decisions of tribunals, etc.** ”

Outreach & Networking



Collaboration & Support

PovNet is constantly collaborating with community and advocacy organizations to make new contacts, get direct feedback and stay connected to how we can best support their work.

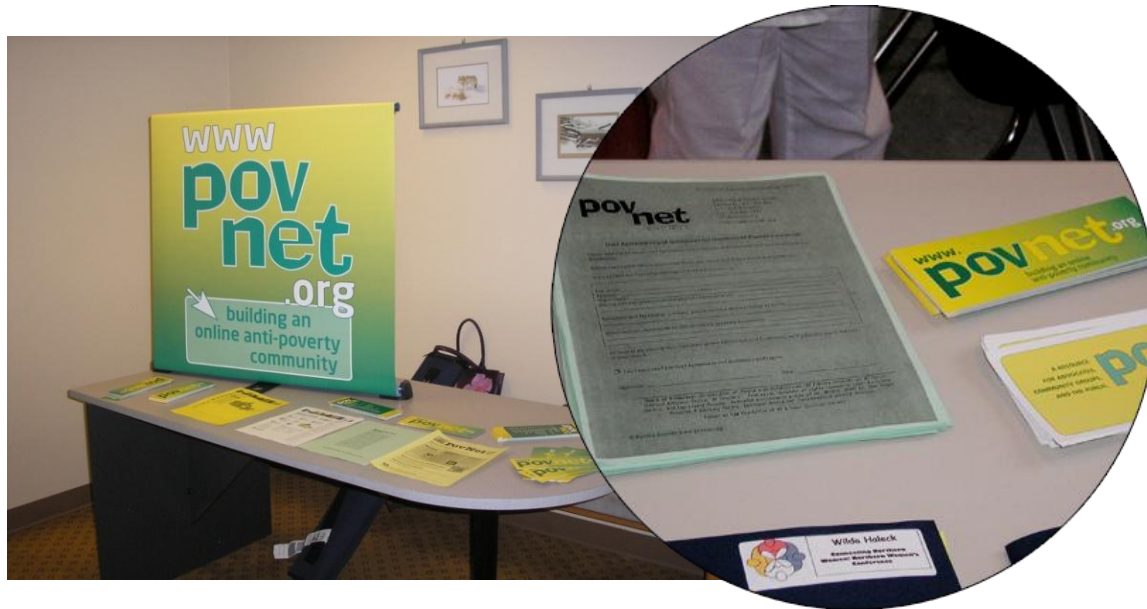
Participating in conferences, workshops and other poverty law-related events allows us to meet advocates, get feedback and stay connected to how we can best support their work.



We provide education and training for advocates who learn to use PovNet's tools because they find it useful for their social justice and advocacy work.

Building Awareness

PovNet's community benefits from our in person outreach work. Our bookmarks, info sheets and other print materials are available at public libraries and other community organizations.



Recently, PovNet was contacted by Radio Canada International for an interview in Arabic, and Saleem Spindari of MOSAIC was happy to lend his expertise.

Penny's Fellowship

In 2008/2009 PovNet's coordinator, Penny, was awarded a fellowship by the Carold Institute.

This opportunity allowed her to spend almost a year collecting stories, wisdom, interviews and ideas about PovNet from the anti-poverty community, in preparation for her upcoming book:

PovNet: Stories of an Online Social Justice Network

Penny also was interviewed by Dorothy Kidd and Pilar Riaño Alcalá, and a video was created about the origins and purposes of PovNet.



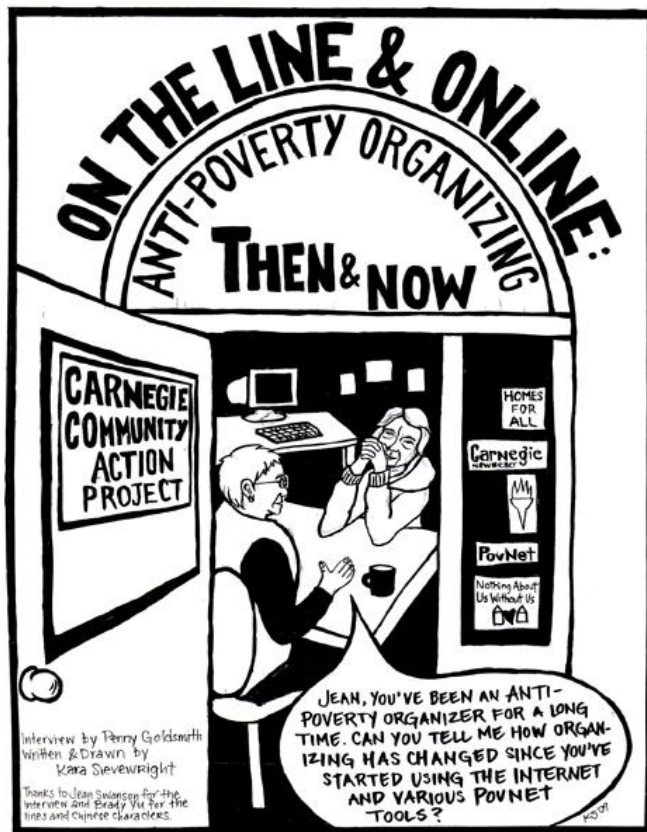
“ There’s a constant kind of evaluation process that goes on that’s more grassroots. ”

~ Penny Goldsmith, PovNet Coordinator



On The Line & Online

One of the interviews that Penny did was with Jean Swanson of the Carnegie Community Action Project. Kara Sievewright turned the interview into a graphic story.





Listening to the Advocates

Penny also created a PovNet digital story, featuring interviews with advocates in Bella Coola, Courtenay, Campbell River, Terrace, Port Alberni and Dawson Creek about how they use PovNet.



"PovNet is a unique online organizing network, and advocates and community workers throughout British Columbia are its mainstay. These are some of their thoughts about where they live, their work, and how they make PovNet useful for them."

Produced in 2009 by Colin Ford of homelessnation.org

Learn More

<http://povnet.org>

<http://povnetu.povnet.org>

<http://twitter.com/povnet>

<http://www.facebook.com/povnet>

Contacts

General Inquiries

info@povnet.org

PovNetU

povnetu@povnet.org

Content

kara@povnet.org

Technical

mosa@povnet.org

