



ONTARIO BASIC INCOME PILOT

Introduction

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services announced that the Province of Ontario will pilot a Basic Income Program in three areas: Hamilton, Brantford, Brant County; Thunder Bay and surrounding area; and Lindsay. They state that “the purpose of this pilot is to assess whether a basic income can better support vulnerable workers, improve health and education outcomes for people on low income and help ensure that everyone shares in Ontario’s economic growth.”

Almost 70 years ago, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights had articulated that the basis of human dignity and well-being are fundamental human rights. Article 25 states:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (herself) and of his (her) family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his (her) control.”

(Article 25, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

As the Government of Ontario evaluates a Basic Income Pilot, I thought it useful to share a set of principles developed by the Social Planning Network of Ontario against which it should be appraised.

Joey Edwardh, Executive Director

Principles for a Basic Income: An Income Security Policy

It is imperative that income security and all social welfare policy in Canada be grounded in the conviction that it is a shared public responsibility to provide the conditions and supports for all Canadians and residents in our land ***to live in health and dignity as a matter of fundamental human rights*** and that strategies, policies and programs that fulfill these rights should be ***developed and implemented in accordance with the social determinants of health.***

Livable Incomes

Everyone needs sufficient income to meet the necessities of living in health and dignity in the community.

Non-conditionality

Public income support must be provided to individuals and families living below the poverty line without other eligibility requirements or conditions related to its use.

Non-Replacement

Basic income payments must not replace, disrupt, or limit access to other essential health and social service benefits and supports, which people on low incomes need to survive and thrive in community.

Augmenting Education and Employment Supports

Individuals receiving a Basic Income must be able to access additional supports to develop and advance their talents and skills through

education, employment and other pursuits driven by their own personal initiative.

Sustaining Employment

A Basic Income program must complement, not supplant, a public policy commitment to the creation of good jobs for all, including opportunities for decent work in the community and civic sector.

Wage Protection and Enhancement

Implementation of a Basic Income must have no bearing on the need for an adequate legislated minimum wage that ensures an individual working full-year, full-time escapes poverty nor should it discourage all employers from paying a living wage to their workers based on the cost in

their areas for individuals and families to sustain themselves and fully participate in community life.

Gender Lens

Basic Income policies and programs must not indirectly result in compelling women in the household to assume the full burden of caregiving roles for children, elderly or other family members.

Ethical Research Practices

Basic Income recipients or participants in a Basic Income pilot must have their privacy protected; no individual or family should be worse off during or after participating in a pilot study.



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