

Now's the Time: A Basic Income Charter for Canada

A CALL TO ACTION

The Kingston Action Group for a Basic Income Guarantee

Preamble

Canadians need to build humane and healthy communities. It's time to ensure an adequate income for all.

Too many of us lack secure livable incomes in a prosperous society. A guaranteed livable income for everyone makes sense.

So we call for national action to tackle poverty, income insecurity, precarious employment, and underemployment. Let's recognize the value of necessary but unpaid work—such as caring for one another and for the planet.

Every Canadian is entitled to economic security. We all deserve to live in dignity, with adequate means to achieve physical, mental and social well-being. Economic security provides the freedom to participate fully in society. That's democracy.

Guiding Principles

A successful national basic income guarantee program will be:

- universally available, subject to income level, regardless of work status;
- adequate to meet needs for food, physical and mental health, housing, clothing, transportation, and internet/communication services;
- provided directly to recipients, and used at their discretion;
- provided in a manner that is respectful and free of stigma and oversight;
- a complementary part of a broad social support system including affordable housing, child care, dental care, pharmacare, and programs that assist those with particular needs and vulnerabilities.
- designed so that no one will be worse off as a result.

Parameters for a National Program

A successful national basic income guarantee program will:

Recognize Indigenous Peoples' Rights

The program must respect the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples, and develop an autonomous process honouring nation-to-nation consultation and negotiation.

Provide Adequate Resources funded by a Fair Tax Regime

It must be fully indexed to the cost of living and supported by adequate resources. Canada possesses adequate resources for social investment, available through progressive tax reform.

Be complemented by legislation requiring payment of a living wage to those who are employed. It must not be a public subsidy to low-wage employers.

Build on successful Canadian programs—Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement, and the Canada Child Benefit program—adapted as necessary to meet the objectives of the program.

Be national in scope, and designed and delivered cooperatively by all levels of government according to their respective jurisdictions, and freely portable among Provinces and Territories.

Be delivered through the tax system with public assistance provided to complete a tax return when necessary.

Be flexible enough to respond promptly to changes in personal circumstances.

Please join us in striving for a Canada where everyone experiences the social, material, educational and political conditions to flourish.

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