



The Lindsay Declaration for a Progressive Basic Income

Adopted November 4, 2017 in Lindsay, Ontario, at the annual organizing meeting of the Ontario Basic Income Network (OBIN).

Whereas under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international human rights law, everyone has the right to food, housing, social security, a standard of living adequate for the health of oneself and one's family, and non-discrimination including on the basis of economic status;

Whereas under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of the person;

Whereas some existing income security programs (e.g., welfare) impose upon income recipients or applicants paternalistic and stigmatizing conditions not applicable to others in society who receive income via other means;

Whereas basic income is a form of income security by which people are ensured access to an income sufficient to help meet their basic needs and to help live with dignity, regardless of work status;

Whereas basic income is known to yield a range of health, educational, economic, and other benefits to individuals, families, communities, and whole societies;

Whereas momentum for basic income is growing in Ontario, elsewhere in Canada, and around the world, building on historic, broad, multi-sectoral, and cross-partisan support;

Whereas basic income momentum in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada can build on existing forms of basic income already in place, notably the Canada Child Benefit, Old Age Security, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement; and

Whereas the Ontario government's current, three-year basic income pilot project may help usher in a more humane and efficient way to help ensure that the basic needs of people in Ontario can be met, and to help Ontarians be more resilient in the face of economic forces and labour market changes beyond their control.

Therefore, be it resolved that we, as citizens of Ontario and of Canada, gathered at the annual organizing meeting of the Ontario Basic Income Network held in Lindsay, Ontario on November 4th, 2017, do affirm that basic income policies and programs must be progressive in their nature and thus reflect the following principles:

1. Basic income must be promoted as a means for economic and social equity and justice, not for charity; and must be aimed at preventing poverty, reducing inequality, promoting health, supporting human resilience, enhancing freedom, and enabling human potential.
2. Given the wealth of Ontario and of Canada, basic income must be promoted from a perspective of fiscal abundance, not scarcity or austerity.
3. Basic income must be a regular (e.g., monthly), reliable (non-withdrawable), non-taxable, and non-stigmatizing (confidential) payment.
4. Basic income must be accessible to all eligible persons and receipt of basic income must not be conditional upon work or any other participation or behavioural requirements.
5. In its maximum available amount, basic income must be sufficient to allow people to meet their basic needs and to help them live a healthy and dignified life.
6. Regional costs of living must be factored into calculation of the maximum available basic income amount, and the amount must be adjusted over time in relation to changes in costs of living.
7. Basic income must be legislatively protected from garnishment by creditors and debt collectors.
8. Basic income must represent a pillar of a comprehensive social security system, other pillars of which must include, but not be limited to, health and disability supports; affordable and accessible housing supports; child care supports; education and training supports, and employment supports including minimum/living wage and pay equity legislation.
9. Basic income must align with the goal of fairer (more progressive) personal and corporate taxation, and must be funded, at least in part, with revenue derived from such taxation.

This Declaration is inspired by and draws from statements from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (Ontario), the Basic Income Canada Network, Community Food Centres Canada, and the Kingston Action Group for a Basic Income Guarantee.