

Poverty reduction strategy

Poverty is not inevitable. Generally, poverty is the result of a combination of factors such as low wages, lack of access to affordable childcare and discrimination.

If we want to reduce and eventually eliminate poverty and if we want to improve the lives of low income people, we need a poverty reduction strategy.

Poverty reduction strategies are essentially plans, with goals and timelines, to reduce both the depth and scope of poverty. More and more countries, and even Canadian provinces, are developing comprehensive poverty reduction strategies. Places as diverse as Sweden, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Newfoundland and Quebec have all determined the most effective way to address poverty is with a poverty reduction strategy.

A good poverty reduction strategy includes:

- √ a long term vision with measurable targets and timelines,
- √ an action plan – with money attached to it, and
- √ an accountability structure that includes ensuring ongoing public consultation and the involvement of low-income people.

Elements of poverty reduction strategies often include income support, such as social assistance and employment insurance, affordable childcare, affordable housing, fair wages, high quality, accessible public education (including post-secondary), public health care (including drug and dental benefits) and programs to combat discrimination.

Ask candidates:

- i) Do you think Ontario needs a poverty reduction strategy?
- ii) What do you think reasonable goals of an Ontario poverty reduction strategy might be?
- iii) Will your party commit to work with low-income people and policy experts to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy with clear goals timelines?