

END POVERTY NOW!

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES ARE TOO LOW

What you can do: Demand that social assistance rates be raised. Ask candidates if they will do so, by how much, in what time frame, and if they will index rate increases to inflation.

- People living on social assistance live in deep poverty.
- They can't afford adequate food, decent housing and medical supplies.
- Almost 60% of food bank users are on social assistance.
- Their situation is becoming more desperate because rates have been frozen since 2018, while inflation continues to increase by over 11%.
- A single person on Ontario Works (OW) receives \$733/mth.
- A single person on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) receives \$1169/mth.
- At the same time, Ontario is saving money because of lower caseloads. OW caseloads are almost 22% lower than at the start of the pandemic. ODSP caseloads are down 4%.

CLAWBACKS KEEP PEOPLE TRAPPED IN POVERTY

What you can do: Ask candidates if they will commit to ending all clawbacks so people who live in poverty are not penalized for accessing other benefits or earning small incomes.

- The Ontario government claws back dollar for dollar back the federal benefits such as Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) and Employment Insurance (EI) from families on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.
- Even during the height of the pandemic, Ontario clawed back 50% after the first \$200 Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). This means that poor people kept less of their pandemic benefits when they needed it most.
- Clawbacks create a ceiling on income that traps people in poverty.
- The provincial government saved millions of dollars from clawbacks on social assistance clients as a result of federal pandemic benefits.

DISCRIMINATION CONTRIBUTES TO HIGHER POVERTY RATES

What you can do: Ask candidates what they intend to do to alleviate poverty for all equity-seeking groups.

- Rates of poverty are higher for women, Indigenous people and racialized people.
- Working age people with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty.
- Recent immigrants have a low-income rate of 31.4%, more than twice the rate of non-immigrants at 12.5%.
- People with precarious immigration status are particularly disadvantaged and they may have barriers to accessing government benefits.
- Racialized people have a low-income rate of 21.3%, almost double the rate of 11.5% for non-racialized Ontario residents.
- Over 30% of working-age singles in Ontario were low-income in 2020.

Social assistance rates must be raised significantly and immediately!

End clawbacks on ALL benefits!

Women, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, racialized people and people with precarious immigration status should not experience higher rates of poverty!

