



INCOME SECURITY ADVOCACY CENTRE
Centre d'action pour la sécurité du revenu

1500 – 55 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5J 2H7
Tel: 416-597-5820
Fax: 416-597-5821
Toll-free: 1-866-245-4072
www.incomesecurity.org

July 25, 2022

VIA EMAIL premier@ontario.ca; Minister.fin@ontario.ca; MinisterMCCSS@ontario.ca

Dear Premier Doug Ford, Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy, and Minister Merrilee Fullerton,

RE: Raising social assistance rates in the August 2022 Budget

We are legal clinic workers, health care providers, service providers, settlement workers, gender equity and racial justice advocates, and other not-for-profit and non-profit organizations who advocate for poverty reduction and income security.

We are writing to urge you to raise social assistance rates in Ontario to adequate levels in the upcoming August 2022 Budget. We are encouraged by the election promise made on May 9, 2022, and affirmed on June 27, 2022, to raise the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates by 5%. However, there are two urgent concerns that we call on you to address so that people on social assistance can live with dignity:

- Ontario Works (OW) rates must also be raised; and
- Both ODSP and OW rates must meet the cost of living.

Background

The inadequacy of social assistance rates in Ontario was a central issue during the 2022 election. Every party recommended raising the rates. Rates have been frozen since 2018 at \$733 for a single person on OW and \$1169 for a single person on ODSP. This leaves recipients living at 40% to 60% below the poverty line.

With over 11% inflation since 2018, the real value of the rates has declined, and the depth of this poverty has increased. This historic inflation, combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, has disproportionately impacted low-income Ontarians who are Indigenous, racialized, women, single, or live with a disability. The current dire financial situation is making social assistance recipients' ability to pay for housing, food, medication, digital access, transportation, clothing, disability supports, and other basic needs impossible.

A 5% increase amounts to just over \$58 more per month for ODSP recipients. This is not enough for groceries, and certainly not enough to secure housing. An ODSP increase also offers nothing for people who rely on OW to survive. We therefore call on your government to address the following two urgent concerns in the upcoming Budget.



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Include OW in the social assistance rates increase

The proposed 5% ODSP increase leaves the 458,000 beneficiaries on OW living in destitution. These are the poorest people on social assistance, the majority of whom are unattached singles and women. They cannot afford the necessities of life on \$733 per month. By maintaining the current rate, this government bears the added cost of paying for these individuals' interactions with shelters, hospitals, the criminal justice system, and other social services. **We implore you to also raise the rates for OW.**

Raise the rates for both OW and ODSP to meet the cost of living

With continued inflation, and the associated increase in cost of living, 5% is not nearly enough of a rate increase to survive. This government has saved on social assistance costs during the COVID-19 pandemic due to federal benefits and lowered caseloads. These savings must be reinvested. **We call on this government to double both OW and ODSP rates, and to index these rates to inflation.**

Ontario will not recover fully from the pandemic if people on social assistance are left behind. We look forward to action and to your commitment to Ontario's most vulnerable in the August 2022 Budget.

Sincerely,

The Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC)
and
ACCES Employment
Access Alliance Multicultural Health & Community Services
Access County Community Support Services
Accessible Housing Network
Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
Age of Majority Singers
Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington
Anthony Frisina
ARCH Disability Law Centre
Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS)
Autistic Bridge Inc.



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Autistics for Autistics: Canadian Self Advocacy
Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)
Barrie Food Bank
Basic Income Speaker School
Basic Income Waterloo Region
BGC Peel
Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
Black Legal Action Centre
Brain Injury Services of Northern Ontario (BISNO)
Bridges to Belonging
Bruce Villa Manor
Caldwell Family Centre Inc.
Cambridge Council on Aging
CAMH
Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits
Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, Ontario Office
Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
Canadian Mental Health Association- Niagara Branch
Caribbean African Canadian Social Services
CARLINGTON COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
Carranza LLP
Carrefour communautaire francophone de London
Centre d'éducation financière EBO
Centre des services communautaires Vanier
Centre espoir Sophie
Centre for Spiritual Living On the Lake
Centretown Community Health Centre
CERA - Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation
Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic
Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) / Initiative: une Ville pour Toutes les Femmes (IVTF)
Claire Littleton, Provincial Co-Chair, Steering Committee on Social Assistance
Clinique Juridique Bilingue Windsor-Essex Bilingual Legal Clinic
Clinique juridique Grand-Nord Legal Clinic



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Club GAIN
CMHA Peel Dufferin
Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change
Community Advocacy & Legal Centre
Community Development Council Durham
Community Family Services of Ontario
Community Legal Assistance Sarnia
Community Legal Clinic - Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk
Community Legal Clinic of York Region
Community Legal Services of Ottawa/Services juridiques communautaires d'Ottawa
Community Living Essex County
Community Living Ontario
CONTACT Community Services
Cornerstone Housing for Women
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
Council of Canadians - Ontario-Quebec Regional Office
Council of Elizabeth Fry Societies of Ontario
Country Lane Co-op
CUIAS Immigrant Services
Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre
Deaf Literacy Initiative
Debra Dynes Family House
Decent Work and Health Network
Defend Disability
Delta Family Resource Centre
Down Syndrome Association of Simcoe County
Downsview CLS
Durham Association for Family Resources and Support
Durham Community Legal Clinic
Durham Deaf Services
Ecohesian
Elgin-Oxford Legal Clinic
Elizabeth Fry Society Simcoe Muskoka
Elizabeth Fry Toronto



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Embrace Agency to End Violence (Formerly Interim Place)
Empowered Kids Ontario
Epilepsy Toronto
Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County
Family Service Ontario
Family Service Toronto
Family Services Windsor-Essex
Federation of Metro Tenants Associations
Feed Ontario
Fred Victor Centre
Fusion Global Education
Giishkaandago'Ikwe Health Services
Gloucester Emergency Food Cupboard
Good Jobs for All Coalition
Green Haven Shelter for Women
GTA Disability Coalition
Guelph Community Health Centre
Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre
Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Hamilton Social Work Action Committee
Health Providers Against Poverty
HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario
HMC Connections
Homeless Health Peel
Hong Fook Mental Health Association
House of Lazarus Matilda Resource Centre Inc.
Industrial Accident Victims Group of Ontario (IAVGO)
Injured Workers Action for Justice
Injured Workers Community Legal Clinic
Injured Workers of Wellington & Dufferin Counties
Institute for Advancements in Mental Health
Interval House of Ottawa Maison Interval d'Ottawa
IRIS Residential Inns and Services
ISARC Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition



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IWC - Hamilton

Jane Finch Community Legal Services

Jewish Family Services of Ottawa

John Howard Society of Simcoe and Muskoka

Keewaytinok Native Legal Services

Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services

KidsAbility Centre for Child Development

Kingston Community Legal Clinic

Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic

Kitchener Waterloo Chapter, Council of Canadians

Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre

Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County

Listening Post Barrie

London InterCommunity Health Centre

Low-Income Family Empowerment Sole-Support Parents Information Network
(LIFE*SPIN)

Madison Community Services

Mississauga Community Legal Services

Mount Forest Family Health Team

Moyo Health and Community Services

Neighbourhood Legal Services

Neighbourhood Legal Services London-Middlesex

Network for the Advancement of Black Communities

New Canadians Centre Peterborough

Newcomer Centre of Peel

Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre

North York Community House

North York Harvest Food Bank

North York Women's Centre

Northern Human Association

Northumberland Community Legal Centre

OCASI - Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants

ODSP Action Coalition

Ontario ACORN



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Ontario Alliance to End Homelessness
Ontario Association of the Deaf
Ontario Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
Ontario Disability Coalition
Ontario Federation of Labour
Ontario Network Of Injured Workers Groups
MCCSS MERC Chair, OPSEU/SEFPO
Orillia Christian Centre - The Lighthouse
Orillia Community Church
Ottawa & District Labour Council
Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses
Ottawa Day Program Coalition
Ottawa Food Bank
Parkdale Food Centre
Partners in Mission Food Bank
PASAN (Prisoners with HIV/AIDS Support Action Network)
Peel Alliance to End Homelessness
Peel Injured Workers
Peterborough Community Legal Centre
Poverty Free Halton
Poverty Free Thunder Bay
Positive Pathways Community Service
Project READ Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington
PSC
PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs
Punjabi Community Health Services
Quinte Immigration Services
Race and Disability Canada
Reception House Region of Waterloo
Redwood Park Communities
Regeneration Outreach Community
Renfrew County Legal Clinic
Rexdale Community Legal Clinic



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RISE Norfolk
S.H.I.F.T.
Scarborough Community Legal Services
Shelter Now Transitional Support Program
Silent Voice Canada Inc.
Skills for Change
Social Assistance Coalition of Scarborough (SACS)
Social Development Centre Waterloo Region
Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
Social Planning Network of Ontario
Social Planning Toronto
Somerset West Community Health Centre
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
South Asian Women's Rights Organization
South Etobicoke Community Legal Services
Steering Committee on Social Assistance
Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre
The 519 Community Centre
The Centre for Active Transportation
The Dam - Develop Assist Mentor
The Guesthouse Shelter
The Legal Clinic
The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
The Mississauga Food Bank
The Neighbourhood Group Community Services
The Ontario Network of People Who Use Drugs
The Salvation Army – Ontario Division
The Salvation Army Harbourlight Ministries
The Salvation Army Scarborough Citadel
Thrive Northumberland: Coalition to End Violence Against Women
Thunder Bay & District Injured Worker Support Group
Thunder Bay Health Coalition
Toronto Neighbourhood Centres
Toronto People With AIDS Foundation



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Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council
Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership
Turning Point Counselling
United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County
Vibrant Communities - Our Safety and Well-being Plan - Cornwall, SDG and Akwesasne
Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada - Ontario Branch
West Scarborough Community Legal Services
West Toronto Community Legal Services
Willowdale Community Legal Services
Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI)
Women's Support Network of York Region
WoodGreen Community Services
Workers' Action Centre
Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic
Working for Change
Working Women Community Centre
Youth Diversion
YWCA Cambridge
YWCA St. Thomas-Elgin
YWCA Toronto