

25 in 5 Supports Call for Income Security Review

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The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction is calling on the Ontario government to move forward on an income security review by September 1.

Swift action would show the government is serious about implementing the recommendations of its own Social Assistance Review Advisory Council, meeting the commitments it made to poverty reduction in December 2008 – and, especially, improving the lives of low-income Ontarians across the province.

“The government now has the advice it sought from experts in the field – it is time for the Premier and Cabinet to act, without delay,” said 25 in 5 Network co-chair Greg de Groot-Maggetti. “We urge government to appoint two income security commissioners and an advisory council, and lay out a broad public consultation schedule, by September 1.”

“We especially welcome the Council’s recommendation to immediately increase the incomes of adults without children who are on Ontario Works,” said Mike Creek, co-chair of 25 in 5. “They bear the largest burden of poverty and make up a significant number of the people on assistance. No one anywhere in Ontario can live on the current single adult benefit of \$580 per month.”

“And we would extend the recommendation to the incomes of everyone on Ontario Works and ODSP. There are many ways to do this, such as the \$100 Healthy Food Supplement, a Housing Benefit for all low-income tenants, or increased tax credits.”

25 in 5 highlights some important recommendations in the Council’s report, including:

- Immediately implementing short-term rule changes in Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, as recommended by the Council in February;
- Separate and substantive discussions with First Nations to ensure long-term reforms reflect their needs and priorities;
- Developing an expanded range of income supports and services to be available to all low-income Ontarians, building on the approach of the Ontario Child Benefit;
- Re-engineering long-term coverage in Ontario Works as an ‘opportunity planning’ program to support achieving full labour market potential through skills building, education, training, employment and related support;
- Ensuring the labour market offers effective pathways out of poverty by strengthening initiatives such as minimum wage increases, enhanced employment standards, fair employment initiatives and the federal Working Income Tax Benefit;
- Developing standards for a livable income and a process to use those standards to ensure the adequacy of Ontarians’ incomes.
- [Read the entire report of the Social Assistance Review Advisory Council](#)