



ONTARIO PROVINCIAL COUNCIL
of
The Catholic Women's League of Canada

ON.18.02

Immediate Implementation of *Income Security:*
A Roadmap for Change for Ontarians with a
Disability

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**Immediate Implementation of *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change* for
Ontarians with a Disability**

1 **Whereas,** *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*, October 2017, presented a 10-year
2 roadmap for income security reform in Ontario including recommendations for
3 supporting people with disabilities through an amended, strengthened and distinct
4 Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) with an assured income approach
5 and redesigned rate structure; and

6 **Whereas,** ODSP rates keep persons with a disability in Ontario in deep poverty when
7 compared with Canadian Low-Income Measures (LIM) because the rates:
8 • Were inadequate when established in 1997 as the primary source of income
9 for Ontarians with a disability; and
10 • Were frozen from 1997 to 2005; and
11 • Are revised at the discretion of the sitting provincial government; therefore, be
12 it

13 **Resolved,** that the Ontario provincial council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in
14 71st annual convention assembled urge the Ontario provincial government to
15 immediately implement the recommendations of *Income Security: A Roadmap
for Change* pertinent to Ontarians with a disability, and be it further

16 **Resolved,** that this resolution be forwarded through the national executive to the other ten
17 provincial councils, urging them to become aware of this issue as it pertains to
18 their province/territory, and to act on it, as deemed necessary/prudent.

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Ontarians with a Disability**

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3 **Brief**

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5 The report, *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change* October 2017, recommends a 10-year
6 roadmap for income security reform in Ontario including support for Ontarians with disabilities
7 through an amended, strengthened and distinct Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) with
8 an assured income approach and redesigned rate structure. It examines inter-related issues in depth
9 and proposes solutions that would achieve income adequacy for Ontarians with a disability and
10 indeed for all Ontarians locked in poverty that would not rely on the discretion of the sitting
11 government.

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13 Internationally, the Low-Income Measure (LIM) is the most commonly used statistic to compare
14 poverty. It is fixed at 50% of median adjusted household income, where "adjusted" indicates that
15 household needs are taken into account. LIMs are calculated three times, using market income,
16 before-tax income, and after-tax income. They do not require updating using an inflation index
17 because they are calculated using an annual survey of household income (Canada, Statistics
18 Canada, Table 3, March 12, 2018).

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20 Using the Before Tax figures, the LIM in 1997 for a single person was \$13,890/year when the
21 ODSP yearly income was established at \$11,160. In 2013, the LIM was established at
22 \$23,939/year when the ODSP single yearly income was \$13,032; calculated from a household size
23 of four (Canada, Statistics Canada, (SLID), March 12, 2018).

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25 ODSP is governed by the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 and administered by the
26 Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services following the social assistance policy
27 directives (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Ontario).

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29 ODSP was created in 1997 when the Ontario government changed its social assistance system to
30 separate those unable to work due to disability from those viewed as able to work. The monthly
31 maximum amounts, i.e., \$930/month for a single person, were established province-wide and
32 frozen by the provincial government from 1997 to 2005. The latest 2% increase effective
33 September 30, 2017 provides the single income recipient with \$1,151/month comprised of \$662
34 for basic needs (food, clothing, heat, hydro, transportation, hygienic needs, phone, cable, internet,
35 household expenses, etc.) and \$489 for shelter, previously \$649 and \$479 respectively. There are
36 additional provincial and federal benefits for those who qualify, i.e., GST/HST credit, the Ontario
37 Trillium Benefit or the Canada Child Benefit.

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39 When established in 1997, ODSP rates were inadequate as the primary means of income for
40 Ontarians with a disability. Increases are fully at the discretion of the sitting provincial
41 governments in terms of the amount, the timing and the calculations. Since 1997 and regardless of
42 the method used to compare, there has been a significant loss of income. The 7-year freeze
43 between 1997 and 2005 has had an extremely detrimental effect on ODSP recipients in terms of
44 their income, health and welfare. Taking all these factors into account, full implementation of
45 *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change* pertinent to Ontarians with a disability is paramount.

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Works Cited

1. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/2015002/tbl/tbl03-eng.htm>. Income Research Paper Series - Research Paper Low Income Lines, 2013-2014: Update, Table 3 - Low income measures by income concept, for household size of four persons 1976-2013. Web. 12 Mar 2018.
2. Statistics Canada. Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) - A 2008 Survey Overview, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0011x/2008001/5203392-eng.htm>. Web. 12 Mar 2018.
3. Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 25, Sched. B <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/97o25b>. Web. 12 Mar 2018.
4. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Ontario Disability Support Program Policy Directives <http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/social/odsp/>. Web. 12 Mar 2018.
5. *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*, October 2017. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/income-security-roadmap-change>. 12 Mar 2018.
6. Income Security Advocacy Centre. Historical Basic Needs and Maximum Shelter benefits for single person on ODSP, Jan 2018.

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Action Plan

1. Write to the premier, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and members of provincial parliament urging them:
 - To immediately implement the recommendations of *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*, October 2017, for Ontarians with a disability
 - To become aware of the need for a more comprehensive approach in supporting Ontarians with a disability through an amended, strengthened and distinct disabled support program using an assured income approach and redesigned rate structure
2. Monitor the provincial government's response to the request of this resolution.