



## **We're Together Ending Poverty Advocates for Implementing Basic Income**

May, 2021

We're Together Ending Poverty (WTEP) is a diverse, grassroots group of Calgary activists who came together in 2008 to educate and empower ourselves and others to take action on root causes of poverty.

Our membership is open to all who self- identify as women, trans and non-binary. One of our core beliefs is that we cannot understand the root causes of poverty without examining other forms of oppression and exploitation, including but not limited to race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation.

Poverty disproportionately affects people who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour, LGBTQ2S+, immigrants, women, and people with disabilities. The underlying causes of poverty need to be addressed in Alberta: racism, classism, ongoing consequences of colonialization, sexism, ableism, cissexism, and heterosexism. One clear option to reduce poverty for all and support people to live with dignity is to implement basic income guaranteed.

Basic income benefits:

- Improves health, food security and housing. Adequate income lowers stress. It will support those who live in poverty to have the same lifespan as higher income Canadians.<sup>i</sup>
- Lowering income inequality. A wide gap between the wealthy and poor citizens leads to civil unrest<sup>ii</sup>.
- Improving job security and job transition. With increasing automation, Canadians need to manage their income through job transitions<sup>iii</sup>.
- Caring for children or elderly family members<sup>iv</sup>
- Human rights and dignity because a basic income program does not require people to justify how they spend their money.

The principles of a basic income program must be<sup>v</sup>:

- Universal so it is available to everyone who fall below a certain income with no behavioural eligibility criteria
- Adequate to support basic costs including housing, food, transportation, clothing, and communications (phones, internet access)
- Individual to a person's needs based on size of family
- Complement existing programs such as affordable childcare, housing or extended health benefits
- Not decrease income.

We're Together Ending Poverty calls on the Governments of Alberta and Canada to collaborate and implement basic income programs for all Albertans. The program design must address the groups disproportionately affected by poverty: black, indigenous, people of colour, immigrants, women, people with disabilities and LBGTQ2S+.

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#### References:

<sup>i</sup>Ontario Basic Income Network & Basic Income Coalition Canada. 2020. [https://www.obin.ca/bi\\_and\\_health](https://www.obin.ca/bi_and_health)

<sup>ii</sup>Massing, M. 2020. Most political unrest has one big root cause: soaring inequality. The Guardian <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jan/24/most-political-unrest-has-one-big-root-cause-soaring-inequality>

<sup>iii</sup>Statistics Canada. 2020. Automation and job transformation in Canada: Who's at risk? <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2020011-eng.htm>

<sup>iv</sup>Forget, E. The town with no poverty: health effects of a Canadian guaranteed annual income field experiment. Canadian Public Policy. 2011. 37(30): 283

<sup>v</sup>Basic Income Calgary <https://basicincomecalgary.ca/about/>