

FIX THE GAP



What Gap?

Twenty years ago two new programs created in Ontario destroyed people's futures overnight by slashing their incomes.

Income security is supposed to provide a safe support for those with nowhere else to turn.

It doesn't.

Many Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program recipients go hungry. Their income is so low that many recipients are forced to rely on the help of charities like food banks to get enough to eat.

Shelter allowances don't come anywhere close to reaching the actual costs of rents in Ontario. As a result they subsist in the most unhealthy, unsafe and inaccessible accommodations.

Today, individuals who rely on these supports are living in the deepest poverty in society.

We can do better.

WE CAN Fix the Gap for individuals on social assistance.

How?

By supporting Bill 6 for starters.

It's a private member's bill the Ontario Legislature is considering implementing.

Bill 6 would create a social assistance research commission that would make recommendations on what OW and ODSP recipients would need to Fix the Gap.

We believe with movement from the province around income security it would be the perfect time to introduce an arms length, non-political, non-partisan entity that would inform not only social assistance but other conversations around basic income and the effectiveness of other income security measures working in tandem (or not working like WSIB and EI).

Strategy

Right now we need to get Bill 6 called to the Social Policy committee.

Moving forward in 8 ways

1. Call or meet with your local MPP and tell them to hear Bill 6 in committee immediately! If you don't know who it is you can find out what riding you are in look [HERE](#) and then look up contact information [HERE](#).
2. Contact your local City Council or Region. Ask them to write to the Premier, Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy and House Leaders, supporting the immediate hearing of Bill 6 through to committee.
3. Write an opinion piece for your local newspaper.
4. Talk about it. Take pictures of the meetings or maybe a short 1 minute video on why this is important to you. Send it to us to share!
5. Take time to listen to the voices of lived experience on the system. Share their stories respectfully.
6. Sign up for our newsletters.
7. Follow us on Twitter @FixTheGap_ONT and join us for Twitter meet-ups listed on our events page once scheduled.
8. Follow us on Facebook and share our content. Search for @FixTheGapOntario or use this link www.facebook.com/fixthegapontario.

Talking about talking...

Words matter. They matter because they can get in the way of understanding and support when you use ones that trigger negative images for people. When writing try using the some of the following themes.

Try thinking along the lines of...

Fix the Gap

Which can lead to three avenues for discussion:

1. Data gap, need for evidence based information,
2. Gap in understanding impact on communities and also our social connection,
3. It leads to filling the gap in making ends meet.

Support a social safety net!

Income security has not kept pace with inflation.

“People cannot afford to pay the rent or buy groceries because income fall far below what it actually costs to live”.

We need the data on the cost of living to make evidence based decisions that benefit everyone.

Let's create an equitable society.

Making ends meet.

We're talking about adequacy: affording rent, bills, groceries.

This is where it starts.

Take politics out of the policy decisions, create a common definition of adequacy.