

Breaking the Cycle: Online Consultation

1. The first Poverty Reduction Strategy set out to reach an ambitious target: reducing the number of kids in poverty by 25 per cent over five years. To support the Strategy, Ontario made investments in key areas. How effective do you believe each of the following measures are in reducing poverty?

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Don't Know
Improving skills and job training programs		<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investing in public education	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing the minimum wage	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing financial assistance to families	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Investing in affordable housing	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lowering taxes for low-income Ontarians	<input checked="" type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding health care/dental care for low-income Ontarians	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tuition support	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Child care support	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attracting more investment to create jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging private sector involvement in combating poverty	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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2. Ontario's First Poverty Reduction Strategy focused on children and their families. Rank in order of groups you believe to be most vulnerable to poverty and where we should focus our resources. You may select up to three.

- Children
- Youth
- Single parents
- Seniors
- Newcomers to Canada
- Women
- People with disabilities
- Families
- First Nations, Métis, Inuit peoples
- Racialized groups
- Unattached individuals
- Should not be a specific focus
- Don't know
- Other [specify below]

1

2

3

Ranking

Other [Also, please enter the rank you chose above for this option]

1

3. This is a difficult economic time for people and governments alike. How comfortable are you with the government doing the following to help contribute to poverty reduction programs. Rank on a scale of 1 to 5 your comfort level with each action (1 being least comfortable, 5 being most comfortable).

	1	2	3	4	5
Increase taxes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Reduce other services	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prioritize existing benefits and programs to specific groups (e.g. families, people with disabilities, seniors, newcomers)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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4. Based on your experience, how effective do you think Ontario has been when it comes to:

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Don't Know
Ensuring Ontarians in financial need can afford basic goods like food and clothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping Ontarians in financial need find jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping Ontarians with disabilities find jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing social assistance support as fairly as possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing affordable housing for Ontarians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. On the whole, would you say Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Work well and should be kept the same	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require minor changes or improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Require major changes	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Should be eliminated	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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6. Looking back over the last 5 years of Ontario's first Poverty Reduction Strategy, what worked well?

- Implementing the Ontario Child Benefit
- Supporting child care modernization
- Full-day kindergarten
- Making post-secondary education more accessible
- Increasing minimum wage to cover more living expenses such as housing, food and transportation
- Increasing social assistance
- Healthy Smiles program for low income children
- Continuing with the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program
- Developing the following initiatives:
 - Open Minds, Healthy Minds (children's mental health),
 - Great to Excellent: Launching the Next Stage of Ontario's Education Agenda (education),
 - No Time to Wait: Report of the Healthy Kids Panel (healthy eating, active living).

7. What is the most important thing the Government of Ontario could do to help reduce poverty? Is there an initiative we implemented as part of the first strategy that we should revisit?

The most important thing the Ontario government can do is to ensure all Ontario families are provided with the income and supports they need to ensure they can live a productive life with dignity and equal participation in society. This can be achieved by coordinated government efforts to increase health equity. Health equity exists when all people can reach their full health potential and are not disadvantaged from attaining it because of their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, social class, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or other socially determined circumstance.

In order to support health equity among all people in Ontario, and therefore to improve health status, the following is recommended (references are numbered in brackets):

1. Implement and evaluate a guaranteed annual income for all households in Ontario (2, 5, 11,25)
2. Increase social assistance rates; "Do No Harm" through reform of the social assistance system (1, 7, 16, 25)
3. Continue to increase minimum wage and implement a Living Wage approach across all sectors including private business (7, 10, 25, 35)
4. Increase child benefit levels (7, 25)
5. Address the shortage of safe and affordable housing, reverse the cuts to emergency housing assistance (formerly CSUMB)- use a "Housing First" approach with those that are homeless (2,4,5,7,8,11,13, 14, 17, 28, 32)
6. Ensure access to affordable, healthy food, making use of information from annual Nutritious Food Basket surveys (5,8, 13, 22, 28, 33)

7. Provide sufficient on-going funding to universal Student Nutrition Program initiatives (11, 22, 28)
8. Increase access to oral health care for all low income people (3, 7, 22, 23)
9. Expand the criteria of Healthy Smiles to include families with household incomes of \$20,000 - \$30,000 (7, 22)
10. Increase investments in early childhood development, including education programs and parental supports such as the Preschool Speech and Language program and sufficiently resource the Healthy Babies and Healthy Children program (5, 9, 12, 22, 28, 31)
11. Improve access to high quality, affordable child care (2, 7, 12, 22, 31)
12. Increase access to affordable recreation for children (6, 22, 34)
13. Support healthy built environments for neighbourhoods of all income levels (8, 9, 13, 18, 22, 29, 31, 36)
14. Support social inclusion and public engagement (9, 19, 20, 22, 30, 31)
15. Support Municipalities in their capacity to provide fluoridated water (24, 37)
16. Continue to increase support of services for children, youth and families experiencing mental illness and addictions along with examining the impact mental health has on moving out of poverty and preventing people from moving into poverty (16, 17, 24, 27)
17. With increased investments and improved access – make post secondary education, skills and training a priority first to parents and youth from low income families (11, 21, 25)
18. Invest in the development, availability and reporting of local and disaggregated data to support an understanding of the impacts of poverty at the local level, including the impact on health (3,9, 20, 22)
19. Move ahead on the commitment in the first Poverty Reduction Strategy to introduce a Community Opportunities Fund to enable better coordination, collaboration and innovation for poverty reduction at the community level (15)

Question 7 References:

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8. How can all levels of government, community groups, the private sector and other stakeholders work together to better address the barriers that keep people from getting out of poverty (eg. Access to employment, education, child care supports, etc...)?

- Adopt a “Health in All” approach. This approach is aimed at the development of all social and economic policies and strongly recommended for all sectors. In addition, ensure there is a broad, integrated, intersectoral approach utilized to achieve equitable and sustainable health for all people, with a priority for those living in poverty.
- Invest in strategic intersectoral partnerships. One key strategic provincial partnership that requires an investment worth noting is the Trilateral First Nations Health Senior Officials Committee. In addition, support the development and operation of regional and municipal community poverty reduction initiatives and Roundtables, ensuring connections are made between these initiatives and the Ontario government on an ongoing basis.
- Develop a Poverty Reduction Charter. Consider joining the Cities Reducing Poverty initiative and endorsing the Poverty Reduction Charter. This initiative will create a collective impact ensuring a shared responsibility across all sectors. Examine other provinces that have already done so.

References for Question 8:

Bierman, A., Shack, A., Johns, A. for the POWER Study. (2012). “Achieving Health Equity in Ontario: Opportunities for Intervention and Improvement”. In Bierman, A. Editor, Project for an Ontario Women’s Health Evidence-Based Report: Volume 2. Toronto, ON.

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9. When it comes to reducing poverty in Ontario, what would success look like 15 years from now?

People in Ontario would have adequate incomes and opportunities to meet their basic needs, maximize their health and fulfill their potential in contributing to our Ontario communities. Income disparities between low and high income earners would be significantly reduced. Government, non-government and private sector organizations would be working inter-sectorally to examine policies, programs and initiatives for their potential impacts on population health and equity, and tailor them to maximize health equity outcomes. Key initiatives aimed at improving health equity, reducing poverty, and improving child development would be evaluated for successful positive outcomes and shared provincially.

From a public health perspective, improved social determinants of health would be reflected in reported positive health outcomes among low socio-economic groups to those normally seen in higher socio-economic demographics.

As quoted in Dr. King's 2011 Health status report for Ontario – the hope for Ontario would be:

- babies are born healthy;
- pre-school children are able to achieve their potential;
- children and young people are healthy and equipped for adulthood;
- working adults live longer, healthy lives; and
- seniors are able to enjoy a healthy retirement.

References for Question 9:

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. (2012). Maintaining the Gains, Moving the Yardstick Ontario Health Status Report 2011. Toronto, ON: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

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Demographic Questions (OPTIONAL)

Finally, a few questions for statistical purposes only. Please be assured that all of your responses will remain confidential.

10. Please check all of the following which apply to you.

- ☐ I live or have lived in poverty
- ☐ I have had a close family member living in poverty
- ☐ I have had a close friend living in poverty
- ☐ I have had a neighbour living in poverty
- ☐ I work with people living in poverty
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to say

11. Which best describes your community.

- ☐ I live in an urban/suburban community
- ☐ I live in a rural community
- ☐ I live in a mixed urban/rural community
- ☐ I live in a remote/isolated community
- ☐ Prefer not to say

12. The responses that I provided represents:

- ☐ My own perspectives as an individual (specify details, optional)
- ☒ The perspectives of my organization (specify details, optional)
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Optional

ALPHA-OPHA Health Equity Work
Group

13. Which of the following best describes your employment situation?

- ☐ Employed full time
- ☐ Employed part time
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Homemaker
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Prefer not to say

14. What sector best describes where you work?

- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Trade
- ☐ Transportation and warehousing