



Coalition Canada
basic income
revenu de base

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basic income canada youth network
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OBIN
ONTARIO BASIC INCOME NETWORK
RESEAU ONTARIEN DE REVENU DE BASE

Statement on Basic Income: A Case for Women

2020

**THE CASE
FOR BASIC
INCOME
SERIES**

Basic Income: A Case for Women

SUMMARY

Over 3,600 organizations and individuals from across the country – including the Canadian Women’s Foundation, the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), and Women’s College Hospital, have signed on to a national Statement on Basic Income: A Case for Women. Developed by a group of leaders from women’s and feminist organizations across the country, the statement urges the Government of Canada to transition as quickly as possible from temporary benefits like CERB and the new Canada Recovery Benefit to a permanent basic income as part of this government’s commitment to gender equality and feminist public policy. COVID-19 has intensified harmful systemic issues affecting women; rates of domestic violence have risen across the country and unpaid caring work has skyrocketed. With a basic income, everyone in Canada can look forward to a future where their needs are met and they can participate fully in rebuilding a healthier and more prosperous society.

ABOUT BASIC INCOME

Basic income means different things to different people. The Case for Basic Income series defines basic income as an income-tested and targeted unconditional cash transfer from governments to individuals to enable everyone in Canada to meet their basic needs, participate in society, and live in dignity, regardless of work status.

Some Case project teams make more detailed recommendations about the principles to guide the design of a basic income program in Canada.

ABOUT THE CASE FOR BI SERIES

The Case for Basic Income series explores the impacts of a basic income program for various communities and policy areas across Canada. Each Case has been developed collaboratively by subject matter experts and basic income advocates to consider the distinct issues and concerns between the Case topic and income insecurity - and the difference that basic income might make.

Every Case is unique in both function and form and is guided by its authors and contributors.

Statement on Basic Income: A Case for Women

We believe now is the time for Canada to move to a method of income security that is both guaranteed and accessible to all who need it—basic income.

COVID-19 has intensified many harmful, systemic issues affecting women. Rates of domestic violence have risen across the country. Unpaid caring work has skyrocketed.

Among these systemic issues, income insecurity is one of the most severe—and this too is not new. In December 2019, 68% of women who were unemployed did not receive EI benefits. While CERB has helped many of these women who shoulder both employment and care-giving responsibilities, it is coming to an end far too soon. CERB continues to leave too many women out, including those who had far too little income before the pandemic hit.

A basic income, a regular payment made through the tax system to an individual, would not leave people out. It provides enough money so that everyone can meet their needs, participate meaningfully in society, and live with confidence and dignity, regardless of employment, disability, race, Indigenous identity, sex, gender identity, or parental or marital status.

Basic income helps fulfill Canada's human rights commitments and is a key tool in a variety of

needed reforms. It works in synergy with child care, housing, pharmacare, dental care, and other public services. It must be pursued along with living wages, pay equity, and closing the gender wage gap.

As we face the COVID-19 pandemic and uncertain economy, women, particularly racialized women, are overrepresented in high-risk essential positions, bear the brunt of jobs lost, and have seen more than 50% of their hours reduced. Women make up 92% of nursing jobs, 80% of medical lab technicians, 75% of respiratory therapists, 90% of personal support workers, 99% of child care providers, 75-80% of community and social service jobs, 84% of cashiers, 72% of food prep, and 71% of cleaners. Our lives and our economy depend on women. Their income security must be a priority.

We consider this statement the beginning of a constructive, informed discussion. We seek a basic income that supports the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, recognizes the diverse backgrounds and experiences of women, and works in solidarity with feminist and other social justice movements. For such a policy to be successful, its design, implementation, and evaluation processes must be fully inclusive of people with lived experience of poverty, income insecurity and inequity—they are the experts.

We, the undersigned, urge the federal government:

To extend CERB benefits so that women with insufficient income who are currently ineligible will not face destitution, and to transition as quickly as possible from temporary benefits to a permanent basic income to ensure all adults in Canada are able to meet needs and be part of rebuilding a healthier society and economy.

Letter Authors/Original Signatories:

Senator Frances Lankin

Senator Marilou McPhedran

Senator Kim Pate

The Hon. Dr. Jean Augustine

Maureen O'Neil, O.C.

Roberta Hamilton (Professor Emerita, Queen's University)

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Tracy Smith-Carrier (King's University College at Western University)

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Sheila Regehr (Co-author, Basic Income: Some Policy Options for Canada)

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Sister Pauline Lally (Sisters of Providence)

Alexandra Kane (Black Lives Matter London, Ontario)

Joëlle Favreau (Nourish)

Susan Abells (Committee to End Homelessness Victoria)

See the full list of signatories [here](#).

SEE ALSO

- "[Basic income: Making the case for women & gender equity](#)" - A report submitted to the Status of Women Standing Committee by Tracy Smith-Carrier and Chloe Halpenny
- This statement on basic income and the case for women in [French](#).