

Dignity for All: National anti-poverty plan for Canada^[1]

#WeHaveAPlan

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in PDF^[2]

Description:

Dignity for All: the campaign for a poverty-free Canada is a collective initiative, launched in 2009 by Canada Without Poverty and Citizens for Public Justice. The campaign seeks concrete and sustained action by the federal government towards a Canada where everyone can pursue opportunities for achievement and fulfillment, embrace the responsibilities of citizenship and community opportunities, and live with a sense of dignity.

While everyone has a role to play in building this Canada, the federal government, with its particular policy-making, legislative, taxation, and redistributive powers, has the responsibility of providing leadership and promoting reform in key areas under its jurisdiction.

Since Dignity for All's inception, the campaign has worked to build a movement for change, bringing together members of all political parties, persons with lived experiences of poverty, and community practitioners to discuss poverty-related issues and potential solutions.

We have hosted a series of policy summits on housing and homelessness, early childhood education and care, income security, food security, health, and labour and employment - all aimed at developing a comprehensive and effective anti-poverty plan that is founded on the best evidence and represents a consensus on the best strategies for reducing poverty across the country.

This document represents a summary of this work, bringing together the key planks of a plan that if implemented will make a meaningful difference in the lives of low-income Canadians, achieving greater prosperity and security for all Canadians. The recommendations made are not exhaustive but represent community consensus on six particular policy areas.

Canada has achieved a measure of success in reducing rates of poverty among seniors, the result of important investments in seniors' income security. Some provinces are also making headway in reducing the incidence and depth of poverty, notably in Newfoundland and Labrador and Québec.

Concerted action is needed now on the part of the federal government in concert with others to broaden the scope and make meaningful investments in proven strategies to reduce poverty among people in Canada regardless of where they live or the unique circumstances of their lives.

Early childhood education and care (p.32 & 33)

Dignity for all campaign calls on the federal government

1) To develop, in collaboration with the provinces, territories, and Inuit Land Claim Organizations, First Nations and Métis governments, a comprehensive plan and timeframe for the implementation of a high-quality, universal, publicly-funded and managed early childhood education and care program for children aged 0 to 5 years and for school-aged children up to age 12, to be phased in by 2020.

2) To develop, pass, and implement national legislation that clearly establishes:

- The right of children of working parents to benefit from child care services and facilities, in keeping with Article 18(3) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Canada-wide goals and principles for the care and education of young children including, but not limited to, quality (such as staff training and compensation), access (universal entitlement, affordability, and inclusion), and respect for diversity including measures to address culturally and linguistically relevant programming
- Measureable goals and timetables for implementing the new Early Childhood Education and Care system and provisions for public monitoring and reporting on system performance and impact;
- Measures to address the needs of specific marginalized populations;
- Appropriate supporting policies, programs and legislation; and
- Dedicated federal transfers of \$1 billion, \$1.6 billion, and \$2.3 billion over each of the next three years to assist in the development of high-quality, accessible services, with the ultimate goal of achieving the international benchmark of at least 1% of GDP by 2020.

3. To improve maternity/parental leave benefits by: increasing maternity benefit level to 80% of wages; creating a more flexible system

with respect to duration and financing options; improving eligibility for all currently excluded workers, trainees, and students as well as those in special circumstances; and introducing a paternity leave benefit of at least two weeks in accordance with international benchmarks

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: poverty ^[4]

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