

2026.05 The Federal Government to Implement a National Guaranteed Basic Income Framework

Resolved, that national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 106th national annual meeting of members assembled urges the federal government to implement a national guaranteed basic income framework.

Brief: The Federal Government to Implement a National Guaranteed Basic Income Framework

In Canada, about 3.8 million people lived below the poverty line in 2022 (Canada, Statistics). Statistics Canada considers people as living below the poverty line if they do not have enough income to cover the local cost of necessities such as food, clothing, footwear, transportation and shelter (Canada, Statistics). In 2018, the federal government released *Opportunity for All—Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*, which established a vision and foundation for future government investments in poverty reduction and set a 2030 target of a 50% decrease in poverty compared to 2015 rates (Canada, Employment). Establishing a national guaranteed basic income (GBI) framework could lead to a reduction in poverty and individuals' improved wellbeing and financial status (Ferdosi et al. 6). The Catholic Women's League of Canada follows the principles of Catholic social teaching, one of which is care for the poor and vulnerable.

An analysis of historical data from the Manitoba Basic Annual Income Experiment in Dauphin, Manitoba, illustrated that a GBI led to an improvement in population health through indicators such as a decline in hospitalization rates (Forget 549). Furthermore, the 2017 Ontario Basic Income Pilot in Hamilton dispelled one of the concerns that GBI would reduce the labour force (Ferdosi et al. 25). Participants reported improvements in health, housing situation, financial status, family relations and labour market experiences (Ferdosi et al. 6). Despite these positive outcomes, an all-party proposal for GBI in Prince Edward Island has not received support from the federal government (Canada, Parliament, House of Commons).

Coalition Canada calls for a GBI that targets poverty reduction and ensures personal security, regardless of one's work status, employment situation or relationship dynamics. Growing support for a GBI has produced in the Senate, Bill S-206 *An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income*, which had second reading on November 6, 2025, and has not yet been brought to the next stage (Canada, Parliament, Senate). Private member's Bill C-253 *An Act to develop a national framework for a guaranteed livable basic income*, had first reading in the House of Commons on October 26, 2025, but is outside the Order of Preference and is unlikely to be debated in the near future.

Research indicates that the federal and Ontario governments have spent an estimated \$10.4 billion to \$13.1 billion annually due to the systemic effects of poverty, creating a heavy and increasing burden on the healthcare system (Laurie 4). Where poverty is a drain on resources, GBI serves as a preventative measure. The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (2021) estimated that while a national GBI would cost \$85 billion initially, the net additional cost to the federal government would be significantly lower due to the elimination of overlapping tax-based supports (Ammar and Busby 3). This makes GBI financially viable without increasing the average taxpayer's burden.

The evidence supports that a livable guaranteed basic income can reduce poverty, significantly improve individual and public health and reduce strain on the healthcare system. The Catholic Women's League of Canada urges the federal government to implement a national guaranteed basic income framework.

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Works Cited

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Action Plan: The Federal Government to Implement a National Guaranteed Basic Income Framework

1. Communicate with the minister of finance and local members of parliament (MPs) encouraging them to advocate for a national guaranteed basic income framework. Refer to the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* for options, including letter-writing, petitions and postcards.
2. Use strategies to educate members on the benefits of guaranteed basic income in the elimination of poverty in Canada, such as poverty simulation exercises.
3. Encourage discussion and presentations to members related to guaranteed basic income.
4. Monitor the federal government's response.