

Provincial
Election
VOTE
June 12!

K-W RESIDENTS VOTE



Poverty Free
Kitchener-Waterloo

Poverty Elimination Framework

Ontario needs to bring positive change to social assistance

Adequate Income to Support Well Being

Ontario has two social assistance programs: Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). The loss of good jobs and the failure of other programs to carry their weight, like Employment Insurance and WSIB, mean more Ontarians are forced to turn to these programs. But OW and ODSP do not provide enough income for recipients to meet their basic needs, let alone the rising cost of living, and fail to help them get out of poverty. **Currently, only the Liberal platform addresses social assistance system issues directly, proposing 1% incremental increases to social assistance rates for a total increase of \$50 in two years. This amount still leaves people in deep poverty. They will also invest \$50m over 5 years with community partners to develop local poverty reduction solutions and will release the 2nd 5 year Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party emphasizes employment and promises to remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities and to eliminate rules that bog down the social assistance system with a focus on helping people find work.**

We've still got a long way to go ...

- Increasing the incomes of people receiving OW and ODSP immediately for \$100 and increasing the assistance rates to 80% of Low Income Measure, a level that allows them to pay for housing, food, clothing, a phone, transportation, and other regular necessities
- Making sure people with disabilities can pay for their longer-term and disability-related needs
- Ending dollar-for-dollar deductions of child support payments from the benefits of lone parents
- Ending the practice of reducing social assistance benefits as the Ontario Child Benefit increases
- Giving municipalities sufficient funds for housing supports and homeless prevention to make up for the Province's elimination of the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit
- Raising the amount for Discretionary Benefits to at least \$15 per person
- Providing drug and dental benefits to low income children **and** adults

Ask your candidates:

- What actions will your party take to bring positive change to OW and ODSP in Ontario and ensure quality, accessible programs that help people out of poverty?
- Will your party commit to making sure that people on OW and ODSP have incomes that are adequate to support the rising cost of living, well-being and health?

Resources:

Poverty Free Kitchener-Waterloo: <http://www.waterlooregion.org/poverty-elimination>

Income Security Advocacy Centre (ISAC): www.incomesecurity.org

ODSP Action Coalition: www.odspaction.ca

ISAC's Social Assistance Review website: www.sareview.ca



Social Planning Council
of Kitchener-Waterloo
Community Information Centre
of Waterloo Region

How, where, when & why to vote:
www.waterlooregion.org/election-ontario-2011

This fact sheet was adapted from a series produced by Social Planning Toronto.