

CD19.3

Attachment 1

Attachment 1: City of Toronto Principles and Positions Related to Provincial Income Security Reform and Basic Income

Principles

It is recommended that City Council adopt the following principles to guide current reform efforts underway with regard to basic income, social assistance and other human services. Overall, benefits, programs and services for residents living in poverty should:

- Identify, meet and respond to the changing and different needs of service users;
- Be simple to understand, easy to access and, wherever possible, involve service users as active participants in ongoing design and delivery;
- Provide benefit levels that significantly reduce poverty and are inflation adjusted;
- Be provided outside of social assistance, where appropriate, so that low income residents can access them through much less onerous eligibility processes;
- Minimize administrative costs and modernize service provision by capitalizing on new technologies and new service delivery channels;
- Significantly reduce or eliminate conditionality, while expanding the use of evidence and risk-based approaches to maintaining program financial integrity; and
- Provide the right incentives and the right supports for clients, working with staff, to address immediate needs and build pathways to a better life.

Positions

Basic Income

It is recommended that City Council support the provincial decision to pilot a basic income and adopt the following specific positions with regard to the pilot:

- The pilot should consist of people on social assistance, as well as other low income people, and there should be clear information about what participation means;
- The pilot should provide benefit amounts that are at least equivalent to those described in Segal's report (namely, at 75% and 100% of the Low Income Measure) and ensure that payments are sensitive to the real cost of living in different communities;
- No one should be worse off as a result of participating. This will mean that there is clarity about the relationships between the pilot and existing social assistance and related systems, with close attention paid to the treatment of other subsidies that people receive, such as childcare and housing;
- The pilot should be structured as a Randomized Controlled Trial to enhance the reliability and value of findings. It is not possible to standardize conditions in saturation sites, limiting the value of findings;
- Related to this there should be a robust research and evaluation strategy, conducted by an independent third party, that focuses not only on impacts with regard to labour

market attachment but also to issues of access to and connections between a broad range of health, social and educational services; and

- The City supports the adoption of Toronto as a pilot site in terms of having Toronto residents be selected to participate in a Randomized Control Trial (as opposed to Toronto, or any specific neighbourhood therein, be identified as a saturation site), while recognising the complexity associated with this, compared, for example, to a smaller municipality. Regardless of the choice of location, the City is committed to working with the Province to support the effective design, implementation and evaluation of the pilot.

Income Security Reform

It is recommended that City Council adopt the following key positions for improving social assistance as part of a broader reform of income security programs. Provincial social assistance reform should:

- Increase income adequacy and align incentives to remove barriers to work;
- Simplify social assistance so that it provides a standard basic rate for adults, with supplements, for example, for disability, children and lone parents, while increasing access to a range of health supports (e.g. dental, eyeglasses, mobility aids), and housing benefit/allowance, outside social assistance;
- Modernise service delivery to ensure clients can access multiple, modern and user-friendly service channels and eliminate policies that create unnecessary barriers for clients and unproductive work for staff;
- Ensure more and better support to clients by investing more resources in the provision of effective service planning; and
- Coordinate and integrate processes and procedures across various programs, especially around eligibility criteria and program policies.