

Resolution in Support of Basic Income for the Niagara Region

WHEREAS, Niagara Region recognizes the social and economic challenges faced by its residents that have a detrimental impact on the determinants of health including income inequality, poverty, inadequate housing, and precarious employment;

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of Niagara Region to strive for the well-being and prosperity of all its residents, which includes ensuring access to basic needs and opportunities to improve health;

WHEREAS, through addressing poverty and improving access to healthcare, a Universal Basic Income can potentially reduce healthcare costs, enabling people to afford preventive care and timely treatments while preventing more costly healthcare interventions, leading to better overall population health;

WHEREAS, a Universal Basic Income program was tested in Hamilton during the Ontario Basic Income Pilot project between 2017 and 2019 and more than 1,000 local residents reported positive outcomes including the alleviation of food and housing insecurity, improved physical and mental health, financial stability, social equity and greater connection to the labour market;

WHEREAS, Niagara Regional Council passed a motion on July 14, 2020, calling upon the federal and provincial governments to prioritize measures to reduce poverty and income inequality in our society;

WHEREAS, Niagara Regional Council passed a motion on July 14, 2020, recommending that the federal and provincial governments re-engage in pilot projects to study policy innovations that can address poverty and income inequality, including the study of a basic income guarantee project in Niagara region;

WHEREAS, the Federal Budget Office upon reviewing the concept of a national Universal Basic Income program determined it could, if properly set out, be a major economic driver to the Canadian economy; and

WHEREAS, a Universal Basic Income program can complement and enhance existing social support systems, ensuring a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the needs of Niagara Region residents including persons with disabilities and aligns and complements Niagara Region's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Niagara Regional Council **SUPPORTS** the concept of a Universal Basic Income to combat poverty, income inequality, and economic insecurity within our community; and supports the continued work on developing a Niagara Poverty Reduction Strategy and the continuing advocacy of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network;
2. That Niagara Regional Council **CALLS UPON** the provincial and federal governments to collaborate to implement a national Universal Basic Income program;
3. That Niagara Regional Council **DIRECTS** the Regional Chair to write a letter to the Prime Minister, local Members of Parliament and the Senate, the Premier of Ontario, local Members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, calling on these orders of government to work collaboratively towards implementing a Universal Basic Income to eradicate poverty and homelessness, and ensure everyone has sufficient income to meet their basic needs; and
4. That Niagara Regional Council **ENCOURAGES** other municipalities across the province and the country to join in advocating for a Universal Basic Income as a key policy tool in the fight against poverty and inequality, and to this end, Niagara Regional Council will advocate through its representatives at Ontario Big City Mayors, Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, for Universal Basic Income resolutions at meetings of those organizations.