

## Realizing Our Potential

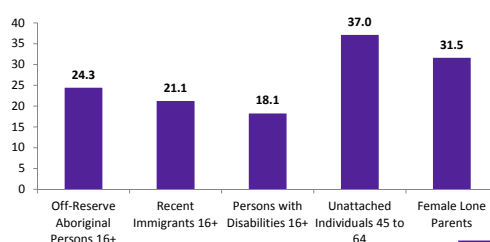


**Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2014-2019)  
and the Local Poverty Reduction Fund**

## Poverty in Ontario: By the numbers

- In 2011, there were **1,512,000 Ontarians** living in low-income households\*:
  - 1,003,000 were working-age adults 18 to 64 years old,
  - 365,000 were children under the age of 18 living in low-income households,
  - 144,000 were seniors aged 65 and over.
- Vulnerable groups such as **female lone-parent families, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants, Aboriginal people, and racialized groups** have higher poverty rates than the general population.

Vulnerable Groups with High Poverty Rates, Ontario, 2011



Based on Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure, 2011

**Realizing Our Potential:**  
Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

## Ontario's Response to Poverty: 3 components

- A poverty reduction **strategy**
  - guided by the vision of a province **where every person has the opportunity to achieve his or her full potential, and contribute to and participate in a prosperous and healthy Ontario.**
- Legislation** that enshrines a long-term commitment to poverty reduction in Ontario. *The Poverty Reduction Act, 2009* requires us to:
  - Develop a new strategy at least every five years;
  - Conduct broad **consultations** to inform new strategies;
  - Set a specific **poverty reduction target** at least every five years; and
  - Table an **annual report** on progress made on initiatives and indicators
- The Poverty Reduction **Strategy Office**
  - a **dedicated team** within the Treasury Board Secretariat responsible for implementing the strategy

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Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

3

## Realizing Our Potential: The New Strategy

*Realizing Our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy (2014-2019)* was released on September 3, 2014. It is informed by:

- **consultations** in the summer of 2013, which included:
  - Regional consultations across the province; Focused provincial discussions on key topics with key stakeholders/sectors; and online public engagement
- **research** to understand:
  - Public perceptions about poverty; Effective practices and innovations in other key jurisdictions to reduce poverty, and technical implications of various policy and program options
- It **builds on progress** from Ontario's first poverty strategy, *Breaking the Cycle*, which was launched in 2008 and focused on children and youth

Investments made in *Breaking the Cycle* helped:



Lift 47,000 children out of poverty in 3 years



Lower the child poverty rate from 15.2 % in 2008 to 13.6% in 2011

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Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

4

## Realizing Our Potential: Strategy Overview

### Continuing to Break the Cycle for Children and Youth



#### Objectives

- Building on the foundation of the first PRS, we are recommitting to meet the original target of reducing child poverty by 25 per cent.

#### Initiatives\*

- Ontario Child Benefit Indexation
- Student Nutrition Program Expansion
- Health Benefits for Low-Income Children and Youth
- Full-Day Kindergarten
- Achieving Excellence/ Closing the Educational Achievement Gap

#### Goal/Outcome

Reducing child poverty and improving all kids' chances at a better future.

### Moving Towards Employment & Income Security



#### Objectives

- Helping young people transition to employment and removing barriers that prevent vulnerable Ontarians from securing employment.

#### Initiatives\*

- Youth Jobs Strategy
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Employment & Training Services Integration
- Employment for Persons with Disabilities
- Social Assistance Reform
- Leveraging Future Investments to Target Vulnerable Groups

#### Goal/Outcome

Helping Ontarians secure employment or rebound from unemployment.

### A Long-Term Goal to End Homelessness in Ontario



#### Objectives

- Signalling a bold long-term commitment to end homelessness.

#### Initiatives\*

- Seek expert advice on homelessness-related target, definitions and data collection
- Investment in Affordable Housing program
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
- At Home/Chez-Soi
- Supportive Housing for people with mental health and/or addictions issues

#### Goal/Outcome

No person in Ontario should have to live on the street.

### Using Evidence-Based Social Policy and Measuring Success



#### Objectives

- Shaping practices to understand where investments provide the most impact in order to make needed adjustments for better returns in the future.

#### Initiatives\*

- Social Innovation
- Local Poverty Reduction Fund
- Targets and indicators to track progress
- Oversight
- Annual Reporting

#### Goal/Outcome

Efficient spending, more effective programs, and better outcomes for people.

## The Local Poverty Reduction Fund: Key Facts

To support the Poverty Reduction Strategy's focus on evidence-based social policy, the government is investing \$50 million over six years towards the Local Poverty Reduction Fund. The fund showcases and evaluates community-driven, innovative programs that focus on preventing and/or transitioning people out of poverty.

- To be considered for the fund, applicants are required to:
  - Focus on **client groups disproportionately affected by poverty**, as identified in Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy
  - Show how the proposal relates to at least 1 of the 11 **indicators** in the strategy
  - Use community **partnerships and collaboration** to deliver programs and services
  - Have a **demonstrated business case** (e.g., current research, interjurisdictional examples)
  - Include partnerships with **third-party evaluators** (academia or practitioners) to develop and implement a clear evaluation framework and share results
  - Include a clear project phase-out or **sustainability plan**
- Eligible organizations include: Not-For-Profit corporations, registered charities, broader public sector organizations such as municipal governments, District Social Service Administration Boards, and Aboriginal communities and organizations.

## Putting the Emphasis on Evaluation

Why:

- **To get better outcomes** for the people of Ontario by learning more about which initiatives have the most promise and build on what is working to make a real impact
- To **support the adoption of evidence-based practices** in policy-making and program design

How the fund will help:

- The fund provides support to community organizations to evaluate programs and services to determine what initiatives make a measurable difference for their clients
- Fund recipients are asked to share key findings and evaluation results. This will provide a wide range of partners, including government and community organizations, access to the lessons learned from the evaluation results.

**“With this fund, we are establishing a new way of tackling poverty, one that’s rooted in evidence.”**

— Deb Matthews, Deputy Premier and Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy



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Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

7

## Current Status

### Sep/Oct 2015: Announcements of projects funded in year 1

- Projects are distributed across Ontario. Several serve clients in more than one community or region
- They are connected to every pillar of Ontario's poverty reduction strategy and impacting every indicator
- They reach a variety of priority client groups

### June to September 2015: The Review Process and Due Diligence

### May to June 2015: The Formal Call for Proposals

### April to May 2015: The Expression of Interest Phase

- Community organizations were invited to submit an Expression of Interest with information about the initiative they were interested in evaluating. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Office provided tailored feedback on proposed projects to help strengthen applications for the Call for Proposals.
- Organizations were not required to participate in the EOI process in order to be able to submit a proposal

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Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy

## What's next?

- Community organizations will have two more opportunities to apply to the fund, in 2016 and 2017
- Should you or one of your community partners have any questions, please have them visit our website: [www.Ontario.ca/povertyreduction](http://www.Ontario.ca/povertyreduction) or they can write to PRSO directly at: PRSO@Ontario.ca
- Details on how to apply to the Fund can be found at <http://www.ontario.ca/page/local-poverty-reduction-fund>