



What is Basic Income?

A basic income is an unconditional cash transfer made from the government to individuals so that everyone has the financial resources to meet their basic needs, participate in society and live with dignity, regardless of work status.

It is an alternative to other income security system that can be full of gaps and problems, provide advantages to some and disadvantage to others.

There are models often referred to:

1.A universal basic income model provides the same benefit amount to every individual regardless of their other income. Often in this model, for those who don't need the basic income because they have higher sources of income, this additional income is taxed back to make up for the payment.

2.A guaranteed basic income model takes other income into account and provides an income 'guarantee' as it is needed. In this model, if an individual's income is very low they get the greatest amount and as other income grows, the amount of the income guarantee reduces gradually. Those who have sufficient income from other sources don't get a payment.

Source: [Basic Income Network of Canada](#)

Basic Income is not a new concept in Canada. There are already forms of BI that are administered through the tax system that have been successful in targeting and reducing poverty for seniors (Guaranteed Annual Income, Old Age Security) and families with children (Canada Child Benefit).

Basic Income is not a panacea. A basic income would be complementary to other programs and not a replacement for other programs. Income alone won't solve systemic inequalities (e.g. sexism, racism) or create more affordable housing and childcare spaces. These initiatives need to continue. Money from a basic income could provide individuals and families with a foundational floor to have economic independence and choice to improve their lives in ways they know they need to.

Source: [Basic Income - What we've learned so far](#)

[Ontario Basic Income Pilot \(2026\)](#)

[Ontario Basic Income Network](#)

[National Basic Income Network](#)

Tamarak Institute: [Basic Income - What we've learned so far](#)