



**Committee of the Whole Report
Council Member Motion – For the Meeting of June 13, 2024**

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** June 6, 2024
From: Mayor Marianne Alto & Councillor Susan Kim
Subject: UBCM Resolution for a Universal Basic Income

Background

In March 2016, Victoria City Council endorsed a motion supporting a national conversation on a Basic Income Guarantee for all Canadians, and in that motion requested letters (urging the provincial and federal governments to work together to consider, investigate, and develop a Basic Income Guarantee for all Canadians) be sent to Prime Minister Trudeau, then Premier Clark, federal and provincial Ministers of Health, Social Development, Children and Family Services, and Justice, with copies sent to other municipal and regional governments in British Columbia with the request that they consider indicating their support for this initiative.

Some kind of a guaranteed basic income has been discussed for more than half a century in Canada. From 1974 through 1979, a basic income program (“*Mincome*”) in Dauphin, Manitoba, showed years later that families that received the pilot income supplement had longer-term better health outcomes, although a full review of the Dauphin experiment’s impact wasn’t undertaken at the time.

Last November, publication of *A Proposal For A Guaranteed Basic Income Benefit For Prince Edward Island* renewed the conversation about the impact of income benefits, proposing a guaranteed basic income benefit for P.E.I. residents aged 18 to 64 through a collaborative federal-provincial program delivered through the income tax system and jointly financed by both governments.

The proposal would virtually eliminate poverty among working-age adults and their children. The lives of families in poverty would also improve with better food security, health, education, housing and community involvement. Pressures on the health-care system would lessen and social cohesion would be enhanced. Intergenerational poverty would be reduced, leading to higher productivity and economic prosperity over time.

Beyond PEI, the concept of a universal income supplement has been endorsed by many organizations, local governments, and political leaders from diverse political parties and perspectives. Member of Parliament Jenna Sudds, the federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, wrote to the PEI government noting that "The federal government would be willing to explore the creation of a working group ... with the intention of exchanging federal-level

administrative, survey and tax data and information in support of P.E.I.'s work to evaluate a Guaranteed Basic Income."

Recently, Senator Kim Pate, an Independent Senator for Ontario and former executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, has long been a champion for a universal basic income program across Canada, and has introduced a bill in the Senate called S-233, An Act to Develop a National Framework for a Guaranteed Livable Basic Income.

Municipalities continue to be at the front line in dealing with community impacts when people are unable to support their own wellbeing. Local governors are being pushed to respond to the downstream effects of poverty, putting unsustainable pressure on their limited capacity to deliver necessary local public services and social supports as they struggle to keep up with downloaded responsibilities. A supplemental basic income program would help alleviate these pressures.

Resolution

(1) That Victoria City Council endorse the following Resolution, and forward the same to the Union of BC Municipalities for consideration at its September 2024 annual convention:

Whereas municipalities are increasingly expected to respond to gaps in Canada's social safety net resulting from growing economic, racial and health inequalities,

And whereas a basic income program, in addressing key social determinants of health, such as income and housing, can alleviate pressures on municipalities to address poverty and fill gaps in social supports, such as shelter, housing, food security and mental health,

And whereas evidence from basic income research and pilots shows that when people have a sufficient and secure income their mental and physical health improves, they have the capacity to secure more affordable, suitable, and safe housing, childcare, healthy food, and transportation, and poverty rates decrease,

And whereas the provision of a basic livable income would benefit individuals, families and communities and protect the most vulnerable in society, and support community resilience,

And whereas evidence shows that a federally funded basic income that improves people's financial stability is possible, as successful income transfer programs already exist in Canada for seniors (Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement) and parents (Canada Child Benefit), and to aid in recovery post-COVID (Canada Emergency Response Benefit),

Therefore, be it resolved that the Union of BC Municipalities urges the Governments of British Columbia and Canada to individually and/or collectively implement a Universal Basic Income, ensuring everyone has sufficient income to meet their needs, helping British Columbia and Canada lessen poverty and homelessness, alleviating the pressure on municipalities to use their limited resources to fill gaps in our social safe net.

(2) That this Motion, if adopted, be forwarded to the daytime Council meeting of June 13, as resolutions to the UBCM 2024 Convention must be submitted by June 15, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Mayor Alto



Councillor Kim