



REASONS TO SUPPORT BASIC INCOME (GBI)

The National Advocacy Circle is comprised of Vincentians from across Canada that are interested in Social Justice. Our intention is to identify advocacy issues for our fellow Vincentians and suggest actions we can take for the benefit of our neighbours in need. We are presenting a series of articles promoting the consideration of a Guaranteed Basic Income to address the needs of Canadians living in poverty. Please share this information with your conferences, councils and parishioners.

Many people fear giving fellow citizens a guaranteed basic income. They think that if you give people money with no strings attached, they will never want to work. Another fear is that we cannot afford it: the cost will burden the country too much.

The parliamentary budget officer (PBO) has calculated the cost of a Guaranteed Basic Income repeatedly, and the answer came back every time that Canada could afford a modest basic income for citizens who need it. The calculations were based on what recipients in the Ontario Basic Income Pilot (OBIP) received. Single adults in need between the ages of 18 and 65 would receive \$16,989 per year (\$1416 per month). Couples would receive \$24,027 per year (\$2002 per month). These income rates are 75% of the current poverty line and they are much better than social assistance, but they would not allow for a life of ease.

Though the OBIP pilot was cut short, recipients reported positive changes in their lives even in that short time. People who were already employed benefitted most because they could take modest risks, and some reported getting better paying jobs. Others were able to go back to school to upgrade their education so that they could get more secure employment in the future. Many reported improved physical and mental health. Some reported being able to afford better quality food. Many reported better family dynamics attributed to reduced stress. There were many benefits even in this short time and no reported downsides.

Finland operated a two-year basic income project in which a group of people received about \$600 per month with no strings attached. There was also a control group who did not receive any benefits. After the program finished, assessment showed that the benefits of the program were modest but genuine. The recipient group reported more paid workdays than the control group. Recipients reported that they had less difficulty in making ends meet. They also reported better health and less stress. [Result Finland](#)

These experiments in basic income are interesting because they occurred recently. However, the most convincing evidence of the benefits of basic income still comes from the Dauphin, Manitoba experiment in the 1970's. This project lasted 5 years and was a saturation site which means that everyone in the community had access to the supports. The information was analysed many years later by Evelyn Forget, a health economist at the university of Manitoba. Her analysis also showed that most people stayed employed and became healthier. More people were able to complete meaningful education. The most compelling evidence of the value of the program was a VIMEO documentary made in 2018 when film makers visited the community and interviewed the participants. More than 40 years later, they described how the project changed their lives because they were able to get an education, start a business or access needed health care such as dental. This long-lasting result is surely the best reason for such a program. [Evelyn Forget](#)

Corry Wink, National Advocacy Circle

For further information see [Busting the Myths](#)

Take Action <https://www.leadnow.ca/basic-income>

<https://www.ubiworks.ca/>

Reading list for more information

<https://poverty.thespec.com/2010/02/a-town-without-poverty.html>

www.obin.ca/bi_and_catholicism

https://www.obin.ca/case_for_bi_series

The Case for Basic Income: Freedom, Security, Justice by Jamie Swift, Elaine Power, Danielle Martin

[Policy Options - Basic Income Canada Network](#)