



STRENGTHENING ASSISTANCE FOR ONTARIO'S MOST VULNERABLE Providing Opportunity For Those Who Need It Most

The McGuinty government recognizes that in order for every Ontarian to participate in the Province's prosperity, it must ensure that effective supports and opportunities are available for its most vulnerable citizens.

The government's investment to support at-risk youth and vulnerable adults and families will grow by an additional \$218 million in 2006-07 to \$10.3 billion, rising to \$10.6 billion by 2008-09.

At-Risk Youth

The government is committed to improving opportunities for young people, particularly those at risk of engaging in violent behaviour. In addition to providing greater opportunities in education through the Learning to 18 strategy and the Reaching Higher plan, the government is investing in new supports for at-risk youth by:

- establishing the Youth Challenge Fund, chaired by Mike "Pinball" Clemons, which will provide up to \$45 million in Provincial and private-sector funding to support community-led programs in Toronto that offer young people positive alternatives to guns and gangs; and
- providing more than \$28 million in the first three years of a new Youth Opportunities Strategy to expand employment and training programs and support the hiring of new outreach workers in at-risk communities across the province.

Adults and Families

The government is making new investments to help working-age adults make the transition from social assistance to employment, to support persons who are least able to care for themselves, and to improve access to economic opportunities for low-income adults and families.

Improved Support for Social Assistance Recipients

The government is improving income security programs for low-income adults and families by:

- increasing social assistance basic needs and maximum shelter allowances for recipients of Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) by two per cent. This will provide an additional \$33 million in benefits in 2006-07 and \$80 million in 2007-08 and beyond to social assistance recipients; and
- making permanent the flow-through of the July 2004, 2005 and 2006 increases to the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). This will provide an additional \$56 million in 2006-07 and \$75 million in 2007-08 to families receiving social assistance.

The increases in social assistance benefits, combined with the flow-through of NCBS increases, mean that a single parent with two children on OW will have \$1,620 more in annual income in 2006-07 than he or she would have had in 2003-04. This is equivalent to a 15.7 per cent increase in his or her social assistance income over the same period.

Transition from Social Assistance to Employment

The government is investing \$4 million in a new Employment Innovations fund, which will engage employers in expanding job opportunities for ODSP and OW recipients. This complements a number of measures the government has implemented to help people on social assistance make the transition to employment.

Developmental Services and Other Supports for the Vulnerable

The government is making key investments to improve the lives of persons with developmental disabilities, low-income seniors and other vulnerable people in our society by:

- increasing funding by almost \$80 million in 2006-07 for services to persons with developmental disabilities, which will expand residential services and community supports, help support agency operating costs, increase supports to families caring for family members, and expand day programs;
- providing increased services for children with special needs through additional funding of \$10 million;
- increasing funding to domiciliary hostels — places of board or lodging for people who need supervision of their daily living activities — by \$7 million in 2006-07 and developing common service standards;
- providing a two per cent increase in 2006-07 to both the Comfort Allowance for low-income seniors in long-term care homes and the Personal Needs Allowance for social assistance recipients in care facilities;
- providing an additional \$11 million in 2006-07 to enhance interpreter and intervenor services for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind; and
- proposing another enrichment to the Ontario Property and Sales Tax Credits so that seniors who receive the guaranteed minimum level of income from governments would get the full benefit of the credits.

Affordable Housing

A new Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program Agreement will result in an overall investment of \$734 million, of which the Ontario and federal governments will each provide \$301 million, with additional contributions from municipal governments. This investment will provide:

- approximately 15,000 new affordable housing units, including housing for victims of domestic violence and for persons with mental disabilities;
- approximately 5,000 housing allowances for eligible lower-income families;
- a home ownership fund to provide capital subsidies to eligible homebuyers with low to moderate incomes; and
- funding for the creation of the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Initiative to assist developers of affordable housing with low-cost, long-term financing for new rental and supportive housing units.

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