

June 04, 2024

Dear Premiers and Ministers of Finance,

We are writing to you as a collective of stakeholder organizations regarding the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit (CDB), a new federal income supplement intended, in the *Canada Disability Benefit Act*, to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities. In our estimation, the recent federal CDB funding announcement has deeply troubled our community, as it is only planned to provide people with disabilities in Canada who have the Disability Tax Credit only \$200 per month – at a maximum.

As a result of this announcement, we are writing to ask that provincial and territorial governments show leadership on this file by working to ensure that the CDB truly lifts people with disabilities in Canada out of poverty. **We ask that you commit to ensuring that all recipients of the CDB who also receive disability income support in your jurisdictions realize the full value of the CDB upon implementation. Put plainly, we are requesting that your governments pledge that the CDB will not be clawed back by your respective disability income support programs.**

The need for the CDB is greater than ever. The current affordability and housing crises disproportionately impact people with disabilities, and the recent [Canadian Survey on Disability](#) has shown that the number of people with disabilities in Canada has increased by 4.7% between 2017 and 2022, meaning 27% - or 8 million - people with disabilities in our country aged 15 and older have at least one disability.

Of those 8 million, over 1.6 million people with disabilities are living in poverty – [with over a million people with disabilities in Canada](#) surviving on under \$20,000 per year. By contrast, research shows that:

- A single person [needs approximately \\$61,000](#) (after tax) to thrive in a city like Toronto.
- In Quebec City, a family of three [requires over \\$40,000](#) per year (after tax) to meet basic costs.
- In Saskatoon, that family of three [needs at least \\$50,000](#) (after tax) to simply survive.
- In Nova Scotia, [research shows](#) that the living wage increased 14% in 2023 to over \$55,000 per year in Halifax.

It is important to note that none of these figures include the cost of having a disability, which is [estimated at 30%](#) over average incomes. It is reprehensible that as a society, we continue to allow so many people with disabilities to be left far behind and left out of thriving communities in every province and territory.

Provincial and territorial disability income supports provide a foundation for people with disabilities to survive. Further, we applaud efforts to index provincial/territorial disability

income supports to inflation, which are a step in the right direction for addressing the rising costs of living. Additionally, increasing employment income exemptions provide a smoother transition into employment for those who can work and are an opportunity for people with disabilities to improve their financial stability.

Ensuring all recipients realize the full value of the CDB is another step along the way to achieve our shared goal of financial safety, security, and stability – and the benefits it could bring – for people with disabilities. We know from the people we serve, work with, and advocate for, that financial stability has a direct impact in every aspect of life, from not having to depend on food banks, to reducing health system usage, to finding safe and stable housing.

We understand that you and your ministries have engaged with the federal government over the last year and are seeking clarification on key aspects of the CDB’s design that could impact disability income support programs without your intervention. We have similarly engaged in the regulations development process and will continue to do so. As a community we will continue to advocate for an adequately-funded CDB that is inclusive, barrier-free, and implemented with urgency.

Even in the absence of approved regulations, there is important work that we are relying on your governments to undertake with haste. We are asking you to take ownership of the process and responsibility for leading the internal negotiation and implementation of the necessary agreements, legislation, regulation, and policy directives to ensure that the CDB once implemented, will fulfill its commitment to be supplemental income that lifts people with disabilities out of poverty, and not lead to any claw backs to existing provincial/territorial disability income support programs or services.

All levels of government in Canada have a responsibility for working together to reduce disability poverty in our country. All levels of government must prioritize implementing the CDB without delay and with no claw backs. Time is of the essence to make sure everyone in Canada has an opportunity to thrive.

We thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to make progress on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Stakeholder Organization	Name	Role
ABLE2: Support for People with Disabilities	Heather Lacey	Executive Director
Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario	Douglas Kwan	Director of Advocacy and Legal Services
Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians	Marcia Yale	National President
Autism Alliance of Canada	Jonathan Lai	Executive Director
BC Disability Collaborative	Pat Mirenda	Chair

Stakeholder Organization	Name	Role
BC Poverty Reduction Coalition	Rowan Burdge	Provincial Director
BC Prader-Willi Syndrome Association	Mandy Young	President
Brain Injury Canada	Michelle McDonald	Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)	Maureen Haan	President & CEO
Canadian Down Syndrome Society	Laura LaChance	Executive Director
Carrefour Solidaire CFC	Sylvie Chamberland, Beccah Frasier, Emily Balderston	Executive Codirectors
CHILD-BRIGHT	Pierre Zwiegers	Director of Operations (Interim)
CHILD-BRIGHT Network – SPOR funded Network – Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)	National Youth Advocacy Council (NYAC)	Youth Research Partners in Patient Oriented Research in Child Health
CHILD-BRIGHT Network – SPOR funded Network – Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)	Corinne Lalonde	Engagement Program and Projects Manager
CHILD-BRIGHT Network – SPOR funded Network – Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)	Heather Muir	Youth and Engagement Initiative Coordinator (contact for the National Youth Advocacy Council - NYAC)
Christian Direction	Dr. Christa Smith- Kingston	Coordinator of Innovation Youth
Citizens for Public Justice	Natalie Appleyard	Socio-Economic Policy Analyst
CNIB	John M. Rafferty	President and CEO
Community Food Centres Canada	Sherri Hanley	Director, Policy & Community Action
Community Resource Centre Killaloe	Bil Smith	Executive Director
Community Society to End Poverty (CSEP) - NS	Stella Lord	Coordinator
Council of Canadians with Disabilities	Heather Walkus	National Chair
Daily Bread Food Bank	Neil Hetherington	CEO
Dalhousie Food Cupboard	Lorraine Salvo	Board Chair/President
Disability Alliance BC	Helaine Boyd	Executive Director
Disability Without Poverty	Rabia Khedr	National Director
Down Syndrome Resource Foundation	Glen Hoos	Director of Communications + Sustainability
Easter Seals Canada	Dave Starrett	President & CEO
Feed Nova Scotia	Nick Jennery	Executive Director
Feed Ontario	Carolyn Stewart	CEO
Food Banks Canada	Kirstin Beardsley	CEO
Food First NL	Laurel Huget	Program Coordinator

Stakeholder Organization	Name	Role
Food Stash Foundation	Carla Pellegrini	Executive Director
Halifax Food Policy Alliance	More Vail	Community Food Coordinator
Hamilton Food Share	Radhika Subramanyan	CEO
Inclusion Canada	Krista Carr	Executive Vice President
Income Security Advocacy Centre	Melinda Ferlisi	Executive Director
inGIRLS CLUB Association	Vicky Ryan	Executive Director
L'Arche Canada	Louis Pilotte	National Executive Director
Le Dépôt Centre Communautaire d'Alimentation	Nicolas Braesch	Responsable des approvisionnements
Live Educate Transform Society	Heather McCain	Executive Director
Malvern Family Resource Centre	Claire Perttula	Food Justice Projects Coordinator
Maple Leaf Centre for Food Security	Sarah Stern	Executive Director
March of Dimes Canada	Len Baker	CEO
Maytree	Elizabeth Mclsaac	President
Mount Paul Community Food Centre	Dawn Christie	Mount Paul CFC Manager
MS Canada	Benjamin Davis	Senior Vice-President, Mission
Muscular Dystrophy Canada	Homira Osman	VP, Research and Public Policy
National Institute on Ageing	Alyssa Brierley	Executive Director
Neighbour to Neighbour Centre	Krista D'Aoust	Director, Community Food & Family Services
Nelson Community Food Centre	Alex Hawes	Executive Director
Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities	Sherry Costa-Lorenz	Executive Director
ODSP Action Coalition	Trevor Manson	Co-chair
Oldtown Storytellers' Society	Brenda Barritt	Executive Director
Ontario Disability Coalition	Sherry Caldwell	Co-Founder
Otonabee-South Monaghan (OSM) Food Cupboard	Joan DiFruscia	Chair
Parent	Carrie Costello	Parent
Parkdale Community Food Bank	Kitty Raman Costa	Executive Director
Parkdale Food Centre	Rebecca Dorris	Director of Advocacy
Partners for Planning	Jill Teeple	Executive Director
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network	Rebecca Pauls	Executive Director
Prosper Canada	Elizabeth Mulholland	CEO
Rick Hansen Foundation	Doramy Ehling	CEO
Roots Community Food Centre	Erin Beagle	Executive Director
SaltWater Community Association Inc.	Marlene Butler	Director of Operations
Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre	Laurie O'Connor	Executive Director

Stakeholder Organization	Name	Role
Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre	Kate Lasiuk	Nutrition Program Manager
Scarborough Food Security Initiative (Feed Scarborough)	Suman Roy	Founder & Executive Director
SFU - Centre for Dialogue	Diane T. Finegood	Professor and Fellow, PhD
Shelley Cares Foundation	Michelle Berry	Executive Director
South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre	Sydney Lougheed	Registered Dietitian
Spinal Cord Injury Canada	Bill Adair	Executive Director
The Depot Community Food Centre	Tasha Lackman	Executive Director
The Depot Community Food Centre	Cassandra Belliveau	Boite a Lunch NDG Assistant Coordinator
The Depot Community Food Centre	Dahlia ChanTang	After-School Program Coordinator
The Depot Community Food Centre	Melanie Romer	Good Food Market Coordinator
The Depot Community Food Centre	Christine Sayegh	Community Gardens Coordinator
The Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination	Dominica McPherson	Director
The Lived and Living Experience Advisory Group, NL	Tina Hann	Disability Justice Lead
The Local Community Food Centre	Margaret Smart	Executive Director
The North Grove	Wendy Fraser	Executive Director
The North Grove	Caralee McDaniel	Manager, Hub Services
The Nourish and Develop Foundation	Jessica Topfer	Executive Director
The Table Community Food Centre	Ramsey Hart	Executive Director
TNG Community Services	Serena Nudel	Director of Community Programs
Toronto Drop-In Network	Daniella Leacock	Manager
United Church of Canada	Rev. Dr. Robin Wardlaw	Former Minister
Vela Canada	Caitlin Goodsell	Executive Director
Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility	Christopher Sutton	CEO
Wellesley Institute	Jesse Rosenberg	Director of Policy
West Central Women's Resource Centre	Lorie English	Executive Director
West Scarborough Community Legal Services	Christie McQuarrie	Executive Director/Lawyer
Working for change	Anita Prasad	Executive Director
YWCA Toronto	Heather McGregor	CEO

CC: Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for disability income support programs

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Kamal Khera, Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Hon. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Official Opposition
Tracy Gray, MP, Shadow Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Yves-Francois Blanchet, MP, Leader of the Bloc Quebecois
Louise Chabot, MP, Critic, Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Jagmeet Singh, MP, Leader of the NDP
Bonita Zarillo, MP, Critic, Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Elizabeth May, MP, Leader of the Green Party of Canada
Mike Morrice, MP, Critic, Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities

Katie Telford, Chief of Staff, Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
Nicholas Kang, Senior Advisor, Office of the Prime Minister of Canada
Andrew Bevan, Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Douglas Wong, Senior Advisor, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Helen Gao, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Kevin Murphy, Senior Advisor, Office of the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion, and Persons with Disabilities
Ian Todd, Chief of Staff, Office of the Leader of the Opposition
David Murray, Senior Advisor, Office of the Leader of the Opposition
Jennifer Howard, Chief of Staff, Office of the Leader of the NDP