

Terms of Reference—BC Basic Income Pilot Assessment

To support work government is doing to reduce poverty, the Province will look at whether a basic income is an effective way to improve income security, reduce poverty and address the impact of technological change. Budget 2018 will provide \$4m over two years to test the feasibility of a basic income in BC and help find ways to make life better for British Columbians. To help guide this work, the province will convene a panel of experts and consult with stakeholders for input and advice to help address the gaps that exist in the critical income and social supports that British Columbians rely on.

The committee would consider the viability of a basic income in BC and support the simulation of various basic income models in BC to identify impacts and financial implications. The committee would also look at BC's existing income and social support system and how elements and principles of a basic income could be used to transform and enhance it. The committee will also outline any areas that could be explored further through a basic income pilot, as well as pilot design.

The work of the committee would include consideration of the impact that advances in technology and automation and other shifts are predicted to have on the labour market over the next several decades. Technological advancements are expected to result in the elimination of tens of thousands of jobs, particularly lower-skilled jobs in the service sector but also in manufacturing and production. The rise in unemployment and precarious employment will put additional stress on existing income support systems, which were not designed for these situations. The committee will consider both current labour market and future labour market conditions.

The work of the committee would also consider additional social, economic, and health-related trends and drivers that are anticipated to impact BC's population and the income and social support system for low income people in BC in the coming years including changes in disability prevalence and conditions, advancements in medical treatment and assistive technology, demographic shifts including changing family composition and an ageing population, and shifting public expectations.

The committee will consider the following principles when evaluating the viability of a basic income in BC and the potential for improvements to BC's income and social support system:

- reduces poverty
- enhances income security
- improves accessibility to supports for people in need of assistance and people with disabilities
- improves accessibility, effectiveness and cultural appropriateness of supports for Indigenous people
- reduces the unnecessary complexity associated with income and disability supports
- promotes social inclusion and socially beneficial activities
- improves mental wellbeing and quality of life
- increases program administration efficiency
- promotes labour market attachment
- eases work transitions

- facilitates the pursuit of education and training
- eases transitions between different income support programs and between income support and employment as applicable
- supports early intervention to mitigate impacts of life on long-term economic security
- reduces associated social costs of poverty (e.g., on the health-care and criminal justice systems)
- considers impact on government's fiscal plan

This approach is similar to the one recently undertaken in Quebec, which led to a detailed impact assessment of the potential for basic income through simulations of basic income and a report with 23 recommendations on how to improve their income and social support system to incorporate some of the benefits of a basic income.

Specific Mandate

More specifically, the committee's mandate is to:

- oversee simulations of basic income in BC;
- analyze the components of BC's current income and social support system;
- identify gaps in the current income and social support system;
- identify and analyze the impacts of changing trends outlined above on BC's population and income and social support system;
- provide recommendations for improving income security in BC through implementing elements of basic income;
 - For each of these recommendations, analyze the impacts; assess feasibility; identify issues
- provide recommendations on any areas that could be further explored through pilot programs, as well as pilot design.

Committee Members

The expert committee will be comprised of the following:

Chair:

- David Green Vancouver School of Economics (UBC)

Members:

- Jonathan Rhys Kesselman School of Public Policy – SFU
- Lindsay Tedds School of Public Policy – U Calgary

Timelines

The expert committee will start meeting in summer 2018. The committee's findings and recommendations are proposed to be released in several reports over an approximate two-year period.