

Background

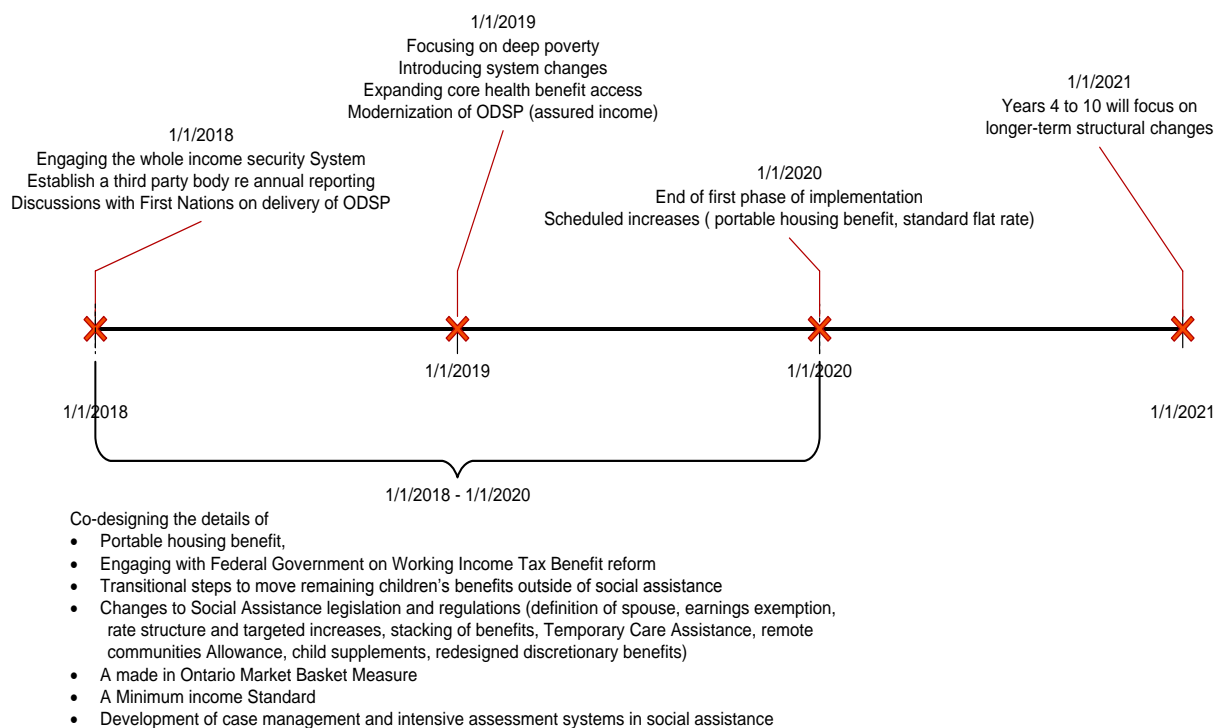
In late October 2017, The Income Security Reform Working Groups (Income Security Reform Working Group, First Nations Income Security Reform Working Group, and the Urban Indigenous Table on Income Security Reform) released the a document entitled Income Security – a roadmap for change detailing the recommendations for steps necessary to reform, transition, and modernize the delivery of income security to people living in poverty. https://files.ontario.ca/income_security_-_a_roadmap_for_change-english-accessible_0.pdf

The Income Security – a roadmap for change identifies a multi-year path to create a modern, responsive and effective system. It is built on three overarching themes: Investing in People, Addressing Adequacy and Recognizing the Experience of Indigenous Peoples. The 18 recommendations identify systemic issues and offer a way forward in addressing reform.

1. Adopt a definition of income adequacy and make a public commitment to achieve that goal over 10 years;
2. Introduce a portable housing benefit;
3. Move income support for children outside of social assistance;
4. Modernize the working income tax benefit;
5. Broaden access to core health benefits;
6. Ensure procedural fairness is embedded in all aspects;
7. Fundamentally change the legislative framework for social assistance programs to set the foundation for a culture of trust, collaboration, and problem-solving;
8. Introduce an approach to serving people receiving Ontario Works and ODSP that promotes a culture of trust, collaboration, and problem-solving as a priority, and supports good quality life outcomes for people in all communities, including Indigenous peoples;
9. Maintain and strengthen ODSP as a distinct program for people with disabilities. Ensure that both ODSP and Ontario Works are well equipped to support people with disabilities with meeting individual goals for social and economic inclusion;
10. Co-design an “assured income” approach for people with disabilities;
11. Redesign the social assistance rate structure so that all adults have access to a consistent level of support regardless of living situation (i.e. rental, ownership, board and lodge, no fixed address, rent-geared-to-income housing, government-funded facility);
12. Improve social assistance rules and redesign benefits to make it easier for people to pursue their employment goals and realize the benefits of working;
13. Modernize income and asset rules so people can maximize the income sources available to them and save for the future;

14. Ensure ongoing access to targeted allowances and benefits until such time as adequacy is achieved. Determine which extraordinary costs remain beyond the means of individuals even when the adequacy is achieved and maintain those benefits;
15. Help those in deepest poverty by immediately increasing the income support available through social assistance as a readily available means for early and absolutely critical progress towards adequacy;
16. Take steps to ensure that social services are ultimately controlled by, determined by, and specific to First Nations;
17. Broaden program outcomes to encompass social inclusion. Simplify process and provide tools for a more holistic, individualized approach that offers wrap-around services; and
18. Income security reform must be accompanied by a robust change management and implementation plan.

Below is a summary of the key recommendations and proposed implementation timeline.



Income Security: A Roadmap for Change

Overview of sequencing of recommendations

Next Steps

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has identified the "Income Security: A Roadmap for Change" as a key influencer and will ensure that the previously announced Social Assistance Services Modernization Strategy aligns with any adopted recommendations on the strategy implementation. This strategy also aligns with the changes in the Social Services Division following an operational review that was presented to the Community Services Committee on November 6, 2017.

<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&lang=en&id=1205&itemid=13871>