

From: <NC-SP-PS-SOCPOL-POLSOC-COR-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca>

Date: Tue, Jun 23, 2020 at 12:02 PM

Subject: Basic Income Guarantee for Canadians

To: <presncwc@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Leson:

On behalf of the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, I am responding to your letter of April 15, 2020. In your letter you expressed support for a basic income guarantee in Canada. I regret the delay in replying.

With regard to basic income, the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of working with provincial and territorial counterparts to find solutions to common challenges. However, it is important to acknowledge that it is up to the provincial and territorial governments to make decisions around the design of social assistance systems and policies in their own jurisdictions. If a provincial or territorial government decides to establish a basic income pilot, the Government of Canada would be pleased to share federal-level survey, administrative, and tax data that could support program design and evaluation.

As your letter indicates, some Government of Canada initiatives have many of the features of a partial basic income for specific groups, such as families and seniors. This includes the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), which provides substantial income support to families raising children. The CCB is tax-free and income-based and provides more support to families who need help the most. The CCB helps almost 3.7 million families and about 6.5 million children, putting nearly \$24 billion annually, tax-free, in the hands of families.

For Canadian seniors, the Old Age Security (OAS) program plays a significant role in providing income security. OAS pensioners who receive little or no income, other than the OAS pension, are eligible for additional assistance through the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). The GIS is income-tested to ensure that this additional assistance is provided to the seniors most in need.

In response to COVID-19, the Government is continuing to explore a variety of potential shorter and longer-term policy responses that could address the ongoing needs of Canadians. For more information about the new measures announced by the federal government, I invite you to regularly visit www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html. Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely,

Hugues Vaillancourt
Senior Director
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