

Welcome!

*A Presentation by:*

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## Why Ontario Works Does Not Work

Currently, more than 185,000 single adults in Ontario are trapped in this government program of cyclical systemic deprivation; I am one of 'those people', as we are so often called, and have been stranded in this program for over 5 years.

However, over these last 5 years I have also been working within my community and alongside integral advocacy groups, agencies, community partners, and leaders to share my experiences, observations, and insights, in the hopes of bringing about positive social and systemic changes.

We do have many serious, and even dire socioeconomic issues in our country; and, these problems almost always lead back to poor policies and procedures that govern and direct our social programs and service providers. But if we are to effectively resolve these 'problems', we must first identify the 'causes'.

I'd like to now illustrate how this current social 'safety net' is in actuality an enormous detriment to the health & well being of its recipients, and, a considerable driver of many of our ongoing socioeconomic issues.

Note: This presentation is the first part of a 2 part series, and focuses primarily on the micro level of Ontario Works income support- in a first person perspective. The 2nd part will focus more directly on the meso & macro level of this program, and will be available at a later date (TBA).

# The Other Side Of The Coin; A First Person Perspective

Social Services: Income Support  
Ontario Works  
Basic Needs Allowance

# Ontario Works Social Assistance Program (Single Adult)

## Ontario Works

**Ontario Works** provides temporary financial assistance through 2 primary support allowances;

1. Shelter Allowance
  2. Basic Needs Allowance
- Total of both = **\$706/mth**

## Shelter Allowance

**Shelter** Allowance for a single adult is set at **\$376/month**.

Average rental rates in a rooming house ranges from \$450-600/month,

Rooming Houses are substandard

## Basic Needs Allowance

**Basic Needs** Allowance for a single adult is set at **\$330/month**.

For a single adult, with all related housing costs paid, this amount is reasonably effective at providing support

# So, Let's Go Shopping!

(As a housed, single, adult)

Monthly

Basic Needs

Allowance:

**\$330.00**

**WAIT!**

Before you pick up your cheque...



# Pre-payment Deductions

Basic Needs Allowance

Basic Needs Subtotal

Basic Needs Balance



**Rent Shortfall**  
(Deducted from Basic Needs allowance)

**Overpayment Recovery**  
(Deducted from Basic Needs allowance)

# Predispositioning Deficit

Basic Needs Support

Basic Needs Allowance  
\$330.00

Internal Systemic Deprivation;  
Significant Driver of Poverty  
(ie: Food Insecurity, Homelessness)

Rent Shortfall  
-\$99.00  
(-30%)

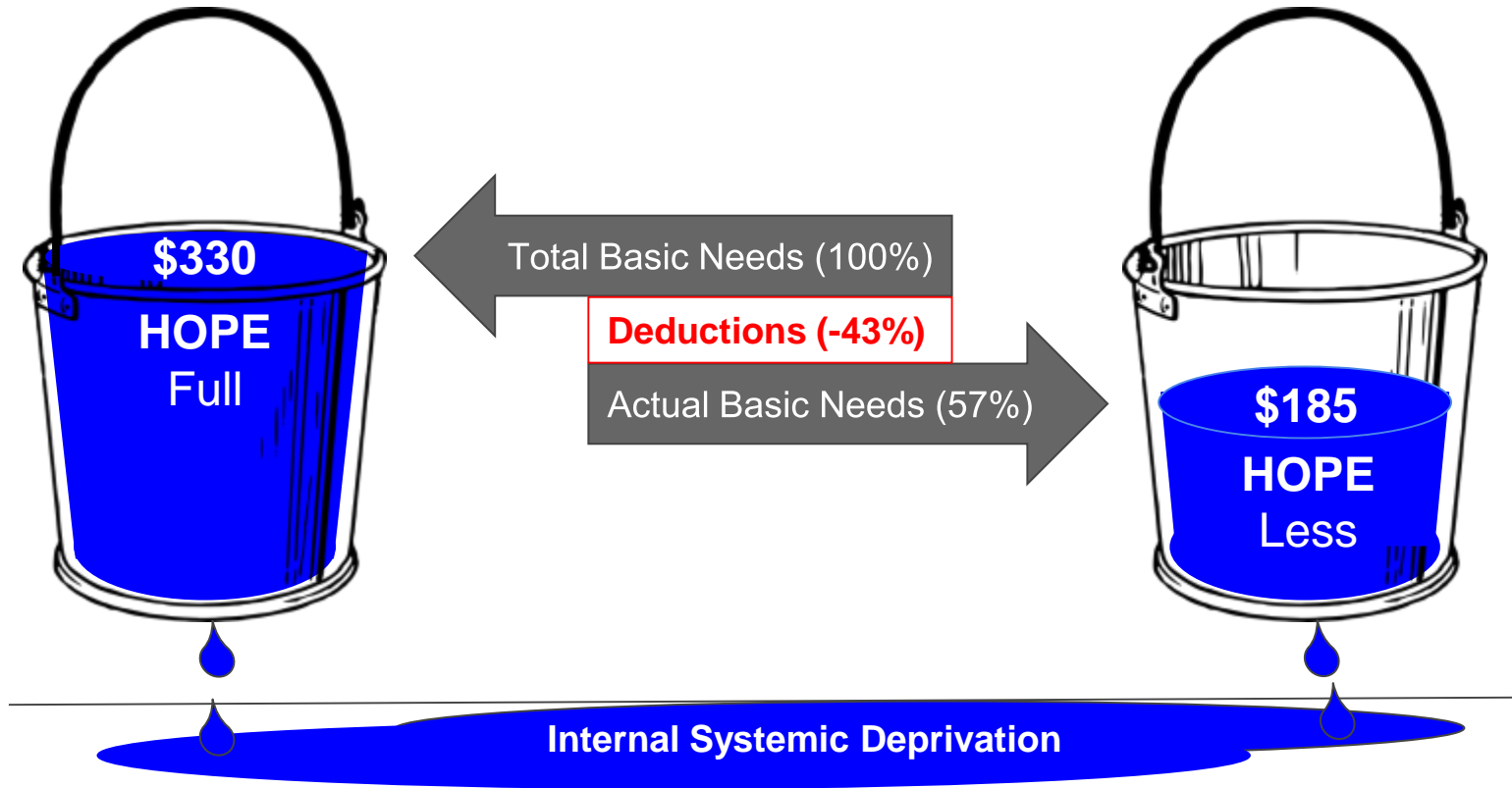
O/P Recovery  
-\$45.00  
(-14%)

Insufficient Funds; doesn't  
provide autonomy or dignity

Basic Needs Balance  
\$186.00

**Predispositioning Deficit**  
Every month, an O/W recipient awaits their next 'Bucket Full of Hope'; yet, every month, the recipient is left **hopeless** due to the continual loss of almost half of their Basic Needs Allowance before they even see their cheque. This predisposes O/W recipients into a life of dependence and servitude within the charitable and social service system.

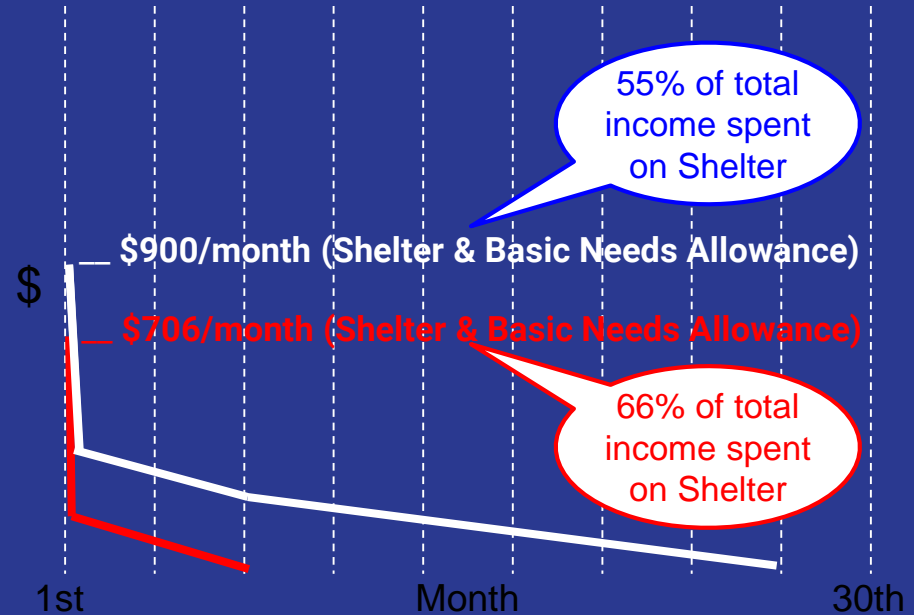
# The 'Dear Liza' Dilemma



# Recommendations

1. Increase shelter allowance to \$500/month for a single adult (approx. +30%),
2. Defer overpayment deductions until gainfully employed,
3. Increase Basic Needs allowance to \$400/month (approx. +20%)

**A little help goes a long way!**



**Raised Total Allowance of \$900, without deductions**  
**Current Total Allowance of \$706, minus deductions**

# The Other Side of the Coin; A First Person Perspective

## Summary

- The Basic Needs portion of financial assistance is reasonably sufficient,
- Shelter allowance is not at par with the current average rental market rates,
- P&P that requires rent shortfalls and internal penalties to be drawn from Basic Needs allowances essentially renders the allowance inadequate & ineffective,
- Ontario Works recipients are therefore trapped in a cyclical systemic process of deprivation that denies them equitable basic human needs and rights,
- Recipients are subsequently predisposed to a life of dependence and servitude within the charitable and social service system,
- Insufficient income is a known driver of food insecurity, homelessness, crime, social disconnection, as well as physical, social, and mental health issues.

It's Time For Change

It's time that our Social Policies & Procedures  
STOP *punishing* vulnerable and disadvantaged  
members of our society

And, instead, START *providing* the services and supports that give real hope, opportunity, and ability to live with dignity and autonomy



It's time to  
**#BeTheChange**

Thank you!

“The Other Side of the Coin;  
A First Person Perspective”

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Ontario Works Basic Needs Allowance

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