Webinar Resources
Basic Income: Principles, Practice and Lessons

This listing has been prepared by Rob Rainer – Chair of Ontario Basic Income Network and Member of Advisory Council of Basic Income Canada Network.

Basic income (BI) is a seemingly simple concept at a high level but is complex and thorny in its details. To help build knowledge about it—including arguments for and against BI—I here recommend six papers all issued between September last year and this month.

*Towards a Guaranteed Livable Income*, by Citizens for Public Justice, "offers a set of recommendations for guiding the development of a Guaranteed Livable Income—an income security system that would ensure that everyone has access to the basic necessities of life and the means to participate meaningfully in the life of their community....a GLI does not represent a solution to all of the causes of poverty, but it is an important strategy for addressing fundamental societal inequities..."

*Basic Income: Rethinking Social Policy*, by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), is a "compendium of thought" from some of Canada’s most knowledgeable BI, health, social policy, and public policy experts. Editors Alex Himelfarb (former Clerk of the Privy Council) and Trish Hennessy state that "the idea of a basic income has catapulted out in front of all of the incremental public policy approaches that have long been on the table [e.g., for combating poverty]. The basic income has become Canada’s newest example of Overton’s Window at work: within certain public policy circles, it has moved from the realm of impossibility to pilot project status [e.g., in Ontario]."

*A Basic Income for Canadians: What Would Change?*, by income security expert John Stapleton, depicts “how ordinary Canadians receive very different treatments from Canada’s income security system”; explores what would happen if BI became available to four fictional people in typical real life circumstances; and strives to show “who would get more money and who would not—while also considering the manifest unfairness of the...current system.”

In *A Policymaker’s Guide to Basic Income*, economist David Macdonald models eight BI scenarios in "two broad approaches: (1) the one-size-fits-all (universal) basic income, where all Canadians receive an identical cheque in the mail at regular intervals...and (2) a negative income tax approach that is geared to income, i.e., the richest Canadians receive nothing and the poorest receive the maximum income supplement." The scenarios range from universal payments of $1,000 to $3,565/year to income-tested payments ranging from $10,000 to $18,008/year. Macdonald concludes that "][t]he most efficient approach...may be a basic income in the negative income tax model that reduces in value based on income and family size—in other words, a basic income that targets those who need it most.”

In *Designing a Basic Income Guarantee for Canada*, economists Robin Boadway, Katherine Cuff, and Kourtney Koebel examine what a single federal-provincial BI program for adults could cost and how it could be funded in a revenue-neutral scenario, using the income-tested model for design and delivery. The authors show how by converting many existing non-refundable tax credits and folding several existing refundable tax credits into the BI, that a BI of up to $20,000 per adult per year could be realized, while simultaneously reducing Canada’s poverty rate by 73% and Canada’s level of income inequality by 17%.

In *Pilot lessons: How to design a basic income pilot project for Ontario*, authors Evelyn Forget, Dylan Marando, Michael Crawford Urban, and Tonya Surman summarize the basics of basic income, review major trends and forces within rapidly changing labour markets, identify key lessons from past BI experiments, and make recommendations for the design of Ontario’s forthcoming BI pilot project—what the authors describe as an opportunity for Ontario to be “at the forefront of global social policy innovation.” (Details of the pilot are anticipated to be announced by the Ontario government in April.)

Can also check out: *Basic Income consultations: What we heard* (report from the ON government, concerning the recent provincial pilot consultations process)