



Right
to Housing

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY
MANITOBA

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Increase to EIA rates helpful, but more needs to be done

Province's announcement of additional \$50 per month will bring EIA recipients' annual incomes up to 47% of the poverty line.

Yesterday Premier Stefanson announced a Family Affordability Package which includes an increase to the Basic Needs Benefit for Manitobans who depend on the Province's primary income assistance program - EIA. These Manitobans will finally receive a desperately needed increase to their monthly budget starting in November of this year. People in EIA's general assistance category and without dependent children will receive an additional \$50 per month. Those in EIA's disability category will receive an additional \$25 per month.

Anti-poverty advocates have long been calling for increases to EIA's basic needs budget. It has remained relatively frozen at \$195 per month for the last two decades while the cost of living continues to escalate. Those left furthest behind are Manitobans in the general assistance category without dependent children. They live with incomes that are about 44% of the poverty line - that is an annual income of \$10,079.

People who live off incomes that low will benefit from every additional dollar received. When she heard about the extra \$50, a Rapid Rehousing participant at Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) said she was excited about the potential impact of the increase in basic needs money she receives from EIA. She said, "she can put that extra money towards part of a bus pass for transport, part of a bicycle for transport, part of a phone plan for communicating with resource organizations or potential employers, part of an internet plan for communication and any number of online resources for my mental health."

This \$50 budget increase will bring EIA general assistance recipients up to 47% of the poverty line. Make Poverty History Manitoba and the Right to Housing coalitions have been leading a campaign to increase the basic needs budget to bring people to at least 75% of the poverty line to help ensure no Manitoban lives in deep poverty.

Increasing the basic needs budget by \$50 is a significant step towards supporting people who live in deep poverty, and every penny will go directly back into our economy. We can't stop here. Even at \$245 dollars per month the EIA basic needs budget fails to cover a single person's monthly food costs based on the national standard for a healthy diet, nevermind other expenses like clothing and personal hygiene products.

Make Poverty History Manitoba and the Right to Housing coalition will continue to urge the Manitoba government to take additional steps to further increase EIA benefit levels to get people

to at least 75% of the poverty line. This is a critical piece of transforming Manitoba's income support system so that it no longer traps people in poverty, but instead allows them to purchase their basic needs, reduce their reliance on food banks, stabilize in their housing, and take steps toward greater financial independence.

The Right to Housing Coalition advocates for quality, affordable housing for low-income people living in Manitoba.

Make Poverty History Manitoba is a multi-sector collaborative coalition committed to changing public policy to achieve a Manitoba without poverty.

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