

**Ministry of Children,
Community and Social
Services**

Minister's Office

7th Floor
438 University Avenue
Toronto ON M5G 2K8

Tel.: 416 325-5225
Fax: 416 325-5240

**Ministère des Services à
l'enfance et des Services
sociaux et communautaires**

Bureau du ministre

7^e étage
438, avenue University
Toronto ON M5G 2K8

Tél. : 416 325-5225
Télééc. : 416 325-5240



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December 16, 2020

Dear Community Partner:

Last December, I invited stakeholders to participate in consultations to inform the development of a new five-year Poverty Reduction Strategy.

I am pleased to announce the release of [*Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario \(2020-2025\)*](#). In this new five-year strategy, we set out a vision for an Ontario where everyone can participate in their communities and achieve greater independence, stability and, wherever possible, long-term job success to support themselves and their families. I want to extend my sincere thanks to our valued community partners for contributing to the development of our strategy to reduce poverty in Ontario.

Through the consultation process, we heard from people across the province about their community's experiences with poverty. We received over 2,500 survey responses and over 280 submissions and had additional engagement with Indigenous partners and municipal committees.

As our consultations came to a close, Ontario was facing one of its greatest challenges, the COVID-19 outbreak that led to an unprecedented economic downturn that continues to deeply impact our communities. I also want to thank you for the vital role you have played in supporting your communities and for providing input about the path to recovery that has further helped shape this strategy.

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Reducing and preventing poverty is a goal that is even more important in the context of the health, social, and economic challenges resulting from COVID-19. Building on the government's COVID-19 response, the strategy connects initiatives across government, identifying actions that will help stabilize peoples' lives, connect them with employment, training, health, mental health and housing supports to help set them on a pathway to jobs and financial stability and support people who are unable to work to participate in their community. The Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan and Employment Services Transformation are the cornerstone initiatives of the strategy, supported by others such as the *Roadmap to Wellness*, Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy.

As we move forward with the strategy's implementation over the next five years, I look forward to listening to and working with community partners, municipalities, the federal government, the private sector, and Indigenous partners to create an Ontario where everyone can participate in their communities to their full potential.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Todd Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping line extending from the end of the name.

Todd Smith
Minister