Poverty Reduction Strategy

2022 Annual Report

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Ontario

Contents

Minister's message

Our government is reducing poverty. We are connecting people across the province with the right programs, benefits and supports, so they can participate in their communities and take steps toward financial independence.

We are improving social assistance delivery throughout Ontario to better help those in financial need or who have a disability. In September 2022, we increased the rates for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program by 5%. We will also make annual adjustments tied to inflation for both programs, starting in July 2023.

For those who can work, we increased the amount someone receiving ODSP can earn from $200 to $1,000, without affecting their income support, or health benefits.

We are also addressing the province's labour shortage by improving employment services and skills training opportunities. Through programs and initiatives like Better Jobs Ontario, Skills Development Fund, and the Integrated Employment Services, we are helping Ontarians get into in-demand job sectors.

We recognize the challenges women and families faced with daycare and school closures. The pandemic reinforced the importance of child care and its correlation with female participation in Ontario's economy.

In March 2022, our government announced a $13.2 billion agreement with the federal government for the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. The program lowers child care fees and creates new affordable child care spaces for families.

As we look ahead, we will continue to improve Ontario's infrastructure such as transit and enabling access to high-speed broadband internet across the province, so that all Ontarians can participate in their communities and our economy.

Together, in continued collaboration with community and Indigenous partners, as well as through actions at all levels of government, we can build an Ontario where everyone has a chance to succeed.

Sincere thanks,

Michael Parsa
Minister of Children, Community and Social Services

Introduction

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy sets a vision for an Ontario where everyone can participate in their communities and achieve greater independence. Since the release of Ontario's third Poverty Reduction Strategy, **Building a Strong Foundation for Success: Reducing Poverty in Ontario (2020–2025)**, the province has maintained a commitment to working with federal, municipal, non-profit and private sector partners to build a pathway to jobs and financial stability for people experiencing poverty.

The third annual report outlines progress on four strategy pillars and key initiatives to support people in and at risk of poverty. The report also provides an update on the strategy target and key indicators.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy highlights the importance of financial independence and sets a five-year target to increase the number of individuals moving from social assistance into employment each year.

In 2022, there were over 27,000 exits to employment, which is an improvement over 2020 and 2021. However, the annual number of exits has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The rising cost of living, alongside the economic recovery from COVID-19, has led to ongoing challenges for individuals and families in poverty. The province will continue to work to create jobs, support people into employment and rebuild the economy.

2022 Context in Ontario

In 2022, inflation reached the highest levels in over four decades in Ontario. The rising cost of living continues to put financial pressure on individuals and families, especially for those in low-wage jobs and at risk of, or who are living in poverty. Ontario has taken key actions to make life more affordable and move people into employment. Major investments in programs like Better Jobs Ontario, Skills Development Fund and the Integrated Employment Services are connecting more people to employment and reducing Ontario's skilled labour shortage. The government is also making everyday costs such as child care, gasoline and diesel more affordable. To help those who qualify for disability support, Ontario increased rates for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) by 5% with future ODSP rates adjusted to inflation. Through initiatives like these and others outlined in this report, the province continues to help people adapt to the changing job market to achieve long-term job success and withstand economic challenges.

Progress on Poverty Reduction Strategy pillars

The government is making progress on the four pillars outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, while supporting policies and programs that help achieve better outcomes for four priority groups in the strategy's focus, including youth, women, Black and other racialized communities and Indigenous peoples.

Pillar one: encouraging job creation and connecting people to employment

The government is connecting people to jobs in in-demand sectors while removing employment barriers through major employment service improvements and initiatives. These improvements provide targeted supports for priority groups and enhance training and apprentice opportunities.

Integrated Employment Services

Ontario is transforming employment services to be more efficient, streamlined and outcomes-focused to meet the needs of more job seekers. Ontario's **Integrated Employment Services (IES) system** helps more social assistance recipients secure stable and rewarding employment by integrating Ontario Works employment assistance and ODSP employment supports into Employment Ontario. This new system creates an easy-to-use one-stop service focused on the needs of the local economy and provides job seekers with a suite of tailored employment services and supports.

This initiative builds on the successes of the first three catchment areas — Peel, Hamilton–Niagara and Muskoka–Kawarthas — to adopt the new system in 2020 and has already helped over 63,000 people find a path to employment (as of December 2022). Early progress in these regions has 82% of participants moving into employment on completion of pre-employment services. This includes Ontario Works recipients, ODSP recipients, as well as IES participants not on social assistance. The IES service delivery model includes 12 months of retention services and employment status monitoring at one-, three-, six- and 12-month checkpoints. The ministry is monitoring long-term client employment outcomes as the system matures. In 2022, Halton, Kingston–Pembroke, Stratford–Bruce Peninsula and York catchment areas adopted the new model. The new approach will be implemented province-wide by the end of 2023.

Enhancing skills for better employment outcomes

The province is helping unemployed or underemployed Ontarians to get the training and credentials they need to find well-paying careers. Launched in 2022, the **Better Jobs Ontario** program pays up to $28,000 in tuition and other costs for short-duration training programs that allow job seekers to match their skills with the needs of hiring employers in the community. Additionally, expanding on the former Second Career program, more applicants are now eligible for up to $500 per week in financial support for basic living expenses while training. Better Jobs Ontario targets a larger and more diverse range of workers who may face challenges finding stable jobs, including those on social assistance, self-employed, gig workers, youth and newcomers.

From the start of Better Jobs Ontario Phase 1 in December 2020 to December 31, 2022, over 7,400 people have started training through Better Jobs Ontario.

In the 2022 Fall Economic Statement, Ontario committed an additional $40 million to the **Skills Development Fund** (SDF) for 2022–23 including $30 million in new funding. The Skills Development Fund supports innovative training projects that upskill workers and job seekers and prepare them for meaningful careers in their communities. The first two funding rounds delivered 388 training projects that aimed to help over 393,000 workers take the next step in their careers in in-demand industries. In September 2022, the third round of funding opened, prioritizing programs that help people with prior involvement in the criminal justice system, at-risk youth, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, Ukrainian newcomers and others facing employment barriers. Investments in 2022 brought the total to $179.3 million for the latest round of funding. The submission of applications for the third round of funding closed in Transfer Payment Ontario (TPON) on January 31, 2023.

Targeted supports for the health and long-term care workforce

The government is expanding the province's health care workforce and supporting more health and long-term care professionals to learn and work in Ontario. In 2022, Ontario announced a three-year $73 million investment to **train and provide clinical placements for over 16,000 personal support worker (PSW) and nursing students** as part of the government's plan to recruit and retain tens of thousands of long-term care staff. In 2022, Ontario also made **wage enhancements** put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic permanent for over 158,000 PSWs and direct support workers.

Ontario's ***Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery*** is designed to expand the province's health care workforce. Recent regulation changes will make it faster and easier for health care professionals trained in Ontario, other provinces and internationally to register and practice in Ontario. Ontario is also working with the College of Nurses of Ontario to reduce financial barriers for retired and internationally educated nurses by temporarily covering the cost of examination, application and registration fees — saving them up to $1,500 each.

Enhancements to apprenticeship and skilled trades programming

To address Ontario's skilled trades labour shortage, the province is moving forward with key initiatives that help people who are unemployed or looking to earn a bigger paycheck move into meaningful careers in the skilled trades. By 2025, one in five job openings in Ontario are projected to be in the skilled trades. In January 2022, the Ontario government launched **Skilled Trades Ontario**, a new Crown agency, to improve trades training and simplify services. The new agency promotes and markets the trades, develops the latest training and curriculum standards, and provides a streamlined user-friendly experience for tradespeople. The government has also funded training in targeted in-demand skilled trades through the Skills Development Fund, including over $13 million for free training and paid electrical apprenticeships for over 2,500 people. Ontario has also invested $11.6 million to two projects that helped nearly 1,500 apprentices and workers upgrade their skills in plumbing, steamfitting, welding, sprinkler fitting and refrigeration trades.

Ontario also expanded its investment in pre-apprenticeship training to a record $28 million this past year, providing young people with the training they need to be successful in the skilled trades. As of January 2023, there were 11,846 active apprentices who have completed an **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program** (OYAP).

Employment supports for priority groups

Historically marginalized populations, including youth, women and racialized and Indigenous people, face unique and disproportionate barriers to entering the workforce, finding employment and other economic opportunities. Ontario is investing **$60 million over three years** (2020–21 to 2022–23) to sustain and enhance the Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP). This investment will sustain existing programming and expand the plan to include a dedicated economic empowerment stream. In February 2022, Ontario announced an additional $14 million in 2023–2024 in **economic empowerment programs under the BYAP**. As part of the BYAP economic empowerment program, three new initiatives will help community organizations, Black-led employers and business leaders create local projects that support career pathways for Black youth. These initiatives are:

- **Career Launch** to help Black children and youth access professional networks and skills development programs
- **Career Advance** to connect Black youth and young professionals with training and work placement opportunities
- **Sector-Innovation Networks** to support Black business leaders in high-growth sectors of the economy

Through the economic empowerment programs of the BYAP, Black Ontarians will be able to acquire in-demand skills to launch their careers, gain experience to advance their careers and access employment opportunities in high-growth sectors.

With an investment of $6.9 million over the next three years, Ontario is enhancing and expanding the **Investing in Women's Futures program**, which provides resources and training opportunities to help women develop in-demand skills for jobs. This investment will expand the program to up to 10 new centres and further funding is being provided to the 23 centres currently offering the program.

Ontario invested $5 million over two years **in a targeted program to help Indigenous, Black and other racialized entrepreneurs** start or grow their business. The Racialized and Indigenous Supports for Entrepreneurs (RAISE) Grant Program, announced in 2022, helps to remove economic barriers by providing funding, training and culturally relevant services to entrepreneurs.

Successful applicants receive a $10,000 grant to facilitate innovation and growth, as well as training and coaching for sustainable economic development.

Long-standing inequities in education have disproportionately affected racialized children through higher rates of suspensions, lower graduation rates and lower rates of transitioning into post-secondary education. To improve access to educational opportunities, the Ministry of Education invested $4.1 million in

22 school boards implementing the **Graduation Coach Program for Black Students** for the 2022–23 school year. Graduation coaches with personal experience and connections to Ontario's diverse Black communities provide direct mentorship to Black students and support their well-being and academic achievement. The program also promotes greater access to post-secondary opportunities and specialized training leading to well-paid, skilled careers. Additionally, coaches advise school boards and school leadership to inform system change and create inclusive spaces that help to eliminate disparities and close the achievement gap for Black students. Since the Fall of 2019, the Graduation Coach Program for Black Students has benefited over 2,000 Black students.

The Ministry of Education also provided $3.92 million to 27 schools boards to implement the **Indigenous Graduation Coach** program for the 2022–23 school year. The Indigenous Graduation Coach program involves having a graduation coach who has life experiences deeply rooted in Indigenous communities and connections to Indigenous cultures. Coaches are an advocate and mentor for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, facilitate access and referrals to academic supports and community resources according to student need, and support students in obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The program also provides supports to Indigenous students as they transition from First Nation-operated and federally funded schools to provincially funded secondary schools as well as into post-secondary education, training or labour market opportunities. Since Fall 2018, over 4,660 Indigenous students have benefited from the program.

In partnership with local communities, the government is developing policies and programs to reduce barriers for racialized people and people with diverse backgrounds to help them achieve financial independence.

Pillar two: connecting people with the right supports and services

Access to services that improve education, health and well-being outcomes is essential in enabling people in poverty to enter and stay on the path towards financial stability. Initiatives in the Poverty Reduction Strategy focus on strong partnerships with communities and local organizations so people get the supports they need — where they need them.

Social Assistance Path Forward

Ontario continues to work toward **building a more responsive, efficient and person-centred social assistance system** that will better connect people to the supports and services they need to get back to work and help the economy recover from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The province and municipal partners are making progress with changes to the system and are seeing positive results. Ontario is streamlining the Ontario Works applications approvals to decrease administrative burden, freeing up caseworkers' time to focus on supporting people in addressing obstacles to employment — such as housing and child care needs. Additionally, in 2022, the government announced changes to social assistance to provide better supports for people with disabilities, simplify programs and improve employment outcomes.

Together, these changes will transform the system so that it provides enhanced support for vulnerable populations, allow local office staff to focus on results for people rather than paperwork, and help people get back to work and contribute to building a thriving Ontario economy.

Roadmap to Wellness

Mental health and addictions issues can have serious impacts on people's quality of life. Services and supports can be critical to ensuring those people with mental health and addictions issues are successful in finding and maintaining employment. Ontario continues to make progress on the implementation of **Roadmap to Wellness**, the province's comprehensive plan to build a modern, connected and high-quality mental health and addictions system.

Since 2019–20, Ontario has flowed net new annualized funding of $525 million into mental health and addictions services, including:

- $130 million for child and youth mental health services
- Over $93 million for addictions treatment services and supports
- $9.05 million for youth wellness hubs that are delivering developmentally appropriate substance use care, primary care and mental health services to youth aged 12 to 25
- Over $40 million for mental health and addictions services and supports for Indigenous people
- $77.35 million for supportive housing for people with mental health and addictions challenges who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- $72.6 million to support those affected by mental health and addictions challenges in the justice sector

Additionally, in response to the pandemic's impact on substance use, Ontario is implementing the Addictions Recovery Fund (ARF), a one-time investment of $90 million over three years introduced in 2021–22 to boost capacity in addictions services for children, youth and adults.

High Priority Communities Strategy

The High Priority Communities Strategy (HPCS) was introduced during the pandemic and was designed to close gaps in health outcomes for communities that were falling further behind. The strategy invested $25 million **to support community partners and lead agencies, including local health and social service providers, in high priority communities**. The HPCS provides culturally responsive health care and maintains partnerships to address social determinants of health.

In 2022 and 2023, HPCS partners, in collaboration with Ontario Health Teams, are focusing on four recovery goals based on community need. These goals are:

- increasing screening for cancer and other chronic diseases
- addressing mental health and substance use
- enhancing population specific wellness models
- addressing unmet primary care needs

Ontario Health Teams

Access to quality health care that is easy to navigate is essential for people facing health challenges, especially those living in northern communities and those experiencing poverty. In October 2022, the Ontario government, in partnership with Ontario Health, announced **the approval of three additional Ontario Health Teams in Northern Ontario**. The three new Ontario Health Teams are: Maamwesying Ontario Health Team, City and District of Thunder Bay Ontario Health Team and Kiiwetinoong Healing Waters Ontario Health Team.

Working together, Ontario Health Teams are creating a continuous patient pathway where patients transition from one provider to another, with one patient record and one care plan being shared between health care providers.

Child welfare system improvements

Ontario continues to work on **improving the child welfare system** to enhance community-based prevention, improving the service experience for those that need protection services, and addressing systemic racism and the overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black and racialized children and youth. This includes working with representatives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to support the implementation of Indigenous-led models for child and family services, including those governed by Indigenous law.

Children and youth in care experience worse outcomes than their non-foster peers, such as lower graduation rates, and are at higher risk of homelessness. Child welfare system improvements focus on prevention and early intervention, keeping more families together, and supporting successful transitions to adulthood for youth moving out of care. Progress has been made toward these goals. Some key accomplishments include:

- Investment of $68 million in the Ready, Set, Go program, launching on April 1, 2023, to provide youth transitioning out of care with life skills and supports they need to pursue post-secondary education, skilled trades training and employment opportunities
- Increased access to culturally appropriate child and family services through Indigenous-specific amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act
- Support for providers to increase the quality of out-of-home care through the release of the Quality Standards Framework and new regulatory requirements for licensees and societies
- Enhanced training for foster parents directly responsible for providing care to children and youth in care to strengthen their ability to provide safe, culturally relevant, high-quality care
- New pre-service qualifications introduced for staff in children's residence requiring enhanced educational requirements or relevant skills or experience for employment
- New and enhanced supports for kinship service, customary caregivers, and adoptive and legal custody caregivers to support permanent arrangements for children in care
- A moratorium on youth aging out of care during the COVID-19 pandemic until March 31, 2023, and invested $8.7 million to better support youth aging out of care
- Investment of $2.2 million in a mentorship program by the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada to improve the lives of children and youth in care. Big Steps to Success connects children and youth aged 7–14 in care with positive adult mentors to provide a caring and consistent relationship with a trusted adult and to support their educational and social success in primary and secondary school

Ontario Community Support Program (OCSP)

The OCSP was launched in April 2020, to respond urgently to the critical needs of low-income, isolated seniors and people with disabilities who were following public health guidance to self-isolate to prevent severe illness and death from COVID-19 during the public health emergency. Ontario has invested about $21.8 million over three years in the **Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA)** to implement this program, which supports the delivery of essentials (i.e., meals, groceries, medications) to vulnerable Ontarians. The current funding agreement for the OCSP ends on March 31, 2023. From April 2020 through December 2022, program funding has resulted in over 2.3 million deliveries to about 85,000 low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Deliveries include about 2.1 million meals, 132,000 food hampers and 72,000 medications and/or essentials.

Enhancing supports for victims and survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence

Human trafficking and intimate partner violence create long-term emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health trauma. Access to targeted and localized services is critical to supporting survivors on the path to healing, recovery and positive outcomes. Ontario's five-year, $307 million **Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy (2020–2025)** details the government's plan to combat human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children and youth. As part of the Strategy, Ontario is investing $96 million in services for survivors of human trafficking and children and youth who have been sexually exploited. This includes up to $46 million in new funding under the Anti-Human Trafficking Community Supports Fund and Indigenous-led Initiatives Fund, for new wraparound community-based, survivor-led and culturally responsive services, so more survivors and children and youth who have been sexually exploited have access to the supports to help them heal and rebuild their lives.

In 2021–22, the government invested approximately $198 million for victims of violence and $11 million for violence prevention initiatives. In November 2021, the government announced an $18.5 million enhancement over three years for the Transitional and Housing Support Program, a program that provides a continuum of supports and services to support survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, and women served in Indigenous shelters on and off-reserve **to access and navigate housing services, including access to housing benefits**. In January 2022, Ontario provided up to $3.6 million **to rural frontline agencies that support survivors of human trafficking and women who have experienced violence**. This additional investment provides agencies with more resources, strengthens culturally responsive supports for Indigenous women and improves access to quality care and services for victims in rural and remote communities.

Supportive housing and homelessness prevention

In April 2022, Ontario announced it had reached an agreement with the federal government to provide a combined $127 million through a fifth phase of the Social Services Relief Fund to help municipalities and Indigenous program administrators support local needs. This funding could be used to add to rent banks, expand shelter space and create long-term housing solutions in response to the increased need for services caused by COVID-19. Through the Social Services Relief Fund, Ontario provided $4.5 million **to create 40 supportive housing units in Mississauga** and $8.5 million to help the House of Friendship in Waterloo purchase and convert a former hotel into a **100-bed ShelterCare centre** to provide emergency housing and wraparound support services.

The government launched a new Homelessness Prevention Program on April 1, 2022. The program supports Ontario's 47 municipal Service Managers **to provide affordable housing and support services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness**, and combines three programs: Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Home for Good and the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program. The new program provides Service Managers more flexibility to target funding where it is needed the most. Ontario invested an additional $25 million annually in the program — bringing Ontario's total yearly investment in the program to close to $464 million. Further, Ontario invested an additional $6.7 million in the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program, bringing the total annual investment to $30 million.

As of January 1, 2022, **By-Name Lists** are in operation in every Service Manager area across the province — an innovative, proven tool that allows Service Managers to have real-time lists of people experiencing homelessness that include information about their needs to help match people to the right housing and supports as they become available.

Affordable community housing

The **Community Housing Renewal Strategy** outlines Ontario's plan to stabilize and grow the community housing sector to help people with low incomes find affordable housing. Initiatives that advanced the objectives of this strategy include investments of:

- $112.1 million in 2021–22 through the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI). In 2021–22, approximately 30,600 units received funding to continue to offer social housing. This includes units which received municipal cost-matching funding. In addition, over 33,800 units, including 252 Urban Native housing units, were approved through the COCHI Repair component, bringing these units to a state of good repair. A further $147.3 million has been made available under COCHI for 2022–23.
- $99.9 million in 2021–22 through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI). In 2021–22, the funding provided helped create 401 new affordable housing units, while preserving an estimated 9,500 affordable and social housing units through repair, renovation or adaptation under the Ontario Renovates Component. Approximately 3,700 eligible tenants living in existing social and affordable housing

units were also assisted with housing-related supports. A further $91.3 million has been made available under OPHI for 2022–23.

- $48.1 million in 2021–22 through the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). In 2021–22, the funding provided a monthly benefit payment to 7,873 eligible households to help pay their rent. Eligible households included survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, Indigenous people, seniors and people with disabilities. A further $96.8 million has been made available under COHB for 2022–23.

As part of the strategy, in March 2022, the province introduced a new community housing regulatory framework that aims to sustain and grow the community housing system, strengthen accountability and improve access to housing assistance for low-income households.

Pillar three: making life more affordable and building financial resiliency

With elevated levels of inflation in Ontario and across the globe, the government is helping people navigate financial and economic uncertainty. The province is investing in initiatives that provide financial relief and support people, especially those in poverty.

Improvements to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

To help bring relief and offset rising living costs for low-income families and individuals with disabilities, Ontario delivered on its commitment to increase both the ODSP rate and the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) program monthly amount **by 5%, beginning in September 2022**. Significant investments to ODSP were announced in November 2022 as part of the **Fall Economic Statement**. The government made changes that allows an ODSP recipient with a disability to keep more of their income by increasing the monthly earnings exemption from $200 to $1,000 per month, beginning February 2023. For each dollar earned above $1,000, an ODSP recipient with a disability will keep 25 cents of income support. These changes will allow the approximately 25,000 individuals currently in the workforce to keep more of their income while receiving ODSP income support and could encourage up to 25,000 more to participate in the workforce.

Increasing minimum wage

On January 1, 2022, the general minimum wage in Ontario was **raised to $15.00 per hour from $14.35**. Ontario also removed the lower minimum wage rate for liquor servers and raised the wage rates for the other special minimum wages proportionally with the increase in the general minimum wage in January 2022. On October 1, 2022, the general minimum wage subsequently increased **to $15.50 per hour**. This 8% increase over one year is helping workers keep up with rising costs and inflation. The next increase is to be published in April 2023 and to take effect on October 1, 2023. With these increases, Ontario's minimum wage is among the highest in Canada.

Also in 2022, **the *Working for Workers Act, 2022*** established the *Digital Platform Workers' Rights Act.* Once proclaimed into force, the Digital Platform Workers' Rights Act will establish a minimum wage for digital platform workers who provide ride share, delivery, or courier services.

Tax relief

Ontario's suite of tax credit and benefits that made life more affordable for workers and families in 2022 included:

- The **Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit** which provides up to $2,000 in relief for 50% of a person's eligible expenses for the year to help workers get training that may be needed for a career shift, re-training, or to sharpen their skills. The 2022 credit will provide an estimated $275 million in support to about 240,000 people, or $1,150, on average.
- The **Low-income Workers Tax Credit** (known as the Low-income Individuals and Families Tax (LIFT) Credit), a non-refundable tax credit that can be used to reduce or eliminate an individual's Ontario Personal Income Tax. The government recently enhanced the LIFT Credit, including an increase in the maximum benefit from $850 to $875. As a result, 1.1 million lower-income workers will see an additional $300, on average, in tax relief for 2022. Combined with other tax relief, the introduction of the LIFT Credit means that about 90% of all Ontario tax filers with taxable incomes below $30,000 pay no Ontario Personal Income Tax. More workers now benefit from the LIFT credit, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 1.7 million.
- The **Ontario Child Care Tax Credit** (known as Ontario Childcare

Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) Tax Credit), a refundable tax credit providing families flexibility to choose the child care options that work best for them. Eligible families can claim up to 75% of eligible expenses, including child care in centres, homes and camps. Claimants of this tax credit will receive an estimated $1,250 in support for 2022, before accounting for the impact of the recent Canada-Ontario Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

- **Reducing the gas tax** by 5.7 cents per litre and the fuel tax by 5.3 cents per litre beginning July 1, 2022 and extended to December 31, 2023. While Ontario drivers are seeing direct saving from the gas and fuel tax cuts, households that do not own vehicles are expected to benefit indirectly in the prices paid for things like taxis, food delivery and consumer products.

Financial support for low-income seniors

The government is helping keep costs down for low-income seniors. In November 2022, as part of the Fall Economic Statement, Ontario announced that it would **double the Guaranteed Annual Income System (GAINS) payment** for all recipients for 12 months starting in January 2023. This measure would increase the maximum payment to $166 per month for single seniors and to $332 per month for couples, an increase of almost $1,000 per person in 2023. This would provide about 200,000 of the province's lowest income seniors with additional support during these times. In addition, there are a number of tax credits and benefits targeted at reducing the cost of living for seniors, including the **Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit**, the **Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit** and the **Seniors Public Transit Tax Credit**.

Housing affordability

In October 2022 the government introduced its most recent housing supply action plan, **More Homes Built Faster**. The ***More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022*** received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022. The newest plan takes bold action to address the housing crisis by building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. More Homes Built Faster builds upon initiatives in **More Homes More Choice** and **More Homes for Everyone**, the first and second housing supply action plans. The changes in the plan and the act will help cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing types that meet the needs of Ontarians, such as single-family homes, townhomes and mid-rise apartments.

Ontario is also helping to protect tenants in Ontario from significant one-time rent increases. The **guideline on rent increases for 2022** was 1.2%, which was below inflation levels. The rent increase guideline is the maximum amount a landlord can increase rent during the year for most tenants without the approval of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Reducing child care and parenting costs

On March 28, 2022, **Ontario and Canada reached a $13.2 billion agreement** that will lower child care fees to an average of $10 a day by September 2025. Fees for families with children under the age of six in participating licensed child care centres were reduced by 50% on average in 2022. This relieved parents of $1.1 billion in child care costs. Families will see further fee reductions in September 2024 and a final reduction to an average of $10-a-day child care by September 2025, with 86,000 new affordable child care spaces by 2026. By the end of 2022, 92% of licensed child care sites in Ontario opted in to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. The CWELCC system also supports child care workers, who are predominantly women, through targeted wage increases that will help build the workforce Ontario needs to stabilize child care across the province.

The government **launched Catch Up Payments** in October 2022 as part of the government's **Plan to Catch Up**. The initiative commits $365 million in direct financial relief to parents or guardians to offset costs with one-time funding for things that best suit their child's needs like tutoring services, supplies and equipment as they help fill gaps that may have emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, parents with school-aged children up to 18 years old could receive payments of $200 per child. Parents with school-aged children with special education needs, up to the age of 21, could receive payments of $250.

Reducing the cost of taking transit

The Ontario government is making it more convenient and affordable for people to use transit across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Ontario eliminated the fare for most local transit when using GO Transit service and increased PRESTO discounts for youth and post-secondary students. In March 2022, the Ontario government rolled out several programs to reduce the cost of transit for riders. Local transit is now free for riders connecting to and from GO Transit on municipal transit systems with **GO Transit co-fare agreements**. This means, for example, that an adult from Mississauga who commutes using MiWay and GO Transit three days a week could save $250 per year on transit expenses.

In addition, PRESTO **discounts for youth and post-secondary students** were increased to 40% off the full adult fare, almost double the former discount. This applies to GO Transit and UP Express customers 13 to 19 years old or anyone enrolled in full-time post-secondary education.

Finally, GO Transit also introduced an Affordability Pilot for low-income riders, beginning with residents of Peel Region who are enrolled in Peel's Affordable Transit Program with either Brampton Transit or MiWay. Riders enrolled in the Affordable Transit Program are reimbursed for 50% of the PRESTO adult fare when travelling on GO Transit using a PRESTO card. The pilot will be rolled out to other transit systems in a phased approach.

Energy cost savings

Ontario's funding for **energy-efficiency programs** increased by $342 million, bringing total investment to over $1 billion over the current four-year electricity conservation framework. Energy efficiency programs and funding to implement energy efficiency retrofits in band-owned commercial and institutional buildings include about $190 million for the Energy Affordability Program (EAP) and programs targeted to First Nation communities. These programs provide free energy efficiency measures or upgrades to eligible homes to reduce their electricity bills. The Ontario Electricity Support Program provides a monthly credit directly to eligible customers' bills based on household income and size (ranging from $35 to $75). If a home is electrically heated, a customer relies on certain medical devices, or a household has at least one Indigenous member, the program offers an enhanced credit amount ranging from $52 to $113 per month. Social assistance recipients who receive an electricity bill are automatically eligible for the program if they receive an electricity bill in their name. In 2021–22, approximately $168 million was spent under the program to lower electricity bills for lower-income households.

Pillar four: accelerating action and driving progress

The government is collaborating with communities and sector partners to support economic recovery and improve service connectivity and accessibility.

Enabling access to high-speed internet across Ontario

Ontario continues to make progress on its investment of nearly $4 billion **to bring high-speed internet access to every community in Ontario** by the end of 2025. The province is making progress towards this goal, including partnering with the federal government to bring access to more homes and businesses, and working with Infrastructure Ontario to deliver the **Accelerated High-Speed Internet Program** through a competitive process.

Expanding virtual learning

Ontario is investing in **virtual learning and digital literacy to improve access to education** and provide flexible learning opportunities to Ontarians. Ontario has expanded access to high-quality online learning courses for high school students through partnerships with school boards, TVO and TFO. School boards select online courses available to their high school students that are delivered by teachers who can adapt content to meet local student needs. Expanding online course options provides students with greater choice and flexibility in meeting their education needs and advances students' digital literacy and other transferrable skills for an increasingly digitally enabled workforce.

Building on and leveraging Ontario's existing digital learning organizations, **Contact North (CN)** and **eCampusOntario (eCO),** the province has committed over $70 million in its Virtual Learning Strategy (VLS). This strategy provides all post-secondary learners a fair chance to acquire the skills they need to enter and compete in the labour market. Investments in the VLS support the expansion of Open Educational Resources (OERs), help deliver digital courses and resources created by Ontario's post-secondary sector and, through a Laptop and Internet Loaner program, provide tools and technologies to support digital learners in small, rural, remote, Francophone and Indigenous communities to learn online.

Achieving Indigenous prosperity and well-being

The province is committed to collaborating with Indigenous communities and organizations to foster economic development, increase access to culturally relevant supports and address poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples. Initiatives are being implemented across the province that advance economic opportunity and respond to long-standing inequities and systemic barriers that put Indigenous peoples at heightened risks of poverty.

The government is investing in Indigenous entrepreneurs, businesses and communities. Ontario has committed to providing $25 million over the next three years, some of which will be directed through the Indigenous Economic Development Fund **to support economic development in Indigenous communities**. In 2022–23, Ontario provided over $6.5 million in funding through the Indigenous Economic Development Fund. This includes funding for 22 economic development projects through the Economic Diversification Grant and the Regional Partnership Grant programs and over $3.8 million through the Business and Community Fund.

This funding will support community-led initiatives in strategic economic planning and implementation, help to remove barriers for Indigenous people pursuing job-specific training and apprenticeship, provide financing to start-ups and support expansion of Indigenous businesses.

Ontario also announced in early 2022 **the doubling of funding for the Indigenous Community Capital Grants Program (ICCGP)** from $3 million to $6 million in 2021–22. ICCGP provided funding to 40 projects across the province to create lasting economic prosperity, jobs and social benefits for Indigenous people. Successful projects range from a shovel-ready initiative in Pikangikum First Nation for a new community and learning facility focused on food storage and distribution, to a feasibility study for a skills and employment training centre in the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation community.

The government is making targeted and local investments that create jobs and enhance education and training pathways for Indigenous populations. Ontario is providing $300,000 **to Indigenous Tourism Ontario (ITO) through the Pan-Regional Fund**. The investment will support a wide range of projects that unite communities and create jobs — including cultural authenticity workshops, product development and itineraries, marketing and workforce development. Ontario announced a commitment of $34 million over four years (2021–22 to 2024–25) **to increase enrolment in nursing and personal support worker (PSW) programs at six Indigenous Institutes**. The investment helps participating Indigenous Institutes to expand existing programs or create new ones and provide culturally responsive education and training pathways to approximately 340 practical nurses, 60 registered nurses and 400 PSWs over the four-year timeframe.

Ontario has invested $9 million over three years (2021–22 to 2023–24) to the Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services (KKETS) Adult Education Program (formerly the Aboriginal Skills Advancement Program), to support adult learners in and around the Ring of Fire area. Through this program, adult learners from the Matawa First Nations communities can access supports to complete the Ontario Secondary School Diploma, gain basic industrial certifications, prepare for participation in the workforce, or further their education and develop life skills necessary for success.

Access to safe, stable housing is vital for those on the path to employment. Indigenous people looking for supportive housing often struggle to find culturally sensitive supports that meets their unique needs. The Indigenous Supportive Housing Program (ISHP) provides housing assistance and support services to Indigenous people who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless, especially those experiencing chronic homelessness, youth homelessness and homelessness following transitions from provincially funded institutions.

Total funding for ISHP has increased from $13.3 million in 2021–22 to $30 million in 2022–23. This includes $10 million provided annually through the Roadmap to Wellness **to provide Indigenous-led, culturally appropriate long-term housing solutions and support services to Indigenous people experiencing or at risk of homelessness**. Through a partnership with the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services and Miziwe Biik Development Corporation, the investment is helping to provide better, safer and secure access to longer-term housing to more Indigenous people in need.

The province will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations to enhance the availability of culturally appropriate, Indigenous-led initiatives that support those in poverty, enhance education and training pathways and improve economic opportunity for First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous peoples.

Measuring success

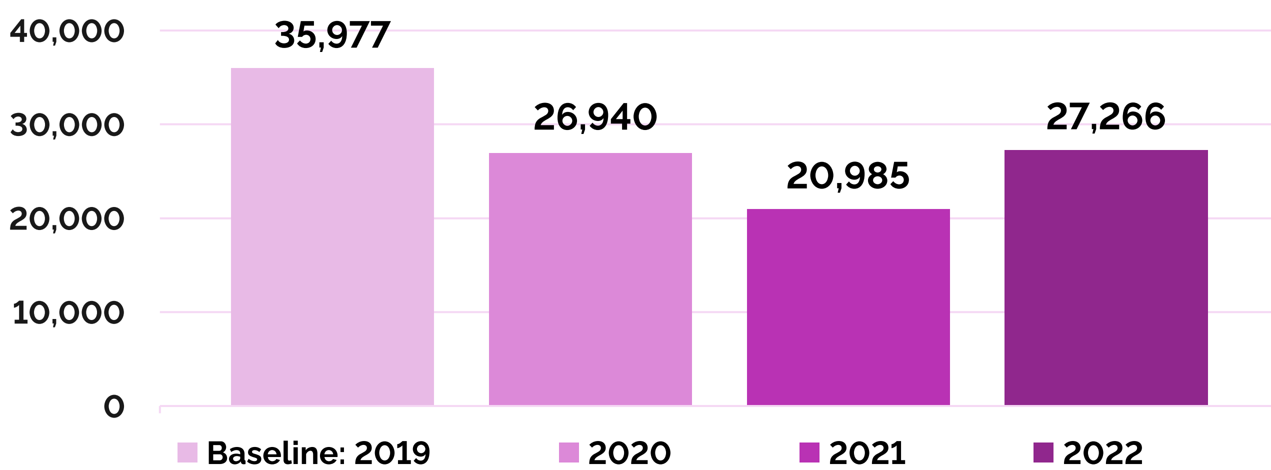
The 2020–2025 Poverty Reduction Strategy contains a suite of indicators to measure the province's progress on poverty reduction and identify areas for improvement. The 2022 annual report marks the first time that the province can report on the indicator 'Employment or enrolment into further education after participation in Integrated Employment Services.' The following section provides the latest available information for each indicator and a brief description on what has changed since the previous year's report (see Appendix for full indicator definitions and sources).

The indicators highlight change across different dimensions and draw data from different sources. As a result, the availability of data varies across the indicators and the indicators have different baseline years and timeframes for when updates can be released. All updates are based on the most recent data available.

Target

The strategy sets a target of getting more social assistance recipients into meaningful employment and achieving financial stability. The government will provide the right supports and services with the goal of increasing the number of social assistance recipients moving to employment each year from 36,000 in 2019 to 60,000 by 2024.

Indicator: Exits to employment from social assistance [1]



Status: Improved from the previous year, but still below the baseline

In 2022, the number of social assistance cases that exited to employment increased to 27,266 from 20,985 in 2021. The province will continue to invest in employment and training opportunities to help more people on social assistance move to meaningful and sustainable employment.

[1] The previously reported numbers for the years from 2019 to 2021 have been updated based on the latest data. The baseline (2019) annual exits to employment increased slightly from 35,971 to 35,977. The 2020 and 2021 annual exits to employment increased slightly from 26,928 to 26,940, and from 20,899 to 20,985, respectively.

Employment, skills and training indicators

The following indicators measure the employment rate, how many jobs were created, the extent to which people on social assistance are becoming employed (while remaining eligible for social assistance) and training results.

Indicator: Employment rate for priority groups, 15 to 64 years old [2]

	Baseline: 2019	2020	2021	2022
General population	73.4%	68.8%	72.0%	74.5%
Youth (aged 15–24)	55.2%	45.8%	51.1%	55.3%
Women	70.0%	65.3%	68.8%	71.3%
Indigenous persons off-reserve	62.7%	60.0%	63.5%	67.8%

Status: Improved from the previous year and also improved compared to the baseline for all groups

The employment rate for the general population and priority groups continued the upward trend in 2022 from 2021, surpassing the pre-pandemic rates for all population groups. The overall employment rate increased by 2.5 percentage points between 2021 and 2022. Among the priority groups, Indigenous persons off-reserve recorded the highest increase of 4.3 percentage points, followed by youth with an increase of 4.2 percentage points and women with an increase of 2.5 percentage points between 2021 and 2022. With higher employment rate increases for

[2] The 2019 baseline figures for the employment rate and full-time and part-time jobs indicators have been updated from those provided in the 2020–2025 Poverty Reduction Strategy to reflect revised data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Indigenous persons off-reserve and youth than the general population in 2022, the gaps between the groups have been reduced. The employment rate gap between Indigenous persons off-reserve and the general population decreased by 1.8 percentage points from 8.5% in 2021 to 6.7% in 2022, and the gap between youth and the general population decreased by 1.7 percentage points from 20.9% in 2021 to 19.2% in 2022. The employment rate gap between women and the general population was 3.2%, unchanged from 2021.

Indicator: Annual full-time and part-time jobs created, aged 15 and over

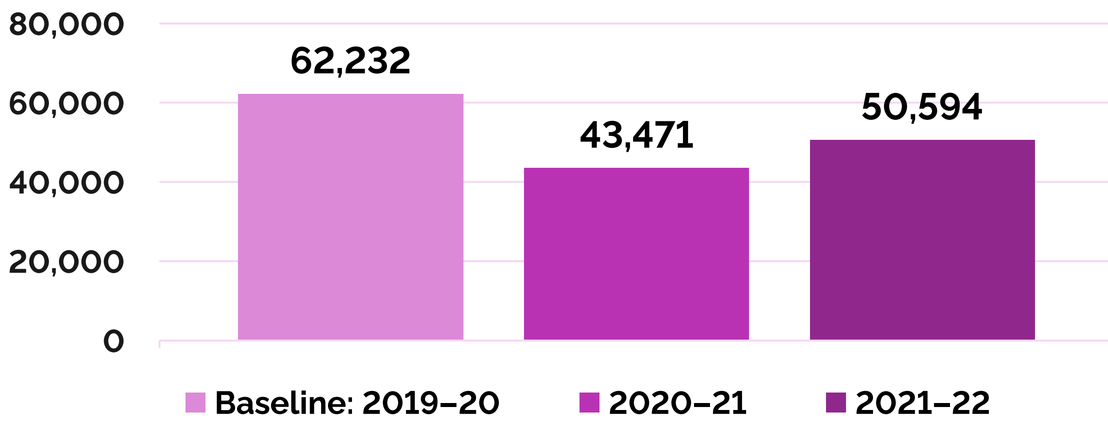
	Baseline: 2019	2020	2021	2022
Total number of net jobs created	183,300	-403,300	367,400	338,300
Number of net full-time jobs created	158,900	-241,300	287,900	283,500
Number of net part-time jobs created	24,400	-162,000	79,500	54,800
Number of net full-time and part-time jobs created — Females	90,300	-219,000	193,200	169,800
Number of net full-time and part-time jobs created —Indigenous persons off-reserve	5,700	-6,500	16,300	17,600

Status: Declined from the previous year, except for the number of net full-time and part-time jobs created for the Indigenous persons off-reserve, but improved compared to the baseline

Ontario experienced a strong economic recovery through 2021 that continued in 2022, supported by consumer spending along with stronger exports. In 2022, 338,300 net new jobs were created, including 283,500 (representing about 84%) full-time jobs and 54,800 (16%) part-time jobs. Females accounted for 50.2% of the overall job gains, which is 2.4 percentage points less than 52.6% of the overall net new job gains for females in 2021. Females represented only 38.4% of the full-time job gains in 2022, compared to 60.2% of the full-time job gains in 2021. Employment among Indigenous persons living off-reserve also increased, recording net new job gains of 17,600 jobs in 2022, a further increase from the previous year's net gains of 16,300 jobs.

With the strong employment growth in the last two years, total employment in 2022 surpassed the pre-pandemic employment in 2019, the baseline year for this indicator. Overall, there was an increase of 302,400 net jobs from 2019 to 2022 and females gained 144,000 (47.6%) of these jobs during this period. Indigenous persons living off-reserve gained 27,400 jobs compared to 2019.

Indicator: Completion of skills or work experience related Employment Ontario (EO) interventions [3]



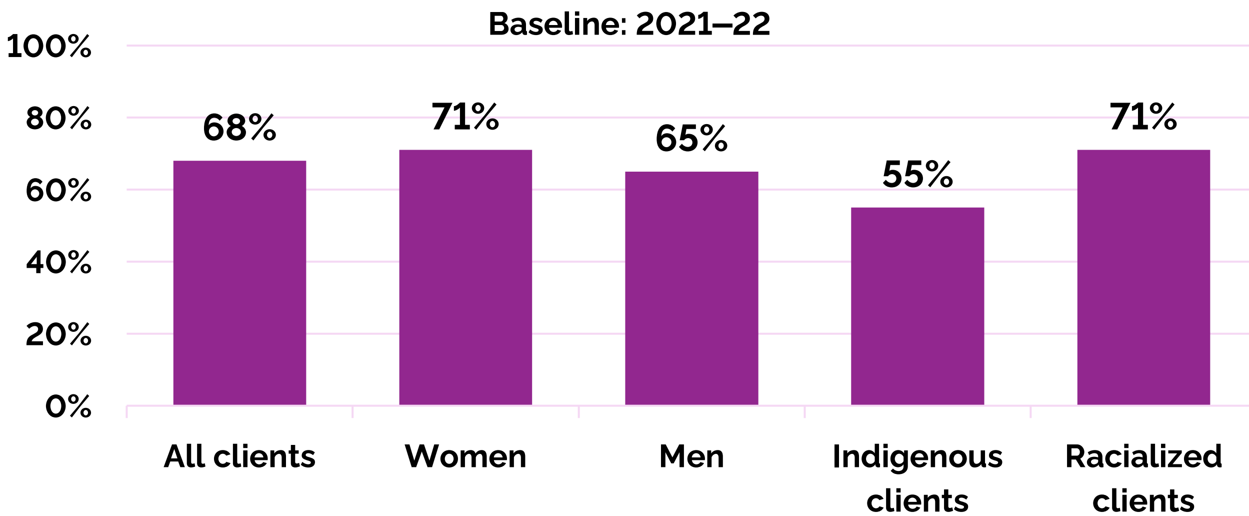
Status: Improved from the previous year, but still below the baseline

Through Employment Ontario, the province helps workers and job seekers get training, skills and experience to meet their goals. In the 2021–22 fiscal year, 50,594 Employment Ontario program participants completed skills or work experience related interventions, which represents 7,123 more interventions and about a 16.4% increase over the previous year.

Beginning in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent public health measures resulted in a substantial decrease in client intake and exit activity for Employment Ontario programs across the province. These impacts continued to affect Employment Ontario program activity in 2021–22.

[3] Clients can access a variety of skills training interventions through Employment Ontario. These could include interventions such as literacy and basic skills training directly delivered by EO providers or the ability to access financial support to pay for training offered by training delivery providers such as colleges or private career colleges. Employment Ontario can also support clients in gaining valuable work experience through job placements and matches. Financial supports are available for clients and employers to provide any additional assistance required to help clients be job ready or provide workplace supports.

Indicator: Employment or enrolment into further education after participation in Integrated Employment Services

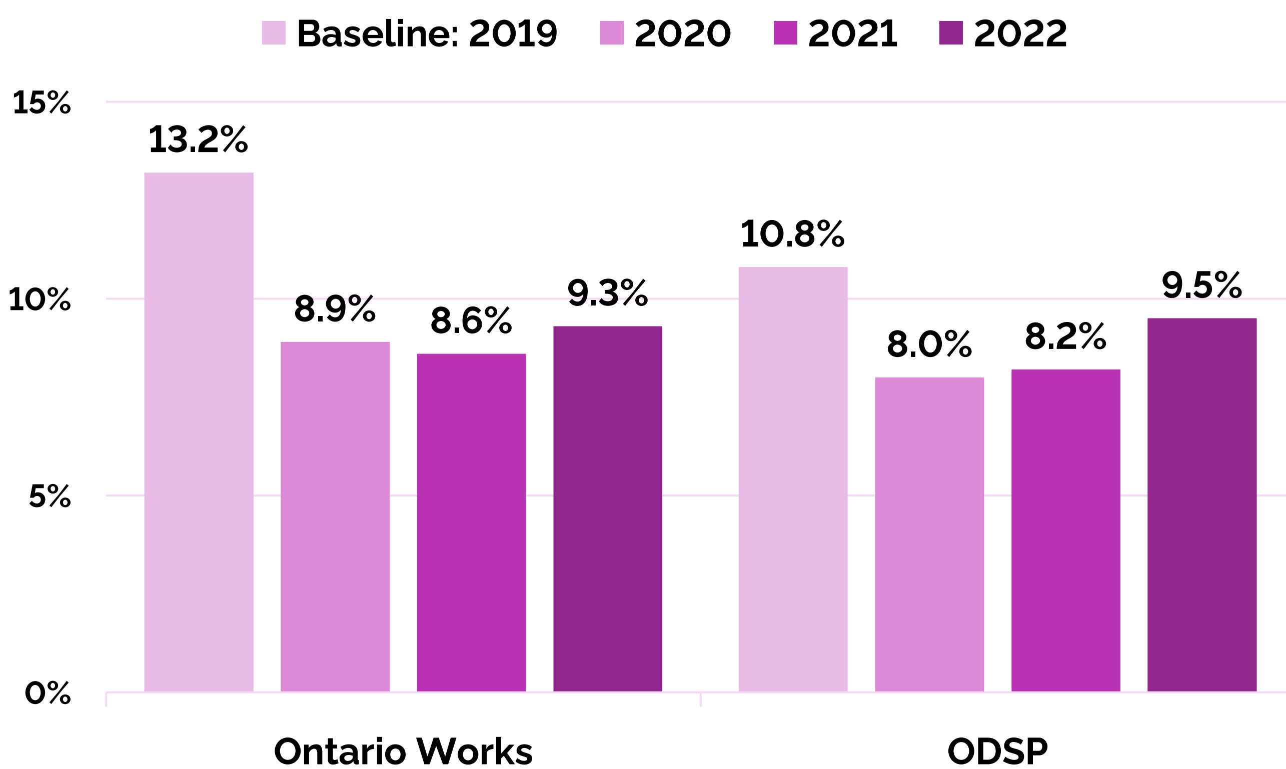


Status: Baseline data

This indicator measures the percentage of Integrated Employment Services clients in areas covered by Employment Services Transformation[4] who identify as employed or in education or training at the three-month follow-up checkpoint after completion of pre-employment services. This is the first time that the government can report on this indicator. In 2021–22, 68% of Integrated Employment Services clients identified as employed or enrolled into further education after participating in the program. Women and racialized groups recorded higher rates (71%), and men and Indigenous persons recorded lower rates at 65% and 55%, respectively. Results will be tracked over time as the Integrated Employment Services delivery model matures.

[4] The province is undertaking Employment Services Transformation using a phased implementation approach. In 2021–22, Integrated Employment Services was delivered in the prototype catchment areas of Hamilton–Niagara Peninsula, Muskoka–Kawarthas, and Peel. In 2022, Halton, Kingston–Pembroke, Stratford–Bruce Peninsula, and York (Phase 1) catchment areas adopted the new model. IES service delivery statistics for phase 1 catchment areas will contribute to the PRS Indicator in the 2023–24 fiscal year.

Indicator: Percentage of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) cases with employment earnings



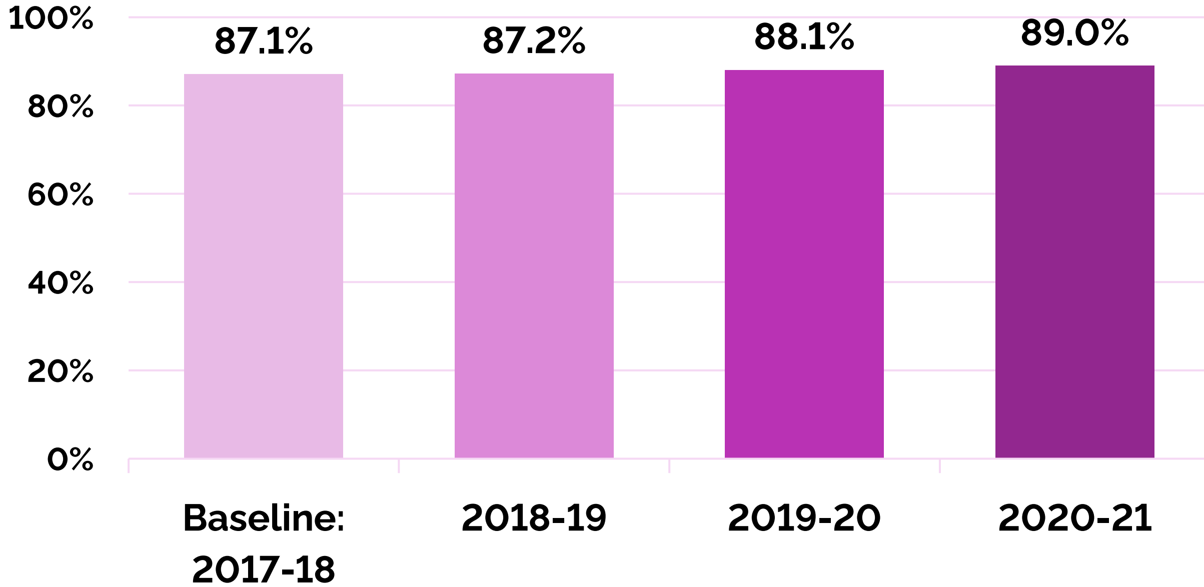
Status: Improved from the previous year, but still below the baseline for both programs

In 2022, the percentage of Ontario Works cases reporting employment earnings increased to 9.3% from 8.6% in 2021. Similarly, the rate for ODSP cases increased to 9.5% from 8.2% in 2021.

Education indicators

The following indicators measure progress on high school graduation rates and credit accumulation that will keep students on track to graduate with their peers, as well as post-secondary graduation rates (universities and colleges).

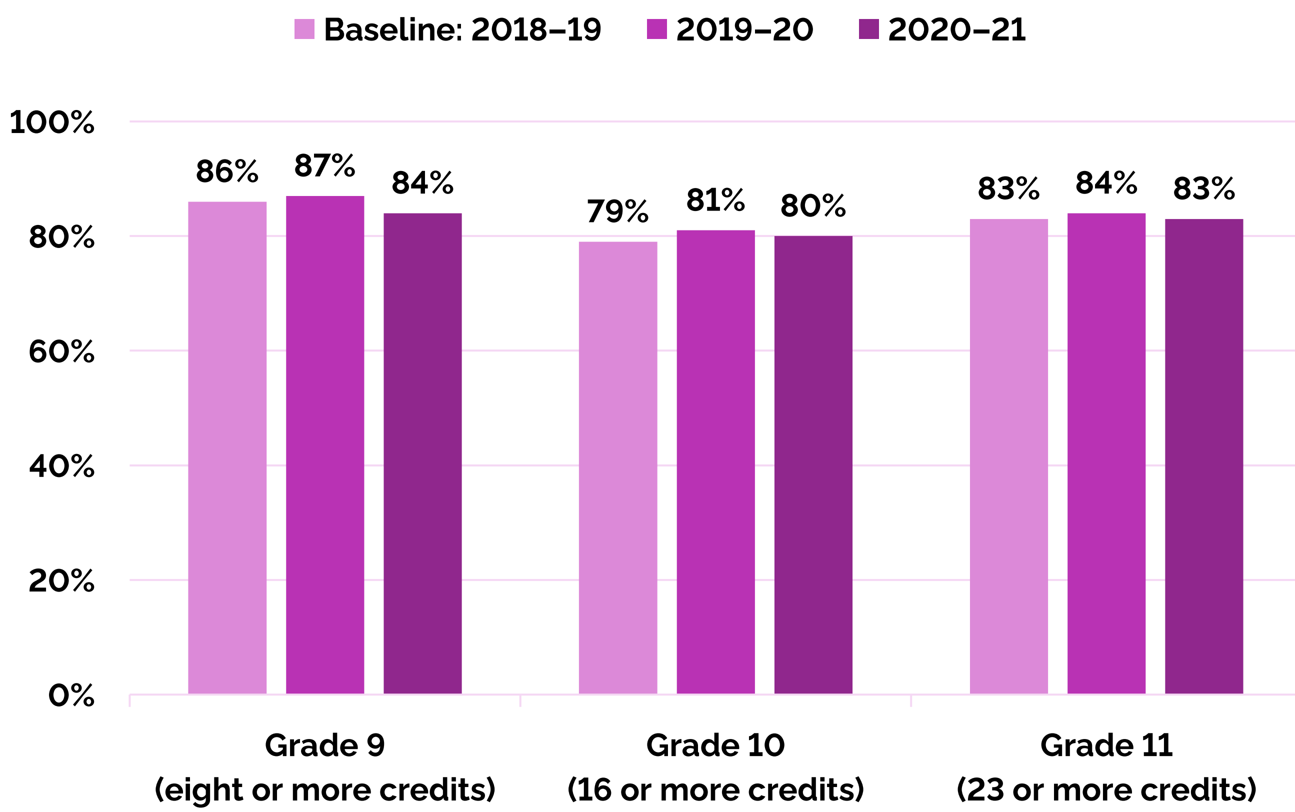
Indicator: Graduation rate (high school)



Status: Improved from the previous year and also improved compared to the baseline

Ontario's high school graduation rate slightly increased in 2020–21, with 89.0% of students graduating within five years of starting Grade 9.

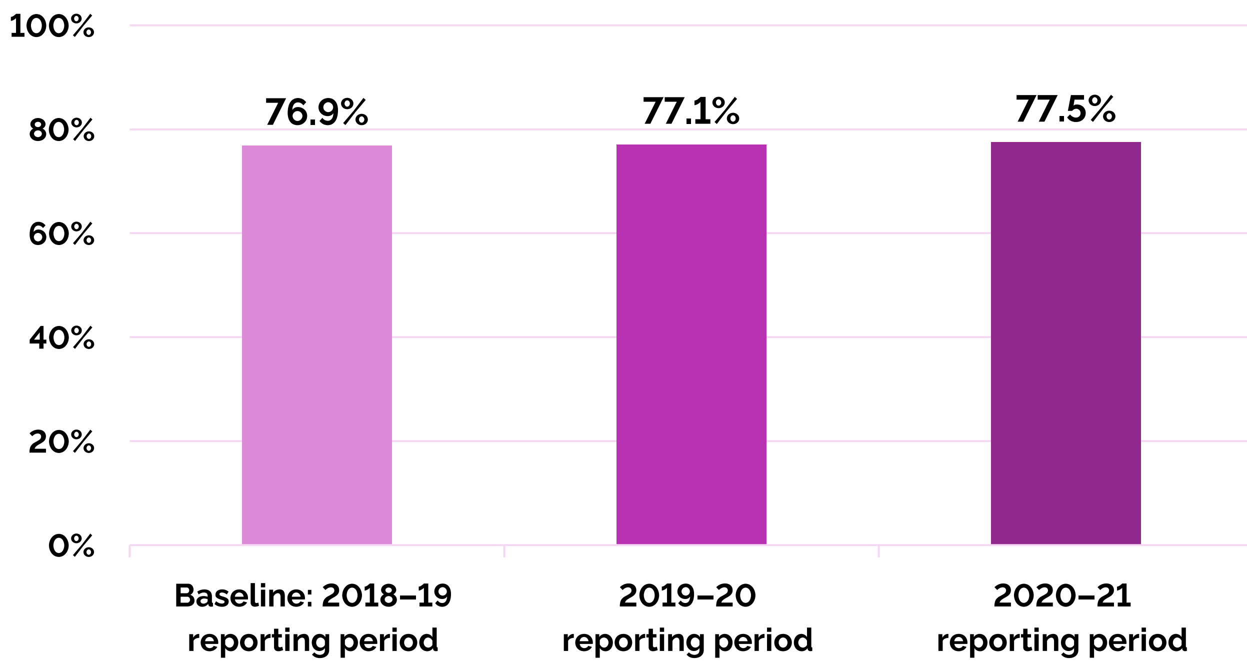
Indicator: Percentage of students accumulating credits that will keep them on track to graduate with their peers



Status: Declined from the previous year, with mixed trends compared to the baseline

Compared to 2019–20, the percentage of students who were on track to graduate slightly declined across Grades 9, 10 and 11 by three percentage points, one percentage point and one percentage point, respectively, in 2020–21.

Indicator: Graduation rate (universities)

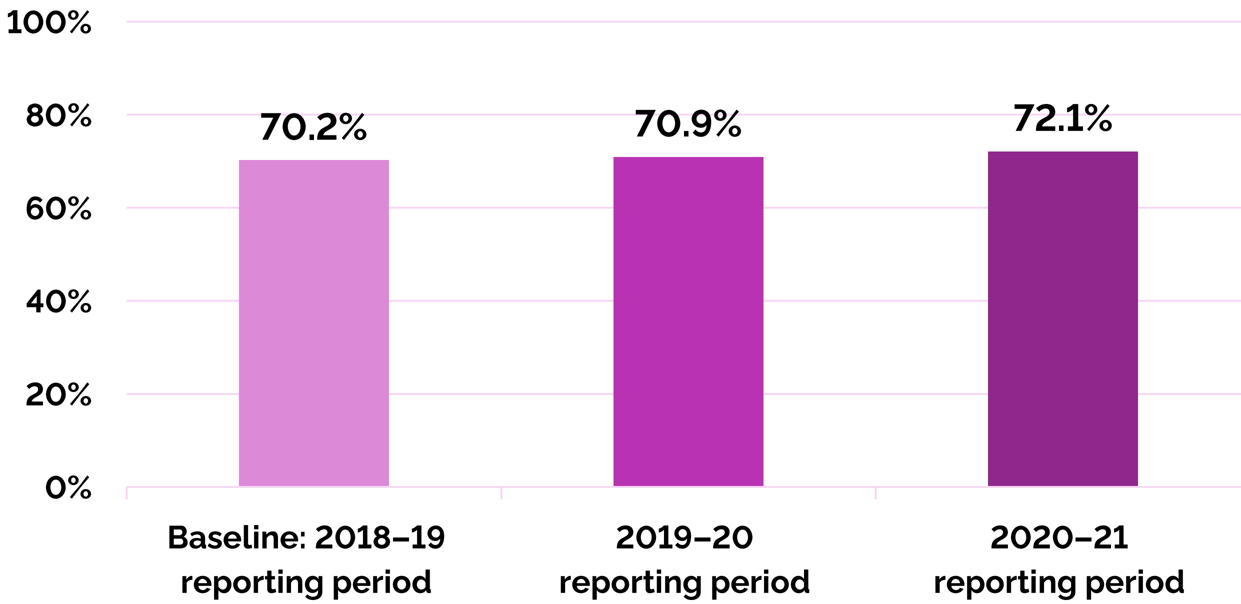


Status: Improved from the previous period and also improved compared to the baseline

The 2020–21 graduation rate for universities is based on students who started an undergraduate degree in 2013 and who graduated from 2014 to 2020.

The 2020–21 graduation rate for universities was 77.5%, which was 0.4 percentage point higher than the 2019–20 graduation rate and 0.6 percentage point higher than the 2018–19 graduation rate.

Indicator: Graduation rate (colleges) [5]



Status: Improved from the previous period and also improved compared to the baseline

The graduation rate for colleges for the 2020–21 reporting period was 72.1%, which was 1.2 percentage points higher than the graduation rate for the 2019–20 reporting period and 1.9 percentage points higher than the baseline.

[5] The 2019–20 graduation rate for colleges is based on students who started one-year programs in 2017–18, two-year programs in 2015–16, three-year programs in 2013–14 and four-year programs in 2012–13 and who had graduated by 2018–19. The graduation rate for the 2019–20 reporting period was slightly above that of the baseline rate.

The 2020–21 graduation rate for colleges is based on students who started one-year programs in 2018 to 2019, two-year programs in 2016 to 2017, three-year programs in 2014 to 2015 and four-year programs in 2013 to 2014 and who had graduated by 2019 to 2020. This graduation rate includes international students and students enrolled in public college-private partnership programs.

Moving toward increased financial independence

The following indicators measure the province's progress in supporting individuals and families in poverty to move towards financial independence. These indicators include how long it takes for people to become employed or exit social assistance once they have first started receiving social assistance, the rate of people who end up returning to Ontario Works within one year of exiting, the share of the total Ontario population on social assistance, whether low-income households can access community housing programs and the share of Ontario households in core housing need.

Indicator: Time to become employed or exit social assistance [6]

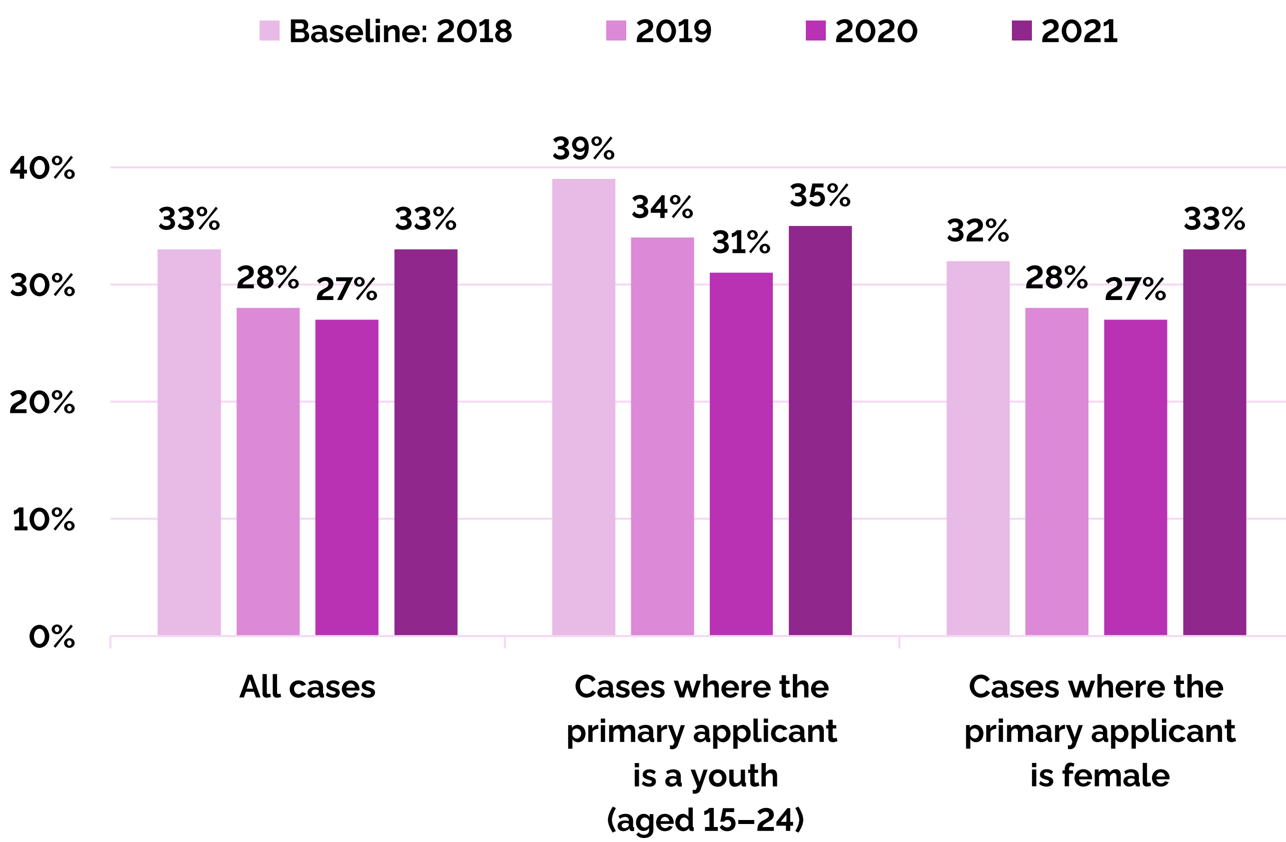
	Baseline: 2018	2019	2020	2021
All cases				
Both programs	8 months	8 months	8 months	8 months
Ontario Works	8 months	8 months	8 months	8 months
ODSP	9 months	9 months	9 months	9 months
Cases where the primary applicant is a youth (aged 15–24)				
Both programs	8 months	8 months	8 months	8 months
Ontario Works	7 months	7 months	7 months	8 months
ODSP	10 months	10 months	10 months	10 months
Cases where the primary applicant is female				
Both programs	8 months	8 months	8 months	8 months
Ontario Works	8 months	8 months	8 months	8 months
ODSP	9 months	9 months	9 months	9 months

Status: No change for all cases during the last three years since the baseline year, except for youth on Ontario Works

[6] This indicator is based on tracking a cohort of cases that started receiving social assistance within the calendar year (including those that were returning to social assistance within the calendar year, after having exited social assistance before). Reasons for exiting social assistance other than employment include failure to provide verification, voluntary withdrawal and income report not received.

This indicator measures the average number of months it takes for new recipients to either report employment earnings or exit social assistance in their first year on assistance. The 2021 data cover those who started receiving social assistance at any point in 2021 and were tracked for 12 months after they began receiving social assistance. New recipients in 2021 stayed on social assistance, on average, between eight and ten months before exiting or reporting employment earnings. This was consistent with the averages in the previous three years, except for youth on Ontario Works. Youth who began receiving Ontario Works in 2021 took, on average, eight months to exit or report employment earnings, compared to seven months among new recipients in the previous three years.

Indicator: Percentage of cases exiting Ontario Works that return within one year [7]



Status: Worsened from the previous year across case types, but the same as the baseline overall

This measure looks at the percentage of cases exiting Ontario Works that return within one year. The measure was worsened for all cases — as well as for cases

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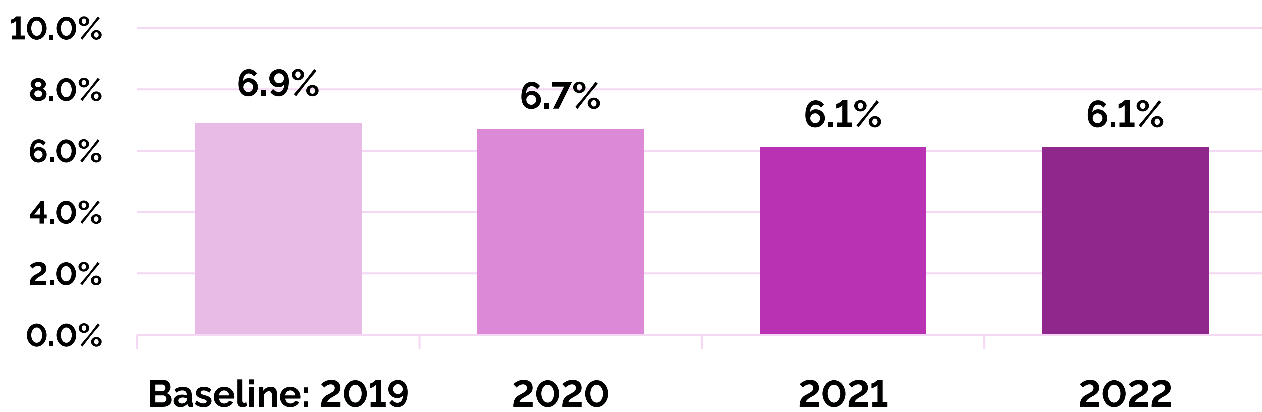
[7] The indicator is based on tracking a cohort of cases that exited Ontario Works during the last quarter of the reporting calendar year. The baseline and 2019 figures for this indicator have been updated to reflect a refinement to the methodology, which now counts cases that returned to Ontario Works "within the year (or 12 months) immediately following the month they left Ontario Works," rather than "within the calendar year after they left Ontario Works," as was previously reported.

where the primary applicant is a youth or female — from 2020 to 2021 with higher percentages of cases exiting Ontario Works that returned within one year of exiting. Among cases that exited Ontario Works from October 2021 to December 2021, about one in three cases returned to Ontario Works within 12 months of exiting. This is six percentage points above the rate of return among cases that exited Ontario Works between October 2020 and December 2020. Similarly, the rate of return to Ontario Works increased by six percentage points from 27% to 33% for cases with female primary applicants and by four percentage points from 31% to 35% for cases with youth primary applicants.

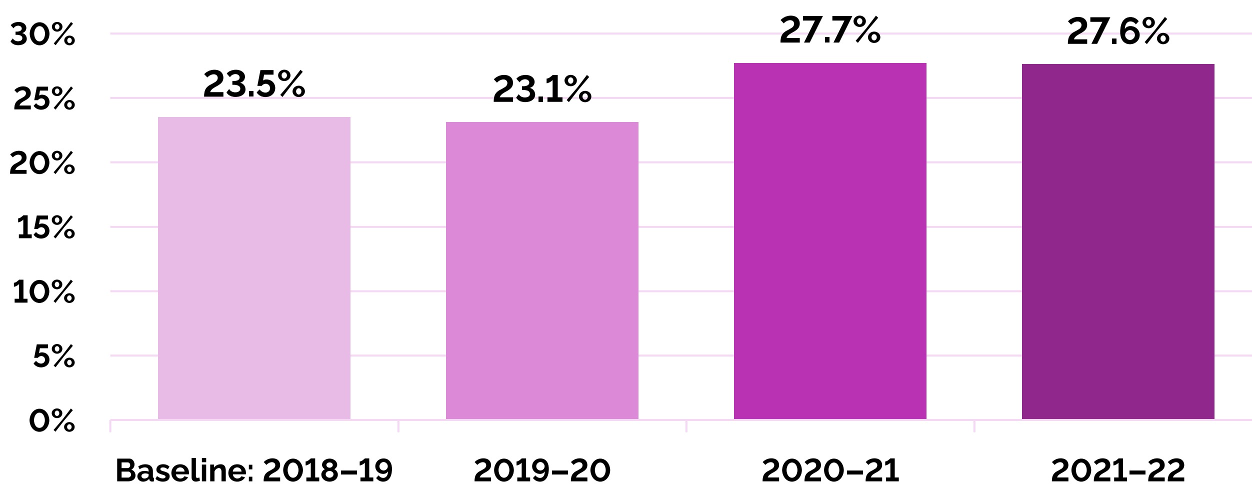
Indicator: Share of the population on social assistance



Status: No change from the previous year and improved compared to the baseline

The share of the population on social assistance stayed unchanged from 2021 to 2022 at 6.1%.

Indicator: Percentage of low-income households assisted in community housing programs [8]

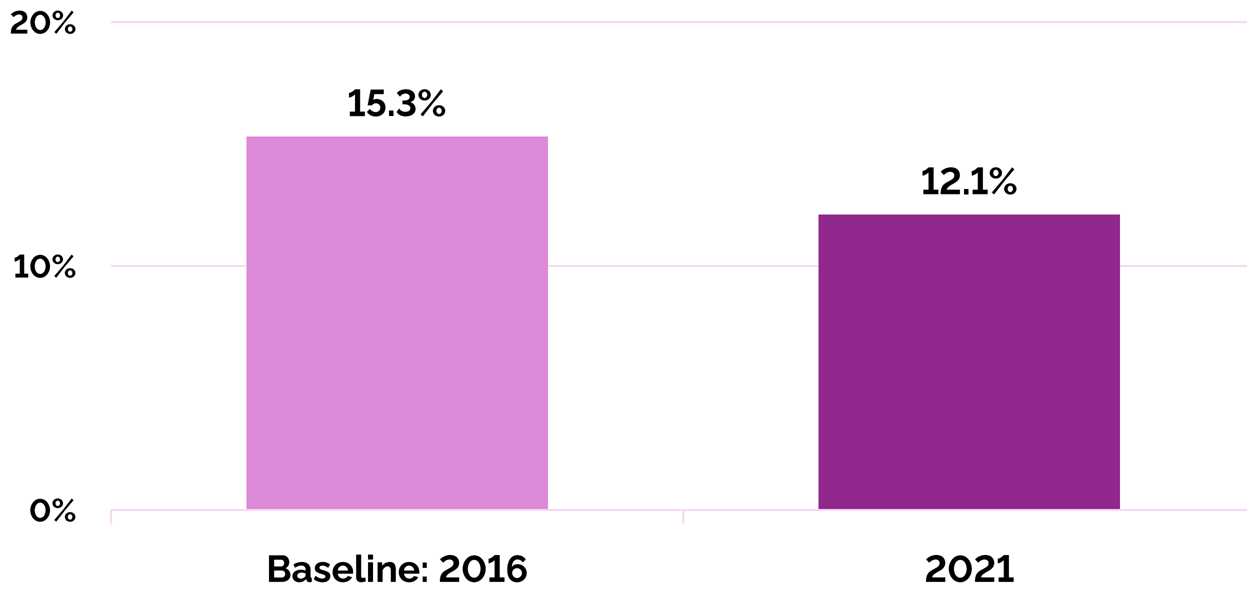


Status: Essentially unchanged, but improved compared to the baseline

The proportion of Ontario low-income households assisted by community housing programs improved by over four percentage points between 2018–19 and 2021–22 (from 23.5% to 27.6%). It was essentially unchanged in the last year.

[8] In the 2020 and 2021 PRS Annual Reports, the values for 2019–20 and 2020–21 had previously been reported as 24.2% and 23.3%, respectively, using *projected* low-income measure (LIM) estimates. This report uses revised values for both years based on updated data released after the previous PRS reports. The current value for 2021–22 (27.6%) is based on a projected LIM estimate and will be updated in next year's report.

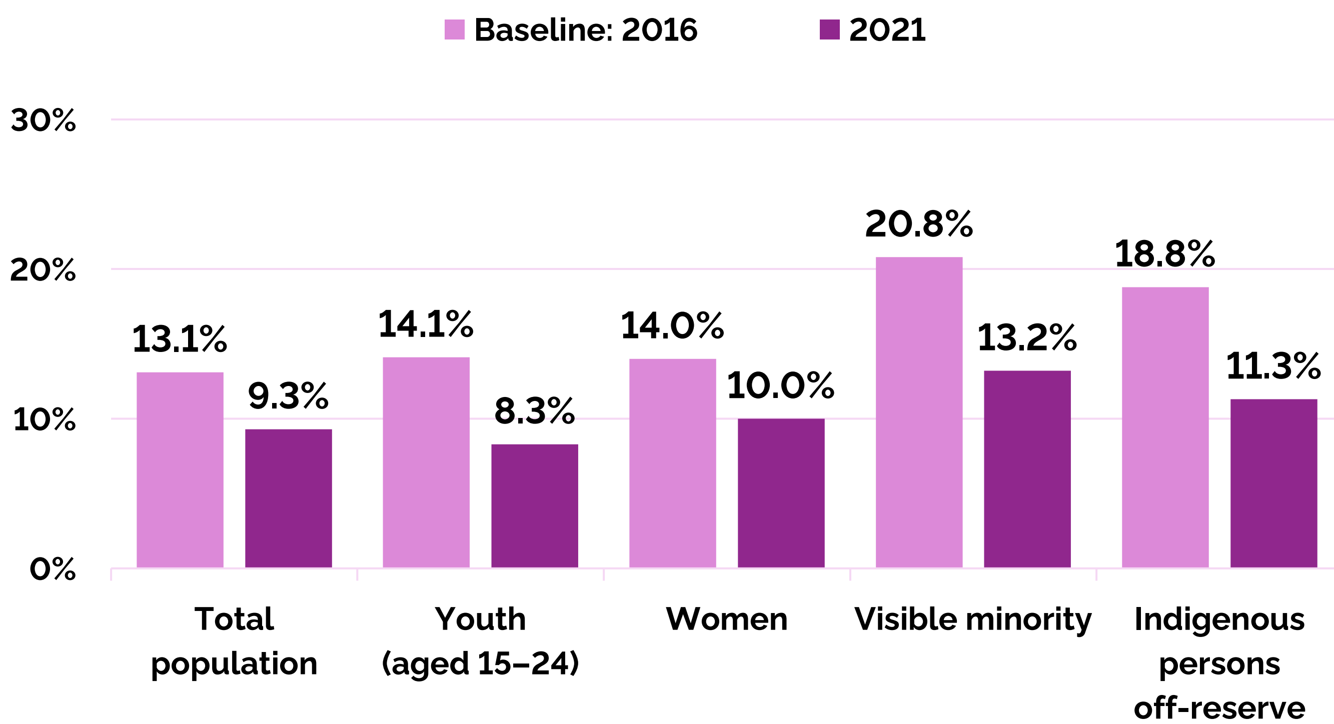
Indicator: Percentage of households in core housing need



Status: Improved compared to the baseline

This indicator measures households living in housing that is inadequate, unaffordable or unsuitable and who need to spend 30% or more of their income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable. The proportion of Ontario households living in core housing need decreased by over three percentage points between 2016 (15.3%) and 2021 (12.1%).

Indicator: Core housing need by population



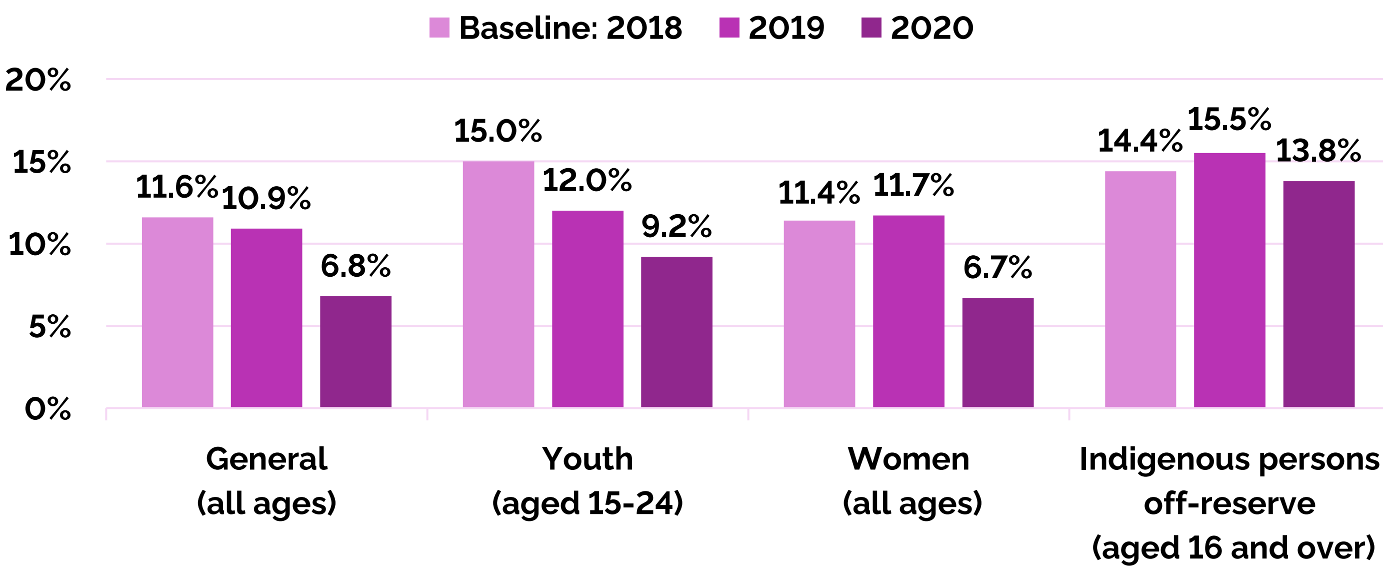
Status: Improved compared to the baseline for all groups

This indicator measures core housing need by the percentage of all persons (rather than household units) in core housing need. The proportion of people living in core housing need decreased by nearly four percentage points among all Ontarians between 2016 (13.1%) and 2021 (9.3%). Between 2016 and 2021, decreases in housing need were mirrored among specific populations, decreasing from 14.1% to 8.3% among youth, from 14.0% to 10.0% among women, from 20.8% to 13.2% among visible minorities and from 18.8% to 11.3% among Indigenous persons living off-reserve.

Poverty indicators

The following two indicators measure the province's progress in reducing the number of people living in low income with a focus on the following priority populations: youth (aged 15–24), women and Indigenous persons off-reserve.

Indicator: Poverty rate based on market basket measure (MBM) [9]



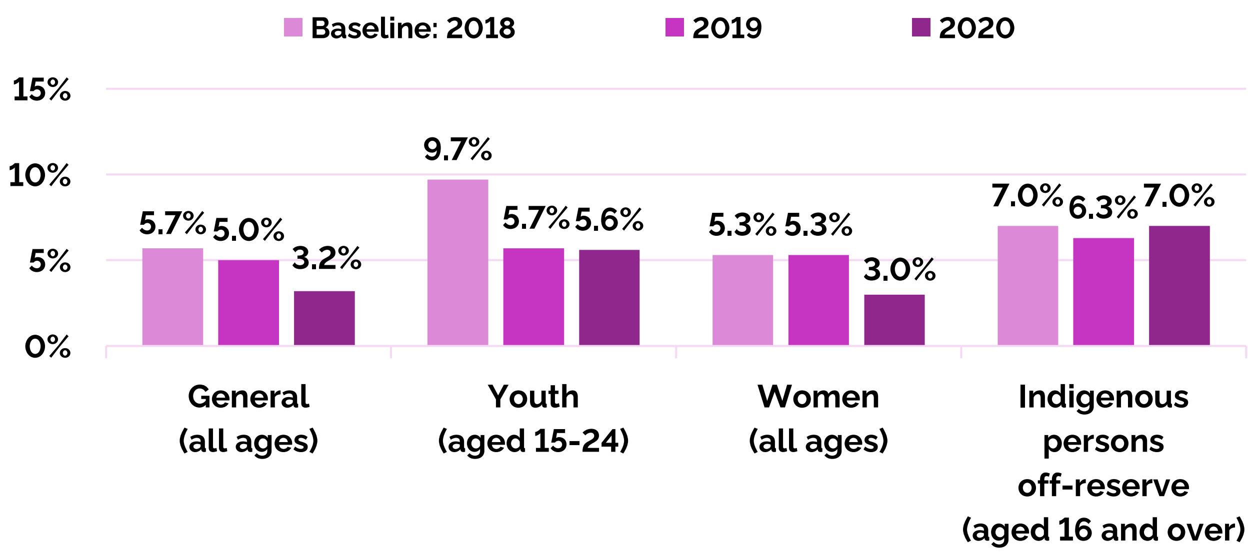
Status: Improved from the previous year and compared to the baseline for all groups

[9] The poverty rate measures the percentage of people in low income, based on the market basket measure (MBM), which establishes income poverty thresholds based on the cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living. The basket includes items such as healthy food, clothing, appropriate shelter, transportation and other necessities. Individuals and families with disposable income less than the applicable threshold based on family size and region of residence are considered to be in poverty.

The overall poverty rate for the general population decreased by 4.1 percentage points from 10.9% in 2019 to 6.8% in 2020. Canada's national poverty rate decreased by 3.9 percentage points from 10.3% in 2019 to 6.4% in 2020 and the large decrease observed from 2019 to 2020 was mostly because of increases in COVID-19 related government transfers, based on Statistics Canada analysis. Among priority populations in Ontario, the poverty rates for women, youth and Indigenous persons off-reserve decreased by 5 percentage points, 2.8 percentage points and 1.7 percentage points, respectively, from 2019 to 2020.

Prior to 2020 (i.e., pre-pandemic), the poverty rate in Ontario was decreasing, from 15.1% in 2015 to 10.9% in 2019, which was a reduction by 4.2 percentage points over a four-year period.

Indicator: Deep poverty rate (MBM)



Status: Improved from the previous year for the general population and for women and improved from the baseline for most groups

The deep poverty rate refers to the percentage of individuals with disposable family incomes below 75% of the MBM threshold for their family size and region. Between

2019 and 2020, the share of people in deep income poverty decreased by 1.8 percentage points for the general population. The deep poverty rate also decreased across priority groups, except for Indigenous persons off-reserve who recorded a higher deep poverty rate in 2020 (7.0%) compared to 2019 (6.3%). Updated data on poverty rates and deep poverty rates will be available later in 2023.

Moving forward

The government has maintained a commitment to working with all levels of government, non-profit and private sector partners to set people experiencing poverty on a pathway to employment and financial stability. On the road to recovery and in the face of economic uncertainties, the government will continue to support those most vulnerable to economic disruption and help all people thrive in Ontario.

Appendix: Target and indicator definitions

Strategy target: Get more social assistance recipients into meaningful employment and financial stability. The government will provide the right supports and services with the goal of increasing the number of social assistance recipients moving to employment each year from 36,000 in 2019 to 60,000 by 2024.

Indicator	Definition	Source
Exits to employment from social assistance	Number of cases that exited Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to employment at least once within the calendar year.	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Poverty rate / Market Basket Measure (MBM)	The poverty rate reports the percentage of individuals in low income, based on the Market Basket Measure (MBM). The MBM threshold is the disposable income required for a family to purchase a specific basket of goods and services defined as the minimum needed to meet a basic standard of living (2018-base). A family is low-income when its disposable income is below the poverty threshold defined for its family size and region.	Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey
Deep poverty rate (MBM)	Percentage of individuals with disposable family incomes below 75% of the MBM threshold.	Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey

Indicator	Definition	Source
Employment rate for priority groups (youth, women, Indigenous peoples)	Percentage of individuals from priority groups, aged 15 to 64, who are employed. This indicator can be broken down by gender, age and Indigenous identity. While Black and racialized persons are a priority group for this strategy, data is not currently available.	Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey
Annual full-time and part-time jobs created, aged 15 and over	Total number of net new jobs created. Number of net new full-time jobs created. Number of net new part-time jobs created. (These figures represent the change in employment, relative to the previous year, for individuals who are aged 15 years and above. Since a small percentage of employed persons have multiple jobs, there might be a slight difference between the change in employment and net new jobs created).	Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey
Completion of skills or work experience related Employment Ontario (EO) interventions	Number of completed skills or work experience related interventions, by EO program participants; Apprenticeship program is not included in the measure.	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
Employment or enrolment into further education after participation in Integrated Employment Services	Percentage of Integrated Employment Services clients in areas covered by Employment Services Transformation who identify as employed or in education or training during three-month follow-up after exit from program.	Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Indicator	Definition	Source
Percentage of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) cases with employment earnings	Percentage of Ontario Works and ODSP cases reporting employment earnings (while remaining eligible for social assistance) on average monthly.	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Graduation rate (high school)	Percentage of students who receive an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) within five years of starting Grade 9.	Ministry of Education
Percentage of students accumulating credits that will keep them on track to graduate with their peers (high school)	Grade 9: Percentage of students who accumulated eight or more credits after one year of secondary school out of the total number of students who completed one year of secondary school. Grade 10: Percentage of students who accumulated 16 or more credits after two years of secondary school out of the total number of students who completed two years of secondary school. Grade 11: Percentage of students who accumulated 23 or more credits after three years of secondary school out of the total number of students who completed three years of secondary school.	Ministry of Education
Graduation rate (universities)	Proportion of all new, full-time, year one undergraduate university students of bachelors (first-entry), or first professional (second-entry) degree programs who began their study in a given Fall term and graduated from the same institution within seven years.	Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Indicator	Definition	Source
Graduation Rate (colleges)	Percentage of full-time students who entered a program of instruction in a particular enrolment reporting period and graduated within a specific period (200% of program completion timeframe for diploma and certificate programs and 175% for degrees).	Ministry of Colleges and Universities
Time to become employed or exit social assistance	Average time between entering Ontario Works and ODSP and leaving or becoming employed (while remaining eligible for assistance), within the first year on assistance.	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Percentage of cases exiting Ontario Works that return within one year	Percentage of cases that exited Ontario Works that returned within one year.	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Share of the population on social assistance	Percentage of the population receiving social assistance.	Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Percentage of low-income households assisted in community housing programs	Number of households assisted across community housing programs, as a proportion of all Ontario households below the low-income measure (LIM) threshold.	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Indicator	Definition	Source
Core housing need	Households in core housing need measures the percentage of households living in housing that is inadequate, unaffordable, or unsuitable and who would need to spend 30% or more of total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable. • Inadequate: in need of major repair • Unaffordable: costs 30% or more of household's total before-tax income • Unsuitable: does not have enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household according to National Occupancy Standard requirements Core housing need by population reports the percentage of persons in core housing need.	Statistics Canada, Census

Indicator under development:

- **Youth in care on track to graduate**: Percentage of students in care who accumulated eight or more credits by the end of Grade 9. This indicator is still under development and will be reported in subsequent annual reports.

Povery Reduction Strategy: 2022 Annual Report

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

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