

**Ministry of Children,
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127-2020-14553

December 16, 2020

Dear Municipal 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 to their full potential 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 those who contributed 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 more than 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 faced with one of its greatest challenges, the COVID-19 outbreak that led to an unprecedented economic downturn that continues to deeply impact our communities.

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 set them on a pathway to jobs and financial stability. The Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan and Employment Services Transformation are the cornerstone initiatives of the strategy, supported by others like the *Roadmap to Wellness*, Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy.

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As we move forward with the strategy's implementation over the next five years, I look forward to listening to and working with municipalities, community partners, 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 horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Todd Smith
Minister