



Council Memorandum

Date:	May 6, 2025
To:	Committee of the Whole
From:	Councillor Richardson
Re:	Ontario Works Rates

Recommendation

That the Memorandum from Councillor Richardson regarding, **Ontario Works Rates**, be received;

That the City of Kawartha Lakes request the Provincial Government to Increase Ontario Works rates to match the Ontario Disability Support Program rate increases, to index those rates to inflation, and further to commit to ongoing cost-of-living increases that will make up for the years of frozen rates; and

That a copy of this recommendation be forwarded to the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; and

That this recommendation be forwarded to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Rationale

The Ontario Works (OW) Financial Assistance rates have been frozen at \$733/month since 2018. In the intervening years since then, housing prices have more than doubled, we have witnessed a global pandemic, and inflation has increased substantially. The



cost of housing, food, medicine and other essentials is taking a toll on our communities and the number of people living in poverty is growing every day.

Those in need of social assistance are hit especially hard and it is hard to understand why OW is not keeping up even with the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), whose rates were increased by 6.5% in July 2023 and another 4.5% in July 2024. Even with those increases, the rates still fall far below the disability-adjusted poverty line (\$3091/month). While neither program provides enough income for a basic standard of living, OW is lagging far behind in supporting those citizens who rely on it for survival. Our staff in Human Services provide great resources and support to such residents, but they cannot provide the necessary income and health-related supports without the province stepping up to address the rising levels of poverty in Ontario and especially the increasing gap between OW and ODSP.