



## **Just Recovery Ontario**

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### **Community Groups Across Ontario Call on Ottawa/Queen's Park for a Just Recovery**

Bracebridge - After watching marginalized and vulnerable people fall through the cracks throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, community groups across small town and rural Ontario, as well as urban centres, are banding together to tell Ottawa and Queen's Park they need to do better in the recovery.

"Just one look at the information that's coming out now shows how badly our social safety net has fallen apart, and how stark the consequences are," said Angie Lynch, ID Services Coordinator with Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic in Thunder Bay. "Seniors, newcomers, racialized groups and other marginalized people bore the brunt of this pandemic. They paid a big price, and we can't let that continue," added Heather Hay, Co-ordinator of Elder Abuse Prevention Muskoka. "We need real solutions before the next wave or the next pandemic."

Just Recovery Ontario formed when community groups, people with lived experience of poverty and community-based service providers from every corner of Ontario started talking over the summer about the challenges they had seen in the pandemic. As they talked, they realized that the pandemic underscored the inequality that was already causing so many problems in communities all across Ontario. But it also showed that these are problems we can solve, when we try.

"In the pandemic, we found housing for homeless people to self-isolate. For millions of Canadians who couldn't work we ensured a decent income. We made sure people had benefits like sick days to keep them and their coworkers safe," said Susan Campbell of the Lake Country Community Legal Clinic in Bracebridge. "Just weeks before COVID-19 hit, governments said these things couldn't be done, but when they became a priority, those problems got addressed. They need to stay a priority."

The campaign will be reaching out to MPs and MPPs across Ontario, to ask them to step up for marginalized people in every part of the province.

"It's not just in big cities that people are struggling and getting left behind," said Carrie Sinkowski, the Community Developer at the Community Legal Clinic of Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk. "We see folks without adequate housing in small towns and rural areas getting hit hard by the pandemic, and having to seek shelter on trails, and in abandoned farm buildings, or be put up in empty motels just to stay safe. That's not a long term plan."

The group launched a website at [www.JustRecoveryOntario.ca](http://www.JustRecoveryOntario.ca) inviting people from across the province to support 5 policies to build a just recovery: affordable housing, adequate incomes, decent work, accessible services and fair taxes (see attached). The site includes an online petition and organizing tools to let anyone in Ontario help grow the campaign. Members are reaching out now to MPs and MPPs to ask them to raise these issues with the Premier, Prime Minister and other leaders to ensure we get a recovery that works for everyone.

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