

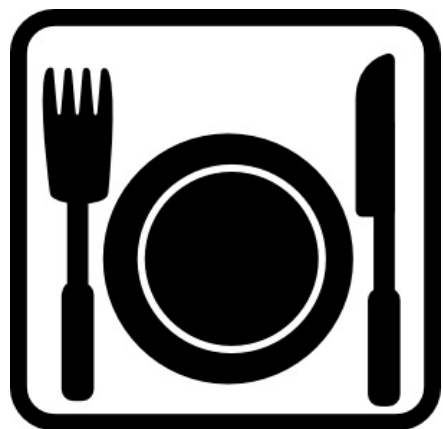
# FIGHTING POVERTY IS ECONOMICAL

We all pay  
for persistent poverty and homelessness.

Study after study links poverty with poorer health, more young people in trouble with the law, higher rates of incarceration and higher justice system costs, more demands on numerous social and community services, more stress on family members, and diminished chances of success at school.

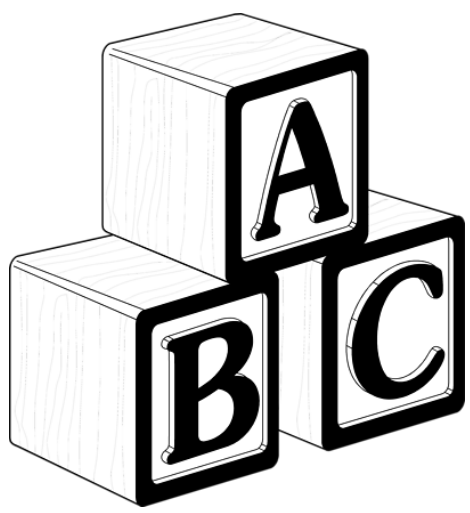
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## Food and Nutrition



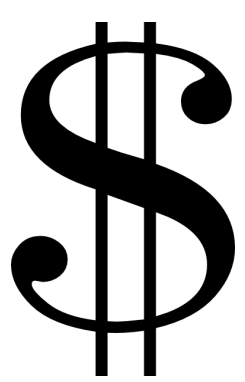
Since 2001, the Dietitians of Canada, BC Region have calculated the basic budget needed to eat a healthy and nutritious diet, and each year they find that **welfare comes are well below what is needed to meet basic food costs**. The implications of this for the long-term provincial health care budget are obvious.

## Childhood Development



We know that **poverty among children in particular has tremendous costs over the long run** because it affects children's cognitive development and future life chances. Children who live in poor families are at a higher risk of becoming involved in crime, dropping out of school, and relying on more income supports and social services over their lifetime.

## Cost of Poverty



A recent study published by the Ontario Association of Food Banks calculated the **cost of poverty** in Ontario to be between \$10.4 and \$13.1 billion for the public treasury, and between \$32.2 and \$38.3 billion for society at large (or about 6 percent of Ontario's GDP).

## Homelessness



Homelessness is particularly costly, both to society at large and to the public treasury. As a recent study from SFU's Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions found, **the cost of servicing the homeless is greater than the cost of housing them**. The study found that BC has 11,750 people with severe addictions and/or mental illness who are "absolutely homeless," and that this group costs the public treasury \$644 million (or \$55,000 per person) in health care, correctional and social services each year.

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Without question, there is a false economy  
in failing to implement a bold poverty reduction plan.