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The 2024 Federal Budget Falls Short of Fulfilling Its Obligations to People in Canada with Disabilities

Vancouver, British Columbia

Plan Institute is disappointed that the current proposed budget for the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) falls short of fulfilling its obligations to people in Canada living with disabilities.

The budget proposes funding of \$6.1 billion over six years for the CDB, beginning in 2024-25, and \$1.4 billion per year ongoing.¹ This translates to a maximum benefit amount of \$2,400 per year, or \$200 a month. This falls significantly short of the estimated \$1,200 monthly amount needed to lift people receiving provincial disability benefits above the poverty line.²

"People with disabilities are in crisis, struggling to afford essentials while living well below the poverty line," says Franceska Grantzidis, Interim Executive Director of Plan Institute. "This allocation fails to meet Canada's legislated poverty reduction goals. We had hoped to see a real solution in this budget not one that keeps people with disabilities in hardship."

The Disability Tax Credit (DTC) was also announced as the qualifying criteria for the new benefit. Barriers to the complex DTC application process, a concern long recognized by advocates including Plan Institute, will leave many people unable to access the CDB. Of the 1.5 million people with disabilities in Canada who live in poverty,³ only one-third are registered for the DTC, a strong indication of the inaccessibility of the application process.

Moreover, despite the government's assertion that the bill would be co-created alongside people with disabilities, it is clear that their voices have not been heard. For members of the community struggling daily to make ends meet, this announcement represents a substantial setback in their anticipation of meaningful change.

¹ The Department of Finance. (2024). *Budget 2024*, the Government of Canada.
<https://budget.canada.ca/2024/report-rapport/budget-2024.pdf>

² Laidley, J., & Tabbara, M. (2023, July). *Welfare in Canada, 2022*, Maytree, Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
https://maytree.com/wp-content/uploads/Welfare_in_Canada_2022.pdf

³ *Canadian Income Survey - 2021 (CIS)*. (2023, May 2), Statistics Canada.
<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5200>

“The passage of Bill C-22 in June 2023 sparked hope for people with disabilities living in poverty. An adequately funded benefit has the potential to change the lives of people with disabilities in Canada. Although the 2024 Budget failed to fulfill its obligations, we are determined that it will be the first step towards this reality,” Grantzidis added.

Plan Institute and its partners will continue to advocate alongside the disability community to ensure that the government follows through on its commitment to lifting people with disabilities out of poverty.

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About Plan Institute

Plan Institute is a national non-profit and social enterprise based in Vancouver, BC that supports people with disabilities and their families. They provide educational materials and resources, collaborate on community-based projects, and engage with a variety of partners to host innovative initiatives for change and policy reform.

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