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## Welfare report blasts asset limit

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Five hundred and seventy-two dollars.

That's the most a single person is allowed to save up or have stuffed in a mattress if he or she wants to be eligible for welfare in Ontario. A family can have just \$1550 worth of assets in hand to qualify.

It's stringent rules like these that make it impossible for people to step out of the cycle of poverty, according to a study being released Wednesday called *Why Don't We Want the Poor to Own Anything?*

"You need at least a few thousand dollars to get back on your feet," said John Stapleton, a social poverty expert who launched the report with the Metcalf Foundation.

Currently, Ontario asset rules force those needing social assistance to liquidate assets (such as savings and RRSPs) to get support.

"Making people destitute to give them emergency help just doesn't make sense," said Stapleton.

The group is calling for the province to raise limits to \$5,000 for single people and \$10,000 for families, and exempt all assets for the first six months. Stapleton says these changes can easily be implemented in the social assistance review the province promised earlier this year.