

November 18, 2022

Chief Commissioner Patricia DeGuire
Ontario Human Rights Commission
180 Dundas Street West, 9th Floor, Toronto, ON M7A 2G5

Re: OHRC statement on human rights, extreme heat waves and air conditioning

Dear Chief Commissioner DeGuire,

We are writing in support of the statement on human rights, extreme heat waves and air conditioning, which the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), released earlier this year, where access to cooling was determined to be a human rights issue.

At Daily Bread Food Bank, Canada's largest food bank, we have developed a rights-based approach, one that recognizes clients as rights-bearers and that governments are ultimately the duty-bearers to create the conditions for access and exercise of those rights. Our mission is to collaborate with all to eliminate food insecurity and to advocate for solutions that end poverty. This can only be done by addressing the root and systemic causes of social and economic inequalities.

We are writing to you today to share research that we conducted with food bank clients coping with the summer heat which produced additional evidence to support OHRC's policy recommendations on setting maximum temperatures requirements in city by-laws.

As you might surmise, food bank clients have increased vulnerability to heat due to high levels of income insecurity, social isolation, and, in many cases, disability (nearly half of food bank clients have disability or health issues). Our survey discovered disproportionately low access to air conditioning among food bank clients in comparison with the overall population of the City of Toronto.

- 40% of the respondents did not have air conditioners in their homes.
- 85% of the respondents faced barriers to cooling their homes; access and cost were the two biggest challenges.
- 30% of the respondents reported to have heat stress, 10% reported having heat-related illness or worsening of pre-existing health conditions.

We are pleased to offer support for your recommendations in our report. Please find the full report enclosed with this letter. Please also do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or comments. Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Diane Dyson
Vice President, Research & Advocacy

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Advocacy Program Support Worker



FIGHTING TO END HUNGER

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