

# Advocate for Change

This report has made it clear that food insecurity is at crisis levels in Toronto. Food is a human right, yet one in ten Torontonians are forced to rely on food banks because they cannot afford the food they need. Food insecurity cannot be left to charities to solve; hunger is a public policy issue requiring public policy solutions.

We cannot wait for change to occur. It is incumbent on all of us, each reader of this report, to take action to spark the systemic changes we need.

Here is what you can do.

“The government needs to do more for people like us. The system is failing us. There needs to be real change.”

Readers of this report, we call on you to



1

## Share This Report

Help us raise awareness by sharing this report with your friends and family.

2

## Advocate for Change

Contact your Member of Parliament, Member of Provincial Parliament, and City Councillor to urge them to adopt the recommendations in this report.

3

## Utilize Your Network and Skills

Think about what resources and skills you can use to make a difference. If you're an educator, how can you raise awareness among your students? If you are involved in a community group, can you mobilize together? If you're a writer, can you amplify the stories in this report?

Members of  
Parliament, we  
call on you to



1

### Canada Disability Benefit

Rapidly design and implement an adequate and accessible Canada Disability Benefit so that eligible recipients begin receiving the benefit by 2025. The benefit should bring people with disabilities 30% above the official poverty line, and people with episodic and invisible disabilities should be eligible.

2

### Supports for Single Unattached Individuals

Reduce the depth of single unattached adult poverty in Canada by transforming the Canada's Workers Benefit (CWB) into a Canada Working Age Supplement (CWAS).<sup>89</sup>

3

### Canada Child Benefit

Increase the Canada Child Benefit amount for the lowest-income families to reduce the severity and prevalence of food insecurity. We further recommend that eligibility be expanded so all families with children are eligible, regardless of immigration status.

4

### Housing Acquisition Strategy

In partnership with Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC), develop and fund a non-profit acquisition strategy to enable non-profit, co-op and land trust organizations to purchase at-risk rental buildings when they come onto the market.

5

### Canada Housing Benefit

Make the 2022 Canada Housing Benefit top-up a permanent refundable tax credit for all low-income renters and improve outreach to low-income communities to promote benefit uptake.

6

### Public Transit Funding

Expedite the investment of \$3 billion in annual permanent public transit funding to support municipalities whose transit systems need urgent support.

Members of  
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Parliament,  
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1

### Ontario Works

Improve the adequacy of social assistance by doubling Ontario Works (OW) rates and indexing to inflation annually while increasing the earnings exemption to match that of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).

2

### Ontario Disability Support Program

Collaborate with the Federal Government in the design of the Canada Disability Benefit to ensure ODSP recipients are automatically eligible, that the benefit amount brings ODSP recipients 30% above the official poverty line, and that benefits are not clawed back for ODSP recipients who receive the Canada Disability Benefit.

3

### Employment and Labour

Progressively increase minimum wage to a living wage, legislate 10 paid sick days, and reinstate equal pay protections for temporary and contract workers.

4

### Portable Benefits

Expedite the development of a portable benefits program so workers who are not provided with benefits through their employer can access medical, dental, vision, and ancillary health services.

5

### Social Services Relief Fund

Make the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) permanent to ensure municipalities can have stable, secure funding for rent banks and eviction prevention programs.

6

### Affordable Housing Targets

As part of the provincial government's plan to build 1.5 million homes over the next ten years,<sup>90</sup> we recommend the Government of Ontario ensure that 300,000 of these are permanently affordable and supportive homes, with a minimum of 50,000 units in Toronto, using an income-based definition of housing affordability.

7

### Surplus Land Development

Designate surplus lands in Toronto for affordable housing.

City  
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1

### Poverty Reduction Strategy

Ensure Toronto's forthcoming Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan and Food Charter provide concrete actions, with funding attached, to prevent food insecurity as well as promote resiliency among Toronto's community food programs by prioritizing access to programming space and a formalized role in the City's emergency planning and preparedness.

2

### Eviction Prevention and Supportive Housing

Increase funding for the Eviction Prevention In the Community (EPIC) program and Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) in partnership with the Government of Ontario.

3

### Affordable Housing Preservation

In partnership with the Federal Government, increase funds available for the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program.



4

### Housing Now Program

Continue to streamline approvals processes and expedite Housing Now developments which designate City-owned lands for housing.

5

### Fair Pass Transit Discount

Expand eligibility for the Fair Pass Transit Discount to all residents whose income falls below the Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT), not just those whose incomes are 75% or lower than the LIM-AT, and partner with community organizations to promote uptake of the program.