

Confront the crisis, drive change

Toronto is facing a deepening food insecurity crisis, a symptom of worsening poverty in one of Canada’s most prosperous cities. Food banks are stretched beyond capacity, safe and affordable housing is out of reach for many, income supports fall short of meeting basic needs, and even full-time employment no longer guarantees the ability to afford life’s essentials.

Toronto must be a city where everyone can live with dignity and thrive. Yet for too many residents, the cost of housing, inadequate income supports, and wages that fall short of basic living costs make this out of reach. Ensuring that all Torontonians can meet their basic needs and build secure, fulfilling lives is essential to sustaining the vibrancy, diversity, and resilience that define our city.

By reading this report, you are a part of the solution. We must mobilize and demand bold, collective action to reverse these trends and build a more inclusive city where everyone can live and thrive.

What you can do



1 Share this information
Help raise awareness by sharing these findings with your friends, colleagues, and networks.

2 Get involved
If you are able, make a financial donation, raise food or funds, or volunteer your time at a local food bank.

3 Advocate for change
Call on decision-makers to act. Send a message to your elected officials, urging them to adopt the recommendations in the report.



Members of Parliament, we call on you to

1 Strengthen the Canada Disability Benefit
Raise the benefit amount above the poverty line and broaden eligibility to align with the Accessible Canada Act’s definition of disability, removing the Disability Tax Credit requirement and automatically including individuals already receiving disability supports. Exempt CDB from claw backs to other benefits and determine eligibility based on individual income.

2 Increase investments in social housing
Double Canada’s social housing from the current proportion of 3.5% to the OECD average of 7% by building and acquiring 372,000 new rent-geared-to-income (RGI) homes in the next five years. Ensure Build Canada Homes funding is dedicated to capital investments in units developed by government, co-operatives, or non-profit and charitable organizations.

3 Expand access to Employment Insurance
Implement a guaranteed weekly minimum of \$600 per week, extend coverage from 45 to 50 weeks, lower qualifying hours from 420 to 300, and extend eligibility to self-employed and gig workers.

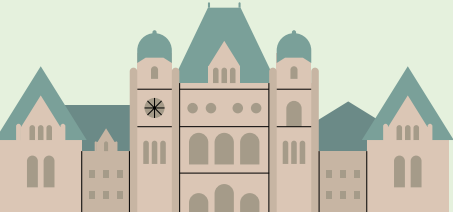
4 Guarantee a permanent National School Food Program
Commit to a permanent National School Food Program by enshrining it into legislation and sustaining the investment of \$1 billion over five years with incremental increases to reflect cost-of-living and dedicated infrastructure funding to support schools to deliver the program.



5 Implement a 50% federal charitable fresh food tax credit
Create a permanent 50% tax credit based on the fair market value of fresh food donated by farmers and producers to registered charities and community food programs. We know more food isn’t the long term solution—but it’s needed now.



Members of
Provincial
Parliament,
we call
on you to



1 Reform social assistance benefits
Double ODSP and OW rates and combine the housing and basic needs portions into a single benefit that remains unchanged regardless of housing status.

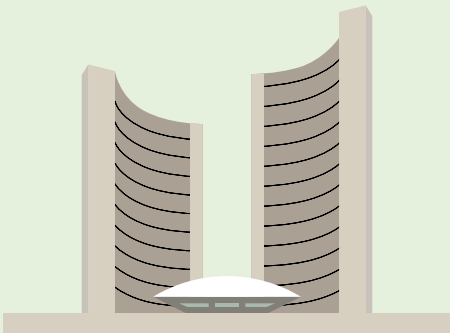
2 Establish and deliver affordable and social housing targets
Mandate at least one-quarter of the new 1.5 million homes to be delivered by 2031 are permanently affordable, supportive, or social housing, using a consistent definition of affordability where rent does not exceed 30% of income.

3 Protect rental affordability
Enhance tenant protections against above-guideline rent increases and remove the rent control exemption from newly developed, purpose-built rental units.

4 Increase investment in the Student Nutrition Program
Work towards a vision where every child in Ontario has access to a nutritious meal at school. Begin by immediately increasing annual funding to the Student Nutrition Program by \$115 million, raising per-student support from 10¢ to the national median of 39¢ per day.

5 Release a strengthened Poverty Reduction Strategy
Launch a new Poverty Reduction Strategy as the current one concludes in 2025, with specific targets, timelines, indicators for measuring progress, and robust reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency.

City
Councillors,
we call on
you to



1 Improve access to support services for low-income households
Increase access to affordable housing, childcare, transit, recreation, and food programs for low-income households through expanded funding, inclusive eligibility, and community-based delivery. Support food programs with long-term, flexible funding and access to city spaces.

2 Implement the Universal Student Nutrition Program
Deliver on the vision to implement a Universal Student Food Program that will provide a morning meal in all Toronto school communities by the 2026/2027 school year and introduce a Universal Lunch Program by 2030.

3 Increase and preserve affordable housing
Expand and increase investment in programs such as the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program and Housing Now to leverage city-owned land and partnerships with non-profit housing providers to deliver permanent affordable housing.

4 Strengthen protections for renters
Extend RentSafeTO to all units and enhance by-law enforcement of existing units that do not comply with health and safety requirements. Increase funding for eviction prevention programs and ensure that the new Regulatory Framework for Multi-Tenant Housing maintains safety standards without displacing tenants. Establish an independent committee to review the effects of property tax burden on tenants.

5 Advance Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy
Ensure clear targets, timelines, measurable indicators, and dedicated funding to address food insecurity and its root causes.