

Be part of the solution

This report has made it clear that food insecurity is at unacceptable and unsustainable levels across Toronto. Food is a human right, yet over one in ten Torontonians continue to rely on food banks because of systemic policy failures, and many more face food insecurity without making it to the doors of our food banks.

We cannot wait idly for change to occur. **It is incumbent on all of us, each reader of this report, to take action and 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, family, and network. If you're an educator, can you raise awareness among your students? If you are involved in a community group, can you mobilize together? If you're a writer or have a platform, can you amplify the stories in this report?

2

Get involved with your local food bank

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

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

You can start by visiting fundthebenefit.ca to send a letter to your federal government, calling for a fully funded Canada Disability Benefit to reduce poverty among people with disabilities.

Members of Parliament, we call on you to



1 Strengthen the Canada Disability Benefit
Top up the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) to at least \$500 per month per recipient by Budget 2025, with progressive increases in future budgets to raise people with disabilities above the poverty line. Meanwhile, pursue additional avenues for eligibility beyond the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) to ensure people with episodic and invisible disabilities are eligible, and administer the Benefit as a refundable tax credit to prevent clawbacks from other programs, benefits, and supports.

2 Launch automatic tax filing for all Canadians
Fully implement automatic tax filing for all Canadians to mitigate barriers and ensure that low-income people can access the benefits they are entitled to.

3 Scale up social and deeply affordable housing
Use a consistent definition of affordable housing—where rent is no more than 30% of a renter’s income in perpetuity—across all programs and scale up investments in these social housing units to double Canada’s social housing stock by 2030, including through increased investments in the Rental Protection Fund to protect at-risk affordable rentals.

4 Ensure public value for public funds
Ensure that affordability requirements are attached to all public subsidies and lands offered to housing projects and investors—including the GST exemption on new rental apartments, the freeze on municipal development charges, and the corporate tax exemption for Real Estate Investment Trusts—to guarantee public value for public funds and assets.

5 Support people with temporary status
Implement a broad and inclusive regularization program to ensure that all people with temporary and precarious status, including international students, temporary foreign workers, refugees, and people who are undocumented, are granted equal access to permanent residency, and in turn, the social services, healthcare, affordable housing, benefits, and decent employment they need to live a dignified life while contributing to Canada’s economy. Invest in skills training and workforce development to match these new residents to in-demand sectors and jobs.

6 Support working-age singles
Reduce the depth of poverty among working-age single adults without children in Canada by transforming the Canada’s Workers Benefit (CWB) into a Canada Working Age Supplement (CWAS).¹²⁵

Members of
Provincial
Parliament,
we call on
you to

1

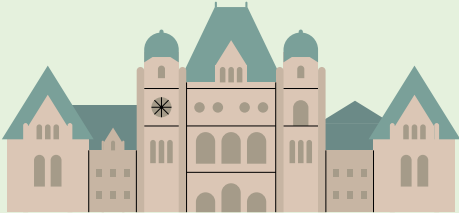
Lift people with disabilities out of poverty

Raise Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates above the poverty line to ensure people with disabilities can afford the necessities for a dignified life. Exempt the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit from clawbacks to ODSP, Rent-Geared-to-Income calculations, and other government and private insurance benefits to avoid penalizing people with disabilities for receiving this new Benefit.

2

Strengthen Ontario Works (OW)

Improve the adequacy of OW by doubling rates, indexing to inflation annually, delivering it as a single flat rate regardless of a person's living situation, and increasing the earning exemption to match that of ODSP. Ensure the forthcoming Canada Disability Benefit is also exempt from OW clawbacks.



3

Increase and deliver on affordable housing targets

As part of the provincial government's plan to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, ensure that at least one-quarter of these are permanently affordable supportive or social housing, with a minimum of 50,000 units in Toronto. Use a consistent definition of affordability where rent is no more than 30% of a renter's income and expand the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) to urgently support tenants renting unaffordable housing in the private market.

4

Implement rent control to protect tenants

Institute legislation to limit rent increases on units built after November 15, 2018, to match the guidelines in place for rent-controlled units and preserve affordability.

5

Strengthen the poverty reduction strategy

Enhance the current Poverty Reduction Strategy and initiate the development of the next five-year strategy and action plan. Both the current and upcoming strategy should include specific targets, timelines, indicators for measuring progress, and robust reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and transparency.

6

Invest in children's meals

Match Toronto's municipal investments in the Student Nutrition Program and flow funds rapidly to ensure a fully funded and universal meal program in schools, so that no child goes hungry.

City Councillors, we call on you to

1 Launch the Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan

Urgently launch Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan and an updated Food Charter with concrete actions, indicators, and funding to prevent food insecurity. Promote resilience among Toronto community food programs by prioritizing access to programming space and a formalized role in the city's emergency planning and preparedness.

2 Protect public lands and assets

Institute a by-law to ensure that public lands are leased and not sold to housing developers, and all homes built on public lands are protected by rent and vacancy control in perpetuity. Continue to streamline approval processes and expedite Housing Now developments on city-owned lands, ensuring that at least 30% of units are affordable and no units are above market rent.

3 Prevent evictions and inadequate housing

Increase funding for the Eviction Prevention in the Community (EPIC) program and Toronto Rent Bank to protect tenants from eviction and homelessness. Strengthen enforcement through the RentSafe program to ensure rental homes meet building standards.

4 Preserve affordable housing

In partnership with the federal and provincial governments, increase funds available for the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) program.

5 Accelerate housing developments

Speed up the housing development and permitting process to address years-long delays in essential housing projects across the city.

6 Expand the Student Nutrition Program

Deliver on Toronto's historic commitment to a fully funded and universal meal program in schools by working with the provincial and federal governments to urgently increase and flow funds for the Student Nutrition Program. This will ensure that no child goes hungry and students across the city get the support they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

