

TO REDUCE POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

VOTE ON
October 24

Poverty and food insecurity affects residents in every single ward.

People should not have to choose between paying rent and putting food on the table. But in a city as expensive as Toronto, where good jobs are hard to come by and social assistance rates are gravely insufficient, that is the choice too many residents have to make. **The upcoming municipal election is an opportunity for you to vote to create real progress on ending poverty and food insecurity.**

What's the Problem?

Poverty Is Widespread and Unequally Distributed

In Toronto, **13.2% of residents** experienced poverty in 2020. Because poverty is rooted in our systems and institutions, people with disabilities and those who are Indigenous, racialized, newcomers, immigrants, and seniors experience higher rates of poverty than the overall population. Toronto has the **third-highest** child poverty rate (14.7%) among large urban centres in Canada. This rate is even higher in some wards:

25.6%

of families in Toronto Centre experience poverty,

20.7%

of families in Humber River-Black Creek experience poverty.

Social Assistance Rates Keep People in Poverty

Ontario's two main programs that provide financial assistance to people who cannot work or cannot find work, the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW), should guarantee a basic standard of living. Regretfully, benefit rates have remained stagnant for decades, and recipients **experience deeper poverty now** than a generation ago.

Research has also shown that

63%

of households who rely on social assistance experience food insecurity.

Toronto Is an Increasingly Unaffordable Place to Live

The high costs of vital services such as housing, public transit, and childcare make it difficult for many residents to enjoy a comfortable and financially secure life. **From 2009 to 2015** the cost of childcare climbed by 30%, public transit by 36%, and rents by 13%. With inflation



reaching new heights this year, the **cost of food** and other essential items is taking a toll on residents' abilities to make ends meet.

Demand for Food Banks Has More Than Doubled

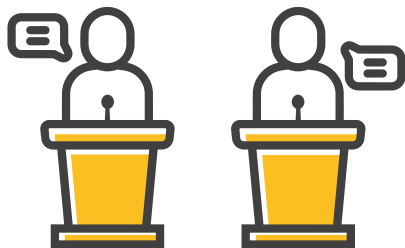
Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest had just over 200,000 food bank visits in August — a record high, up from about 72,000 visits a month pre-pandemic — and almost 9,000 new food bank users. The high cost of living, insufficient wages, and inflation are contributing to this growth, putting tremendous pressure on community groups that provide food security programs.



Take Action!

1. Ask Your City Council Candidates If They Will Commit to the Following Actions:

- Advocate to the provincial government to significantly increase social assistance rates so recipients are lifted out of poverty and can live with dignity. ODSP & OW must also be indexed to inflation.
- Advocate at the federal level for sustained funding to address food security.
- Provide community organizations and grassroots groups with free access to municipally owned spaces for food production and distribution.
- Provide long-term and sustained municipal funding to community organizations to maintain food security programs that were started during the pandemic.
- Increase funding for student nutrition programs.
- Fully fund and implement the T’Karonto Indigenous Prosperity Plan.
- Provide dedicated and long-term funding for the [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), including meaningful supports to residents impacted by the affordability crisis.
- Provide measurable poverty reduction targets and publish annual progress reports.



2. Learn More About the Candidates

[Attend an event](#) such as an All Candidates Debate to learn more about the election issues and where candidates stand.



3. Pledge to Vote

[Election day](#) is on October 24.

[Advance polls](#) are from October 7–14.

[Apply to vote](#) by mail from September 1–23.