

TO REDUCE POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY

VOTE ON
June 26

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 gravely insufficient, that is the choice too many residents have to make. **The upcoming mayoral by-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 food have made life difficult for many residents. In the City of Toronto, **the average rent** for available units has increased by more than 20% in just one year. **Public transit offers less for more**, with adult and youth fares increasing, while transit service is being cut. In February 2023, **food costs** were up 10.6% over the previous year. The rising cost of living is taking a toll on residents' abilities to make ends meet.



Demand for Food Banks Has Quadrupled

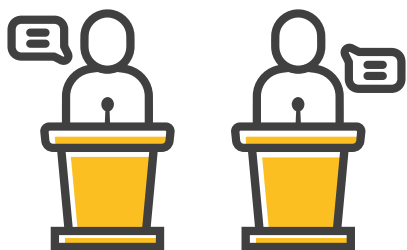
In March 2023, nearly 270,000 clients used a food bank in Toronto, compared to about 65,000 per month prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It's the highest need for food banks in Daily Bread Food Bank's 40-year history in the city. Each month, Toronto's food banks are seeing 12,000 new clients – 6 times more than before the pandemic. The high cost of living, insufficient wages, and inflation are contributing to this record growth, putting tremendous pressure on community groups that provide food security programs.



Take Action!

1. Ask the Mayoral 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. Similar to the province's plans for 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

Check out [our election resources](#) and attend an event, such as a Mayoral Debate, to learn more about the election issues and where candidates stand.



3. Pledge to Vote

Election day is on June 26.

[Advance polls](#) are from June 8-13.

[Apply to vote](#) by mail from May 1-26.