



Dear City Council,

YWCA Toronto is the largest multi-service nonprofit organization serving women, girls, and gender diverse individuals in Toronto. Across our programs and services, we see that food insecurity is an enormous and increasing challenge for the individuals and families we serve. Our frontline staff are consistently receiving requests for food assistance that go well beyond our capacity. We work above and beyond to gather and distribute donations, and to refer people to food banks and other wraparound support services. However, we remain unable to meet the level of need we are witnessing in our communities.

The idea that if something is too expensive then people will not buy it cannot be applied to necessity goods like groceries; people will purchase groceries they consider too expensive – or outright cannot afford – because they need to feed their families. Surveillance pricing preys on people's lack of options. Many of the families we serve cannot afford – either in time or in the cost of transportation – to shop around for the best available price. Ensuring food is accessible both in terms of availability, cost, and geographical location is critical.

According to Daily Bread Food Bank, in 2025 food bank visits in Toronto reached an all-time high of 4.1 million, up 340% since 2019. 1 in 4 food bank clients in Toronto are children. We are experiencing a chronic crisis of food insecurity and affordability that must be addressed immediately.

We also note that food security is fundamentally a gender equity issue. Women and gender diverse individuals are disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity, poverty, and food insecurity. These issues require gender-responsive policy and funding solutions, underscoring the importance of advancing the City's Gender Equity Strategy alongside these efforts.

Given the disproportionate impact of housing and food insecurity on women and gender-diverse individuals, we encourage Council to address these issues through a gender equity lens and as part of its broader commitment to developing and implementing a Gender Equity Strategy.

We strongly support the Executive Committee's recommendation that the City Manager identify all possible mechanisms for the City of Toronto to ban and regulate surveillance grocery pricing. We also strongly encourage the City of Toronto to urgently explore all possibilities to reduce food insecurity across Toronto, including working with the provincial and federal

governments to manage the worsening cost-of-living crisis, with a particular focus on women, gender diverse people, and children.

YWCA Toronto is committed to supporting City Council in their efforts to address this issue. We are available to meet to share our expertise and work collaboratively to reduce food insecurity for women, girls, and gender diverse individuals in Toronto.

Please reach us at executiveoffice@ywcatoronto.org to arrange a meeting.

Deepa Mattoo, Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Toronto

Sami Pritchard, Director of Advocacy and Communications, YWCA Toronto

These comments are being submitted for distribution to City Council ahead of City Council Meeting 43, on July 29, 30, and 31, 2026.

RE: Item - 2026.EX33.33 Making Grocery Prices Fair: Banning Surveillance Pricing in Toronto
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2026.EX33.33>