

**Re: Support for Member Motion introduced by Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie**

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Council,

On behalf of Feed Ontario, I am writing to express our strong support for the member motion being introduced by Toronto Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie urging the Province of Ontario to amend Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rules to allow individuals without a fixed address to retain and save their shelter allowance so it can be used toward securing housing.

Under current social assistance rules in Ontario, when recipients lose their housing, they also lose their shelter allowance (\$390 for Ontario Works and \$599 for ODSP), creating a significant barrier to securing new housing. The motion requests that the Province of Ontario establish a mechanism (such as a reserve or escrow account) that allows these funds to be held and used for first and last month's rent and other housing-related costs necessary to secure and stabilize housing when housing is secured.

With nearly 85,000 people experiencing homelessness across Ontario—and homelessness in Toronto more than doubling since 2021 to over 15,400 individuals—this targeted policy solution could support over 30,000 OW and ODSP recipients in regaining housing while also reducing downstream costs to the healthcare and emergency shelter systems.

Feed Ontario represents over 1,200 food banks and hunger-relief organizations across the province. Through this work, we see firsthand the growing challenges OW and ODSP recipients face in securing and maintaining housing. Together, our network serves over one million people each year, who access services more than eight million times annually, with more than half relying on social assistance as their primary source of income. Allowing OW and ODSP recipients to preserve their shelter allowance during periods of housing instability would help reduce barriers to securing new housing and lower the risk of prolonged homelessness.

We urge Toronto City Council to adopt this motion and thank you for your leadership and commitment to addressing homelessness.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Stewart  
CEO, Feed Ontario