

Members of Toronto City Council  
100 Queen St. West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

May 19, 2026

**Re: Joint Letter of Support from Daily Bread Food Bank and Member Agencies for the Member Motion introduced by Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie (MM41.4)**

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Toronto City Council,

On behalf of Daily Bread Food Bank and our member agencies, we are writing to express our strong support for Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie's motion urging the Province to amend Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) so that people without a fixed address can **retain and save their shelter allowance** to help secure housing.

Under Ontario's current social assistance rules, recipients who lose their housing also **lose their shelter allowance—\$390 per month under OW and \$599 under ODSP**—making it even harder to secure a new place to live. This motion calls on the Province to create a mechanism, such as a reserve or escrow account, so those funds can be preserved and used for first and last month's rent and other housing-related costs needed to obtain and stabilize housing. Daily Bread Food Bank has long advocated for this practical reform, alongside broader changes to improve the adequacy of social assistance.

This motion is urgent and necessary to help prevent homelessness and support faster exits from it.

Ontario's homelessness crisis has accelerated sharply, with **nearly 85,000 Ontarians** experiencing homelessness in 2025—an increase of almost 8% in one year and nearly 50% since 2021.<sup>i</sup> This trend is reflected locally: in Toronto, homelessness has more than doubled since 2021 to **over 15,400 people**.<sup>ii</sup> Among social assistance recipients in Ontario, **over 30,000 people** were experiencing homelessness as of July 2025—a 72% increase since 2019.<sup>iii</sup>

Food banks are seeing firsthand the growing overlap of poverty, food insecurity, and homelessness. **More than one million Ontarians** used a food bank last year, 61% of whom were social assistance recipients.<sup>iv</sup> In Toronto alone, our network served over 4.1 million food bank visits in 2025.<sup>v</sup>

Meanwhile, spending on emergency shelters in Ontario rose from **\$750 million** in 2021 to **\$1.2 billion** in 2025—a staggering 60% increase.<sup>vi</sup> The City of Toronto is currently spending approximately **\$204 per person per night** on emergency shelter.<sup>vii</sup> Even under a steady economic scenario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario estimates that homelessness will double over the next 10 years and could reach **nearly 300,000 people** in the event of an economic downturn.<sup>viii</sup>

In light of these pressures, this policy offers a **fiscally responsible and cost-effective** way to help thousands of people on social assistance secure stable housing while reducing long-term shelter and healthcare costs that municipalities and the province are increasingly struggling to sustain.

The proposal also aligns closely with the *Toronto Housing Charter*, which recognizes housing as essential to human dignity and well-being and to building sustainable, inclusive communities. We are grateful to Deputy Mayor Ainslie for bringing forward this motion, which reflects the City's broader

leadership and commitment to addressing homelessness and supporting housing stability through investments in emergency systems and tenant supports.

We urge City Council to adopt this motion as a practical step that advances the right to housing for all Torontonians.

Sincerely,



Neil Hetherington, CEO  
Daily Bread Food Bank



Sahar Raza, Vice President, Research & Advocacy  
Daily Bread Food Bank

**Supported by the following Daily Bread Food Bank member agencies:**

Access Alliance  
Agincourt Community Services Association  
Allan Gardens Food Bank  
Alpha House  
Avenue Road Food Bank  
Bethany Church Food Bank  
Bloor West Food Bank  
Breakaway Community Services  
Calvary Grace Food Bank  
Centennial College Student Association Inc.  
Centre for Immigrant and Community Services  
Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre  
Church of St Stephen-in-the-Fields  
Cooper-Mills Gooch Community Food Bank  
Covenant House Toronto  
East End United Regional Ministry, Nourish East  
End program  
Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre  
Emmanuel Life Management Center  
Evangel Hall Mission  
Flemingdon Foodbank  
Good Neighbours Drop-in, Scarborough  
Grantful Food & Fellowship Food Bank & Soup  
Kitchen  
Haven on the Queensway  
Holy Wisdom Food Bank  
House of Compassion  
LAMP Community Health Centre  
LHTC Food Bank  
Mabelle Food Bank - Islington United Church

Nellies  
Oasis Dufferin Community Centre  
Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre  
Parkdale Community Food Bank  
Ruchama Fraidel Relief Organization  
S. Bartholomew's, Regent Park  
Sistering  
St James Food Basket  
St. Ann's Foodbank  
St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church Food Bank  
St. John's Mission  
Student Association of George Brown  
Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre  
TAIBU Community Health Centre  
The Housing Help Centre  
The Common Table, Church of the Redeemer  
The Neighbourhood Group  
The Stop  
The Neighbourhood Group Community Services  
Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Supportive  
Housing Network  
Toronto Metropolitan Student' Union Good Food  
Centre  
Toronto People with AIDS Foundation  
Toronto West SDA Church Food Bank  
Ve'ahavta  
Warden Woods Community Centre  
West Hill Community Support Program  
Weston King Neighbourhood Centre  
WoodGreen Community Services

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- <sup>i</sup> Donaldson, J., Kandyba, L., Wang, D. (2026). *Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis*. HelpSeeker. <https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2026/MunisUnderPressure1YearUpdateReport2026-01-13.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> City of Toronto. (2025, July 7). *City of Toronto releases findings of 2024 Street Needs Assessment homelessness survey*. <https://www.toronto.ca/news/city-of-toronto-releases-findings-of-2024-street-needs-assessment-homelessness-survey/>
- <sup>iii</sup> Balata, L. (2026, January 20). *Designed to fail: How Ontario's income security policies create and perpetuate homelessness*. Maytree. [https://maytree.com/publications/designed-to-fail-how-ontarios-income-security-policies-create-and-perpetuate-homelessness/?mc\\_cid=6903e9e542&mc\\_eid=6e908110ef](https://maytree.com/publications/designed-to-fail-how-ontarios-income-security-policies-create-and-perpetuate-homelessness/?mc_cid=6903e9e542&mc_eid=6e908110ef)
- <sup>iv</sup> Feed Ontario. (2025, December 3). *Hunger report 2025: Hunger hurts Ontario*. <https://feedontario.ca/hunger-report-2025/>
- <sup>v</sup> Daily Bread Food Bank, & North York Harvest Food Bank. (2025). *Who's hungry report 2025*. <https://www.dailybread.ca/research-and-advocacy/research/whos-hungry-report/>
- <sup>vi</sup> Donaldson, J., Kandyba, L., Wang, D. (2026). *Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis*. HelpSeeker. <https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2026/MunisUnderPressure1YearUpdateReport2026-01-13.pdf>
- <sup>vii</sup> City of Toronto. (2024). *2024 Budget Notes: Toronto Shelter and Support Services*. *BudgetTO*. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/bu/bgrd/backgroundfile-242343.pdf>
- <sup>viii</sup> Donaldson, J., Kandyba, L., Wang, D. (2026). *Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis*. HelpSeeker. <https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2026/MunisUnderPressure1YearUpdateReport2026-01-13.pdf>