



January 26, 2026

Budget Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Telephone: 416-392-4666
Email: buc@toronto.ca

**Re: City of Toronto Budget 2026
Addressing Excessive Indoor Temperatures in All Rental Units**

Although low-income communities across the City of Toronto are not responsible for climate change, they are disproportionately impacted by its effects. Climate change is causing extreme heat events to become more frequent, more lengthy and more severe. Extreme heat can be deadly, particularly in rental housing with no cooling infrastructure in place and where indoor temperatures soar above 26 degrees Celsius for long periods of time.

The Toronto Heat Safety coalition, made up of tenant advocacy groups, legal aid clinics, environmental groups, advocates for seniors, advocates for people with disabilities, and advocates for 2SLGBTQ+ people, are supportive of the City of Toronto's efforts to address excessive and dangerous indoor heat in rental units with a by-law to set a maximum temperature of 26 degrees Celsius in all rental units, to be presented for approval in May, 2026. In-home cooling is essential to protect tenants vulnerable to heat from the serious health impacts of climate change.

Expansion of Air Conditioning Pilot Program

We are strongly supportive of expanding the pilot program, which provides free air conditioning units to income-eligible people in Toronto. This program is an important public health intervention and will protect recipients from the health impacts of extreme heat. Katz et al., [*Air Conditioning in Nursing Homes and Mortality During Extreme Heat*](#), JAMA Intern Med. (2025) studied the impacts of air conditioning on mortality in nursing homes in Ontario. Extreme heat was associated with significantly increased odds of mortality in homes without air conditioning compared to those with air conditioning. The study estimates that approximately 33 people's lives were saved by the air conditioning

mandate between 2020 and 2023. It also estimates that had the Ontario air conditioning mandate been implemented in 2010, instead of 2020, 131 fewer people would have died on extreme heat days.

The initial pilot program to distribute air conditioning units to income-eligible seniors in 2025 was a success and will help individuals who received the air conditioning units be safer and healthier. We will continue to support City of Toronto staff to ensure air conditioning units are supplied, delivered and installed in as many homes as possible.

Budget Should Help to Implement Maximum Temperature By-Law

We recommend that the City of Toronto ensure that this budget includes any initial support for staff to report back with a draft maximum temperature by-law in all rental units in May, 2026.

We also recommend that future budgets include necessary support for successful implementation of a maximum temperature by-law. Those supports could focus on new or expanded retrofit programs to prevent costs being passed to low-income tenants, including ensuring that City staff have capacity to apply for additional funding from the federal and provincial governments. We also recommend that dedicated funding within the Municipal Licensing and Standards department be included in future years to coincide with any planned implementation of the maximum temperature by-law, to ensure capacity for dedicated education and enforcement efforts.

Regards,

Kimber-lee Wargalla
Community Outreach Co-Ordinator
Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

Elsie Tellier
Staff Lawyer
ARCH Disability Law Centre

Dr. Sehjal Bhargava
Co-chair, Ontario Regional Committee
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)

Jacqueline Wilson
Counsel
Canadian Environmental Law Association

Lidia Ferreira
Community Engagement Specialist
Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW)

Zee Bhanji
Stakeholder Engagement and Energy Policy Analyst
Low-Income Energy Network (LIEN)

Harper Jean Tobin
Community Resilience Project Director
The 519

James Maroosis, Kemba Robinson, Marcia Stone, Stacey Semple, Alejandra Ruiz
Vargas, and Marva Burnett, Board Members
Toronto ACORN Board
Toronto ACORN

How-Sen Chong
Climate Campaigner
Toronto Environmental Alliance