

FOOD INSECURITY IN ONTARIO'S COMMUNITIES

Our Ask

That municipal governments support their local Public Health Unit and encourage the Provincial Government to:

- Implement measures to reduce food insecurity.

That municipal governments create or enhance policies that have the potential to enhance incomes for low-income residents, such as:

- Investing in affordable housing and accessible and affordable public transportation.
- Supporting and working with anti-poverty coalitions and food policy councils.

Return on Investment



- Being food insecure is strongly associated with greater use of the healthcare system. Annual health care costs are 121% higher in households with severe food insecurity.

Background



- Food insecurity is a determinant of health and impacts health equity.
- Lacking sufficient money for food takes a serious toll on people's health. Adults in food insecure households are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes, and high blood pressure; children are more likely to suffer from mental health problems and teenagers are at greater risk of depression, social anxiety and suicide.
- Food insecurity – not having enough money to buy food – is a serious social and public health problem in Ontario, affecting 1 in 8 households. One in 6 children in Ontario lives in a food-insecure household.
- The root cause of food insecurity is poverty. Income-based solutions are needed to address food insecurity. Food charity and community food programs are ineffective responses to food insecurity. Current social assistance rates are not enough – 64% of Ontario households reliant on social assistance are food insecure.
- Incomes are not enough for many working people. Almost 60% of food insecure households in Ontario have employment income, yet they still have difficulty having enough money for food.
- Regular monitoring of food affordability and household insecurity is critical to inform and evaluate policies, programs and services.