

Carolyn Parrish
Mayor, City of Mississauga
T 905-896-5555 F 905-896-5879
mayor@mississauga.ca



City of Mississauga
300 City Centre Drive
MISSISSAUGA ON L5B 3C1
carolynparrish.ca

Office of the Mayor

November 13, 2024

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

Cc:

Hon. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Associate Minister of Long-Term Care and MPP Mississauga – Centre
Hon. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and MPP Mississauga – Streetsville
Deepak Anand, MPP Mississauga – Malton
Sheref Sabawy, MPP Mississauga – Erin Mills
Rudy Cuzzetto, MPP Mississauga – Lakeshore
Kaleed Rasheed, MPP Mississauga East – Cooksville

RE: Food insecurity emergency – City of Mississauga

Dear Premier and Mississauga Members of Provincial Parliament:

At our November 13, 2024 Council meeting, Mississauga City Council supported the request from Food Banks Mississauga to declare a food insecurity emergency in our city. We did this because, unfortunately, Mississauga has the fastest-growing rate of food bank use in the province – exceeding the provincial average – and the number continues to grow with each passing year. One in 13 residents now use a food bank and 16,000 are children. This situation is unacceptable and unsustainable for Food Banks Mississauga. While we are doing what we can at a local level to help address this unprecedented need in our community, we recognize that this is a broader issue that must be tackled by all three levels of government.

On behalf of Mississauga Council and the residents of Mississauga, I ask you to declare a food insecurity emergency at the provincial level and to take the actions outlined in Mississauga's resolution to address the root causes of the issue - to prioritize poverty reduction policies and programs in support of basic human rights for everyone. We need long-term, sustainable solutions to address these food insecurity challenges and you have the powers to make this happen.

Please read the attached resolution, which clearly lays out Council's position on this matter. While we will continue to work with Food Banks Mississauga to meet the crisis-level needs of our neighbours, we must all work together as political leaders on policy change to address the root causes of food insecurity. In a country as prosperous as Canada, no one should have to use a food bank.

Regards,

Carolyn Parrish
Mayor of Mississauga
mayor@mississauga.ca

cc. Mississauga City Council
Geoff Wright, City Manager and CAO, City of Mississauga
Association of Municipalities of Ontario

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Moved by: Chris Fongca

Seconded by: [Signature]

WHEREAS according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25(1), every human being has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control; and,

WHEREAS food insecurity is defined as the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints; a serious public health problem and a marker of pervasive material deprivation (poverty); and,

WHEREAS chronic stressors (e.g., disability, precarious work, cost of living crisis) and acute shocks (e.g., COVID-19, illness, eviction) make it more difficult to afford life's basic needs and live free from poverty; and,

WHEREAS Food Banks Mississauga and their 60+ agency member network provided food and household items to over 56,267 neighbours (+58%), or 8% of Mississauga residents, over 421,000 times (+80%) year-over-year, with revenue growth at 2% and no ability to further cut costs without detrimental impacts to food security programming; and,

WHEREAS over 28% of food bank visitors in Mississauga were children (15,754), a 42% increase from last year; and,

WHEREAS one out of every four (25%) of Food Banks Mississauga visitors identifies as having a disability, and the most a single person on ODSP can receive is \$1,368 per month, which is less than \$17,000 per year. ODSP is currently lower than it was in 2018 (\$1,409, adjusted for inflation) and amounts to less than half of the disability-adjusted poverty line (\$3,177). OW has had no increases since 2018. The maximum a single person on OW can receive is \$733 per month, which is 70% below the poverty line; and,

WHEREAS according to Food Banks Canada and the Material Deprivation Index, it's estimated that closer to 25% of all Canadians – meaning almost 175,000 people in Mississauga – currently have a poverty level standard of living; and,

WHEREAS by 2027, without appropriate policy intervention, we estimate food bank use in Mississauga to almost double to over 100,000 people, requiring a commensurate 91% increase in food sourcing; and,

WHEREAS food banks are not funded by the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario; and,

WHEREAS Ontario nonprofits, including food banks, are collectively experiencing stagnant and declining financial resources amidst climbing demand, and increased reserve use, with 39% of nonprofits assessing themselves at significant risk for not existing in the next three years; and,



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Moved by: Chris Farnsworth

Seconded by: M. Al

WHEREAS the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario have historically de-prioritized and underinvested in poverty-reducing social services and programs over multiple decades, resulting in the continued erosion of social safety nets; and,

WHEREAS the roots of rising income inequality are legislative: economic policies and market changes have disproportionately benefited high-income households and negatively impacted lower-income households; and,

WHEREAS in the fourth quarter of 2023, the economic divide between the wealthiest 20 per cent and the poorest 40 per cent in Canada has widened to 65 percentage points, an increase from the same quarter a year earlier. The richest 20 per cent of households saw their average disposable income increase by 6 per cent due to higher wages and higher returns on financial assets. This group now owns 67.7 per cent of the country's total wealth, an average of \$3.3 million per household; and,

WHEREAS according to Food Banks Canada's Poverty Report Card, the current Ontario Government received a D- on Experience of Poverty and an F on Poverty Measures; and, WHEREAS poverty costs Ontario around \$33 billion dollars per year: increased justice system - \$1.1 billion; health care - \$3.9 billion; lost income - \$19.4-25 billion; lost tax revenue - \$2.7-3 billion; and,

WHEREAS if this trend continues, the Government of Canada will not only fail to meet its 2030 target of a 50% decrease in poverty compared to 2015 but will also fall back below its 2020 target of a 20% decrease.

THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF MISSISSAUGA:

1. Declare food insecurity an emergency in Mississauga; and,
2. Request that any relevant upcoming Region of Peel awareness campaigns include this declaration; and,
3. Advocate to higher orders of government alongside Food Banks Mississauga and its 60+ neighbourhood food banks, meal and snack programs, and food pantries for long-term, sustainable, poverty-reduction legislation, policies and programs that centre people with lived experience, in the highest impact areas of:
 - a. Improving Ontario's social assistance programs;
 - b. Investing in affordable, supportive and public housing; and,
 - c. Building a stronger workforce through better labour laws that benefit workers and enhanced worker support programs.

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Moved by: Chris Fonseca

Seconded by: [Signature]

4. Recommend the Peel Region Food Security Emergency Response Fund be increased for 2025, with a robust and transparent application process to ensure equitable fund distribution; and,
5. Send a communication, signed by Mayor Carolyn Parrish on behalf of City Council, to Mississauga MPs and MPPs, requesting they join their municipal counterparts in solidarity, asking for an emergency to be declared at the Provincial and Federal levels, and increasing their commitment to poverty reduction policies and programs in support of basic human rights; and,
6. Send a communication, signed by Mayor Carolyn Parrish on behalf of City Council, to Premier Ford and Prime Minister Trudeau, advocating to the Provincial and Federal governments to support the Groceries and Essentials Benefit brought forward by Food Banks Canada, aimed to help struggling households afford vital costs like food and shelter. It focuses on low-income families, directly aiding those hit hardest by food insecurity and poverty; and,
7. Share this Resolution with and seek support for advocacy related to food insecurity issues across the country from Send a copy of this Resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

Share this Resolution with and seek support for advocacy related to food insecurity issues across the country from
CF
[Signature]

Recorded Vote	YES	NO	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Mayor C. Parrish	✓	✓		
Councillor S. Dasko	✓			
Councillor A. Tedjo	✓			
Councillor C. Fonseca	✓			
Councillor J. Kovac	✓			
Councillor N. Hart	✓			
Councillor J. Horneck	✓			
Councillor D. Damerla	✓			
Councillor M. Mahoney	✓			
Councillor M. Reid	✓			
Councillor S. McFadden			✓	
Councillor B. Butt	✓			

Carried

 Mayor