

Date

Dear

Food insecurity is a crisis in our community that demands your immediate action. The cost of living continues to skyrocket and many of our neighbours, especially those with disabilities who rely on social assistance, are struggling to afford basic needs – like food.

Food insecurity not only undermines a person's health and well-being – it also erodes our community. No one can fully contribute to our community's economic and social fabric if they cannot afford to eat.

I urge you to take the following actions to help end food insecurity in our community:

1. **Invest in Affordable Housing Initiatives:** According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a one-bedroom apartment in Huntsville costs \$1,300 a month – if you can find one. Our community needs a rapid increase in publicly funded apartments at rent-geared-to-income rates, so people can redirect their limited income to other basic needs – like food.
2. **Expand Public Transportation Infrastructure:** Investing in public transportation options – accessible buses, subsidized transit passes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks – will help ensure all community members can easily and affordably access services, like grocery stores.
3. **Increase Ontario Disability Support Program Rates:** Despite recent increases, ODSP rates still hold people under the poverty line. According to the Ontario Living Wage Network, a household in Muskoka needs about \$3,300 a month. Current ODSP rates leave a single person with only \$1,368 per month, despite higher costs of living for people with disabilities.
4. **Protect Social Assistance from Clawbacks:** Protecting social assistance, like ODSP, from clawbacks triggered by employment income or other social benefits, including the new Canada Disability Benefit, will help ensure people with disabilities have predictable incomes that help lift them out of poverty rather than forcing them deeper into it.

Food insecurity is caused by serious financial hardship. I trust that you will consider these actions with the urgency they warrant and work with the appropriate partners to make them happen quickly.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

Name

Community

Email Address