



North Bay, ON May 9, 2023

Subject: Food Insecurity

File No. _____ **Res.** 2023-_____

Moved by Councillor: Horsfield

Seconded by Councillor: Mitchell

Whereas improved financial stability allows municipal residents to participate, contribute, and invest in their local economies and communities;

And Whereas poverty puts additional pressure on municipalities, who are responsible for delivering necessary and strained public and social services to support residents who are struggling with the consequences of inadequate income;

And Whereas food insecurity has a detrimental impact on physical and mental health;

And Whereas adequate income is an important social determinant of health that greatly impacts food security and other social determinants of health such as mental health, housing and transportation;

And Whereas the 2022 Cost of Eating Well report shows that households reliant on social assistance do not have enough money for the costs of living, including food;

And Whereas 67% of households in Ontario with social assistance as their main source of income experience food insecurity.

Therefore Be It Resolved that the Council of the City of North Bay support efforts to raise awareness about, and work to reduce, health inequities, including food insecurity; and

Furthermore be it resolved that the Council of the City of North Bay endorse the letter from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit and call on the Province of Ontario to:

- legislate targets for the reduction of food insecurity as part of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy; and
- increase social assistance rates to reflect the costs of living, and to index Ontario Works rates to inflation going forward; and
- urge the province to resume investigating the feasibility of creating a guaranteed living wage (basic income) in the Province of Ontario; and

Furthermore Be It Resolved that the Council of the City of North Bay provide a copy of this resolution to the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, neighbouring municipalities, Victor Fedeli, MPP (Nipissing), Graydon Smith, MPP (Parry Sound-Muskoka), John Vanthof, MPP (Timiskaming-Cochrane), the Honourable Doug Ford (Premier), the Honourable Merrilee Fullerton (Minister of Children, Community and Social Service), the Honourable Sylvia Jones (Minister of Health) and the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa), MP Anthony Rota, MP Scott Aitchison, MP Marc Serre, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

Carried ☐ Carried as amended ☐ Lost ☐

Conflict _____ Endorsement of Chair _____

Record of Vote (*Upon Request of Councillor* _____)
Signature of Clerk _____

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Room 281
Queens Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

The Honourable Sylvia Jones
Minister of Health / Deputy Premier
777 Bay Street, College Park, 5th Floor
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton
Minister of Children, Community and Social Service
438 University Avenue, 7th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Dear Premier Ford, Minister Jones, and Minister Fullerton:

RE: Food Insecurity in Ontario

The City of North Bay is writing to you to echo the concerns raised by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit about the important public health issue of food insecurity. They shared that recent estimates show that **one in six households experience food insecurity, and one in five children live in a food insecure household**. The scale of this problem is concerning, and it is not acceptable that so many households in Ontario do not have enough money for food.

The Health Unit's [2022 Cost of Eating Well report](#) highlights the severe health consequences of food insecurity, and draws attention to the need for adequate incomes to address this issue. Further, it emphasizes the inadequacy of current social assistance rates. It is clear households receiving social assistance do not have enough money for the costs of living, including food. With ongoing record high food inflation rates, the financial situation is increasingly dire for these households.

Municipalities feel the impact of poverty at the local level, struggling to adequately support citizens who are unable to make ends meet. Funding and administering public and social services, including targeted supports for low-income households is challenging at the best of times, but even more-so now in the current state of COVID-19 recovery and inflation rates. Ensuring low-income households have enough money to meet their basic needs is essential for their health.

As a result of the correspondence received from the Health Unit, which provides the local context of food insecurity in our community, the City of North Bay has passed a series of motions calling for policy action to reduce food insecurity in Ontario. The complete list of resolutions and motions are attached **(include resolutions)**. To summarize, our council joins the Health Unit in calling on the Province of Ontario to:

- Legislate targets for the reduction of food insecurity as part of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Increase social assistance rates to reflect the costs of living, and to index Ontario Works rates to inflation going forward.
- Resume investigating the feasibility of creating a guaranteed living wage (basic income) in the Province of Ontario.

The Province of Ontario can help reduce food insecurity and poverty, especially among households receiving social assistance. From a municipal perspective, we urge you to take action for the health of our citizens and to ease the burden of poverty on our municipality. Please consider the motions our council has passed on this important issue. Thank you for reviewing this information.

Sincerely,

(signatures)

References:

Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021*. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). 2022. Retrieved from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit. *2022 Cost of Eating Well: Monitoring food affordability in the North Bay Parry Sound District*. 2023. Retrieved from: [https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/HU_FoodInsecurity_Report22-\(1\).pdf](https://www.myhealthunit.ca/en/health-topics/HU_FoodInsecurity_Report22-(1).pdf)

Knox B. *The case for basic income and municipalities*. Ontario Basic Income Network. 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.obin.ca/bi_and_municipalities