



SUSTAIN

Alliance for healthy, just and sustainable food & farming
Working across Indigenous Territories / Ontario

Reduce poverty, improve working conditions, and ensure affordable housing to increase food security

- 22.9% of individuals in Ontario face food insecurity, driven by inadequate income, unemployment, and rising food prices.
- The primary factors include insufficient income, unstable employment, lack of affordable housing, and high food inflation.
- While charities help, they often don't address the root causes of food insecurity, which stem from income inequality and systemic poverty.
- Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates are too low, failing to meet the cost of living, especially in high-cost areas, including Northern Ontario.
- Migrant farm and food workers face exploitation due to tied work permits, poor working conditions, and lack of healthcare.
- Ontario is facing a severe affordable housing shortage, driving up homelessness and housing instability. Recent zoning changes threaten agricultural land, exacerbating food insecurity.

Recommendations

- Align OW rates with the cost of living and **index them to inflation**.
- **Provide regional increases to ODSP**, particularly in high-cost areas, including Northern Ontario, to ensure individuals with disabilities can afford basic needs.
- Increase minimum wage to a **living wage** and ensure **regular adjustments**.
- Advocate for **Guaranteed Basic Income (GBI)** to provide stable financial support for all people in Ontario.
- **End tied work permits for migrant farm and food workers** and provide healthcare access **regardless of permit status**.
- Strengthen enforcement of all **workers' rights**, including ensuring migrant workers are **protected from abuse**.
- Prioritize the development of affordable housing **through non-profit and co-op sectors**, with long-term affordability guarantees.
- **Reinstate and strengthen rent control policies** and expand the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) to support low-income families.

These policies have been created with the input of 90+ Ontario organizations collaborating over 4 months and have been vetted by the Sustain Board as of February 4, 2025. For more information, please go to:
<https://sustainontario.com/vote2025/>