



## From Etobicoke to Scarborough, community organizations are calling on mayoral candidates to show up for a better Toronto. #ShowUpTO

Toronto needs a mayor who will show up to meet the needs of our diverse communities and address the affordability crisis, safety concerns and systemic inequities growing along racial, gender and neighbourhood lines. Women, Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, newcomers, seniors, youth, gender diverse people, people with disabilities, and people on fixed incomes are disproportionately impacted by the rising cost of living, food insecurity, violence and inadequate housing in Toronto. With an election for a new Toronto mayor on the line, we are calling on all candidates to prioritize gender and racial equity and invest in poverty and violence reduction.

### HOUSING AND SHELTER

Housing is a human right. Individuals and families should be able to secure safe, affordable and stable housing without sacrificing their wellbeing. Affordable and dignified housing plays a key role in advancing safety and improving the quality of life and access to services. No one should ever feel forced to stay in a violent relationship because they cannot afford to leave. Toronto is in desperate need of affordable, accessible, and safe housing options for women and gender diverse people. Shelter and supportive housing wait lists continue to grow, market rent is becoming less and less affordable, and 'renovictions' and 'demovictions' are on the rise.

#### **Housing and shelter: Increase affordable, accessible, climate resilient, and safe housing options for women and gender diverse people.**

1. Increase funding to the [Toronto Tenant Support Program \(TTSP\)](#), expand the program to include 'renovictions' and 'demovictions' and increase tenant hotline service hours of operation.
2. Address overcrowding by implementing the [enhanced new shelter model](#) with its focus on housing, and its complimentary shelter and health framework, and ensure adequate funding for outreach-based programming and services that create housing plans and support housing access.

3. Create new processes to document and eliminate housing discrimination toward newcomers, racialized, Indigenous and Black Torontonians, residents on fixed incomes, survivors of gender-based violence and/or people with disabilities.
4. Increase access to social housing for low-income families by investing municipal land and municipal funding, including an expansion of the [MURA program](#) to support the building of new safe, green, accessible and deeply affordable homes, with priority for nonprofit developments as a better long-term investment isolated from market factors.
5. Work urgently to solve Toronto's financial dilemma from the loss of Development Charges under new provincial planning legislation, and ensure fair, equitable outcomes under the proposed [Bill 97](#) changes to existing municipal rental replacement by-laws.

## TRANSIT AND INTERNET

Toronto needs a plan to make the TTC safer, accessible, and reliable. A study by WomanACT has shown that 86% of transit riders have experienced some form of harassment in the last year and that women are far more likely than men to experience sexual harassment. Additionally, during the pandemic, it has become clear that access to the internet is a means of safety and should be considered a public good.

**Transit and internet: Ensure the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is safe, accessible and affordable, particularly for women and gender diverse people, people with disabilities and low-income individuals, and that all residents can access the Internet.**

1. Demand the TTC develop a strategy to ensure riders, particularly women and gender diverse people, are free from violence and harassment. This includes hiring specific, trauma-informed support staff and increasing TTC service levels outside peak hours and at night.
2. Reverse TTC service cuts, [which disproportionately impact neighbourhoods marginalized by poverty and racism](#), improve TTC reliability, and reduce TTC fares using a commercial parking levy as a funding source. Fully fund the Fair Pass discount for low-wage workers, lengthen the 2-hour fare window, and expand free transit to people receiving social assistance and high school students.
3. Establish a municipal broadband network and provide free public Wi-Fi, including ensuring Wi-Fi and cellular data services on the TTC.
4. Provide deeply subsidized internet and technology packages to all low and moderate-income people.
5. Protect door-to-door [Wheel-Trans service](#) and stop the rollout of the TTC's Family of Services plan which will force many customers with disabilities to use the conventional, less accessible, TTC system.

## DECENT WORK

Decent work conditions are essential for ensuring families and individuals are able to pay their rent, put food on their tables, and participate in their communities. Economic security provides stability and enables individuals to plan for the future, save for emergencies, and invest in their wellbeing. Care workers—who bore the brunt of the pandemic to care for those most in need of

support, are now facing a cost of living crisis and grappling with indecent working conditions. The cost of living crisis and ramifications of the pandemic have disproportionately impacted women—in particular, racialized, Indigenous, trans and newcomer women, women with disabilities and caregivers. We need meaningful action to address income inequality, promote decent work and protect the nonprofit sector.

**Decent work: Enhance wages and implement better working conditions for frontline and nonprofit workers, a largely feminized and racialized segment of the workforce.**

1. Create a comprehensive workforce strategy for the child care sector and support child care budgets that provide decent and comprehensive wages and benefits to ECEs and other child care workers.
2. Tie all infrastructure investments to community benefits agreements to create decent work opportunities for women, racialized community members and people with disabilities.
3. Increase resources to nonprofit organizations core funding to ensure they can create safe equitable environments to develop and sustain their frontline and management staff.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

Gun violence, gender-based violence and femicide are on the rise. In Toronto, there were [89 recorded cases of gun violence](#) within the first four months of 2023. Poverty and economic disparity are catalysts of violence that cannot be ignored. Eradicating gun and community violence through meaningful investments in culturally appropriate and trauma-informed programs and strategies must be a priority for the City of Toronto.

**Community safety: Increase funding for trauma-informed and culturally-responsive approaches to community safety.**

1. Resource Toronto's [Gender Equity Strategy](#) adequately and ensure priorities identified by residents and expert organizations are reflected in the Strategy.
2. Create a specific fund that provides cash payments to survivors of violence to help rebuild lives in safety.
3. Recommit to [Toronto's Drug Strategy](#) and increase funding to expand and resource programming and services for harm reduction.
4. Create accessible, affordable and diverse counselling and mental health supports for women and gender diverse people; including supporting a multi-access point system by increasing 24/7 community mental health crisis lines.
5. Recommit to the implementation of Toronto's [SafeTO](#) plan, including rapidly increasing funding and implementation of programs that eliminate the reliance on police to address mental health, houselessness, youth in crisis, gender-based violence and gun violence with a connected ecosystem of care
6. Expand City-wide coverage of existing [Toronto Community Crisis Services \(TCCS\)](#), prioritizing the implementation of a 24/7 Indigenous-led response.

## COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Everyone deserves reliable, quality and affordable access to community services, programs and space—these are a tenet of community wellbeing. Parks and public spaces are gathering places for communities; investments in maintenance and programming can help drive safety and wellbeing. Toronto needs to invest in poverty reduction initiatives and programming that ensures our communities' safety, health and wellbeing, particularly for girls and trans youth, and youth with disabilities. An investment in girls and youth programming is an investment in our future.

### **Community wellness: Ensure access to free recreation programs and green space across the city for girls and youth, including food programs.**

1. Commit to the next [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) and ensure full and comprehensive resource allocation and annual tracking and progress reporting.
2. Increase funding and [Welcome Policy](#) subsidies for recreation programs for girls and trans youth, and youth with disabilities, and ensure geographic equity for community centres across the city, with a priority for building new community centres in racialized neighbourhoods.
3. Deeply invest in an assertive nonprofit and public child care centres expansion strategy, that is publicly planned, and actively work towards a publicly funded, licensed, universal child care system.
4. Expand year-round access to critical amenities in public parks as places of respite, such as washrooms and water fountains across the city.
5. Keep residents safe, especially tenants, during extreme weather events by implementing a maximum safe temperature for rental units and providing support and resources for communities to develop local emergency preparedness plans for extreme weather events.
6. Invest in [social development plans](#) across all wards of the City of Toronto.

Click [here](#) to pledge to show up for a better Toronto and vote on June 26! #ShowUpTO