

**COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE PUTTING QUEEN'S PARK ON NOTICE:
FOOD IS A RIGHT! FREEZE THE RENT! RAISE THE RATES! RAISE WAGES!**

TORONTO, ON - On Thursday, October 23, at 11 a.m., a coalition of organizations focused on disability justice, food security, workers' rights, renters' rights, income security, poverty reduction, and improved social services will arrive at Queen's Park in Toronto to put Queen's Park ON NOTICE!

The event will call attention to the interconnectedness of social issues that people living on low incomes and even moderate incomes are facing. The front lawn of Queen's Park will be taken over by food bank supporters, disability justice advocates, renters, workers, and Ontarians who are tired of having their struggles ignored by policymakers. Organizers are calling on the government to freeze rents, end food insecurity, raise social assistance rates, and raise wages.

"Every year at the food bank we see more and more clients," said Chiara Padovani, Senior Specialist Advocacy and Community Engagement at North York Harvest Food Bank. "We hear more and more stories of unfair and illegal evictions, of bad bosses who get away with abuses towards workers who are treated as disposable. We see how social assistance has left our clients demoralized and in deep poverty. We have called together our friends from across social sectors and across the province to put Queen's Park ON Notice!"

Thursday's event will include music, speeches, a meal served by North York Harvest Food Bank staff and volunteers, and a giant snakes-and-*broken*-ladders board game showing that there is no getting ahead in a province that leaves its most vulnerable members to struggle without support.

ODSP Action Coalition is supporting this event in an effort to draw attention to the legislated poverty under which people with disabilities in receipt of ODSP or OW are forced to survive.

"Woefully inadequate social assistance rates are directly fueling the province's highly visible and ever-growing homelessness crises affecting every corner of the province" said Trevor Manson, co-chair with ODSP Action Coalition and ODSP recipient. "And when a person on social assistance becomes homeless, at a time when they are at their lowest point and need the most help, the province inexplicably cuts their benefits by taking away their so-called shelter allowance."

Queen's Park ON NOTICE is being co-hosted by ACORN Ontario, DJNO, Fair Rent Ontario, FMTA, Income Security Advocacy Centre, Justice For Workers, North York Harvest Food Bank, ODSP Action Coalition, Raise the Rates Coalition, Social Planning Toronto, York South-Weston Tenant Union, the Campaign for Adequate Welfare and Disability Benefits, and the Weston King-Mount Dennis Neighbourhood Centre.

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