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How you can help vulnerable people in Toronto during the coronavirus crisis

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Ontario Premier Doug Ford has declared a state of emergency, shutting down all non-essential services, to slow the spread of COVID-19.

But some services are still operational across Toronto, and they need support from those who can offer it.

Below are a few ways people can get involved, either by volunteering or donating financially, to support others during the coronavirus pandemic:

COVID-19 VOLUNTEER RESPONSE TEAM

Volunteer Toronto, a nonprofit agency that supports nonprofits across the city, has set up a response team and invites people to join it. It essentially features an e-blast for anyone who signs up with volunteer opportunities. Learn more at info.volunteertoronto.ca/covid19 (<https://info.volunteertoronto.ca/covid19>).

CITY OF TORONTO

The City of Toronto has created a donation portal to bring in products, services and funds to support its COVID-19 pandemic relief efforts. Learn more at [toronto.ca/covid-19](https://www.toronto.ca/covid-19) (<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>).

MEALS ON WHEELS

Story continues below▼

Meals on Wheels programs are provided by 19 different agencies across Toronto. There's always a need for volunteer drivers, and reports show there's been a spike in clients as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Here's a few of the agencies that run the service.

- **Canadian Red Cross** – The Toronto Region branch of the national charity operates a Meals on Wheels program in Etobicoke from its office at [557 Dixon Road](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Canadian+Red+Cross/@43.6898931,-79.571512,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0x3925a12f04125430?sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiUltKn67XoAhUFbc0KHc3qARsQ_BIwCnoECBEQCA) (https://www.google.com/maps/place/Canadian+Red+Cross/@43.6898931,-79.571512,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0x3925a12f04125430?sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiUltKn67XoAhUFbc0KHc3qARsQ_BIwCnoECBEQCA), Unit 110. Call [416-236-3180](tel:416-236-3180) (tel:14162363180).
- **Humber Community Seniors' Services** – This program serves the former city of York from its Mount Dennis location at [1167 Weston Rd.](https://www.google.com/maps/place/1167+Weston+Rd,+York,+ON+M6M+4P5/@43.6874875,-79.4922186,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b36b4d61c8419:0xe5638e684d55d0bd!8m2!3d43.6874875!4d-79.4900299) (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/1167+Weston+Rd,+York,+ON+M6M+4P5/@43.6874875,-79.4922186,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b36b4d61c8419:0xe5638e684d55d0bd!8m2!3d43.6874875!4d-79.4900299>) Call [416-249-7946](tel:416-249-7946) (tel:14162497946).
- **Lumacare** – This organization serves all of North York west of Bathurst Street. Call [416-398-5519](tel:416-398-5519) (tel:14163985519).
- **Circle of Care** – This organization provides a kosher Meals on Wheels program through parts of midtown, North York and up to York Region. Call [416-635-2860](tel:416-635-2860) (tel: 1- 416-635-2860).
- **WoodGreen Community Services** – WoodGreen serves Toronto's east end. Call [416-572-3575](tel:416-572-3575) (tel:14165723575).
- **Neighbourhood Link Support Services** – The organization serves Toronto's east end, including the southwest portion of Scarborough. Call [416-691-7407](tel:416-691-7407) (tel:14166917407).

To find other Meals on Wheels agencies in the city, visit www.mealsonwheels.ca (<http://www.mealsonwheels.ca/>).

BLOOD DONATION

While Canadians are urged to stay at home because of the coronavirus pandemic, Canadian Blood Services continues to need donations. The organization has several permanent locations in Toronto. They include:

- King Street, [163 King St. W.](https://www.google.com/maps/place/163+King+St+W,+Toronto,+ON+M5H+4H2/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x882b34d237534cfb:0x5291e3923231bfa2?sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjfhP2NtLHoAhVRBs0KHdJtDLAQ8gEwAHoECAsQAQ) (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/163+King+St+W,+Toronto,+ON+M5H+4H2/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x882b34d237534cfb:0x5291e3923231bfa2?sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjfhP2NtLHoAhVRBs0KHdJtDLAQ8gEwAHoECAsQAQ>)
- College Street, [67 College St.](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Victoria+Hospital+for+Sick+Children,+67+College+St,+Toronto,+ON+M5G+2M1/@43.6603578,-79.3891367,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b34b66cb2ac5f:0x87fa76351998e251!8m2!3d43.6603578!4d-79.3869427) (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Victoria+Hospital+for+Sick+Children,+67+College+St,+Toronto,+ON+M5G+2M1/@43.6603578,-79.3891367,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b34b66cb2ac5f:0x87fa76351998e251!8m2!3d43.6603578!4d-79.3869427>)

- Yonge and Bloor, [2 Bloor St. E.](#)

(<https://www.google.com/maps/place/2+Bloor+St+E,+Toronto,+ON+M4W+1A8/@43.6710978,-79.388257,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b35dc64daa0f5:0xc68d743e7a560cf3!8m2!3d43.6710978!4d-79.386063>)

The organization also holds blood donor clinics at partner sites on a scheduled basis. To find one near you, or to make an appointment at any of the locations, visit www.blood.ca (<http://www.blood.ca>) or call [1-888-2-DONATE](tel:18882DONATE) (<tel:18882366283>).

FOOD BANKS

Volunteers donate their time at a sorting food event at the Daily Bread Food Bank. – Ian Kelso/Torstar file photo

Some food banks have closed; those that remain open are having to serve more people while also receiving fewer donations during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can help, either by donating food or cash or volunteering your services. Here are a few agencies that are seeking support.

- **Daily Bread Food Bank** – This Etobicoke-based organization supports some 135 agencies across the city providing meal programs or food banks. The organization welcomes 10,000 volunteers per year. Learn more at www.dailybread.ca (<https://www.dailybread.ca/>).
- **North York Harvest Food Bank** – This organization serves north Toronto, providing 2.3 million pounds of food to partner agencies. Food donations can be made at its warehouse at [116 Industry St.](#) (https://www.google.com/maps/place/116+Industry+St,+York,+ON+M6M+4L8/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x882b3149fa9954fb:0xb3da769527b55013?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiej6CM_cLoAhXbKM0KHTwGA3AQ8gEwAHoECA0QAQ) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., but it says monetary donations are preferred at this time. Learn more at northyorkharvest.com (<https://northyorkharvest.com/>).
- **Second Harvest Food Rescue** – This Toronto-based agency provides fresh perishable food to hunger-relief organizations across Canada. It needs support to keep its trucks rolling during the COVID-19 outbreak to support programs that are under increased stress during this time. Learn more at secondharvest.ca (secondharvest.ca).
- **The Salvation Army** – The Salvation Army says donations are down, but the need for food and hygiene products has gone up. It asks anyone who can help to make a donation at its Railside Distribution Centre, located at [150 Railside Rd.](#) (https://www.google.com/maps/place/150+Railside+Rd/@43.737724,-79.326622,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xb1c3e99b76ca3d72?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjey_yprsf0AhVyc0KHU1MBTIQ_BIwCnoECBEQCA) in Scarborough, any time between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday. The organization says it needs starches, spreads, canned meats, tuna, coffee, shampoo, soap, deodorant, body wash, socks, underwear, incontinence products and female hygiene products. Financial donations can be made at www.salvationarmy.ca (<http://www.salvationarmy.ca>).

Toronto has hundreds of food banks. North York Harvest Food Bank can help you find one near you. To do so, call [416-635-7771](tel:4166357771) (<tel:14166357771>), ext. 0, or email info@northyorkharvest.com (<mailto:info@northyorkharvest.com>).

POVERTY AND HOMELESS SUPPORT

The problems of Toronto's poor or homeless populations have not gone away since the outbreak; in fact, they've become worse. You can make a positive difference for them by supporting the agencies that help them.

- **Good Shepherd Ministries** – The agency based at [412 Queen St. E.](#) (https://www.google.com/maps/place/Good+Shepherd+Ministries/@43.6562689,-79.362509,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xa8e1bd1738436505?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiT2-KqgsPoAhXCAP0JHXBKAUMQ_BIwCnoECBEQCA) has had to change how it operates, including reducing hours and now providing meals to go in a bag. You can help by donating food (check their website for items most needed) or by donating financially (online donations are preferred). Learn more at www.goodshepherd.ca (<http://www.goodshepherd.ca>).
- **Fred Victor** – The organization dedicated to ending homelessness provides services at 20 locations. It says homeless and low-income people are especially susceptible to the coronavirus. Without donations, the agency can't support those who are at most risk. Learn more at www.fredvictor.org (<https://www.fredvictor.org/2020/03/13/help-homeless-during-covid-19-outbreak/>).
- **Eva's Place** – Eva's Place offers services such as shelter and transitional housing to young people. It says youth experiencing homelessness are extremely vulnerable to the spread of the virus. Learn more at www.evas.ca (<https://www.evas.ca/>).
- **Covenant House Toronto** – This organization serves homeless children or those who are victims of sex trafficking. A donation at this time will help provide food, shelter and medical care to some of Toronto's most vulnerable residents, as well as implement health and safety measures during this crisis. Learn more at covenanthousetoronto.ca (<https://covenanthousetoronto.ca/>).
- **YWCA Toronto** – The Y doesn't just offer gym space and child care. Among its many services are homeless shelters, escape from violence shelters and permanent housing services. The organization provides shelter to nearly 1,700 women and children each year. Learn more at www.ywcatoronto.org (<https://www.ywcatoronto.org/ourprograms/shelterandhousing>).

Toronto is home to dozens of homeless help programs, from drop-in centres, shelters, Out of the Cold programs, housing help and more. To learn more and to find a program near you to potentially support, visit the City of Toronto's Housing and Shelter page at www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter (<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/housing-shelter/>).

PROGRAMS FOR SENIORS

- **Friendly Neighbour Hotline** – The University Health Network's OpenLab launched this service on March 23 to mobilize volunteers to deliver groceries to vulnerable seniors. The organization has a volunteer intake form online and participants can select which Toronto neighbourhoods they would like to volunteer in. Learn more at uhnopenlab.ca/project/hotline (<http://uhnopenlab.ca/project/hotline/>).
- **West Toronto Support Services** – While the organization has had to cancel many programs, such as adult day services, it still needs volunteers and donations to provide support services from its **Bloor Street** (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/1709+Bloor+St+W,+Toronto,+ON+M6P+4E5/@43.654647,-79.4610242,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b34302f55c2e9:0x48ef618377877bba!8m2!3d43.6546431!4d-79.4588302>) and **Weston** (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/1167+Weston+Rd,+York,+ON+M6M+4P5/@43.6874914,-79.4922239,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x882b36b4d61c8419:0xc5638e684d55d0bd!8m2!3d43.6874875!4d-79.4900299>) locations. Learn more at wtss.org (<https://wtss.org/>).
- **ESS Support Services** – Etobicoke-based ESS Support Services has had to suspend a host of programs, but some, like its assisted living services, in-home respite services and transportation, continue. It says financial donations are critical at this time. Learn more at www.esssupportservices.ca (<https://www.esssupportservices.ca/ess-program-and-services-update-covid-19/>).
- **Senior Persons Living Connected** – This organization based at **3333 Finch Ave. E.** (<https://www.google.com/maps/place/3333+Finch+Ave+E,+Scarborough,+ON+M1W+3P7/@43.7963418,-79.3189683,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x89d4d3b9bce750cd:0x5b1e9e3527f81ce2!8m2!3d43.7963418!4d-79.3167796>) in Scarborough, like many others, has had to stop providing a number of programs, but many continue to be offered. You can support this work financially. Learn more at www.splc.ca (<https://www.splc.ca/donate>).
- **North York Seniors Centre** – This centre has modified the way it provides a number of programs, and it's unlikely to accept new volunteers at the moment. But you can help financially. Learn more at www.nyseniors.org (<https://www.nyseniors.org/get-involved/donate/>).
- **Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association** – Volunteers with the AMYA across Canada, including its Toronto chapter, are making grocery store runs for seniors and people with disabilities. The Neighbourhood Helper needs more volunteers. Learn more at www.helpingneighbours.com (<https://www.helpingneighbours.com/>).

HOSPITALS

Sunnybrook has started a website asking for more PPE, joining a growing list of hospitals in need of more protective gear during the COVID-19 pandemic. - Andrew Francis Wallace/Toronto Star file photo

- **Sunnybrook** – Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre is seeking donations of personal protective equipment (PPE). It says it needs N95 masks, other masks and face shields, surgical gowns, protective medical goggles, and ventilators. Learn more at sunnybrook.ca/content/?page=novel-coronavirus-covid-19-donate-masks-ppe (<https://sunnybrook.ca/content/?page=novel-coronavirus-covid-19-donate-masks-ppe>).
- **North York General Hospital** – North York General needs PPE items including surgical masks, N95 masks, and face shields (disposable and reusable), along with other items. A tent outside has been set up where people can drop items off. Learn more at www.nyghppdrive.ca (<https://www.nyghppdrive.ca/>).
- **Humber River Hospital** – Humber River is seeking PPE items such as face masks, gloves, gowns that tie in the back, and sanitizer wipes. Learn more at www.hrh.ca/covid-19 (<https://www.hrh.ca/covid-19/>).
- **Etobicoke General Hospital** – William Osler Health System, which operates Etobicoke General and a few hospitals in Peel Region, said it needs financial and PPE donations. Its foundation has started a \$1 million fundraising campaign to support Osler's COVID-19 response. Learn more at oslerfoundation.akaraisin.com/ui/covid19 (<https://oslerfoundation.akaraisin.com/ui/covid19>).
- **Scarborough Health Network** – SHN, which operates three sites in Scarborough, is seeking PPE and financial donations. It is in need of 3M goggles, procedure and N95 masks, hand sanitizer, and face shields (disposable and reusable). Learn more at www.shn.ca/news/helpourheroes (<https://www.shn.ca/news/helpourheroes/>).
- **Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital** – The hospital dedicated to serving children with disabilities and their families is increasing its Family Support Fund to help families facing financial hardships associated with raising a child with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis. Learn more at www.hollandbloorview.ca (<https://www.hollandbloorview.ca/>).
- **University Health Network** – UHN, which runs hospitals such as Toronto General and others, is seeking financial and PPE donations to support its COVID-19 response. Learn more at www.uhn.ca/Covid19/Pages/COVID_support_donations.aspx (https://www.uhn.ca/Covid19/Pages/COVID_support_donations.aspx).

Looking for more COVID-19-related content? Visit our [coronavirus landing page \(https://www.toronto.com/toronto-topics/9866764-coronavirus-crisis/\)](https://www.toronto.com/toronto-topics/9866764-coronavirus-crisis/) to read the latest news, safety information, public health announcements and more.



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