



ANNUAL REPORT



2019
EDITION





LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

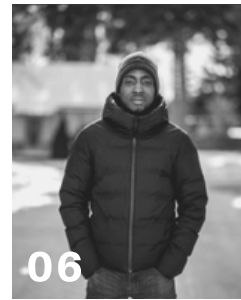
The Toronto Youth Cabinet acknowledges the land on which we meet and work is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.




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MESSAGE FROM
EDNA ALI,
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE
TORONTO YOUTH
CABINET



The Toronto Youth Cabinet is a non-partisan advocacy organization that strives to improve the quality of life for Toronto's youth. In working together with City Councillors and through fostering partnerships amongst various organizations, the Cabinet is dedicated to providing young people with a forum in which they are able to build an equitable, accessible, and youth-friendly Toronto.

The TYC has several Working Groups that focus on issue-specific projects and initiatives. While our focus are issues that all Torontonians deal with, such as community safety, or unemployment, or the housing affordability crisis for example, we seldom think of these issues in a forward-thinking manner, much less as they come to affect young people—especially our most vulnerable.

As we reach the end of our 2018-2019 term, it will have been my second year as Executive Director of the Toronto Youth Cabinet. As this term ends, I would like to reflect on not only the stellar achievements of this term, but also of the hard work and successes of the 2018-2019 term.

I am proud to have provided the support to all the work that you will read about. I am even prouder of our leadership team that saw these projects through—many thanks to you all for your fantastic work.

My time at the Toronto Youth Cabinet has been a such a rewarding experience. I've learned so much about Toronto, its municipal processes, and explored the many different ways we can mobilize around the many issues that face this rapidly changing city.

That said, there is still more work to be done. You'll not only see what we've done the past two years, but you will also get a sense of what's to come for us as organization as well.

It's been twenty years and we still need a conduit for youth voices to take up space at our City. I truly hope in the next twenty years that won't be necessary. I hope that our systems work for and with its young people, especially those of us at the margins. Until then, I am humbled to know so many incredible young people in this organization who keep working towards the equitable, accessible, and youth-friendly Toronto we deserve.

Edna Ali

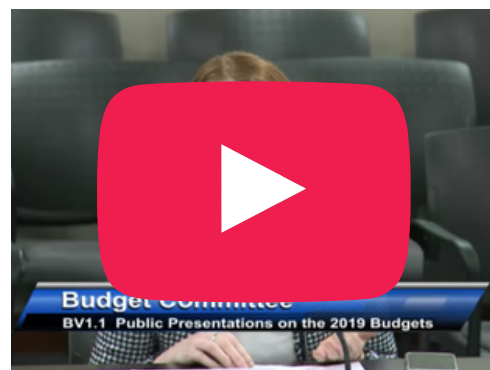


BUDGET

The Budget Working Group aims to increase youth awareness, engagement, and excitement around the City's Budget process and investigate the effectiveness of Council's budget process and budgetary decisions as they pertain to youth in Toronto.

During budget cycle, the TYC was a key stakeholder in keeping up the pressure the City to be proactive in maintaining vital City assets its social housing stock and transit, as well as programs that youth rely on.

A huge win was our deputation and budget breakdown workshop where we explained the budget and trained young people on how to write and deliver deputations. Several very well-written deputations were made from members of the Working Group, and presented in different areas of the city.



Click to see the deputations

Other wins include media attention. While it is not necessarily the best way to communicate with youth, it was great in getting our message across strongly to councillors and members of the general public.

Current Projects

- Continuing TYC presence at budget deputations, in the election campaign, and other events that pertain to the budget as a way to encourage more youth to be engaged in the Budget process
- Highlight the needs of youth in the budget in a unique way, and attempt to demonstrate what a budget may look like if youth had power to develop this.
- Encourage City Council to consider additional revenue tools such as a Municipal Income tax, the vehicle registration tax, commercial parking levy, and etc.



NEWCOMER

The Newcomer Working Group is dedicated to encouraging the integration, civic participation, and success of newcomer youth in Toronto. Two main initiatives were taken: first, connecting with various organizations that serve newcomer youth in order to establish beneficial partnerships with community actors that can guide us the working group. Second, consultations with newcomer youth took place to directly to hear their concerns regarding the city, and what they would like to be improved for them.

This consultation process also serves as a method for the working group to establish what newcomer youth prioritize, so that the TYC may take it to define our action plan for the next and following years. Discussion topics included education, accessibility to municipal government, access social services, and transportation.

A report from these consultations has been published. Additionally, an Open Dialogue was held in partnership with the City of Toronto's Youth Development Unit, Toronto Strong Neighbourhood, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Units, and Newcomer Office to empower newcomer youth and identify available community supports to address common challenges in areas such as civic engagement, community resources, and education.



[Click to read the report](#)

Current projects include:

- Public campaigns to advocate for newcomer youth as detailed in our report
- Working with the Newcomer Office and Council's Newcomer Advocate to fill gaps present in the civic knowledge and engagement and of newcomer youth
- Prioritizing membership of newcomer youth within the working group itself



The Transit Working Group aims to advocate for transit policies that meet the needs of youth and students in Toronto.

The bulk of the work taken place this term was to understand this landscape and foster relationships between both City of Toronto staff, City Council members, and transit advocacy groups.

Further work also included a deputation at budget committee against the proposed fare hike, as well as an **email action alert campaign** sent to young people to tell City Council stop the fare increase.

Finally, the Transit Working Group is representing the TYC on several City of Toronto Stakeholder Advisory groups as it pertains to transit projects such as the Eglinton West LRT, the Yonge Tomorrow study, and more.



[Click to watch the deputation](#)

Current projects include:

- **Fighting for increased TTC service**
- **Advocacy that would see the implementation of Vision Zero and Toronto Cycling Plan**
- **Beginning a discussion about prioritizing transit vehicles on City streets**

EQUITY AND EMPLOYMENT

The Equity & Employment Working Group works to fight the City's rising rate of youth unemployment, and improve access to jobs for marginalized youth.

Our goal was to better understand the reoccurring trends that hinder their ability to seek out employment that is both secure and desirable, while also acknowledging that these barriers run deeper for some communities more than others.

This led to creation of a report that was the result of the collaborative efforts of our working group members. We held over 30 consultations with relevant stakeholders who provided insight that reflects the larger community's knowledge of the issues embedded within the topic of youth unemployment. These consultations formed the basis of our research report on youth unemployment.

These findings were later discussed in a webinar on barriers to youth employment and ways the youth sector can promote pathways to meaningful employment.

Current projects include:

- Data collection and research on job postings to assess what skills young people require in today's job market



[Click to read the report](#)



URBAN HEALTH

The TYC's Urban Health group is the most recent working group to form. It will combine and link youth experts to partner and collaborate with Toronto Public Health on a variety of special interests affecting youth across Toronto. Using a holistic, equitable, and anti-oppressive lens, team members will work together to promote and inform said interests to the greater public using the platforms of the TYC and TPH.

Ultimately, the goal for the Urban Health team is to empower, uplift, and provide a voice for youth who have previously navigated various social determinants of health. The only way in which we can maximize youth services to their full potential is if youth have the opportunity to participate and inform the same services that are designed for them.

Current wins this term is the development of a resource guide on services for youth participating in Frosh Week regarding substance misuse for Frosh Leaders and Resident assistance in the universities and colleges in Toronto. Additionally, the Urban Health Working group took the lead on providing strategic advice to Maximum City's YouthScore project.

Current projects include:

- **An Open Dialogue on Responses to Overdose Prevention**





EDUCATION

The TYC's Education Working Group works with Toronto's school boards in order to amplify the voice of students and advocate for the issues that matter most to them.

We spent numerous months developing a working relationship with the TDSB Student Senate members and TCDSB Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team members.

We have also been looking the resources available to students as it concerns mental health supports. We have been finding that the supports provided to students is limited and are exploring opportunities to increase supports to students, be that through be them changes to curriculum, training, programming, or staffing.

Current projects include:

- Further developing a working relationship between the Education working group and TDSB and TCDSB student leadership
- Advocacy for more mental health supports for students in TDSB and TCDSB schools





COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Community Safety Working Group aims to advocate for the safety and autonomy of youth in Toronto through policing and violence prevention initiatives. The problems this group seeks to address are centred on violence prevention and policing initiatives in Toronto communities that affect the mobility and safety of youths, but more specifically marginalized youths and communities in Toronto.

Huge wins with the working group was partnering with the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy to host two Youth Violence townhalls, providing community members, youth allies, and young people a forum to discuss their concerns as well as share what the City and the TYC has been working towards on the issue.

In light of rising rates of violence affecting our most vulnerable, and especially affecting the City's most vulnerable youth, we are working with some incredible young people in Regent Park to make space for young people to discuss, learn, and promote best practices in youth-led initiatives around violence prevention and policing.

Furthermore, due to the broad and systematic nature of both violence prevention and policing, this group's other work focused on work and research on how young people perceive their relationship with police. The purpose of the to uncover the strengths of the relationship, as well as the weaknesses, to then be able to identify areas of potential growth and improvement. This led to several consultations across the City and a survey that saw over 70 responses.

Current projects include:

- Working to develop training for new police recruits on how to interact and engage with young people
- Continue youth dialogues around policing and violence prevention in the west and east end of the City.



The Housing Working Group is dedicated to educating youth on their rights and the best practices in relation to their roles as residents of the City of Toronto, as well as advocating for policies and initiatives which ensure that Toronto is an accessible and affordable city for all.

One initiative from this group was **releasing a statement** on National Housing Day Statement, affirming the TYC's stance that housing ought to be recognized as a fundamental human right as such, as well as reaffirming the recommendations brought forward during past TYC housing events.

Another initiative was providing a forum for Toronto youth to learn more about the affordable housing crisis and share their lived experiences, and shape the discussion and future priority areas for organizations and municipalities working to improve housing affordability, particularly from a youth-driven perspective. This discussion was done through Civic Action's CivicDish project, Torontonians gather for meaningful mealtime and generate ideas for collective action on some of our biggest urban challenges.

Current projects include:

- The development of a youth-centered and youth-friendly tenant rights guide



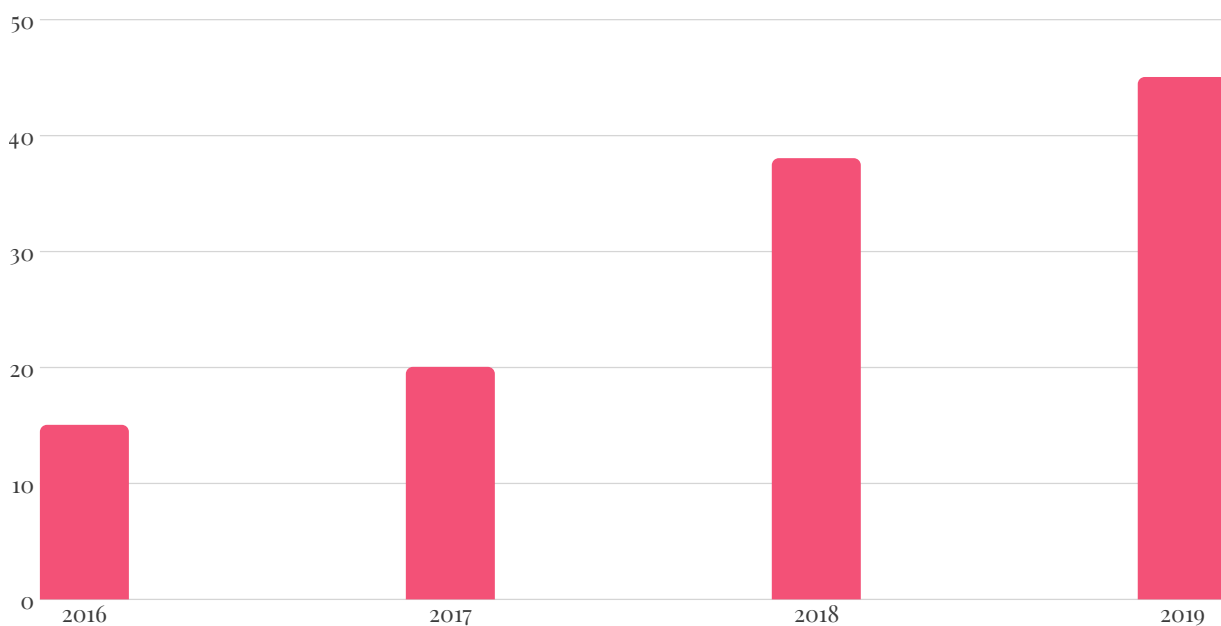
CABINET MEETINGS

Our monthly Cabinet meeting is open to all youth between the ages of 13 and 24 who live, work, or learn in the City of Toronto. These meetings are two hours, with the first half dedicated to a guest speaker, collaboration, or policy discussion.

We've had hundreds of young people attend, with a consistent attendance of over forty young people at each and every one of our Cabinet meetings for the 2018-2019 term. There, we heard from City Councillors like Councillor Bailo and Councillor McMahon.

We've also heard from organizations like Story of Ours, Urban Minds, the Peer Project, Maximum City's YouthScore project, Toronto Community Benefits, Wellesley Institute, and Apathy is Boring.

Cabinet members also had the opportunity to contribute to the Toronto's Resiliency Strategy, the 2018-22 Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy for Toronto, the City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, the Eglinton West LRT transit project, and the City of Toronto's Doors Open event.



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH CHART FOR YEAR 2019

YOUTH WEEK

During the first week of May, the City of Toronto celebrates Youth Week. This week highlights the many opportunities that the City of Toronto provides for the city's youth, as well as celebrate youth engagement and showcase the abilities and talents of youth in the areas of recreation, arts, sports and civic engagement in communities across Toronto.

The events the Toronto Youth Cabinet hosted was the kick-off the 20th anniversary celebrations for the Toronto Youth Cabinet with a panel discussion titled: Elevating Youth Voices: Working Towards A Youth-Friendly Toronto. The panel explored what a youth friendly Toronto looks like, what role youth can play in city-building and barriers that they can face in doing so, while also exploring past and present contributions of youth in Toronto. Following from that, a reception with music, food, and networking opportunities took place.

In partnership with Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the Toronto Youth Cabinet hosted its own session for the IF I RULED T.O. Youth Summit where youth from across the city were invited to present their thoughts and ideas regarding matters of entrepreneurship, mental health, civic engagement and violence in the community. For the TYC's workshop, we helped participants learn more about how they can be change agents in their communities.

The week ended with an event done in partnership with Laidlaw Foundation, Twitter Canada, For the Youth Initiative, Apathy is Boring, Civic Action, Ryerson's Democracy Exchange, and the Young Women Leadership Network a Youth Town Hall featuring the Provincial Party Leaders for the Provincial Elections. The discussion touched on pressing youth facing issues ranging from tuition, housing, employment and criminal justice reform. Liberal party leader Premier Kathleen Wynne, NDP party leader Andrea Horwath, and Green Party Leader Mike Schreiner attended. Hundreds of young people tuned in on Twitter to watch.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

ANTI-OPPRESSION RESOURCE

The operations of the Toronto Youth Cabinet are guided by principles of anti-oppression. Anti-oppression training is a mandatory requirement for all members to be part of the TYC.

In between these quarterly trainings, our members an anti-oppression resource was developed to serve as an introduction to the anti-oppression principles, approaches and tools the TYC utilizes .



[Click to read the resource](#)

Members are expected to apply this learning to all projects and contributions they perform as members of the TYC.



BRIEFING NOTES

The TYC will be leading a new sort advocacy strategy focused on issues impacting youth in the City of Toronto. One aspect of this strategy will require Working Groups to identify key issues/positions related to their working group, and hear from young people themselves on how these issues impact them and their communities. Click below to read more about these briefing notes:



TYC 2018- 2019 TEAM



Edna Ali
Executive Director



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Dir. Internal Affairs



Arjun Sahota
Chair



Andrea Fernández
Dir. Policy &
Advocacy



Riley Peterson
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Dir. Organizational
Development



Ninar Fawal
Newcomer Lead



Eli Aaron
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Rania Ahmed
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Lead



Ann Nguyen
Education Lead



Michael Manu
Budget Lead



Erika Dupuis
Urban Health Lead



Diana Yoon
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Osivue Isteumah
Equity & Employment
Lead