



Daily Bread

Food Bank

2019 WHO'S HUNGRY REPORT KEY FINDINGS

About

In partnership, Daily Bread Food Bank, North York Harvest Food Bank and The Mississauga Food Bank have released *Who's Hungry 2019* – a report profiling hunger in the Toronto region. Through quantitative and qualitative research and data collection, this report provides valuable insight into the causes and consequences of food insecurity across our cities.

The key finding of the report is that Canada is not meeting its legal obligations with respect to the right to food. In fact, food bank use in the Toronto region is growing at double the rate of population growth.

Who's Hungry is provided to the public and government leaders to raise awareness and spark policy change to reduce poverty.

2019 Key Findings

- **The number of visits to food banks in the Toronto region is growing.**
 - There were over 1 million visits to food banks in the Toronto region in the last year (April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019)
 - This represents a 4% increase compared to the previous year
- **Neighbours in our communities are experiencing hunger regularly.**
 - 44% of adults reported going hungry at least once a month
 - 25% of parents reported that their children go hungry at least once a month
- **The rising cost of housing, coupled with stagnant monthly incomes, means there is less money left for basic expenses.**
 - The median income of food bank clients is \$806/month and has not increased since last year
 - The cost of a 1-bedroom apartment rental in Toronto has increased by 6% since last year
 - Food bank clients report spending 74% of their income on housing, an increase of 6% since last year

- The median amount of money left for food and all other expenses after rent is paid is \$7.83 per person, per day. That amount is 3% less since last year
- **Social assistance rates do not provide enough income to meet all basic needs.**
 - 60% of food bank clients report social assistance as their primary source of income (this includes Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program)
 - 57% of food bank clients report living with a disability
- **Level of education does not determine food bank use.**
 - 44% of food bank clients have completed post-secondary education
- **A disproportionate percentage of the population who are turning to food banks are racialized.**
 - Close to 25% of food bank clients identify as Black (compared to 8% of Toronto's population)

Report Themes

- **The Right to Food is not being realized in Canada, despite government obligations and commitments to do so.**
 - Food is a basic human right, yet over four million Canadians are food insecure – meaning they have “inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.” ([source](#))
- **Hunger is growing in the Toronto region and it is a symptom of poverty.**
 - 1 in 7 households in the Toronto region are experiencing hunger.
 - There has been a 4% increase in food bank use in the Toronto region, compared to only a 2% increase in the population.
 - In Toronto, a family of two adults and two children is considered living below the poverty line if they have an income of \$41,362 or less. Of the families who participated in our survey, 98% fell below this poverty line.
- **Food bank use correlates to areas with high concentrations of poverty and is growing in the suburbs.**
 - The highest per capita food bank use remains in the Toronto Centre riding, an area with a high concentration of poverty.
 - In the past year, Mississauga, North York and Scarborough saw the biggest increases in food bank use.
 - Mississauga 16% / North York 9% / Scarborough 8%
- **One of the leading factors that leads to food bank use is rising housing costs.**
 - The majority of food bank clients (67%) live in private rental units (unsubsidized housing) and face the burden of high rental costs.

- The average rent of a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto has increased by 6% in the last year, but the median income for food bank clients has remained the same.
- Food bank clients are spending a median of 74% of their income on rent, putting them at an extremely high risk of homelessness.

Considerations and Recommendations – A Snapshot

We are calling on all levels of government to meet their legal obligation to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food. Hunger is a symptom of poverty and a public policy issue that cannot be outsourced to charity.

The federal election has concluded, and Ontario's government has recently returned to Queen's Park – this is an opportunity for our new government to put achieving the right to food at the top of their agenda.

We are putting forward six recommendations to realize the right to food:

1. Strengthen social assistance
2. Support low-income households by expanding tax benefits and creating pathways out of poverty
3. Invest in affordable housing and tenant protections
4. Enhance access to affordable childcare
5. Commit to ensuring access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food in each and every community
6. Adopt a human rights-based approach to decision making to ensure policies promote equity

Hunger is not a partisan issue – access to food affects every riding in Canada. In a country as prosperous as ours, no one should have to choose between feeding their children and paying their rent.

Visit dailybread.ca/whoshungry to review this year's full report.