

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 14, 2022

**FOOD BANK CRISIS: 1.99 MILLION VISITS TO FOOD BANKS IN TORONTO OVER THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS**

*New report by Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank reveals low incomes, high housing costs and inflation are pushing people to crisis-level food bank use.*

**Toronto, ON** – Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank have released the annual [Who's Hungry](#) report, a profile of food insecurity in the City of Toronto. The report illustrates the deep strain faced by food banks and those accessing them.

**Over the past twelve months, there have been 1.99 million visits to food banks, and demand is projected to push that number to over two million for the 2022 calendar year.**

“Month after month, we keep seeing the impact of insufficient incomes, combined with inflation and rising costs of living, lead to record-breaking numbers,” says Neil Hetherington, CEO, Daily Bread Food Bank. “The need for food banks is at crisis levels with no signs of slowing down. Moreover, food banks are seeing more *new* clients each month, and those visiting are experiencing more severe levels of food insecurity. On average, they are also younger and more likely to be employed.”

**Food bank clients' incomes have dropped, despite higher numbers of employed food bank clients.**

- After their rent and utilities are paid, food bank clients have a median of \$8.01 left per person, per day, to pay for food and all other necessities. This is a drop from last year's median of \$9.17 per day.
- Food bank clients report a median annual income of \$12,732 – nearly 50% below Canada's official poverty line.
- The median for racialized people is \$7.75 per person, per day. Those who had arrived in Canada within the past year have \$3.81 per person, per day.
- Among those reporting employment income, 80% are living in deep poverty (75% of poverty line).
- 33% of respondents reported employment as their primary source of income. Of those employed, 60% reported holding a precarious job with low wages and little to no benefits.

**Rents are absorbing an unbearable part of peoples' incomes.**

- 87% of food bank clients live in unaffordable housing. As defined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, this means that they are paying 30% or more of their income on housing, compared to 45% of residents overall in Toronto.
- 69% of food bank clients were paying at least half of their income on housing, putting them at risk of homelessness.
- 18% of clients were paying 100% of their income on housing costs.

**Food bank clients are socially and economically isolated.**

- 39% of food bank clients report that they do not have people in their lives to count on in times of need. That is 5 times higher than the general population at 8%.

- The portion of seniors who are food bank clients has risen from one in ten to one in six.
- 29% of seniors reported they sometimes/often did not have enough food to eat.
- 87% of seniors reported living in housing considered unaffordable.

**“I can't afford three meals a day because of the cost,” says a *Who's Hungry* survey respondent. “If it were not for the food bank, I would not be able to make it; it would be 8-10 days without food per month.”**

“Food insecurity is caused by poverty,” says Ryan Noble, Executive Director, North York Harvest Food Bank. “While food banks play a vital role in the lives of thousands of Torontonians, they cannot reduce poverty. We need bold, systemic changes which require governments at all levels to act.”

The Right to Food will not be realized until the systemic issues that perpetuate inequities are addressed. All levels of government need to prioritize poverty reduction strategies.

**Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank call for the following:**

1. Guaranteed income security and the elimination of systemic poverty.
2. Solutions to Toronto’s housing affordability crisis.
3. Mitigating the steep increases in the cost of living.

To read the full report and detailed recommendations, visit [dailybread.ca/whoshungry](https://dailybread.ca/whoshungry)  
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