

# WHO'S HUNGRY 2022

## Top Line Messages

- **With growing record demand, things are NOT okay.**
- **Incomes have dropped, despite a higher number of employed food bank clients.**
- **Rents are absorbing an unbearable part of incomes.**
- **Food bank clients are socially and economically isolated.**

## Key Findings

**During the reporting period, a record 1.68 million food bank visits were recorded in Toronto, up 16% from the previous record of 1.45 million last year. Over the past twelve months, there have been 1.99 million visits. Demand is projected to reach over two million visits by the end of 2022.**

**Most clients are trapped in deep poverty, reporting incomes that are half of Canada's official poverty line.**

- 96% of respondents live below the poverty line. (\$2,060 per month/\$24,720 annually for singles).
- 82% of respondents were living in *deep poverty*, defined as having an income at or below 75% of the official poverty line, which is \$1,545 per month/\$18,540 annually for a single person.
- The median annual income of food bank clients was \$12,732, down \$540, from \$13,272 in 2021.
- 43% adults went hungry at least one day a month. 12% children go hungry at least one day per week.

**Low incomes and high housing costs are pushing people to food banks. Record inflation rates are accelerating the number of visits.**

- Food bank clients have a median monthly income of \$1,061, leaving a median of \$8.01 left per person per day, after rent and utilities were paid. This is a drop in real dollars from last year's median monthly income of \$1,106 and \$9.17 per person per day after paying shelter costs.
  - If a food bank client takes two TTC trips, traveling to work and returning home, they would be left with only \$1.51 at the end of the day. This is impossible for anyone to survive on.
- Incomes of racialized groups and new immigrants were also substantially lower. 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.

**High housing costs absorb most of food bank clients' household incomes; food banks act as a stop gap in their household budgets.**

- 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.

**Having a job is no longer sufficient to protect against experiences of food insecurity.**

- One in three clients (33%) reported employment as a primary source of income, double the rate from last year's *Who's Hungry 2021* (16%).
- Of those reporting employment, 39% rely on part-time or temporary employment as their primary source of income. 16% work on a casual basis.
- Of those employed, 60% reported holding a precarious job with low wages and little to no benefits.

## People on the edge are the ones pushed to using food banks.

- Food bank clients were almost 5 times more likely to report that they did not have people in their life to count on in times of need than the general Canadian population, at 39% versus 8%, respectively.
- 7 out of 10 respondents (70%) who reported not having enough food to eat were racialized and of those who reported child hunger, more than 4 out of 5 (81%) were racialized, compared to 1 out of 5 (19%) of children raised in white households.
- The portion of seniors who are food bank clients has risen from one in ten to one in six. 29% reported they sometimes / often did not have enough food to eat. 87% lived in housing considered unaffordable.
- 38% of those using food banks receive social assistance.

## System Solutions

**The Right to Food will never be realized until the systemic issues that perpetuate inequities in our communities are fixed. Poverty reduction needs to be addressed by governments and we call for the following actions:**

### Guaranteeing Income Security and Eliminating Systemic Poverty

- Tackling income inequality by investing in job search and training supports and updating eligibility criteria for Employment Insurance (EI) to reflect modern realities of work.
- Helping the working poor by increasing minimum wage to a living wage and expanding income supports eligibility for single adults.
- Mitigating the effects of precarious employment by reinstating legislative protections for equal pay for equal work, expanding the number of sick days and creating a portable benefits program.
- Ensuring the income security of vulnerable groups by revisiting the concept of a Universal Basic Income program, permanently implementing the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) and expanding eligibility criteria of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).
- Ending the inadequacy of social assistance rates by increasing ODSP and OW rates.
- Improving the administration of social assistance with user-centered design and standards.

### Solving Toronto's Housing Affordability Crisis

- Incentivizing and expediting the development of affordable housing in the private market.
- Rapidly expanding access to affordable housing and preserving existing social housing supply.
- Protecting tenants from evictions.
- Supporting low-income renters.
- Restoring in-person hearings as an option at the Landlord and Tenant Board and reversing the \$133 million budget cut to Legal Aid Ontario.
- Using income-based metrics, instead of average market rent, for affordable housing policies.
- Taking legislative and regulatory steps to protect the current stock of affordable housing.

### Mitigating the Steep Increases in the Cost of Living

- Tackling rising medical expenses by making drug and dental benefits available to all low-income households.
- Strengthening our public transit systems by expanding the TTC Fair Pass Discount Program.
- Bridging the digital divide by creating a digital access benefit for all social assistance recipients.

## About

In partnership, Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank have released ***Who's Hungry 2022*** – an annual report profiling hunger, poverty, and system strain in Toronto. **To review the full report, visit [dailybread.ca/whoshungry](https://dailybread.ca/whoshungry).**