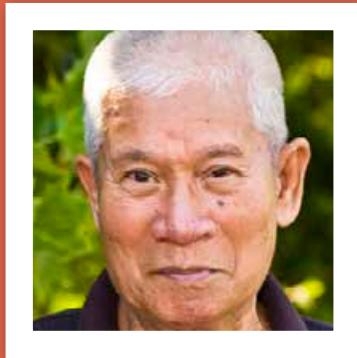


WHO'S HUNGRY FACES OF HUNGER



2012 PROFILE OF HUNGER IN THE GTA





In this report we present the voices of those interviewed as well as the observations from the volunteers. Together they help present the face of hunger. It is hoped that by showing this face we can inspire action, and push for solutions.

It is only through the assistance of survey volunteers and people accessing food banks that we are able to present the face of hunger. "Survey Volunteers" are those who volunteered to conduct one-on-one interviews with people accessing food banks. "Survey Respondents" are those who are accessing food banks who agreed to participate in the survey, helping share their stories and voices.

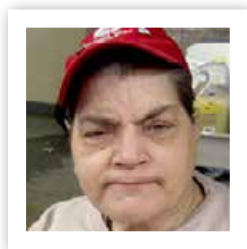
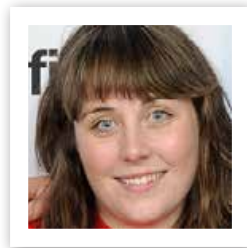
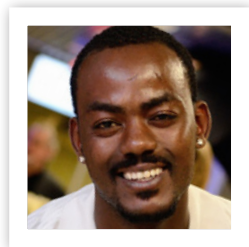
"During one interaction, the children in one family were **smiling and energetic** throughout. Even during the questions about how often they went hungry, their warmth or smiles didn't wane and I couldn't help but find it so incongruous, but caught myself wondering if I was **making assumptions about how hunger should look.**"

~ Who's Hungry Report 2012,
Survey Volunteer

FACES OF HUNGER

WHO'S HUNGRY

2012 PROFILE OF HUNGER IN THE GTA



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The face of hunger in our communities is not easy to see.

In the 2012 *Who's Hungry Report: Faces of Hunger*, you will see that hunger in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is often hidden. Not being able to afford food and going hungry, let alone coming to a food bank, is often not discussed with friends, family or neighbours. It is often thought that people are not supposed to go hungry in a wealthy country like Canada. When they do, it is seen as an individual failing—something must be wrong with them. So when someone is suddenly faced with the fact that they also cannot afford food, they may feel ashamed. They may continue to suffer quietly or only come to a food bank when they can't take the hunger any more or the worry about their children having enough to eat.

The reality is hunger in the GTA exists. After another year of an unsteady economy and rising food inflation, our number of client visits is heading upward again, nearly 20 per cent higher than before the recession in 2008. This year we saw 1,123,500 visits through the doors of our member agencies and those of our regional partners throughout the GTA. The number of visits in the inner suburbs are catching up to those in the city core. It is especially disturbing to us that people, including children, are going hungry more often than they were before the recession.

The face of hunger is also changing. More and more of those coming through our doors have a similar demographic profile to the general population. Twenty-eight per cent have a university education or higher. People who you don't realize are struggling because they don't "look" poor are skipping meals or not eating for an entire day. When you sit on a bus, look to the left or look to your right—one of those people may be coming to a food bank. It could be anyone. If there was ever a stereotypical

person who needed a food bank, that stereotype no longer exists. It could be your neighbour, friend or someone in your extended family. It could even be you. The people coming to a food bank are as diverse as they could possibly be. What brings them through the doors for the first time could be a loss of a job, a sudden disability or being told for the hundredth time that they have great skills, but no Canadian work experience.

People need support to pay the rent AND put food on the table.

As diverse as the people coming to food banks are, there is one key issue that brings most through our doors: they pay a very high percentage of their income on rent. On average, our clients who live in market housing pay 71 per cent of their income on rent; spending 30 per cent is considered affordable, spending 50 per cent means you are one paycheck away from being on the street. When people are struggling with low income, rent is non-





negotiable. While you can eat less food when money is tight, you can't pay less rent, or pay for the kitchen and not the bedroom. As one survey respondent said "You need shelter to exist. Food is a luxury." Therefore, a key solution is to help people better afford housing.

The high percentage that people coming to food banks spend on shelter is why Daily Bread wants the Ontario government to create a benefit that will help people to pay for their rent. If people get help paying for their housing, they will be better able to afford food. This is why housing matters. A housing benefit is a bold idea that would help people pay the rent and put food on the table.

Times are changing and the labour market is changing. Our income security system needs to change with it.

Following on the heels of the Ontario Child Benefit, an Ontario housing benefit would be another crucial step towards the restructuring of our income security system.

It would be paid to all low-income people, regardless of whether they are receiving social assistance or working. By doing so, more people will be lifted out of poverty. It is now up to the provincial government to implement this next step.

Help us continue the fight against hunger. Join the fight.

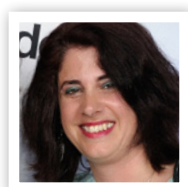
The bottom line is that food banks are here to help. Coming to a food bank for the first time can be very difficult and it's part of the reason there are so many people out there struggling with hunger silently. We are here for as long or as short a time as we are needed and we do far more than just provide emergency food programs. While we will continue to push for the changes needed to put more money in people's pockets, we will continue to do our best to make sure people get the healthiest food possible, as well as the support and information needed.

LEARN MORE about the proposed Ontario Housing Benefit and other information by visiting www.dailybread.ca. Tell your provincial candidate to support an Ontario housing benefit.

Help **SPREAD THE WORD** by sharing this report with friends, family and neighbours.

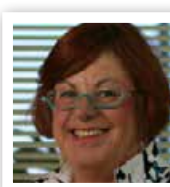
VOLUNTEER with Daily Bread Food Bank, or at the local food bank in your community.

DONATE. Daily Bread Food Bank relies on your generous donations to be able to fund research, pressure the government for change, educate youth in schools about poverty and provide food and resources to those in need.



Anne

Anne Kothawala
Chair of the Board



Gail

Gail Nyberg
Executive Director

KEY FINDINGS

HUNGER BY THE NUMBERS

Number of visits to GTA food banks

1,123,500
OVERALL

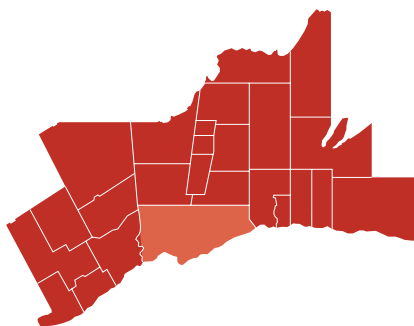


That's more than the number of riders through Bloor-Yonge station in a typical work week.

18%
INCREASE



or over 170,000 visits since pre-recession period in 2008.



■ **177,500**
905

■ **946,000**
TORONTO

799,500
DBFB MEMBER AGENCIES

DRIVING FORCES OF HUNGER

The driving force of demand for food banks is lack of income. The amount of money people are left with per day after rent has been paid is less than a TTC round trip.

\$691 Median monthly income.



Money available per person per day after rent is paid.

Percentage income spent on rent/mortgage including utilities :



AVERAGE AFFORDABLE



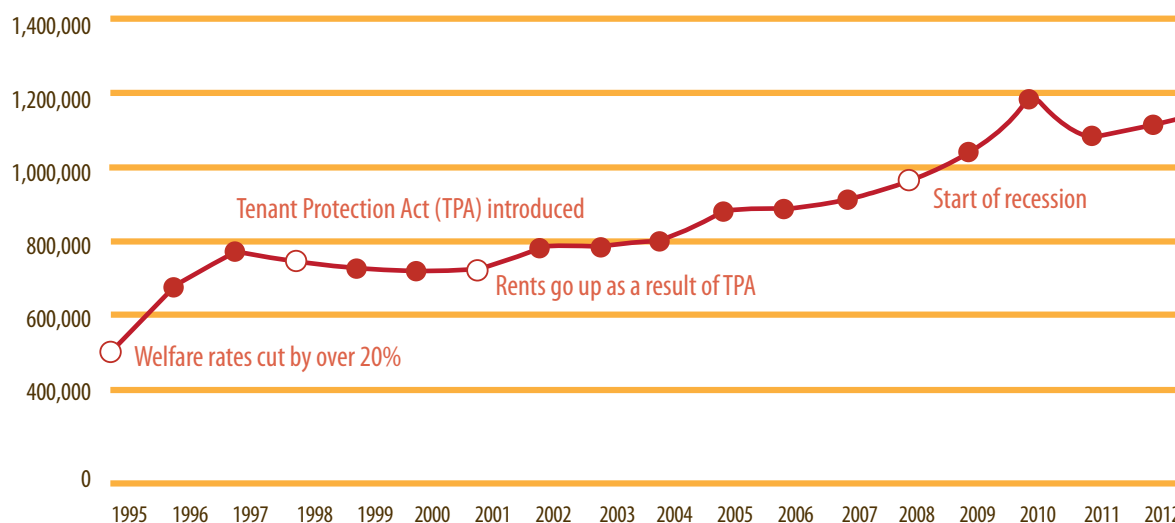
RISK OF HOMELESSNESS



FOOD BANK CLIENT



TOTAL FOOD BANK VISITS, 1995 TO PRESENT



DEPTH OF HUNGER

- 39%** Adults who have not eaten for a day because of lack of money.
- 45%** Adults who go hungry at least once per week because of lack of money.
- 32%** Food bank clients who are children.
- 25%** Children who go hungry at least once per week because of lack of money.
- 32%** Adults who have given up food in order to pay rent.

THE CHANGING FACE OF HUNGER

Overall, compared to five years ago, people visiting food banks are older, more likely to be born outside of Canada and have higher levels of education.

	2012	2007
 Born outside of Canada.....	51%	44%
 Graduated university.....	28%	25%
 45 to 64 years old.....	26%	24%

THE FACES OF HUNGER

"I feel honoured to have heard these people's stories and am surprised by the courage, warmth, openness and hope I encountered. It makes it even more difficult to understand how the problem of hunger is so widespread and how easy it is to miss. But it is very real in ways one might not necessarily imagine. I feel that my experience won't allow me to forget these faces and how much I was affected.

The facts of their circumstances were painful to hear, yet their spirits were so full of energy and directness that it made it overwhelming to take in."

~ Survey Volunteer

Every year Daily Bread conducts a survey across the GTA of people who access food banks. Over 100 volunteers go out to over 40 food banks across the city to conduct one-on-one interviews with food bank clients. The only project of its kind in Canada, Daily Bread's annual survey is a crucial tool that helps to raise awareness of the issues that contribute to hunger and poverty by listening to the people that it is affecting the most.

It is only through the assistance of these volunteers and people accessing food banks that we are able to do this work. Hunger and poverty are often very well hidden in the GTA. Through this process we not only see how many people come to food

banks, but also get a rare glimpse of the face of hunger in the GTA. We can see that poverty in our communities is a contradiction between the dignity, pride and strength of those who are struggling to make ends meet and their present circumstances in which they have to contend with the pain of hunger in order to keep a roof over their heads.

Through the annual survey we also get to hear a diverse range of voices not heard in public policy debates about poverty. We can hear first-hand through those with lived experience about what causes hunger, where the social safety net has holes in it, and the desire to contribute to their community or get back on their feet.





Through their interviews, survey volunteers help to share this voice. Volunteers can also give us an overall view of what they saw, heard and felt during the interviews. Their observations add to the face of poverty that many don't see, with many having their own assumptions and beliefs being challenged. The volunteers emphasize how much they could identify with the people they interviewed, and that the only way they differ in most cases was their present financial circumstances.

In this report we present the voices of those interviewed as well as the observations from the volunteers. Together they help present the face of hunger. It is hoped that by showing

this face we can inspire action, and push for solutions. A big part of this solution has to address that the driving force behind hunger and poverty in the GTA is a lack of income. Food banks are essential but emergency food programs can only help to a certain point. It is crucial to push for the solutions that address lack of income while supporting those who need help. This means creating an income security system that allows for more people to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, while still providing food to those who need it. Above all, we need solutions that support people's pride and dignity, while making sure they don't go hungry.



"When I signed up to volunteer for the Daily Bread Food Bank's annual survey, I was unsure of exactly what to expect. The people who use food banks are not a part of society to which we pay a great deal of attention, nor are many who use the food bank open with that fact to their friends and family. Still, I had somehow ended up considering people who use the food bank as different than me. But one of the realizations I made when I started talking to people was just how many similarities there are between us. If just a couple of things were to be changed, anyone could easily be in their position. While I may have heard it before, I finally understood and experienced first-hand that poverty and hunger can strike anyone at any time."

~ Survey Volunteer

HUNGER BY THE NUMBERS

For every one person who comes to a food bank, there is at least one other person who cannot afford food and is struggling with hunger who does not come.

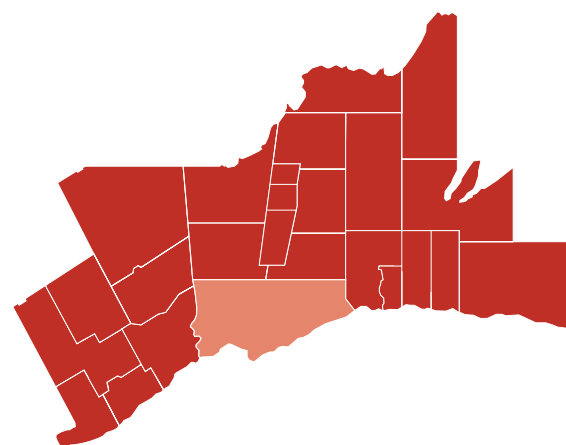
Overall Number of Client Visits

April 2011 to March 2012

1,123,500

799,500

DBFB MEMBER AGENCIES



177,500
905

946,000
TORONTO

The high numbers of people coming to a food bank in the GTA shows the extent of the economic hardship that many people are facing. The highest increase in numbers of people coming to a food bank in over a decade happened two years after the recession, not during. Then unemployment rates stabilized, and numbers decreased — but uncertainty and a feeling of fear over economic stability was still in the air. Now due to rising costs of living, more people are having a harder time affording the basics and as a result the numbers of people needing help is rising again. Total client visits from April 2011 to March 2012 were 1,123,500, the fourth year in a row surpassing one million visits. There is now a four per cent increase in client visits over last year in the GTA. Toronto saw a four per cent increase, and the 905 region saw a two

per cent increase. Overall, the numbers of client visits are still 18 per cent higher than before the 2008 recession, which provides a clear illustration of the lasting effect the economic crisis has had in the GTA. Since the recession, visits have markedly increased in the inner suburbs such as Etobicoke, North York and much of Scarborough.

These numbers may just be the tip of the iceberg. One study showed that only 40 per cent of households deemed to be “severely food insecure” had actually used a food bank during the previous year.¹ What this disturbing information may mean is that for every one person who comes to a food bank, there may be at least one other person who cannot afford food and needs the help who does not come. There



are various reasons why people who are clearly struggling with hunger aren't coming to food banks.

"Stigma" is when someone is labeled by society in a negative way as "different". There is a strong stigma associated with poverty in a wealthy society such as Canada, and getting help from a food bank is seen as a symbol of poverty. When asked why they thought people don't come to a food bank even when they need to, survey respondents said repeatedly that a sense of pride and stigma may be a reason, and noted that they themselves had not come in the past for similar reasons. Respondents also frequently mentioned that the cost of public transportation is a significant barrier to accessing a food bank, not surprising given that on average respondents

have less than six dollars per day available after rent is paid—not enough to cover a round trip TTC fare.

How long have people been coming to a food bank on a regular basis?

Length of time coming to a food bank	2012	2007
Less than 1 year	49%	59%
More than 1 year to 2 years	19%	13%
More than 2 years	33%	28%

"It was painful to hear many people repeat the phrase, "I was ashamed," as the reason they hesitated to come [to the food bank]."

~ **Survey Volunteer**

"Pride stops a lot of people. I've been suffering for years but being too proud has made my health suffer as well. Time to humble oneself."

~ **Survey Respondent**

"There's a stigma of not being able to provide for yourself that stops people; as adults you're measured by your ability to take care of yourself. When you can't, you feel embarrassed."

~ **Survey Respondent**

"There is some reluctance, especially if one is used to not relying on any support. (There's) a sense of some stigma...often people use food banks as a temporary aid, when stabilizing their finances. It's not always forever."

~ **Survey Respondent**



FACES OF HUNGER

For many people, coming to a food bank is a temporary measure to get them through a difficult financial period. About half of people coming to a food bank have been doing so for less than a year, with people coming on average for 16 months. However, five years ago, the majority (59 per cent) were coming for less than one year, and on average for only 12 months. We are now seeing more people coming for longer periods of time, with the majority (52 per cent) coming for more than one year, compared to five years ago when 41 per cent had been coming for more than one year. One reason for this may be that in the last few years, rates of inflation on basic items such as food have been increasing faster than the core inflation rate itself, having a greater impact on those with limited incomes.²

Reason	Percentage
Lost job	34%
Disability	16%
New to area	16%
Just found out about food bank	10%
Living on savings	9%
Family break-up	8%
Left Employment Insurance	4%
Can't access Employment Insurance	4%
Reduced hours at work	3%
Can't access social assistance	2%
Other	12%



Why people initially need help

Losing a job is a key reason why a significant portion of people come to a food bank for the first time. There is often a delay in the amount of time people come to a food bank after losing work—they may have run out of Employment Insurance benefits (E.I.) if they have been able to access it, or have spent down their savings or used a line of credit. Many have part-time, casual or seasonal work arrangements and are not eligible for E.I., and have to come to food banks so they can get food during gaps in their employment income.

The sudden onset of a disability or serious illness is often a trigger for poverty, especially when there are few income supports available except for social assistance for those who do not have disability coverage. Those with long-term disabilities receiving fixed incomes have to contend with food and energy prices rising above inflation, and are more likely to find their dollar simply does not last until the end of the month.

Those who are new to the area are often newcomers who have been in the country for five years or less. Some are refugee claimants waiting for their claims to be processed, while others are landed immigrants who are having difficulty getting their foreign credentials and education recognized and cannot find employment.

“... some [people] have been using the food bank for years, while others have just gotten over the stigma of making their first trip. Some can’t see a way out of relying on the food bank, while others are hopeful for the future.”

~ Survey Volunteer

² John Stapleton, “Less on their Plate,” Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, September 1, 2011. www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/monitor/less-their-plate



Convention Refugees are forced to leave their countries to escape war, persecution or harm and seek refuge or protection in another country. When a refugee arrives in Canada, the claimant must be granted approval from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) to be able to remain in the country. This year, six per cent of survey respondents were refugee claimants.

Recently, refugees from North Korea have managed to escape their home country and have arrived in Canada, and these North Korean newcomers are among the faces of hunger in the GTA. What they have endured from their escape from North Korea may not immediately be apparent as they sit silently waiting with their hamper bags, chatting quietly with their friends, or cooing joyfully over their babies, but their stories are real, powerful and transcend any language barrier that might exist. Similar to so many other food bank clients, one North Korean newcomer said that “people are shy” accessing food from a food bank, and feel a sense of “embarrassment” doing so. It can be extremely difficult and traumatic to have to flee a country, but food banks and emergency food programs are here to help in whatever ways possible.

"Some days I was overwhelmed by the number of seniors using the food bank. Many had lost jobs late in their careers, throwing a wrench into their retirement savings. I had heard it was difficult for older people to get hired, but now I know it's true. And it's especially difficult when English is not your first language. Retirement is supposed to be a great time to relax and enjoy life, but when you're living paycheque-to-paycheque it's impossible."

~ Survey Volunteer





CHANGING FACES OF HUNGER

Overall, people visiting food banks are getting older, more likely to be born outside Canada and are likely to have higher levels of education compared to five years ago.

Those between 45 and 64 are now 26 per cent of those coming to food banks, whereas five years ago they were 24 per cent. The median age of survey respondents five years ago was 42; it is now 46. Many survey respondents in this age bracket are single-person households and have a long-term disability. The increase in persons 45 and up is reflective of the demographic trend occurring in the general population of Toronto.³

The majority (51 per cent) of those coming to food banks are born outside of Canada, whereas five years ago they were 44 per cent of respondents. They are more likely to have university levels of education, have families with children under 18 and have someone in the household who is working. Newcomers may be Canadian citizens, permanent residents (landed immigrants) or refugee claimants waiting for their claims to be processed. Most face the difficulty of finding an affordable place to live for themselves and their families, and pay a very high portion of their income on rent as a result.

Higher numbers of people born outside of Canada coming to food banks is related to the increase of respondents with a university or college degree. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents report a university or college education or higher compared to 25 per cent five years ago. Those who are university educated are more likely to have permanent resident (landed immigrant) status. Those with permanent resident status are often skilled and educated workers, facing the ongoing barrier of having their skills and credentials recognized once they settle in the country, often lacking the social and professional networks to compete for jobs in a troubled economy.

There are regional differences in regards to demographics. There are more families with children coming to food banks in the 905 area, while there are higher numbers of single people and a larger percentage of those in the 45 to 64 age group in the 416 area.

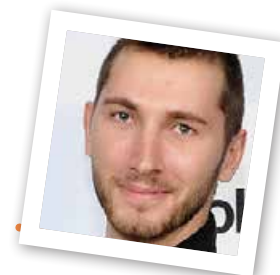
Citizenship Status	2012	2007
Canadian Citizen/First Nations	73%	78%
Landed immigrant/permanent resident	20%	15%
Refugee claimant	6%	4%
Other	2%	3%
First Nations	2012	2007
Yes	7%	8%
Country of Birth	2012	2007
Born outside Canada	51%	44%
Gender	2012	2007
Female	53%	55%
Male	47%	45%
Age Groups	2012	2007
18 and under	32%	34%
19 to 44	38%	38%
45 to 64	26%	24%
65 and up	4%	3%
Median age	46 years	42 years
Household Composition	2012	2007
Single	45%	44%
Single parent	17%	19%
Couple without children	8%	9%
Couple with children	18%	18%
Extended family without children	9%	6%
Extended family with children	4%	4%
Education	2012	2007
Grade school or less	8%	9%
Some high school	20%	23%
Graduated high school	22%	23%
Some college or university	23%	21%
Graduated college or university	24%	22%
Post-graduate degree	4%	3%
Disability	2012	2007
Yes	45%	51%

³ For the Toronto Census Metropolitan area those in the age range of 45 to 64 are 27 per cent of the population. www.toronto.ca/demographics/pdf/censusbackgrounder_ageandsex_2011.pdf



“There’s a question on the survey that asks for your highest level of education. At first I assumed that for people using the food bank, education levels would probably be quite low, but that’s not true at all. Both women I met that morning had master’s degrees from their native countries. One was an engineer from Algeria and the other was a scientist from Cuba. Neither could get work here in thier field. They both spoke good English and were taking classes to improve but they said it’s very difficult to get employers here to recognize their qualifications. Both had children and were using the food bank to support their families. I have a master’s degree and got a job in my field as soon as I graduated. Meeting these women made me realize this isn’t something I should take for granted.”

~ **Survey Volunteer**



DEPTH OF HUNGER

“You need shelter to exist. Food is a luxury.”

~ Survey Respondent

While food banks have been seeing much greater numbers of people than the pre-recession period, those numbers are just one indicator of the economic hardship people are facing. The frequency with which people go hungry is also increasing and is substantially more than five years ago. Forty-five per cent of adults are going hungry at least once a week in 2012, compared to 40 per cent in 2007. Twenty-five per cent of children are hungry at least once a week in 2012, compared to 18 per cent in 2007. This could be because the cost of food is rising faster than inflation, whereas incomes have stayed relatively stagnant.

Hunger means not being able to afford balanced meals, skipping or reducing sizes of meals, or not eating at all for an entire day due to lack of money. For those living on fixed monthly incomes, hunger often occurs toward the end of the month when money has run out.

Hunger is also the result of making frightening choices. You pay your rent so you don't get evicted, or you eat. For most the choice is obvious. You may be able to eat less food when money is tight, but you cannot pay less rent. Utility bills like gas, water or heat also have to be paid.

How often were you hungry in the last 3 months because you could not afford to buy food?

Amount	2012	2007
At least a couple days per week	24%	22%
At least one day a week	21%	18%
At least one day a month	15%	10%
Rarely	21%	22%
Never	20%	29%

How often were your children hungry in the last 3 months because you could not afford to buy food?

Amount	2012	2007
At least a couple days per week	12%	10%
At least one day a week	13%	8%
At least one day a month	10%	5%
Rarely	17%	15%
Never	48%	62%

People skip meals so they can afford transportation in order to get to work, school, or essential services such as medical or child care. Not being able to afford transportation is a huge barrier even in regards to accessing food. Many respondents mentioned they cannot get to a food bank because they could not afford public transportation.

Hunger means prioritizing a loved one's needs over your own. Households with kids said that they had given up meals for their children, or for child-related items/activities. People give up eating so their kids can eat properly, purchase formula and diapers for infants, or so a daughter's broken school bag could be replaced.

People often go hungry in order to afford prescription medications as well as over-the-counter medication such as cough medicine or aspirin. While recipients of social assistance are usually provided a drug plan and limited dental coverage, the benefits are not exhaustive. Numerous respondents with serious long-term illness or disability indicate they've had to give up meals to pay for medicine not covered by the Ontario Disability Support Program.

FACES OF HUNGER

In the past 12 months, have you ever not eaten for a whole day because of lack of money for food?

Amount	2012
Yes	39%

If yes, how often?

Amount	2012
Almost every month	54%
Some months but not every month	31%
Only one or two months	15%



59%

Survey respondents who have had to give up a meal in order to pay for something else in the last 3 months.

Survey respondents gave up a meal to pay for:

RENT

32%

BILLS/UTILITIES (GAS, HYDRO, WATER)

20%

TRANSPORTATION

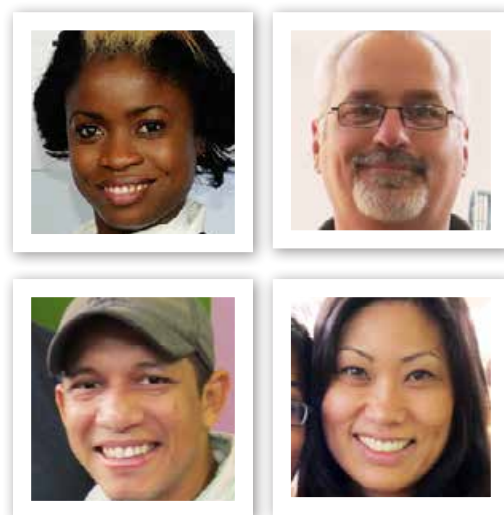
15%

CHILD AND CHILD-RELATED

9%

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

6%



"During another interview I had to fight to not get emotional while listening to a woman talk about how she tried to make a can of soup last for several days. She told me that she would try to flavour water sometimes even just slightly by reusing tea bags, and how that would quell her hunger a bit more than just using plain water."

~ Survey Volunteer

"The tendency is to eat heartily for a couple of weeks and have to ration/go hungry until the following month."

~ Survey Respondent



DRIVING FORCES OF HUNGER

“Until I met food bank clients, I had no idea how little people on Ontario Works receive. And if you’re not in subsidized housing, it’s absolutely astonishing how much income people spend on rent. For some people I spoke with, there was sometimes not even \$50 left to cover all other expenses after paying for housing. Doing surveys has made me far more aware of income inequality in Toronto and the lack of subsidized housing in the city.”

~ **Survey Volunteer**

The driving force of hunger and of demand for food banks is lack of income. The median monthly income for people coming to food banks is \$691.⁴ With the average cost of a bachelor apartment in the GTA being \$818 and a one bedroom \$973,⁵ it is extremely challenging to find a place to live that is remotely affordable for this level of monthly income. Households with children are less likely to be able to find apartments below average cost, as there are fewer affordable options due to the extra rooms that are required. For the 70 per cent of survey respondents who pay market rent, they are spending on average 71 per cent of their income on rent.

This lack of income is related to the sources of income people receive. Sixty-eight per cent of respondents report getting their main source of income from one of two social assistance programs in Ontario: Ontario Works (sometimes referred to as welfare) and the Ontario Disability Support Program. Ontario Works is intended to provide a temporary source of income when job loss occurs or if no other income is available, and Ontario Disability Support Program is provided to individuals with chronic or long-term illnesses or disability in order to help them meet their living expenses. On their own, neither form of income is enough to live on, nor are they indexed to the costs of living. For example, the monthly income for a person receiving Ontario Works is \$599, an amount which makes coming to a food bank on a regular basis a necessity. Receipt of social assistance and

68% Survey respondents who report getting their main income from one of two social assistance programs.

In Ontario, the social assistance programs are:

Ontario Works (commonly known as welfare), intended to provide a temporary source of income when job loss occurs or if no other source of income is available.

Ontario Disability Support Program, which is provided to individuals with chronic or long-term illness or disability in order to help them meet their living expenses.

On their own, neither form of income is enough to live on, nor are they indexed to the costs of living. Receiving social assistance and going hungry is not an isolated phenomenon. Health Canada research shows that nationally, receipt of social assistance as a main source of income is by far most closely associated with food insecurity.

going hungry is not an isolated phenomenon. Health Canada research shows that nationally, receipt of social assistance as a main source of income is by far most closely associated with food insecurity.⁶

⁴ This is “adjusted” median household income, a method which takes into account the varying sizes of all households and adjusts the dollar value accordingly. This method divides a household’s income by the square root of the size of the household. The “unadjusted” amount of income is \$1,039. The adjusted level of household income is lower because of the high numbers of survey respondents who were single-person households and therefore receiving lower levels of social assistance income.

⁵ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Rental Market Report, Greater Toronto Area,” Fall 2011.

⁶ Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2, Nutrition (2004) “Income-Related Household Food Security in Canada” Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion, Health Products and Food Branch. Health Canada, 2007.

FACES OF HUNGER

Paid work does not guarantee freedom from hunger. Thirteen per cent of respondents receive their main source of income from employment, and one quarter of respondents have at least one person in their household who is employed. While much focus is often given to increasing the minimum wage to address poverty for those who are working, this focus only addresses part of the issue. The median hourly income for respondents who are working is \$11.23 and 68 per cent of respondents earn more than the minimum wage of \$10.25 per hour. Almost one quarter (22 per cent) earn more than \$15 an hour. The current labour market trend, of moving from full-time employment towards part-time and casual employment, is being seen in the employment situations of survey respondents as well. Survey respondents who are employed often earn more than minimum wage but on average are only working 20 hours a week. Added to this precarious nature of employment is that most respondents do not have drug or dental benefits.

As a result, people have to choose between dental work and medications, or food.

Some people require both welfare and work to get them through the course of the year. Due to casual or seasonal work arrangements, such as landscaping or construction, the length of work periods are shorter and qualifying for Employment Insurance becomes less likely. Therefore Ontario Works becomes the only option to fill the gap in income. Close to one third (32 per cent) of respondents receiving Ontario Works have cycled on and off of it two or more times.

For survey respondents, the cost of living related to housing is only partly mitigated by subsidized housing. Subsidized housing, also known as Rent Geared to Income (RGI) housing, refers to apartments that are subsidized by the government so that people living on low income can afford them and rent is adjusted so tenants pay about 30 per cent

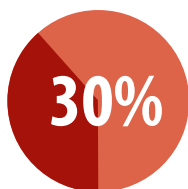
Median monthly income: **\$691**

Money available per person per day after rent is paid:



\$5.83

Percentage income spent on rent/mortgage including utilities :



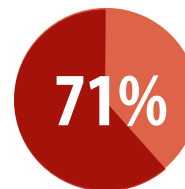
AVERAGE AFFORDABLE

Paying no more than 30% of household income on housing is considered affordable.



RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Spending over 50% of household income puts one at severe risk of homelessness.



FOOD BANK CLIENT

The average food bank client pays 71% of their household income on housing.



of their income to live there. The waiting lists are very long to access these units: wait times are between 5 and 10 years in Toronto and up to 15 years in Peel region.⁷ Because the units are scarce and the wait times are so long, many don't even bother applying.

However, living in subsidized housing does not necessarily alleviate the need to come to a food bank. Close to one third of people coming to food banks are residents of subsidized housing. In addition, past results have found that the level of hunger is also about the same between respondents living in subsidized housing versus those who are not.⁸

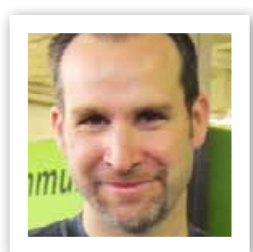
There could be various reasons for this. One may have to do with how social assistance benefits and rules around subsidized housing rent calculations interact with each other. For those receiving social assistance, their overall benefits

are reduced when they secure subsidized housing units, which reduces their overall income. Added to this is the fact that many in subsidized housing still have to pay high utility costs like heat and hydro, which have been taken out of their rent calculations and have to be paid out of the remaining income. Rapidly rising energy and food costs dig even further into remaining income. Many survey respondents who live in subsidized housing are also more likely to have a disability. Having a disability adds to many of the expenses due to the costs associated with medication and other supports needed.

WHAT IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

Primary Source of Household Income	Percentage
Ontario Works	43%
Ontario Disability Support Program	25%
Job/employment	13%
Pension	5%
Child tax benefits	5%
Employment Insurance	2%
No income	2%
Other	4%
Cycled off/on Ontario Works two or more times	32%

Employment (the working poor)	
Someone in household employed	25%
Median hourly wage	\$11.23
Median hours of work per week	20
Hourly wage (categories)	
Less than \$10.25	20%
\$10.25 (current minimum wage)	13%
Between \$10.25 and \$15.00	46%
More than \$15.00	22%
Benefits	
Dental	3%
Drug	1%
Both	16%
Neither	81%



"It's hard. You're working [for] a certain amount of money and then you're at the food bank."

~ Survey Respondent

⁷ Ontario Non Profit Housing Association Waiting Lists Survey, 2011.

⁸ Who's Hungry 2011, p.18.

SOLUTIONS TO HUNGER

In order to make sustained progress on poverty reduction and reduce the need for food banks, people need an income security system that not only allows people to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table, but also provides opportunities to move forward.

The face of hunger in the GTA shows us we have a lot of work to do to fight hunger and poverty in the GTA. As the economy struggles to recover and the cost of food rises, more people need help, and are coming to food banks for longer periods of time. Even more disturbing, both adults and children are going hungry more often than before.

The face of hunger is also changing. Similar to the general population, people accessing food banks are getting older, increasingly not born in Canada and are more educated. All are contending with an income security system that doesn't meet their needs. Social assistance on its own doesn't provide the basics of life, nor does a labour market that provides less security, fewer full-time opportunities and no guarantee out of poverty. Food banks or any other food program can address hunger to a point, but providing food on its own will not be able to address the driving forces of the issue.

The key driving forces are poverty and lack of income. As much as this lack of income is caused by uncertainties

such as the state of the economy, a better income security system can soften the blow. We are seeing this with families who have children who receive various tax benefits, such as the federal Child Tax Benefit and the provincial Ontario Child Benefit, to complement their employment and social assistance income. As a result of these benefits, there are signs of promise: families with children have decreased substantially as a portion of welfare caseloads, in spite of unsteady economic times. Clearly more work needs to be done on this front, but what has been accomplished in the last ten years to improve income security programs for this age group has made a significant impact.

As our population and labour market changes, our income security system has to continue to change with it. We've seen positive results with the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit back in 2008. A next step to transform our income security system could be to provide an additional benefit to the working age population.

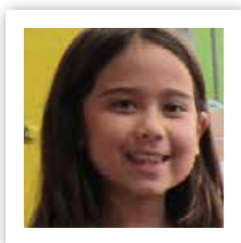




A key issue for people coming to food banks, regardless of other circumstances, is that a high portion of their income is spent on housing. A housing benefit could help address this, and would be a huge step forward in continuing the transformation of our income security system to meet the needs of a changing population and economy. Such a benefit, provided to all low-income households with or without children, would provide an added top-up to social assistance or employment income, so they could afford both rent and food. It would also provide opportunity, by reducing barriers from welfare to work and not “claw back”, or reduce employment income for those making that transition.

Emergency food programs like food banks are important mainstays for many people who are struggling financially, and it is important this system exists and continues to evolve to meet the needs of the people it serves. People also need an income security system that recognizes their situation changes, similar to how the state of the economy changes, and does not trap them in poverty when they encounter difficult times.

Regardless of their situation, people remain hopeful and strong. While food banks and other food programs are doing the best they can to minimize stigma, our income security system needs to do its part to give people more support, opportunity and hope.



“Food banks serve a very important function in helping those who, for whatever reasons, need that resource. For those with marginal income, they make a big—often vital—difference.”

~ Survey Respondent

METHODOLOGY

***Who's Hungry 2012: Faces of Hunger* reports the number of people served (vs. the number of individuals) in participating neighbourhood food banks in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The total numbers reported on pages 6 and 10 are for Daily Bread Food Bank member agencies and regional partners only (regional partners are The Mississauga Food Bank, North York Harvest Food Bank, York Region Food Network, and Feed the Need in Durham). These total numbers do not include meal programs or non-Daily Bread affiliated organizations such as St. Vincent de Paul and the Salvation Army, with the exception of Salvation Army Ajax.**

Collecting the Data

Daily Bread Food Bank's annual survey took place from mid-February until mid-April 2012, in neighbourhood food banks across the GTA. Volunteers were trained to conduct a 38-question survey in an open-style interview with food bank clients. Respondents also had the option of filling in the survey themselves.

Surveys were conducted on location at participating food banks. Food bank clients were invited to participate in the survey either while waiting to collect or just after they had collected their food. As in previous years, the target number of interviews for each food bank was set at three per cent of their average monthly client visits. Overall, 49 food banks participated in the survey, and 107 trained volunteers

conducted interviews. The reality surrounding food banks made random selection of participants difficult. However, volunteers were trained in ways to approach clients to address the issue of randomness. Any concerns with randomness were mitigated by the sample size, ensuring that the survey was largely representative of all households using food banks.

For ethical purposes, food bank clients were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, they could withdraw from the survey at any time and participants could skip any question within the survey. Additionally, volunteers emphasized that the interview was confidential and clients could not be identified by their responses.





Analyzing the Data

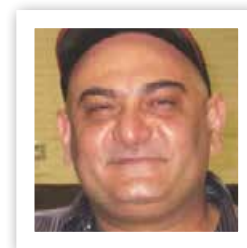
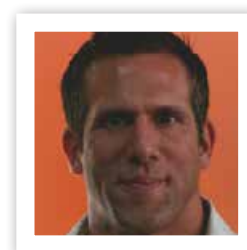
About 1835 surveys were conducted for this study; 1778 were sufficiently complete to be used for analysis. Preparation and analysis of the data occurred in three stages; data “cleaning”, data entry and data analysis.

First, the data was cleaned, which involved going through each survey and ensuring the survey was sufficiently complete for analysis. Incomplete surveys were discarded and were not considered for further use. The survey cleaning also ensured the data was sufficiently clear for the data entry process. Results and analysis were generated using software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences v17 (SPSS).



“I had the chance to interview a few new clients at the food bank. For most, the issue was a recent loss of job. Many had spent a considerable amount of time unemployed before going to the food bank. Whether they were living off savings, E.I. or borrowing, people waited to come to the food bank until it was necessary. This just goes to show how much stigma there is in getting help from the food bank. None of this was entirely surprising, but their attitude after they overcame that barrier was. Many of the people felt empowered by going to the food bank, by overcoming that barrier and reaching out for help. More than that, they felt optimistic and hopeful that the future would bring better things, and that using the food bank would help them bridge into future opportunities to support themselves. It was an interesting experience, and I wonder what I might do, or how I might feel in their situation.”

~ Survey Volunteer



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The annual survey of food bank clients is made possible through the contributions of hundreds who have donated their time and experience.

Foremost, Daily Bread Food Bank thanks the more than 1800 food bank clients who shared their personal accounts. We are always grateful that you are willing to share your time and experiences. You are helping to reveal the faces of hunger in the GTA and helping us to move towards solutions. The annual survey would be impossible without your participation. Hopefully, your stories will inspire others to join the fight against hunger.

Daily Bread thanks the many volunteers who participated in conducting the surveys. Your commitment to the successful completion of this project is greatly appreciated. We would also like to thank June Larkin and Stanley Doyle-Wood from the Equity Studies program at the University of Toronto for including volunteering in the survey as part of the structured component of their curriculum.

Daily Bread thanks the participants of our survey committee, including Daily Bread Food Bank board member John Stapleton, Andy Mitchell from the Social Assistance in the New Economy Project at the University of Toronto, Joan Stonehocker and Catherine Cook from York Region Food Network, Daniel Liadsky from North York Harvest Food Bank, and Harvey Low from the Social Policy Analysis and Research Unit at the City of Toronto. We are also grateful for survey input from Valerie Tarasuk from the Department of Health Sciences at the University of Toronto, Micheylinn Lafleche from the United Way of Greater Toronto, and Matthew Feaver from Campbell Company of Canada.

Daily Bread extends its thanks to regional survey partners, including York Region Food Network, North York Harvest Food Bank, The Mississauga Food Bank, and Feed the Need in Durham for their contributions.

Last but not least, a sincere thank-you to the following food banks for their support of Who's Hungry, and their participation in the annual survey of food bank clients:

Agincourt Community Services
Allan Gardens Food Bank
Aurora Food Pantry
Bathurst-Finch Community Food Bank
Calvary Baptist Church
Central Etobicoke Economic Support
Christ Church St. James Food Pantry
Churches by the Bluffs
Churches on the Hill
Community Alliance Food Bank
Community Share Food Bank
Compass Market Food Bank
Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre
Eden Food Bank Battleford
Eden Food Bank Unity
Fareshare Oakville
Flemingdon Park Ministry

Fort York CAC
Georgina Community Food Pantry
Glen Rhodes United Church
Haven on the Queensway
Lansing United Church
Lawrence Heights Community Food Bank
Malvern Healthy Community Cupboard
Markham Food Bank
New Toronto Street Food Bank
Newmarket Food Pantry
OASIS Dufferin Community Centre
Our Saviour Lutheran Church
Pape Food Bank
PWA Toronto
Richmond Hill Community Food Bank
Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities
Scott Mission

SDA Oshawa
Seva Food Bank
Simcoe Hall Settlement House
Sorauren Food Bank
St. Mary's Food Bank Coopers
St. Mary's Food Bank Dundas
St. Ninian's Anglican Church
Syme-Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre
The Lighthouse Centre
The Stop Community Food Centre
Weston Area Emergency Support
Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank
Woodbine Baptist Church
YMCA O'Connor Focus Community Food Bank
Yonge Street Mission



“I had thought that only a certain type of person would end up using the food bank. However the individuals who use the food bank are as reflective of Toronto’s diversity as any other group of people.”

~ Survey Volunteer

Who's Hungry 2012 was written by **Richard Matern** and **Susie Kim**, and designed by **Anita Sekharan** and **Jessica Ward**. Special thanks goes to **Sarah Anderson**, Acting Director of Communications, **John Stapleton**, board member, and **Catherine Leek** of Green Onion Publishing for their creative direction and editorial assistance.

Illustrations provided by Alyssa Andres
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"I have never had to worry about my access to food. Most of the time I only ever had to worry about when I wanted to eat, or what I was going to make. Interacting with people and understanding that hunger and access to food are daily issues for them was eye opening. I cannot fully imagine what that struggle would be like. It is astonishing to me how tenuous so many people's grasp on the basic necessities of life are."

~ **Survey Volunteer**

"When it was just myself—I would do without. But when children are with me, then I will use this facility (food bank)."

~ **Survey Respondent**

"In (another country) I was completing my PhD in chemistry. When I came to Canada my qualifications were not recognized and I could not get work in my field. This caused much disappointment and frustration and depression."

~ **Survey Respondent**

"Two years ago \$100 could buy food for one month. Now \$100 only lasts a week. The increase in the cost of food has gone up way faster than the money to survive on."

~ **Survey Respondent**

"I was always amazed that even when people had almost no money, they would always make sure their children had what they needed. Many parents said they would routinely skip meals in order to make sure their children had food they liked and enough of it."

~ **Survey Volunteer**

"I do not feel comfortable asking. I ask for my kids—if it were just me I would not come."

~ **Survey Respondent**

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