

WHO'S HUNGRY 2025

About

In partnership, Daily Bread Food Bank and North York Harvest Food Bank have released the *Who's Hungry 2025* report— an annual profile of food insecurity and poverty in Toronto.

This year, Toronto food banks reached a devastating new milestone: over 4.1 million client visits, 636,000 more than the year before, a staggering 340% increase since 2019. Today, more than one in ten Torontonians continue to rely on food banks.

The hunger crisis has deepened, shifting from a short-term emergency to a long-term reality. More people are relying on food banks more frequently and for longer periods of time, even while working full-time, juggling multiple jobs, or holding post-secondary degrees.

Who's Hungry 2025 highlights the deepening crisis of poverty and hunger affecting thousands of Torontonians. The report includes recommendations for every level of government, as well as actions the public can take to help end hunger.

Key Findings

Hunger is becoming harder to escape—people are relying on food banks more often and for longer periods of time.

- Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, food bank visits reached an all-time high of over 4.1 million (4,124,313) — 635,962 more than the previous year and a 340% increase since before the pandemic.
- More than 1 in 10 Torontonians rely on food banks – compared with just one in 20 in 2022.
- In the past year, 112,554 new clients visited food banks for the first time.
- For the first time since 2020, the majority of visits (59%, up from 47% last year) came from returning clients rather than new ones.
- Food bank use has become more frequent: More than half (54%) of survey respondents visited food banks three or more times a month, up from 43% last year.
- More than half (53%) of clients missed a meal to pay for something else.
- 1 in 4 food bank clients are children. Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) respondent households with children reported their children went hungry at least once a week in the past three months.
- 11% of survey respondents rated their mental health as 'poor' and 25% as 'fair.' Indigenous respondents were nearly 3 times more likely to rate their mental health as "poor" (32%).

The high cost of living and inadequate wages are forcing people deeper into poverty.

- Nearly all respondents (96%) identified the rising cost of living as one of the top three reasons they visit food banks.
- 88% of survey respondents live in unaffordable housing. More than 1 in 5 (22%) spend their entire income on housing.
- Survey respondents reported a median income of \$1,200 per month—down from \$1,265 last year, while median housing costs rose from \$1,200 to \$1,300.
- After paying housing costs and utilities, survey respondents had a median of just \$8.33 per person per day left over for all other expenses.

- Nearly two-thirds of respondents (62%), up from 49% in 2024, used credit, loans, help from family or friends, selling belongings, and other short-term strategies to pay for essentials.
- The proportion of clients experiencing homelessness increased by 19% from 2024 to 2025.

Employment and education do not safeguard against hunger.

- Nearly half (46%) of respondents reported that at least one person in their household is employed.
- Among employed respondents, 35% work multiple jobs, and 72% would work more hours if they were available, despite already working a median of 35 hour per week.
- 57% of survey respondents hold a post-secondary degree or higher.

Calls to Action

As the food insecurity crisis deepens in Toronto, we must raise our voices and demand coordinated action from all levels of government to reverse these trends.

Every food bank visit is a policy failure that requires public policy solutions. Here are key actions you can take to help eliminate food insecurity:

To readers of this report:

- Raise awareness by sharing this report with your friends, family, and networks. Mobilize your community to advocate for change or get involved with your local food bank. Most importantly, **call on your Member of Parliament, Member of Provincial Parliament, and City Councillor to urgently adopt the recommendations in this report.**

To Members of Parliament:

- Strengthen the Canada Disability Benefit by raising the benefit amount above the poverty line, broadening the eligibility criteria, and exempting it from claw backs. Double the amount of social housing, expand access to Employment Insurance, guarantee a permanent National School Food Program, and create a federal charitable fresh food tax credit for food donated to registered charities and community food programs.

To Members of Provincial Parliament:

- Double social assistance rates and combine housing and basic needs portions into a single benefit that remains unchanged regardless of housing status. Establish and deliver affordable and social housing targets, protect rental affordability, increase investment in the Student Nutrition Program, and release a strengthened Poverty Reduction Strategy with specific targets, timelines, and measures to ensure accountability and transparency.

To City Councillors:

- Advance the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy and improve access to housing, childcare, transit, recreation, and food programs for low-income households. Implement the Universal Student Nutrition Program, strengthen protections for renters, and increase and preserve affordable housing through programs such as the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA).

To review the full report and recommendations, visit dailybread.ca/whoshungry.