

HungerCount 2002

Eating their Words: Government Failure on Food Security

Canada's Annual Survey of Emergency Food Programs

Prepared by Beth Wilson with Emily Tsoa

For the Canadian Association of Food Banks



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191 New Toronto St.,
Toronto, ON
M8V 2E7

Tel: (416) 203-9241
Fax: (416) 203-9244
e-mail: info@cafb-acba.ca

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HungerCount 2002 Provincial Coordinators

British Columbia	Robin Sobrino	Surrey Food Bank
Alberta	Emily Tsoa	CAFB
Saskatchewan	Gord Barnes	Regina Food Bank
Manitoba	Heidi Magnuson-Ford	Winnipeg Harvest
Ontario	Sue Cox	Daily Bread Food Bank, Toronto
Quebec	Daniel Cohen	CAFB
New Brunswick	Bill Cockburn	District 4 Food Bank
Nova Scotia	Dianne Swinemar	Metro Food Bank Society
Prince Edward Island	Mike MacDonald	Upper Room Hospitality Ministry
Newfoundland	Eg Walters	Community Food Sharing Association

Provincial Support

Ontario.	Tasha Truant, Don Sage, Donna Durdle, Tracy Cooper, Tanja Kraft, Shawn Turnbull	Ontario Association of Food Banks
Nova Scotia.	Pam Morrison	Metro Food Bank Society

Translation and Layout

Laurier Trahan Terry Lynch

Researchers

Emily Tsoa Beth Wilson

CAFB Staff Support

Aynsley Morris Charles Seiden



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2002 Food Bank Facts

In 1996, the federal government committed to take action to realize food security and end hunger in Canada and around the world through its endorsement of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security. Six years later, results from the 2002 Hunger-Count study attest to the continued lack of political will to address these issues on the domestic front:

- 747,665 people in Canada received emergency groceries from a food bank during the month of March 2002 – a 12.5% increase in food bank use since 1997
- food bank use increased by 4.1% over the past year and by 97.8% since 1989
- 620 food banks with 2,192 affiliated agencies operate in Canada today compared to 905 emergency food programs in 1997
- Newfoundland showed the highest rate of per capita food bank use at 5.65%
- 40.8% of food bank recipients were children – an estimated 305,047 children relied on donated food in March 2002 compared to 278,472 in March 1997
- social assistance recipients made up the highest percentage of food bank recipients at 58.0%; workers constituted 11.9%; people receiving disability support made up 8%
- 47.3% of food banks reported difficulties keeping pantry shelves stocked and had to take additional measures to try to meet overwhelming need in their communities
- food banks with meal programs served more than 2 million meals in March 2002
- over 900,000 hours of labour, including more than 340,000 volunteer hours contributed to the operation of food banks in Canada during March 2002



Government Failure on Food Security

Executive Summary

As a signatory country on the 1996 Rome Declaration on World Food Security, the federal government has committed to taking action to realize food security and end hunger in Canada and around the world.¹ In June 2002, the federal government recommitted to domestic and international action at the second World Food Summit in Rome.² On the international stage, the federal government makes promises to ensure human rights^{3,4} – the right to food, the right to housing, the right to an adequate standard of living – but at home, these basic human rights have taken a backseat. As an NGO intimately involved with issues of hunger and food insecurity in Canada, the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) has monitored and commented on the progress of the federal government with respect to domestic food security and issues of economic access to food.⁵

Despite government commitments, food bank use has continued to climb, increasing by 12.5% since the Rome Declaration was signed. In the past year, food bank use increased by 4.1% and by 97.8% since 1989. In response to need in the community, 620 food banks with an additional 2,021 affiliated agencies have opened their doors in Canada. Only five years ago, a total of 905 emergency food programs were in operation nationwide. While food banks attempt to meet the need in communities, almost one-half reported taking additional measures to try to restock empty pantry shelves during March 2002. Almost one-third of those running out of food had to cut back on the already limited amount of groceries that they provided to the public. Despite attempts to distribute the best quality, quantity and variety of food possible, studies reveal the nutritional inadequacy of food bank diets and increasingly common experience of hunger among food bank recipients.^{6,7}

Poverty and food-insufficiency put adults and children at increased risk for a multitude of physical and mental health problems, and undermine quality of life, family harmony and civic participation. In comparison to people with higher incomes, adults living in poverty are more likely to develop, and die from, cardiovascular disease, as well as cancer, diabetes and respiratory disease.^{8,9} Even after taking into account medical and lifestyle risk factors, socioeconomic status has a lasting and powerful impact. Individuals and families without adequate resources to acquire needed food are likely to have nutritionally deficient diets, lacking in many essential vitamins and minerals.^{10,11} Food insecurity also elicits feelings of alienation, impoverishment and social exclusion.¹²⁻¹⁴

While parents deprive themselves in order to protect their children from the impacts of poverty and food insecurity¹⁵, some simply do not have the resources to ensure an adequate

diet for their children. Inadequately-nourished children are more likely to experience compromised health, iron deficiency, frequent stomach aches and headaches, colds, ear infections, anemia and asthma.^{16,17} Children with poor diets also have slower recovery periods from illness and reduced immune systems.¹⁸ Food insecurity is associated with major depression in adults¹⁹, hyperactivity in children²⁰, and dysthymia, suicidal ideation and attempted suicide in adolescents.²¹

Despite these serious consequences to health and life chances, the federal government has introduced few significant initiatives since signing the Rome Declaration. While they continue to increase the value of the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), children in the poorest of the poor families in most provinces and territories are excluded from the advantage afforded by the NCBS. In eight of thirteen provinces and territories, governments continue to treat the NCBS as income and deduct its value dollar-for-dollar from the cheques of all welfare-poor families.²² Despite public outcry, the federal government refuses to enact legislation to stop the clawback, leaving welfare-poor families to the whims of provincial governments.

On the housing front, the federal government signed agreements with seven provincial and territorial governments over the past year.²² They have committed \$680 million toward housing over the next five years. While a welcome change to devolution and cutbacks, housing experts consider this one-time investment in housing inadequate to meet current needs. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the National Housing and Homelessness Network calculate the cost of an effective national housing strategy at \$2 billion annually over a 10-year period.^{23,24} Even assuming matching dollars, current funding levels fall far short of this proposal. As issues of housing affordability are intimately linked to hunger, a national housing strategy remains a central issue to ensuring income and food security in Canada.

Declining numbers of living wage jobs alongside rising numbers of non-standard, low wage work arrangements, punitive social assistance programs with abysmally low rates, restrictive and inadequate disability support programs, and a scarce supply of affordable housing remain common contributors to hunger and food insecurity. Federal Employment Insurance (EI) reforms initiated in the mid-1990s have left the majority of unemployed workers ineligible for EI coverage or for the employment training programs and services available through EI.²⁵ Unemployed workers with limited options are left to accept low wage employment or apply for social assistance, leaving them at increased risk for hunger and food insecurity. Despite massive EI surpluses, the federal government has refused to protect the majority of work-

ers from the ravages of unemployment.

Empty promises on the international stage have not ensured basic human rights at home. Clearly, the federal government and most of its provincial counterparts will not take serious action to address hunger and food insecurity in Canada without *significant encouragement*. They did not during the peak of the economic boom or as the economy faltered leaving more people unemployed. Food banks will continue to try to stem the tide of hunger in our communities, but effective, long-term solutions rest with government. We invite every person who has visited a food bank, whether to pick up a bag of groceries or to drop one off, to provide their elected leaders with *significant encouragement* to act. Encourage them to keep their promises to Canadians.

Introduction

The HungerCount study is a national survey of food bank use in Canada. Initiated in 1989, the HungerCount study has been conducted on an annual basis since 1997. Each year, we invite every food bank in Canada to participate in order to provide an up-to-date national portrait of hunger and food insecurity. In the past, food bank use was the only measure available for assessing the extent of hunger and food insecurity in Canada. However, recent national population surveys have found that many more individuals than those occupying food bank lines lack the financial resources to access an adequate diet.^{12,26,27} According to the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) and the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (NLSCY), most food insecure individuals and families do not use food banks or other charitable food programs, despite need. While food bank studies include many marginalized people that are excluded from population studies (due to the use of telephone surveys), food bank use alone underestimates the extent of food insecurity and hunger nationwide. As such, findings from this current study may best be viewed as the tip of the iceberg with respect to hunger and food insecurity in Canada.

Within a domestic context, hunger and food insecurity are best understood as consequences of extreme poverty. In this land of plenty, a radically unequal distribution of resources underlies the existence, extent and depth of poverty across the country. Like homelessness, hunger and food insecurity emerge when social policies fail to ensure an adequate standard of living that meets basic needs. The annual HungerCount provides a means of evaluating the progress of governments with respect to ensuring income security, food security and an adequate standard of living for all.

Method

The CAFB is a national umbrella organization representing the majority of food banks in Canada. Its member food banks assist approximately 90% of people accessing food banks nationwide. Each year, we invite every food bank in Canada, members and non-members, to participate in the Hunger-

Count survey. As the HungerCount study has evolved over the years, we have compiled a list of Canadian food banks. New food banks, location changes and closures are documented to ensure an up-to-date list for survey distribution. New food banks are identified by participating food banks, provincial coordinators from across the country, CAFB staff members, and through news clippings and internet searches.

A food bank is defined as an organization that provides the public with emergency groceries either directly or via affiliated agencies. An agency is an organization that regularly receives a supply of groceries from a food bank for distribution to the public. Food banks and agencies operate emergency grocery programs that provide limited supplies of groceries to people in need. Some food banks also operate meal programs or have agencies that do. Meal programs provide prepared meals to people in need, including many homeless individuals.

In January 2002, CAFB staff members mailed HungerCount surveys to each food bank in Canada. The 2002 HungerCount survey is a one-page, double-sided, 16-item questionnaire. Food bank use is measured by counting the total number of individuals who received groceries from food banks and their affiliated agencies during the month of March 2002. Each person is counted only once regardless of the number of times that they received assistance from the food bank during the study period. March is chosen as the study period because it is considered an unexceptional month without predictable high or low use patterns. Since March is used consistently as the study period, we are able to make relevant comparisons in use patterns over time. Other questionnaire items measure: worker and volunteer hours contributed during the study period, year that the food bank opened, frequency of food bank use allowed, days worth of food provided, total number of prepared meals served, coping strategies used when food banks ran out or were running out of food during the study period, income source and family composition, demographics of food bank recipients, and local trends in food bank use. Although we measure the total number of prepared meals served during the study period, the HungerCount study is not a census of all meal programs in Canada and therefore greatly underestimates meal program activities on a national level. Totals reported provide some measure of the extent of meal program use as operated by food banks and their agencies.

Throughout the summer, a team of individuals collects surveys and verifies information gathered. CAFB board members and food bank staff members act as provincial coordinators in this capacity. Most provincial coordinators are employed by large food banks or food bank networks in their respective provinces and have long histories within the sector. Their expertise helps to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the survey data. Provincial coordinators forward completed surveys to the CAFB for data entry and analysis. CAFB staff members and provincial coordina-

Table 1. Food Banks in Canada and 2002 HungerCount Participation

	# of food banks not including agencies	# of food banks participating in 2002 HungerCount	% of participating food banks	# of agencies of participating food banks included in results
British Columbia	85	84	98.8	139
Alberta	72	68	94.4	240
Saskatchewan	17	15	88.2	1
Manitoba	28	27	96.4	208
Ontario	222	194	87.4	429
Quebec	27	22	81.5	1,099
New Brunswick	58	55	94.8	4
Nova Scotia	44	44	100.0	72
Newfoundland	54	39	72.2	0
PEI	6	6	100.0	0
Yukon	2	2	100.0	0
NWT	3	3	100.0	0
Nunavut	2	2	100.0	0
Canada	620	561	90.5	2,192

ince. In Newfoundland, 72.2% of food banks completed surveys. Provincial coordinator Eg Walters was able to collect emergency grocery program totals by telephone for all but four of the remaining Newfoundland food banks. Estimates were used for the final four locations based on previous use patterns.

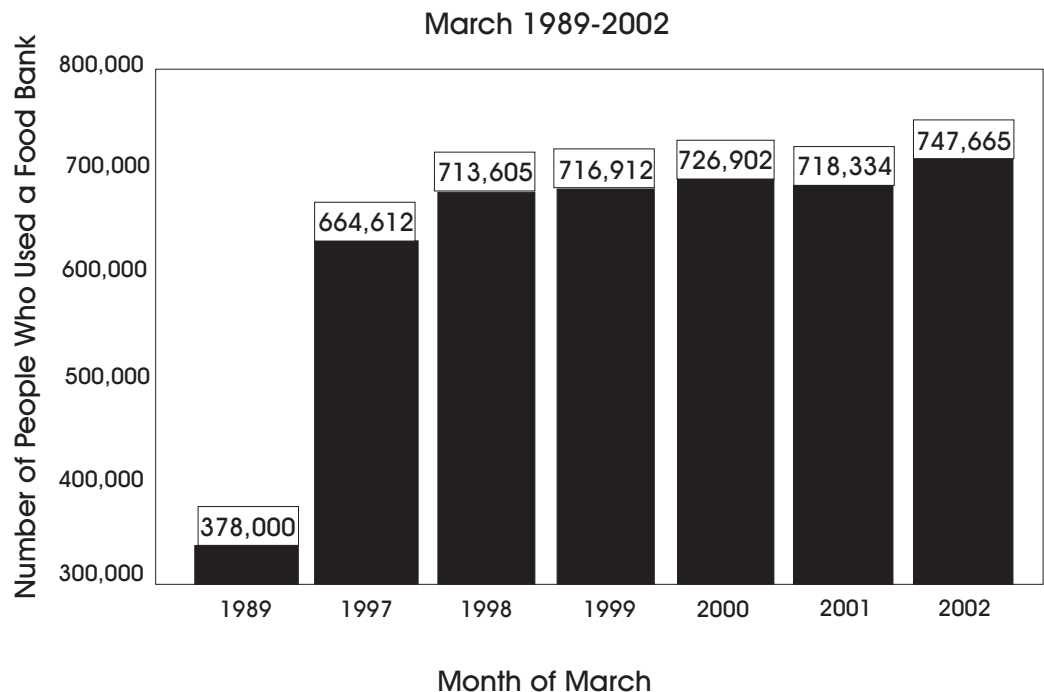
In Quebec, the vast majority of emergency grocery programs are operated through 14 large food bank networks known as Moissons. The Moissons support a total of 1,099 affiliated agencies across Quebec. In the past, we lacked the administrative resources to

tors contact non-responding food banks to encourage participation and clarify survey information. Food banks reporting large increases or decreases in emergency grocery program or meal program use are also contacted to verify figures and gather further information regarding these emerging trends. In a small number of cases where actual grocery program figures are not available, provincial coordinators provide conservative estimates, where possible, based on newspaper reports, previous food bank use and population statistics.

As shown in Table 1, 620 food banks with 2,192 affiliated agencies are currently operating in Canada. This year, 561 food banks participated in the HungerCount study, resulting in a participation rate of 90.5%. In Ontario, 87.4% of food banks completed surveys. Provincial coordinator Sue Cox was able to contact additional food banks and use conservative estimates for the remainder in order to account for 98% of the provincial population. Newspaper reports, population statistics and past use patterns were used to arrive at conservative estimates for the remainder of the prov-

identify food banks operating independently of the Moissons. Through the efforts of a dedicated bilingual staff member, we were able to update the Quebec food bank directory this year. In total, he was able to identify 27 food banks operating in Quebec and obtain the participation of 22, including all 14 Moissons, resulting in a provincial participation rate of 81.5%.

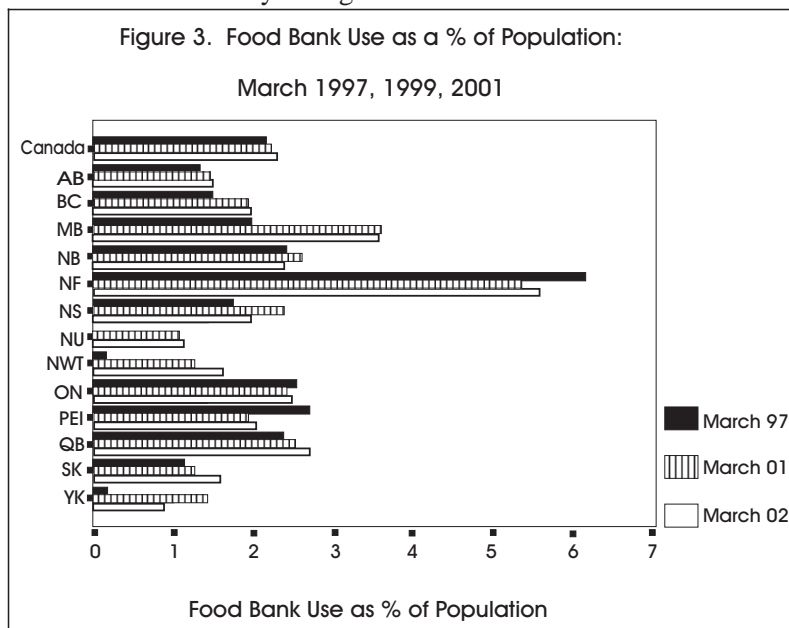
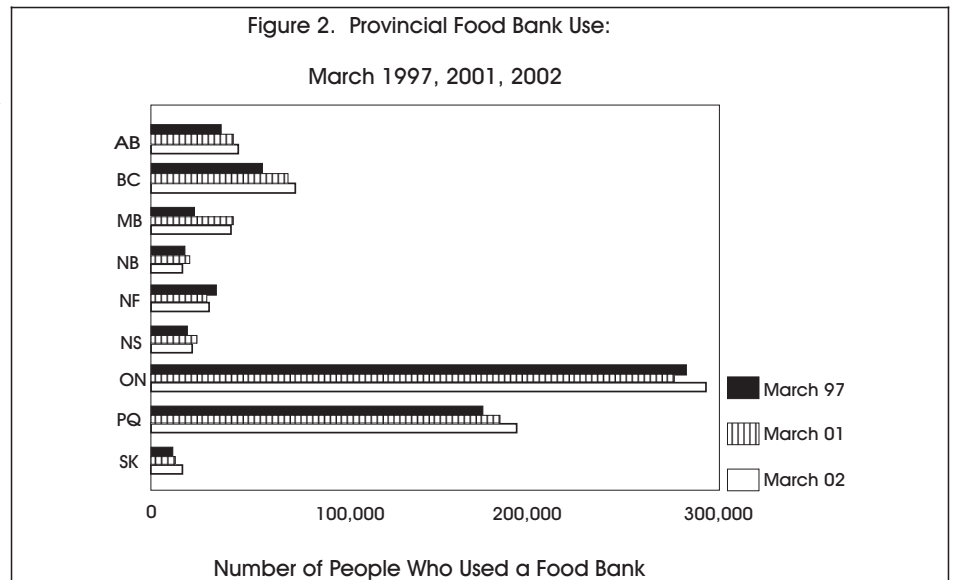
Figure 1. One Month of Canadian Food Bank Use:



Results

Figure 1 shows the number of people who received groceries from a food bank during the month of March since 1989. Food bank use increased by 4.1% over the past year and has almost doubled since 1989.

Figure 2 shows the number of people who received emergency groceries by province for March 1997, 2001 and 2002. Due to their smaller size, data from Prince Edward Island and the territories are not shown. Food bank use increased over the past year in most provinces and territories. After an easing of use in March 2001, the number of people accessing food banks in Ontario climbed to a 6-year high in March



2002. Food bank use decreased over the past year in Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the Yukon. Manitoba food banks saw a slight decline by a fraction of a percent over the past year. While study results revealed a decrease in food bank use in the Yukon between March 2001 and March 2002, food bank workers in the territory reported an overall increase on an annual basis. The number of people assisted by food banks in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia declined by 9.8% and by 16.2%, respectively.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of people who received emergency groceries by province for March 1997, 2001 and 2002. Food bank use in Canada increased to 2.41% of the Canadian population in March 2002 from 2.30% in March 2001. As a percentage of the provincial population, Newfoundland food banks have continued to assist the largest number of people in the country. After a decline in per capita food bank

	All Food Banks		Food Banks Reporting Age Breakdown*				Total Assisted	Number of Food Banks
	Total Assisted	Provincial Share (%)	Households	Adults	Children			
British Columbia	80,844	10.8	19,852	42,387	21,833	64,220	71	
Alberta	46,306	6.2	14,950	26,401	18,357	44,758	61	
Saskatchewan	16,581	2.2	6,533	8,743	7,838	16,581	15	
Manitoba	42,459	5.7	16,953	22,851	19,595	42,446	26	
Ontario	295,228	39.5	73,084	122,006	85,492	207,498	175	
Quebec	196,462	26.3	59,105	102,347	72,891	175,238	16	
New Brunswick	17,122	2.3	7,040	10,933	5,662	16,595	39	
Nova Scotia	18,436	2.5	8,289	10,801	7,610	18,411	42	
Newfoundland	30,166	4.0	2,836	5,134	3,374	8,508	38	
PEI	2,800	.4	1,044	1,713	1,087	2,800	6	
Yukon	248	<.1	87	69	35	104	1	
NWT	697	<.1	32	373	324	697	3	
Nunavut	316	<.1	33	176	140	316	2	
TOTAL	747,665	100.0	209,838	353,934	244,238	598,172	495	

* Household numbers are based on fewer food banks than adult and children numbers with the exception of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and the Yukon.

use in Newfoundland last year, the percentage of Newfoundlanders turning to food banks increased once again to 5.65% from 5.4% in March 2001. At 3.69%, Manitoba continues to show the second highest rate of per capita food bank use in the country.

Table 2 shows the number of people using food banks by province and territory with household, adult and child figures where available. Food banks in Ontario and Quebec, the most populous provinces in the country, continue to assist the largest share of food bank recipients.

Meal Programs

In addition to operating emergency grocery programs, 107 food banks reported that they or their agencies run meal programs. One hundred food banks were able to provide totals for meals served during March 2002. In March 2002, food banks reported serving a total of 2,189,890 meals across Canada. In comparison, food banks reported serving 1,997,771 meals during March 2001. In a comparison of 65 food banks that reported meal totals during the last two study years, meals served increased by 29.2% from 1,624,791 in March 2001 to 2,099,379 in March 2002. Again, many meal programs operate independently of food banks and are not included in this study. These figures provide some measure of meal program activity among Canadian food banks.

Food Bank Recipients

In March 2002, children constituted 40.8% of food bank recipients. In comparison, just over one-quarter of the population is under the age of 18. In Canada and the United States, children are consistently over-represented in food bank lines, speaking to the inadequacy of social policies meant to address child poverty and provide support to families. According to provincial and territorial figures, Saskatchewan food banks assisted the highest percentage of children at 47.3% of all recipients, followed by the North West Territories at 46.5%, Manitoba at 46.2% and Nunavut at 44.3%.

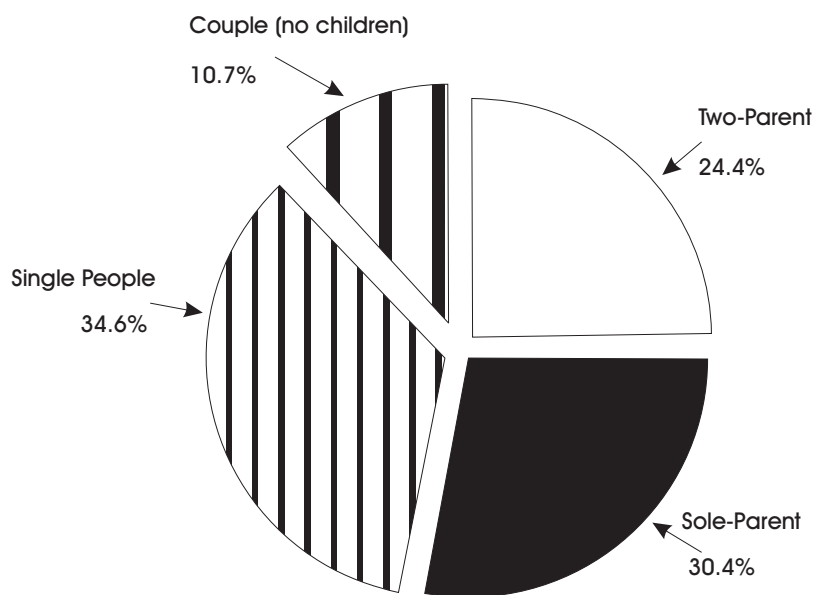
Figure 4 shows the percentage of single adults, couples without children, sole parent families and two parent families accessing food banks based on estimates provided by 295 food banks. Percentages were weighted by total number of people assisted in emergency grocery programs. Based on these estimates, more than half of all households accessing food banks are families with children. Over one-third of households assisted are single people with the remaining 10%

constituting couples with no children.

A total of 343 food banks provided estimates of the percentage of seniors and 247 food banks provided estimates of the percentage of students accessing their grocery programs. Percentages were weighted by total number of people assisted in grocery programs. An estimated 6.4% of food bank recipients are seniors and an estimated 9.1% are students.

Figure 5 shows the breakdown of food bank recipients'

Figure 4. Family Composition of Food Recipients*



*based on estimates from 295 food banks

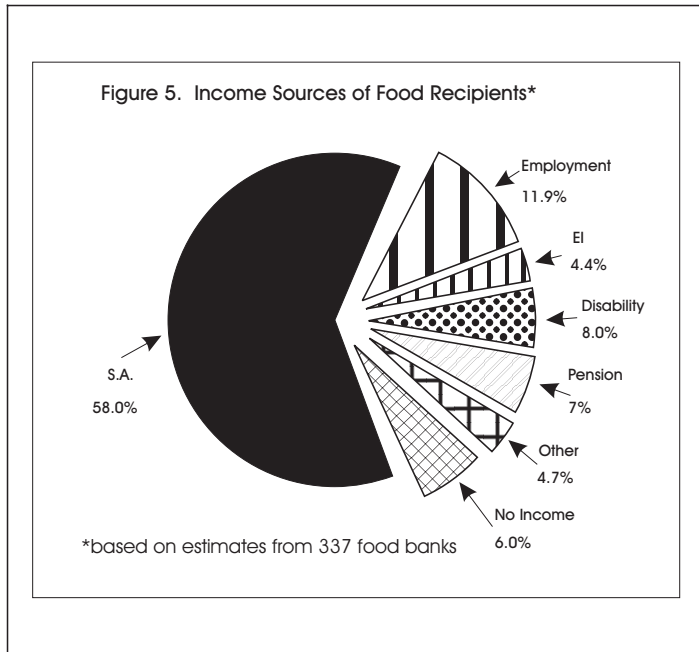
source of income using estimates provided by 337 food banks, weighted by total number of people assisted in grocery programs. Similar to findings from previous years, social assistance recipients constitute the majority of people using food banks. Estimates suggest that substantial numbers of working poor people, people with disabilities and those with no income at all turn to food banks for help.

Food Bank Operations

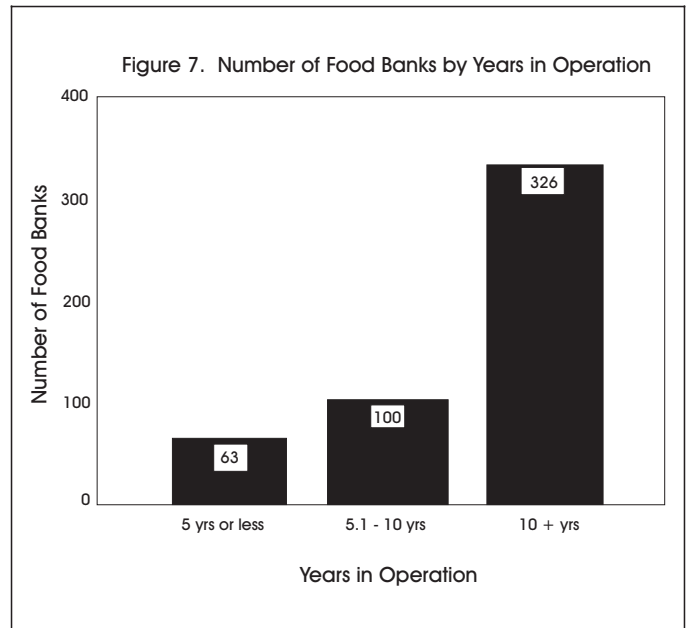
Figure 6 shows the number of food banks operating in communities of various sizes. As illustrated, food banks operate in rural communities, towns, small and mid-size cities, as well as large urban centres. Many food banks situated in smaller centres serve people from surrounding areas, as well as their immediate population. Affiliated agencies of larger food banks may operate in communities of varying sizes adjacent to the location of the main food bank.

Figure 7 shows the number of food banks by years in operation for 489 food banks with complete data. In the past five years, sixty-three new food banks opened including three in 2002.

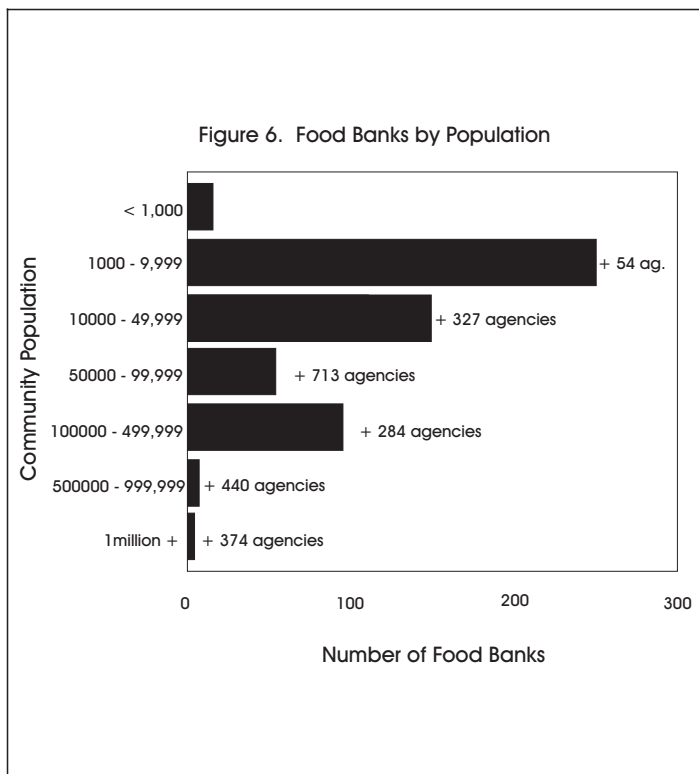
Four hundred and ninety-six food banks reported on the



of food to individuals and families in need. Figure 9 illustrates the frequency with which people are able to access emergency grocery supplies based on 491 food banks. Most allow food bank use once per month as a rule. Not all food banks have rules regarding frequency of use, however most have had to adopt rules as a means of rationing scarce grocery



number of paid staff hours and 470 reported on the number of volunteer hours contributed to the operation of their food bank during the month of March 2002. In total, paid staff contributed 565,242 hours and volunteers contributed 340,107.75 hours for a total of 905,349.75 hours during the one-month period. These figures attest to the massive efforts of the charitable and voluntary sectors to try to feed people left hungry by federal and provincial offloading of responsibility.



supplies in the face of increasing community need. Despite the adoption of rules around frequency of use, most food banks try to avoid turning anyone away empty-handed regardless of when their last visit took place. In general, food banks that provide smaller supplies of food allow more frequent use and those that provide larger supplies ask people to come less often.

During the month of March 2002, 47.3% of food banks reported experiencing problems providing food assistance in their communities, up from 39% in March 2001. Figure 10 shows the percentage of food banks that took various actions

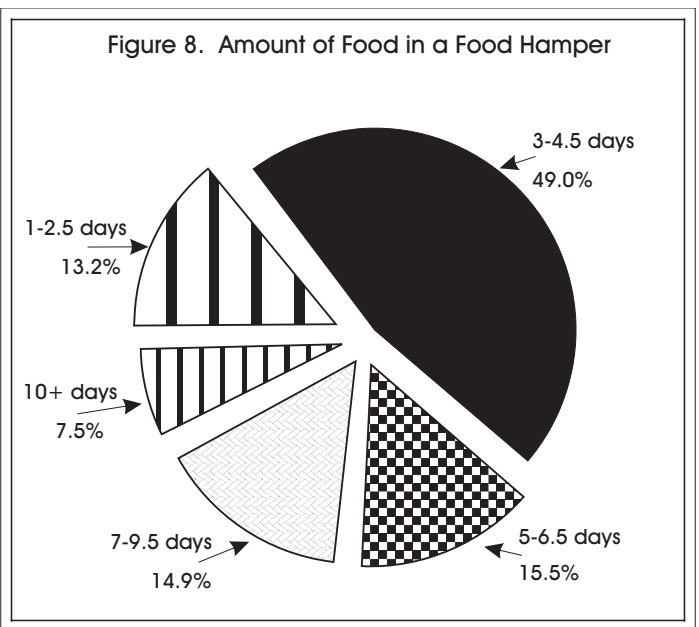


Figure 8 shows the percentage of food banks that provide varying sizes of food hampers based on 478 food banks. Most food banks are only able to provide 3 to 4.5 days worth

to try to deal with the lack of groceries on their pantry shelves. Although few, an increasing number closed early/did not open, or turned people away empty-handed because of lack of available food during the study period this year. The majority bought food when they normally would not or purchased more than they normally would try to keep shelves stocked. This practice can only last as long as financial resources permit. Almost one-fifth of food banks rationed already limited supplies to people in need. Other measures included additional food drives, pleas to communities, praying and distributing hampers without important food items.

Figure 9. Frequency of Food Bank Use Allowed

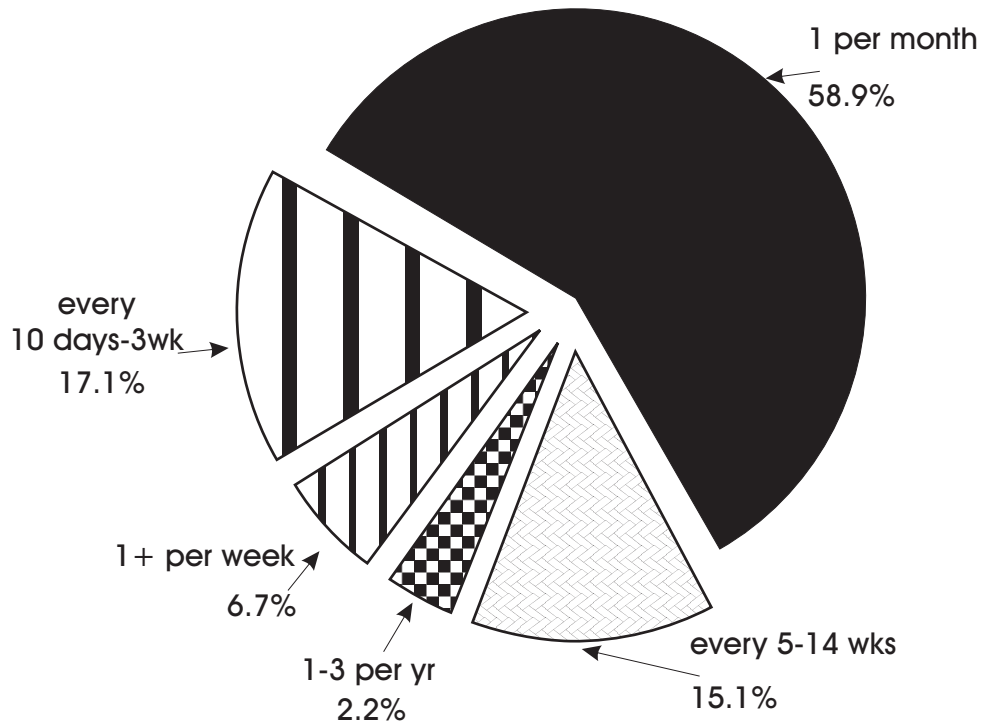
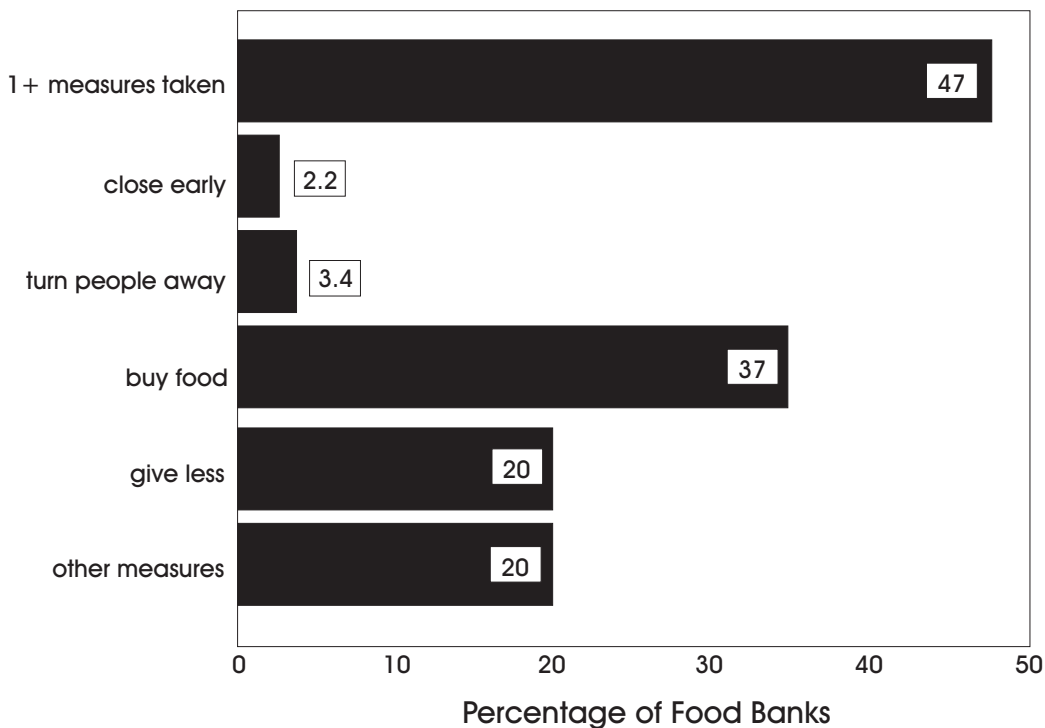


Figure 10. Measures Taken Due to Lack of Food



Discussion

While governments fail to ensure an adequate social safety net, more Canadians turn to food banks in an attempt to meet their most basic needs. Declining numbers of living wage jobs together with rising numbers of non-standard, low wage work arrangements, punitive social assistance programs with abysmally low rates, restrictive and inadequate disability support programs, and a scarce supply of affordable housing are common contributors to hunger and food insecurity across the nation. Each province and territory tells a particular story with respect to the circumstances of hungry people and the factors influencing food insecurity on a regional basis.

Provincial Perspectives

British Columbia

Food bank use has increased in British Columbia for the fifth consecutive year since the HungerCount study was adopted as an annual survey in 1997. BC food banks experienced a rise of 4.7% in emergency grocery program use over the past year. Given the deep cuts to social programs enacted by the newly elected provincial Liberal government under Gordon Campbell, an increase in the number of people without adequate access to food is not surprising. But most alarming, this increase occurred prior to many recent cuts and changes to social assistance and disability support programs in BC.

“Logging community – industry down the tubes. Donors are now clients.”

- British Columbia food bank worker

On April 1, 2002, provincial cuts to basic support rates for most social assistance recipients deemed employable took effect.²⁸ On July 1, 2002, social assistance shelter rates were also cut for families of three or more. In addition to eligibility and exemption changes limiting access to assistance, BC has become the first province to impose time limits for receipt of social assistance benefits.^{29,30} Employable recipients will only be allowed to collect assistance for 24 months out of a 60 month period. Depending on family composition, already meagre benefit levels may be cut or cancelled entirely for recipients past the 24 month period. New restrictive eligibility criteria scheduled to take effect in the fall threaten to end and severely curtail future access to disability support for many people with disabilities.³¹ In March 2002, prior to these cuts and changes, forty-one percent of BC food banks reported taking additional measures in an attempt to restock empty pantry shelves. The most recent installment of Campbell’s “New Era” is likely to land more people in food bank lines, where assistance may be residual at best. Increased hunger and food insecurity appear inevitable. Massive, diverse and creative resistance campaigns lodged across the province stand as the only hopeful sign during a particularly grim period for many British Columbians.

Alberta

Food bank use in Alberta has increased by 4.1% over the past year and by almost one-quarter since 1997. In mid-2001, an Alberta MLA committee conducted a review of low-income programs administered by the province.^{32,33} Workshops were held in order to solicit feedback and recommendations from a range of individuals and organizations, including low income people, business leaders, municipal politicians and representatives from a variety of community agencies. One key recommendation under consideration is the introduction of a Market Basket Measure as a benchmark for setting support levels. If implemented, social assistance rates would have some relation to the actual cost of living for Albertans. The provincial government has yet to implement committee recommendations. It is hoped that these pressing issues will be raised during the Fall 2002 session.

“Most jobs are part-time and minimum wage. Rent and utilities are almost impossible to pay. Even a small setback (sickness, fewer hours, repairs) makes the bills pile up”.

-Alberta food bank worker

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan food bank use has increased for the fifth consecutive year. Food bank use grew by more than 7.6% over the past year and by more than 40% since 1997. While children are over-represented in food bank lines across Canada, Saskatchewan surpasses the national average with 47.3% of food bank recipients under the age of 18. According to provincial coordinator Gord Barnes, Saskatchewan food banks are concerned with their inability to meet the basic nutritional needs of the families they try to provide support to – in particular the children. Social assistance recipients represent the majority of food bank users. While the total number of recipients who are on the Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP), the province’s social assistance program, has declined, those who remain on SAP find it very difficult to make ends meet. SAP rates, and in particular, shelter allowances, have not been adjusted for many years. The reality for most SAP recipients is that they must use food money to pay for their shelter costs.

“The demand surpasses our food sources.”

-Saskatchewan food bank worker

Manitoba

In Manitoba, food bank use declined by a mere .4% over the past year with food banks assisting 166 fewer people during the 2002 study period. Since 1997, the number of people accessing emergency grocery programs in Mani-

“More people using food banks on a regular basis.”

-Manitoba food bank worker

toba increased by a staggering 86.9%. Provincial coordinator Heidi Magnuson-Ford commented on some of the regional trends in Manitoba's food bank use. An increasing number of first time callers are requesting appointments at Manitoba food banks. Heidi noted the diversity of the client population including young and old, single individuals and families, people with disabilities, families with very small children and more First Nations people, particularly in rural areas. To address the needs of food bank recipients, Manitoba food banks call for an increase in the minimum wage and social assistance rates, more opportunities for personal growth and development, as well as skill development, and changes to government services to increase their accessibility and user-friendliness for all.

The Prairie Provinces. According to recent anecdotal reports from food bank workers in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the drought has resulted in steep increased need throughout rural areas of the prairie provinces over the summer months. Echoing the concerns of many, one food bank worker commented, "You know it's really bad when you get a farmer in. They're usually the ones donating the food." Many rural food banks report a decrease in donations while struggling to assist those impacted by the drought. According to Saskatchewan provincial coordinator Gord Barnes, all of the food banks are finding it difficult to maintain an adequate level of donated food to meet the needs in their communities. Government support and intervention is urgently needed to address the emerging and longstanding issues facing Canadian farmers and the agricultural sector.

Ontario

Food bank use in Ontario has increased by 6% over the past year. Since 1997, over a 5-year period marked largely by economic recovery, Ontario food bank use increased by 3.6%. In addition to a slump in the economy, provincial coordinator Sue Cox accounted for the increase by the continued lack of affordable housing, rent de-control, a stagnant minimum wage rate, restrictive eligibility criteria and low benefit levels for disability support, and inadequate social assistance rates. A recent publication demonstrated the inadequacy of social assistance rates for many Toronto residents.³⁴ Using conservative figures to estimate housing and food costs, researchers found that social assistance rates for single individuals and two-parent families were inadequate to provide a nutritious diet. While the social assistance rate for the single parent family afforded a nutritious diet, levels of assistance were inadequate for six months out of the year due to extra heating costs etc. Researchers noted that expenditure costs likely underestimate true needs and actual expenses of social assistance recipients.

"More working poor and people on OntarioWorks. Rent is high. Affordable housing is almost non-existent."
-Ontario food bank worker

A recent study conducted by Toronto Social Services calls into question the provincial government's assumptions regarding the success of OntarioWorks, the province's workfare-style social assistance program.³⁵ In a telephone survey of individuals who had recently left OntarioWorks, researchers found that one-third were not financially better off and most had not escaped poverty. One-third experienced food shortages and 40% reported paying their rent or mortgage late. Seventeen percent returned to OntarioWorks within one year. One third of those who returned were ill or disabled. These results likely underestimate the extent of negative outcomes experienced by OntarioWorks leavers. Individuals most vulnerable for experiencing hunger and food insecurity, those without homes or without telephones, were not included. Researchers credited the shortsighted focus of the program on the fastest route to a job - any job - and a lack of provincial support for education and training programs with these poor outcomes.

Quebec

Food bank use in Quebec increased by 4.6% over the past year and by 11.6% since 1997. Although recent initiatives of the Quebec provincial government have yet to impact the extent of need witnessed by food banks, they provide hope for Quebecers without adequate access to food and other basic needs. The provincial government has committed \$1.4 billion over the next three years to addressing poverty and social exclusion, including \$500 million toward affordable housing projects.^{36,37} In July 2001, the provincial government ceased its clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement from the cheques of welfare-poor families, joining a minority of provincial governments in this regard.²² These recent announcements stand in stark contrast to the regressive social policies of many other provincial governments. We encourage the Quebec provincial government to follow through on these commitments and to go further – to develop a social safety net that ends the need for food banks in Quebec. We invite the provincial government to establish goals with accompanying timelines to reduce and ultimately to end the need for food banks in Quebec.

"Marked growth of single people, isolated and at the rock bottom of social assistance, incapable of subsidizing the whole of their needs"
- Quebec food bank worker

Newfoundland

This year, Newfoundland food bank use crept back up by 3.2% after slight declines over the past two years. According to provincial coordinator Eg Walters, demand in rural areas was up some 18.5% as most economic growth continues to be centered on the Eastern Avalon (St. John's-Mount Pearl areas). With the

"The waiting period for EI is a problem."
- Newfoundland food bank worker

construction of Inco's proposed experimental smelter poised to start up in the Placentia/Argentia area on the East Coast, a spike in the construction industry is a given. The spin-off for increased housing demands and related retail services for short-term and long-term employees will have a significant impact on the local economy. Talks between the province and Quebec on the development of the Lower Churchill have reopened with indications that both parties are working towards a final deal. These initiatives combined with Inco's project and the ongoing development of the offshore oil field will provide much needed employment in Newfoundland. Rural areas will continue to struggle given out-migration, an aging population and the impact of the fisheries' moratorium. However, many areas are successfully promoting themselves as tourist locations offering short term seasonal jobs. Newfoundland continues to experience the highest per capita food bank use at 5.65%.

New Brunswick

Food bank use in New Brunswick decreased by 9.5% over the past year with a 1.4% increase over 1997 figures. Provincial coordinator Bill Cockburn credited the history-making upturn in the economy with the improved situation in New Brunswick. Bill noted, for the first time since the creation of Canada, the New Brunswick economy is growing at a rate that is faster than the national average. However, the unemployment rate is still higher than the national average.

"There are many people who depend on food banks each month."
-New Brunswick food bank worker

Nova Scotia

In Nova Scotia, food bank use has declined by 17.2% over the past year but remains 12.6% higher than 1997 figures. The decline is largely driven by decreases in emergency grocery program use in Halifax. According to a recent study conducted by the Metro Food Bank Society in Halifax, decreases in food bank use were accounted for by 8% fewer adults and 10% fewer children.³⁸ Authors suggested that the introduction and development of advocacy programs may have resulted in increased access to benefits and entitlements, lessening the need for food banks among a particular segment of the population. While food bank use decreased in Halifax, the study found a surge of 46% in meal program use within Halifax drop-in centres over the past year. These findings raise questions as to whether other segments of the population have lost stable housing and moved from food bank lines to seats around tables at drop-in centre meal programs.

"We get quite a few single people on disability pension."
-Nova Scotia food bank worker

This year, people with employment constituted 8.3% of all Nova Scotians accessing food banks, up from 6.7% in 2001.

At \$6.00 per hour as of October 1, 2002, Nova Scotia has one of the lowest minimum wage rates in the country.³⁹ According to a recent report from the Nova Scotia office of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Nova Scotia minimum wage at \$5.80 per hour (rate prior to the October 1 increase) bought almost 30% less than it did twenty-five years ago.⁴⁰ After factoring in cost of living, the real minimum rate in Nova Scotia decreased by \$2 since 1976. As they occupy more low wage positions, women are particularly impacted by the inadequacy of the minimum wage rate. Not surprising, growing numbers of workers are unable to make ends meet and finding themselves in food bank lines.

Prince Edward Island

Food bank use in PEI showed an increase of 5.4% over the past year. However due to a reporting error in March 2001, it is likely even higher. Provincial coordinator Mike MacDonald commented that although more people are working, food bank use continues to climb. He noted that much employment creation is part-time and low wage, as well as seasonal. Although these openings are moving more people into the labour market, they do not necessarily ensure income or food security. Mike commented on the inability of food banks to meet the needs of many in the community who struggle day-to-day with basic needs.

"This is the worst year we've seen in terms of unemployment."
-Prince Edward Island food bank worker

The Territories

Nunavut and the Northwest Territories experienced increases over the past year. While food banks in the Yukon assisted fewer people during the 2002 study period compared to 2001, food banks reported an increase in use over the course of the year. In addition to limited employment opportunities, high food costs due to transport expenditures also contribute to food insecurity in the territories.

"Yukon – The need has doubled in the past year due to the economy."
"Nunavut – Food bank is a must as food prices at the store are so high."

The Rome Declaration on World Food Security

Through their underfunding, erosion and dismantling of social programs, federal and provincial governments have effectively offloaded responsibility for addressing hunger and food insecurity to the voluntary and charitable sectors. Yet, the federal government continues to commit to the right to food, the right to housing and the right to an adequate standard of living through international agreements.^{1,3,4} Most recently, Canada recommitted to the Rome Declaration on World Food Security at the second World Food Summit held in Rome in June 2002.² Canada became a signatory

country on the Rome Declaration on World Food Security at the first World Food Summit in 1996.¹ One hundred and eighty-two nations, including Canada, have committed to an overriding goal of reducing the number of hungry people on a global basis by half by the year 2015. They also endorsed the right to food and the notion of food security. As defined in the declaration, “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” In order to progress towards this goal, Canada developed a plan of action, articulating key domestic and international commitments.

As an NGO intimately involved in issues of domestic hunger and food insecurity, CAFB has monitored and commented on the activities of the federal government with respect to its commitment to achieve food security within Canada.⁵ We find no evidence to suggest that hunger and food insecurity in Canada have abated since the federal government’s adoption of the Rome Declaration in 1996. Since 1997, food bank use has increased by 12.5%. According to the 1998/99 National Population Health Survey, approximately 8% of Canadians, an estimated 2.5 million people, have compromised diets in terms of quality or quantity of available food.¹² An additional 2%, or one-half million people, worry that they will run out of food because of lack of money. These figures may greatly underestimate the extent of food insecurity and compromised diet in Canada due to the exclusion of people without homes and without telephones from the study.

In Canada’s Second Progress Report on Implementing the World Food Summit Plan of Action⁴¹, the importance of poverty reduction to the achievement of food security was reaffirmed. The authors noted: “The reduction of poverty is an important element in the strategy for addressing food insecurity in both domestic and international actions, based on the notion that a key condition for food security is access to sufficient resources to purchase or grow food. Domestic actions centre on improving upon Canada’s social system, especially with respect to those programs that target our most vulnerable populations.” Despite this acknowledgement and the commitment to implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty, the federal government has failed to take substantive measures directed at income security for those most vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger.

Children

In this progress report, the same authors credit the National Child Benefit System as a means of addressing child poverty.⁴¹ Indeed, the federal government continues to increase the value of the NCBS on an annual basis.²² Yet, children in welfare-poor families in eight out of thirteen provinces and territories gain no benefit from the NCBS. Most provincial and territorial governments treat the NCBS as income and deduct its value dollar-for-dollar from the cheques of families

receiving social assistance, leaving children of the poorest of the poor no better off. Despite public outcry, the federal government has refused to enact legislation to stop the NCBS clawback.

In addition to reducing child poverty, the federal government also frames the NCBS as a means of enhancing labour force attachment. The implication is that the NCBS, if provided to welfare-poor families, would discourage entry into the workforce. Yet the federal government provides no evidence to demonstrate this effect. There is no suggestion from provinces that have stopped the clawback that providing the NCBS to welfare-poor families has discouraged labour force participation. Since its inception, New Brunswick and Newfoundland passed on the entire benefit to welfare-poor, as well as working-poor families.²² In 2001, provincial governments in Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Quebec altered their position on the clawback. The Nova Scotia government stopped the clawback entirely. The Manitoba government stopped the clawback for families with children under 7, and the Quebec government stopped the clawback for all family allowance recipients. While there is no evidence to suggest that these changes have discouraged workforce participation, there is evidence showing an increase in the quality of life of families impacted by changes in these three provinces.²²

As a means of addressing child poverty, the NCBS, particularly without protection against provincial clawbacks, falls far short of its stated goal. During the 2002 study period, an estimated 305,047 children were reliant on charitable food donations compared to 278,472 children in 1997. According to a Toronto area food bank study, child hunger has increased from 18% to 32% over the past seven years, despite the assistance of food banks.⁷ On the international stage, the federal government proudly showcases the NCBS as a means of addressing child poverty while leaving welfare-poor families to the whim of provincial governments. Their continued refusal to enact legislation to stop the clawback is unconscionable given the impact on many of Canada’s children.

Housing

Authors of the Second Progress Report also call attention to the federal government’s National Homelessness Initiative including the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative as a measure to reduce poverty and food insecurity.⁴¹ Yet none of this funding has been earmarked to actually open or construct new affordable housing units. Lack of affordable housing remains a crucial issue for individuals and families accessing food banks. Local food bank studies demonstrate that most recipients spend more than 30% of their income toward housing.^{7,42,43} The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation considers such individuals in core housing need and at risk of becoming homeless.⁴⁴

After years of retrenchment on social housing responsibilities, the federal government has signed housing agreements with seven provincial and territorial governments over the

past year.²² The federal government has agreed to provide a total of \$680 million over a 5-year period to provincial and territorial governments that offer matching funds. Although a welcome change from downloads and cutbacks, this funding level is still inadequate to meet housing needs in communities. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the National Housing and Homelessness Network calculates the cost of an effective national housing strategy at \$2 billion annually over a 10-year period.^{23,24} In Ontario, housing experts have voiced concerns over the promised affordability of new housing stock, questioning whether rents will be set at levels accessible to people with low and moderate incomes.⁴⁵ There is no suggestion that the federal government will intervene to ensure the affordability of this new housing. The federal government has yet to adopt a sustained and adequately funded national housing strategy. This issue is central to the needs of many food insecure households.

Employment Insurance

Authors of the Second Progress Report fail to examine how reforms to the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system, now called Employment Insurance (EI), have impacted food insecurity and hunger in Canada. While they acknowledge the importance of social programs aimed at providing income security for Canadians, the once central federal program for unemployed workers, UI/EI, is absent from their analysis. Over the past decade, the percentage of unemployed workers entitled to UI/EI benefits has fallen drastically. Most recent data show that 38.5% of unemployed workers are eligible for EI compared to more than 74% a decade ago.²⁵ While employed, these workers paid into the UI/EI fund. But when unemployed, those with limited options are left to accept low wage employment or apply for social assistance, leaving them vulnerable for food insecurity and hunger. Eligibility criteria for social assistance programs may also exclude unemployed workers who own property or have assets.²²

Social Assistance

National population studies, as well as food bank research, make clear that people in receipt of social assistance are at particular risk for food insecurity and hunger.^{12,27} Despite this obvious policy connection, authors of the progress report fail to report on the federal government's role with respect to social assistance programs in Canada. According to the National Council of Welfare, social assistance rates in every province and territory in the country fall well below the Low Income Cut-Off, a measure commonly used to define poverty, and are woefully inadequate to meet basic needs.²² While social assistance programs fall under the jurisdiction of provincial governments, federal government action paved the way for provincial cuts, restrictive eligibility changes, the introduction of mandatory workfare programs, and in the case of British Columbia, the implementation of time limits for receipt of assistance.

In 1996, the federal government replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). With the introduction of the CHST, national standards for social assistance were lost, transfer payments to provinces were cut by \$7 billion, and block transfer payments were introduced.⁴⁶ The loss of national standards ended the requirement for provinces to determine eligibility on the basis of need, to provide assistance at levels in accordance with need and to ensure an appeals process. The introduction of block transfer payments allowed provinces to allocate federal funds toward health care, education or social services as they preferred. Federal dollars were no longer earmarked specifically for social assistance. While social activists have advocated to abolish the CHST and end block funding, the federal government has failed to take action in this regard. The federal government's repeal of CAP and introduction of the CHST remains a significant precursor to emerging food insecurity and hunger in Canada.

Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity

Physical Health and Nutrition. Government indifference and lack of systemic action to realize income and food security carries human, societal and health care costs. Lack of economic access to an adequate diet has serious consequences with respect to physical health and nutrition. Researchers have documented the nutritional inadequacies common to charitable food provisions.^{6,10} Emergency food programs tend not to have adequate supplies of meat, fresh vegetables and fruit. In a study evaluating the contents of food bank hampers, nutritionists found that groceries provided did not allow individuals to meet the basic recommendations for daily nutritional intake under Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, especially for nutrients like calcium, vitamin D and vitamin A.¹⁰ The intake of other nutrients like folate, protein, vitamin C, magnesium, and zinc among frequent users of food banks also tends to be low.¹¹ Although food banks were originally established to respond to emergency food needs, they have started to become a long-term food source for many low-income families.⁴⁷ These long-term users clearly do not attain the adequate food variety or nutrition that they need through charitable donations.

Cardiovascular disease is another major health concern affecting low income Canadians. Researchers have found evidence supporting a causal link between low income and cardiovascular disease.⁸ Studies conducted in 1986 and 1996 found that those living within the poorest 20% of urban neighborhoods were much more likely to die from cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and respiratory diseases than other Canadians.⁹ While medical and lifestyle risk factors do contribute to heart disease and stroke, they account for very little variation in whether people develop such health problems. Income remains a significant predictor of disease after controlling for other risk factors.

Affecting one in five children, child poverty in Canada is a serious problem associated with ill health and poor nutrition among children. Research has found that children from low income families tend to have a higher prevalence of poor/fair health status and iron deficiency than children from high income families.¹⁶ Even when controlling for income status, food-insufficient children are still significantly more likely to have poorer health and to experience frequent stomach-aches and headaches than food-sufficient children. Frequent colds, ear infections, anemia, and asthma are also commonly experienced health problems.¹⁷ Research has shown that young children from poorer families tend to have compromised diets.¹⁸ Lack of adequate nutrition can lead to slower recovery rates from infection and also to reduced immune status. In addition, undernutrition can lead to increased risks for chronic disease in adulthood.

The link between hunger and inadequate nutrient intake is a serious problem for the elderly as well. Elderly individuals from food-insufficient households are more likely to have low intakes of nutrients, including calcium, vitamins A, B, and E, as well as magnesium and zinc.⁴⁸ Their mean energy intake also tends to be lower than what is recommended for people in their age group. This makes it more difficult for them to obtain other recommended nutrients, which places them at an even greater risk for nutrient deficiencies.⁴⁹

Research has consistently found that parents in poor families often deprive themselves of food in order to provide for their children.^{16,49} This is particularly true for mothers, since women heading single-parent households are especially at risk for low income.⁵⁰ According to one study assessing the nutritional vulnerability among women using food banks, those in families experiencing severe or moderate hunger had lower energy and nutrient intakes than those not reporting hunger.⁵¹ These women were at risk of deficiency for vital nutrients like iron, magnesium, vitamin A, and folate.⁵² A high proportion of them also had low calcium intakes. Research has also found an association between hunger and major depression among women from low income households.¹⁹

While the immediate impact of inadequate nutrient intake may be minimal in terms of major illness risk, its long-term impact can lead to chronic diseases. Similarly, the short-term consumption of an inadequate diet is unlikely to have major adverse health effects for families who only use food banks on a short-term basis. However, as mentioned before, many families rely on food banks as their main source for attaining food. Local food bank studies show that a growing number of adults and children experience hunger or have inadequate food supplies despite the assistance of a food bank.⁷ Nutritional deficiencies are clearly a potential problem for these families. This is especially true for women, children, and the elderly, who are most at risk for adverse health conditions.

Mental Health and Quality of Life

Several researchers have documented the effect of food insecurity on mental health and quality of life. Food insecurity is associated with an increased sense of impoverishment, feelings of alienation, exclusion and powerlessness, deprivation, overwhelming stress, emotional upset, distress, inability to overcome obstacles and major depressive episodes.¹²⁻¹⁴ People in food insecure households have described a loss of pleasure associated with cooking and eating, a sense of being demeaned by inadequate diet, disrupted familial relationships, and restrictions on socializing due to an inability to share food with friends.¹³ Further, parents struggled with an inability to face their incapacity to provide adequately for their children, further disrupting these relationships.¹³ Reflecting on the atmosphere at the dinner table, they described scenarios filled with tension and dissatisfaction. Devoid of the enjoyment and bonding often associated with dining rituals, mealtime instead reinforced the sense of deprivation these families experience.

While parents attempt to shield their children from the consequences of poverty, they may simply lack the resources to provide an adequate diet. In addition to the physical impact on children and youth, hunger, compromised diet and food insecurity have emotional and psychosocial consequences as well. Researchers have found that children who are hungry or at risk for hunger are more likely to experience impaired psychosocial functioning.²⁰ They also display higher levels of hyperactivity, absenteeism, and tardiness compared with children who are not hungry. Adolescents experiencing hunger are also more likely to experience depressive disorders. One study found that food-insufficient adolescents were significantly more likely to have had dysthymia, thoughts of death, a desire to die, and to have attempted suicide.²¹

While food banks provide some relief for food insecure households, recipients describe mixed feelings associated with their use, further contributing to stress and emotional upset. Although appreciative of the assistance, people also experience feelings of guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, shame, discomfort and frustration when left with no option but to turn to food banks for help.^{13,43} While food bank use has become increasingly common, food-insecure families experienced the need for charitable assistance to meet basic needs as abnormal. Food bank use is stigmatized and often accompanied with the feeling of 'swallowing one's pride'. Desire to avoid food bank use may be further reinforced for individuals who have been treated poorly by staff or anticipate such treatment.⁵³ Despite need, some people refuse to use food banks for fear that their privacy will not be maintained and their financial situation will become common knowledge in their community.¹³ Parents were especially concerned with shielding their children from negative scrutiny within the community.

In addition to nutritional impact, parents in food insecure households have expressed fears of losing custody of their

children due to their inability to meet basic needs.¹³ According to related research conducted with the Children's Aid Society of Toronto, inadequate housing has been identified as a contributing factor in one in five cases of children in care.⁵⁴ In these cases, lack of adequate housing contributed to admission of children into care and/or led to delays in returning children to the family home. Given the intimate link between food insecurity and housing affordability problems, this research raises similar concerns with respect to food insecure families.

Conditions of hunger and food insecurity carry social costs for those directly affected, as well as for society at large society. Food insecure individuals describe conditions of social exclusion and loss of opportunity to participate in community and civic life.¹³ Lack of financial resources, physical and mental health impairments, and time lost to food procurement activities, such as going to food banks and meal programs, may act as barriers to social participation. Physical and mental health problems resulting from food and economic insecurity may reduce learning potential, contribute to lost productivity, and absenteeism at work.⁵⁵ Living without access to adequate food must necessarily undermine individual potential to realize goals and to partake fully in community life.

The maintenance of food insecurity also has an impact on the larger society in monetary, as well as less tangible ways. Food insecurity and hunger are associated with increased health care costs and longer hospital stays.^{56,57} Income maintenance programs that protect against poverty, food insecurity and hunger may also lessen the burden placed on our health care system. In this respect, decent social programs may be a form of preventive medicine, saving money in the long-run. Many of our politicians question the legitimacy of "social program spending", portraying increased support as fiscal irresponsibility. They do not consider the financial costs incurred through increased demands on health care and lost productivity, not to mention human and societal consequences, when governments fail to provide social programs that ensure income and food security for all.

Lack of systemic action directed at food insecurity and hunger has also had an impact on the food system itself. In the face of political abdication of responsibility for hunger and food insecurity, the voluntary sector has responded by developing charitable food programs for those without adequate resources to meet basic needs. This action has inadvertently resulted in the development of a two-tiered food system.^{58,59} One segment is market driven and available to those who can afford it. The market system may be further segmented into categories available to those with more disposable income, such as organic and health foods. The second segment is a residual, charitable one available to those excluded from the first segment. The latter is typically characterized by poorer quality and inadequate quantities of food to meet need.

This two-tiered food system may also impact society by eroding demands for social rights. The institutionalization and public visibility of food banks may inadvertently reinforce individualistic, charitable responses to hunger and food insecurity rather than political solutions. Benign calls for donations may serve to normalize the radically uneven distribution of resources in society. Recognizing this unintended impact, it is important for us, as food banks, to reiterate the political nature of hunger and food insecurity and to work for social change to redress these injustices. Although individualistic responses to hunger and food insecurity may have a depoliticizing impact on public perceptions, it appears that most Canadians at present recognize domestic hunger as a serious problem and the majority agree that governments hold a great deal of responsibility for solving the problem.⁶⁰

The Road Ahead

Reflecting on hunger and food insecurity in Canadian society, academics have raised questions about the possibility of increased societal conflict emerging out of deepening inequality and poverty.⁶¹ As conditions worsen, they ponder where society will draw the line on acceptable avenues for accessing food and tolerable levels of poverty and inequality. We consider similar questions with respect to the rising tide of hunger and food insecurity in Canada. What kind of society do we collectively create when food insecurity and hunger, as well as homelessness and poverty, are maintained by a lack of systemic action? What level of dissociation and disconnection is necessary for those in power to live with these inequities? What rationalizing of public policy and pejorative myths about poor people must be told to maintain these differences? How does living in a society characterized by 'haves' and 'have nots', where expressions of great wealth and prosperity can be witnessed alongside absolute and abject poverty, affect people across class boundaries? Food insecurity has an impact beyond that which is most immediate and most obvious. It has an impact on us all.

Clearly, the federal government and most of its provincial counterparts will not take serious action to address hunger and food insecurity in Canada without *significant encouragement*. They did not during the peak of the economic boom or as the economy faltered leaving more people unemployed. A frayed social safety net and empty political promises have not filled the plates of hungry men, women and children. We invite every person who has visited a food bank, whether to pick up a bag of groceries or to drop one off, to provide their elected leaders with *significant encouragement* to act. While food banks will continue to try to stem the tide of hunger in our communities, effective, long-term solutions rest with governments. Encourage them to keep their promises to Canadians.

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APPENDIX A. Provincial Breakdown of HungerCount 2002 selected Results

HungerCount 2002 Item	Canada	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NF	NS	NB	PE
Total Volunteer Hours for March	332,669.75	36,019.0	22,757.5	3,374.25	22,427	53,791	157,978	3,622.5	16,625	15,594.5	263
Total Employee Hours for March	564,922.00	11,219.5	14,569.5	3,914.50	2,789	30,057	487,246	784	4,892	9,203.5	150
Household Composition – Estimated Percentages (weighted by total number of people assisted in grocery programs)											
Sole-Parent Families	30.3	34.0	34.5	29.6	37.8	27.1	33.4	20.7	31.0	30.9	25.2
Single Individuals	34.6	38.3	25.9	33.7	25.2	36.9	35.5	21.3	36.5	24.4	22.5
Couples with No Children	10.7	8.3	13.1	10.8	14.8	9.5	11.5	11.7	11.1	14.1	16.0
Two-Parent Families	24.4	19.4	26.5	25.9	22.2	26.5	19.6	46.3	21.4	30.6	36.3
Seniors	6.4	6.7	4.2	3.8	7.8	5.5	9.3	4.4	4.2	7.8	8.8
Students	9.1	3.8	5.2	6.8	4.8	12.2	8.7	6.7	6.9	3.2	3.9
Income Sources – Estimated Percentages (weighted by total number of people assisted in grocery programs)											
Social Assistance	58.0	77.3	32.2	72.5	60.9	47.0	64.3	84.6	64.4	71.9	53.1
Employment	11.9	4.4	23.0	6.1	23.5	12.6	10.0	4.7	8.3	5.5	9.4
Employment Insurance	4.4	2.5	4.1	2.5	3.9	3.5	5.5	1.7	5.3	7.1	17.9
Disability Support	8.0	6.4	9.5	2.3	3	16.9	2.1	2.2	8.0	5.0	9.9
Pension Income	7.0	3.5	4.9	2.3	8.1	7.3	8.4	3.9	7.9	6.0	7.5
Other Income (inc. student loans)	4.7	3.6	15.2	2.6	2	4.2	4.6	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.1
No Income	6.0	2.3	11.1	11.7	3.1	8.5	5.1	.6	4.1	2.7	1.1
Amount of Food in a Hamper – Percentage of Food Banks											
1-2.5 days worth	13.1	21.8	1.9	14.3	33.3	8.4	10.0	25.7	13.3	5.2	0.0
3-4.5 days worth	49.0	48.7	22.6	50.0	48.2	53.6	40.0	54.3	50.0	56.4	100.0
5-6.5 days worth	15.5	16.7	17.0	14.3	7.4	13.4	30.0	17.1	16.7	25.6	0.0
7-9.5 days worth	14.9	11.5	24.5	14.3	7.4	17.3	20.0	0.0	16.7	12.8	0.0
10+ days worth	7.5	1.3	34.0	7.1	3.7	7.3	0.0	2.9	3.3	0.0	0.0
Frequency of Food Bank Use Allowed – Percentage of Food Banks											
Once per week or more often	6.7	11.3	5.4	6.6	23.1	4.5	26.7	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0
Every 10 days to 3 weeks	17.1	10.0	8.9	20.0	65.4	11.9	40.0	10.8	26.5	25.6	0.0
Once per month	58.9	57.4	42.9	46.7	11.5	68.9	20.0	75.7	64.7	64.1	100.0
Every 5 to 14 weeks	15.1	21.3	33.9	26.7	0.0	12.4	6.7	10.8	8.8	7.7	0.0
1-3 per year	2.2	0.0	8.9	0.0	0.0	2.3	6.6	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Measures Taken Due to Lack of Food – Percentage of Food Banks											
1+ measures taken	47.3	42.5	50.9	61.5	37.5	45.7	57.1	44.4	44.1	51.1	100.0
Close early or do not open	2.2	3.8	3.6	0.0	4.2	1.6	0.0	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Turn people away without food	3.4	5.0	3.6	0.0	4.2	2.7	5.9	2.8	2.9	2.2	0.0
Buy food when they normally would not or buy more food than they normally would	37.9	33.3	41.8	53.8	26.1	34.4	23.5	44.1	42.4	47.7	83.3
Give people less food than usual	19.6	16.3	13.5	30.8	32.0	18.4	43.8	17.1	11.8	18.2	66.7
Other (includes additional food drives, appeals to the community)	19.3	20.0	18.2	15.4	32.0	20.4	29.4	13.5	20.6	11.1	16.7
Average number of measures taken among those food banks that took measures due to a lack of food	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.6	2.4	1.7	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.5	1.7