

2023–2024

Food Banks BC Impact Report



*Working together towards a
hunger free British Columbia*



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Food Banks BC is grateful and honoured to work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Salish Peoples, including the ƛ̓íćəý̓ (Katzie), ƛ̓ʷɑ:ńłəń (Kwantlen), and Semiahma (Semiahmoo) land-based nations. We are a provincial organization and our work goes beyond the place where we live and impacts the lives of nations across BC and Turtle Island.

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

Today, hundreds of food banks and hunger relief operations are providing services to hundreds of thousands of families and individuals on a regular basis. Clients used to be people who needed a short-term helping hand.

Now, we see families and individuals with full-time jobs, juggling to fit their weekly food bank visit alongside their other errands. No one could have predicted that this is where we would find ourselves 42 years after BC's first food bank opened in 1982.

To respond to this new reality, we have seen some significant changes at Food Banks BC. While our work to support food banks and hunger relief agencies remains part of our core identity, we are also becoming more.

At the beginning of 2024, we changed our mission: To Alleviate Hunger Today and to Prevent Hunger Tomorrow for All British Columbians.

This change captures two distinct shifts for our organization. While we are continuing our commitments to supporting and enabling the work of hunger relief charities, we are also prioritizing the work required to end the need for food banks. Essentially, we are raising the stakes on who we are accountable to: every British Columbian who faces hunger.

Our evolution as a charity has resulted in significant growth in our profile, impact, and reach. We have launched new grants, piloted school nutrition programs, and expanded our focus on food access and food systems in northern BC. We have also continued to support communities experiencing food access emergencies due to devastating wildfires. We are now working alongside more agencies than at any point in our history. We see continued growth in the diversity of our work as we continue to grow and adapt.

Much of this work is possible due to the incredible support we receive from our donors and partners. Thank you. The impact this has on Food Banks BC and our members is felt deeply in communities throughout BC. We would also like to acknowledge Food Banks BC's partnership with the Government of British Columbia and the funding that supports the critical work of BC's hunger relief agencies. In these challenging times, the provincial government's commitments toward creating greater access to food while reducing poverty and food insecurity are critical. We look forward to our continued, collective efforts toward ending hunger in BC.

We are also very grateful to the Food Banks BC staff team and the Board of Directors for your tireless efforts toward helping us achieve our vision, mission, and goals.

And finally, we would like to thank the many hunger relief organizations that support people in need in BC. Thank you for all that you do.



Hajira Hussain
Board Chair



Dan Huang-Taylor
Executive Director



Executive Summary

State of Hunger in BC

The resonating impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis have had devastating consequences on the household budgets of British Columbians.

Record numbers of people have turned to food banks over the past year. In March 2024, we achieved an unwelcome milestone. For the first time, our members served 100,000 unique clients in a single month.

Combined with the impact of climate change and significant challenges for BC's farmers and producers, it is clear to see how creating dignified access to food, reducing food insecurity, and strengthening our food systems need to be prioritized.

Poverty is at the root of food insecurity and BC's poverty rate is substantially higher than the national average (11.6% compared to 9.9%). Food Banks Canada's 2024 Poverty Report Card for BC shows that almost half of people in British Columbia (45%) feel financially worse off compared to last year. The price of food increased by 5.4% in BC, which is higher than the national average of 5%. And more than one in five people are experiencing food insecurity.

All levels of government have a crucial role to play in addressing poverty. In the absence of policies and supports that help people out of poverty, we will continue to see the need for food banks in BC and across Canada.



Did you know?



Over 100,000 people access our member food banks every month.



One in every three clients is a child.



More than one in ten clients are seniors.



Food Banks BC's **107 food bank members** support over a thousand hunger relief programs.



Most clients are employed, but their **income is insufficient.**



Over \$6 billion dollars of food is wasted in BC every year. This is healthy food that is sent to landfill sites when it could be redirected to feed hungry families.

Our Impact 2023–2024

The role of Food Banks BC has expanded significantly in recent years, but we have witnessed the greatest change in the past year.

We remain committed to supporting our 107 members through the provision of food, funds, and other supports. Just as important, innovation around hunger relief, food access, and food security initiatives has broadened the scale and scope of our organization.

We are reaching more people than ever before. Beyond our membership, we work with many agencies that specialize in providing food access support to equity-deserving groups, including racialized populations, refugees, Indigenous communities, seniors, and migrant workers.

Highlights Aligned With Our Strategic Plan

This past year saw Food Banks BC building on the significant progress achieved over the first year of our five-year strategic plan. Our key priorities include supporting our network, strengthening our society for long-term sustainability, growing our advocacy for a food secure BC, and reaching more people through new partnerships and programs. Some key highlights:

Support — Meeting the Needs of our Members

Provide value for members by enabling them to learn, share, build capacity, increase sustainability, and meet the needs of their communities.

- ▶ **\$6 million in new government funding**, along with existing funding, resulted in a record volume of grant funds being distributed among our members. These grants included funding for refrigeration, food, and other costs associated with food bank operations, such as staffing and overhead expenses.

Sustainability — Building a Stronger Association

Identify and implement governance and operational best practices to enhance Food Banks BC's long-term value to our members and stakeholders.

- ▶ In May 2023, Food Banks BC was officially welcomed as an accredited organization under the [Imagine Canada Standards](#). This prestigious achievement recognizes commitment to the highest level of accountability, governance, and transparency. Soon after, Food Banks BC also gained accreditation through Food Banks Canada's National Standards of Excellence.

Systems Change — Advocates for Change

Effectively represent the collective interests of our members to all stakeholders through advocacy while working innovatively and cooperatively to reduce food insecurity in British Columbia.

- ▶ With the launch of our [Accessibility and Equity Guide](#), we demonstrated our leadership in supporting the food bank network to create safe, accessible, and welcoming environments for everyone who uses their services. The Guide was acknowledged as a necessary resource and Food Banks Canada launched it nationally to ensure that 5,100 agencies in the national network had access to the materials. In recognition of this work, Food Banks BC was nominated for an [Untapped Accessibility Award under the category of "Inclusion Champion"](#).

Stakeholder Engagement — Broadening Services for Wider Impact

Provide leadership by supporting and promoting food security initiatives and agencies beyond our membership, where possible.

- ▶ **This past year we reached more agencies and communities than at any point in our history.** We launched our non-member Agency Relief Fund, the Resilient North Project (Phase 2), and two school meals pilots. We also continued providing support to communities impacted by the devastating wildfires of Summer 2023.

Addressing Hunger Across All Demographics

Hunger in BC impacts people of all ages and life stages.

A Look at Client Demographics

62,481 or 30.9% of total
visits are by children

Clients Visiting Local BC Food Banks, by Age Group (107 food banks reporting)



- 30.9% 0-17 years
- 14.9% 18-30 years
- 22.0% 31-44 years
- 22.5% 45-64 years
- 9.7% 65+ years

Source: [HungerCount – BC Data Insights](#)

195,925 Visits

Per Month to a Local BC Food Bank

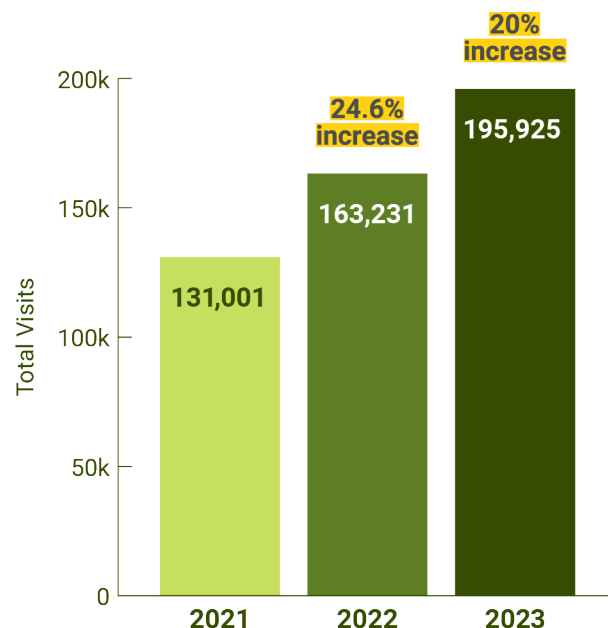
Clients Visiting Local BC Food Banks, by Household Type (120 food banks reporting)



- 53.3% Single people
- 17.2% Two-parent families
- 12.2% Single-parent families
- 11.9% Couples with no children
- 5.4% Other

Source: [HungerCount – BC Data Insights](#)

The Need is Growing



Source: [HungerCount 2023, page 22](#)

A Year in Numbers: Distributing Food and Funds

Over the past year, Food Banks BC continued to provide support to member and non-member hunger relief agencies through the provision of food and funds. So much of this was made possible through the incredible support of our donors and funding partners.

Member & Non-member Disbursements

Donation Sources	Amount
Food Banks BC fundraising campaigns	\$3,718,816
Provincial government funding	\$6,564,967
Corporate donations	\$236,626
Unions/Foundations donations	\$216,500
TOTAL	\$10,736,909

Provincial Egg Donations (2023 – 2024)

Egg Donation Sources	Amount in Dozens
BC Egg (through Food Banks BC)	39,150
Egg Farmers of Canada (through Food Banks Canada)	40,110
Burnbrae vouchers*	670
TOTAL	79,930**

*Burnbrae vouchers were distributed to rural and remote regions to enhance accessibility.

**That is 959,160 individual eggs!



Provincial Food Donations (2023 – 2024)

Food Donation Sources	Amount in Pounds (lbs)
Food Banks BC purchased product	457,470
Food donations received and disbursed by Food Banks BC	753,004
Food donations received and disbursed from Food Banks Canada	736,613
TOTAL	1,947,087

Food Banks BC Provincial Supports

HUB Support and Transportation	Amount
HUB subsidy	\$93,845
Food shipping to members	\$302,161
TOTAL	\$396,006

Food Purchasing	Amount
Food purchasing	\$296,196
TOTAL	\$296,196

Emergency and Non-emergency Member Support	Amount
Member support, training, and education	\$93,571
Emergency member support	\$381,033
TOTAL	\$474,604



Investing in Equity

As a society, we are facing an increasingly critical situation that is shaped by social policy, systemic racism, climate change, geography, and colonial food systems. We believe it is more important than ever to provide food access support to everyone.

Beyond our membership, we work with numerous agencies that specialize in providing food access support to equity-deserving groups, including racialized populations, refugees, Indigenous communities, seniors, and migrant workers.

To improve our member agencies' programs and services for their clients, we partnered with Untapped Accessibility to develop [A Guide to Accessibility and Equity for Food Banks](#).



Food Banks Canada is grateful for Food Banks BC's leadership in developing the Guide to Accessibility and Equity for Food Banks, and their support in adapting the guide to a national audience so food banks across the country can better meet the needs of everyone who comes to our doors.

Kirstin Beardsley, CEO,
Food Banks Canada

We are working to raise the status quo and push toward dignified food **access for all.**

One role that is common for us all is that of learner. There will always be more for us to learn about each other and how we can better care for one another. We are committed to providing the tools, resources, and opportunities needed for our network to continue this journey of improvement, and we are also committed to learning from this process ourselves.



Over the past year, Food Banks BC's generous support has enabled us to significantly expand our impact through our monthly Hamper Distribution programs. Thanks to your partnership, we have been able to distribute an additional 400 hampers, reaching over 24,000 people in need.

Azim Dahya, CEO Muslim Food Banks & Community Services



Program Highlights

Our Programs in Action

One of our key mandates is to provide a system of support that increases efficiency and reach. We do this through continuous learning, adaptation, and designing new programs, to ensure relevancy and that needs are being met.

The Perishable Food Refrigeration Grant

The unnecessary loss of consumable food is a critical issue. Over \$6 billion of food is wasted in BC every year when much could be redirected to feed hungry families.

The final round of the Perishable Refrigeration Grant was launched in 2023. This allowed our members to purchase equipment that has significantly increased our network's capacity to accept and store more perishable food. This has helped reduce waste and get more fresh and healthy food onto the tables of British Columbians.

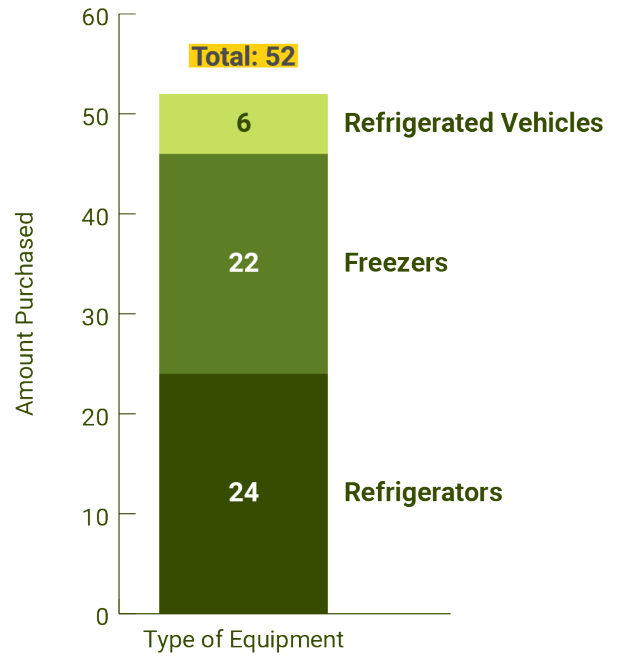


This new truck from the Perishable Food Refrigeration Grant has allowed us to increase our food pick-ups by 19% in weight, ensuring fresh, perishable food reaches more families faster and more efficiently. Thanks to this grant, we've significantly reduced spoilage and maximized the impact of our services. Thank you, Food Banks British Columbia!

Trina Speiser, Director of Development,
Central Okanagan Food Bank



Equipment Purchased



Emergency Food Support

Food banks play a crucial role during times of emergency and natural disaster. They provide food, water, and other urgently needed supplies to evacuees, people impacted within the community, frontline emergency service personnel, aid services, and other non-profit agencies.

In 2021, Food Banks BC partnered with the Salvation Army, Associated Grocers, and Gordon Food Services to coordinate the delivery of food into the Lytton region in response to the devastating wildfires affecting the area. We also flew food into isolated, flooded communities in partnership with Helicopters Without Borders, to ensure basic needs were met.

The work to support Lytton continues to this day, but more BC communities have been impacted. Food was shipped to the Ulkatcho First Nation this past year. Last summer's wildfires destroyed much of the local traditional hunting grounds and supplies of hunted meat were down 70%, along with the community's berry crop.

As climate change continues to create food security emergencies, particularly in rural areas, Food Banks BC will continue to provide food, funds and awareness building to support those affected.



Food Banks BC has been an essential partner in recovery from the 2021 Lytton wildfires. Food Banks BC worked alongside local community leaders on disaster response with an understanding of how racism and colonial food systems contribute to food insecurity.

Nadine Hoehne, Senior Implementation Manager, Nlaka'pamux Nation Tribal Council



Together we were able to impact approximately 80 Indigenous community members by providing fresh food and pantry staples that they otherwise would not have access to due to their remote location. This food security program has an incredible impact on the community, and we can't thank you enough for your support so far.

Lindsay Bodrug, Impact and Engagement Manager, Helicopters Without Borders

The Resilient North

This project, delivered in partnership with the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC), set out to understand the opportunities and barriers regarding food access in northern BC by:

- ▶ Creating a comprehensive understanding of where and what communities' needs are in terms of food access.

- ▶ Engaging communities in focus groups, interviews, and other community conversations, to further guide the project.
- ▶ Co-developing food access models that address root causes of inequality experienced by northern communities.

The project research phase is complete, and our commitment to focusing on the north of the province has continued to gather momentum.

In partnership with PHABC, we have established new connections in northern communities and highlighted the unique challenges experienced in this part of the province. We have also developed a better understanding of how to build locally-led, community-owned food systems. Our Rapid Stimulus Grants, awarded in summer 2024, will also play a critical role in establishing and expanding local and regional food systems in northern BC.

Soon, we will have an even deeper understanding of how we are helping shape the future of dignified food access and enhanced food security in BC.



Our work is intended to better understand how the system is working and to generate more sustainable and dignified access to food for all those who need it. We are honoured to partner with Food Banks BC to build deeper, more community based solutions to food insecurity.

Shannon Turner, Executive Director, Public Health Association of BC





Photo provided by bcaite.ca

School Nutrition Pilot Program

Did you know that **one in three** food bank clients is a child? We currently have two school meals pilot programs, operating in partnership with BC Agriculture in the Classroom, and Flourish School Meals. These pilot programs have contributed enormously to giving kids in BC schools access to healthy, nutritious food. They will also inform the development of effective, cost-efficient school meals programs.

The pilot program with BC Agriculture in the Classroom has increased the weekly provision of fresh, local produce and dairy products to 42 schools, reaching over 10,600 students. This has provided 1.8 million additional servings.

The pilot program with Flourish School Meals, in partnership with the Mustard Seed and two school districts, delivers meals cooked from scratch and snacks to about 3,000 students per day. With Flourish, we are also working on a strategic framework for program development so other districts can implement their own school meals programs.

Through the provision of adequate, nutritious food for kids in schools, it is our hope that we can start to see a reduction in the number of families and children who rely on food bank services and alleviate the strain on our network.



In the last year, Food Banks BC's support has allowed us to scale from feeding 400 students to over 3,000 students per day with our school meal programs. Our partnership has given us the financial security to grow quickly without fear.

Matthew Kemshaw, Executive Director, Flourish School Meals

Agency Relief Fund

In partnership with the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Food Banks BC administers funding support to member and non-member, charitable agencies providing hunger relief services in BC communities. This funding is available as a grant that supports the operating costs of helping people who are facing hunger and food insecurity.

This includes the purchase of culturally appropriate and healthy food items that meet dietary restrictions, as well as equipment costs, and operational overhead costs (staff, rent, and administration).

This past year, the Agency Relief Fund distributed \$2.3 million.



This funding has made a huge difference in our food bank, as we have been struggling to keep pace with the need for food assistance. The number of people accessing food through our food bank has grown by 35% this year, so these funds have been hugely impactful.

Warren Schatz, Community Ministry Director, Chilliwack Salvation Army Share and Care Food Bank



Looking Ahead

What is Next for Food Banks BC?

While demand continues to grow and food banks remain an essential part of the social safety net, Food Banks BC is committed to meeting the needs of our members as they work to achieve hunger-free communities.

This continues to be at the core of what we do. But building a stronger association is also critical as we look to serve all British Columbians who face food insecurity. To do this, we must ensure that we have a strong network, allowing us to share, learn, leverage strengths, identify gaps, and reach all sections of our increasingly diverse communities.

We also need to work with partners across the government, non-profit, and corporate sectors to develop food systems that promote waste reduction and enable surplus food to reach people in need.

And finally, we need to advocate for systemic changes that will reduce, and eventually end, the need for food banks in BC. Looking ahead, Food Banks BC will focus on growing the influence and impact we and our network can have on the shared mission of ending hunger and food insecurity.

We are going through a period of significant change. Over the last few years, we have adapted to new environments: physical, cultural, societal, and political. In many cases, these changes have brought about some of the most extreme and challenging times we have seen in recent history.

But we are not alone in this work. Our network is growing, enabling deeper insight into the need, and wider reach across the province. We look forward to the future, as we continue to support British Columbians in need while working toward a hunger-free BC.

Acknowledgements

It is All Thanks to You, Our Partners and Supporters

Partnerships make it all possible. We would not be able to do this work without the generous support of the many donor partners who have provided food, funds, and other support. Together, we are addressing hunger and food insecurity in BC.

Food Banks BC is deeply grateful for you, our supporters and donors. We are pleased to recognize the amazing efforts of our many other partners who have stepped up to help us end hunger in British Columbia.

To see a full list of our partners, visit our [partners page](#).



Funding Partner



Major Food Banks BC and Member Campaign Partners



Food and Freight Partners



Donor Partners

Acosta Canada Corp

Aheer Transportation Ltd.

Aqueduct Foundation

BC Cattlemen's Association

Camosun Biotechnology Inc.

Campbell Company of Canada

Complete Purchasing Services

Diageo Canada

Easy Energy Inc.

Ecofish Research Ltd.

EcoLogic Consultants Ltd.

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Ionica Inc.

Lafarge

Maple Leaf Centre for
Food Security

Merit Kitchens (2002) Ltd.

Mission Hill Family Estate

Molson Coors

Parrish & Heimbecker Limited

Pattison Food Group Ltd.

Provincial Employees
Community Services Fund

Restoration Lands Inc.

Save On Foods

Sobeys Inc.

Teck Resources Limited

Telus Corporation

The Faculty & Staff Association
at University of Fraser Valley

The Tenaquip Foundation

Tourmaline Oil

Toyota Canada

Transoft Solutions Inc.

Vancouver Foundation

Varsteel

Vitalus Nutrition Inc.

Voth Developments Ltd.

Waypoint Insurance

Western Rice Mills



Relieving hunger today and preventing hunger tomorrow for all British Columbians.



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