

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Bringing Everyone to the Table



Food banks in Canada received a historic and very concerning number of visits this year: far more than enough to call an emergency. On a more hopeful note, it was also a year when vast numbers of people and organizations contributed to relieving and preventing hunger through the country's food banks and Food Banks Canada.

Too many of us are just one crisis away from experiencing food insecurity, if we haven't been touched by it already. The empowering news is that we all have a role to play in ending it.

**When everyone comes to the table,
no one will go hungry.**

Food Banks Canada unites contributors from across sectors, communities and regions to advance this shared vision and to make a coordinated, collaborative impact. In this report, we're proud to share what we've accomplished together this year.

"I will use the simplest words I know:

**'Thank you very much.'
Thank you very much
for the food you are
providing for me,
my family and many
other people in these
difficult times.'**

~ Food bank client, Alberta

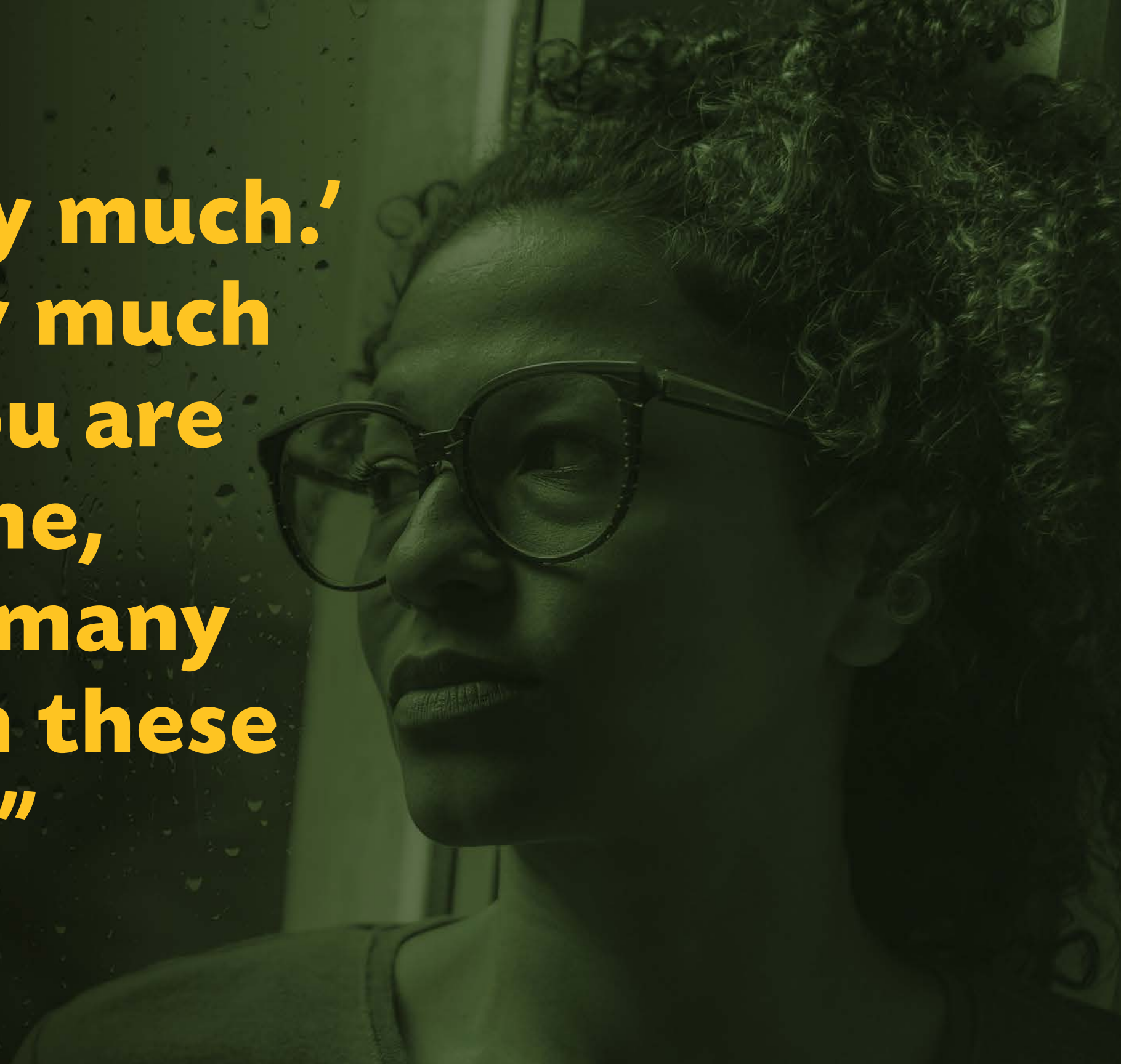


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Food Banks Canada is the leader in addressing food insecurity in Canada. Our mission is to provide national leadership to relieve hunger today and prevent hunger tomorrow in collaboration with the food bank network from coast to coast to coast.

For over 40 years, food banks have been dedicated to helping people living with food insecurity in Canada. More than 5,500 food banks and community organizations come together to serve our most vulnerable neighbours, who – this year – made over 2 million visits to these organizations in one month alone, according to our *HungerCount* report.

Since 2010, Food Banks Canada has shared

over \$1 billion in food supports
and **over \$275 million in funding**

to help maximize collective impact and strengthen local capacity

– while, backed by leading research, advocating for meaningful actions from governments to counter hunger and its root causes.

Our vision is clear:

A Canada where no one goes hungry

We connect and support a network of

**over 5,500 food banks
and community organizations**

The food bank network serves an estimated

3 million people annually

Land Acknowledgement

As an organization that supports a network of food banks and community organizations spanning from coast to coast to coast, Food Banks Canada recognizes that our work takes place on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples who have cared for this land we now call Canada since time immemorial.

We acknowledge that many of us are settlers, and these lands where we live, work, meet and travel are subject to First Nations self-government under modern treaties, unceded and unsurrendered territories, or traditional territories from which First Nations Peoples, Métis and Inuit have been displaced.

We are committed to decolonization and dismantling the systems of oppression that have dispossessed and continue to dispossess Indigenous People of their lands and deny them their inherent rights to self-determination.

This includes evaluating the role that Food Banks Canada has played in perpetuating these systems and working toward being active partners in the path toward reconciliation.



Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

As we move forward, Food Banks Canada remains committed to learning and to improving our approach to better include and represent all the members of our diverse community.

We will continue to seek new and better ways to embrace EDI principles in all the work we do. Our vision is a Canada where no one goes hungry. This vision is inclusive of every person within our borders, irrespective of race, national or ethnic origin, language, citizenship, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, income source, age or mental and/or physical ability.



*Top left: Samples of culturally appropriate food purchased by Archway Community Services Food Bank in Abbotsford, BC, through a FBC Access Grant.
Top right: Food acquired with an FBC Emergency Food Access Grant is delivered to seniors in Brampton, Ontario.
Bottom left: A mobility access ramp purchased with Food Banks Canada support by Salvation Army Food Bank, Prince George, BC.
Bottom right: Residents of Aklavik, Northwest Territories, process the meat from a caribou hunt hosted by the new FBC-supported local food bank.*

A Message From Our Leaders

It isn't our first time saying this, but sadly it remains true: Food insecurity in Canada has never been as high as it is today. Food Banks Canada's *HungerCount 2024* report recorded **over 2 million visits** to food banks in only one month, a sombre milestone that represents an **increase of 6% compared to 2023** and

90% compared to 2019. What's more, Food Banks Canada's researchers project even more growth in need in the coming year.

Behind the numbers are people — our friends and neighbours — who simply can't make ends meet right now. In addition, there are signs that the food banking system is reaching its absolute limit, with nearly 30% of food banks running out of food before meeting demand.

We can't let this unsustainable trend continue.

Canada has the resources it requires to address this emergency. And encouragingly, more people than ever are joining forces to help make it happen. They include caring donors, generous corporate partners, visionary philanthropic foundations, innovative problem-solvers in leadership positions at food banks, selfless volunteers, insightful people with lived experience of food insecurity, passionate political advocates and dedicated food banking veterans who have continued pushing forward in the face of soaring need.

However, governments must come to the table as well. We need them to act now by implementing meaningful policy changes to address the root causes of food insecurity in Canada, such as our broken social safety net.

In the face of great challenges, we're extremely proud of what we've achieved over the past year in collaboration with our supporters. We hope this report will encourage them, and inspire new ones, by sharing examples of what we can do with one another's help.

Some highlights of the year include:

Backed by our leading research on food insecurity in Canada, we've advocated for policy solutions to reduce hunger in the long run and provide immediate relief for people who are facing it right now

We've distributed **over \$127 million** in food support throughout the country

We've shared **\$22,348,960** in funding with the food bank network to expand access, build capacity, improve operational effectiveness and more

While pursuing these goals and others, we've seen that there are a great many people in Canada who care deeply about the well-being of their communities. Inspired by their energy, we are launching a new strategic plan that will rise to the challenges posed by an uncertain economic environment and advance our vision of a Canada where no one goes hungry.

Change is needed, and Food Banks Canada is prepared to lead the way, because the future of our country depends on feeding the human potential of everyone who lives here.

We welcome you to join us!



Kirstin Beardsley
CEO, Food Banks Canada



Mary-Jo Hewat
Board Chair, Food Banks Canada

Food insecurity research, advocacy and awareness

Our 2024 Poverty Report Cards, which grade and compare governments on their legislative efforts to alleviate poverty, became the **dominant discussion topic in Canada's Parliament for a week**

Over **450**
unique media

stories about Food Banks Canada's HungerCount 2024, which raises awareness of the high prevalence of food insecurity and recommends policy measures for reducing it

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

**Food and product support
to the food bank network:
\$127 million**



103 million lbs of greenhouse
gas diverted through food recovery

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

**Over
\$22.3
million**
in funding
support
to the
food bank
network

This Is the Impact We Have Together

This past year we asked the *Constellation Consulting Group* to conduct an analysis of our **social return on investment (SROI)**.

The SROI framework is an internationally recognized way of expressing the value created by an organization’s activities — not only the economic value but also other kinds of benefits.

Using standardized SROI methodology, it was concluded that for every dollar invested by our donors and partners, Food Banks Canada creates nearly \$8.00 in social, environmental and economic value. This breakdown of the analysis’s findings lists just a few examples of the many positive outcomes it identified.



YOUR GENEROUS INVESTMENT

Food Banks *Example:* Increased capacity to provide programming and services to their communities

Food Bank Users *Example:* Individuals’ and families’ food needs are met, leaving them with more resources for other needs (e.g. housing, children’s full participation in education opportunities, etc.)

Environment *Example:* A reduction of food waste, resulting in fewer greenhouse gas emissions

Governments *Example:* Individuals’ and families’ food needs are met, resulting in physical and mental health benefits that decrease demands on the healthcare system

Value to food banks: **\$2.09**

Value to food bank users: **\$1.86**

Value to the environment: **\$1.71**

Value to governments: **\$1.71**

Value to donors and partners: **31¢**

Value to researchers and the media: **08¢**

Donors and Partners *Examples:* More opportunities for people to feel connected to their communities; lower costs for moving unsold food; tax savings

Researchers and Media *Example:* More access to time-sensitive, high-quality evidence and experts who can speak to food insecurity in Canada



\$1 = \$7.76
Value Generated

Making an Impact Through Research, Advocacy and Awareness

The challenge: To maximize our impact, we need more people and organizations to join forces and contribute to relieving and preventing hunger. This includes policymakers, who must take meaningful action to end food insecurity in Canada by targeting its root causes.

What we bring to the table: Along with the network of food banks throughout the country, we expose the hunger crisis and engage an ever-growing number of people in our mission.

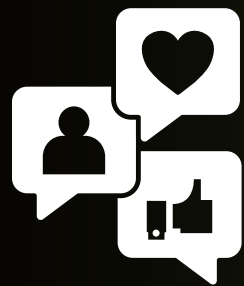
Meanwhile, our researchers and policy experts help make the case for systemic changes that address the issues underlying food insecurity and food bank use. Together with food bankers, the wider research community, advocacy coalitions and grassroots advocates, we advance evidence-based solutions and work with governments at all levels to work toward a Canada where no one goes hungry.

**Over 1
million**
users on
FBC's website



Over 50 ministers, MPs and senators
hosted at FBC events, where they met with
food bankers from across the country

Over 100,000
petition signatures
and letters sent to
local representatives
by people who
want urgent action
on food insecurity,
prompted by our
Groceries and
Essentials Benefit
campaign



Over 100,000 followers on
Food Banks Canada's social media channels

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

HungerCount: A Snapshot of Food Bank Use

Food Banks Canada has researchers on staff and a robust dataset that gives us a view of food insecurity like no other organization in Canada. This unique viewpoint informs our decision-making and underpins everything we do.

Our flagship research report is the annual HungerCount. It's a census-type survey of most of the country's food bank agencies, organizations and programs, including those that are not affiliated with Food Banks Canada. By capturing data from March of each year, HungerCount provides an overview of food bank use throughout Canada. By analyzing who is using food banks and why, it allows us to see actionable trends and make informed policy recommendations.

2024's report found that:

Food banks across Canada received **over 2 million visits in one month**

700,000 visits to food banks in Canada each month are **made by or on behalf of children**

18% of people who access food banks are employed but **still can't make ends meet**

42% of food bank users are single adults, who **face the rising cost of living with few supports**

The food bank system is buckling under the strain. Nearly 30% of food banks across the network reported running out of food before demand was met, while another 56% gave out less food than usual to avoid running out.



HungerCount 2024

Buckling under the strain

Running low on food is nothing new for food banks, as variations in supply and demand can be unpredictable. But this is a significant jump. Given the urgency of the situation, Food Banks Canada made detailed government policy recommendations that encompassed:

Rebuilding Canada's social safety net

Ensure no person in Canada drops below a minimum income level, so that no one lives in poverty

Tackling the affordable housing crisis

Work with greater urgency to address the inadequate number of housing units being built, and introduce programs to help reduce housing costs today

Helping workers with low incomes make ends meet

Create a responsive employment insurance system that all workers can turn to if and when needed

Addressing Northern and remote food insecurity and poverty

Review the entire approach to the long-term root causes of food insecurity in the North; food-driven solutions can only do so much

HungerCount also generates media headlines and engagement with Food Banks Canada's communications channels. In doing so, it raises public awareness of the shockingly high prevalence of food insecurity in Canada and increases support for tackling this problem.

In 2024, the report generated:

Over **50 opportunities** for food bankers and Food Banks Canada staffers to speak with the press

Over **450 unique media stories**

Over **75,000 impressions** and **3,100 engagements** on social media

More than **147,000 visits to our website** from people who clicked on HungerCount ads

“It is really worrisome to admit you can’t provide for yourself.”

~ Community-based research participant experiencing food insecurity

“The people who used to help or volunteer sometimes are now the ones who need assistance too.”

~ Food banker and survey respondent, Alberta

The Poverty Report Cards: A Push Toward Lasting Solutions

The root cause of the need for food banks is poverty, and preventing hunger tomorrow means tackling poverty at a systemic level. That's why Food Banks Canada's annual Poverty Report Cards grade and compare governments on their legislative efforts to alleviate it.

When we developed this first-of-its-kind interactive tool in 2023, we intended to help decision-makers gauge how they can do better by identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for future progress.

To accompany the report cards, our experts prepare policy recommendations for each provincial and territorial government, as well as the federal government. These recommendations cover issues ranging from housing affordability to mental health programming. Together, they act as

a map to steer the country toward a future where food insecurity is so rare that food banks could readily meet the need.



Our latest Poverty Report Cards became the **dominant discussion topic in Canada's Parliament** for a week in May 2024. They also sparked widespread national and local media coverage, **garnering over 400 media stories and reaching a total audience of millions**, on the day of their release. And **over 15,000 visitors** to FBC's website consulted the report cards directly.

Most encouragingly, ministers and policymakers at both federal and provincial/territorial levels have reached out to Food Banks Canada and provincial food bank associations to discuss the Poverty Report Cards and what they could do to improve their grades.

There are even reasons to suppose — though we certainly can't take sole credit — that the Report Cards have influenced policy already. For example, in late 2023, Newfoundland

announced a new poverty-reduction strategy, which was one of our top recommendations for the province that year. The strategy's provisions include a major increase to the Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit and an extension of the provincial school food program to all elementary grade levels.

What's clear is that no one province or government can solve this problem alone. The Report Cards bring them together behind one objective: to reduce poverty significantly across Canada.



Rachael Wilson, CEO of the Ottawa Food Bank, talks with Adam van Koeverden, MP, and Mike Morrice, MP, at the 2024 Poverty Report Cards' launch on Parliament Hill.

A Critical Presence on Parliament Hill

On November 27, 2024, Food Banks Canada CEO *Kirstin Beardsley* addressed a crowd of food bankers, MPs, senators and supporters gathered on Parliament Hill. **“It is nothing short of failure to accept hunger as a normal part of life in Canada,” she said. “People in Canada need better support, and they have used their voices to call for it.”**

She was referencing the fact that over 100,000 petition signatures and letters to local representatives had been sent in by people who wanted urgent action on food insecurity.

According to Food Banks Canada’s policy team, this challenge calls for a dual path forward: Governments must implement policies to reduce the root causes of poverty in the long term, while also providing urgent relief to the millions of people who are struggling with the cost of living today.



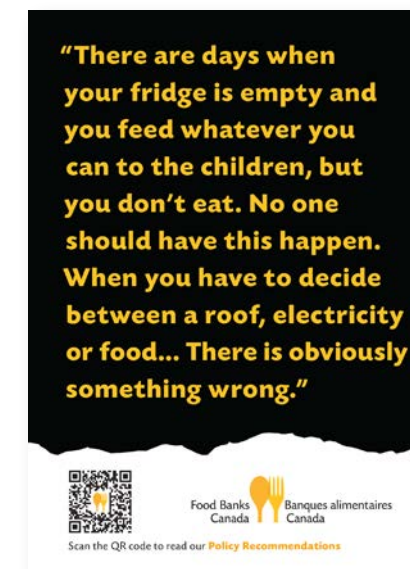
In early 2024, we identified a Groceries and Essentials Benefit as a feasible way of extending this sorely needed immediate support.

It would be an expansion of the GST/HST rebate that already goes out to households with low incomes. Because the mechanism for that rebate is already in place, the Groceries and Essentials Benefit could very quickly put extra buying power into the hands of those who need it the most: families for whom even just another \$150 per month would make a meaningful difference.

Over the following months, we engaged both the food bank network and the public with this option through a petition and letter-sending campaign, supported by ads, emails, press releases and other advocacy tools. Ultimately, tens of thousands of people rallied around it, including food bankers who used their influence with the news media to spread information about it.

The most powerful voices of all belong to people with lived experience of food insecurity, many of whom volunteered to share what an additional \$150 would mean for them. Food Banks Canada printed their words on postcards (see a sample to the right) and brought them to Parliament Hill, where our CEO made a call for change on their behalf.

“[A supportive member of Parliament] came by to remind me that we are one of the few groups who are advocating on the Hill for the millions of people we serve: folks who use food banks or who are at risk of needing food banks,” says Kirstin Beardsley. “There are a lot of people advocating in Ottawa for business or various sectors of the economy, but it’s critical that the people we represent can be heard, too. It drove home the fact that we have a deep responsibility to amplify their voices.”



“An extra \$150 per month would allow me to eat breakfast every day, not just for the first week after I get my cheque. I could have more fruits and vegetables in my daily diet.”

“My family of 3 has to choose every month between paying our rent on time or getting enough groceries. My partner makes \$7 an hour MORE than minimum wage and we still can’t afford enough food for our family.”

Making an Impact by Acquiring, Transforming and Distributing Food

The challenge: Food is more than just a product. It's nourishment, energy, health, culture, community, dignity. But millions of people in Canada struggle to get the food they need.

What we bring to the table: As a national organization, our scope, expertise and scale give Food Banks Canada a unique opportunity to source food to share — and to prevent high-quality, nutritious food from going unused. Together with donors, producers, manufacturers and retailers, we procure large quantities of food at all stages of the supply chain. Then, with our warehousing and transportation partners, we store and move food to where it's needed across Canada.

We're also developing programs and relationships to transform food in ways that make it easier to move, store and consume. This ultimately allows us to share even more.

Soup's On! Unlocking New Food Sources for People in Need

A tasty, nourishing soup produced specifically for food banks by Food Banks Canada is making its way to hundreds of thousands of people experiencing food insecurity across the country. Full of Canadian-grown pulses and grains, it represents a new chapter in food banking.

Traditionally, food banks have procured most of their food from private citizens, retailers or food-processing companies. But to keep up with the level of need amidst soaring food costs, we must also move up the supply chain and work with suppliers of raw ingredients, including both manufacturers and primary food producers such as farms and fisheries.

A lot of product is available to food banks from this sector, some of which would otherwise be lost even though it is of high quality and safe to eat.

However, fresh food has logistical limitations because of its short shelf life. If we can transform some of it into other kinds of food, we can make it easier to store and transport, extend its geographical reach, moderate natural peaks and dips in supply, and in some cases, make it more practical or appealing for food bank clients.



Getting involved in food transformation can also allow food banks to produce some of the specific foods they want, rather than just hope to receive them as donations. This helps to:

Provide a reliable and predictable stream of products for food bank clients

Increase the supply of foods that are dense in nutrients and/or in high demand

Ensure access to options that are compatible with various cultural cuisines, food allergies and dietary needs

Various local food banks across the country have been leading the way. Food Banks Canada is amplifying their efforts by scaling them up.

In doing so, we are building our expertise and capacity to transform food, which will unlock the potential to share far more of it.

From the prairies to the national scale

In 2023, Regina Food Bank and Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre collaborated with the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre to produce a hearty lentil-and-oat soup mix. Based on a recipe developed at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bioresources,

this dry mix is shelf-stable, vegetarian-friendly, easy to prepare, flavourful and packed with essential nutrients, including protein.

The soup mix got overwhelmingly positive feedback, so Food Banks Canada asked for permission to expand the project by manufacturing and distributing the soup to food banks all across the country.

In FY 2024-25, we arranged to manufacture over 600,000 packets of soup mix, using Canadian crops. Each packet would make a filling meal for two adults or could feed a family of four when accompanied by a side dish. We are sharing this large batch of soup with the network of food banks for free.

“Our efforts in this area are about giving the power of choice to food banks and their clients,” says **Caren Batchelor**, FBC’s Manager of Procurement for National Programs. “We’re striving forward with food transformation in an effort to produce nutritious items that are frequently purchased by food banks. **The For GOOD Foundation**, a wonderful partner of ours, is already supplying several of those products. If you add to that the fact that we’re now getting our own experience with food transformation, we’re well on our way.”

After the Bell Program Takes Hunger Out of Childhood Summers

Like plenty of his peers, “Maxime,” a school-aged child living in Quebec’s Lanaudière region, attended a day camp during the summer of 2024. But before long, a camp counsellor noticed something was off: Maxime was having trouble following directions and keeping up with his group.

The camp’s leaders sat down with Maxime to find out what was distracting him. They learned that he had not had breakfast that morning, so they offered him a bag full of healthy options. Once he had eaten, there was a noticeable change in his demeanour.

From then on, Maxime visited the office regularly to pick up more food packs. Before long, he was not only integrating with his group but even emerging as a natural leader within it.



Children enjoy After the Bell packs in Athabasca, Alberta.

Maxime's day camp was one of hundreds of organizations that participated this year in *After the Bell*, a Food Banks Canada program that addresses child hunger by providing portable bags of nutritious, kid-friendly foods throughout the summer when school-based food programs are unavailable.

Roughly one in every three visits to a food bank are made by or on behalf of children. The summer months can pose particular challenges for families: Parents or guardians may face extra childcare expenses, and they can't depend on in-school meal programs to reduce their grocery bills or help meet their children's nutritional needs.

Since 2015, After the Bell has helped to fill this gap. Thanks to donations and special rates from our partners, participating food banks and community organizations receive packs containing shelf-stable items such as crackers, cereal, oatmeal and sunflower seeds. They also receive money to supplement the food packs with fresh items such as apples, sugar snap peas, cheese and yogurt.

In the summer of 2024, Food Banks Canada distributed **200,000 packs in 215 communities** across the country under the auspices of After the Bell. In human terms, this program meant healthy and energetic children, parents and guardians relieved from the immense stress of struggling


"Our local school principal was one of the volunteers who delivered the weekly packages. The children were so excited to see him. They would greet him at the door like a long-lost friend with hugs and stories about what they were doing. It was like travelling around with Santa Claus!"

Gerad Noble, Stephenville Emergency Food Services, Stephenville, Newfoundland and Labrador

to provide the essentials for their families, and — according to food bankers on the ground — special moments of excitement.

To quote a client of Archway Food Bank in Abbotsford, British Columbia,

"This helped me have the ability to say 'yes' when the kids were hungry and wanted snacks, and was more appreciated than you can imagine. Thank you!"



“As food bankers, we often see people on their worst day. They’re often fearful to come and ask for support, unsure of what to expect, and very overwhelmed. Words can’t describe the joy of seeing a child skip in, excited to see us and pick up their bag!”

~ Wendy Quarrington, food bank coordinator, The Table Community Food Centre’s Good Food Bank, Perth, Ontario

A Sample of Food Banks Canada's Food Programs

Emergency Response Program

Food banks play a crucial role in feeding their communities during a disaster. To support their response, Food Banks Canada is supplying and storing pre-assembled, non-perishable emergency food packs at strategic locations throughout the country, ready for dispatch within 48 hours, as needed. This year, we assembled **50,000** such packs.

The For GOOD Foundation

The For GOOD Foundation is a group of volunteers who work with agricultural and manufacturing partners to deliver high-quality food at exceptional value. Food Banks Canada has teamed up with the For GOOD Foundation to distribute these products to food banks from coast to coast to coast.

Marketplace

Marketplace is an online group-purchasing program that offers exceptional deals and rebates exclusively to affiliate food banks. Leveraging the collective buying power of the network, food banks can expect to save **25% to 50% on food and operational items** from reputable vendors across Canada.

National Food Sharing System (NFSS)

From corporate donors and partners, Food Banks Canada receives large-scale donations, such as product overruns, production errors and close-to-code items. We also have partnerships with companies that provide planned, recurring product donations throughout the year. All this food, which totalled roughly **7.8 million lbs** in FY 2024-25, is sorted at provincial hubs and distributed safely and efficiently to food banks and other community organizations, with help from our logistics partners.

Retail Food Program

Food Banks Canada partners with national retailers to match hundreds of stores across Canada with local food banks to divert safe surplus food. This program provides an essential ongoing supply for food banks while supporting sustainability efforts for retailers. In FY 2024-25, it recovered around **19.1 million lbs** of food.

“Without this relationship, our clients would not have the full, robust food hampers that we offer. We would absolutely have to scale back without the incredible support of our local Walmart store.”

Amy Pillage, program coordinator, Edson Food Bank Society in Edson, Alberta, on the Retail Food Program



Feed Nova Scotia, one of the provincial hubs of the National Food Sharing System.

“Week after week, we were seeing clients line up outside our door, hours before we opened. People, like Susan with her two children, would wait in the rain or snow to make sure they could get what items they needed before we ran out. With a reliable and consistent stream of donated products, we can plan our limited financial resources, and our clients can plan their lives.”

~ Jessie Chiu, food services team manager, Kerr Street Mission in Oakville, Ontario,
on the impact of planned product donations

A smiling woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark jacket over a patterned shirt, is holding a clipboard and looking towards the right. The image is overlaid with a green tint.

Making an Impact by Investing in Canada's Food Bank Network

The challenge: For the past five years, food banks throughout the country have been facing a critical surge in demand for their services, and many are stretched to their limits. To offer support to everyone who needs it, the food bank network requires not only more food but also more capacity in general.

What we bring to the table: Together with donors, partner organizations, food bankers and volunteers, Food Banks Canada supports the long-term resilience and reach of the national food bank network through investments in infrastructure, food, accessibility, operational standards, programs and more.

\$3.7 million
to help food banks
implement Food
Banks Canada's
National Standards
of Excellence



\$4.0 million
invested in improving access
to food banks for everyone
who needs support



\$0.5 million
to support the work
of the provincial food
bank associations

\$2.5 million
invested in Northern
food security

\$3.0 million
invested in food
bank capacity

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Food Insecurity in the North

In January of 2025, Food Banks Canada staffers **Jay Stevens** and **Nolan Wadsworth Polkinghorne** visited Baker Lake, Nunavut, home to around 2,000 people. Their first port of call was the Abluqta Society, a local social enterprise that runs a food bank and thrift shop.

It was time for the Abluqta Society's annual general meeting, and more than 60 highly engaged community members were in the room. Sensing their welcoming energy, Stevens and Polkinghorne presented Food Banks Canada as a potential partner in their efforts to improve food access in the region.

Hunger touches virtually every community in Canada, but Northern locations such as Baker Lake are affected disproportionately. In fact, **over one third of people living in the territories experience some form of food insecurity**, according to

Statistics Canada, compared to around 23% of people living in the provinces. In Nunavut, that figure rises to a staggering 62%.

It's a complex and critical issue that requires solutions rooted in truth and reconciliation, self-determination and advocacy.

Stevens and Polkinghorne's role is to build relationships with Northern communities and collaborate with them to develop locally led solutions that are respectful of their unique needs and cultures. "When you're making a connection, you ask people



FBC Northern Network Manager Jay Stevens with Abluqta Society Board Chair and Operations Manager Lianna Pattunguyak.

how they perceive food security from the community lens," explains Stevens. "It's up to each community what they want to do, and we're there to support as we can."

In Baker Lake this year, that looked like informing the Abluqta Society's leadership about the latest Food Banks Canada grant opportunities and arranging advisory support for their applications. Stevens and Polkinghorne also connected the Abluqta Society with the Wiiche'iwaymagon Buying Alliance, a group of tribal councils, Indigenous organizations and food banks that negotiate together for lower prices on food and food-harvesting equipment.

"A week or so later, they started attending the Wiiche'iwaymagon meetings, and eventually they signed on as a new member," says Polkinghorne. "That will give them more buying power for food,

as well as access to 25 staple food items that will be coming into the community regularly."

In March 2025, the Abluqta Society was forced to look for a new space after black mould was discovered in the building that had been hosting it. The Society's connections to FBC and Wiiche'iwaymagon will give it a larger network of support as it navigates through this crisis.

Other communities have been interested in partnering with FBC to launch or sustain after-school food programs, traditional hunting and harvesting activities, cooking classes, breakfast programs, elder nutrition programs, food-security organizations (including but not limited to food banks) and more.

Food Banks Canada is committed to furthering equitable access to food in underserved communities. So in FY 2024-25, we distributed **\$2.5 million in grant funding to Northern food-security initiatives**. This figure doesn't include Stevens and Polkinghorne's efforts, or FBC's policy development and government advocacy.

It all starts with connections. "A lot of food banks and community organizations in the North feel they're alone in what they're doing in their respective regions," says Stevens. "We connect them to one another,

and that keeps the momentum going. When we visit, they often say something like, '**Someone heard us**. Someone is going to be a partner in addressing food-security issues. We don't feel alone anymore.'"



Abluqta Society board member Erin Strachan.



Building Capacity

Supported by donors and partners, Food Banks Canada's Northern Capacity Fund invests in Northern food banks and food-security organizations, empowering them to

acquire the infrastructure they need to improve and expand their services. In FY 2024–25, this flexible fund supported **42 projects and organizations**, while other FBC grant programs invested in another **60 projects and organizations located in the North**.

One example is Sirivik, a food centre in the fly-in community of Inukjuak in northern Quebec. The Northern Capacity Fund enabled it to buy and ship materials for a pioneering four-season greenhouse. The facility is scheduled to open in 2025 and will play a crucial role in advancing fresh local food production year-round, reducing reliance on expensive imported foods.

Sirivik also bought two snowmobiles and a canoe to enhance Ulluriat, its “on-the-land” program. The snowmobiles support sustainable food sourcing throughout the winter months. For instance, “Jimmy,” one of Inukjuak’s young community members, was able to experience his first hunting trip in 2024. On one of

the new snowmobiles, he successfully harvested a caribou. “Proudly bringing the meat and skin back home, ‘Jimmy’ not only provided for his family but also strengthened his connection to traditional practices,” Sirivik reported.

“As both a staff member and a community member, I am incredibly grateful for this program. With the high cost of living in the North, access to country foods makes a significant difference for my family and many others. People come to the office with smiles on their faces, excited to prepare a nourishing traditional meal for their families.”

*Inuvik Native Band, Inuvik,
Northwest Territories*

Power in Numbers

Food Banks Canada is proud to be part of the Wiiche'iwaymagon ("Friends helping friends") Alliance, an Indigenous-led organization dedicated to providing "a hand up, not a hand out" by helping to develop food sovereignty and food-security options in its member communities. The alliance began in northern Manitoba and Ontario but welcomes all interested nations in the North.



FBC VP of Network Relations and Programs Chantal Senecal and Northern Network Manager Jay Stevens hold a copy of the Wiiche'iwaymagon Treaty Agreement.

In October 2024, it created the Wiiche'iwaymagon Buying Alliance. This not-for-profit corporation will use its members' collective buying power to negotiate bulk food prices and shipping rates for them. Proceeds from the sale of this food will be reinvested in subsequent food shipments. In a region where groceries cost far more than elsewhere in the country — \$10 for a cabbage or \$20 for a bottle of cooking oil would not be unusual — the resulting price reduction could improve access dramatically.

Extending the Reach of Food Support

Food Banks Canada is building its National Food Sharing System's distribution capacity in the North by helping to identify regional hubs that could receive large food shipments from our logistics partners and share them with outlying communities.

The imperative to bring food support to everyone who may need it, regardless of geography, is one of the reasons we are pleased to have signed an affiliate agreement this year with The Food Bank Society of the Yukon, which delivers food to communities in Yukon and northern British Columbia. They have assumed a special role as the new territorial association representing Yukon food banks.

Communities Served by the Food Bank Society of the Yukon



- Communities served monthly
- Communities receiving occasional food or supplies

“One of our clients is pregnant and needs to come into Smithers to see her doctor for regular appointments. She was very excited to receive bus tickets to support her access. The highway that connects Witset and Smithers is Highway 16 (“The Highway of Tears”). It is along this road that many Indigenous women have gone missing while trying to hitchhike. These bus tickets help support women’s safe travel into town for services such as the doctor, the food bank, etc.”

~ The Salvation Army Smithers Food Bank, Smithers, northern BC

Free Tax Clinics at Food Banks Achieve Massive “Returns” on Investment

In the spring of 2024, when “Marlice,” a single mother of one, walked into the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre, she simply expected to get some help filing her taxes. What she didn’t yet know was that this free service would help to change her life situation dramatically.

Marlice had never filed taxes before, partly because she didn’t fully understand the process and felt apprehensive about it. With help from a volunteer from KPMG in Canada, a financial-services firm partnered with Food Banks Canada, she found out she was eligible for enough tax credits to bring her a refund of more than \$3,000. This unexpected windfall allowed her to pay off overdue bills and buy essential household items that she’d been putting off for months.

What’s more, filing her taxes made Marlice eligible for certain ongoing government benefits, which made it easier for her to put nutritious food on the table for herself and her child each day.

“Now, she can focus more on her kid’s needs and less on where their next meal will come from,” says **Jasleen Kaur**, a program manager at the Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre. “And this tax education empowered her in managing her finances. By providing immediate

financial relief through tax refunds and long-term stability through awareness, we are helping families move towards self-sufficiency and a brighter future.”



Tax clinic volunteers at the Unemployment Help Centre of Windsor in Ontario.

Millions of Dollars Where They're Needed Most

Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre is just one of the organizations that participated in Food Banks Canada's **National Tax Clinic program** in FY 2024-25. People with modest incomes also had access to free tax clinics at five other primary locations across the country.

In addition, Food Banks Canada awarded 18 smaller grants in FY 2024-25 to strengthen pre-existing tax clinics, which reported back and helped us estimate the deep impact these clinics can make within the food bank network.

Together, the six primary clinics completed **7,733 tax returns that benefitted more than 9,600 people**, including over 2,500 children and other dependents. Meanwhile, the 18 additional clinics completed **another 8,625 tax returns**.

In total, the 24 tax clinics returned more than **\$58.5 million** to the pockets of food bank clients!

Financial Empowerment

As Marlice experienced, people with low incomes often need to file a tax return to receive government benefits that can make an enormous difference to their household finances, such as GST/HST credits, the Canada Child Benefit and disability supports.

However, many personal, institutional and systemic barriers can get in the way. Some people — unaware that they're eligible for benefits — may assume that filing isn't important because their income isn't high enough to owe taxes. Others lack knowledge of the taxation system or the funds to pay someone to help them navigate it. Some face challenging personal situations that make filing into a daunting or low-priority task.

Low incomes are at the root of food insecurity and the need for food banks. By helping people access the government credits and benefits they are eligible for, we can help them move forward out of survival mode. In other words, we can relieve hunger today and prevent hunger tomorrow.

As Jasleen Kaur explains, “The Tax Clinic Program has empowered clients with financial literacy and education... [In part because of this program,] they see the food bank as not just a source of emergency food but as a comprehensive support system dedicated to improving their overall well-being.”

“A client needed to file her taxes as quickly as possible to qualify for subsidized housing. Without this clinic, she would have needed to pay a fee that she didn't have the means to cover.”

Caroline Malette, Administrative Director, Le Centre de bénévolat et Moisson Laval, Quebec

“A notable success story from the program involved a volunteer who is a newcomer and who, after participating in the clinic, was able to secure a job using the experience of volunteering. This highlights the broader impact of the program beyond immediate financial assistance, as it also fosters personal growth and empowerment.”

~ Nicoleta Maan, Manager of Volunteer Services, Sources Community Resources Society,
Surrey, BC

The Standards of Excellence: A Solid Foundation for Food Banking's Future

If you've seen one food bank, you've seen... one food bank. Food Banks Canada collaborates with a network of organizations that each serve a community with distinct needs and operate in their own way.

A shared set of values and best practices underpins this healthy diversity: Every network member upholds Canada's Ethical Food Banking Code.

And now, many are also working toward accreditation through Food Banks Canada's Standards of Excellence.

Launched last year, the Standards of Excellence are a baseline to which the food bank network holds itself accountable in governance and administration, people management, financial and legal matters, client service and care, public engagement and fundraising, food operations and food safety.

Food Banks Canada doesn't expect food banks to earn the Standards of Excellence accreditation without

extra resources. We provide manuals, training videos, consultations, answers to questions, funds and anything else they might need along the way. In FY 2024–25 alone, we awarded **\$3.75 million in financial support** through our Standards of Excellence grant.

One of the organizations that earned the accreditation this year was Regina Food Bank. “We strive to operate at the highest level possible,” says its CEO, **John Bailey**. “Part of this work includes making sure we have great benchmarks to measure our work against.”





Warehouse volunteers at Regina Food Bank.

His team started off with low-hanging fruit: Their existing food-handling practices were already closely aligned with the Standards of Excellence's requirements. "Our day-to-day practices had developed without the rigour of documentation," says Bailey.

"It was all there for us, but we needed to put pen to paper."

In general, prioritizing documentation was the greatest challenge posed by the Standards to Bailey's team. It required a change of mindset, one that he thinks will lay a stronger foundation

for future growth. "We realized the importance of not just doing the work, but also creating systems to transfer knowledge and facilitate continuous improvement," he reflects.

Now that they've completed the process, Regina Food Bank can start reaping the benefits. "Accreditation demonstrates our commitment to being the best-run organization we can be," Bailey says. "It gives our donors, partners and the community we serve the transparency and accountability that we are achieving best practices in food banking."

Across the food bank network as a whole, accreditation will help food banks to enhance their capabilities, share learnings and grow even stronger and more agile.

"Unfortunately, there's no reason to expect the world will calm down anytime soon," says FBC's VP of Network Relations and Programs, **Chantal Senecal**. "But by working together, we can improve our readiness for whatever comes next."

"Without a doubt, the biggest benefit to us in reaching accreditation is the improvements to our client experiences. The little improvements we made in a variety of areas all combined to enable us to do a better job serving our clients."

Pelham Cares, Pelham, Ontario

Removing Barriers to Service, Reaching More People in Need

A few years back, “Ahmed,” age 58, arrived in Canada with his family of six, eager to build a new life. However, settling into a new country takes time, and his initial lack of access to a car or another reliable form of transportation made it a struggle to acquire the essentials.

On a regular basis, Ahmed would ride a bicycle to the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge in Alberta, to collect food for his family.

Unable to carry an entire food hamper on his bike, he would have to sort through it, taking only the most essential items. “Despite his determination, the weight of this challenge was heavy,” recounted the food bank’s executive director, *Danielle McIntyre*, in a report to Food Banks Canada. “Leaving behind food that his family needed was heartbreaking, but there was no other option.”

Fortunately, Food Banks Canada awarded an **Access Grant** to the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge this year. Supported by individual donors, companies and philanthropic organizations, this granting program helps food banks **break down barriers to service and increase access for populations that have been excluded**. In this case, the food bank used some of the funds to buy transit tickets and delivery vouchers to help remove transportation barriers.



Halal food made available through Food Banks Canada's Access Grant.

The client intake supervisor called Ahmed into her office to share the good news: for the next couple of months, his hampers would be delivered directly to his doorstep. Though he was still learning English and often found it difficult to communicate, he didn't need to speak. The relief and joy that washed over his face were clear.

When Ahmed could finally find the words, he expressed his profound gratitude, sharing that he and his family would never forget how much the food bank had helped them during their challenging first year in Canada. Says McIntyre, “[It made them] feel truly supported and cared for in their new home.”

Access, Dignity and Belonging

According to recent data from Statistics Canada, **25.5% of the population in the provinces — or approximately 10 million people — worry at least somewhat about being able to get enough food.** This suggests that food banks are not reaching everyone who needs them.

First launched in 2023, Food Banks Canada's Access Grant Program grew out of a research project that identified ways to make food banks more accessible to all. To inform their work, our researchers analyzed poverty data and partnered with peer researchers who had experience with food insecurity.

In FY 2024–25, we distributed **\$4 million** to food banks for investments that included but were not limited to:

Food that meets specific dietary needs (e.g. halal, kosher, vegetarian, etc.) or that is familiar to people from specific cultural backgrounds

More food for food banks in urgent need of it

Translation of communication materials into languages spoken by food bank clients

Physical accessibility upgrades, such as wheelchair-friendly infrastructure

Expanded or flexible hours to accommodate clients' varied schedules

Welcoming and dignified environments to help dismantle the barriers of shame and stigma (e.g. private intake spaces, training for volunteers and staff, etc.)

Transportation solutions to expand food banks' reach into underserved communities (e.g. mobile food trucks, delivery services, taxi vouchers, etc.)

Programs that help to build community (e.g. communal meals, cultural food exchanges)

“Until food banks are no longer needed,” says Food Banks Canada CEO *Kirstin Beardsley*, “we must strive to ensure that everyone, right across the country, has access to the healthy, fresh and culturally appropriate food they need in an environment that supports dignity and a sense of belonging.”

“Many clients face significant barriers in breaking the cycle of poverty. As a refugee from Ukraine myself, I relate to their challenges. In this role, I became instrumental in facilitating access to food banking services, especially for our Ukrainian-speaking community. I was able to help our clients access a variety of other services as well, such as assistance in finding a job or writing a resumé, referrals for renewing expired documents, and much more.”


Client support worker hired with funding from an Access Grant at the New Toronto Street Food Bank

“As a family from India, it was so nice to find familiar foods like tofu and lentils. Thank you for your kindness and for thinking about our culture. You are helping not just our bodies but also our hearts.”

Clients of the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank in Kelowna, BC



The Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge's Access Grant also enabled the purchase of electronic equipment for communication and translation.



“Every week, I see seniors and clients with mobility challenges using the ramps to access the food bank without struggle. The new canopy has been a game-changer too. On rainy days, people waiting outside are no longer soaked when they come in. These updates show that we’re thinking about the whole person, not just handing out food. It’s about dignity and respect.”

~ Long-time volunteer at Barrie Food Bank in Ontario, observing upgrades enabled by an Access Grant

Keeping It Fresh: Boosting Food Banks' Capacity to Share Perishable Food

In the summer of 2024, the Central Okanagan Food Bank (COFB) in Kelowna and West Kelowna, British Columbia, was serving between 10,000 and 10,500 people each month. This was a big increase from the year before, and it called for bold changes.

Using a **Capacity Boost Grant** from Food Banks Canada, COFB invested in a large walk-in/drive-in freezer.

Warren, a long-time volunteer, was enthusiastic. “Before, we were struggling to keep up with the influx of frozen donations, and we had to rush to sort them,” he shared in a report to FBC. “Now, with the new freezer, we have time to properly organize everything and make sure nothing goes to waste. It’s rewarding to see how much more we’re able to offer our clients.”

In fact, prior to the new purchase, COFB was turning away generous donations of frozen items due to space constraints, according to CEO **Trevor Moss**. “The new freezer has strengthened our partnerships with food recovery organizations, local grocers and farms,” he says. “Knowing we have the capacity to manage larger volumes of perishable foods, these partners have increased their donations.”

With help from individual donors, companies and philanthropic organizations, Food Banks Canada awards Capacity Boost Grants to food banks to invest in infrastructure such as:

refrigeration

emergency generators

cold transportation

warehouse equipment

safe food-handling equipment

greenhouses and gardens

The goal is to enable food banks to safely accept, store, grow, handle and distribute more food — and fresh food in particular.

The Central Okanagan Food Bank was one of 103 organizations throughout Canada that received funding through our latest complete round of Capacity Boost Grants. In FY 2024–25, we distributed \$3 million through this program.

At COFB, not only the quantity but also the quality of food has improved, says Moss. “By being able to offer a wider range of frozen items — particularly meats and prepared meals

— we’ve significantly enhanced the nutritional content of the food we distribute,” he explains. “Access to diverse and nutritious food options supports not only physical health but also the overall well-being of our clients.”



Project SHARE’s community gardens in Niagara Falls, Ontario, produce fresh fruit and veggies for both the gardeners and the organization’s food bank. “We have two seniors who were gardening with us for many years until they had to stop due to their limited mobility,” says Debbie Cank-Thatcher, Project SHARE’s Seasonal Program Coordinator. “This year, the new steel raised beds have provided them with an easier experience. They are very pleased and let us know each time we see them in the garden.”

“People are excited to have fresh produce, and especially such variety as we can offer with the help of local farmers and producers. Many people express that they couldn’t access these types of food items otherwise. Knowing that kids are getting to experience what this food looks and tastes like fills me with joy.”

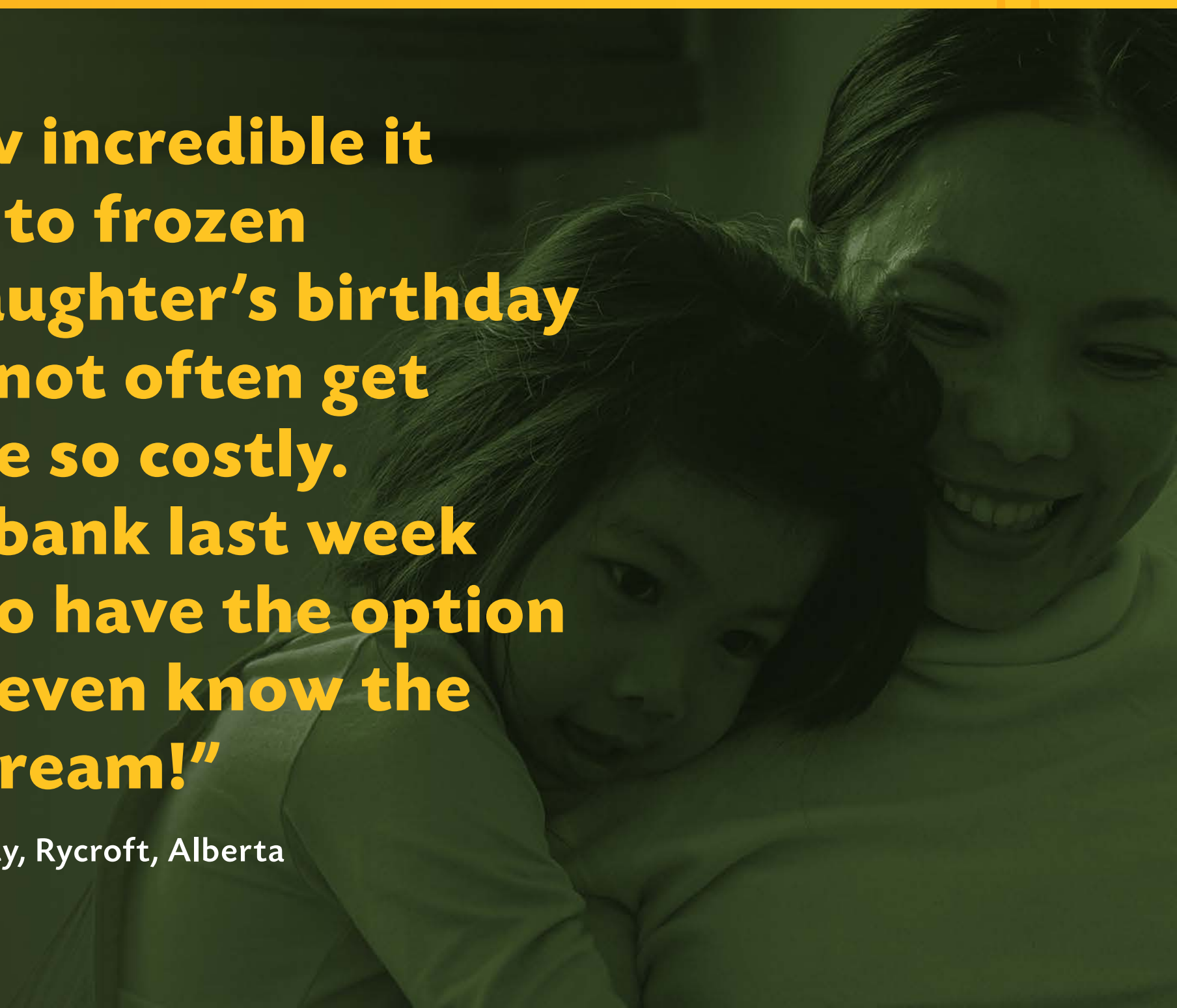
MJ, volunteer at People for a Healthy Community, Gabriola Island, BC




Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation in Yukon purchased a refrigerated van that allows them to safely transport meat, eggs and vegetables to community initiatives such as school nutrition programs, a men’s shelter, community lunch programs and meals on wheels.

“You have no idea how incredible it is to now have access to frozen “special items.” My daughter’s birthday is coming, and we do not often get treats because they’re so costly. We came to the food bank last week and were so excited to have the option for ice cream! I don’t even know the last time we had ice cream!”

~ Client of the Central Peace Food Bank Society, Rycroft, Alberta





“I am super excited that RISA [housing for disadvantaged, homeless youth from across Nova Scotia] now has generators. Two years ago, there was a bad hurricane, and we lost power for one week. I remember watching staff throw food away because it had gone bad. For kids like me who grew up worrying about where their next meal would come from, it was scary to see food being put in the garbage. I’m so happy I’ll never feel that anxiety during a power outage again. Thank you for the difference you are making in the lives of people like me.”

~ A resident of Regional Independent Students Association, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Our Impact Grows Out of Organizational Culture

Food Banks Canada prioritizes its culture: We know it's a key ingredient for succeeding at our mission. In November 2024, Waterstone Human Capital recognized us for embodying one of **Canada's Most Admired™ Corporate Cultures** of the year.

Awardees are selected by a board of leaders from companies that have been recognized for this distinction in the past. In their decision-making, they consider multiple aspects of organizational culture, including vision and leadership, recruitment and hiring practices, talent development and management, cultural alignment and overall performance. For us, performance means advancing our mission and achieving our organizational goals, collaboratively with a team that is happy, healthy and engaged.

We believe that through a unified vision, dedicated leadership, strategic foresight and putting our values at the heart of everything we do, we can have a profound and lasting impact on society.

“We create our culture as a team and we have an amazing one,” says Food Banks Canada CEO *Kirstin Beardsley*. “A great culture is built and sustained by great people, with every person bringing their unique selves to contribute something special. Together, we strive to create a workplace where passion for the

Waterstone
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CULTURES
2024

mission drives performance and where people feel connected to the societal impact they contribute to.”

This special culture truly permeates the staff. In the most recent annual staff engagement survey, 100% of the team indicated that they are proud to work for Food Banks Canada.

“I love the collaboration at Food Banks Canada, where everyone understands their distinct role in addressing food insecurity in Canada and puts their best foot forward.”

~ Kim Watkins, Grants Program Manager

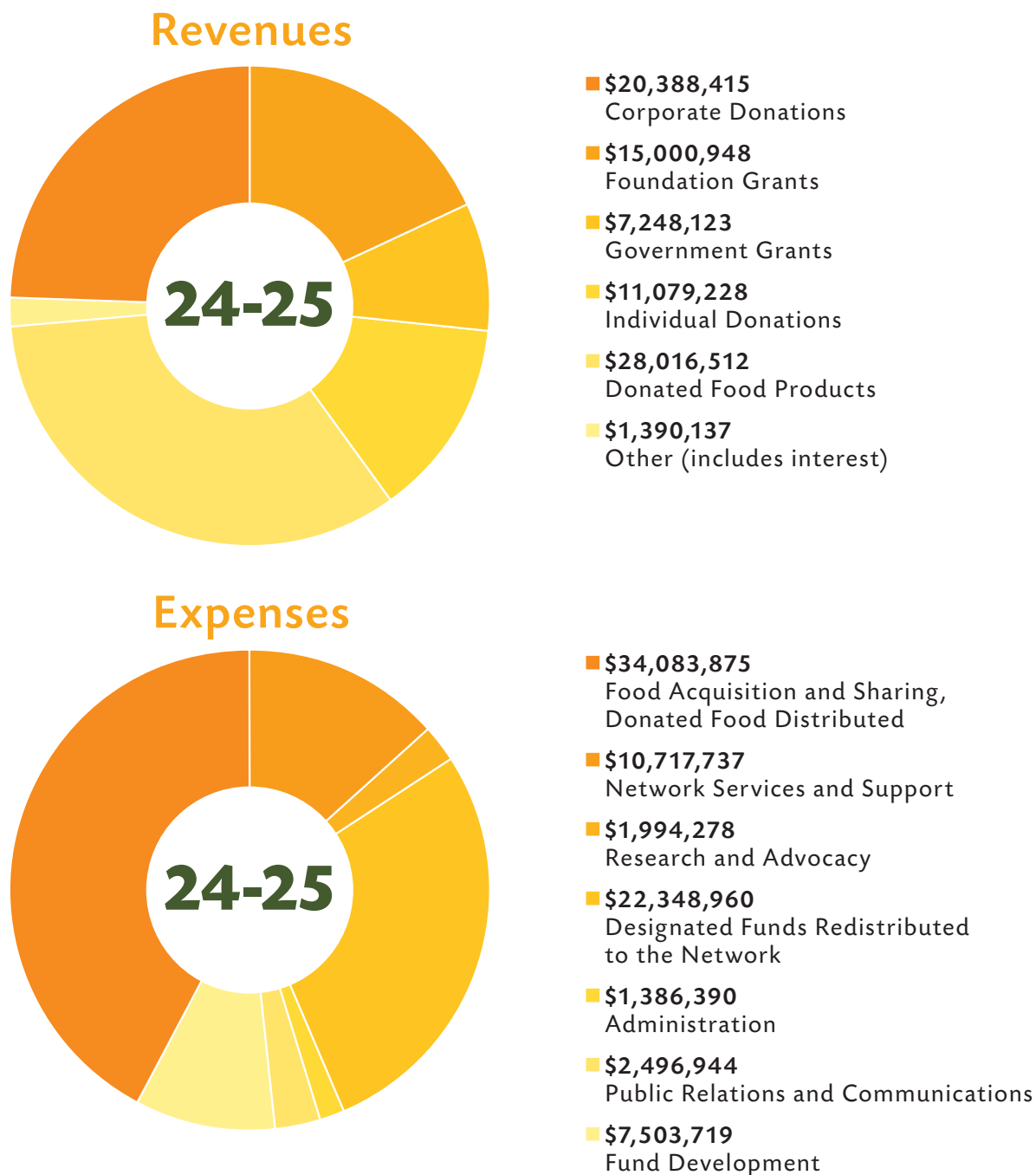
“Food Banks Canada not only truly cares about their staff, but it’s an organization that is based upon caring for and helping others.”

~ Mark LeBlanc, Distribution & Logistics Manager



Financial Oversight and Accountability





Statement of Operations and Change in Net Assets

REVENUE	FY 2024-25	FY 2023-24
Corporate Donations	20,388,415	20,069,249
Foundation Grants	15,000,948	4,829,618
Individual Donations	11,079,228	8,609,931
Government Grants	7,248,123	22,934,540
Other (includes interest)	1,390,137	1,961,962
Donated Food Products	28,016,512	33,359,934
TOTAL	83,123,363	91,765,234
EXPENSES – Program Services		
Network Services and Support	10,717,737	25,558,582
Research and Advocacy	1,994,278	1,971,454
Food Acquisition and Sharing	6,067,363	3,113,220
Funds Distributed	22,348,960	22,259,413
Donated Food Distributed	28,016,512	33,359,934
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	69,144,850	86,262,603
EXPENSES – Support Services		
Public Relations and Communications	2,496,944	1,404,630
Fund Development	7,503,719	3,967,314
Administration	1,386,390	985,388
TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES	11,387,053	6,357,332
TOTAL EXPENSES	80,531,903	92,619,935
Increase (decrease) in Net Assets	2,591,460	(854,701)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	28,325,263	29,179,964
Net Assets, End of Year	30,916,723	28,325,263



Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	FY 2024-25	FY 2023-24
Cash	31,921,014	17,017,007
Investments	5,632,934	19,004,184
Accounts Receivable	7,512,755	7,241,551
Prepaid Expenses	840,063	1,094,520
Capital Assets	0	40,998
TOTAL ASSETS	45,906,766	44,398,260
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	14,990,043	16,049,945
Deferred Capital Contributions	0	6,120
Deferred Rent	0	16,932
TOTAL LIABILITIES	14,990,043	16,072,997
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	25,593,291	24,529,398
With Donor Restrictions	5,323,432	3,795,865
TOTAL NET ASSETS	30,916,723	28,325,263
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	45,906,766	44,398,260

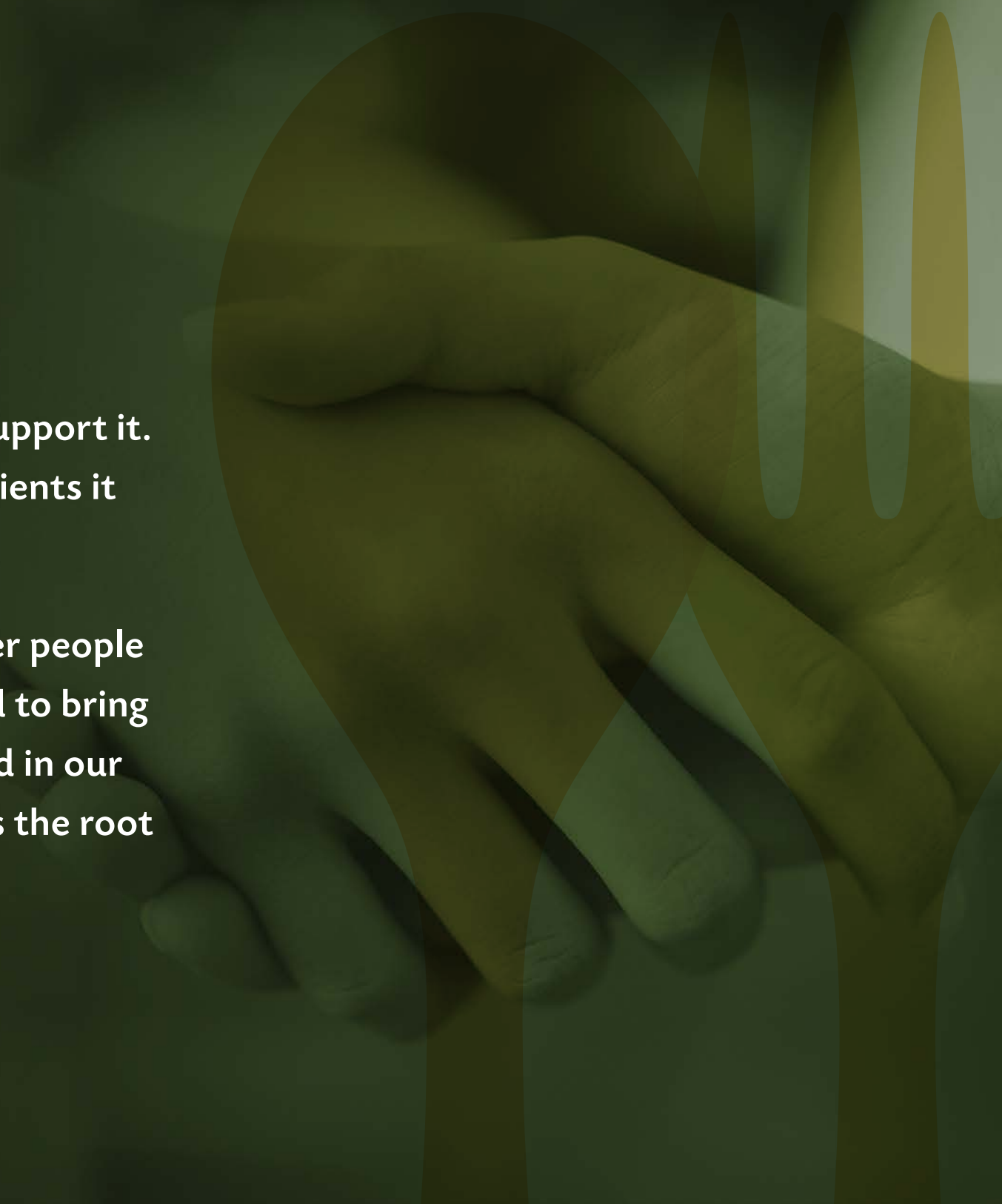
The audited financial statements of Food Banks Canada are available on the Food Banks Canada website at: <https://foodbankscanada.ca/about-us/annual-reports>

Oversight The audited financial statements of Food Banks Canada have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for not-for-profit organizations established by the Accounting Standards Board of Canada. The Board of Food Banks Canada approves an annual operating plan and budget and receives quarterly reports from management. Additionally, the Audit Risk and Finance Committee of the Board meets with management to monitor the external audit, financial performance, internal control environment, enterprise risk management and related mitigation strategies of the organization.

Thank You to Our Partners and Donors

Our work is only possible thanks to the partners and donors who support it. On behalf of Food Banks Canada, the food bank network and the clients it serves, a heartfelt thank you!

These generous contributors are leading the way and inspiring other people and organizations to step forward as well. We are immensely proud to bring them to the table, where they are helping to relieve the urgent need in our communities today, while also driving meaningful action to address the root causes of food insecurity in Canada for tomorrow.



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“We have experienced family crisis situations due to the loss of homes in the wildfires. Fire victims were so thankful for the food they received to relieve some of the trauma they were going through. Many tears were shed in gratitude.”

Athabasca Good Samaritan Ministries Association, Athabasca, Alberta

“With our community fighting food insecurity every day, we were proud to be able to distribute food to every single child, without leaving anyone out.”

Amber Kadjuk, Hamlet of Arviat, Nunavut



Top left: Pelham Cares in Ontario is among the organizations that earned Food Banks Canada’s Standards of Excellence certification this year. **Bottom left:** A coldtainer allowing Trenton Care and Share Food Bank in Ontario to maintain the cold chain on the road. **Above:** A forklift purchased by FBC for Moisson Lanaudière in Quebec.

**“Over the past year,
we have seen the number of
meals being served at our
centre double to meet the
growing needs in our community!
Thank you for supporting
our teams on the frontlines.”**

~ Harvest House Atlantic, Moncton, New Brunswick



Bringing Everyone to the Table



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