



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**Children continue to make up a large proportion of people helped by food banks.**

The 2016 Food Banks Canada national HungerCount results are mirrored in our community. 36% of the 31,400 people in Waterloo Region needing food support are 18 and under. This is comparable to numbers reported by food banks across the country.

In addition, results reported nationally show that while a large percentage of those helped are on social assistance, a significant number are working.

**In Waterloo Region**

- 17% are working or on EI (recently working)
- 34% receive social assistance
- 30% receive disability benefits

**Across Canada, single people who live alone continue to increase as a percentage of those helped by food assistance.** In Waterloo Region single person households rose from 27% of those needing food support in 2013 to 50% in 2016.

**The national report noted that immigrants and refugees are populations of particular concern in many regions of the country.** More than 1200 new Syrian-Canadians have been welcomed to Waterloo Region in the past year. The Food Bank of Waterloo Region has provided food starter kits for 200 households to help them transition from shelters to their own homes. The Food Bank expects to help an additional 500 people anticipated to arrive in Waterloo Region before the end of the year. Many programs within the food assistance network are helping these newest neighbours to become settled and acclimatized to their new home.

**HungerCount 2016 shows** that the demographic characteristics (household type, primary source of income, housing type) of those receiving help has remained similar to previous years.

Food bank use remains unacceptably high because there are too few well-paying jobs; inadequate supports for people unable to work; and inadequate training to prepare low-skilled Canadians for well-paying jobs.

"It's heartbreaking to see men, women and children in our community struggling to meet their own basics needs. We are grateful that this is a caring community willing to work collaboratively to ensure no one goes hungry in Waterloo Region," says Pat Singleton, Executive Director of the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank.

"We fully endorse Food Banks Canada's recommendations for a national poverty reduction strategy to be in place, supported by sufficient resources, by Fall 2017 and for changes to be made to social assistance to move us closer to a basic livable income in Canada," says Wendi Campbell, Executive Director of The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

In addition, both Campbell and Singleton noted, "We are fortunate to have many large volume food donations from companies that choose to help food banks. We would also like to see Food Banks Canada's recommendation for a tax credit for food manufacturers and retailers come to fruition so these donors would receive a benefit for choosing to donate their products to food banks."

We need the community's continued support so we can continue to help the more than 10,000 men, women and children that seek assistance from a food program in Waterloo Region each month. Financial donations can be made online, by phone, or in person at an event or at Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank or The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Food donations can be made at any fire hall, police division, grocery store, local food drives, as well as at the food banks. Donations will also be collected at the Santa Claus parades in our community.

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*For more information, please contact*

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