



2024
Community
Impact

Vision

A Waterloo region where no one experiences hunger.

Mission

Through community collaboration, we obtain and distribute essential food from our neighbours for our neighbours.

Organizational values

- Community Impact
- Equity, Inclusivity, and Respect
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Operational Excellence
- Continuous Improvement
- Integrity and Dependability



Territorial acknowledgment

The land on which The Food Bank of Waterloo Region operates is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Chonnonton Peoples. We are situated on the Haldimand Tract, land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on either side of the Grand River. We acknowledge the enduring presence of Indigenous Peoples with whom we share this land today, and we are committed to cultivating authentic and respectful relationships characterized by trust and collaboration.

Leadership Message

The past 12 months have been challenging.

This year, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region faced the highest demand for food assistance in our 40-year history. One in eight households in our community needed food support from the 54 organizations in the Community Food Assistance Network. To put this into perspective, last year it was one in 10 households, two years ago one in 14, and three years ago, it was one in 20.

The increases in demand for food assistance that we've seen over the past few years highlight the deepening challenges faced by our community. With 73,615 individuals seeking help between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024—a 25 per cent increase from the previous year—more individuals and families are struggling to meet their basic needs. The sharp rise in visits to food hamper programs, jumping from 450,387 to 558,545, underscores the growing reliance on these essential services.

The frequency of visits is another concerning trend. This year, there was a 15 per cent increase in the number of people visiting a hamper program more than eight times. This troubling statistic shows what we've known for some time: that people are no longer turning to food assistance only in emergencies. With the rising costs of food, rent, and mortgages, every day is an emergency for many people, and accessing food assistance is the only way many people can get by.

It's clear that the Network is essential for those in need of food assistance, but it offers much more. In addition to food programs, many Network partners provide services like mental health support, job placement assistance, and housing support. This means that food from a Network partner isn't just nourishment—it's a connection to crucial community resources and support.

As we mark our 40th anniversary in October 2024, we're reminded that The Food Bank was originally intended to be a temporary solution to food insecurity. While we still hope for government actions to address poverty, the root cause of food insecurity, the growing numbers make it clear that The Food Bank is vital to our community and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

As you read this Community Impact report, we hope you see the difference our donors, volunteers, sponsors, staff, and Network partners make for those facing hunger. We're incredibly grateful to our community for your support and generosity as we work together to create a Waterloo region where no one experiences hunger.



Kim Wilhelm, CEO
The Food Bank of
Waterloo Region



David Brenneman, Chair
The Food Bank of Waterloo Region
Board of Directors

2023–2024

Board of Directors

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Glen Polson
Director

Pejman Salehi
Director

Mike Verhoeve
Director

HUNGER IN

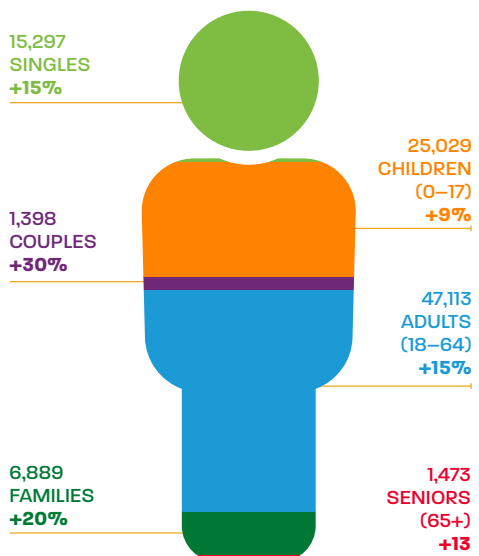
Waterloo region

Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, the **Community Food Assistance Network**, which gets essential food from The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and Cambridge Food Bank, **supported 25 per cent more people** than the previous year. Over 73,600 adults and children accessed a food hamper program more than 558,000 times, representing a 24 per cent increase in the number of visits.

The numbers here tell us more about who is accessing food support in our community.

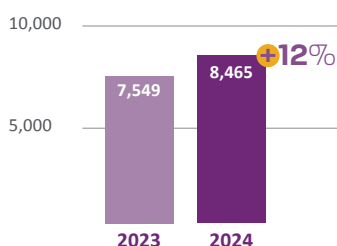


PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC

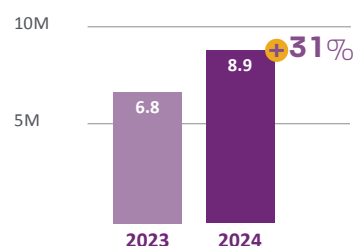


With the support of our community, we continue to meet the unprecedented need for food assistance year after year.

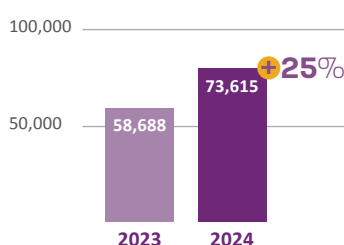
NEW HOUSEHOLDS: FOOD HAMPER PROGRAMS



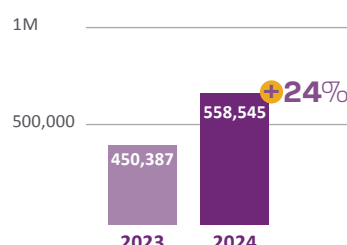
POUNDS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED



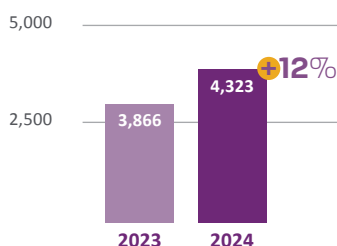
UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED: FOOD HAMPER PROGRAMS



FOOD HAMPER PROGRAMS



REFERRAL CALLS: FOOD SUPPORT



PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Karina's story

Each fall, we share our latest Hunger Count data to highlight the need for food assistance in Waterloo region. The numbers we present are often staggering, and it can be hard to comprehend the statistics. While sharing data is important, telling the story of the person behind the numbers is even more crucial.

Meet Karina Granados. In 2023, Karina, her husband Jose, and their two sons, ages 9 and 12, moved from Mexico to Kitchener after Jose secured a three-year work permit for a landscaping job. Karina had fond memories of her time in Canada 25 years earlier during a youth exchange program in Cambridge and wanted to give her children the same opportunity.

However, winter brought challenges. With fewer work hours available for Jose and Karina looking for part-time employment, the family struggled to keep up with rent and food costs. A neighbour introduced Karina to hamper programs provided through the Community Food Assistance Network that could provide emergency food to help her family through tough times.

Karina likens the hamper program to a trampoline, illustrating how it provides a crucial boost in times of need. "That initial jump or visit is like the first push off a trampoline. It gives you the momentum to rise and regain your footing," she explains.

She also recalls the excitement her boys felt when she brought home a hamper: "They loved getting ketchup." Grateful for the support, Karina wanted to give back. She started volunteering, first during the holidays and then regularly at House of Friendship, one of the 54 organizations supported by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

"I don't know everyone's story or history, but I do see the necessity. As a volunteer, I see the people. I can also feel the fear they have when they come to the program for the first time—it was the same feeling I had. But that fear quickly fades when you see the volunteers' smiles," Karina shares. She adds, "The thank you we hear isn't for the volunteers; it's for the donors."

Today, Karina works part-time delivering medication and continues to volunteer at House of Friendship, helping others who, like her, need a hand during difficult times.

“

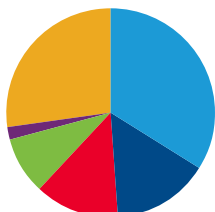
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 **NEED FOOD? CALL 519.743.5576 EXTENSION 340.**

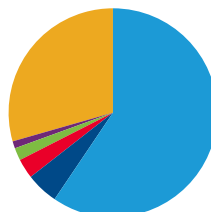
AGES

34% 0–17 YEARS
15% 18–30 YEARS
13% 31–44 YEARS
9% 45–64 YEARS
2% 65+ YEARS
27% UNKNOWN ADULTS (18+ YEARS)



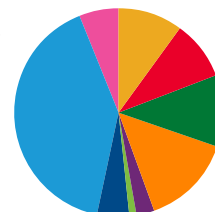
HOUSING TYPE

59% PRIVATE RENTAL HOUSING
5% SOCIAL RENTAL HOUSING
3% HOMEOWNER
2% RESIDES WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS
1% EMERGENCY SHELTER
30% OTHER



INCOME SOURCE

10% ONTARIO WORKS
9% ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM
11% EMPLOYMENT INCOME
14% NO INCOME
3% OLD AGE SECURITY
1% EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
5% OTHER
41% UNKNOWN
6% STUDENT LOAN



Feeding our Community

How does the Community Food Assistance Network work? The Food Bank of Waterloo Region functions as a distribution centre, so we don't give out food directly from our location.

Instead, we work with the Cambridge Food Bank to lead the Community Food Assistance Network. This means we acquire essential food items, fulfill orders, and distribute fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food to partner organizations across Waterloo region.



WHAT OUR NETWORK PROVIDES: The Network consists of 54 organizations and 132 food assistance programs.

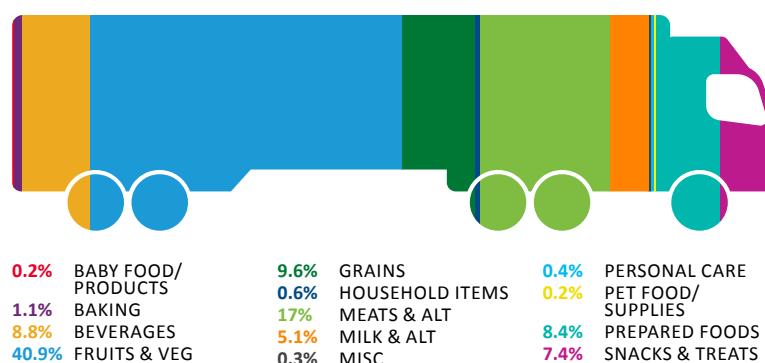
Working together, these organizations address hunger by providing:



The Network ensures that adults and children in every city and township in Waterloo region **have access to essential food support close to home.**

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PER CATEGORY

In 2023–2024, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and Cambridge Food Bank distributed **more than 8.9 million pounds of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food** across the Community Food Assistance Network—a **31% increase** compared to the year before.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Erb West Community Centre in Waterloo, run by Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health, offers a hamper program every Wednesday from 10:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. Community members who live within the neighbourhood boundary can select from a variety of fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food to build their own hamper. They serve about 60 households each

week. This program supports Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health's commitment to community development in the Erb West neighbourhood. It empowers residents to improve their community, making it a better place to live, learn, work, and play.



Trinity Community Table in Cambridge serves hot meals every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., and provides bagged lunches to go. They serve over 2,000 meals each month, ensuring anyone in need can access a meal in a hospitable environment.



The Waterloo Region Community Health Van, operated by Sanguen Health Centre, makes weekly stops at shelters, supportive housing units, and encampments throughout the region, reducing barriers to care and making healthcare services more accessible for vulnerable people in our community.

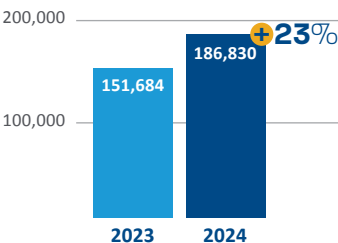
Rooted in harm reduction, they provide safe supplies for drug use and sex, food, drinks, and other healthcare services and social supports. Each month, they distribute about 900 snacks which include fresh, nutritious options like handheld fruit.



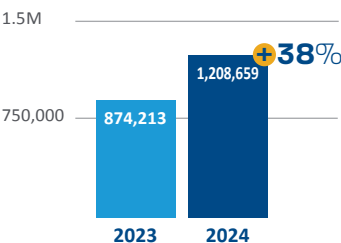
Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region provides safe shelter, education, and outreach support to women, gender-diverse individuals, and children experiencing domestic violence, empowering them to build a life free from violence. They run two emergency shelters, Anselma House in Kitchener and Haven House in Cambridge, where food and nutrition

coordinators prepare meals and keep the kitchens stocked for participants.

HAMPERS DISTRIBUTED



COMMUNITY MEALS SERVED



AGENCY LISTING

A Better Tent City
 Adventure4Change
 Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo Area
 All Saints' Anglican Church
 Alison Neighbourhood Community Centre
 Anishnabeg Outreach Employment and Training
 Cambridge Family Early Years Centre
 Cambridge Shelter
 Cambridge Vineyard Church
 Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health Community Ministry
 Emmanuel United Church
 First United Church
 Food Not Bombs
 Glencairn Church
 House of Friendship
 Kinbridge Community Association
 Kingdom Community International Church
 KW Underhill Residential
 Langs
 Marillac Place
 Nutrition for Learning
 oneROOF Youth Services
 Porchlight Counselling + Addiction Services
 Ray of Hope
 Salvation Army Kitchener Community Church and Family Care Centre
 Sanguen Health Centre
 Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region
 Services and Housing in the Province
 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Agnes
 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Anthony Daniel
 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Mary's
 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – Our Lady of Lourdes
 Society of St. Vincent de Paul – St. Teresa
 St. Aloysius Church
 St. Andrew's Hespeler Presbyterian
 St. Columba Anglican Church
 St. John's Anglican Church
 St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Stanley Park Community Centre and Community Association
 Starling Community Services
 Supportive Housing of Waterloo
 The Healing of the Seven Generations
 The Salvation Army Cambridge Citadel
 The Working Centre
 Traverse Independence
 Trinity Community Table
 University of Waterloo – WUSA Food Support Service
 Wellesley Food Cupboard
 Wilfrid Laurier University – Students' Union Food Bank
 Wilmot Family Resource Centre
 Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region
 Woolwich Community Services
 Y.W.C.A.

Neighbours Helping Neighbours

Helping neighbours in need is a community effort. Thanks to the contributions and dedication of our donors and volunteers, we're able to support the growing number of individuals and families facing food insecurity. Their generosity and hard work ensure that healthy, nutritious meals are available to those who need them most, fostering a stronger and more resilient community.

This past year, the Community Food Assistance Network helped 73,615 unique individuals through hamper programs, including 8,465 new households, with essential food support and other resources. By supporting The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, you help this extensive network of food assistance providers reach more individuals and families in need.

Through our EAT 365 Monthly Giving program, 2,450 donors help us relieve hunger every day of the year. Our EAT 365 supporters contribute \$1.1 million annually, with an average monthly gift of \$39.30 per person. **This provides over two million meals for hungry people in our community.**



4,730

FIRST-TIME DONORS



2,450

MONTHLY DONORS



\$39³⁰

AVERAGE MONTHLY GIFT

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

David's story

Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, donors from EAT 365, our monthly donor community, provided more than two million meals for people in Waterloo region who need food assistance. We're so grateful to the community members who help fight hunger every day through their monthly donations.

David Bertrand is one of those community members. He started donating monthly in early 2021 after he and his colleagues at Geosyntec Consultants participated in a sorting activity through our Food Engagement program. This program lets community and corporate groups volunteer in our warehouse, work as a team, and give back to the community. They also get a tour of our distribution centre.

David recalls, "The facility and operations were impressive... seeing how active it was, how much food goes out, and how many people [The Food Bank of Waterloo Region] helps."

In early 2024, David returned to The Food Bank for another food sorting activity, this time with his daughter's Waterloo Ravens U15 hockey team. He says, "It reconfirmed the need [for food assistance] in the community and the benefit of our monthly giving. Being a monthly donor provides consistency to The Food Bank. It provides reliable funding to a good organization that's helping people in the community."



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➡ **JOIN OUR EAT 365 MONTHLY GIVING COMMUNITY
AT [THEFOODBANK.CA/EAT365](https://thefoodbank.ca/eat365).**



141

CORPORATE &
COMMUNITY GROUPS



32,772

VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED



4,491

INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS



26,538

KILOMETRES DRIVEN BY
VOLUNTEER DRIVERS



5.7M

POUNDS OF FRESH, FROZEN,
AND NON-PERISHABLE
FOOD SORTED



FOOD HAMPERS PACKED

76,479 FRESH

8,883 NON-PERISHABLE

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Diego's story

Volunteers are essential to The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and play a crucial role in all aspects of our operations. From accepting community donations and sorting food to packing hampers and delivering food to our Community Food Assistance Network partners, we couldn't do our work without our 4,500 volunteers.

This year, we welcomed Diego Vargas-Avila to our amazing volunteer team. Diego helps in our distribution centre, sorting food donations and packing orders for our partners.

"I had made food donations in the past but wanted to contribute more directly to repay the goodwill I received when I first arrived in Canada," Diego explains.

In 2002, Diego's family immigrated to Canada as refugees. "We faced many challenges in an unfamiliar country," he remembers. A family friend told them about a local food assistance program. Diego was only four or five years old when they first received support. He doesn't recall much from that first visit but remembers seeing and experiencing kindness.

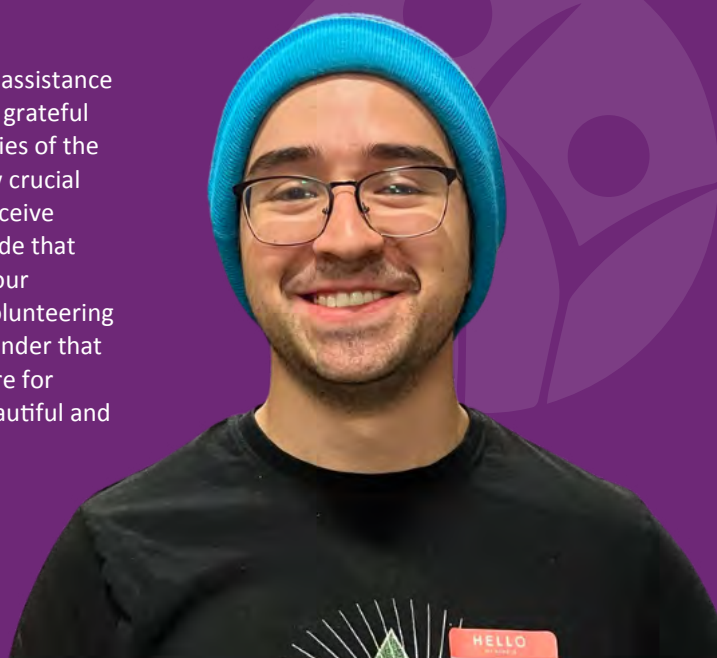
"Seeing strangers help people they had never met before, with respect and dignity, left a lasting impact on me,"

Diego says. "From the greeters who welcomed us with warm smiles, the volunteers who took time to explain to my mother how she might use these unfamiliar food products and ingredients, to the social workers who introduced my family to additional support resources. Everyone I met contributed to what it meant to me to be part of a community in this incredible country."

Diego's family received food assistance for about two years and was grateful for the support. "My memories of the food bank reminded me how crucial it was for us as a family to receive that support. I'd like to provide that support to other families in our community," Diego says. "Volunteering with The Food Bank is a reminder that people in our community care for each other, which is truly beautiful and worth celebrating."



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➤ **SIGN UP TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER AT [THEFOODBANK.CA/VOLUNTEER](https://thefoodbank.ca/volunteer).**

FOOD ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region invites corporate and community groups to volunteer at our distribution centre. It's an excellent way to connect as a team while giving back to the community. Volunteers help with activities like sorting frozen food, repacking items in the Fresh Approaches Food Centre, sorting non-perishable food, and packing hampers. Thanks to these groups, **nearly 400,000 meals were sorted between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.**

➤ **SIGN YOUR GROUP UP TO VOLUNTEER AT [THEFOODBANK.CA/GET-INVOLVED/FOOD-ENGAGEMENT](https://thefoodbank.ca/get-involved/food-engagement).**





◀ **ALLIANZ GLOBAL ASSISTANCE EMPLOYEES** participated in engagement activities on October 21 and November 27, sorting 17,459 meals.


17,459
MEALS SORTED

TOP

non-perishable food
sorters



▲ **ELEVATION MEMBERS** participated in activities on October 23, March 9, and April 13, sorting 10,781 meals.


10,781
MEALS SORTED



Food, Funds, and FUN!



Hosting a food and fund drive or fundraising event is a fantastic way to support The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and our Community Food Assistance Network partners.

The food and funds raised through community and corporate drives, and community events help us fill inventory gaps, buy food to meet diverse dietary needs, and keep our trucks running. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, our community raised a remarkable **1.8 million meals**.


\$762,095
FUNDS RAISED


357,343
POUNDS OF
NON-PERISHABLE FOOD

2023–2024 FOOD & FUND DRIVE PROGRAM SPONSORS

Did you know? Thanks to our Food & Fund Drive program sponsors, we can provide boxes, paper bags, and posters for community and corporate food and fund drives.



FOOD AND FUND DRIVE SPOTLIGHT

Kennedy's story

Every year for the past four years, Kennedy Williams has hosted a food and fund drive for her birthday.

"I thought it would be good for the community and I wanted to help people who don't have food," Kennedy says.

Kennedy turned eight years old in February 2024. To celebrate, her goal was to raise 800 pounds of food and \$800. About a month before her birthday, with help from her parents, Kennedy started promoting her food and fund drive.

"My parents posted it in lots of groups, and I spread the word at school," Kennedy explains.

Her classmates filled boxes with non-perishable food. Family members from nearby and around the world donated money online and shipped non-perishable food through Amazon to Kennedy's house. Kennedy also put bins on her porch for neighbours who wanted to drop off donations.

"Whenever I would get home from school, I would see, like, 16 packages at my door," Kennedy says.

"This was the first year we did the Amazon Wish List, so Kennedy was pretty excited that we'd come home to a porch full of boxes," adds her mom, Chantel Williams.

Friends and family members also brought donations for The Food Bank of Waterloo Region to Kennedy's birthday party. In total, Kennedy collected 800 pounds of food and raised \$1,150, meeting her food goal and surpassing funds raised! This works out to an incredible 2,919 meals for people in need.

Kennedy and her parents, Chantel and Clint, are grateful to everyone who donated to Kennedy's birthday food and fund drive and helped make it a success. In 2025, Kennedy hopes to raise even more!

"She wants to engage in all kinds of things The Food Bank does," Chantel says. "She does the Reverse Advent Calendar every year. If she sees a food drive anywhere, she'll ask if we can buy something for it. She's just very aware of how she can help in the community, and I think that's awesome, especially for a girl

her age. I think it's inspiring other kids to want to do these kinds of things too. Kennedy has an awareness of people around her and showing kindness comes naturally to her. She sees how helping people really matters and how it makes people feel."

To other kids who are interested in raising food and funds for The Food Bank, Kennedy says, "I think that they should try their best and they should do goals that make them happy."

Thank you, Kennedy, for making a difference in our community. We can't wait to see what you do next!



**REGISTER YOUR FOOD AND FUND DRIVE
AT [THEFOODBANK.CA/FFD](https://thefoodbank.ca/ffd).**



FIRST RESPONDERS TO FOOD BANK 365

The First Responders to Food Bank 365 program, supported by Melloul-Blamey, builds on the work and commitment of our first responder organizations in Kitchener-Waterloo, going beyond emergency situations to help people in their communities. This program invites community members to drop off non-perishable food items to any fire, police, or paramedic station, at any time. All donations go to The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Since 2015, the community has donated enough food to provide nearly **200,000 meals**.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Our annual events and campaigns, along with those organized by our community, raise awareness about The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and food insecurity. They also bring in food and financial resources that help us provide more food to those in need. Here are some notable events from the past year.

👉 **VISIT [THEFOODBANK.CA/EVENTS](https://thefoodbank.ca/events) TO DISCOVER FUN AND EXCITING EVENTS THAT SUPPORT THE FOOD BANK.**



WESTMOUNT TRADITION CHARITY TENNIS TOURNAMENT:

For the second year in a row, The Food Bank benefited from the Westmount Tradition Charity Tennis Tournament. Held from June 14 to 16, 2024, at the Westmount Golf & Country Club, the three-day event raised over 237,000 meals for people in need. Besides the tennis matches, there were fundraising activities like a casino night, silent auction, and 50/50 raffle. Since 2023, the tournament has raised **455,000 meals**.



CANSTRUCTION WATERLOO REGION: Canstruction Waterloo Region 2024, presented by Cohen Highley Lawyers, raised an amazing 113,284 meals! This annual event, held at Conestoga Mall during March Break, helps raise food and funds, increase awareness about food insecurity in our community, and brings together local businesses and groups to creatively build a future without hunger. This year, 14 teams used their talent and skills to build impressive structures using over 24,000 unopened food cans. Since 2008, Canstruction Waterloo Region has raised more than **1.8 million meals**.

Register your team for 2025 at thefoodbank.ca/canstruction.



EMPTY BOWLS: Empty Bowls returned on May 28, 2024 to Wilfrid Laurier University's Lazaridis Hall. The 26th annual event, organized by the Robert Langen Art Gallery and Waterloo Potters' Workshop, was a huge success, raising over \$39,000. This equates to an incredible 79,000 meals. Since its inception, Empty Bowls has raised **1.5 million meals**.



WAFFLES IN THE WAREHOUSE: On September 22, 2023, we hosted our 10th annual Waffles in the Warehouse. Presented by Aire One Heating & Cooling KW, the breakfast gathering raised 55,000 meals for those in need. The event also brought together community leaders. Through stories from food assistance participants and service providers, including a talk by local Métis chef Sydney Keedwell, we raised awareness about food insecurity in Waterloo region and highlighted the power of working together to make a difference.



GREAT FOOD SORT CHALLENGE: The 2024 Great Food Sort Challenge raised an incredible 136,787 meals for people in Waterloo region struggling to afford food. The eighth annual event took place on January 25, 26, and 29, bringing together 28 teams for a friendly competition to see who could sort the most food and raise the most meals. Over the three days, 268 people sorted through 68,655 pounds of non-perishable food (equivalent to 166 watermelon bins). The teams, representing 23 local businesses, also **raised \$18,075**.

Register your team for 2025 at thefoodbank.ca/gfsc.

CBC SOUNDS OF THE SEASON:

Every year, CBC hosts its Sounds of the Season campaign, a celebration of community and kindness in support of food banks across Ontario. Since 2002, the campaign has raised over \$10 million. Locally, in 2023, the **campaign raised \$95,000**. That's the same as 190,000 meals!



KITCHENER RIBFEST AND CRAFT BEER SHOW:

Every year, the community comes together to enjoy mouth-watering barbecued ribs and chicken at the Kitchener Ribfest and Craft Beer Show. Although admission is free, attendees generously donate food and funds at the gate. In 2023, the event raised \$7,624 in cash and 725 pounds of non-perishable food. Over the past decade, **248,892 meals have been raised!**



KITCHENER-WATERLOO OKTOBERFEST:

In October 2023, our community supported The Food Bank at various Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest events, including Grillefest hosted by City of Kitchener Council, the Onkel Hans Food Drive at the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Thanksgiving Day Parade, Concordia Club's Community Appreciation Night, and Stuff a Bus. Altogether, these events raised **35,397 meals** for people accessing food assistance programs in Waterloo region.

TIM HORTONS HOLIDAY SMILE COOKIE:

In 2023, Tim Hortons launched its first-ever national Holiday Smile Cookie campaign. All proceeds from cookies sold in Kitchener-Waterloo from November 13 to 19 were donated to The Food Bank and Tim Hortons Foundation Camps. This campaign not only spread kindness but also raised over **128,000 meals**. Now that's something to smile about.



FULL BELLIES: HAPPY HEARTS.:

Every summer, we run the Full Bellies. Happy Hearts. campaign to raise money so kids and their families have access to healthy food all year. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community and our matching sponsor, the Allan Bush Investment Team, we reached our goal of **1.5 million meals**. Since 2019, the campaign has raised \$7.5 million.



Saving Fresh. Feeding Community.

When many people think about food banks, they imagine cans and boxes. However, at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, we provide more than non-perishable food. Of the more than 8.9 million pounds of food that we distribute to the Community Food Assistance Network, 59 per cent is fresh or frozen! Here's how we ensure fresh, healthy food is available for people in need.

➡ **IF YOU'RE A FOOD PRODUCER OR DISTRIBUTOR INTERESTED IN DONATING EDIBLE FOOD, VISIT [THEFOODBANK.CA/FOODRECOVERY](https://thefoodbank.ca/foodrecovery) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR DONATION CRITERIA.**



Food Recovery program: Through our Food Recovery program, launched in 2019, we work with farmers, restaurants, retailers, distributors, and manufacturers to accept edible food they can no longer sell and would otherwise throw away. This food is redirected to help feed the 1 in 8

households in Waterloo region struggling to afford to put food on the table. This program addresses food waste and hunger simultaneously by ensuring that surplus food reaches those who need it most. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, our Food Recovery program prevented over 2.6 million pounds of food from being thrown out! This achievement is even more remarkable considering that all this recovered food helped feed more than 73,600 people in Waterloo region who rely on food assistance.



Fresh Approaches Food Centre: In our award-winning Fresh Approaches Food Centre, volunteers and staff safely repack and freeze large fresh food donations from farmers, restaurants, retailers, distributors, and manufacturers. This helps us use more produce, keeps it fresh

longer, and allows us to give more healthy food to our partners in the Network. Since 2018, we have processed over 551,000 pounds of food that might have gone to waste. We also thank Libro Credit Union for generously sponsoring the work we do in this space.



Perishable hamper line: At The Food Bank, we provide fresh, nutritious hampers for partners in the Network that run food hamper programs. These hampers are packed onsite with care. Volunteers work on an efficient assembly line, with each person adding one item to the hamper and

then passing it to the next person. This continues until each hamper is filled with a variety of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables. From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, our dedicated volunteers packed over 76,000 hampers for our Network partners. This effort ensures that individuals and families accessing a food hamper program receive the healthy food they need.



Mobile Pantry: Launched in 2021, our Mobile Pantry travels to neighbourhoods across Waterloo region, making it easier and more convenient for individuals and families to access essential food support from our Network. This year, five Network partners hosted the Mobile Pantry at their

locations. During each visit, our Mobile Pantry can provide fresh, frozen, and non-perishable food for up to 160 households.

Feed Collaboration

Feed Collaboration is an initiative spearheaded by Feed Ontario in partnership with The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, bringing together a diverse group of food producers, including farmers, greenhouses, hydroponic growers, processors, manufacturers, and distributors. The goal is simple but powerful: to support communities by redistributing surplus food to food banks across southwestern Ontario.

What sets Feed Collaboration apart is its local-first approach. Food banks at local, regional, and provincial levels work together to increase food resources for the entire Feed Ontario network. This collaborative effort not only helps new and existing food donors connect with their local food banks but also ensures that surplus resources are redirected to communities in need throughout Ontario, leaving nothing to waste.

In 2023–2024, food producers generously contributed an impressive **980,490 pounds of surplus food** to The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. This food was then shared with food banks across southwestern Ontario as part of Feed Collaboration, marking a staggering 145 per cent increase in contributions compared to the previous year. This growth underscores the incredible impact that collaboration and a strong community focus can have on fighting hunger and reducing waste.



FOOD BANKS WE WORK WITH:

Beamsville
Brantford
Caledonia
Cambridge
Chatham
Dunville
Fergus

Fort Erie
Guelph
Grimsby
Hagersville
Hamilton
Hanover
Ingersoll

Listowel
London
Meaford
Niagara Falls
Niagara-on-the-Lake
Orangeville
Owen Sound

Palmerston
Port Colborne
Port Elgin
Sarnia
St. Catharines
Tilsonburg
Walkerton

Welland
West Lincoln
Warton
Windsor
Wingham
Woodstock

➡ [LEARN MORE ABOUT FEED COLLABORATION AT THEFOODBANK.CA.](https://thefoodbank.ca)

Advocacy in action

The Food Bank of Waterloo Region is experiencing its highest demand for food assistance in 40 years, highlighting the need to address food insecurity more effectively.

While emergency food programs provide immediate relief, they fail to tackle the root cause, which is poverty. That's why food banks alone are not the solution. Reducing poverty through government policies is essential to combat food insecurity. Along with Feed Ontario, our provincial partner, and Food Banks Canada, our federal partner, we urge government officials to prioritize this issue and consider proposed policies on social assistance, living wages, and affordable housing. We also encourage the public to contact their local elected officials to support these policy recommendations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Feed Ontario
feedontario.ca/advocacy-change/policy-recommendations

Food Banks Canada
foodbanksCanada.ca/hungercount/policy-recommendations

FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL

Provincial
ola.org/en/members/current

Federal
ourcommons.ca/members/en

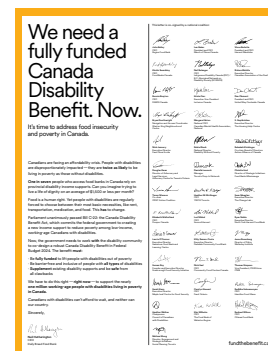


Pierre Poilievre stops by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region

On June 7, 2024, Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and Official Opposition, visited The Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Alongside Dianne McLeod, executive director at Cambridge Food Bank, we gave a tour of The Food Bank's distribution centre. During the visit, we discussed the growing need for food assistance in our communities and advocated for policies that improve the incomes of those living in food-insecure households. These conversations are vital in moving forward our vision for a Waterloo region where no one experiences hunger.

Canada Disability Benefit

The rising cost of living is affecting everyone, but it's hitting Canadians with disabilities even harder. People with disabilities are twice as likely to experience poverty, and one in seven who rely on food banks get support from provincial disability income. In early 2024, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region joined over 30 organizations, including food banks and community groups, in asking the federal government to make sure the Canada Disability Benefit is inclusive, fully funded in the 2024 budget, and open to people with all types of disabilities. Instead, the federal government has allocated \$6.1 billion in program funding over six years—amounting to about \$200 per month per individual—which falls short in providing the support people with disabilities urgently need. **You can learn more at fundthebenefit.ca.**





▲ Left, Kim Wilhelm, CEO, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, and Mike Morrice, Kitchener Centre MP.



▲ Left, Valerie Bradford, Kitchener South—Hespeler MP, Maddie Robertson, Sahanna Chahauver, and Kim Wilhelm, CEO, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

Canada Summer Jobs program

In August 2023, Mike Morrice, member of parliament for Kitchener Centre, and Valerie Bradford, member of parliament for Kitchener South—Hespeler, stopped by The Food Bank of Waterloo Region to meet with CEO Kim Wilhelm and post-secondary students Maddie Robertson and Sahanna Chahauver, who were employed through the federal Canada Summer Jobs program. Both Maddie and Sahanna worked for the summer as warehouse associates in our distribution centre.

Spring Day of Action at Queen's Park

On May 16, 2024, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region joined other food bankers from across the province for Feed Ontario's Spring Day of Action at Queen's Park in Toronto. We met with local members of provincial parliament to highlight the increasing number of people using food assistance programs in Waterloo region. We also discussed ways the Ontario government can help reduce food insecurity in our communities and how elected leaders can advocate for the needs of food banks.



► Left, Michelle Rickard, marketing and communications manager, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Kim Wilhelm, CEO, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Catherine Fife, Waterloo MPP, and Andrea Waters, marketing and communications manager, Feed Ontario.



▲ Food bankers across Ontario gather at Queen's Park.

Fall Day of Action at Queen's Park

On November 1, 2023, Feed Ontario hosted a Day of Action in Toronto. The day was an opportunity for food bankers across the province to gather at Queen's Park, meeting with members of provincial parliament to discuss the growing need for food assistance across Ontario, including Waterloo region, and to call on the government to take immediate action to address food insecurity and poverty in our communities.

► Left, Michelle Rickard, marketing and communications manager, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Mike Harris, Kitchener—Conestoga MPP, and Kim Wilhelm, CEO, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.





Our Team

When it comes to our workforce, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region has experienced a remarkable growth of 29 per cent over the past two years. This increase in our team size has been instrumental in bolstering our capacity to maintain and enhance our operations.

With a larger, dedicated staff, we are better equipped to manage the rising need for food assistance in our community. This growth not only strengthens our operational effectiveness but also underscores our commitment to addressing food insecurity with greater efficiency and compassion. Now, with a paid staff of 40+, we are also proud to be a Living Wage Employer. We believe that all employees should be paid an hourly wage that allows them to meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and clothing, while also participating in community life.

29% GROWTH OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS



The Food Bank family says good-bye to Wendi Campbell

The Food Bank family was saddened to share the news that our former CEO Wendi Campbell had passed away on January 15, 2024. She was 53 years old.

Wendi, who joined The Food Bank in the fall of 1999 on a one-year contract, became The Food Bank's CEO in 2007. She continued to lead the organization for over a decade.

Her commitment to innovation in community service was unparalleled. As The Food Bank's longest-serving employee, Wendi was a driving force in the procurement of over 40 million pounds of food for Waterloo region and surrounding communities. In addition to overseeing day-to-day operations, Wendi was a fearless advocate for The Food Bank, working with numerous provincial and national committees and boards to enhance systems related to food security.

Upon her passing, Wendi left behind a profound legacy of innovation, progress, and impact at The Food Bank. Beyond her leadership, Wendi had a bright vision for the community. She believed, with unyielding conviction, that through collaboration, advocacy, and perseverance, sustainable solutions could be found to address food insecurity, ensuring that no one in Waterloo region goes hungry. The Food Bank continues to honour that vision.



Mark Warner

Fifteen years ago, Mark Warner began his journey with The Food Bank as a volunteer. Initially, he was just looking to fill his Friday afternoons, but over the years, he gradually took on more volunteer shifts until, eventually, he was hired as a full-time driver. He has now been working at The Food Bank for six years.

Mark is on the road five days a week throughout Waterloo region, delivering food orders to partners in the Community Food Assistance Network. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, he travelled over 13,000 kilometres!

His favourite part of the job is “the relationships you develop with the agencies and the people there.”



▲ Left, Rebecca Jeschke, Julie Hornick-Martyk, and Leah Kschesinski.

Agency Relations team

As the 54 organizations in the Community Food Assistance Network continue to see unprecedented demand at their food assistance programs, The Food Bank’s Agency Relations team is there to support them. This small but mighty team of three provides guidance and training, communicates important information, helps Network partners navigate challenges, and tracks food assistance use across the Network. They also operate the Centralized Food Assistance Outreach line, helping callers in need connect with nearby food assistance programs.

“We work with organizations all over the region who are working towards the same goal and are creative and willing to try new things,” says Leah Kschesinski, agency relations coordinator at The Food Bank. “The Network is very collaborative and always ready to share ideas. This makes it easy to take learnings from one program and apply it elsewhere.”

Julie Hornick-Martyk, food assistance outreach coordinator, adds, “It’s so rewarding to hear about all the hard work that Network partners put into providing the very best service to community members. The Network is made up of people who genuinely care about people and relieving the effects of poverty.”

Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, Network partners distributed 186,830 food hampers and served 1,208,659 meals to more than 73,600 people in Waterloo region. But they didn’t just provide food. In addition to providing food assistance, many of the organizations within the Network also offer other essential services including mental health support, job placement assistance, and shelter and housing support.

“I continue to be amazed and inspired by the power of working together,” says Rebecca Jeschke, capacity building specialist. “As a team member at The Food Bank and as part of a network of partners alleviating hunger, we’re unlocking new ways of extending care across Waterloo region. Our impact goes beyond the food we provide; it’s also about the overall health and wellbeing of our communities.”

Thank you, Leah, Julie, and Rebecca, for supporting our Network partners and championing the voices of the people they serve!



Financial Accountability

Income statement for the year ended June 30, 2024.

The generosity of our community ensured that more than 73,600 people in Waterloo region had access to food when they needed it.

DONATIONS & INCOME

FOOD DONATIONS	69.8%	\$28,010,692
DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING	24.8%	\$9,957,517
REGION OF WATERLOO – COMMUNITY FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK	2.8%	\$1,122,031
FOOD BANK DISTRIBUTION SERVICES	0.3%	\$108,035
INVESTMENT & OTHER INCOME	2.3%	\$930,176
TOTAL	100%	\$40,128,451

EXPENDITURES

FOOD DONATIONS	76.2%	\$28,010,692
PERSONNEL	8.2%	\$3,016,389
ADMINISTRATION	1.5%	\$500,743
FUNDRAISING & FOOD DRIVES	3.3%	\$1,201,068
FOOD PURCHASE & PROCESSING	3.9%	\$1,429,156
FACILITIES	1.1%	\$390,935
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & AGENCY RELATIONS	0.2%	\$90,544
TRANSPORTATION	0.7%	\$254,359
REGION OF WATERLOO – COMMUNITY FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK	2.7%	\$1,010,028
COMMUNITY FOOD ASSISTANCE NETWORK – NETWORK CAPACITY	1.5%	\$550,821
AMORTIZATION OF CAPITAL ASSETS	0.8%	\$277,582
TOTAL	100%	\$36,782,317

★ **NOTE: IN THE PAST YEAR MORE THAN 7.95 MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD WAS DONATED, VALUED AT \$3.52 PER POUND.**



The Food Bank of Waterloo Region focuses on growth, sustainability, and innovation as part of our long-term planning. Through a financial strategy, the Board of Directors ensures financial stability to navigate potential fluctuations in donations and the effects of economic uncertainty. As part of this approach, the Board internally designates the following operating reserve:

EMERGENCY FOOD PURCHASE RESERVE

\$3,900,000

provides funding to purchase food in the event of significant events and damages (such as COVID-19) or gaps in supply chains to prevent disruption to community programs and agency partners.

CAPITAL MAINTENANCE RESERVE

\$280,000

addresses the needs of an aging building and ensures optimal health and safety of staff and volunteers.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESERVE

\$300,000

supports community food and program needs in crisis situations as outlined in the Region of Waterloo Emergency Management Plans.

FUTURE CAPACITY RESERVE

\$5,261,876

provides resources as we look to the future. Investing in a new space and supporting our team is fundamental to ensuring safe and secure food distribution that meets the needs of our changing community.

OPERATING RESERVE

\$4,500,000

provides approximately six months operating expenses as working capital to accommodate fluctuations in cash flow and program funding.

NETWORK CAPACITY RESERVE

\$800,000

supports programs in the provision of innovative food support services and programs in the community to meet the food assistance needs in Waterloo region.

Looking Ahead

As we mark 40 years of service and look to the future, our commitment to adapting and evolving remains strong. Entering our fifth decade, we recognize this is a crucial time for The Food Bank, our Community Food Assistance Network, and our community.

With the cost of living staying high, the demand for food support from our Network partners will likely increase. Alongside this growth, challenges such as outdated facilities, changes in food delivery methods, and the impacts of COVID-19 highlight the need for more operational space. Our Board of Directors is addressing these long-term needs. We also understand that future challenges will require innovative solutions, strong partnerships, and a clear sense of purpose. By implementing our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, we are committed to building on our successes, addressing new needs, and driving meaningful change in our community. Together with our partners, supporters, and the communities we serve, we are confident in our ability to navigate the future with resilience and continue making a lasting impact on those experiencing hunger. Here's to the next chapter of our journey—one that promises growth, collaboration, and an unwavering commitment to alleviating food insecurity in Waterloo region.

2024–2027

Strategic directions



Design for high-performing partnerships



Build an innovative and sustainable workplace culture and environment



Bring clarity to community



Strengthen our numbers

➤ Learn more about our strategic priorities at thefoodbank.ca/strategicplan



**FEED
ONTARIO**



**Agréé
IMAGINE CANADA
Accredited**

**Community
Impact
Print Partner**



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WE'RE SOCIAL!

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@FoodBankWaterlooRegion  

#FeedWR

thefoodbank.ca