



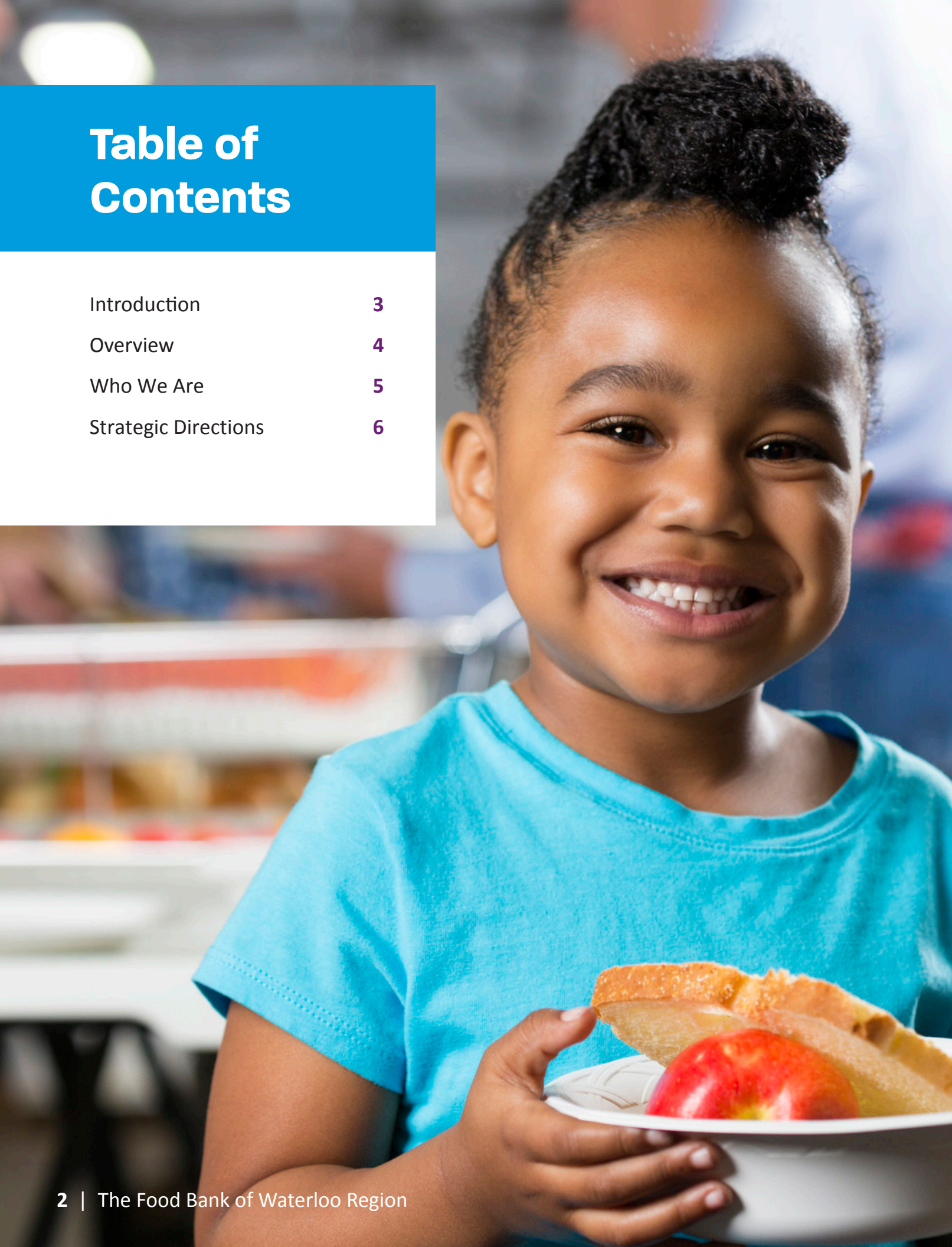
The Food Bank of Waterloo Region

Strategic Plan

2024–2027

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Introduction

Welcome from CEO and Board Chair

To say the past three years have been challenging for The Food Bank of Waterloo Region would be an understatement. Not only did the COVID-19 pandemic continue to bring unique obstacles, prompting significant shifts in our day-to-day operations, but the overall cost of living rose drastically, resulting in more people than ever in our 40-year history to turn to the Community Food Assistance Network for support. Throughout 2023, our Network partners consistently recorded record-breaking numbers, underscoring the growing demand for food assistance. However, amid these challenges, we found opportunities to innovate. Our ability to pivot and evolve during times of crisis, ensuring a continuous and reliable supply of emergency food for people in need, stands as a testament to the unwavering commitment and dedication of our staff and volunteers.

Looking ahead, we know the next three years will be a pivotal time for The Food Bank, our Network, and our community. Anticipating a rise in the overall cost of living, it's likely that the demand for food support from our Network partners will continue to grow. To address this, The Food

Bank's Board of Directors is actively engaged in discussions about the long-term impacts and the need for adequate operational space.

Over the next three years, we will leverage our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan as the foundation for our actions. This plan not only encapsulates the lessons we've learned but also emphasizes the importance of listening and incorporating feedback from our interest-holders. Guided by our organizational values and strategic directions, The Food Bank is set to continue to empower our Network partners to support people experiencing food insecurity, while also adapting to the ever-evolving needs of our communities. This forward-thinking approach positions us to navigate the challenges ahead with resilience and efficacy.

Kim Wilhelm

CEO, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region

David Brenneman

Chair, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region
Board of Directors

Overview

Over the past few years, The Food Bank of Waterloo Region has passionately responded to the increasing and urgent demand for food support with initiative and resourcefulness, addressing community needs. While striving to provide equitable services and distribution to the Community Food Assistance Network, there have been instances where our focus leaned more towards reacting to emerging needs rather than proactively addressing them.

Throughout the development of our new strategic plan, we endeavoured to realign our focus on proactive thinking. We dedicated ourselves to achieving greater clarity about our purpose and our role

within the Network, aiming to communicate this clarity effectively to all those we engage and collaborate with. The aim of these actions is to drive more impact for our community.

The creation of this new plan was not undertaken in isolation. This process involved the concerted efforts of numerous individuals from The Food Bank of Waterloo Region, the Network, program participants, and community members, investing their time and energy to collaborate and deliberate on our path forward. It aimed not only to define our journey but also to ensure that this journey best serves the present and future needs of the community.



Who We Are

Our Vision

A Waterloo region where no one experiences hunger.

Our Mission

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

Our Organizational Values

Community Impact

We are committed to making a positive impact in our community through active volunteerism, welcoming community participation, and striving to enhance the overall quality of life for those accessing food assistance in Waterloo region.

Equity, Inclusivity, and Respect

Embracing diversity and demonstrating respect for all, we foster an inclusive environment where everyone's perspectives are valued, contributing to an equitable community.

Collaborative Partnerships

Building strong partnerships and relationships is at the core of our approach. We believe in a supportive and collaborative approach, working together to address challenges and create lasting positive change.

Operational Excellence

We uphold professional excellence and accountability in our operations, promoting shared responsibility for the well-being of the community. Financial stability is a key pillar, ensuring sustained support for our mission.

Continuous Improvement

Committed to ongoing growth and adaptability, we prioritize continuous improvement and flexibility, ensuring that our strategies evolve to proactively meet the changing needs of the community.

Integrity and Dependability

We value loyalty, dependability, openness, and transparency. These principles guide our actions, fostering a culture of trust and integrity within our organization and with our community partners.

Strategic Directions

In recognizing the opportunity we have ahead of us, it is our desire at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region to be diligent and flexible in the ways we plan for the future. Our strategic directions take into consideration the nuanced context of our organization and community needs today, and areas of focus that will enable us to become stronger and more responsive to future needs.

Emerging from the strategic planning process are four directions that will guide The Food Bank's work in our community and with our broader provincial and national partners, ensuring a more food secure future. These directions give us a broad horizon and provide us space for adaptability in a constantly changing environment.

Directions

- Design for High-Performing Partnerships
- Bring Clarity to Community
- Build an Innovative and Sustainable Workplace Culture and Environment
- Strengthen Our Numbers



Design for High-Performing Partnerships

Forging impactful partnerships for an enhanced and equitable community through collaborative excellence.

We are committed to leveraging and working with the strengths of our partners to create more effective relationships that serve to enhance community experiences. Building on our past successes, we will work collectively to redesign and redefine our relationships to foster a more cohesive and collaborative system, guided by hands-on and people-centred practices. This effort will be iterative and will enable us and our partners to work with more clarity, positively impacting our ability to work towards our mission on a day-to-day basis. Through this collaborative and more fulsome approach to our partnerships, we will ultimately provide an enhanced and more equitable food provision system.

Objective:

- Co-create, build, and showcase Network priorities in a systems map



Bring Clarity to Community

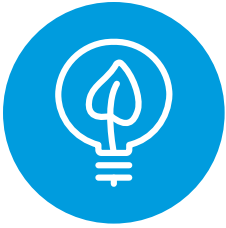
Supporting communities through clear purpose, inclusive advocacy, and amplified impact.

The community we work alongside and serve is made up of so many interest-holders: participants accessing food assistance in the region, donors, Network agencies, and non-Network agencies, all are crucial in our ecosystem. We will work to bring clarity about our purpose and the extent of our mission and vision to all. This will be done with intention, sensitivity, and consideration for the various needs and identities of our community. This clarity acts as a catalyst, building stronger relationships and amplifying our capacity to effectively communicate our value.

As this clarity brings more awareness about our work, so does our ability to extend support to our community through our diverse Community Food Assistance Network. By fostering clearer communication and a shared sense of purpose, we not only bolster our relationships but also empower ourselves to advocate more effectively at various government levels and agencies, ultimately enabling us to be more impactful in our work.

Objective:

- Strengthen community supports



Build an Innovative and Sustainable Workplace Culture and Environment

Creating the conditions for our workforce to thrive by investing in our space and fostering a culture of innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity.

Our goal is to foster a strong and supported workplace culture that champions both innovation and sustainability, firmly rooted in environmental accountability. Central to this vision is our commitment to equipping our dedicated team—comprising of staff, volunteers, and board members—with the essential resources crucial for their success and longevity. Continuity in institutional knowledge and succession planning will be seamlessly woven into our fabric, ensuring a robust foundation for growth.

As we set our sights on the future, investing in our space and resourcing our team remains fundamental. We embark on a journey to enhance the operational effectiveness of our space, recognizing the importance of a focused and innovative workplace through safety and equipping our team with the tools they need to succeed. By investing in our workforce culture and environment with intention, our changes will serve us in nurturing a better, more inclusive, and sustainable workplace for all.

Objectives:

- Launch our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and culture plan
- Create a new facility plan



Strengthen Our Numbers

Diversifying our donor base to amplify relationships and opportunities.

Our aim is to establish sustainable and enduring opportunities that actively bring in and involve donors from all walks of life into personalized donor journeys. By doing so, we seek to foster commitment and sustainability not only in securing funding and resources but also in cultivating robust and long-lasting relationships with our donors. Recognizing the importance of creating and maintaining relationships with donors not merely as financial contributors, but as sources of time, talent, and treasure, we aspire to create an inclusive space for engagement.

Our focus also extends to raising awareness about our services, playing a pivotal role in forging connections with a broader spectrum of funders and sponsors. These relationships are integral in bolstering our capacity to broaden our offerings and enhance service delivery to our partners, ultimately magnifying our impact within the community.

Our goal is to make sure everyone, no matter who they are, feels included in supporting us.

Objective:

- Diversify and invest in our donor portfolio

The 2024–2027 Strategic Plan has been developed collaboratively with The Food Bank of Waterloo Region and Overlap.

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