

Who's Hungry

SNAPSHOT



BEYOND COVID-19: BUILDING A
FUTURE WITHOUT POVERTY

About Who's Hungry 2020

For more than two decades, the *Who's Hungry* report has profiled experiences of poverty and food insecurity among food bank clients in Toronto. Each year, we survey clients through March and April, typically hearing the voices of more than a thousand people doing everything they can to access food for their families in an increasingly unaffordable city.

Of course, 2020 has not been a typical year. While our survey collection was cut short after just two weeks due to the pandemic, we knew that food bank client voices were needed more than ever.

During times of crisis it is too often those who are marginalized that are ignored both in response to the emergency and in recovery. Based on our annual survey, food bank client intake data, and the *Hunger Lives Here* research conducted at the height of the first wave of COVID-19, *Who's Hungry 2020* looks to the past, present, and future of food insecurity in Toronto to build a stronger, more resilient city.

What can you do?

Stay informed about poverty: Read the *Who's Hungry* report to learn about the extent of hunger in Toronto and the driving forces behind it.

Make your voice heard: Government must take action to achieve the right to food for all. Connect with your City Councillor, MPP and MP to make sure they know that you want to see poverty and food insecurity eliminated in your community.

Donate: With your help, we can provide immediate food and other resources to relieve hunger.

Volunteer: Contact your local food bank to find out how you can get involved. If you would like to help conduct surveys for next year's *Who's Hungry*, please contact research@dailybread.ca.



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See findings inside

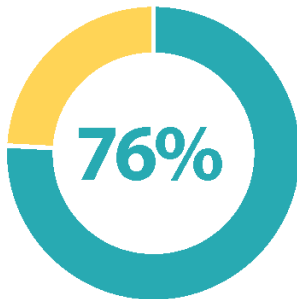


COVID-19 has intensified poverty and food insecurity

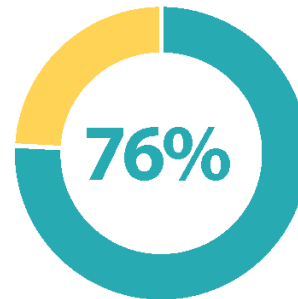
51%

increase in food bank visits in July/August, 2020 compared to year prior

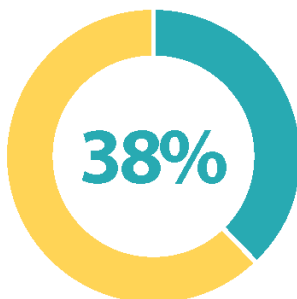
Our *Hunger Lives Here: Risks and Challenges Faced by Food Bank Clients During COVID-19* report released in July 2020 found that, of survey respondents:



76% of new clients reported that they began accessing food banks because of COVID-19



76% who had been working prior to the pandemic reported job loss



38% were worried about facing eviction in the coming months



3X more were anxious or stressed about not having enough food to eat

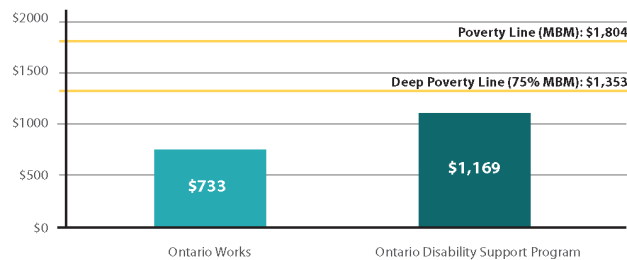
Food insecurity is not just a COVID-19 issue.

5.4% INCREASE
in food bank visits compared to prior year

984,416 visits to food banks in Toronto the year leading up to the pandemic

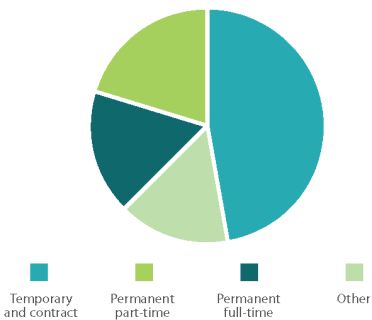
Incomes have not kept pace with the growing cost of living

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES COMPARED TO THE POVERTY LINE



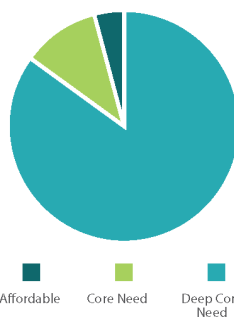
65% of respondents received social assistance as their primary income source. Social assistance rates have not kept pace with inflation, leaving recipients well below the poverty line.

RESPONDENT EMPLOYMENT TYPE



43% earned minimum wage or less. **73%** had no dental, medical or retirement benefits. **48%** looking for work reported illness/disability as a barrier.

RESPONDENT HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STATUS



83% of private market renters were at high risk for homelessness. **29%** were living in housing that requires major repairs.



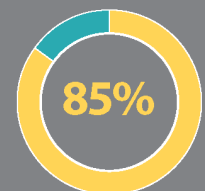
43% of adults went hungry at least once a week.



22% children went hungry at least once a week.



received at least half their food from food banks.



still did not always have enough food to eat.

We can take a different path forward.

We can listen to the voices of those experiencing food insecurity and put poverty reduction at the core of recovery efforts.

We can eliminate deep poverty by increasing social assistance rates, centering community-based responses in poverty reduction, and increasing refundable tax benefits for vulnerable populations.

We can make employment a pathway out of poverty by implementing national, universal childcare, raising the minimum wage, enhancing employment standards and implementing a national pharmacare program.

We can achieve affordable housing for all by providing immediate and long-term rent relief, increasing the supply of affordable housing, and ensuring that housing and development policies meet the needs of those with low incomes.



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