

JOB LOSS POVERTY EXCLUSION
HEALTH PROBLEMS FAMILY BREAKUP
LOW WAGES



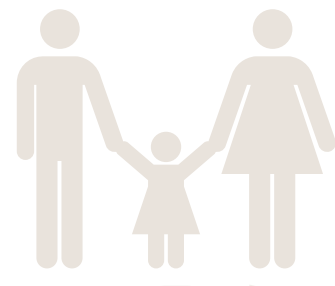
HUNGERCOUNT

2013

A comprehensive report on hunger and food bank use in Canada, and recommendations for change

FAMILY BREAKUP

LOW WAGES



LAYOFFS POVERTY



EXCLUSION

LAYOFFS

FOOD INSECURITY

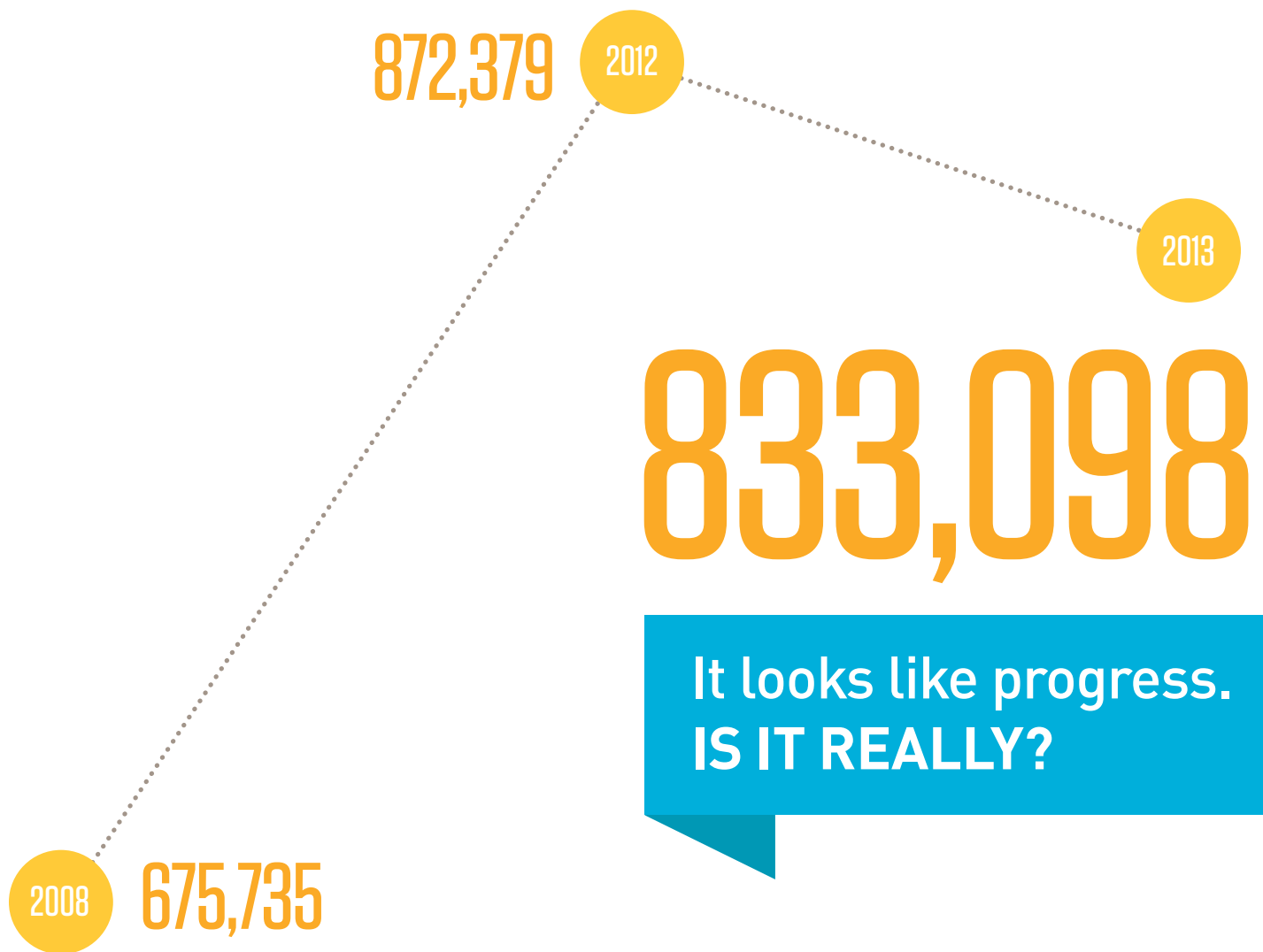
UNEMPLOYMENT

UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING



Food Banks Canada





In March 2013, 833,098 people turned to a food bank in Canada, down from 872,379 the previous March. Underlying this small drop is a concern of enormous proportions: food bank use remains **higher** than it was before the recession began five years ago. During a time of apparent economic recovery, far too many Canadians still struggle to put food on the table. *HungerCount 2013* bears witness to the need for food banks across Canada and moves beyond this, to seek solutions that address the root causes. Our five recommendations are simple but significant action items that would move our country towards real progress.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2013, 833,098 people were helped by food banks in Canada; over a third were children. Years after the end of the recession, food bank use remains close to record levels — and is 23% higher than in 2008, before the recession began.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS FOOD BANK USE?

The people asking for help from food banks are diverse and often surprising. For example, 12% of households helped are currently employed, and another 5% were recently employed. Half are families with children, and nearly half of these are two-parent families.

More than a third of those helped are children – kids who are going to school, trying to learn, and going to bed with empty stomachs.

Of the 833,098 individuals receiving food, 11% self-identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, and an additional 11% are new immigrants to Canada. Both of these groups continue to face unacceptable levels of poverty, and are forced to turn to food banks as a result.

WHY DOES THE NEED FOR FOOD BANKS PERSIST?

Though the concept of the food bank is relatively new, the support that food banks provide – essential food, at no cost, for those who cannot afford it – is older than Canada. Unfortunately, the problem they address has never been as severe, for as long a period, as it is now. Food banks have been helping more than 700,000 people each and every month for the better part of the past 15 years. At the root of the need is low income, whether in the short or long term.


The causes of low income are well known. Canada has lost hundreds of thousands of well-paid blue collar jobs over the past 30 years, as manufacturing has fled to parts of the world where things can be made more cheaply. The jobs that

have replaced them are more likely to be low-paid, part-time, and temporary. For people who do not have the skills to attain the jobs that pay well, access to education and training can be frustratingly beyond reach. For those unable to work, Employment Insurance and social assistance have become more difficult to access, and the meagre incomes supplied by these programs make it very difficult for families to afford adequate, nutritious food.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

These problems are highly complex, and they will not be solved by tinkering at the edges of social policy. They require real investment and new thinking. While we do not have all the answers, *HungerCount 2013* offers five action areas that we believe can move Canada forward.

- 1 Commit to adequate, long-term federal funding of affordable housing in Canada, so that people are not forced to choose between paying rent or buying food.
- 2 Increase social investment in northern Canada to address the stunning levels of food insecurity in northern regions.
- 3 Increase federal support from \$500 million to \$700 million per year for existing programs funded under Labour Market Agreements, to help the most vulnerable Canadians get training to qualify for well-paying jobs.
- 4 Revolutionize social assistance so that people can build self-sufficiency instead of being trapped in poverty.
- 5 Increase federal and provincial support to help people working in low-paying, part-time, and temporary jobs attain better-paid, long-term employment.



We lose billions of dollars each year trying to address the health and social consequences of poverty after it takes its toll – RATHER THAN PREVENTING IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.



RESULTS: DISTURBING LONG-TERM TRENDS

In 2008, it appeared that progress was being made, as the number of people helped by food banks each month reached its lowest point in 10 years. Unfortunately, the recession hit Canada late that year, and food bank use suddenly skyrocketed by 18%, rising from 675,735 to 794,738 people per month in 2009. It continued to rise until it hit a high of 872,379 last year. During this time, food banks and other charitable food programs have been stretched to their limits.

HungerCount 2013 tells us that the need for food banks and other charitable food programs in Canada continues to be widespread and, in many regions, continues to grow.

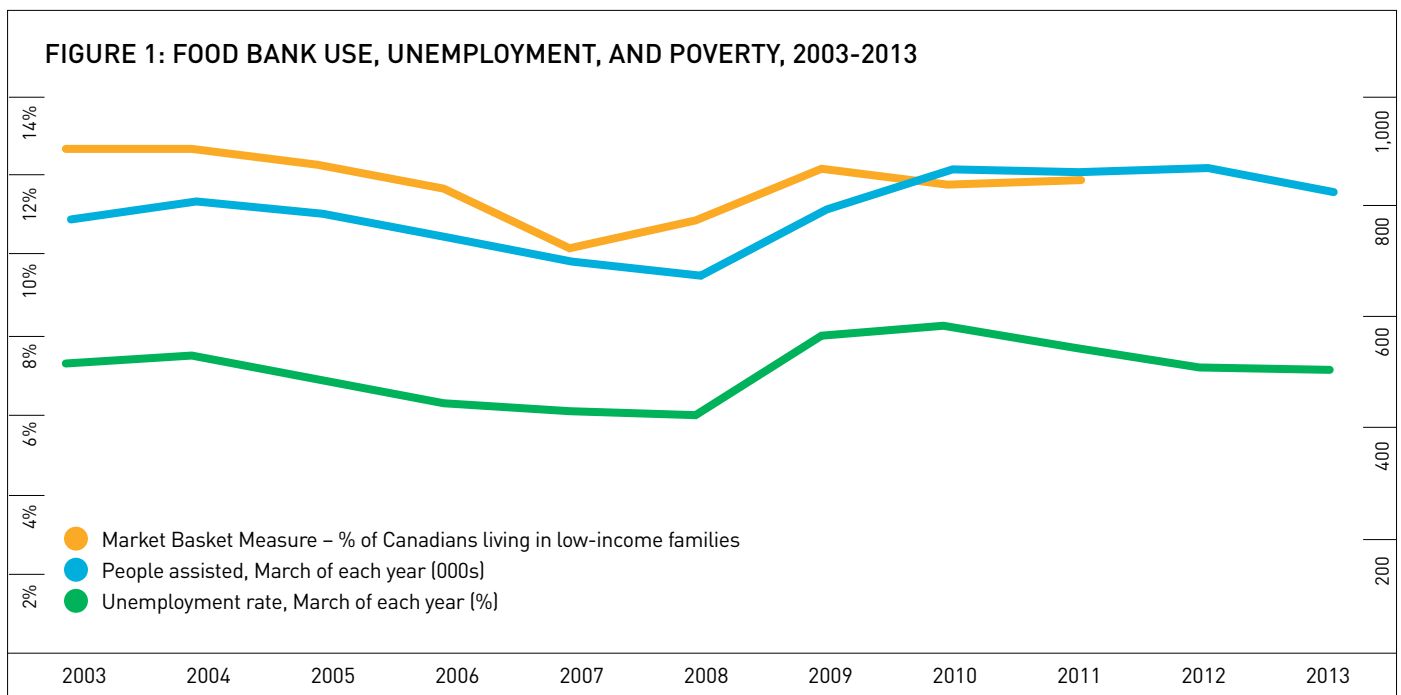
In March of this year, **833,098** people received food from a food bank in Canada. Of those helped, **36% were children** and **77,920** were turning to a food bank for the **first time**.

During the same period, **4,341,659** meals were prepared and served by soup kitchens, shelters, school breakfast initiatives, and other programs.

- Food bank use decreased slightly, by 4.5%, from 2012 to 2013. **It is nevertheless 23% higher than in 2008, before the last recession began.**
- The use of meal programs is 11% higher than in 2012, and 40% higher than in 2008.
- **Nearly half of food banks reported an increase in use in 2013**; these food banks saw a 21% rise in the number of people coming to them for help this year.

Last year, food bank use reached its highest level on record. As **Figure 1** (below) shows, though 2013 has seen a welcome – if minor – decrease, the number of people in need of food assistance remains historically quite elevated. Each month, Canadian food banks come to the aid of a population that is nearly equal to the population of Nova Scotia.

For more detailed information on food bank use in Canada, the provinces, and the territories, please see **Table 1**, page 7.





It can happen to anyone

It is well known that some population groups face a higher risk of living in poverty – for example, older single people, single-parent families, individuals receiving social assistance, people with disabilities, new immigrants, and Aboriginal people.¹ Likewise, these groups are overrepresented at food banks:

- Half of households who receive food report **social assistance** as their primary source of income.
- 43% of households helped by food banks are **single-person households**.
- 25% of those assisted are **single-parent families**.
- 16% of households assisted are living primarily on **disability-related income** supports.
- 11% of individuals assisted self-identify as **First Nations, Métis, or Inuit** (rising to 25% in small towns and rural areas).
- 11% of people helped are **immigrants** who have arrived in Canada in the past 10 years.²

In contrast, the *HungerCount* survey results also highlight the fact that hunger, food insecurity, and poverty can happen to anyone:

- 22% of households helped by food banks are **two-parent families**.
- 12% of households assisted gain the majority of their income from **employment**; another 5% are on **Employment Insurance**.
- 7% of individuals who receive food from a food bank live primarily on **pension** income (rising to nearly 10% in small towns and rural areas).
- 7% of households helped are **homeowners** (increasing to 15% in small towns and rural areas).

This second group of findings may be surprising; they go against commonly-held yet inaccurate beliefs – for example, that only people who don't work use food banks. We can add to the above data the fact that in March of each year since 2010, between nine and eleven percent of those helped each month were visiting a food bank for the first time.

WHAT IS A FOOD PROGRAM?

Charitable food programs in Canada generally fall into one of two categories:

- **Food banks** provide about five days' worth of food for individuals and families to take home and prepare; many provide additional non-food programs and services.
- **Meal and snack programs**, which include soup kitchens and school breakfast programs, serve prepared meals for people to sit down and eat. These are often managed by organizations with broad social service mandates, for example, shelters, youth drop-in centres, and schools.

Both of these categories, related yet separate from each other, must be understood for a true sense of the scope of charitable food provision in Canada. Please see page 9 for more information on the range of services offered by organizations in the network.



COMMUNITY PROFILE: ELLIOT LAKE, ONTARIO

A TRAGIC EVENT CREATES SHOCKWAVES



On June 23, 2012 the roof of the Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake collapsed. The disaster injured 20 people, and two women – Lucie Aylwin and Doloris Perizzolo – were killed. Elliot Lake continues to deal with the aftermath of this tragedy.

The loss of life in Elliot Lake was accompanied by the loss of livelihood for the people that owned businesses or worked at the complex, which was the largest commercial centre in the area. The building included 18 stores, nine government offices, a library, and a hotel. It is estimated that the closure threw 250 people out of work, in a small city of 11,000 residents.

Elliot Lake, like so many other Canadian cities and towns, has struggled for years to come to terms with the loss of a defining industry – in this northern Ontario

setting, it was uranium mining that filled that role, and brought resources flowing into the area. The last of the mines closed in the early 1990s, at the end of a decline that saw the loss of 4,000 jobs.³

The current labour market in the region is defined by tourism, services, and retail. For many of those who worked at the Algo Centre Mall, jobs were part-time or relatively low-paid, and the consequences of this are clear to Betty Trakas, at the Elliot Lake Emergency Food Bank. “When the mall collapsed many people lost part-time jobs and full-time too. Their Employment Insurance ran out rather quickly or the amounts they received were small. We have seen a 50% increase in people accessing the food bank – 150 more people each month.”

Elliot Lake is a prime example of the consequences of a declining industrial base, the continued growth of low-paid work, and the paring-down of Employment Insurance that has happened over the past 15 years. Again and again, food banks see families who are unable to find work, whose financial resources have hit bottom, and who can’t find a way out of the hole.

For our recommendations on creating good jobs and improving Employment Insurance, please see the Recommendations section, page 13.

THE FACTORS



TRAGEDY

A horrific collapse of the city’s largest commercial centre led to death and injury for some, and job loss for many survivors.



How widespread is food bank use in Canada?

While the *HungerCount* survey provides data only for the month of March, we can use this information to make realistic estimates for the full year, and thus sketch an annual picture of food bank use in the country.

Based on March figures (see page 4), we estimate that 1.7 million individuals will be helped by a food bank at least once over the course of 2013. Of these, more than 930,000 – approximately half – will do so for the first time.⁴ These individuals will look back on 2013 as the year they first needed to use a food bank.

Moreover, while most food banks provide each household with about five days' worth of food once a month, many have

the resources to provide help more frequently. The 833,098 individuals helped in March made 1,171,639 actual visits to food banks during this period. Over the course of a year, that adds up to an estimated 14,059,668 food bank visits.

These figures provide stark evidence that, when considered over longer periods, the need for and use of food banks in Canada is disturbingly widespread. They also show that, while some people need help over longer periods, the majority of those coming through the doors of the food bank need help intermittently, or for a relatively short period of time.

TABLE 1: FOOD BANK USE IN CANADA, BY PROVINCE⁵

Province/Territory	Total Assisted, March 2013	Percent Children, March 2013	Total Assisted, March 2012	Total Assisted, March 2008	Change, 2008-2013	% Change, 2008-2013	Change, 2012-2013	% Change, 2012-2013
British Columbia	94,002	29.5%	94,966	78,101	15,901	20.4%	-964	-1.0%
Alberta	48,653	44.1%	53,512	33,580	15,073	44.9%	-4,859	-9.1%
Saskatchewan	22,465	43.8%	24,621	17,751	4,714	26.6%	-2,156	-8.8%
Manitoba	60,229	44.7%	63,482	40,464	19,765	48.8%	-3,253	-5.1%
Ontario	375,814	35.0%	404,373	314,258	61,556	19.6%	-28,559	-7.1%
Quebec	156,750	37.1%	155,574	127,536	29,214	22.9%	1,176	0.8%
New Brunswick	19,989	33.2%	19,524	15,638	4,351	27.8%	465	2.4%
Nova Scotia	21,760	32.0%	23,561	16,915	4,845	28.6%	-1,801	-7.6%
Prince Edward Island	3,502	35.8%	3,406	2,892	610	21.1%	96	2.8%
Newfoundland & Labrador	26,412	37.9%	27,044	27,260	-848	-3.1%	-632	-2.3%
Territories	3,522	37.5%	2,316	1,340	2,182	162.8%	1,206	52.1%
Canada	833,098	36.4%	872,379	675,735	157,363	23.3%	-39,281	-4.5%



COMMUNITY PROFILE: **BRANDON, MANITOBA**

STRUGGLING IN A STRONG ECONOMY



Brandon, Manitoba is a city on the vanguard of the new western economy. Located 220 km west of Winnipeg, Brandon grew by 11% between 2006 and 2011.⁶ Its unemployment rate in January was a very low 3.9%,⁷ and it has a number of large employers and a relatively diverse economic base.

Like other western cities, Brandon is learning on the fly when it comes to dealing with fast economic and population growth. Its rental apartment vacancy rate is extremely low at 1% – with a 0% vacancy rate for bachelor apartments.⁸ It is home to thousands of newly arrived people, from a wide range of countries and speaking diverse languages, hired through the federal Temporary Foreign Worker program. The city's social service agencies are running as fast as they can to keep up with the rapid change.

Marla Somersall, Executive Director of Samaritan House in Brandon, says, "The cost of living in the city

has spiked, and there are thousands of people working in precarious, low-paying jobs, whose incomes do not reflect the real cost of living. Our food bank is serving almost double the number of people it was in 2008, and our employment, training, and job search programs cannot respond adequately. One quarter of the households we help are working and still can't make ends meet."

Somersall notes that infrastructure in Brandon is not keeping up with growth: "There are simply not enough rental apartments in the city to meet demand. The shortage has caused rents to shoot up dramatically, and we see a lot of overcrowding, which causes a lot of stress. People are living in substandard conditions because they can't find or afford anything better."

Brandon is in many ways a microcosm of our popular idea of the west. Businesses are hiring, the unemployment rate is low, and the economy is growing. Hidden behind the positives, however, is a pervasive stress at the individual and family level, and a shortage of services and infrastructure for people struggling to maintain a footing.

For our recommendations on education and training, improving the labour force, and increasing affordable housing, please see the Recommendations section, page 13.

THE FACTORS



▶ BOOM TOWN

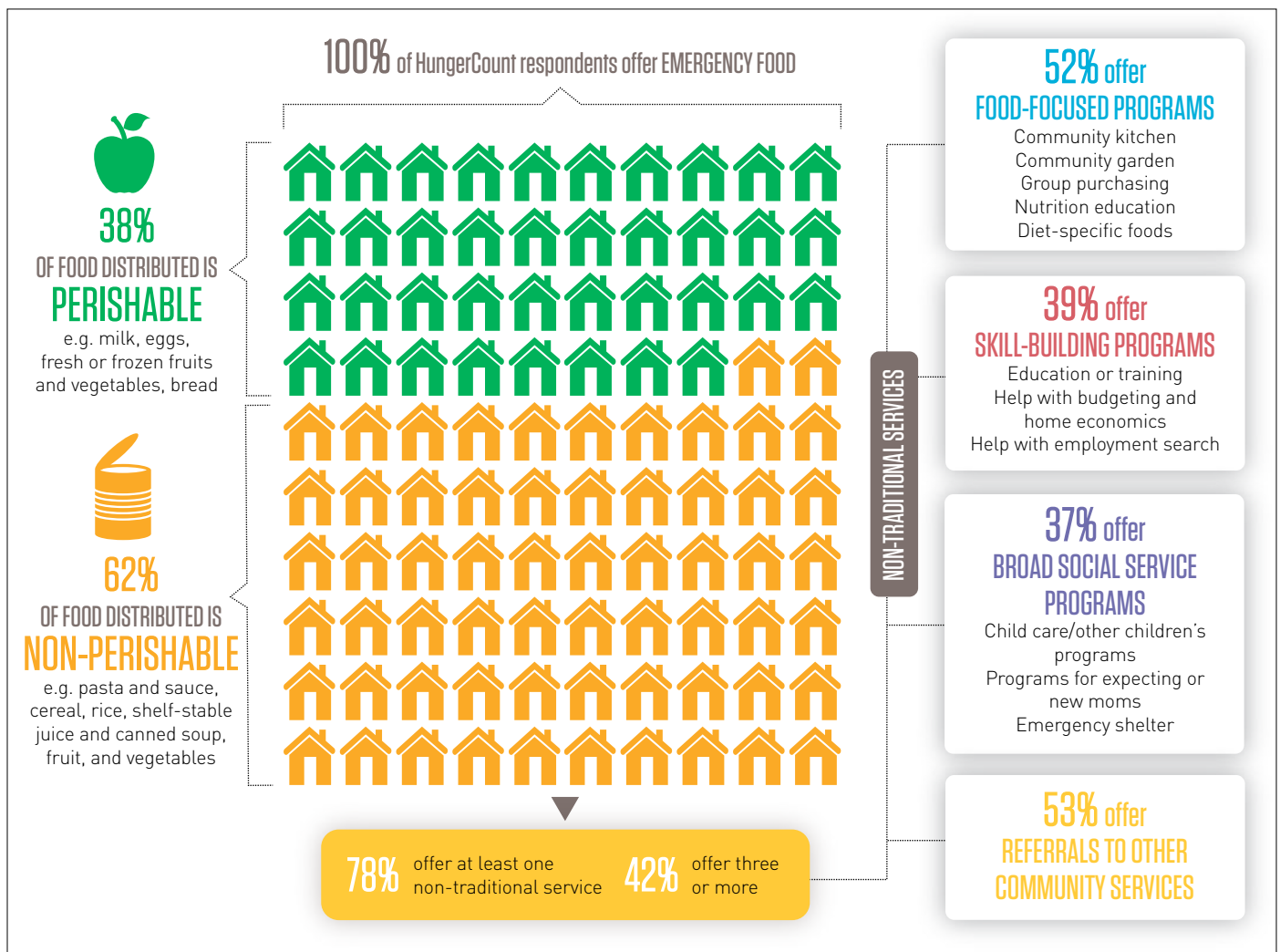
Rapid economic growth has given rise to low-paying jobs, rental unit shortages, and a higher cost of living.



Canada's "emergency food" network is multi-faceted

The 4,743 organizations that participated in *HungerCount 2013* are quite different in their structure, their approach, and the services they provide. They range from small, volunteer-run community agencies with budgets of a few thousand dollars, to charities that are among the most professional in Canada. While a large number of them were created primarily to provide emergency food to people in need, many are agencies that were not established as food banks, but have added this service to fill a gap in their community.

Over time, organizations that began as "food banks first" have similarly expanded to offer other types of services, such as education and training, community kitchens and gardens, group purchasing, and special programs for particular demographic groups like new moms or the homeless. What is often viewed mainly as an emergency food network is in fact much more diverse and multi-faceted. The infographic below provides an overview of the types of food and range of services offered by the organizations that participated in *HungerCount 2013*.⁹





COMMUNITY PROFILE: SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

LOSS OF MANUFACTURING IS FELT BY EVERYONE



Since 1991, the number of manufacturing jobs in Canada has dropped by nearly 400,000, even as Canada's population has increased. Manufacturing currently accounts for 10% of Canadian jobs, whereas in 1991 it made up 16%.

For decades, in Saint John "manufacturing" meant "shipbuilding," and this sector revolved around the great Saint John Shipbuilding company. The closure of that company's dry dock in 2003 was a low point in a shocking industry decline. In the province as a whole, the number of people working in manufacturing has decreased by 33%, from a high of 43,555 in 2001, to 29,097 in 2013.¹⁰

Saint John has struggled for years to attract new business and rebuild the local economy. As is the case in other parts of Canada, well-paying shipbuilding jobs have been replaced by less lucrative work in tourism, service and retail – though even these have not filled the gap. In March, there were 30,000 more people on Employment Insurance in New Brunswick than there were available jobs.¹¹ The unemployment rate stands at 10.4%, compared to 7.2% in Canada overall.¹²

One result of these changes is a staggering increase in food bank use in the city: Saint John food banks are now helping 68% more people each month than they were in 2008.

Margaret Forestell-McLeod at the St. John East Food Bank explains: "Our economy has taken quite a hit in the last couple of years and this year it is really showing in our numbers. We have so many people being laid off due to businesses closing or downsizing, and people are returning from the west – many head to the oil patch and find that the prospects are not as great as they anticipated."

For our recommendations related to the changing job market in Canada, please see the Recommendations section, page 13.

THE FACTORS



SHUTDOWN

The decline of the shipbuilding industry has raised unemployment rates and devastated the local economy.



Food banks – when crisis becomes the norm

In Canada, the common refrain about food banks is that they began as a temporary response to the recession of the early 1980s, and were meant to be a short-term measure to address the ensuing crisis. More than 30 years later, they are still here.

Like any well-worn story, the reality is of course more complex. The “food bank” may be relatively new, but the service food banks provide – essential food, at no cost, for those who cannot afford it – is not. In the distant past, this type of assistance was offered from neighbour to neighbour, among family members, and through churches, service clubs, and unions. Now, these institutions have declined in scope and importance as communities have become less cohesive, families have spread across the country and the world, and church attendance, volunteerism, and union membership have dropped. Food banks are now the physical embodiment of a type of aid that is older than Canada.

That being said, food banks are dealing with a problem that is arguably larger than it has been in many decades. **The number of people helped by food banks has not dropped below 700,000 people per month** for the better part of the past 15 years. **Four million people in Canada, including more than a million children,** have inadequate or insecure access to food because they **cannot afford enough to meet their needs.**¹³

Within the food bank network, crisis has become the norm. Canadians continue to give generously, and food banks continue to stock, give, and re-stock. We are at a point where the welfare office refers people to the food bank rather than provide emergency funds, and where food banks

provide food to government-run agencies in order for those agencies to trim their bottom lines and meet budgets. All this, from a network in which, in 2013:

38%

of food banks have been forced to **cut back the amount of food** they provide to each household because they do not have enough

8%

of people asking for help are **turned away** or referred elsewhere because the food bank doesn't have enough food

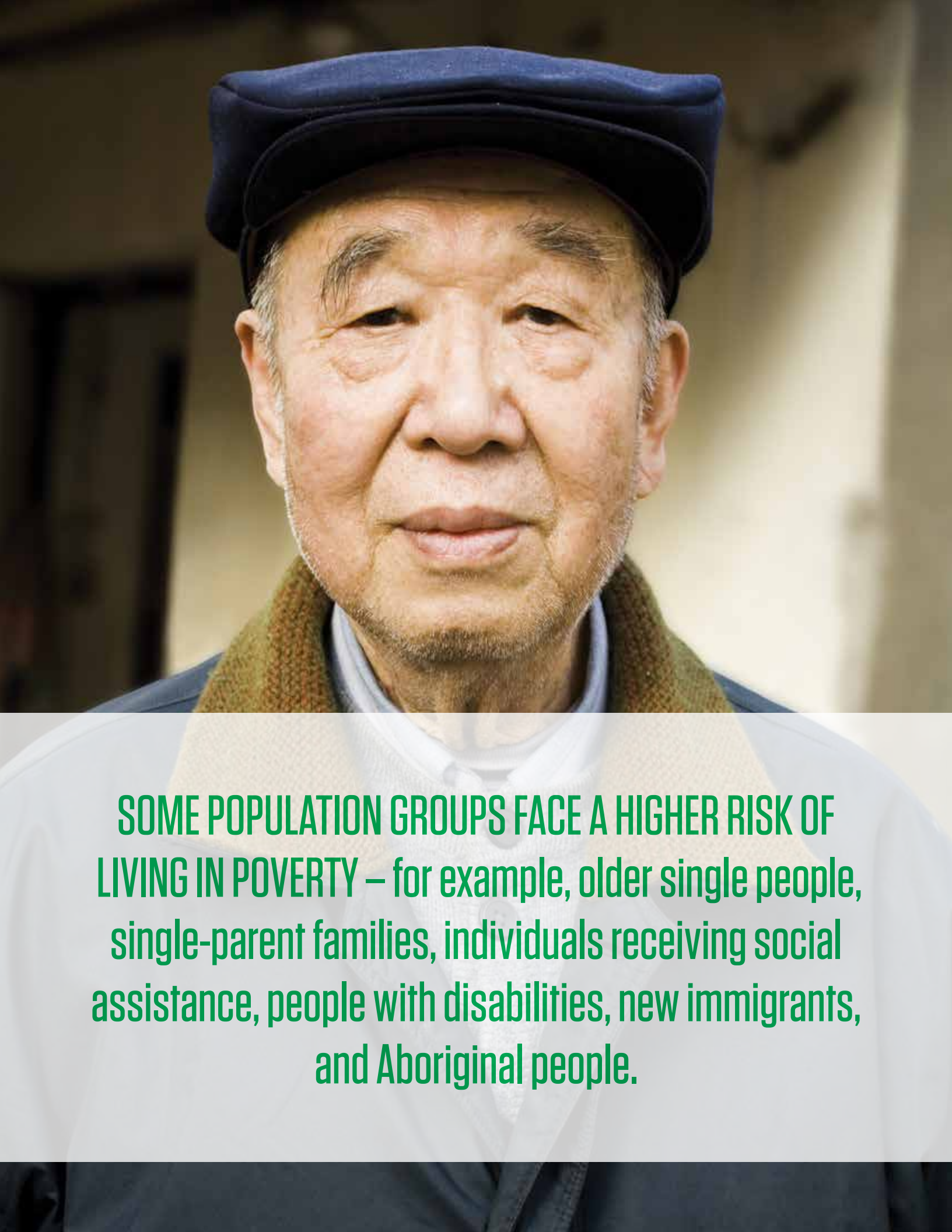
32%

of organizations have **no paid staff**

53%

of food banks **buy more food** than usual because in-kind donations do not meet the need

To deny this is a crisis, or to believe this is the best way to address poverty and food insecurity, is to deny reality. The level of food insecurity in Canada, and our dependence upon food banks, is unacceptable, and federal and provincial governments need to take serious action to reduce the number of people who ever think of setting foot in a food bank. To this end, the next section identifies key issues, and offers recommendations for moving forward.



SOME POPULATION GROUPS FACE A HIGHER RISK OF LIVING IN POVERTY – for example, older single people, single-parent families, individuals receiving social assistance, people with disabilities, new immigrants, and Aboriginal people.



RECOMMENDATIONS: ACTION ITEMS

Reducing the need for food banks in Canada

Low income is at the root of more than three decades of food bank use in Canada. Though the circumstances that send someone through the doors of a food bank are diverse – the loss of a job, family breakup, sudden health problems, barriers related to race, disability, or mental illness, among others – it is the widespread lack of income to cushion hard times that is the key factor that makes Canadian food banks so necessary.

Food bank use is a symptom of larger problems that have real consequences for Canadians, and for Canada. People living on low incomes are more likely to get sick and experience long-term negative health outcomes. They are less likely to contribute to their full capacity in the workplace and the community. We lose billions of dollars each year trying to address the health and social consequences of poverty *after* it takes its toll – rather than preventing it in the first place.

Current levels of poverty, food insecurity, and food bank use are, in large part, the result of a drastically altered economic landscape, characterized by a staggering decrease in the number of well-paying blue collar jobs in Canada. While all high-income countries are dealing with this issue, responses to it have varied, and Canada's particular situation can be traced to concrete government policy choices.

Since the 1990s, federal and provincial governments have focused on economic growth, getting more people working, and increasing "workforce flexibility" – in other words, the

ability of employers to hire and fire, the ability of workers to perform the jobs that are available, and the likelihood that workers will go where the jobs are.

Policy decisions related to this priority have included a decrease in support for people who are unable to work or find a job. For example, it is now more difficult to qualify for Employment Insurance, and social assistance benefits continue to be appallingly low. In theory, this makes it more likely that people will work rather than collect public benefits. The reality, however, is that well-paying jobs are out of reach for too many, and this "flexibility" is contributing to poverty, food insecurity, and the need to resort to food banks.

It is possible to take a different approach. It is possible to make realistic, pragmatic policy changes that will improve Canadians' lives and create a better Canada, where economic health is as important as economic growth – where individuals and families do not lose out in the name of bringing down the unemployment rate or exerting negative pressure on wages.

Our recommendations envision an improved support system for Canadians facing tough times, who are unable to fully participate in the economy, or who are no longer in the workforce and do not have enough to sustain them. They are meant to build self-sufficiency among those who need help in the short-term, and to offer adequate, dignified supports for those who need assistance over longer periods.



1. Maintain support for Canadians at risk of failing in the labour market

In March of this year, 1.4 million working age Canadians were unemployed.¹⁴ More than half – over 700,000 people – did not have access to Employment Insurance (EI). This meant that they had no access to non-employment income apart from social assistance, and no access to EI-related skills training.¹⁵

Since 2008, \$500 million per year has been allocated by the federal government to the provinces for programs targeting Canadians not eligible for EI. The focus of these Labour Market Agreements is on people with low skill levels who have not developed a strong attachment to the labour market. They are likely to have received social assistance in the past, and many need much more than straightforward training and job search assistance – they often need extensive help with basic skills as well. They are highly likely to be indigenous Canadians, people with disabilities, and people with mental health or chronic health issues.

With federal funding, the provinces have helped to develop a network of programs and organizations that are having a positive impact on Canadians who struggle to enter and remain in the workforce. As it becomes more and more difficult to access Employment Insurance, this network will only increase in importance.

Unfortunately, the **2013 federal budget proposes to remove 60% of this funding**, and to reallocate the money to the new Canada Job Grant. This decision could effectively dismantle what we believe is a crucial source of support for vulnerable Canadians, who need more rather than less help to be able to engage with and succeed in a constantly changing labour market.

WE RECOMMEND:

- 1 That federal-provincial Labour Market Agreements be renewed in 2014, with a budgeted increase to \$700 million per year; and that this be used to support and enhance the existing networks built and sustained by provincial governments.
- 2 That, regardless of federal policy related to the Canada Job Grant, provincial governments designate funding in their 2014 budgets to maintain or enhance programs initiated and sustained by Labour Market Agreement support.

“Canada needs to improve workplace skills training and lifelong education. Canada’s adult literacy skills are mediocre, with a large proportion of adults lacking the literacy skills necessary to function in the workplace.”

– Conference Board of Canada¹⁶





Canada has lost hundreds of thousands of well-paid blue collar jobs over the past 30 years, as MANUFACTURING HAS FLED TO PARTS OF THE WORLD WHERE THINGS CAN BE MADE MORE CHEAPLY. The jobs that have replaced them are more likely to be low-paid, part-time, and temporary.



2. Act to ensure that Canadian jobs are good jobs

The old maxim that “a job is the best defense against poverty” has become increasingly unreliable. Since 1991:

- the number of employed Canadians has grown by 32%;
- the number of people employed in well-paying manufacturing jobs has declined by 20%;
- the number of people employed in lower-paying retail, accommodation, and food services jobs has grown by 38%.¹⁷

Nearly **4 million Canadians** work in sales and service jobs; they earn, on average, **\$17,700 per year**, compared to \$34,100 in manufacturing.¹⁸ The takeaway is simple: work has become lower paid, more temporary, and more uncertain for more people.

Federal and provincial governments have focused their attention on creating the “most flexible workforce in the world”¹⁹ – where people can easily move, or be moved, out of a job or from one sector or region to another. Major reports from the Law Commission of Ontario and United Way Toronto show that this flexibility translates to precarious employment (i.e. work that is part-time, temporary, and without non-wage benefits) for too many Canadians. This has a range of negative consequences, including lower income, elevated stress, and increased risk of illness and injury.²⁰

Recent developments in British Columbia demonstrate how provincial governments have, in order to increase labour market efficiency and flexibility, contributed to increasing workforce instability. Changes to the BC Employment Standards Act have:

- reduced protections for farm workers, and redefined many food processing jobs as farm-related labour;
- reduced the minimum daily shift from four to two hours;
- eliminated the requirement for 24 hours notice of a shift change;
- raised barriers to accessing Employment Standards Officers in the event of an employer-related complaint.²¹

These examples highlight how simple legislative changes can lead to increased uncertainty and difficulty for Canadian workers. At the federal level, the precariousness of work has been increased through additional restrictions on access to Employment Insurance – fewer than half of unemployed Canadians are able to access EI, compared to nearly 75% in the early 1990s.²² For hundreds of thousands who are unable to work, or unable to find work, social assistance has become the only option, ensuring that the most vulnerable Canadians live well below poverty levels.

“The nature of employment is evolving and the standard employment relationship based on full-time, continuous employment, where the worker has access to good wages and benefits, is no longer the predominant form of employment, to the extent it ever was.”

– Law Commission of Ontario



**WE RECOMMEND:**

- 1** That provincial governments revise employment standards legislation to increase support for people working in precarious sectors of the labour force, including retail, accommodation and food services, and farm work.
- 2** That provincial governments increase the number of employment standards officers overseeing compliance to employment standards legislation, to better protect vulnerable workers.
- 3** That the federal government ensure that low-income workers, who are less likely to be eligible for Employment Insurance, do not pay a larger percentage of their income in EI premiums than high income workers.²³
- 4** That the federal government choose to either extend EI Regular Benefits to temporary foreign workers, or eliminate EI premiums for this class of workers. Workers should not pay into a program to which they do not have access.
- 5** That the federal government reduce the hours of work required to qualify for EI, in acknowledgement of the changing labour market and drastically reduced eligibility for the program.



Though people come to a food bank for many reasons – the loss of a job, family breakup, sudden health problems, among others – it is the **WIDESPREAD LACK OF INCOME TO CUSHION HARD TIMES** that is the key factor that makes Canadian food banks so necessary.



3. Prevent further erosion of federal support for affordable housing

Food bank use is a symptom of the disconnect between the cost of living and what a household takes in through employment earnings and other benefits. Year after year, food banks have highlighted the fact that the cost of housing is the key piece of the puzzle in this disconnect.²⁴

Nearly one in three households in Canada are renters, yet only 10% of housing built over the past 15 years has been purpose-built rental development.²⁵ Over the last decade, the building industry has shifted from creating purpose-built rental housing to condominiums and single-dwelling homes.

The supply of low-cost rental housing has diminished, and rents have gone up; at the same time, incomes for the majority of Canadians have stagnated. Currently, **1.6 million households** (40% of all households who rent) **pay 30% or more of their income on rent.**²⁶ Too many individuals and families are finding that, after they pay their rent and bills, there is very little left over for enough healthy, nutritious food.

To add to this growing crisis, the Federal Social Housing Operating Agreements, in place since the 1960s and 1970s, are beginning to expire. These agreements were put in place to support social housing providers who offered affordable rents for tens of thousands of low-income Canadians. Without federal reinvestment, many providers are being forced to reduce the number of affordable units, or are switching entirely to charging what the market will bear.

In 2013, 10,500 fewer households are being supported by Social Housing Operating Agreements than in 2011; this

number will continue to increase year after year as the \$1.6 billion currently allocated to these agreements gradually disappears by 2040.²⁷

Support for affordable housing is a crucial element in any effort to reduce the number of Canadians who need food banks to make ends meet. We were very pleased to see the inclusion of \$1.9 billion over five years to renew the Affordable Housing Strategy, as well as affordable housing partnerships with the provinces, in the 2013 federal budget. Moving forward, we believe that further supports are necessary.

WE RECOMMEND:

- 1 That the federal government implement targeted tax reforms to support the development of affordable rental housing; for example, allowing the rollover of capital gains that are re-invested in new purpose-built rental housing, and introducing direct fiscal incentives such as social housing tax credits for purpose-built rental developers.
- 2 That the federal government re-invest a minimum of half of all funds saved via expiring Social Housing Operating Agreements, and create a new Federal Social Housing Operating Fund that would support existing housing providers by covering costs related to capital repairs, maintenance, and retrofits.



4. Invest in supportive, quality social assistance programs

Half of the households helped by food banks receive the majority of their income from provincial social assistance programs. This link between welfare and food bank use is not surprising: provincial welfare benefits have been far below poverty levels for many years. For example, in Nova Scotia a single person on welfare receives \$300 per month for housing, and \$238 per month for personal expenses – a total of \$538 per month, or \$6,456 per year.²⁸ This is **\$7,998 below the low income cut-off** for communities with populations under 30,000.²⁹ It is \$14,968 below what one would earn working full time making the Nova Scotia minimum wage.

Though there is a lot of talk about the link between welfare and work, welfare benefit levels have little relationship to what Canadians earn in the workforce. Nor do benefit levels have much of a relationship to the actual cost of living. Almost universally, current benefit levels have been inherited by governments who are unwilling – out of fear or neglect or misguided beliefs – to raise them to anything approaching a humane or dignified level that makes economic sense.

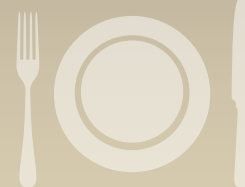
People living on social assistance need their provincial governments to have the courage to admit that welfare, in its current form, does more harm than good. While it is politically difficult to improve the system given the common stereotypes about those on welfare, it is the right thing to do.

WE RECOMMEND:

- 1 That all provincial and territorial governments begin or continue to work with social assistance beneficiaries and other stakeholders to design an income support system that helps our most vulnerable citizens become self-sufficient.
- 2 That the federal government continue to increase the value of the Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB), to make it easier for Canadians to leave welfare for work.
- 3 That eligibility for the maximum WITB benefit include all households with earned incomes below the after-tax low income cut-off.

“For over twenty years, the changes to social assistance have generally been ones driven by the need for government to save money and shrink the circle of those who qualify.”

– Kelly Lamrock, former Minister of Social Development, Government of New Brunswick³⁰



THE ROOTS OF HUNGER



5. Increase social investment in northern Canada

Though they receive little or no government funding, food banks across Canada have unfortunately become unofficial extensions of provincial social assistance programs. During times of personal financial crisis, government offices routinely refer welfare recipients to food banks rather than provide emergency financial support.

The further north one travels in Canada, the less likely it is that food banks are able to fill the gaps left by provincial social assistance systems. Community resources are simply not sufficient to meet the need. In the territories, although government efforts are underway to support the creation and expansion of food banks, these services are unlikely to ever address hunger adequately. Whereas one may be forgiven for believing that food banks are an effective long-term way to address hunger in highly populated areas, this fiction is laid bare in the North.

Food insecurity in the North, and particularly in the Arctic, is a dire public health emergency. Northern residents have come to rely more and more on foods shipped from the South, and a number of recent media reports have made clear the incredibly high cost of even the most simple diet. In short, people in the North are

not getting enough to eat, nor are they eating, on the whole, enough nutritious, healthy food. While the federal government's Nutrition North Canada is increasingly seen as a valuable program, it is not enough, and much more needs to be done to enable the development of local and regional food economies.

WE RECOMMEND:

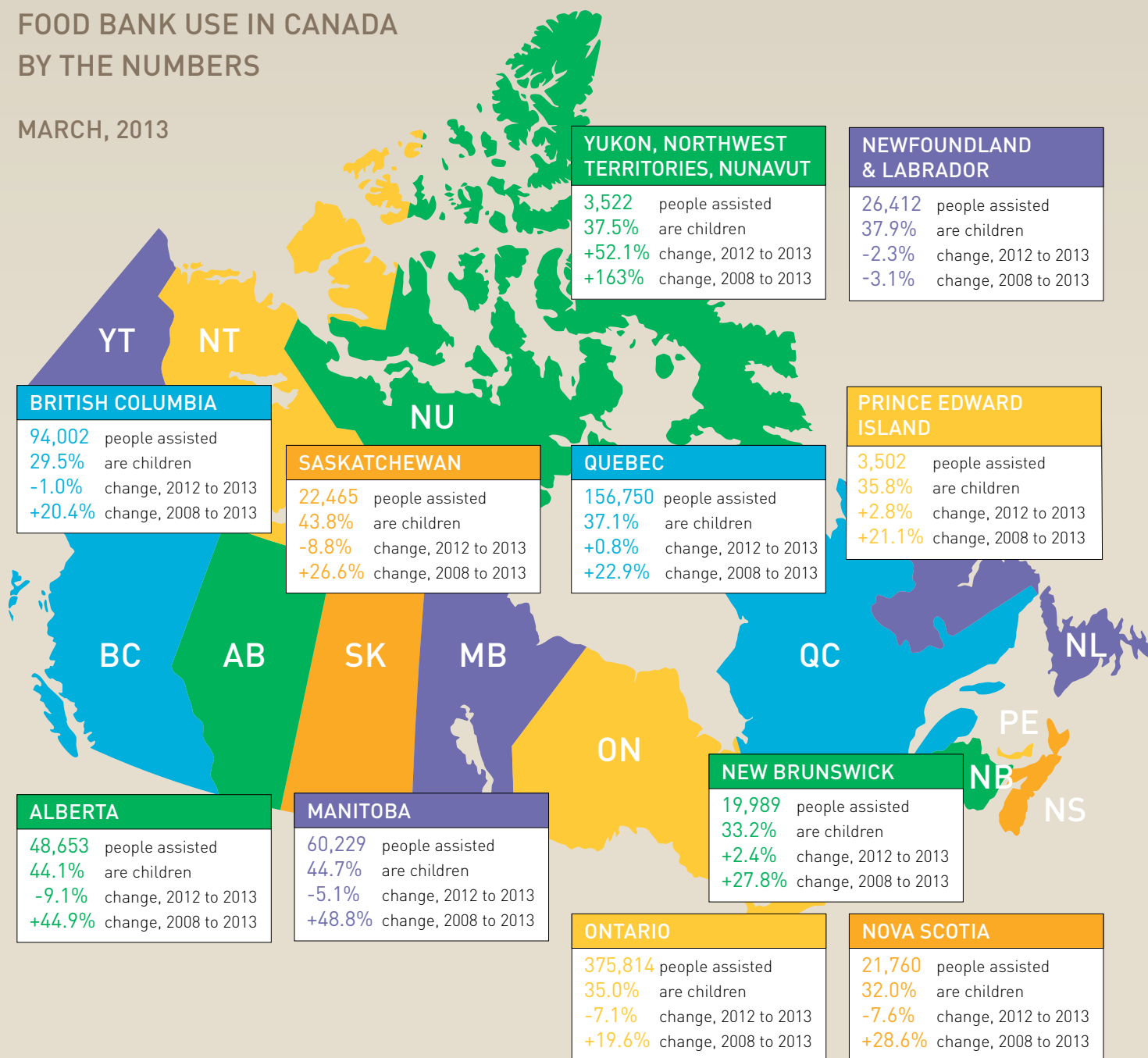
- 1 That a federal Northern Food Security Innovation Fund be created to help jumpstart and sustain community-based, community-led food initiatives across the North.
- 2 That comprehensive school breakfast programs across the territories be established and adequately funded.
- 3 That significant investment be made in community-building infrastructure in northern communities, including the construction or rehabilitation of community-identified resources such as community centres and community freezers.



DETAILED NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL FINDINGS

FOOD BANK USE IN CANADA BY THE NUMBERS

MARCH, 2013





CANADA

833,098

people helped by food banks in March

+23.3%

change since 2008

36.4%

are children

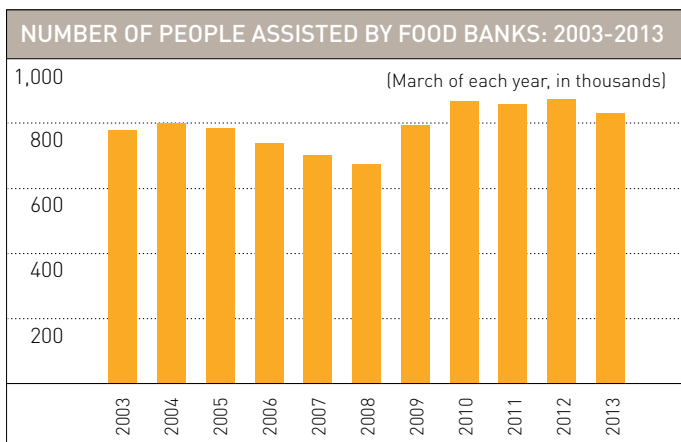
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	833,098	872,379	861,775	867,948	794,738	675,735	776,783
% Change, 2003-2013	7.2%						
% Change, 2008-2013	23.3%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-4.5%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	49.3%	47.9%	48.8%	70.7%	78.4%	--	--
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	36.4%	38.4%	37.9%	37.8%	37.2%	37.1%	40.8%
Households assisted by food banks	348,210	368,619	354,265	369,818	347,043	304,394	310,713
% Households assisted for the first time	9.40%	10.5%	10.9%	9.2%	--	--	--
% National population assisted	2.38%	2.54%	2.48%	2.56%	2.37%	2.04%	2.47%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	48.2	49.4
% Post-secondary students	3.3	1.9
% Age 65+	4.3	5.6
% Aboriginal persons	11.3	25.2
% Immigrants or refugees ³¹	11.1	1.7

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	24.6	22.3
% Two-parent families	21.9	21.9
% Couples with no children	11.0	13.3
% Single people	42.6	42.4
Number of food banks reporting	1,251	457

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	11.5	10.4
% Employment Insurance	4.6	5.5
% Social assistance	50.0	53.5
% Disability-related income support	16.4	14.2
% Pension	6.9	9.3
% Student loans/scholarships	1.6	0.9
% No income	5.3	3.3
% Other	3.6	2.9
Number of food banks reporting	1132	398

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.0	15.4
% Rental market tenants	64.1	59.3
% Social housing tenants	21.7	12.3
% Band-owned housing	1.7	6.4
% Shelter or group home	1.6	1.1
% Living on the street	0.7	0.6
% Living with family or friends	3.1	4.9
Number of food banks reporting	1104	400



BRITISH COLUMBIA

94,002

people helped by food banks in March

+20.4%

change since 2008

29.5%

are children

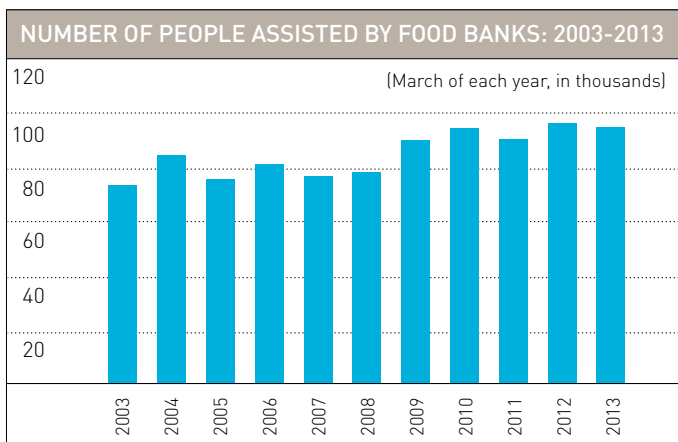
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	94,002	94,966	90,193	94,359	89,866	78,101	73,490
% Change, 2003-2013	27.9%						
% Change, 2008-2013	20.4%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-1.0%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	45.8%	44.4%	52.9%	60.2%	80.8%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	29.5%	29.5%	31.9%	29.7%	31.4%	31.2%	38.3%
Households assisted by food banks	44,750	43,282	42,465	45,196	44,206	35,005	32,336
% Households assisted for the first time	6.6%	6.9%	6.9%	6.5%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.03%	2.07%	1.98%	2.10%	2.03%	1.77%	1.79%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	48.0	50.0
% Post-secondary students	1.4	2.9
% Age 65+	4.7	6.5
% Aboriginal persons	25.7	31.7
% Immigrants or refugees	3.2	1.7

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	20.6	18.3
% Two-parent families	15.2	17.6
% Couples with no children	11.4	12.5
% Single people	52.8	51.6
Number of food banks reporting	75	46

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	10.0	9.5
% Employment Insurance	3.9	4.9
% Social assistance	39.7	44.8
% Disability-related income support	28.7	22.2
% Pension	7.9	8.7
% Student loans/scholarships	0.6	0.4
% No income	5.9	5.2
% Other	3.3	4.3
Number of food banks reporting	70	40

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	6.3	11.6
% Rental market tenants	76.3	64.1
% Social housing tenants	9.4	6.3
% Band-owned housing	3.6	9.6
% Shelter or group home	0.5	0.8
% Living on the street	1.2	1.6
% Living with family or friends	2.9	6.1
Number of food banks reporting	63	39





ALBERTA

48,653

people helped by food banks in March

+44.9%

change since 2008

44.1%

are children

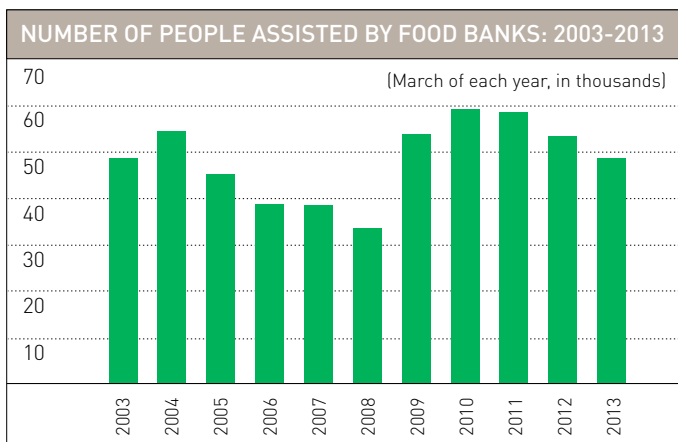
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	48,653	53,512	58,735	59,311	53,976	33,580	48,743
% Change, 2003-2013	-0.2%						
% Change, 2008-2013	44.9%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-9.1%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	38.9%	40.8%	35.6%	72.5%	78.4%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	44.1%	44.1%	43.7%	43.1%	43.1%	42.0%	42.4%
Households assisted by food banks	19,374	21,309	21,556	20,078	20,815	12,031	18,035
% Households assisted for the first time	11.6%	11.0%	17.7%	10.0%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	1.24%	1.40%	1.57%	1.60%	1.40%	0.96%	1.54%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	54.7	59.9
% Post-secondary students	1.4	1.2
% Age 65+	6.1	8.2
% Aboriginal persons	46.2	65.3
% Immigrants or refugees	7.3	3.9

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	21.9	17.0
% Employment Insurance	6.5	4.4
% Social assistance	32.2	34.0
% Disability-related income support	15.5	18.6
% Pension	8.6	15.7
% Student loans/scholarships	1.3	0.2
% No income	9.6	6.7
% Other	4.3	3.4
Number of food banks reporting	57	41

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	35.3	30.7
% Two-parent families	22.9	28.7
% Couples with no children	7.6	12.1
% Single people	34.2	28.5
Number of food banks reporting	69	49

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	5.6	9.7
% Rental market tenants	63.1	44.7
% Social housing tenants	15.2	2.4
% Band-owned housing	7.3	26.7
% Shelter or group home	1.3	0.5
% Living on the street	1.7	0.2
% Living with family or friends	5.9	15.9
Number of food banks reporting	58	42



SASKATCHEWAN

22,465

people helped by food banks in March

+26.6%

change since 2008

43.8%

are children

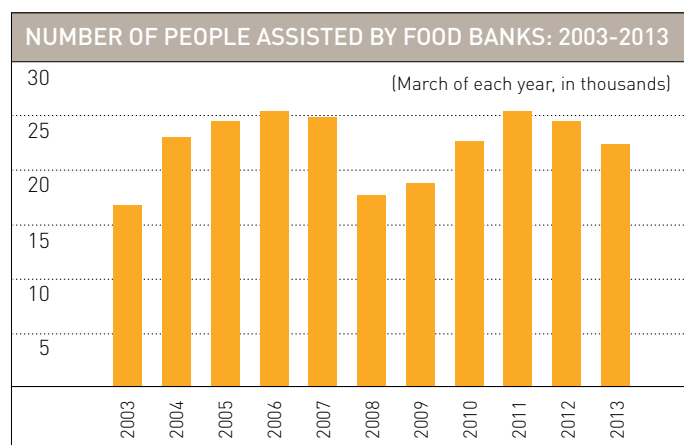
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	22,465	24,621	25,432	22,662	18,875	17,751	16,792
% Change, 2003-2013	33.8%						
% Change, 2008-2013	26.6%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-8.8%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	48.1%	17.6%	52.0%	52.0%	78.0%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	43.8%	47.5%	46.3%	44.1%	44.4%	45.6%	47.0%
Households assisted by food banks	9,043	10,180	7,734	8,355	7,063	5,819	6,717
% Households assisted for the first time	4.7%	5.8%	8.6%	7.8%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.06%	2.30%	2.42%	2.18%	1.80%	1.73%	1.69%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	54.4	51.1
% Post-secondary students	1.5	0.3
% Age 65+	2.8	3.6
% Aboriginal persons	57.2	62.6
% Immigrants or refugees	8.4	0.5

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	26.0	27.6
% Two-parent families	19.4	28.5
% Couples with no children	10.5	10.0
% Single people	44.1	33.9
Number of food banks reporting	30	22

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	13.6	15.2
% Employment Insurance	3.2	4.8
% Social assistance	55.9	58.7
% Disability-related income support	6.7	5.0
% Pension	6.2	9.5
% Student loans/scholarships	3.0	0.3
% No income	6.0	3.3
% Other	5.3	3.1
Number of food banks reporting	26	17

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.4	14.5
% Rental market tenants	66.3	33.3
% Social housing tenants	13.4	19.9
% Band-owned housing	5.2	28.1
% Shelter or group home	0.5	0.2
% Living on the street	0.2	0.0
% Living with family or friends	6.9	0.5
Number of food banks reporting	25	17





MANITOBA

60,229

people helped by food banks in March

+48.8%

change since 2008

44.7%

are children

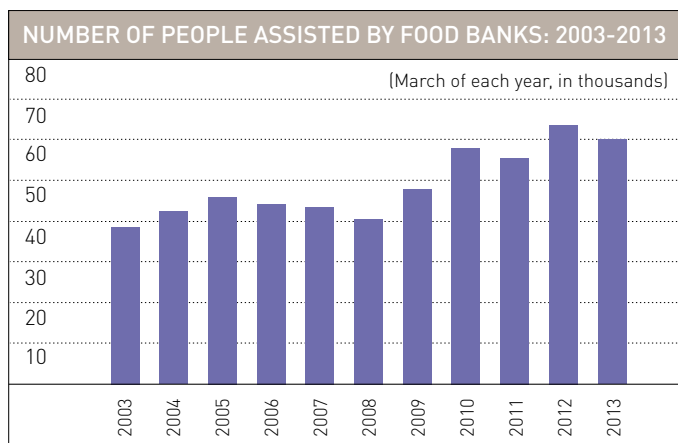
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	60,229	63,482	55,575	57,966	47,925	40,464	38,584
% Change, 2003-2013	56.1%						
% Change, 2008-2013	48.8%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-5.1%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	60.0%	59.1%	42.4%	73.0%	66.0%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	44.7%	47.6%	50.4%	50.5%	48.7%	45.7%	46.2%
Households assisted by food banks	23,074	21,261	18,620	-	-	-	-
% Households assisted for the first time	17.8%	13.3%	12.4%	12.5%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	4.72%	5.05%	4.47%	4.72%	3.89%	3.30%	3.33%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	48.1	52.7
% Post-secondary students	0.7	1.3
% Age 65+	2.6	7.1
% Aboriginal persons	n/a	46.5
% Immigrants or refugees	4.0	4.0

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	13.3	11.1
% Employment Insurance	5.0	4.3
% Social assistance	51.1	49.8
% Disability-related income support	0.8	12.0
% Pension	9.2	12.0
% Student loans/scholarships	2.7	0.8
% No income	11.7	2.1
% Other	6.2	7.9
Number of food banks reporting	23	19

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	22.2	26.0
% Two-parent families	26.4	21.7
% Couples with no children	14.5	15.3
% Single people	36.9	37.1
Number of food banks reporting	37	33

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	14.3	14.2
% Rental market tenants	39.8	34.0
% Social housing tenants	19.8	20.1
% Band-owned housing	18.2	21.0
% Shelter or group home	1.1	1.3
% Living on the street	1.7	2.5
% Living with family or friends	5.1	6.9
Number of food banks reporting	24	20



ONTARIO

375,814

people helped by food banks in March

+19.6%

change since 2008

35.0%

are children

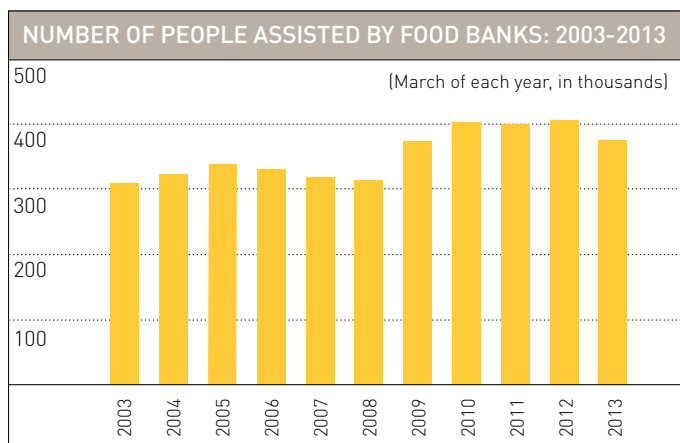
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	375,814	404,373	400,360	402,056	374,230	314,258	308,452
% Change, 2003-2013	21.8%						
% Change, 2008-2013	19.6%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-7.1%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	47.2%	48.1%	46.4%	73.6%	76.2%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	35.0%	36.4%	37.0%	37.1%	37.6%	37.6%	42.2%
Households assisted by food banks	162,568	174,618	160,275	160,402	148,660	137,491	117,212
% Households assisted for the first time	8.7%	9.8%	10.0%	6.9%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.77%	3.01%	2.97%	3.06%	2.90%	2.40%	2.54%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	45.0	46.7
% Post-secondary students	3.7	1.5
% Age 65+	3.9	4.4
% Aboriginal persons	6.2	17.1
% Immigrants or refugees	11.1	0.4

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	25.6	21.4
% Two-parent families	20.5	25.2
% Couples with no children	10.3	14.4
% Single people	43.6	39.0
Number of food banks reporting	262	65

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	10.9	11.0
% Employment Insurance	3.1	4.9
% Social assistance	42.0	33.3
% Disability-related income support	28.3	36.1
% Pension	6.3	8.9
% Student loans/scholarships	0.9	1.2
% No income	4.7	2.5
% Other	3.8	2.1
Number of food banks reporting	228	56

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	5.1	12.5
% Rental market tenants	65.2	67.8
% Social housing tenants	24.3	15.6
% Band-owned housing	0.6	0.8
% Shelter or group home	1.7	0.4
% Living on the street	0.4	0.4
% Living with family or friends	2.7	2.5
Number of food banks reporting	223	57





QUEBEC

156,750

people helped by food banks in March

+22.9%

change since 2008

37.1%

are children

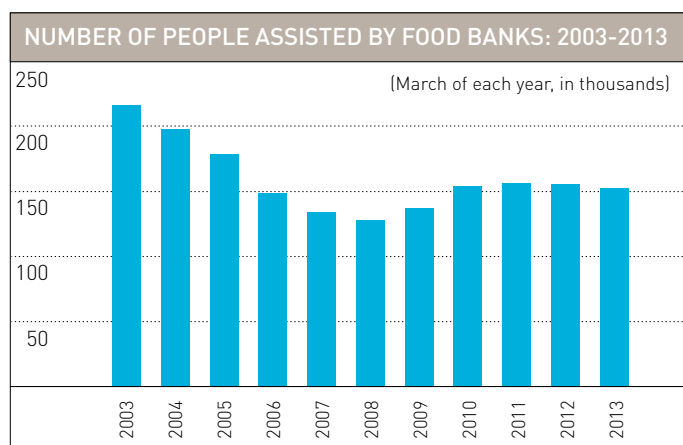
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	156,750	155,574	156,279	154,364	137,464	127,536	216,000
% Change, 2003-2013	-27.4%						
% Change, 2008-2013	22.9%						
% Change, 2012-2013	0.8%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	50.0%	47.1%	51.9%	-	-	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	37.1%	37.2%	36.0%	37.9%	33.9%	37.1%	38.1%
Households assisted by food banks	67,544	70,510	74,350	-	-	-	-
% Households assisted for the first time	12.6%	14.6%	15.6%	-	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	1.95%	1.94%	1.97%	1.96%	1.77%	1.97%	2.89%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	48.8	47.6
% Post-secondary students	5.8	3.6
% Age 65+	5.3	5.5
% Aboriginal persons	1.5	5.4
% Immigrants or refugees	30.7	4.6

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	21.5	21.5
% Two-parent families	25.6	20.0
% Couples with no children	11.3	12.6
% Single people	41.7	45.9
Number of food banks reporting	619	147

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	10.2	10.1
% Employment Insurance	5.1	6.1
% Social assistance	64.1	66.7
% Disability-related income support	2.9	3.4
% Pension	6.7	7.5
% Student loans/scholarships	3.1	1.7
% No income	4.8	2.4
% Other	3.1	2.2
Number of food banks reporting	601	147

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	7.2	18.3
% Rental market tenants	66.4	62.1
% Social housing tenants	19.0	11.9
% Band-owned housing	0.5	1.5
% Shelter or group home	2.8	2.9
% Living on the street	1.2	0.7
% Living with family or friends	3.0	2.6
Number of food banks reporting	569	140



NEW BRUNSWICK

19,989

people helped by food banks in March

+27.8%

change since 2008

33.2%

are children

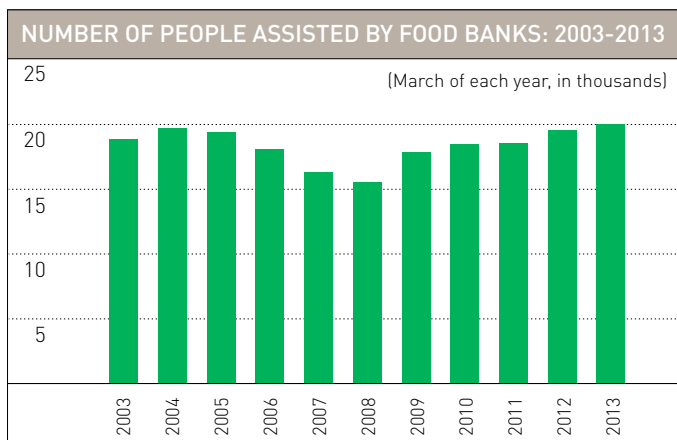
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	19,989	19,524	18,539	18,517	17,889	15,638	18,875
% Change, 2003-2013	5.9%						
% Change, 2008-2013	27.8%						
% Change, 2012-2013	2.4%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	59.6%	51.9%	54.2%	66.0%	70.6%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	33.2%	32.0%	34.4%	34.3%	33.8%	33.2%	34.7%
Households assisted by food banks	9,376	8,975	8,160	8,440	7,710	7,060	8,683
% Households assisted for the first time	7.4%	9.0%	7.7%	9.4%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.65%	2.58%	2.46%	2.46%	2.39%	2.09%	2.52%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	49.2	50.4
% Post-secondary students	0.8	0.7
% Age 65+	3.9	4.1
% Aboriginal persons	4.9	4.5
% Immigrants or refugees	1.7	0.7

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	9.7	7.1
% Employment Insurance	4.6	5.2
% Social assistance	69.3	71.7
% Disability-related income support	4.9	5.0
% Pension	5.8	6.8
% Student loans/scholarships	0.5	0.6
% No income	2.6	1.3
% Other	2.5	2.3
Number of food banks reporting	34	22

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	23.0	21.3
% Two-parent families	20.5	19.6
% Couples with no children	12.6	15.2
% Single people	43.8	43.9
Number of food banks reporting	38	27

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	19.4	25.5
% Rental market tenants	60.8	55.2
% Social housing tenants	14.2	13.3
% Band-owned housing	2.7	2.5
% Shelter or group home	0.0	0.0
% Living on the street	0.1	0.1
% Living with family or friends	2.8	3.4
Number of food banks reporting	31	24





NOVA SCOTIA

21,760
people helped by food
banks in March

+28.6%
change since 2008

32.0%
are children

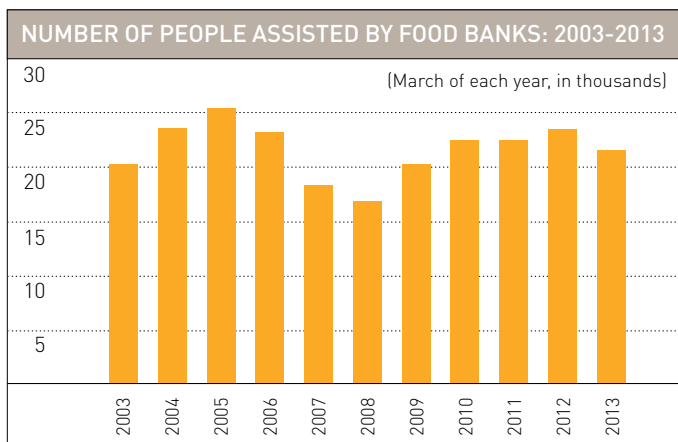
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	21,760	23,561	22,505	22,573	20,344	16,915	20,263
% Change, 2003-2013	7.4%						
% Change, 2008-2013	28.6%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-7.6%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	37.0%	55.6%	41.5%	68.1%	57.4%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	32.0%	32.6%	31.5%	33.0%	34.1%	35.0%	39.7%
Households assisted by food banks	9,789	10,626	10,814	10,840	9,605	7,926	8,308
% Households assisted for the first time	5.6%	5.1%	6.9%	7.3%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.30%	2.49%	2.39%	2.40%	2.17%	1.81%	2.17%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	45.5	45.0
% Post-secondary students	2.1	0.7
% Age 65+	4.5	4.9
% Aboriginal persons	3.9	3.1
% Immigrants or refugees	3.8	0.2

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	21.7	20.3
% Two-parent families	21.3	21.1
% Couples with no children	13.1	15.3
% Single people	43.9	43.3
Number of food banks reporting	74	36

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	11.4	8.9
% Employment Insurance	5.2	5.5
% Social assistance	56.4	56.8
% Disability-related income support	11.0	11.2
% Pension	8.9	10.3
% Student loans/scholarships	0.7	0.5
% No income	3.1	3.0
% Other	3.3	3.8
Number of food banks reporting	54	27

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	14.4	14.6
% Rental market tenants	67.2	69.0
% Social housing tenants	13.4	11.7
% Band-owned housing	1.9	1.8
% Shelter or group home	0.4	0.0
% Living on the street	0.1	0.1
% Living with family or friends	2.6	2.7
Number of food banks reporting	62	32



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

3,502

people helped by food banks in March

+21.1%

change since 2008

35.8%

are children

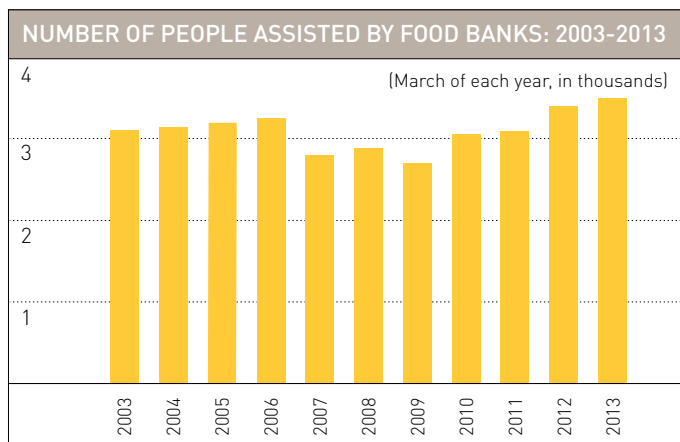
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	3,502	3,406	3,095	3,068	2,706	2,892	3,118
% Change, 2003-2013	12.3%						
% Change, 2008-2013	21.1%						
% Change, 2012-2013	2.8%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%	50.0%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	35.8%	34.1%	35.3%	35.5%	35.8%	35.4%	36.6%
Households assisted by food banks	1,278	1,413	1,231	1,198	1,083	1,155	1,091
% Households assisted for the first time	3.4%	4.9%	7.0%	6.9%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	2.40%	2.33%	2.16%	2.17%	1.93%	1.95%	2.27%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	47.6	46.0
% Post-secondary students	0.5	0.6
% Age 65+	5.6	4.0
% Aboriginal persons	3.8	0.0
% Immigrants or refugees	9.3	0.0

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	26.3	18.2
% Two-parent families	26.7	30.9
% Couples with no children	13.4	9.1
% Single people	33.6	41.8
Number of food banks reporting	6	3

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	17.4	7.5
% Employment Insurance	21.6	28.5
% Social assistance	41.5	38.2
% Disability-related income support	5.9	0.8
% Pension	10.3	18.4
% Student loans/scholarships	0.0	0.0
% No income	2.0	4.4
% Other	1.2	2.2
Number of food banks reporting	5	2

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	14.7	26.1
% Rental market tenants	65.0	56.9
% Social housing tenants	14.0	14.8
% Band-owned housing	3.7	0.0
% Shelter or group home	1.1	0.0
% Living on the street	0.2	0.0
% Living with family or friends	1.4	2.1
Number of food banks reporting	6	3





NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

26,412

people helped by food banks in March

-3.1%

change since 2008

37.9%

are children

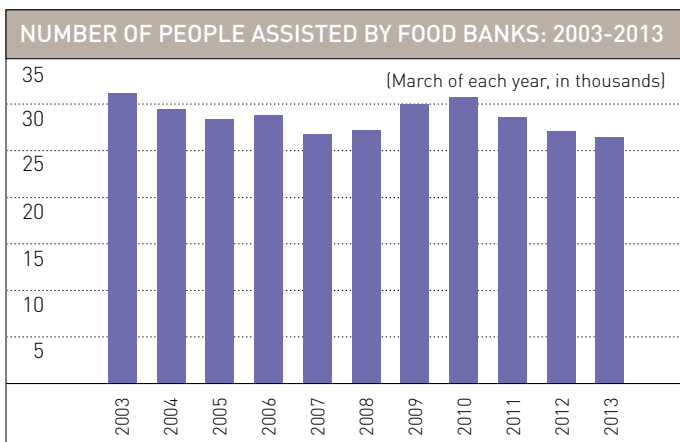
KEY HUNGERCOUNT FINDINGS	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2003
Individuals assisted by food banks, March	26,412	27,044	28,642	30,800	30,014	27,260	31,132
% Change, 2003-2013	-15.2%						
% Change, 2008-2013	-3.1%						
% Change, 2012-2013	-2.3%						
% Food banks reporting an increase	37.9%	51.9%	40.7%	67.9%	70.4%	-	-
% Assisted who are under 18 years of age	37.9%	38.8%	37.3%	37.3%	37.4%	38.4%	40.9%
Households assisted by food banks	8,923	8,950	9,090	9,003	9,235	8,037	9,962
% Households assisted for the first time	4.4%	4.7%	4.8%	5.4%	-	-	-
% Provincial population assisted	5.14%	5.29%	5.63%	6.03%	5.90%	5.36%	6.00%

DEMOGRAPHICS	All	Rural
% Women	59.0	48.2
% Post-secondary students	1.0	1.5
% Age 65+	3.6	5.9
% Aboriginal persons	0.3	5.2
% Immigrants or refugees	0.9	0.1

PRIMARY SOURCE OF INCOME	All	Rural
% Job income	8.2	4.1
% Employment Insurance	12.5	6.1
% Social assistance	72.5	77.4
% Disability-related income support	0.5	2.7
% Pension	6.0	7.8
% Student loans/scholarships	0.0	0.3
% No income	0.1	0.9
% Other	0.2	0.7
Number of food banks reporting	29	21

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	All	Rural
% Single-parent families	35.6	28.1
% Two-parent families	25.3	20.1
% Couples with no children	12.2	15.1
% Single people	27.0	36.7
Number of food banks reporting	29	21

HOUSING TYPE	All	Rural
% Homeowners	12.0	19.3
% Rental market tenants	20.2	45.6
% Social housing tenants	67.2	31.1
% Band-owned housing	0.0	0.1
% Shelter or group home	0.0	0.1
% Living on the street	0.0	0.3
% Living with family or friends	0.6	3.5
Number of food banks reporting	28	20



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- 4 $1.7 \text{ million individuals} = [(833,098 - 77,920) + (77,920 * 12)]$, or: separate individuals helped in March, minus those helped for the first time, plus individuals helped for the first time multiplied by 12 months.
 $930,000 = 77,920 * 12$, or: individuals helped for the first time in March multiplied by 12 months.

A person who is helped for the first time in (for example) March may ask for food again in April, or July, or December – these subsequent events would be counted as visits. This is important in understanding why “first-time helped” in March is 9.4% of the total, whereas “first-time helped” over the year is approximately half of the total.

Using internal food bank use data collected in the months of June and September beginning in 2010, as well as monthly data provided by a number of food banks over several years, it is clear that food bank use levels are relatively stable from month to month. This allows an assumption that new clients replace those who no longer need or ask for help from a food bank.
- 5 Table 1 contains several corrections of information from the *HungerCount 2012* report: the number of people assisted by food banks in British Columbia during the month of March 2012 is lower than the figure published in *HungerCount 2012*; the number of people assisted by food banks in Ontario during the month of March 2012 is lower than the figure provided in *HungerCount 2012*; therefore, the number of people assisted by food banks in Canada in March 2012 is lower than previously published. Despite these changes, the level of food bank use in 2012 remains the highest recorded in Canada.
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- 9 *HungerCount 2012* noted that “About 40% of food programs also offer additional services...” Information in the 2012 report is based on the findings of the *HungerCount 2011* survey, which asked respondents to choose from a list of nine services. The 2012 and 2013 surveys asked respondents to choose from a larger, more inclusive list of 20 services, 13 of which are included in the infographic on page 9. Information provided in the infographic is not comparable to information provided in the *HungerCount 2012* report.
- 10 Statistics Canada (2013). *Table 281-0025 – Employment (SEPH), seasonally adjusted, for all employees for selected industries classified using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), monthly (persons)*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.
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METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of the annual *HungerCount* survey is to provide a national and provincial snapshot of food bank use in Canada. This is accomplished by counting the number of individuals who receive groceries from food banks and their affiliated agencies during the month of March, and by counting the number of meals and snacks prepared and served by a variety of organizations. Information is collected on the number of unique individuals that receive food from food banks, the total number of visits to food banks, and the total number of meals and snacks prepared and served by meal programs. March has been chosen as the study period because it is an unexceptional month, without predictable high or low use patterns. Since March is used consistently, we are able to make relevant comparisons in use patterns over time.

The survey also records information on several characteristics of those assisted by food banks, including age category, gender, and student status at the individual level, and primary source of income, household composition, and housing type at the household level. As well, the survey measures volunteer and paid staff hours worked at

participating organizations, and coping strategies used when participating organizations risk running out of food.

Surveys were sent to all known Canadian food banks and meal programs in February 2013. When necessary, *HungerCount* Provincial Coordinators contacted organizations prior to the submission deadline to ensure a high response rate and to clarify survey questions. Completed surveys were returned to Provincial Coordinators, who checked responses for accuracy and completeness before forwarding paper or electronic copies to Food Banks Canada.

Throughout the summer, Food Banks Canada staff and volunteers worked with *HungerCount* Provincial Coordinators to collect outstanding surveys and resolve any inconsistencies in responses. Survey data were entered into a database, checked for accuracy, and analyzed by Food Banks Canada staff. In cases where surveys were not completed by operating food banks, conservative estimates were produced in consultation with Provincial Coordinators, using 2012 figures as a guide.

TABLE 2: HUNGERCOUNT SURVEY PARTICIPATION, 2013

Province/Territory	Number of Known Food Programs	Number of Participating Food Programs	% of Food Programs Participating	Number of Food Programs with Estimated Information	Number of Agencies Included	Total Organizations Included
British Columbia	92	92	100%	0	328	420
Alberta	109	82	75%	27	458	567
Saskatchewan	32	32	100%	0	115	147
Manitoba	51	51	100%	0	370	421
Ontario	503	426	85%	77	1270	1,773
Quebec	994	994	100%	0	0	994
New Brunswick	58	58	100%	0	33	91
Nova Scotia	170	156	92%	14	27	197
Prince Edward Island	6	6	100%	0	7	13
Newfoundland & Labrador	40	33	83%	7	70	110
Territories	10	8	80%	2	0	10
Canada	2,065	1,938	94%	127	2,678	4,743

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Food Banks Canada thanks the hundreds of thousands of people accessing food programs, and the thousands of staff and volunteers who, every year, contribute information to the *HungerCount* report. Without their efforts and participation this research would not be possible.

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