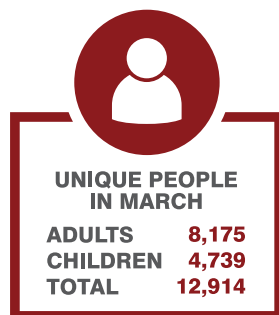
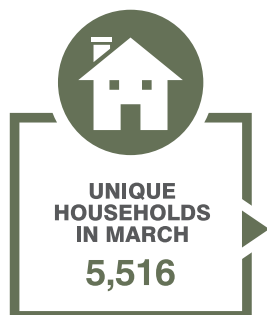


A response to food insecurity in the face of **COVID-19**

For over 30 years, **Hamilton Food Share** has been our city's food acquisition and distribution hub for Hamilton's Emergency Food Network. Given our unique ability to report on and respond to network-wide pressures, trends and emergent issues, **Hamilton Food Share** was well positioned to take the lead in the coordination and planning of the system's response to ensuring people continued to have access to the food they needed in the face of a pandemic. This report outlines the story of hunger in our city in March 2020, and our response to **COVID-19**.

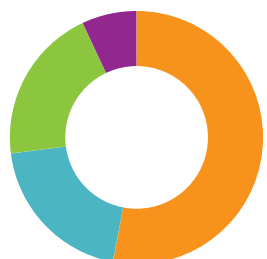
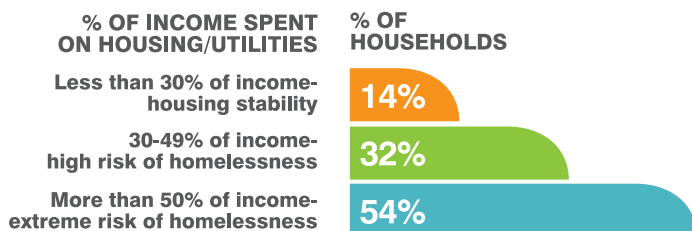


HOT MEALS SERVED IN MARCH
20,729

Food Bank Access over the past year: 8.6% increase in the number of visits made to emergency food banks, over the prior year

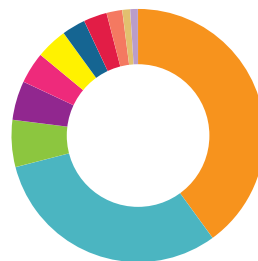
When a state of emergency was announced by the Government of Ontario on March 17th, best practice recommendations had already been put in place by the emergency food system. By increasing its food support to member agencies and extending food supports to additional emergency food programs, extra food was available in the system in order to decrease the number of visits households were making each month. This modification, and personal safety concerns saw food bank visits decrease by 28% in the last two weeks of March.

Risk of Homelessness by Percentage of Income Spent on Rent and Utilities



Who is paying more than 50% of their income on housing costs?

- Single Households (53%)
- 2 Parent Families (20%)
- Single Parent Households (20%)
- Couples (7%)



Primary Source of Income of Foodbank Service Users in Hamilton

- *Disability (40%)
- Ontario Works (31%)
- Child Tax Benefit (6%)
- Other (6%)
- Employed: Full-Time (4%)
- Old Age Security (4%)
- Employed: Part-Time (3%)
- CPP Retirement (3%)
- No Income (2%)
- Resettlement Assistance Program (1%)

*(ODSP, CPP Disability, Private Disability)

While nearly 2 million jobs were lost in Canada as a result of **COVID-19**, emergency income policies and responses were put into place. It is likely that this response allowed impacted households to continue to access basic needs and mitigated the impact on the emergency food sector. While these benefits gave financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly impacted by **COVID-19**, there was very little income relief available for individuals receiving social assistance, who represent over 70% of food bank users in Hamilton. The majority of food bank users did not find themselves better positioned to afford basic needs.

This response highlights the governments' understanding that access to a guaranteed minimum income can reduce poverty in a sustainable way.

Emergency Food Programs Taking Part in the Survey

Ancaster Community Services / De Mazenod Door Outreach / East Hamilton Food Centre / Good Shepherd Centres / Living Rock Ministries / Mission Services of Hamilton / The Native Women's Centre / Neighbour to Neighbour Centre / Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg / Salvation Army Hamilton / Salvation Army Dundas / Stoney Creek Community Food Bank / Wesley Urban Ministries / Welcome Inn Community Centre

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD RESPONSE

Hamilton Food Share and the Emergency Food Network

From the onset of **COVID-19**, it became clear that all emergency food programs across the city would need to take additional precautions to ensure the health and safety of their staff and service users. Using the information gathered through its relationships with Feed Ontario and Food Banks Canada, **Hamilton Food Share** was able to develop a summary of information, practical considerations and best practices recommendations to be shared with our member agencies. Modifications such as providing pre-packed hampers, extending and adjusting hours of operations to reduce the number of people accessing the program at one time, and providing extra food to decrease the number of visits households would need to make were put into place within days of recommendations being made.

Increased Food Acquisition & Distribution

RESPONDING TO THE NEED (APRIL 1st - AUGUST 31st, 2020)



2,183,278 lbs.
of food distributed



45,400 lbs.
received of non-perishable, food industry surplus



44,760
pre-packed hampers



92,414
prepared meals served



Over 36,500
household visits to food banks



58%
increase in food acquisition



22
emergency food programs supported

Increasing Our Reach

HAMPER & MEAL DELIVERY PROGRAMS

1,010
hampers delivered



2,516
deliveries made



28,202
meals provided



3,438
delivery recipients



The Way Forward ► PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT TO THE EMERGENCY FOOD NETWORK



62,000 lbs.
of priority non-perishables through Feed Ontario's bulk buy program



22,500
additional cartons of milk through FBC & Dairy Farmers of Canada plus 40,668 cartons of additional dairy



180
pallets of frozen protein through The Federal Surplus Program



260,000 lbs.
priority non-perishables through Full Shelves Program

"Food security is a basic need and was a key priority from the early days of the City's pandemic response. **Hamilton Food Share** played an instrumental role in both coordinating and supporting emergency food distribution across the city to provide food and support to individuals most in need."

Grace Mater, Operations Chief,
Emergency Operations Centre,
City of Hamilton

"Never in my 30 years at Hamilton Food Share have I witnessed the level of care and concern this city demonstrated over the past 6 months. We are so incredibly grateful to the city, our donors, and our community partners who gave to support our neighbours struggling with hunger in the face of COVID-19. As a result of this overwhelming assistance, we fed a city in the first wave and **Hamilton Food Share** enters the second wave of COVID-19 stronger operationally and prepared to meet the needs of those individuals and families in our communities who rely on emergency food programs to keep food on their tables."

Joanne Santucci, Executive Director, Hamilton Food Share



339 Barton St., Stoney Creek, ON L8E 2L2
905.664.9065 | info@hamiltonfoodshare.org

Join us on Instagram @HamiltonFoodShare
Follow us on Twitter @HFShare
Like us on Facebook at Hamilton Food Share

To donate, learn more, or to sign up
for our e-newsletter, visit us at

www.hamiltonfoodshare.org