

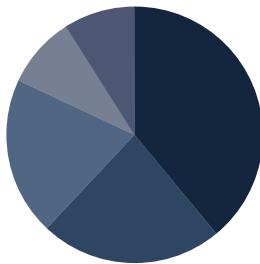
## A snapshot of food insecurity in Hamilton

For the past 3 decades, Hamilton Food Share has served as the central hub for emergency food shipping and receiving in the city, instrumental in supporting a network of 23 hunger-relief programs. Hamilton Food Share also manages the client intake database, allowing us to gather data directly from the frontline of hunger. This report is formulated using that data.

## A LIFE UNAFFORDABLE

For years, households with low incomes have grappled with making challenging financial decisions to fulfill their basic needs, such as food, housing, personal care items, and transportation. High inflation rates only further erode the value of their income, making it harder to ensure these needs are met. In 2022, the percentage of people living in food-insecure households has risen in every province, exceeding the pre-pandemic estimates from 2019<sup>1</sup>.

We have seen a notable rise in the number of working households relying on the emergency food sector to ensure there is food on their tables. Today's inflation means that low-income Canadians may have more difficulty maintaining their existing quality of life than high-income households. This can force low-income families, many of whom live paycheque to paycheque, to cut back on essentials, such as food<sup>2</sup>.



### Family Composition

- Single Households (39%)
- Two Parent Families (23%)
- Single Parent Households (20%)
- Couples with No Children (9%)
- Other (9%)

On any given day:  
More than 1,117 people will reach  
out for food support

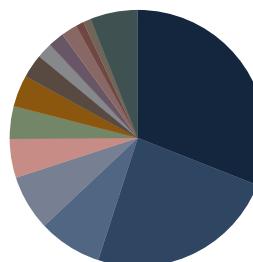
## HOMELESSNESS RISK

Low-income households, already struggling to find affordable housing options, face additional challenges when inflation drives up housing costs. Rent increases further strain budgets and make it harder to maintain stable housing. According to a survey conducted in 2019, nearly half (46%) of the households surveyed acknowledged that they would face homelessness if they did not receive assistance from the food bank<sup>3</sup>.

In March 2022, there were 1,841 households paying more than 50% of their total income on rent. In March 2023, that number increased to 2,621 households, putting them at extreme risk of homelessness<sup>4</sup>.

### Income to Rent Table

Percent of Income Spent on Rent	% of Households
Less than 30%	13%
30-49%	29%
More than 50%	58%



### Primary Source of Income of Food Bank Service Users in Hamilton

- Disability\* (31%)
- Ontario Works (OW) (24%)
- Child Tax Benefit (8%)
- Employed: Full-Time (7%)
- Employed: Part-Time (5%)
- Old Age Security (4%)
- No Income (4%)
- CPP Retirement (3%)
- Resettlement Assistance Program (2%)
- Savings (2%)
- EI (2%)
- Private Pension (1%)
- Immigration (1%)
- Other (6%)

\*(ODSP, CPP Disability, Private Disability)

Hamilton Food Share believes everyone has a right to the most basic necessities of food and shelter; however, inadequate incomes and soaring housing and food costs are making these basic necessities inaccessible for thousands of households in our city.

# A SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN HAMILTON

Over the past year, there has been an alarming surge in the number of people relying on the emergency food sector to meet their basic needs across Canada. In Hamilton, the increase in the number of visits being made to hunger-relief programs is cause for great alarm. The ability to absorb the increased need in our community is pushing our system beyond its capacity. The added escalated risk of homelessness for households served in our network truly highlights that our role is no longer simply about feeding people, but in providing a resource that allows households to pay their rent, pay their utilities, and remain in their homes.



## DEFINING THE NEED

On any given day:  
66 seniors will seek help at a food bank

As the hunger crisis escalates in our city we are witnessing a concerning trend of poverty both expanding and intensifying. Over the past year, 34% of households accessing emergency food banks were previously not connected with the emergency food system and are now having to seek this assistance to meet their basic needs each month. Households already reliant on these services find themselves making additional visits, highlighting the growing severity of the situation.



### FOOD BANK VISITS IN MARCH 2023

Total Days' Worth of Food Provided  
**200,178**

Total Meals Provided  
**600,534**



### On any given day:

426 children will line up at a food bank

<sup>1</sup>(2022) "Who are the most at risk of household food insecurity" Proof Food Insecurity Policy Research, University of Toronto. <sup>2</sup>Uppal, Sharanjit (2023) "Rising prices and the impact on the most financially vulnerable: A profile of those in the bottom family income quintile," Statistics Canada. <sup>3</sup>Wahoush, Olive (2022) "Hamilton Food Share: An Impact Analysis" Partnership Engage Grant funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, McMaster University in the Health and Social Sciences Faculties and the Secure Empirical Analysis Laboratory (SEAL data lab) at McMaster. <sup>4</sup>Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2016, March 23). "What Is Core Housing Need?", Housing Observer Online.

## Taking Part in the Survey: Emergency Food Network

Ancaster Community Services / De Mazenod Door Outreach / Flamborough Food Bank / Good Shepherd Centres / Hamilton Jewish Family Services  
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 / Welcome Inn Community Centre



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