

HAMILTON HUNGER REPORT 2025

For over 30 years, Hamilton Food Share has served as the city’s primary hub for hunger relief, distributing more than 4.7 million pounds of healthy food and products annually to food banks, meal programs, and community agencies.

This report draws on data collected in March 2025 from food bank visitors across Hamilton in the 2024-2025 year. These figures offer a real-time snapshot of hunger in our city from the on-the-ground realities of those reaching out for help.

A Growing Crisis

In 2024, nearly 10 million people in Canada lived in a food-insecure household, including 2.5 million children. That’s about one in four Canadians—a 15% increase over the previous year, and the third consecutive year of record-setting food insecurity.^[1]

Right here in Hamilton, the need is rising sharply. Since 2021, food bank usage has jumped by over 50%. In March 2025 alone, 615 people turned to emergency food programs for the first time, many of them families who have never needed help before. Hunger is no longer a marginal issue; it’s a daily reality for thousands in our community.

MARCH 2025

A SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN HAMILTON

INDIVIDUAL VISITS IN A MONTH

18,943

ADULTS 12,546

CHILDREN 6,397



Children make up **34%** of all food bank visits

HOUSEHOLD VISITS IN A MONTH

7,153



around **615 people** turned to emergency food programs for the **first time**



HOT MEALS/SNACKS SERVED IN A MONTH

26,059

AROUND 841 MEALS/SNACKS SERVED EVERY DAY.



there were **32,775** visits to **Hamper Programs**

2024-2025

492,239

Total meals served

386,524

Total visits to local food banks



around **611 people** reached out to a food bank **each day**

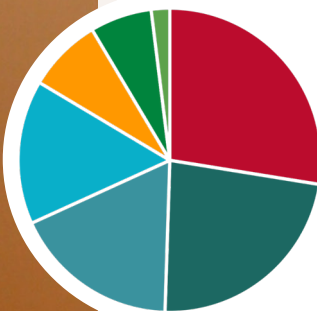
32%

said that the **cost of food** was the reason for their visit

Food Alone Won't Fix This

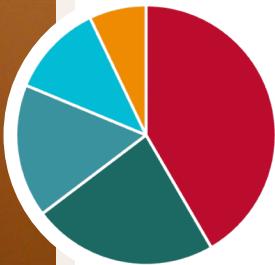
Hunger in Hamilton isn’t caused by a lack of food; it’s the result of a system that’s failing to meet people’s most basic needs. Rising food bank use reflects deep issues like high housing and grocery costs, stagnant wages, and weakened social supports. These challenges hit those facing systemic barriers the hardest—like single parents, newcomers, racialized groups, and people with disabilities—and pushes them more into crisis through no fault of their own.

Primary Source of Income of Food Bank Users in Hamilton



- Disability Related Benefits (28%)
- Social Assistance (Ontario Works) (23%)
- Other (17%)
- Employment Income (15%)
- Old Age Pension (8%)
- No Income (7%)
- Employment Insurance Income (2%)

Family Composition



- Single with no children (42%)
- Two Parent/Guardian (23%)
- Single Parent/Guardian (16%)
- Other (12%)
- Couple with no children (7%)

At Hamilton Food Share, we see the impact of hunger every day. People are forced to choose between rent and groceries, or basic meals and medication. Food banks offer urgent relief, but they’re not the solution. Ending hunger means addressing poverty through affordable housing, fair wages, and stronger social supports. We believe in a future where no one has to rely on food banks to survive. That future is possible when we work together with courage, compassion, and a commitment to lasting change.

^[1]Rezaee, Jasmine Ramze. "Food-Insecurity Crisis Is Policy Failure." Policy Options, 5 June 2025, policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2024/food-insecurity/.