



CALGARY FOOD BANK

**ANNUAL REPORT
2022 – 2023**

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THE CALGARY FOOD BANK AT A GLANCE



FEED

Relieve hunger and provide support for clients who are experiencing food insecurity



LEAD

Expand our role as a catalyst in inspiring, engaging, and empowering community to build a food-secure future.



CONNECT

Continue to strengthen our network to address root causes of food insecurity.



"I have four children. Food costs have gone up so much. As well as every other cost. I try not to use the food bank often. But sometimes every once in a few months I have to. And it really helps me tide things over."

Calgary Food Bank Client



149,909

Total number of hampers distributed to Calgarians through all of our programs.



1,320,635

Pounds of food distributed through Food Link program to **56** partner organizations with a value of **\$4,263,848**.



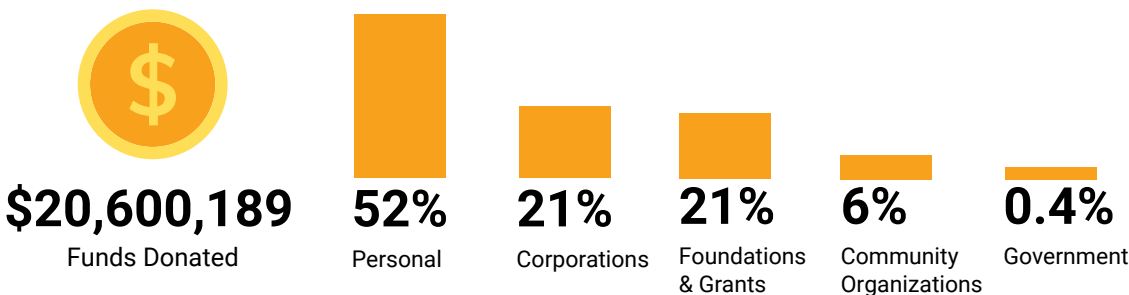
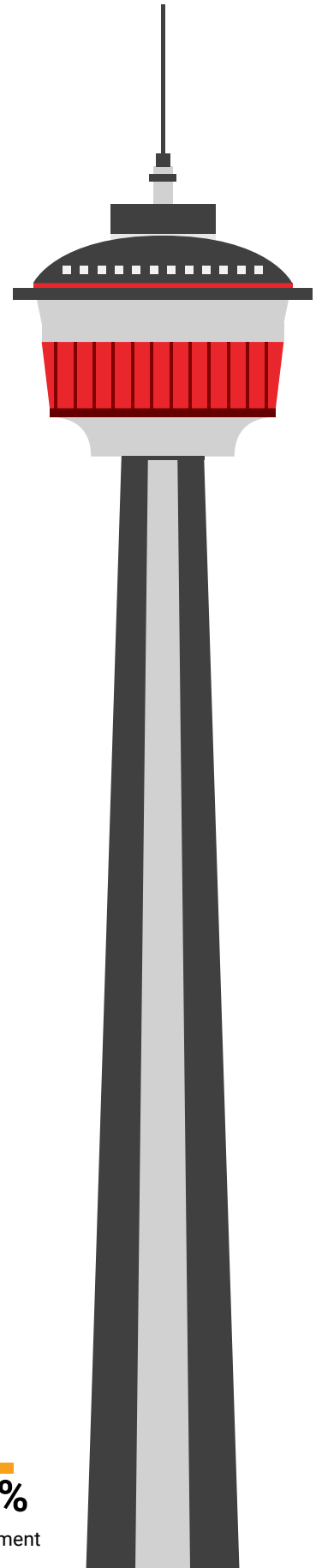
91%

Of our donations come from our **360** food industry partners. We rescued **13,327,753** pounds of quality food with a value of **\$41,815,532**.



4,780

Total number of people connected with and guided to **93** programs across **62** community partners to receive help beyond food.



Volunteers



Volunteers accounted for **62%** of the Calgary Food Bank's workforce giving **146,122** hours of time.

1,770
Group Shifts

26
Volunteer Roles

468
Hours A Day

163
Volunteers A Day

Hampers



144,760
Emergency Food

4,785
Weekends And More

22,195
Baby

364
Welcome Home

What's In A Hamper



34%
Protein



32%
Fruits & Veggies



26%
Other



8%
Whole Grains

Clients



88,399

Unique clients served through Emergency Food Hampers.



Going to the Calgary Food Bank was like going to visit a friend's house to ask for a bit of help, I was overwhelmed and incredibly humbled by the whole experience.

-Client Quote

Client Demographic Breakdown:

64% Families

36% Individuals

34% Children

31% Working

7% Single Parents

4% Seniors



Top 3 reasons for using the Calgary Food Bank:

Fixed Government Benefits: **24%**

Unemployed/Looking for Work: **20%**

Full-Time Income Insufficient: **16%**



\$3.50

Worth of food can be distributed for every dollar donated.

LEADERSHIP



MELISSA FROM PRESIDENT & CEO

I joined the Calgary Food Bank during a time of growth and challenge, but this has also been a time of collaboration and meaningful steps forward. In 2022–2023, there were over 144,000 client visits to the Calgary Food Bank—an astounding 27% increase in visits compared to the last year.

Year after year, Calgary Food Bank has seen record-breaking numbers of new clients and community agencies seeking support, with inflation, cost of living, job loss, and forced relocation as top drivers. We see working parents unable to make ends meet, skipping meals so their children can eat. We see seniors and people on disability pensions and other fixed incomes needing additional support.

Despite this heaviness, we continue to be inspired by the kindness and generosity that surrounds us. Public food donations remain consistent, and our community remains loyal and supportive of our mission. Our dedicated response to the needs of Calgarians is thanks to our donors, staff, volunteers, and partner organizations.

Thank you for giving your gifts of food, time, and money to feed your fellow Calgarians.



AMY LEONG BOARD CHAIR

It is exciting to see how the Calgary Food Bank continues to evolve. In a short amount of time, Melissa From, the Calgary Food Bank's new President and CEO has made great strides in working with her team, progressing strategic goals and addressing immediate key priorities such as reducing wait times for clients. She has engaged with dozens of community partners, stakeholders and donors to continue to share our mission and vision while ensuring stability throughout the organization. Melissa's broad experience and strength in building relationships have been a great asset to successfully navigate through the many complex conditions we face.

Despite what happens in the world around us, the Calgary Food Bank stays committed to meeting the demand for food support in our city. Though restrictions were lifted following Covid-19, new events such as the war in Ukraine will persist. In response to the need of families and individuals who have called our community home and new neighbors including Ukrainian people fleeing war-torn countries, Calgary needs us more than ever.

While the Calgary Food Bank experiences unprecedented demand on staff, resources and processes, it is through energetic leadership and ongoing sustainability that we will ensure our future success and growth. As Board Chair and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I can confidently say we will meet each challenge with strength and resolute optimism.

HELP BEYOND FOOD



Steve Benson is a music teacher by profession but these days his time is spent on the phone! He volunteers at the Calgary Food Bank's Call Centre and helps clients connect with other supports in the community. He's on the front lines helping Calgarians who need food and may want support beyond an emergency food hamper. On the days that Steve is assigned to the Call Centre, he shares, "Those are good days... I give food and work to reduce worry." When Steve talks to clients about the support they may need he thinks about our community partners who address the root causes of why they access the Calgary Food Bank. He says, "On those days... I give hope". He explains in careful detail how each call he makes to people who are struggling is a chance to help them find their way out of the hole. "I've been there," he tells them, "Many people need just one or two or maybe three things to get them out of that hole." One example Steve retells is of a pregnant teenage mother who was kicked out of the family home. The dad wasn't in the picture and so this young mom was left on her own to figure out how to provide for herself and her baby. Thankfully the Calgary Food Bank was her first call. Once food was arranged, Steve connected her to other supports.

The Calgary Food Bank's Community Liaison team works with over 90 programs that can provide additional support to our clients. From help accessing government supports, to mental health, addiction support and even help for their pets; the list is long and helps work towards the goal of fighting the root causes of food insecurity. Steve says that the list of organizations doing incredible work is exhaustive, "It depends on what the client needs. I like to take my time and really hear what is going on so that I can provide some guidance about what will be the most helpful. I don't like to overwhelm them with a bunch of phone numbers. A lot of the agencies we refer clients to are also extremely busy and are at or beyond capacity, so patience is required."

Steve recently got off the phone with a single dad who was laid off and needed some support. The single father of three accessed the Calgary Food Bank two years ago but until recently has been able to make ends meet. "People do not want to use a food bank. They are embarrassed and so I reassure them that food, shelter, and dignity are a right. As a volunteer with the Calgary Food Bank, I want to ensure that I'm doing everything I can to support each person that I talk to."

Before Steve has to dash off to his next shift, he takes a moment to say, "I have the great privilege of volunteering at the Calgary Food Bank and to talk and support the amazing people on the other end of the phone by helping them reach their full potential. Therefore, I feel it's my responsibility to give my time to help improve the lives of others."

The Calgary Food Bank has an incredible volunteer force made up of unique individuals. 800 volunteers are required each week in order to meet the demand. Having those volunteers coupled with strong relationships with Community Partners, means great strides can be made; one client at a time, fighting hunger and its root causes.

HELP FEED THE NEED



Thanks to a partnership forged with Food Banks Canada, the Calgary Food Bank received 26 skids of lentils from Viterra, The Agriculture Network. Viterra is a fully integrated agriculture network that connects producers and consumers to supply sustainable, traceable and quality-controlled agricultural products. In Canada, they are a leading marketer and handler of grains, oilseeds, pulses, and cotton. Viterra harnesses the Canadian prairie's agricultural industry by providing nutritious food options to those in need. Ryan Schroeder, Regional Operations Manager came for a visit and shared their story. Watch the video on our website.

BUILDING COMMUNITY



Each week a dedicated group of volunteers from ARC Resources joins the Calgary Food Bank to help distribute food to Calgarians experiencing food insecurity.

Giving back is core to Arc Resources' culture and something their people are passionate about. Long-term partnerships that create long-lasting impacts are at the heart of their community giving program. They're proud to support the communities where they live and operate through corporate giving, employee donations and ongoing volunteerism. They regularly roll up their sleeves to support their community through volunteer shifts and fundraising campaigns.

They support their employees in making meaningful contributions to local community causes through their Donation Matching Program. Employees can donate up to \$500 each year and receive a company match to double the impact.

One of their giving focus areas is "Healthy, Safe and Resilient People". They support the physical and mental health, well-being and safety of their people, their loved ones, and the communities in which they operate. This includes organizations such as the Calgary Food Bank.



ARC's partnership with the Calgary Food Bank is one of our longest, dating back to ARC's early days in 1996. Over the years, ARC has supported the Calgary Food Bank through both corporate and employee donations, and with regular volunteerism. In fact, ARC employees have volunteered at the Calgary Food Bank nearly every month for the past 20 years. For ARC employees, the monthly volunteer shift has been a great chance to gain perspective on the challenges members of our community face. It also provides an opportunity to meet coworkers from other departments and have a little fun while supporting the community. To demonstrate their continued commitment, in December 2022, ARC announced a \$200,000 donation at CBC's Blitz Day and matched ARC employee donations of almost \$17,000 at their annual holiday party.

"As one of our longest standing community partnerships, the Calgary Food Bank is an organization that meets a critical need for vulnerable people in our community," said Lisa Olsen, Senior Vice President, People and Corporate. "Our partnership with the Food Bank has spanned more than 27 years, and it's a cause that our people have always been passionate about. Throughout the year and especially during the holiday season, our people roll up their sleeves to volunteer, and contribute their own funds to support this important organization".

A TIME TO HARVEST



Good things have been growing at several gardens in and around the city in support of the Calgary Food Bank. Community gardens take root and are lovingly cared-for by farmers donating their harvest throughout the spring and summer months.

In 1996 retirees from Chevron, Amoco and Imperial Oil came together to plant, tend and harvest fresh produce for the Calgary Food Bank. In 1999 PowerGarden (TransAlta retirees) joined this gardening quest. Over the years, these dedicated volunteers have planted gardens on land shared by benevolent farmers, acreage owners, churches and industrial sites. A record-breaking 2023 harvest yielded more than 94,000 pounds of vegetables. This fresh produce found its way into emergency food hampers and kitchens of our community partners that prepare food for vulnerable people needing extra support.

These volunteers who enjoy spending quality time with people they worked with are no strangers to growing fresh from the heart. The harvest this year includes potatoes, squash, zucchini, onions, carrots, beets, kohlrabi, tomatoes, and cucumbers. The retirees have grown nearly one million pounds of fresh produce for the Calgary Food Bank since



the groups were formed. While they do the lion's share of the work, they do have great support from the community. Donating one acre of prime irrigated farmland to this cause in 2020, Eagle Lake Turf Farms formed a partnership with the TransAlta retirees which tripled the annual yield of produce grown. There is a core group of 60 is able to plant, weed and maintain all of these garden plots. Harvesting over 40 tons of vegetables in the fall needs the support of family members, friends and neighbours, and caring volunteers from Chevron, FortisAlberta, Imperial Oil, TransAlta, the Calgary Food Bank and Eagle Lake Landscape Supply. Volunteers from church and school groups also roll up their sleeves. A special thank you to West Coast Seeds and Upper Green Farms for their generous donation of seeds and seed potatoes for these gardens.



Fred Ritter, garden coordinator for POWER (Projects Organized With Energetic Retirees) says the activities range from soil preparation and seeding to weeding and finally harvesting in the fall. It's hard work but Fred says it's all worth it, "It energizes folks when you know your gardening efforts go towards providing fresh produce to people in need." These gardens also create a venue for retirees to maintain contact with friends made in their workplace over their years of employment. Both the Calgary Food Bank and volunteers benefit from their gardening experience!

– Special thanks to John Holms for contributing to this feature –

COMMUNITY IN ACTION



The Calgary Food Bank's Food Link Program connects over 56 community partners to help improve the lives of Calgarians who need it most. By providing bulk food and supplies for partners to prepare meals, these organizations can focus their resources on their programs that deal with root causes of food insecurity.

Melody Brown Foster, Director of Operations and Administration at the Calgary Dream Centre says the partnership with the Calgary Food Bank is invaluable; "We save over \$180,000 annually because of the food support we receive through the Calgary Food Bank's Food Link Program."

Amanda is one of countless Calgarians who sought help from the Dream Centre. Her story inspires!

One of the hardest nights for me on the streets was trying to sleep outside in - 30. It was so cold and snowy. I can only describe the hunger I experienced, to what I imagine a diabetic would experience when their blood sugar levels are low. You are so deprived of food; that you begin to shake. At one point, I was only 95 lbs. I could count every rib on my body and my eyes looked dark and sunken in."

Amanda now works full-time at the Dream Centre, one of the Calgary Food Bank's community partners. She says that like in many homes, the kitchen is at the heart of how we connect with our people. It's where we gather to develop a connection. Amanda says that she enjoys creating meals with whatever type of food happens to be donated in a given week. "It allows for creativity. For example, in the fall a massive donation of assorted squash arrived at the Dream Centre kitchen and I learned a bunch of ways to prepare it". Often feeding over 100 people each day, Amanda says that she not only learned to make soups and salads with vegetables, but she also learned to bake goods and create meals". She says the menu is constantly changing based on donations. The Dream Centre

serves three hot breakfasts a week as well as lunch, dinner and snacks. Amanda reinforces the importance of the food donated, "It goes a long way, and there's very little waste in our kitchen." What she likes most about working there is seeing how a nutritious and hot meal helps someone who is struggling. "Those of us in recovery can tell if it's not a good day. It's easier to connect with someone over a hot meal; it helps to create family at the Centre, which is so important."

Last year, the Calgary Food Bank donated 86,080 pounds of food to the Dream Centre.

DOUG AND PAUL



Paul and Doug Lavoie are a super fit, fun and inspiring couple who decided to celebrate the milestone of Doug's 50th Birthday by running 50 half marathons in 50 weeks. That's a feat unto itself, but they went a step beyond and ran in support of the Calgary Food Bank. Their original goal of \$50,000 raised before Doug's 50th birthday in September was surpassed in June, and they quickly made the decision to add another \$50,000 to the goal! The guys say, "Birthdays can be a moment for all of us to celebrate and reflect upon how we can be our best version; not only for ourselves, but also our community". The 50th run was completed on Doug's 50th birthday on September 24. The final amount donated on behalf of Paul and Doug, in support of Doug's 50th birthday is an incredible \$138,211. Generous donations like these, by citizens who want to make a real difference, not only help to feed thousands of people but also foster a sense of community and gratitude.



"Fitness philanthropy" represents a new form of giving where displays of fitness are increasingly also tied to displays of civic engagement. The growth of fitness philanthropy highlights changing responsibilities for health and wellness and addresses key sociological concerns with identity, community, and civic engagement, that are now manifest in sports charity challenges. Catherine Palmer & Zack Dwyer – School of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania, Australia



Thank You
to our donors, supporters, and volunteers

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