

WHO'S HUNGRY 2009: KEY FINDINGS

Food bank use in the GTA has rapidly increased in the past year due to the recession.

Overall number of client visits: 1,030,568

Increase since 2008: 8%

Increase from January to March of this year compared to the same time period last year: 17%

Average per month: 85,881

The largest portion of new clients is people who have lost their jobs or have had their hours cut. A substantial number are not accessing welfare because of their savings. Of the food bank clients who have been coming 6 months or less, reasons for visits include:

Losing their jobs: 35%

Living on savings: 11%

Reduced hours at work: 6%

The majority of people using food banks do so for a relatively short period of time.

Percentage of clients who have used a food bank for 6 months or less: 37%

Percentage of clients who have used a food bank for 1 year or less: 55%

Over one third of food bank clients are children. However, single adults remain the largest household type using a food bank.

Percentage of food bank clients who are children: 35%

Percentage of food bank clients who are single: 41%

Children who go hungry at least once a week: 17%

Adults who go hungry at least once a week: 42%

The majority of respondents are Canadian citizens, and many are immigrants who have been in Canada for 10 years or more.

Percentage of clients who are Canadian citizens: 72%

Born outside Canada: 49%

Percentage of those not born in Canada who have been here 10 years or more: 46%.

A significant percentage of respondents are highly educated, and include newcomers who cannot get work in their field.

Percentage who have graduated college or university: 22%

Percentage who have a post graduate degree: 4%

The cost of housing is the largest expense for most people.

Percent of income spent on rent/mortgage including utilities: 76%

People who pay market rent: 74%

Hunger in the GTA is the result of lack of money, not lack of food.

Median monthly household income: \$980

Percentage who receive Ontario Works (OW) as their main source of income: 44%

Being employed is not always a ticket out of poverty.

Percentage of households with at least one person employed: 30%

Average hourly wage: \$10.90

Median hours of work per week: 20 hrs

Percentage without either drug or dental benefits: 82%

People living in poverty have a high level of vulnerability to costly forms of debt in order to pay for their basic needs.

Percentage of respondents who go into debt to pay for basic needs such as food, rent, or clothing: 77%

Percentage of respondents who have sold assets or property in order to pay their bills: 54%