

# EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2022

It will be two years since the declaration of the pandemic – March 10, 2020. While 2020 seemed to go by in slow motion, 2021 was a far more challenging year for Edmonton's Food Bank. One key indicator was the increase in the number of times an individual needed us which means this person's life is far more unstable and volatile than it once was. On average a person needed to see us 5.24 times compared to 4 times in 2020.

The organization worked through wave after wave of COVID to ensure we remain open and helping our community. A vaccine mandate was introduced in November 2021, while extra cleaning and mask use continue.

We are humbled by the kindness and help from our donors, volunteers, and community supporters. Because of the commitment of our community, Edmonton's Food Bank is ready and serving our neighbours in need.

Thank you.



## EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK...

- continued through rain, snow, and ice, during one of the coldest Decembers ever. We kept our fleet on the road picking up donations and delivering food to distribution points throughout the city.
- implemented three drive throughs for clients to pick up their festive hampers. Brave volunteers and staff helped 429 households while the temperature outside was brutally cold.
- started sourcing turkeys for our festive meals in July. Because of this work, 2,764 turkeys, 1,552 hams, and 379 halal chickens were available for agency partners, individuals, and families this holiday season.
- vehicles traveled 182,438 kilometers in 2021 picking up and delivering food throughout Edmonton. This is equivalent to traveling the entirety of the TransCanada Highway 24 times.
- collected, packed, and stored a record 6 million kilograms of food in one year – the most in our history. This includes 5,503,973 kg in food donations and 548,050 kg of purchased food.
- served an average of 25,801 people per month through hamper programs.
- provided food to more than 300 different partners including Multicultural Health Brokers, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Hope Mission, The Mustard Seed, and many more.
- completed our third client survey – 2021 Beyond Food Revisited – which is available at [edmontonsfoodbank.com/about/publications/](https://edmontonsfoodbank.com/about/publications/)
- helped people secure employment by purchasing over \$27,000 in safety tickets and providing other services. These tickets included First Aid, Safe Food Handling, and many more.

## Client Story:

"I'm really amazed at the great quality of food we got from the Food Bank. Many thanks to all the staff and volunteers. The staff/volunteers are so hard working they were working outside in the cold and brought the food out to our car! God bless you. Awesome caring customer service. I have never been to a food bank in my life but COVID 19 has caused job loss, and this food bank has come to rescue me and my family. Thanks again. God bless you all."

Dez M. - Edmonton's Food Bank Client



Because of you, we are able to continue to do what we do best - serving those in need, since 1981. If you have any questions please contact Tamisan Benz-Knight, Manager of Strategic Relationships & Partnerships, at 780.425.2133 ext. 232.

# EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK UPDATE

MAY 2022



The Edmonton Chamber recognizes exceptional leadership with the Northern Lights Award of Distinction. It honours individuals and organizations that have made positive and lasting contributions to our community. Edmonton's Food Bank was honoured on April 30 as the recipient of the 2021 Northern Lights Award of Distinction.

"The work of Edmonton's Food Bank is not about one organization, but the dedication of thousands of generous donors, outstanding businesses, and committed people creating a kinder community. We are able to serve those facing food insecurity because of you. In celebrating this award, we are beyond grateful for your continued commitment to our neighbours in need."

- Marjorie Bencz, CM, Executive Director  
Edmonton's Food Bank.



Pictured above is David Benjestorf, Vice Chair, Edmonton's Food Bank and Jeffrey Sundquist, CEO, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce.



## EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK...

- Experienced a record number of hamper recipients in March. We served 32,082 people a food hamper, 11,851 of which were children.
- Provided a spring celebration with festive additions - 409 hams, 547 halal chickens, and 1,197 turkeys were distributed in food hampers and to our agency partners.
- Worked with community members and opened three new depot locations to reduce the distance and travel time for people to access their food hampers. These new locations include: YMCA: Castledowns, Boyle Street Plaza YMCA, and Hillview Baptist Church.
- Continued use of the Food Bank Annex as an overflow depot when other community food depots are full. Inflation impacts the cost of food, fuel, and all aspects of our lives, negatively affecting the people we serve.
- Served 320 agencies across Edmonton with meals and snacks. Each day, on average, 22 agencies access food from our warehouse! This means organizations such as emergency shelters, snack programs, seniors' programs, and pet programs receive the items they need to continue to keep our communities safe and healthy.
- Partnered with nine new agency programs to access food resources for their clients.
- Equipped two community food depots with freezers. Your donations made it possible for us to provide freezers to the Unitarian Church of Edmonton and the Marantha Christian Reformed Church depots. These freezers will allow us to supply items such as frozen meat in our food hampers.
- Is continuing to support Ukrainian and Afghan refugees arriving in Edmonton. In addition to providing food hampers, we have welcomed refugees to our volunteer team and the Beyond Food program. Our diverse staff team makes this possible by providing services in 19 languages.

*"My husband and I have been donating to the Edmonton Food Bank for some time now and today we saw it being used by an Afghan family of 11! It was very well organized and they filled 4 large boxes with every food item you can think of including halal chicken! And the staff were very friendly and helpful. Thank you so much :)"*

- Mary (Google Review)



Because of you, we are able to continue to do what we do best - serving those in need, since 1981. If you have any questions please contact Tamisan Bencz-Knight, Manager of Strategic Relationships & Partnerships, at 780.425.2133 ext. 232.



# EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2022

## Mud, Sweat and Gears Giving More

Tom, one of our wonderful volunteers, comes in weekly usually traveling on his bike. He had saved up to purchase his bike, and it was more than just a mode of transportation, it gave him independence. Unfortunately, in June, Tom had his bike stolen in a brazen act of theft outside the Food Bank warehouse. As Edmonton's Food Bank was searching for a solution, Paul, from Mud, Sweat and Gears, graciously stepped up. He donated a brand-new bike to Tom so that he can continue to commute around the city, including his volunteerism with the Food Bank! This act of kindness warms our hearts and we applaud Paul and the team at Mud, Sweat and Gears for their thoughtfulness – thank you!



While inflation and increased costs are top of mind for everyone, it disproportionately impacts people on fixed and low incomes. The pandemic affected the Food Bank differently at the start: depots closed, volunteers stayed home, and food drives were cancelled; however, we witnessed immense generosity from Edmontonians that helped keep our programs running. 2021 brought its own unique circumstances, and now 2022 is undeniably a year of struggle for the organization and the people we serve. The monthly average number of clients helped with a food hamper has increased almost 100% when compared to 2020.

- June 2022 saw the largest number of people helped through the hamper programs in our 41-year history: 34,867 people.
- Edmonton's Food Bank's warehouse outbound food surpassed the inbound food donations during this same time period. Essentially, the organization has purchased more than 1.15 million dollars worth of food to make up for the deficit of 228,252 kilograms (503,204 lbs) of food.
- Our 65 community food depots, who have increased the number of hampers they can each distribute, are still running at full capacity most of the time.
- Inflation is affecting the volume of food one dollar is able to purchase with cautionary notes from suppliers that our food orders may go up by 5% this fall.

Despite these challenges, Edmonton's Food Bank continues to serve the community. Thanks to dedicated donors, we continue to salvage (i.e. glean) food from warehouses.

- Volunteers have contributed 45,464 hours picking up, sorting, and redistributing food throughout Edmonton.
- Community food and fundraisers are steadily growing to provide opportunities for donors to give conveniently. Grocery stores and fire stations also collect non-perishable food year-round for us.
- Our job readiness and support collaborative, Beyond Food, has had 491 participants. Edmonton's Food Bank paid for 298 safety tickets plus helped clients access 894 free tickets to help them secure gainful employment.
- Supported 24 Ukrainians with our Beyond Food program and welcomed one successful applicant to the Food Bank staff team.



Pictured above is volunteer Tom (L) and Paul from Mud, Sweat and Gears (R).



Because of you, we are able to continue to do what we do best - serving those in need, since 1981. If you have any questions please contact Tamisan Bencz-Knight, Manager of Strategic Relationships & Partnerships, at 780.425.2133 ext. 232.