

Contact Information

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 Edmonton's Food Bank

 edmontonsfoodbank.com

"I called you guys because I knew you would be there for me and my grandson."

- Client

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

With spring approaching and the vaccine rollout making its way to vulnerable Albertans, we find a sense of hope as the snow starts to melt, and the sun sticks around a little bit longer each day.

Despite these positive events, food insecurity exists and we remain open and serving our community. We acknowledged our 40th anniversary this past January – that's forty years of gleaning (salvaging) food, serving community members, working with our partner agencies, and providing reliable stewardship to our donors.

This stewardship is an important part of our responsibility to the people we help, our donors, and the public. Providing food to people in need is good in and of itself; however, there is more to it. Food insecurity is a symptom of poverty and while providing food helps an immediate need, it does not create long-term impact or change. We understand the intricacies of poverty and why people are struggling with food insecurity.

About 20 years ago, funders and community leaders were looking for consistent, accurate, and complete hunger data, and asked the Food Bank to consolidate the intake processes. Today, our call centre handles the intake process for over 60 community food depots across Edmonton and whenever possible, ensures that clients can access services at their nearest, most convenient depot in their neighbourhood. In December, we answered between 418 and 669 calls per day. This data collection provides a baseline as we continue to monitor the needs and services in our community. Aggregate data is shared with elected officials and the public.

By collecting client names, dates of birth, addresses, etc., we can pull important information for the community such as the number of 'unique' hamper recipients, ages, and the frequency of requests. When we meet with government decision makers, we use reliable data to explain why changes need to be made, such as increases to income security, more affordable housing and childcare, etc. Organizations like Islamic Family & Social Services Association conduct their own intake and work closely with us to ensure their client data is in alignment with our own, allowing a seamless incorporation into one client database. It is very important to us to serve people respectfully, while gathering comprehensive data at the same time.

Thanks to your donations of food and funds in 2020, we can confidently say that you helped positively and had a direct impact on 60,896 people in Edmonton. This number only reflects people served by hamper programs and it does not include people accessing services at soup kitchens, shelters, school programs and other community meals. Together with the information we gather, we can better support our clients.

Sincerely,



Marjorie Bencz, CM
Executive Director



Still Festive Despite COVID-19

COVID-19 did not prevent less fortunate Edmontonians from enjoying a festive meal. Our supporters rallied behind Edmonton's Food Bank with enough food and monetary donations to distribute hampers to over 26,000 people in December alone; the highest number of clients for that month in our 39 year history. Because of you, we helped bring about a sense of normalcy and security during a very uncertain time.



Isabella and Carlos

Isabella and Carlos never thought they would need to use a food bank. They were both working and able to pay their household expenses. Then the pandemic robbed them of their jobs, health, and peace of mind.

This couple's COVID-19 story began in March of 2020 when the pandemic affected their work and both lost hours and income. They were able to make ends meet until December when Carlos tested positive for COVID-19 through exposure at work, and Isabella was infected shortly thereafter. Neither worked in December and their situation was becoming quite dire when a friend suggested they reach out to Edmonton's Food Bank.

Because they had never received a food hamper before, Isabella and Carlos were surprised by the items they received. The bag of apples, fresh kale, zucchini, eggs, margarine, peanut butter, cereal, and yogurt ensured food on their table and took away the stress of stretching their limited budget even further.

"I would like to send you my gratitude from the bottom of my heart," stated Isabella in a recent email to Edmonton's Food Bank. "Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who make this possible. A million blessings to all of you. Human beings like you make a big difference in this world."



Volunteering - A Work of Heart

Throughout the month of February, Edmonton's Food Bank profiled some of our amazing volunteers. We are truly grateful to all these individuals who allow us to continue our mission of serving those in need.



While some individuals and families do access food hampers directly from Edmonton's Food Bank, we are a central warehouse and referral centre for over 250 agencies, churches, schools, and food depots. We focus on food so our agency partners can focus on their areas of expertise and know their clients have access to food. By working together, we can help people move out of poverty. Thank you for your commitment to helping us create a kinder community together.



Because of You...

- We kept our doors open throughout the pandemic and continued to distribute food without disruption.
- In 2020, we collected, sorted, repackaged, and redistributed more than 4.8 million kilograms of food valued at over \$27,696,000. Between 60% to 80% of the food we distributed was salvaged (gleaned) from grocery stores, warehouses, farmers, and other food suppliers.
- We provided about 350,000 meals and snacks monthly through our partner agencies, including 70 schools in Edmonton. Working with other organizations, the Food Bank also provided food to the Edmonton Convention Centre homeless shelter.
- Along with our food distribution, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers are available to our partners serving vulnerable populations. Additionally, the Government of Alberta and the Canadian Red Cross have provided kits that contain masks, sanitizer, and multi-language instructions on self isolating and keeping people safe.

Thank you!

Anawim Place Still Filling the Need

Edmonton's Food Bank and Anawim Place have been food partners since 1998. We provide food for them to feed inner city residents. It's a critical link to some of our most disadvantaged individuals. So when we learned they had to close their doors due to concerns of spreading the COVID-19 virus, the Food Bank and others stepped in to help.

Initially, we focused on making the space COVID-19 compliant by installing plexiglass and supplying PPE. It was at that point we discovered all the other serious issues that needed to be addressed.

When Anawim Place reopened, they welcomed clients into a space with updated flooring, newly painted walls, a fixed furnace, a safe electrical system, and a new security door. This completely volunteer-operated service could now once again provide food hampers to those in need, two days a week.

Edmonton's Food Bank was happy to work with Anawim Place and keep this vital service operating. As the biggest inner-city depot distributing hampers, these dedicated volunteers are a trusted lifeline for many.



Going Above and Beyond Food

Shawn was struggling to find employment when a friend told him about the Beyond Food program offered by Edmonton's Food Bank. Staff worked with Shawn by updating his resume, showing him job search techniques, and practicing for job interviews. In addition to this help, Shawn accessed online training that removed his final barrier to employment.

"I am very grateful for the services I received from Beyond Food. I was able to take an online course and received a Security Training Safety Ticket. As soon as I completed it, I had work available to me. The staff was very kind and helpful and I cherish the opportunity to work in the community that has helped me so much. Thank you."



Beyond Food offers free employment assistance, English and math upgrading, budget advice, personal counselling, and more.

If you need any of these services, please call 780.425.2133 ext. 228 to book an appointment.

BEYOND FOOD!