



# 2023 Fact Sheet

*“If you want to eliminate hunger, everybody has to be involved.”*

## Message from the Executive Director

**These are not records we wanted to set.**

Food insecurity is a challenge of various levels. At the entry stage, families may feel stressed about their finances and worry about affording food. In the mid-level, individuals might start making budget-conscious choices and reducing their food intake, but the hunger is not overwhelming. At the third level, both adults and children may experience periods of hunger due to food scarcity.

Poverty research has indicated that a greater number of Canadians are finding it difficult to cover their basic living expenses. A few years ago, 19% of households were at risk, and now, recent research suggests that as much as 36% of Canadian households are facing challenges in affording basic necessities like food and shelter.

In Red Deer, our food bank has become 81% busier since March 2019, and we see the toll it takes on the mental and physical health of those we serve. We must find ways to make housing attainable and food accessible. No one should have to make the heart-wrenching choice between a warm bed and a full stomach.

This is our mission, and we have even more determination to accomplish it: **to alleviate hunger today and prevent hunger tomorrow.** We're committed to initiatives that can make a significant impact on the social crisis we're facing.

In the face of unrelenting demand, we remain committed to providing consistent support and caring services. In the year ahead, we will need to continue our efforts to develop and secure funding to ensure we can support our community in a sustainable way.

In April, we will celebrate 40 years of service to Red Deer and District, and it's thanks to the support of our dedicated board of directors and the incredible caring demonstrated by this community that we find hope and empowerment to face the complex demands of our growing region. Together, we can build a brighter and more food-secure future.

## Food Donations

**Quick facts on the food we've moved.**

- During our 2022–23 fiscal year, the Red Deer Food Bank received **\$3,673,813 of in-kind food donations.**
- Gardeners donated over **31,000 pounds of produce** from their yards and gardens this year.
- We received **70,809 pounds of food from Food Banks Alberta**, and 53,630 pounds left our facility to serve the **18 rural food banks in our region.**
- As a zero-waste facility, **we redirected over 1 million pounds of food from landfills.** Foods that we cannot feed to people are distributed as feed to farms and zoos.
- We fed **1,415 pets** through our Kibble Kitchen.

## Financial Highlights

**The Red Deer Food Bank is 100% reliant on donations and sourcing its own revenue through social enterprises and grant applications.**

- In 2022–2023, the Red Deer Food Bank was blessed with **\$1,142,842 in donated funds**, from individual contributions, group fundraising, and corporate donors.
- We also received **\$316,397 in government grants.**
- We earned **\$169,128 in Culinary Services revenue**, serving 294 events in the community this past season.
- While we are grateful for all the contributions we receive, it's no surprise that the rising costs of food, fuel, heating and power takes a toll on us all. **Food inflation is 10.3% higher than last year** according to Canada's Food Price Report 2023, and is expected to continue to rise another 5% – 7% in 2024, meaning ongoing demand and pressure on the Food Bank.

**Working together so no one goes hungry.**

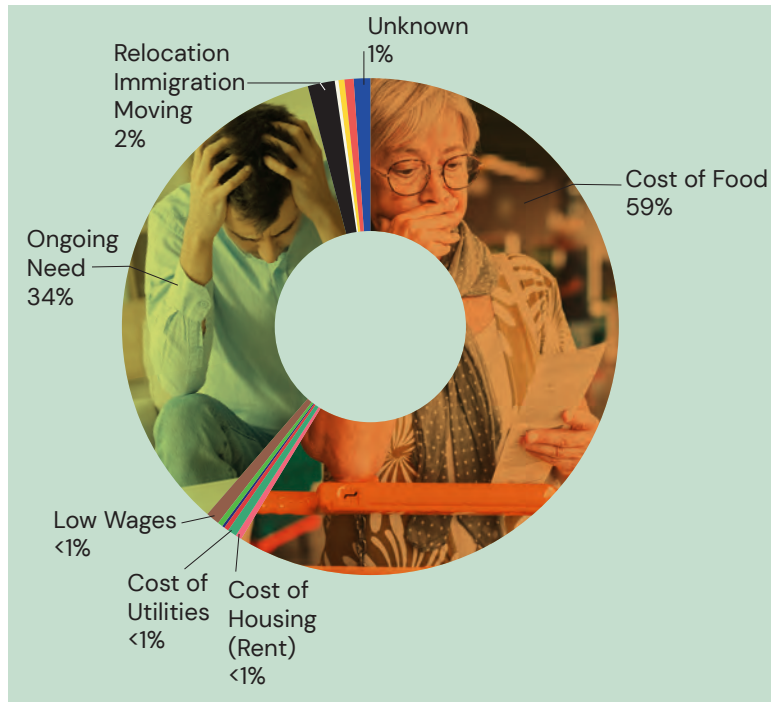
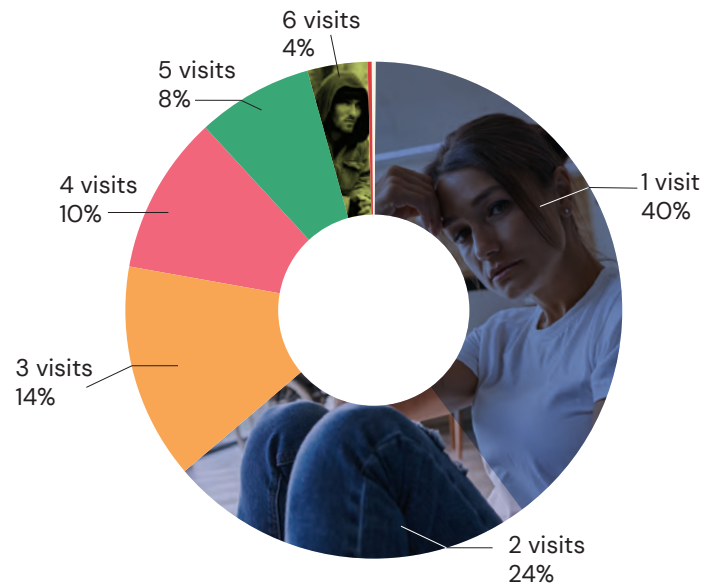


# Number of visits

64% of clients we served only used our services 1 - 2 times over a 6-month period.

Since capturing data in March 2023, we have found that many of the people who needed to use the Food Bank emergency hamper program were truly those in a short-term situation when securing food for their household was a challenge.

The data also shows that the demand lessened with time. Only 4% of our visitors required assistance in each of the 6 months between March and August of 2023.



# Reason for Visit

A staggering 59% of applicants for support claimed that Cost of Food was the primary reason for assistance.

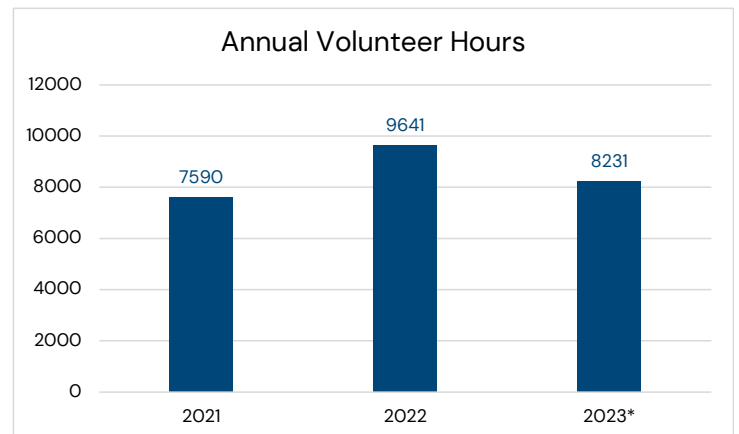
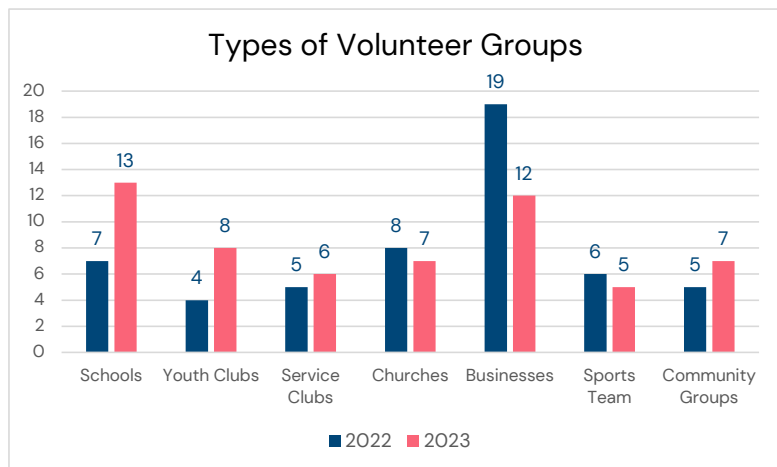
With affordability and inflationary pressures affecting everyone in our community, the demand for assistance from the Food Bank continues to mount. Not being able to afford food to eat is a primary stressor for anyone.

The fact also remains that while individuals and families are impacted by the rising cost of food, so is the Food Bank. We are able to leverage our buying power to get better pricing for our purchases, however the prices are increasing all throughout the supply chain.

# The Volunteer Factor

Our volunteers are enormously important to our organization.

The Red Deer Food Bank currently has 125 active volunteers, some who have recently joined us, and others who have been with us for 15 - 20 years or more.



\* Year-to-date as of September 30, 2023.

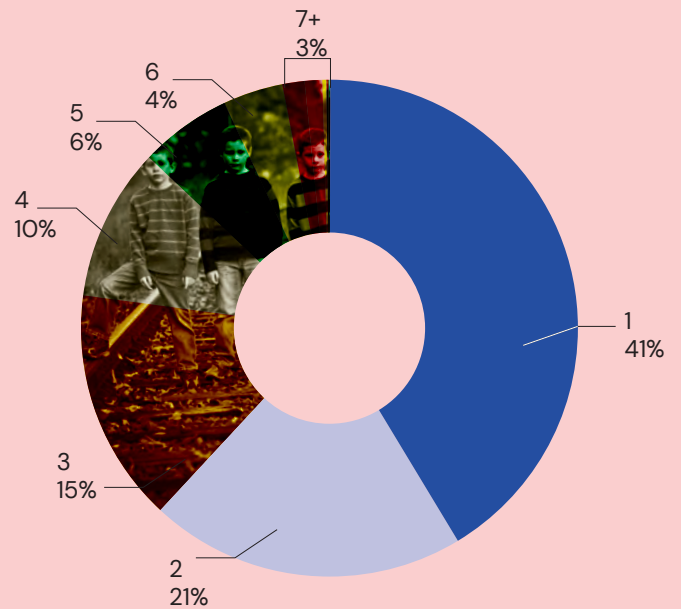
The contribution of time is as needed at the Food Bank as the funds that allow us to operate. So far in 2023 we are on track to realize nearly 11,000 volunteer hours. Put in terms of monetary contribution, these volunteers save the Food Bank \$165,000 in wages that would otherwise need to be paid to complete the tasks we ask of them.

# Household Size

**38% of households we serve have three or more people in the home.**

Our clients are not solely individuals. The make-up of over one-third of the households involves a tapestry of family and relationship structures: single parents, married and common-law couples with children, adult children caring for their parents, multi-generational families, seniors raising grandchildren, even roommates and siblings.

The situations may vary, but the reason for the need is consistent: they do not have the ability to secure enough food to feed everyone in their home for the entire month, making a hamper request a necessity.



# Racial Identity

**32% of households we serve are Caucasian.**

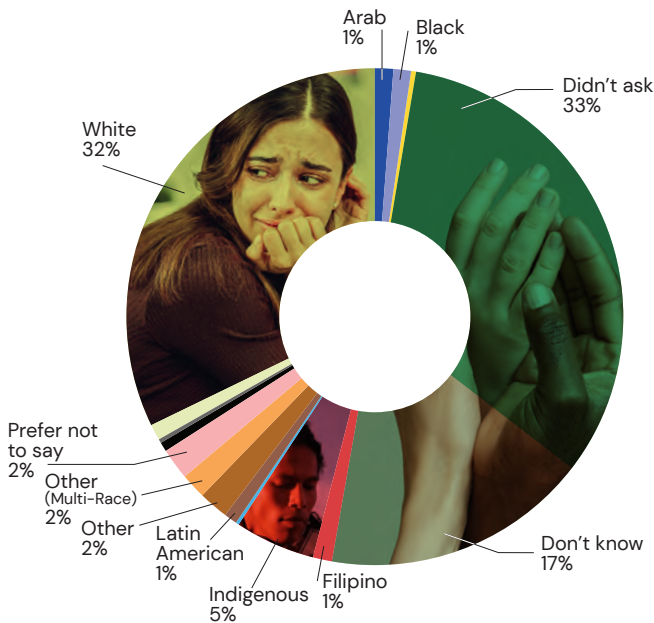
In March 2023, the Red Deer Food Bank began to update databases of clients by asking for racial identity as a means to ensure we are properly addressing, as much as possible, the cultural tapestry and needs of the many ethnicities within the community.

50% of the individuals who utilized the Food Bank between August 2022 and March 2023 were not identified by race, therefore no data is available for them.

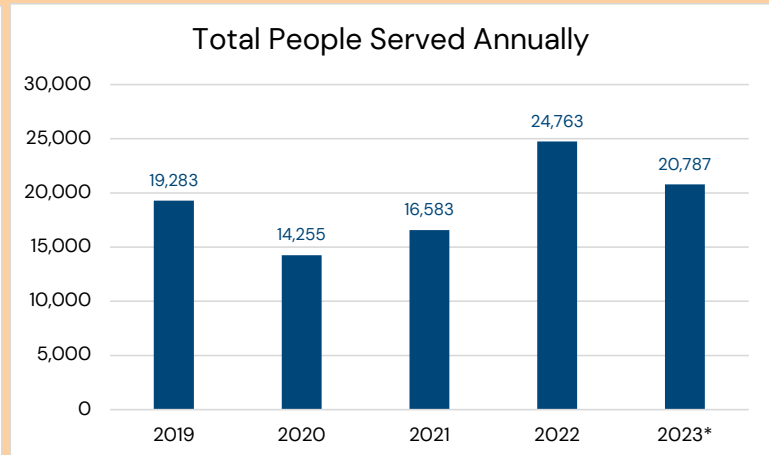
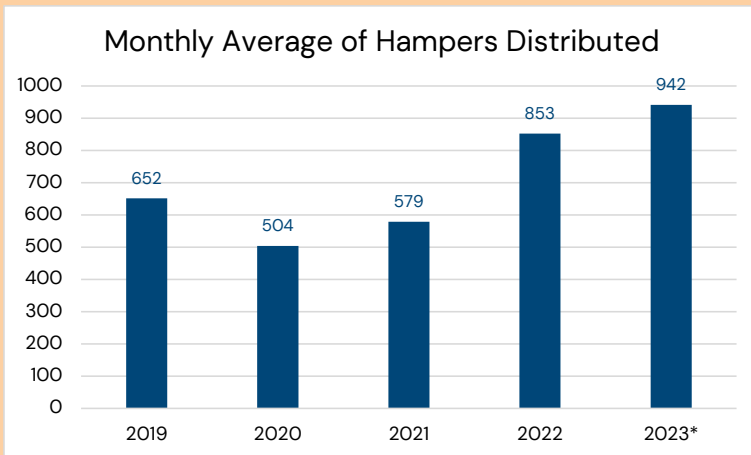
Of those who responded when asked, 32% were self-identified as Caucasian, and 5% were Indigenous First Nations. Other identities were noted and appear to represent relative numbers within the general population.\*

We cannot presume the other 50% that were not identified in our statistics are representative of those that were.

\*According to 2021 Stats Canada data that indicates in the City of Red Deer, nearly 18% of the population identifies as a visible minority. <https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/red-deer/percent-visible-minority/#/>



By September 30, 2022, we had served 18,076 people; in 2023 that number increased to 20,787, an increase of 15%. So far in 2023, we've supplied over 14% more hampers than we did in 2022.



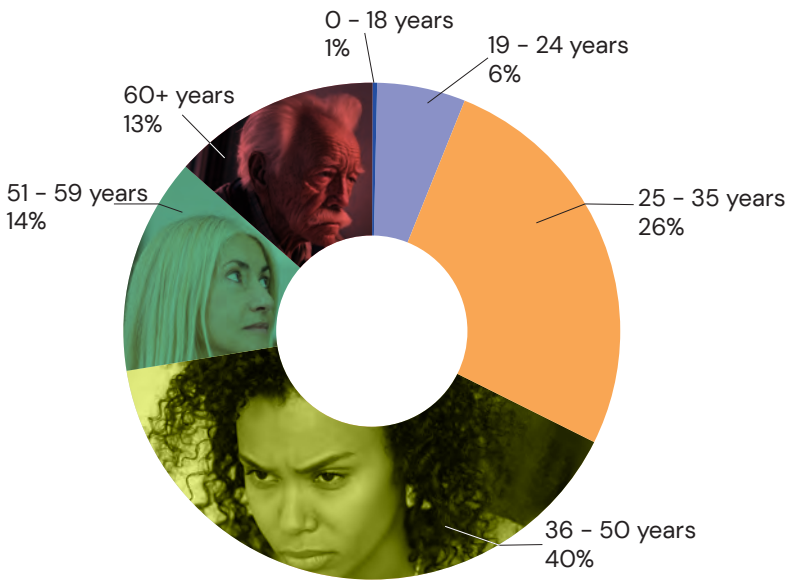
\* Year-to-date as of September 30, 2023.

# Age Group of Applicants

**40% of clients who contacted the Food Bank for support were between 36 and 50 years old.**

The next largest segment was 26% in the 25 - 35 year-old age bracket. These two segments would account for a large portion of the population that have children in the home, as reflected in the following statistics.

The segments following are those over 50 years of age; 51 - 59 (14%) and those over 60 (13%). This is a concern as these are people whose prime earning years are waning or behind them, or who are already retired and on limited income. How much more of an increase we witness in these age groups remains to be seen.



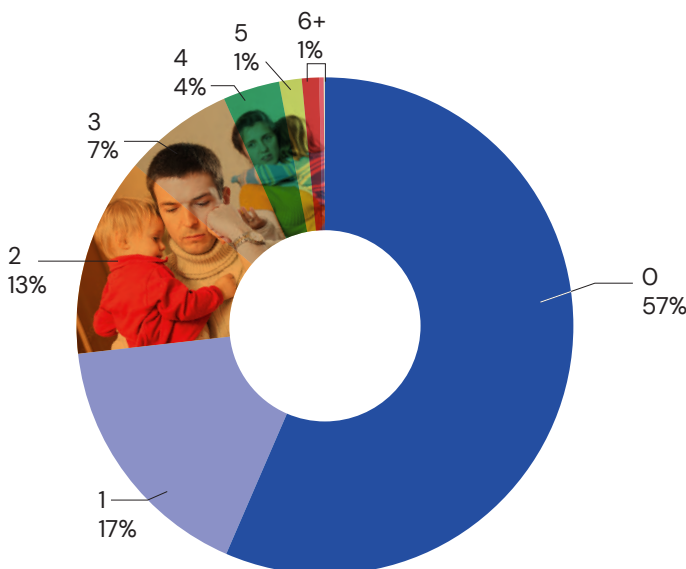
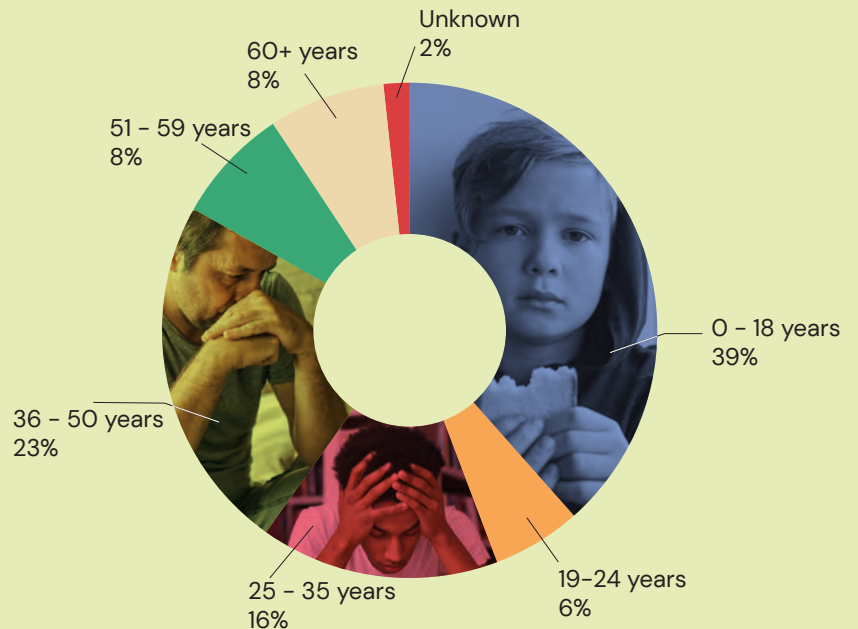
# Age Group of Individuals

**39% of individuals who had need of food from the Red Deer Food Bank are under the age of 18.**

These are the members of the applicants families who reached out to the Food Bank for support. As echoed the graph to the right, nearly all the people who ate because of our emergency food hampers were children.

It can also be seen that the individuals from the 25 - 35 year-old and 36 - 50 year-old segments also accounted for 39% of people who used food hampers.

This echoes the initial presupposition that the adult segments between the ages of 25 and 50 were likely requesting hampers as a family.



# Number of Children in the Household

**26% of households receiving emergency hampers had 2 or more children in the home.**

When added to the 17% of single-child homes, the total number of households served with children makes up **43%** of our recipient households. When we hear about parents missing meals so their children can eat, these are the situations that require our support.

# Quick Facts: Food Scarcity & Red Deer Food Bank

**1 in 5**  
**Albertans**  
were deemed  
**FOOD INSECURE**  
in 2022\*.

\*Based on Alberta Health Services Reports & Statistics Canada data.

The Red Deer Food Bank is directly involved in supporting agency programs that require food to fulfill their mandates. This includes everything from lunch programs in schools to shelters and detox facilities.

As a regional hub for Food Banks Alberta, we distribute food as needed by rural single-day food banks throughout central Alberta. Our service area reaches 20,000 square kilometres. Communities served stretch from Ponoka to Rocky Mountain House, Three Hills to Stettler, and many points in between.

WE SUPPORT  
**30**  
Community Agencies  
& **18**  
Rural Food Banks

**42,919**  
visitors  
used our  
**PANTRY PROGRAM**  
this past year.

Our Community Pantry Program is available for open access to all members of the community, with no intake process required. Anyone from the public can access the Pantry, and gather close-to-date foods to supplement their diets.

Excess produce that cannot be distributed through the hamper program before spoiling can also be picked up in the Pantry. Bins of potatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, corn, and squash have been made available to anyone having challenges stocking their own pantry.

The Food Bank  
was accessed  
**70,219**  
times  
between  
AUG. 1/22 & JUL. 31/23.

Includes both emergency hamper program & community pantry.

**27,300**  
people  
were fed by our  
**HAMPER PROGRAM**  
this past year.

Between August 1, 2022 and July 31, 2023, over 11,000 households received an emergency food hamper from the Red Deer Food Bank. These households averaged 2.4 people, and as reflected in our data regarding the constituents of these households, nearly 40% of them were children.

Food inflation is now estimated to hit an average of 10.3% for 2023. Our demand has grown 86.9% from our 5-year low in 2020, with the rising cost of food accounting for 59% of the reason for accessing our services.

**11,144**  
homes  
received our  
**EMERGENCY**  
food hampers.

DONATE NOW



## In the News

While we avoid sharing opinion on public policy, we recognize that world events impact our ability to care at home.

We see campaigns in the media asking us to contribute to emerging global issues. Often, within months, we can correlate increased food bank use with new resident applicants who have found safe shelter in Canada. In the last year, new resident applicant demand grew from 17% – 26% percent nationwide. It is clear that conflicts abroad result in local demand. Supporting the Red Deer Food Bank enables us to care for new members of our community as they settle in the area. [#feedtheneed](#) [#everybodyeats](#) [#welcomefriend](#)



The Smiths are an average Alberta family. John and Jane both work at steady jobs, their kids Jimmy & Jessica attend school and have activities and interests they enjoy after school and on weekends.

Together John and Jane make the median income of \$91,000, which has typically provided a comfortable life for them.

However, with two growing children eating more as they enter their teens, they're noticing their grocery bills climbing - a LOT. Jane is a careful money manager, and she's gone back through their food expenditures since 2020. She's calculated that the family grocery budget has increased 25% since then, and it is looking like it will go up yet again next year.

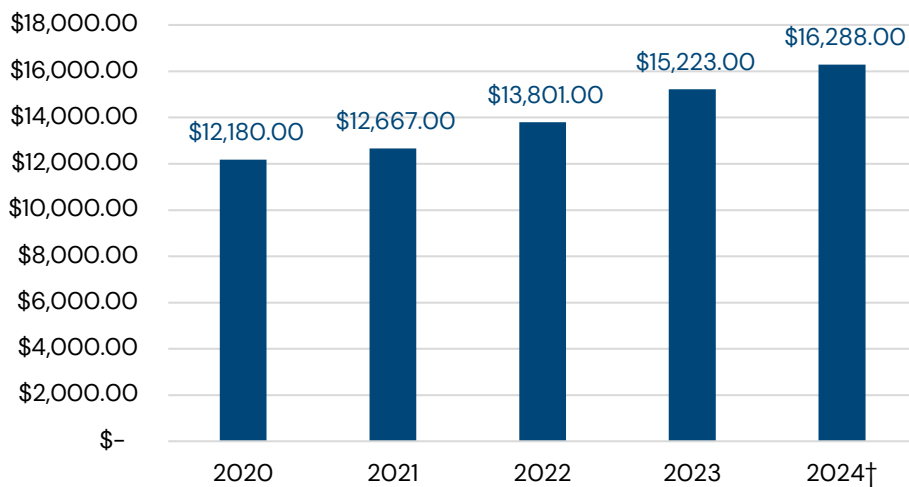
With their food budget jumping from 13% to now over 16% of their take-home pay, and increasing to as much as 20% by this time next year, they are beginning to wonder where they can make things easier on their pocketbooks. Their mortgage and utilities were once within the 'normal' 30% of their income, but rising utility costs threaten to push them over that maximum threshold. They wonder what this winter's utilities will look like.

They are thankful though, because they consider themselves lucky. They bought their house over 10 years ago & renewed their mortgage last year before interest rates took off. They can make their vehicles last a little longer. They can scale back holiday shopping and delay that vacation they were talking about.

Still, they wonder:

"If we are finding it a challenge, and we are the 'average', what are people doing who are making less? How are they getting by?"

### Annual Food Expenditure in Canada\*



\*Based on a family of four including a man (age 31–50), woman (age 31–50), boy (age 14–18), and girl (age 9–13).

† Projected estimate.

**G** 8,500+ profile interactions on Google Business page (May – Oct. 2023)

**f** Facebook Reach ↑ 11%  
Page & Profile Visits ↑ 63.5%

**i** Instagram Reach ↑ 316.7%

**X** Twitter Engagement Rate 2.5%

**in** Linked In activated in September 2023

Social media analytics YOY September 2023 to 2022.



Meg Tucker is our new Community Food Program Educator at the Rotary Club of Red Deer East Community Kitchen, and she has produced 30 educational videos for sharing on our website.

## Getting the word out

**There is much to share about the work of the Food Bank and its compelling stories.**

Social media is the primary platform for letting the community know about events, programs, tips, and acknowledgments of our volunteers and donors. The new website that launched in 2022 has been instrumental in acquiring new volunteer applications, receiving orders and inquiries for the Community Kitchen, where to find our food trucks, making donations of food and funds, and being a resource for ongoing education and information.