

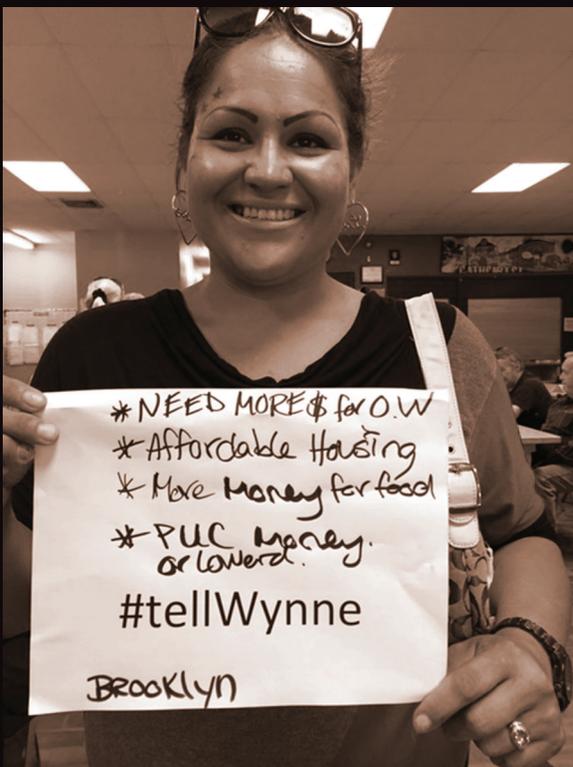
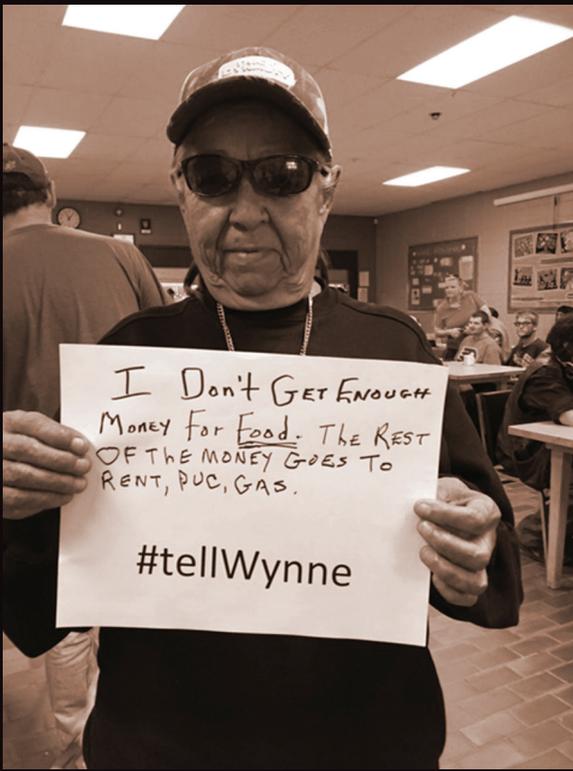
# FOOD BANKS ARE NOT ENOUGH!

## What 546 donors, users and staff say about food banks: a survey

“Put Food in the Budget is to be congratulated on its work to draw more attention to Ontario’s reliance on food banks as a means to manage very serious problems of poverty and food insecurity. The survey results indicate tremendous awareness of and concern about the ways in which the province depends on food banks to compensate for the failure of social assistance and other income support programs to provide adequate support for people in need.

“I was particularly struck by the feelings of shame linked to this practice. Not only do people express shame in having to use food banks, but there is a sense of collective shame in being part of a province that has entrenched food charity as the sole help available for people who cannot make ends meet. The PFIB’s calls to action are loud and clear. We can only hope this campaign helps to propel the Government of Ontario to ‘put food in the budget’.”

—Valerie Tarasuk Ph.D.  
Professor, Department of Nutritional Sciences  
University of Toronto





Copyright © Put Food in the Budget, 2016  
All rights reserved.

## Executive summary

The Put Food in the Budget campaign created a simple survey to learn what people think about government reliance on food banks as a strategy to meet the most basic need of people who are poor in Canada—having enough food to eat.

The survey included 10 questions and also asked respondents if they have ever used, volunteered with or donated to a food bank. We also invited people to make any comment they wished. (Please note that this survey does not evaluate individual food banks or food bank practices.)

546 people completed the survey in the month of December 2015.

92% or more of respondents know the following are true:

- NOT all people in Canada without enough money to buy food go to a food bank.
- People are NOT able to go to a food bank as often as they need food.
- People who go to food banks do NOT get enough food to feed their families.
- People who rely on food banks are NOT able to eat a healthy diet.
- NOT ONLY people on social assistance need to go to food banks.

72% of respondents know that food banks do NOT reduce household food insecurity.<sup>1</sup>

Only 28% of respondents expect that those who request food from a food bank will be required to submit proof of income.

Only 15% of respondents worry that people who go to food banks “abuse the system.”

89% of respondents agree that food banks “should be unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada.”

98% of respondents agree with the following statement: “After 30 years of ‘emergency’ food banks in Canada, it’s time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor.”

31% of respondents reported having used a food bank.

43% of respondents reported having volunteered at a food bank.

70% of respondents reported having donated to a food bank.<sup>2</sup>

Almost 30% of respondents—154 people—made the effort to write a comment in addition to answering the survey questions. The comments reveal that many people feel ashamed that our government still relies on food banks to meet the most basic needs of people who are poor. (An extensive sample of comments is provided in Appendix One: Survey Results and Comments).

1. Household food insecurity is determined by financial vulnerability. Minimally, vulnerable households experience anxiety that their food supplies will run out; at more severe levels, household members go without food. Only increasing income and making rent affordable, thus ensuring that people with low incomes have enough money for food, reduces food insecurity. Loopstra R., and Tarasuk V. (2015). Food Bank Usage Is a Poor Indicator of Food Insecurity: Insights from Canada. *Social Policy and Society*, 14(3), 443-455.

2. Percentages do not add up to 100%, as respondents can have more than one form of experience with a food bank. Only 5% of respondents reported having none of these connections to a food bank.

# Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What story do the comments tell?	2
The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes...	6
Take action to Put Food in the Budget	7
Conclusion	8
Commentary and References	9
Appendix 1: Survey results and comments	10
Appendix 2: Endorsement	15
Appendix 3: The survey	17

## Introduction

To learn what members of the public think about government reliance on food banks as a strategy to meet the most basic need of people who are poor in Canada—having enough food to eat—the Put Food in the Budget campaign created a simple survey.

The survey included 10 questions and also asked respondents to say if they have ever used, volunteered with, or donated to a food bank (see Appendix 3 on page 16 for the questions and answers). Please note that this survey does not evaluate individual food banks or food bank practices.

Five hundred and forty six people completed the survey in the month of December 2015. Most respondents completed the survey through the website of the Put Food in the Budget campaign ([putfoodinthebudget.ca](http://putfoodinthebudget.ca)).

We also invited people to make any comment they wished. Almost 30% of respondents—154 people—made the effort to comment in addition to answering the survey questions. The comments reveal that many people feel ashamed that our government still relies on food banks to meet the most basic needs of people who are poor.



**People across Canada have been generously donating to food banks for more than thirty years. Do food bank donations meet the need? Do you wonder if food banks will be necessary for another thirty years?**

**What do *you* think? Please complete this short survey online at [www.putfoodinthebudget.ca](http://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca)**

- 1 All people in Canada without enough money to buy food go to a food bank. TRUE  FALSE
- 2 Anybody can go to a food bank as often as they need food. TRUE  FALSE
- 3 People who go to food banks are able to get enough food to feed their families. TRUE  FALSE
- 4 People who rely on food banks can eat a healthy diet. TRUE  FALSE
- 5 Only people who receive social assistance go to food banks. TRUE  FALSE
- 6 Food bank donations reduce household food insecurity. TRUE  FALSE
- 7 When you make a donation to a food bank, do you expect that those who request the food will be required to submit proof of income (and other documents) to prove that they need it? YES  NO
- 8 Many food banks have a detailed screening process because they fear that recipients may 'abuse the system.' When you donate to a food bank, do you worry about 'abuse'? YES  NO
- 9 Food banks should be unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada. YES  NO
- 10 After 30 years of 'emergency' food banks in Canada, it's time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor. YES  NO

**How did you do?**  
Turn over to see some answers and facts. ▶

“Survey respondents have spoken very eloquently about the disgrace of food banks' existence in a country as wealthy as this one, where social assistance and low-wage jobs do not allow people to cover the basic necessities of life”  
– Elaine Power Ph.D., Queen's University

## What story do the comments tell?

The government's strategy of relying on food banks provides inadequate amounts of food and inadequate nutrition to people who are poor (see pages 3 and 4).

The experience of going to a food bank creates shame for many people. Even people who do not go to food banks feel ashamed that our governments still rely on food banks to meet the most basic need of people who are poor. *"I am ashamed to live in a country where food banks are necessary."*

“It is sad, appalling, and morally reprehensible that a temporary stop gap, designed to address food insecurity among marginalized and impoverished people in our wealthy and civilized nation, endures 30 years later.”  
– survey respondent

### Government, corporate, media complicity

People criticize governments for abdicating their responsibility and continuing to rely on food banks. Respondents also point out the complicity of big business and the media in perpetuating this reliance on food banks. This comment summarizes the way in which big business and media deflect public attention from the real issue of poverty:

“It is very sad that big business and the media have turned the desperation of those that are forced to use food banks or go hungry into a 'feel good' exercise for those who donate, and lets people think that they have done their part. When it allows our government to shirk their responsibility, allows the big businesses to profit and the general public to believe that the need has been fulfilled, when it is the furthest thing from the truth.”  
– survey respondent



## **Call for governments to end poverty**

Many respondents call for government policies that will put food in the budget of people who are poor, including adequate social assistance rates, higher minimum wages, affordable housing, and a guaranteed annual income.

“ I manage a food bank and I am horrified by the amount of money people are expected to live on, by the ‘food’ people donate, by attitudes about the poor, and by how short-sighted we all are when we don’t demand a universal guaranteed income in Canada!”  
– survey respondent

## **Social assistance rates are appalling**

Some people have told us they worry that if the Put Food in the Budget campaign continues to argue that food banks are not enough, donations to food banks will decline and people who are poor will become even more desperate. One survey respondent said it this way:

“ Food banks are doing what they can to address poverty, and many food banks are adopting friendly ‘user-policies.’ I hope that your campaign doesn’t criticize food banks, but looks at the appalling social assistance rates.”  
– survey respondent

## **Governments abdicate their responsibility**

Survey respondents described how government is abdicating its responsibility to provide for all members of society when it relies on food banks instead of implementing policies that put food in the budget:

“ Food banks are doing the work that governments should do—raising welfare rates, for example.”  
– survey respondent

“ Prior to the Harris government’s drastic cuts to ODSP, OW, and then Mother’s Allowance, no one I knew of on those needed a food bank. Now most do or someone is personally helping them with food. How sad that over 20 years later the ODSP/OW rates aren’t up to what they were back prior to 1993!”  
– survey respondent

“ Governments think that because there are food banks they don’t have to give as much money. The answer is an increase in minimum wage—and more money for social assistance, adapted to inflation.”  
– survey respondent

“ I agree it’s time for our government to step up ... we are such a rich country... surely every one of our Canadian people should be able to eat a healthy diet everyday... without needing to go to a food bank.”  
– survey respondent

## Governments abdicate their responsibility (Continued)

“ I am always conflicted about giving to food drives, not because I begrudge the food, because I do not. I think food banks have become entrenched in our psychological selves and are viewed as wonderful things. The conflict is to donate or let people go hungry or perpetuate the growth of food banks by letting governments and citizens off the hook by not dealing with the real problem: people who are poor cannot purchase food because they do not have the money to do so. I think it is long past time to bring in a system that guarantees all people a standard of living that allows them to purchase their own food rather than the present system that... makes the rest of us feel good for giving to food banks while continuing to ignore the real issue.”

– survey respondent

“ The social safety net is full of holes and governments are relying on the good graces of people to fill those holes with food and monetary donations. This is unfair and unconscionable.”

– survey respondent

“ I am a client at a food bank, but I also volunteer my time to help others. It makes me so angry that as a food bank user, I rely on multiple food agencies—and some people don't even have that privilege! And we still don't get enough for our family. As a volunteer, I see all walks of life in poverty—full-time workers, house owners, disabled, etc. It's unfortunate the government is not putting enough supports where people have to rely on multiple agencies and still not get enough. So many of us are desperate and need help. We don't want the food bank to be a permanent solution, but sadly it has become one for many families I see, including our own, every month.”

– survey respondent

“ No one should have to go hungry in Canada. Government social assistance rates need to increase significantly. The current rates for Ontario Works and ODSP are far, far below the poverty threshold, rates basically that would allow people to slowly starve to death if there weren't food banks. The government should be ashamed, for it is the government who relies on the existence of food banks so it is off the financial hook. Most taxpayers would be willing to see an increase in their taxes to eliminate the need for food banks.”

– survey respondent

“ Food banks are an abdication on the part of governments to ensure the right to food.”

– survey respondent

“ Poverty isn't prevented in Canada, it is allowed to fester.”

– survey respondent

“ The government depends on food banks doing what they do not. This has to stop.”

– survey respondent

## Restore our collective dignity

These comments and the survey results tell an important story. It's a story that is different than the one being told by the government and mainstream media, and in public appeals for donations to food banks. People who responded to the survey call on our governments to:

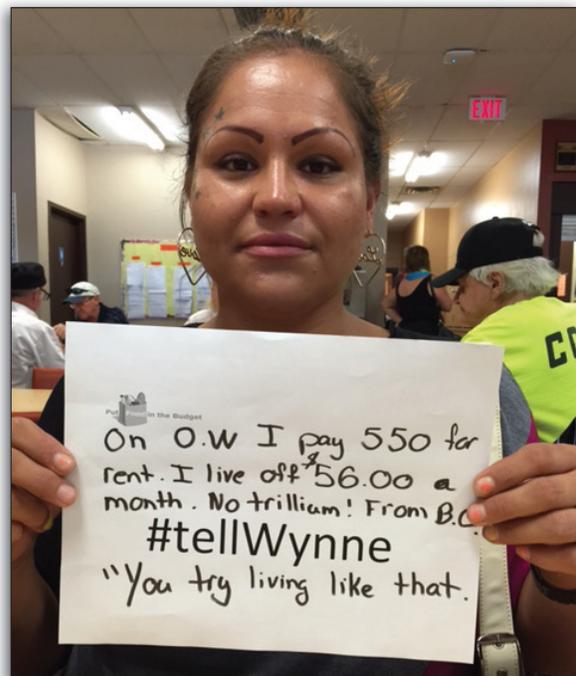
- Stop the humiliation of people who are poor, caused by their having to rely on charitable donations in order to eat.
- End the national shame that results from requiring people who are poor in a country as wealthy as Canada to go to food banks.
- Put food in the budget of people who are poor—make food banks unnecessary.

The results of this survey are important to people who are poor and who use food banks, because they demonstrate that the shame they are made to feel is everyone's shame.

**Our collective dignity as a nation will be improved when our governments make food banks unnecessary and put food in the budget of people who are poor.**

The results of this survey are also important because they tell people who donate to and who volunteer or work at a food bank that many people like them feel the same way. We are not alone when we publicly raise their voices and demand that governments put food in the budget.

The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes it is important to amplify the critical message heard from these respondents: food banks are not enough.



# The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes...

## 1 FOOD CHARITY DOES NOT MEET PEOPLE'S DAILY NEEDS FOR NUTRITIOUS FOOD

- Food banks will never be able to collect and distribute enough healthy and nutritious food to end household food insecurity.
- Food bank volunteers, staff and donors are doing the best they can in an impossible situation. The Put Food in the Budget campaign respects their compassion and dedication
- Corporations that seriously want to end poverty must pay enough taxes to support government social programs. Their own labour practices must provide wages, benefits and working conditions that ensure workers can live in health and dignity.

## 2 IN A SOCIETY AS WEALTHY AS OURS NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO RELY ON FOOD BANKS

- 118,000 millionaires live in Toronto alone<sup>3</sup>
- The top six banks in Canada collectively made record breaking profits of \$35 billion in 2015<sup>4</sup>.
- Canada's top 100 CEOs pocketed, on average, \$8.96 million in 2014—184 times more than the average wage in Canada.<sup>5</sup>

## 3 PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE IS NOT LIVING UP TO HER PROMISE TO BE THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PREMIER

- The high cost of housing and heating consume most of the income of people who receive social assistance or who work in low-wage jobs.
- Social assistance rates are shamefully inadequate: they do not provide people with an income that provides for a life of health and dignity.
- Because pensions for many people are too low and minimum wages are inadequate, many people do not have enough money to put food in their budget.
- The provincial government is responsible for creating and implementing legislation, policies and programs to end poverty in Ontario and ensure that everyone can have a life of health and dignity.
- Proven solutions to poverty include—but are not limited to—higher social assistance rates, higher minimum wages, affordable housing, affordable childcare, affordable public transit, affordable education and accessible community services.

## 4 THE POLITICAL WILL TO END POVERTY IN ONTARIO BEGINS WITH US

- Premier Wynne will implement legislation, policies and programs that put food in the budget only when enough of us organize and demand that she make ending poverty an urgent priority.
- Unless we demand that Premier Wynne put food in the budget, people who are poor in Ontario will be forced to rely on food banks for another thirty years.

3 [http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/09/toronto\\_has\\_118000\\_millionaires.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/09/toronto_has_118000_millionaires.html)

4 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/bank-profits-rise-1.3348661>

5 <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/ceo2016#sthash.TQ8AwVn5.dpuf>

# Take action to Put Food in the Budget

The Put Food in the Budget campaign intends this report to be a resource for people who are organizing to end poverty in Ontario. If you agree that Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario government must act to put food in the budget, you can do many things:

- Share and discuss this report with friends, family, and co-workers.
- Endorse the Put Food in the Budget campaign statement on food banks. (See Appendix 2, page 15).
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, using the information in this report to state that it's time to put food in the budget and make food banks unnecessary.
- Meet with a local reporter to discuss the results of this report, and to talk about the urgent need to end poverty in your community.
- Arrange a meeting with your local MPP to present and discuss this report. Tell your MPP that food banks are not enough, and demand that your MPP make ending poverty an urgent priority and support policies that put food in the budget.
- When politicians of any political party shows up at a food drive with a donation for a photo opportunity, tell them food banks are not enough and tell them—it's time to put food in the budget!
- Whenever a corporation sponsors a food drive tell the corporation's managers and owners to pay their workers a living wage and to pay enough taxes to ensure that governments can put food in the budget.
- Contact Premier Wynne. Tell her that food banks are not enough—it's time to put food in the budget.

Kathleen Wynne, Premier;  
 Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
 Toronto ON M7A 1A1  
 Email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)  
 Phone: 416 325 1941



Members of Put Food in the Budget confront Premier Wynne.

## Conclusion

### Thank you...

Thank you to everyone who participated in this survey and shared their comments with us. We hear you. Your comments strengthen our resolve and commitment to put food in the budget of people in Ontario who are poor.

Some of you spoke of your appreciation of our campaign:

“ I think the work you do is phenomenal to raise awareness of how the government uses food banks as a smoke screen to hide the huge inequity around a living wage.”  
– survey respondent

“ Keep up the good work, and by keeping pressure on all levels of government, we can make this a better place for all.”  
– survey respondent

“ I am a member of a few poverty-reduction organizations and have been involved in Put Food in the Budget. Having lived, worked, and still having family in northeastern Ontario, where some are Ojibway-Metis, I thank you PFIB for exposing the truth on our inhuman conditions up there.”  
– survey respondent

“ Keep up the good work/advocacy.”  
– survey respondent

### Acknowledgements

Kathe Rogers: Editor  
Tony Biddle: Design  
Eric Mills: Editing  
Mike Balkwill: Writer

### You can join the campaign to Put Food in the Budget

And you can keep informed about campaign activities through our website and social media.

Support the Put Food in the Budget campaign by:

- signing up for our e-newsletter.
- making a financial donation

[www.putfoodinthebudget.ca](http://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca)  
Email: [infopfib@gmail.com](mailto:infopfib@gmail.com)

  @putfoodinbudget | #pfib

Put Food in the Budget campaign  
Box 143, 283 Danforth Ave.  
Toronto, ON M4K 1N2

“ Put Food in The Budget’s survey of food bank users and volunteers provides compelling evidence that it’s high time to change the conversation about hunger in Ontario, and the rest of Canada, from food charity to the Right to Food.”  
– Graham Riches,  
Emeritus Professor, UBC School of Social Work

## Commentary

“Survey respondents have spoken very eloquently about the disgrace of food banks’ existence in a country as wealthy as this one, where social assistance and low-wage jobs do not allow people to cover the basic necessities of life. People ask me how we can afford to eliminate poverty. I ask them how we can afford not to. We are already paying dearly—billions more than it would cost to enable people to buy food, housing, and other essentials. For example, we know that 20% of our health care costs are directly related to poverty. But the cost of poverty in human suffering is incalculable. As the survey respondents have said so clearly, ENOUGH! Time to end this madness. Let’s make sure that food banks can close because there is no longer any demand for what they offer”.

Elaine Power,  
Ph.D. Associate Professor  
School of Kinesiology & Health Studies  
Queen’s University

“Put Food in The Budget’s survey of food bank users and volunteers provides compelling evidence that it’s high time to change the conversation about hunger in Ontario, and the rest of Canada, from food charity to the Right to Food. Respondents frequently cite the responsibility of the Ontario Government to act. In fact the Ontario Government has an obligation under international law to ensure the food security of all its citizens. As a partner with the Federal Government of Canada, Ontario long ago ratified the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, including the Right to Food (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1976). Forty years is too long to wait. Discharge your legislative obligation. Act now!”

Graham Riches,  
Emeritus Professor and former Director,  
UBC School of Social Work

## References

*HungerCount 2015*. (2015). Mississauga, ON: Food Banks Canada.

Loopstra R., and Tarasuk V. (2015). Food Bank Usage Is a Poor Indicator of Food Insecurity: Insights from Canada. *Social Policy and Society*, 14(3), 443-455.

Tarasuk V., Dachner N., and Loopstra R. (2014). Food banks, welfare, and food insecurity in Canada. *British Food Journal*, 116(9), 1405-1417.

Riches, G and Tarasuk, V (2014) “Canada: Thirty years of Food Charity and Public Policy Neglect”, Ch. 4 in *First World Hunger Revisited; Food Charity or the Right to Food?* Riches & Silvasti (eds) [www.palgrave.com/page/detail/first-world-hunger-revisited-graham-riches/?k=9781137298720](http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/first-world-hunger-revisited-graham-riches/?k=9781137298720)

## Appendix I

# Survey Results and Comments

### QUESTION 1

**Q:** All people in Canada without enough money to buy food go to a food bank. True or false?

**A: False.** Fewer than one in four people who don't have enough money for food go to food banks.

**Respondents' answers:** "True" 8%, "False" 92%

### QUESTION 2

**Q:** Anybody can go to a food bank as often as they need food. True or false?

**A: False:** In most Ontario communities, food bank visits are limited to one per month.

**Respondents' answers:** "True" 8%, "False" 92%

### QUESTION 3

**Q:** People who go to food banks are able to get enough food to feed their families. True or false?

**A: False:** Most food banks provide enough food for only 2 or 3 days a month.

**Respondents' answers:** "True" 4%, "False" 96%

### Comments from survey respondents

“Food banks can only rely on what people donate. There are so many poor people today, that food banks can't keep up. They were meant for emergencies. They are not the answer.”

“Family of five and two days of food helps, but it still hurts to go to bed hungry.”

“Our food bank is full of dented, opened, and mostly outdated food. I hate using it.”

“Fresh food needs are not met in many rural areas. I live in North Hastings. Our tiny food basket is open three days a month in a hamlet with 37% of the people living under the poverty line. This is absurd and stigma-creating. Please put food in the budget.”

“I manage a team of social workers who assist refugees who are resettled to Canada. The MAJORITY of our clients rely on food banks. It's a very sad state of affairs indeed.”

“Over the past five years, I have needed to get food from a food bank. I have noticed that the amount of food I am getting now is actually not as much as what I was getting five years ago. This is because we have more people who also need access to that food, and in order to attempt to deal with this, the food banks have to give each household less. This is food rationing... just like WWII. Why is rationing food for the poor accepted as okie-dokie? Could this be part of a way to keep us living in fear and deprivation? Stop the war on the poor!”

### QUESTION 4

**Q:** People who rely on food banks can eat a healthy diet. True or false?

**A:** Evaluations of food provided by food banks consistently document poor nutritional quality. Adults who can't afford to buy adequate food require from 23% to 121% more healthcare than average Ontarians do.

**Respondents' answers:** "True" 8%, "False" 92%

## Appendix I

# Survey Results and Comments *(continued)*

### Comments from survey respondents

“ I volunteer at a church food voucher program. There is never enough money for underprivileged families to eat a healthy diet.”

“ I can remember being horrified at what the food bank considered ‘food’. All processed, high salt, high-chemical stuff. We need policies that end poverty altogether.”

“ I used to go with a friend from across town. There was nothing, ever, that either I or my child could eat: we have special diet needs. I’d give him our ‘stuff’, and he’d give me \$5, which would purchase marked-down produce on the clearance section at the local greengrocer’s. One time, I was very excited: there were broken beans in a brown bag; they were dirty, but dirt washes off. However, the ‘dirt’ turned out to be mold.”

“ ‘Emergency measure’ implies that one requires food from the food bank for only a few days a month, when in fact people working for minimum wages do not have any money for food after the rent, heat, and hydro are paid. There is no milk, hardly any meat and fresh produce—a healthy diet is not possible. People suffer because food banks cannot replicate a grocery store; therefore, balanced meals are not attainable. Increasing their income is the only solution. Charity does not get people out of poverty.”

“ Food bank diets exacerbate ill health and poor dental outcomes. A way must be found to have decision-makers comprehend these budgetary and human costs.”

#### QUESTION 5

**Q:** Only people who receive social assistance go to food banks. True or false?

**A: False.** 16% of those assisted by a food bank earn most of their income from employment, and 7% of households helped by food banks live primarily on a pension (HungerCount 2015).

**Respondents’ answers:** “True” 2%, “False” 98%

#### QUESTION 6

**Q:** Food bank donations reduce household food insecurity. True or false?

**A: False:** Household food insecurity is determined by financial vulnerability. Minimally vulnerable households experience anxiety that their food supplies will run out; at more severe levels, household members go without food. Only increasing income and making rent affordable, thus ensuring that people with low incomes have enough money for food, reduces food insecurity. (Loopstra, Dachner, Tarasuk 2015).

**Respondents’ answers:** “True” 28%, “False” 72%

#### QUESTION 7

**Q:** When you make a donation to a food bank, do you expect that those who request the food will be required to submit proof of income (and other documents) to prove that they need it? Yes or no?

**A: No:** Many food banks require people who need food to provide proof of income, proof of expenses (rent, hydro, telephone, etc.) and photo ID of family members.

**Respondents’ answers:** “Yes” 28%, “No” 72%

## Appendix I Survey Results and Comments *(continued)*

### QUESTION 8

**Q:** Many food banks have a detailed screening process because they fear that recipients may ‘abuse the system.’ When you donate to a food bank, do you worry about ‘abuse’? Yes or no?

**A: No:** The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes that food is a right and that no one who didn’t have to would go to a food bank.

**Respondents’ answers:** “Yes” 15%, “No” 85%

### Comments from survey respondents

“ I know people have to provide proof of income, but I don’t like it.”

“ I ‘know’ people have to prove need; it shouldn’t be done—it’s an invasion of privacy. No one goes begging for food unless they need it.”

“ Once I did try to go, but I do not like the detailed inquisition process that I was met with, so I stayed away. People need to be informed that there is no LAW on the books to protect people’s personal privacy of their information they give to the food bank. They tell you they have a confidentiality policy, but try to enforce that if your privacy has been breached.”

“ Our little town has had a food bank since 1986. They demand users of their service (small local food banks, food cupboards, schools) have a detailed and intrusive documentation process in place for their clients.”

“ My food bank is closed the first week of every month, so you cannot get help the first week of the month. If you have to choose between heat or electricity staying on or food, you are going to go hungry because you will never be able to afford the fees to get heat or electricity running again if you choose food. Poverty is real, and it is degrading. Proving you need food, and are poor enough to need it, is degrading. Why do the rich not have to prove they need tax breaks??? Why do they not have to prove their companies need government programs?? In three years, my son turns 18; at that point, as a disabled single mother to a special needs child, we will lose half of our income. Half of what already does not cover basic needs.”

“ The food bank at which I volunteer does NOT require proof of need. Also, a choice of two fresh fruits and two fresh vegetables are provided in addition to canned selections of vegetables and other staples. We are very conscious of trying to provide healthy food options.”

“ I live on ODSP. My local food bank has cut me off because ‘I should have money left.’ I’m not the only one on ODSP that they have cut off. I pay full market rent and don’t have money left. Luckily, other pantries are less prohibitive and I can access them.”

## Appendix I Survey Results and Comments *(continued)*

### QUESTION 9

**Q:** Food banks should be unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada. Yes or no?

**A:** If you answered YES, go to our website at [www.putfoodinthebudget.ca](http://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca) and join the campaign to Put Food in the Budget.

**Respondents' answers:** “Yes” 89%, “No” 11 %

### Comments from survey respondents

“We as a country, as a people, should be totally ashamed that people go hungry when there is so much to give.”

“I am employed in Client Services at a Food Bank. It breaks my heart daily the state of our country and its lack of empathy for the basic necessities (rights) of a human being in Canada—food and shelter!”

“Food banks are one of the best examples of how individuals and communities act together to support the people neglected by government. I am ashamed to live in a country where food banks are necessary. We need to make sure people actually have enough to eat by creating a minimum income that meets the true cost of living in this country.”

“I am a journalist/social activist who writes about poverty and food bank usage. There is shame in and around food bank usage. Shame that in our opulent province people, many of whom are children, are going hungry each day.”

“Having an alternative ‘food’ source for poor people is absurd and the Canadian government should be ashamed that this has continued for so long. I am actively working to change this.”

“It is a national shame that any Canadian needs to turn to a food bank. We need plans and policies to put it to an end.”

“It is a disgrace that they are still around! Food should be available to any in need. Hope and pray that they are not around for another 30 years!”

“I find it shameful that we still have food banks in Canada, rather than policies that ensure everyone has a decent standard of living. EVERYONE!”

“It is sad, appalling, and morally reprehensible that a temporary stop gap, designed to address food insecurity among marginalized and impoverished people in our wealthy and civilized nation, endures 30 years later! This is a benchmark that governmental policies and procedures need to be redesigned and updated. Food security is a birthright!”

“Charity is essential when there's no justice, but there is no justice when people have to rely on charity.”

“Food banks are a sign of injustice, and keeping people in poverty is violence.”

## Appendix I Survey Results and Comments *(continued)*

### QUESTION 10

**Q:** After 30 years of ‘emergency’ food banks in Canada, it’s time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor. Yes or no?

**A:** If you answered YES, please contact Premier Kathleen Wynne and tell her to put food in the budget. Phone: 416-325-1941 Email: premier@ontario.ca

**Respondents’ answers:** “Yes” 98%, “No” 2%

98% of respondents agree that after 30 years of ‘emergency’ food banks in Canada, it’s time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor!

Respondents recommended the following policies as examples of how to put food in the budget of people in Ontario who are poor

### Comments from survey respondents

“Food banks are not the answer. Only good social policy will eliminate food insecurity and its source—poverty.”

“Minimum wages need to become full-living wages.”

“Time to ensure that housing is available with proper supports, along with medical, social, and financial supports. Let’s go!”

“I am all for us as citizens being charitable. One of the very best ways for us citizens to be charitable is to pay sufficient taxes so that welfare and other transfer payments will reflect the needs of recipients. Government transfer payments are the most efficient way to be charitable.”

“Social assistance rates need be increased significantly and reflect the real cost of living, not survival.”

“All Canadians need a living wage—too many simply cannot get sufficient work and many have work that simply does not pay enough.”

“There should be a guaranteed annual income for everybody. It worked beautifully when they tried it in Manitoba.”

“It’s time to treat access to HEALTHY food as a human right!”

“Revolution now!”

## Appendix 2

# Endorsement

### 1 FOOD CHARITY DOES NOT MEET PEOPLE'S DAILY NEEDS FOR NUTRITIOUS FOOD

- Food banks will never be able to collect and distribute enough healthy and nutritious food to end household food insecurity.
- Food bank volunteers, staff and donors are doing the best they can in an impossible situation. The Put Food in the Budget campaign respects their compassion and dedication
- Corporations that seriously want to end poverty must pay enough taxes to support government social programs. Their own labour practices must provide wages, benefits and working conditions that ensure workers can live in health and dignity.

### 2 IN A SOCIETY AS WEALTHY AS OURS NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO RELY ON FOOD BANKS

- 118,000 millionaires live in Toronto alone<sup>1</sup>
- The top six banks in Canada collectively made record breaking profits of \$35 billion in 2015<sup>2</sup>.
- Canada's top 100 CEOs pocketed, on average, \$8.96 million in 2014—184 times more than the average wage in Canada.<sup>3</sup>

### 3 PREMIER KATHLEEN WYNNE IS NOT LIVING UP TO HER PROMISE TO BE THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PREMIER

- The high cost of housing and heating consume most of the income of people who receive social assistance or who work in low-wage jobs.
- Social assistance rates are shamefully inadequate: they do not provide people with an income that provides for a life of health and dignity.
- Because pensions for many people are too low and minimum wages are inadequate, many people do not have enough money to put food in their budget.
- The provincial government is responsible for creating and implementing legislation, policies and programs to end poverty in Ontario and ensure that everyone can have a life of health and dignity.
- Proven solutions to poverty include—but are not limited to—higher social assistance rates, higher minimum wages, affordable housing, affordable childcare, affordable public transit, affordable education and accessible community services.

### 4 THE POLITICAL WILL TO END POVERTY IN ONTARIO BEGINS WITH US

- Premier Wynne will implement legislation, policies and programs that put food in the budget only when enough of us organize and demand that she make ending poverty an urgent priority.
- Unless we demand that Premier Wynne put food in the budget, people who are poor in Ontario will be forced to rely on food banks for another thirty years.

1 [http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/09/toronto\\_has\\_118000\\_millionaires.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/05/09/toronto_has_118000_millionaires.html)

2 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/bank-profits-rise-1.3348661>

3 <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/ceo2016#sthash.TQ8AwVn5.dpuf>

## Appendix 2 Endorsement

### I agree with the Put Food in the Budget campaign:

- Food charity does not meet people's daily needs for nutritious food
- In a society as wealthy as ours no one should have to rely on food banks
- Premier Kathleen Wynne is not living up to her promise to be the social justice premier
- The political will to end poverty in Ontario begins with us

### I endorse the demands of the Put Food in the Budget campaign that Premier Kathleen Wynne put food in the budget and...

- Raise social assistance rates
- Raise the minimum wage
- Create affordable housing
- Raise corporate taxes

### I pledge to take action to put food in the budget!!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Website (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail endorsement to: Put Food in the Budget campaign  
Box 143, 283 Danforth Ave.  
Toronto, ON M4K 1N2

or scan and email to:  
infopfib@gmail.com



**People across Canada have been generously donating to food banks for more than thirty years. Do food bank donations meet the need? Do you wonder if food banks will be necessary for *another* thirty years?**

**What do *you* think? Please complete this short survey:**

- 1 All people in Canada without enough money to buy food go to a food bank. TRUE  FALSE
- 2 Anybody can go to a food bank as often as they need food. TRUE  FALSE
- 3 People who go to food banks are able to get enough food to feed their families. TRUE  FALSE
- 4 People who rely on food banks can eat a healthy diet. TRUE  FALSE
- 5 Only people who receive social assistance go to food banks. TRUE  FALSE
- 6 Food bank donations reduce household food insecurity. TRUE  FALSE
- 7 When you make a donation to a food bank, do you expect that those who request the food will be required to submit proof of income (and other documents) to prove that they need it? YES  NO
- 8 Many food banks have a detailed screening process because they fear that recipients may 'abuse the system.' When you donate to a food bank, do you worry about 'abuse'? YES  NO
- 9 Food banks should be unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada. YES  NO
- 10 After 30 years of 'emergency' food banks in Canada, it's time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor. YES  NO

**How did you do?**  
See next page for some answers and facts.



- 1 *All people in Canada without enough money to buy food go to a food bank.*  
**False:** Fewer than one in four people who don't have enough money for food go to food banks.

---
- 2 *Anybody can go to a food bank as often as they need food.*  
**False:** In most Ontario communities, food bank visits are limited to one per month.

---
- 3 *People who go to food banks are able to get enough food to feed their families.*  
**False:** Most food banks provide enough food for only 2 or 3 days a month.

---
- 4 *People who rely on food banks can eat a healthy diet.*  
**False:** Evaluations of food provided by food banks consistently document poor nutritional quality. Adults who can't afford to buy adequate food require from 23% to 121% more health-care than average Ontarians do.

---
- 5 *Only people who receive social assistance go to food banks.*  
**False:** 16% of those assisted by a food bank earn most of their income from employment, and 7% of households helped by food banks live primarily on a pension (HungerCount 2015).

---
- 6 *Food bank donations reduce household food insecurity.*  
**False:** Household food insecurity is determined by financial vulnerability. Minimally vulnerable households experience anxiety that their food supplies will run out; at more severe levels, household members go without food. Only increasing income and making rent affordable, thus ensuring that people with low incomes have enough money for food, reduces food insecurity. (Loopstra, Dachner, Tarasuk 2015)

---
- 7 *When you make a donation to a food bank, do you expect that those who request the food will be required to submit proof of income (and other documents) to prove that they need it?*  
Many food banks require people who need food to provide proof of income, proof of expenses (rent, hydro, telephone, etc.) and photo ID of family members.

---
- 8 *Many food banks have a detailed screening process because they fear that recipients may 'abuse the system.' When you donate to a food bank, do you worry about 'abuse'?*  
The Put Food in the Budget campaign believes that food is a right and that no one who didn't have to would go to a food bank.

---
- 9 *Food banks should be unnecessary in a country as wealthy as Canada.*  
If you answered **YES**, go to our website at [www.putfoodinthebudget.ca](http://www.putfoodinthebudget.ca) and join the campaign to Put Food in the Budget!

---
- 10 *After 30 years of 'emergency' food banks in Canada, it's time for government policies that put food in the budget of people who are poor.*  
If you answered **YES**, please contact Premier Kathleen Wynne and tell her to put food in the budget. Phone: 416-325-1941 Email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

---