

Frequently Asked Questions



1. What Daily Bread Food Bank's mission?

Daily Bread Food Bank is fighting to end hunger in our communities by:

- Providing food and resources for hungry people

Food donations, coming from the public and the food industry, are sorted and delivered to our 165 member agencies. Agencies provide food relief programs, such as food banks and meal programs, for diverse members of our community. Clients are also offered advocacy support in resolving issues that may accompany hunger like access to social benefits, housing, immigration, and employment.

- Mobilizing greater support, involvement and action

You help fight hunger! Daily Bread Food Bank links individuals, companies, schools and community groups together to end hunger and poverty in our community. Through on-going community financial and food donations, volunteerism and advocacy Daily Bread Food Bank can continue its important work.

- Creating social change to reduce poverty through research, education and advocacy

Getting to the root causes of hunger is vital to solving the problem. Daily Bread develops innovative, practical government policies that reduce hunger and poverty. By conducting community-based research and gathering statistics through an annual survey of food bank clients, Daily Bread Food Bank creates reports that increase public and political responsiveness and encourages dialogue about the issues of hunger and poverty.

2. Can you end hunger in our communities?

Definitely. Before 1983, food banks were unimaginable in Canada, as they should be today. Unfortunately, these days demand for food banks is at a record high. Through research we educate politicians, the public and community leaders by producing reports about the causes of hunger and poverty and offering solutions to reduce food bank use.

3. When was Daily Bread Food Bank established and why?

Early in 1983, a number of concerned people began meeting to look at how to address the escalating poverty and hunger in Toronto. After much deliberation and consultation, it was decided that a centralized organization to solicit and distribute food was needed. This organization, although incorporated, was meant to be temporary as the founding group would continue to press for changes in public policy to alleviate the problem of hunger. The driving force in the beginnings, and the first Executive Director, was Sister Marie Tremblay, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph, a Catholic order. Incorporation occurred in the fall and the first food was received at Christmas of 1983.

4. Why do you have a central warehouse and distribution system as opposed to simply neighbourhood food banks on their own?

Daily Bread Food Bank is a network of food banks and other food relief programs. It is Toronto's largest network of food relief for people who are struggling with hunger. The food industry preferred to have a central organization to deliver food to, so Daily Bread was established to be the primary distributor of food. The central warehouse and distribution system works better than a group of smaller food banks or programs would because as a representative of over 160 member agencies, Daily Bread can raise much more food and funds.

Daily Bread's size and visibility also allows us to negotiate beneficial relationships with the food industry and allows us to create awareness campaigns with the media.

5. Do people get paid to work at Daily Bread?

Yes, we have a staff of approximately 50 people. Given the amount of food we deal in (over 12 million pounds in 2006/07 fiscal year) and the record high number of people struggling with hunger, it is necessary to have full time staff who work regular business hours to handle the load. It comes down to accountability and efficiency. Although we have some paid staff, we are very much a volunteer powered organization. We keep salary costs down by having a large number of volunteers support our efforts in administrative positions, in our warehouse and sorting food. We couldn't do what we do without their help.

6. Does Daily Bread Food Bank need financial donations?

Absolutely. Daily Bread can purchase more food with a dollar than members of the public can. We also need money to store, sort, and distribute the food we collect. Our non-food expenses are best characterized as operations costs (such as gas for trucks, maintenance, refrigeration) as opposed to administrative costs. All of these expenses are directly related to achieving our mission.

7. How can I help?

The best way is to help us raise public awareness of hunger and support the fight against hunger. Our website regularly offers suggestions on how to do so. Another great way to help is to organize a fund or food drive at your school, church, business or community organization. You may also be interested in joining our team of special events volunteers who help with public education, fund and food raising events and food drives.

At Daily Bread's New Toronto Street facility, we have various volunteer positions available ranging from administrative duties such as general office help to sorting food. Generally, positions are available during regular business hours. We can take groups or individuals. We have two public sorting days as part of each of our three major food drives. The best source of volunteer opportunities is found on our web-site: dailybread.ca

Please note: All volunteers must be over 14 years except for children accompanied by parents on our public sorting days.

8. How do the food programs know people really need the food?

When someone asks for food from a neighbourhood food bank there is an intake interview to assess if that person fits the eligibility criteria. Part of that interview requires that the client bring some form of documentation that indicates their financial and home situation. We do this to see how much money they have left over after they have paid their rent to meet the rest of their needs— including their most basic needs, such as food. The process respects the dignity of those involved. The interview is necessary so that food is getting to people who need it. It also ensures that the people who have the least income have the greatest access to food. Those with the fewest resources are eligible to come to a food bank up to four times a month, while some who comparatively have more may only be eligible to come one, two or three times.

9. How much food can you give out to a person?

We give out two to three days worth of food per person in each household to supplement what the individual or family can afford. We do the best we can to make sure no one goes hungry but no one can live entirely off of food from a food bank. This food is usually stretched out to last longer.

Our best is not enough. More food would help but the real answer is to reduce the number of people who rely on food banks so that we can make the food we do receive go further.