



# Community Food Security Update

Presentation to the Health and Social Services Committee

February 6, 2025

Ben Earle, President and CEO



**Established** | 2008 by local food banks as the **regional food distribution hub**.

**Purpose** | to **nourish our community** by making food accessible to residents of Durham

**Reach** | **70 community food programs** across Durham

**Distribution** | **\$8.8 million worth** (2.5 million lbs) of fresh and non-perishable food annually

**Grocery Distribution Centres**

Loblaws | Sobeys

**Food Banking Partners**

Feed Ontario | Food Banks Canada

**Food Rescue Partners**

Second Harvest

**Farm Production**

Local farm partners | FTND Vertical Farm

**Food Service Distribution**

Gordon Food | Flanagan Foodservice

**Community & Retail Partners**

Grocery | Community Donations



**Food Banks & Pantries**

Tiered based on Hunger Count

**Community Meal Programs**

e.g. DOFN, Backdoor Mission

**Community Food Programs**

Shelters | Schools | Social Service Orgs

**The Market**

@ Oshawa | @ Iroquois Park

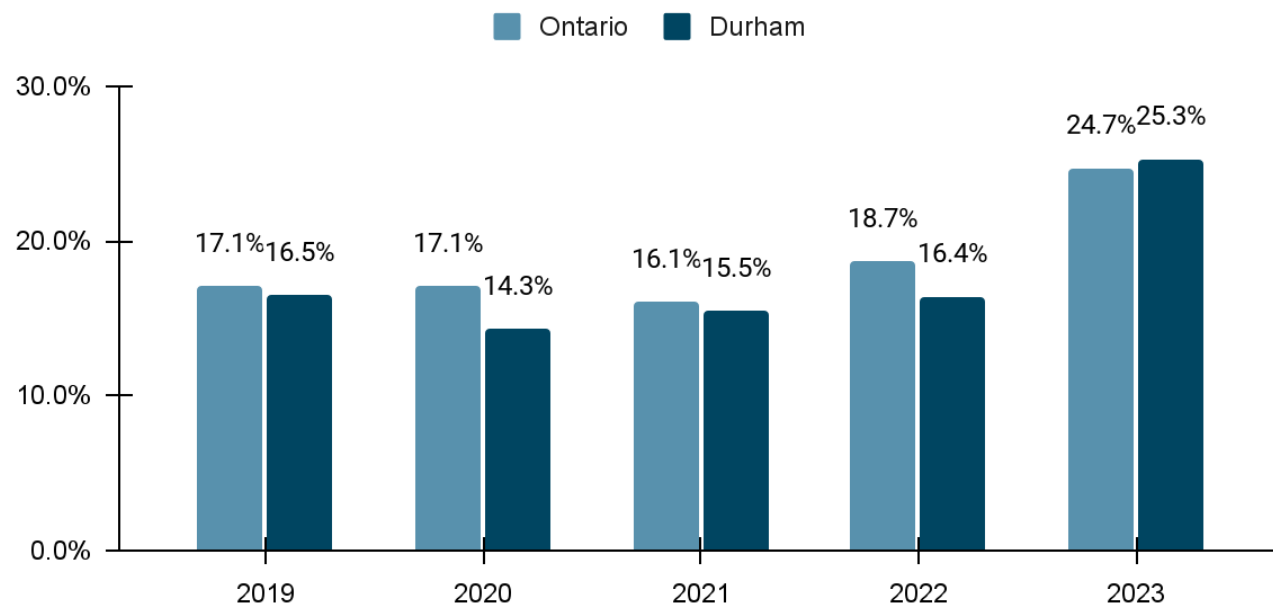


**Feed the Need in Durham**  
How we work



*Durham, like communities across Ontario, is in the midst of an escalating crisis of food insecurity as more residents than at any previous time struggle with the challenge of accessing the food that they require for a healthy and nutritious diet.*


## Food Insecure Households, Ontario and Durham (2019 - 2023)



Source: Public Health Ontario, 2024, Snapshots Data File For Household Food Insecurity

In 2023, 63,872 Durham households were food insecure.

Within these households, 192,896 individuals are living with food insecurity, an increase of 10.9% over 2022.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands pushing a metal shopping cart through a grocery store aisle. The person is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt. The cart has an orange handle. In the foreground, the cart is filled with fresh produce, including several yellow pineapples and red bell peppers. The background shows the store's aisles with various products on shelves and bright overhead lighting.

Rising food insecurity in Durham is the direct result of a sharp rise in the cost of necessities, in particular a significant rise in the cost of food and housing.

From January 2020 to January 2024, food prices in Canada increased by 22.5% and housing prices by 21.9%.

In Durham, from 2019 to 2023, the monthly cost of food for a family of four increased by 36%, from \$821 per month to \$1,173 per month.

In the previous 5-year period (2015-2018), these costs increased by only 2%, from \$830 per month to \$853.

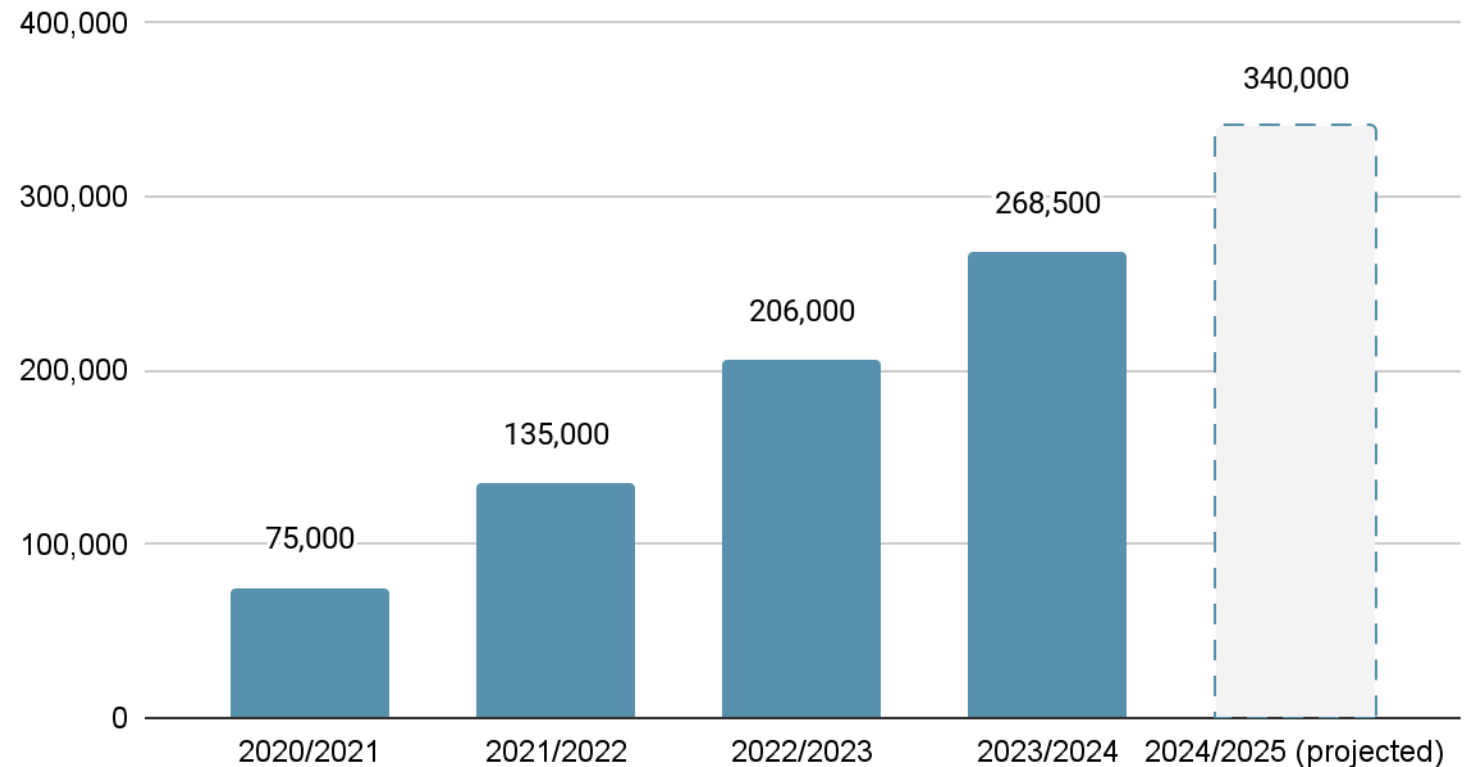
## Food Bank Use

In 2023, **37,887 individuals visited a food bank in Durham**, an unprecedented increase of 60% since 2021.

Over the past year the number of visits to food banks in our community increased 30% to 268,500.

This growth has continued with an increase of 27% in the number of visits to food banks from April to October 2024 over the same period in 2023.

Visits to food banks in FTND's network (annual)

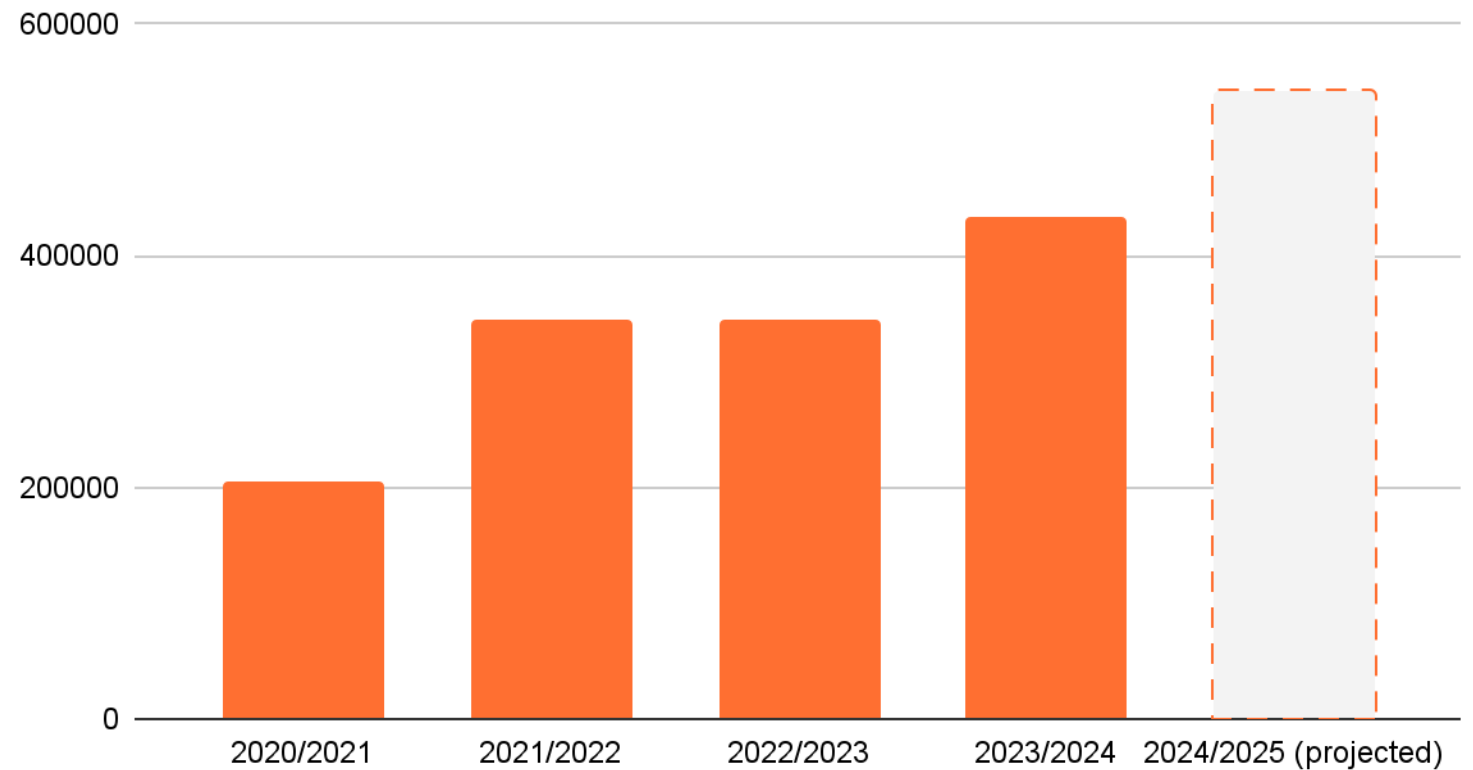


# Meal Programs

From April 2023 to March 2024 there were 432,000 visits to meal programs in FTND's network, an increase of 26% over the previous year.

This growth has continued with an increase of 25% in the number of visits to meal programs from April to October 2024 over the same period in 2023.

Visits to meal programs in FTND's network (annual)



Feed the Need in Durham supports **policy change that will reduce poverty and increase dignified access to food** for residents of Durham.

- Food Banks Canada's Groceries and Essentials Benefit
- Introduction of a **national basic income guarantee** that would be available to all Canadians when they needed it most, providing an income floor to reduce and stave off poverty across our community.

To truly create community food security, we need to **look closely, honestly, and collectively at our food systems** to identify and make the changes required for a food system that will meet the demands and challenges of the twenty-first century.

- This work starts at home, in Durham, where we can work together with producers, processors, retailers, government, community organizations, and residents to identify community-based actions that can support food security and a sustainable local food system.

