



Harvest Voices 2022: Report identifies current trends in poverty and food insecurity in Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba, December 1, 2022 – *Harvest Manitoba* (Harvest) – Now in its second year, *Harvest Voices 2022* was released today. The *voices* of this report are that of Harvest clients – the respondents of a large-scale survey conducted and compiled by Harvest Manitoba. The findings are compelling and illustrate how the use of food banks correlates to a broader spectrum of economic instability, that includes income as well as a lack of strong supports and programs for people in need.

“This report gives us a picture of who our clients are, the challenges they face every day, and the help they need,” said Meaghan Erbus, Director of Network, Advocacy and Education. “It’s just one snapshot of the real-world impact of food insecurity and poverty in our province, and we’ve found that 24% of the clients we now serve are employed. The report also has several eye-opening personal stories that should inspire us to work for a future where no Manitoban goes hungry.”

Linda, shares one of three personal client stories that are found in *Harvest Voices*. In 2013, she took an early retirement from a successful career in community work following a terminal cancer diagnosis. She has since beat back the terminal cancer diagnosis – however, her health and financial independence have been affected. With help from Harvest, she can better manage her budget. “Now that I have food that is coming in once a month, I’m able to handle the rest of the bills that are coming in,” said Linda.

With a network of more than 360 food banks and agencies across the province that feed more than 90,000 people a month, Harvest is now in unprecedented territory as the demand has increased by 40% since this time last year. “Inflation has taken a toll on food bank recipients. Prices continue to rise for nearly everything we buy, in particular food. As a result, the amount of people we serve has doubled since 2019,” said Vince Barletta, President and CEO of Harvest Manitoba.

The following are the key findings from this year’s report:

- Food bank usage in Winnipeg has **doubled** since 2019.
- Respondents were predominantly female (69.2%), and an average of 45.9 years of age.
- We are seeing more and more families with children needing to access food support - in the month of October we served **15,000 children**.
- There has been a **50% increase** in the number of clients with jobs accessing food banks (16% to 24%).

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Harvest Manitoba (“Harvest”) is a charitable organization dedicated to nourishing our communities and our sense of community so that no Manitoban goes hungry.

HARVEST VOICES BACKGROUNDER

December 1st, 2022

Harvest Manitoba

Harvest Manitoba (formerly *Winnipeg Harvest*) is a charitable organization dedicated to nourishing our communities and our sense of community. We believe that by working together we can achieve a future where no Manitoban goes hungry. We collect **12 million pounds** of food every year, which is sorted and packed largely by volunteers into Harvest Hampers and distributed to Manitobans through our Community Food Network of more than **360 food banks** and agencies in Winnipeg, rural, northern and First Nations communities. Right now, we feed 90,000 Manitobans every month, 15,330 of which are children. Our Food Distribution Centre, which includes our Emergency Food Support Assistance Line and Warehouse, is in our Winnipeg headquarters.

To learn more and to donate, please visit: HarvestManitoba.ca

Harvest Voices Report

Harvest Voices is a report dedicated to uplifting the voices of people accessing food banks across Manitoba. This report uses data gathered through surveys to identify trends in poverty and food security across our province. The survey consisted of sixty-seven questions on demographics, education, income, health and wellness, food insecurity, and inflation.

Throughout the report respondents have shared their experiences of the difficult choices they are forced to make everyday. Many speaking to loss of employment, food prices, life changes, and health being significant challenges they face daily.

Food bank clients were invited to participate in the survey by phone, in-person or online. The survey was conducted from August to October 2022, resulting in 395 surveys successfully completed and included in the analysis.

Today a quarter of food bank users are people with jobs, 50% more than just one year ago. An ever-growing number of food bank users are Indigenous, now over 40% of Harvest clients, and this number is set to increase due to rates of poverty, particularly child poverty much higher than the general population. We are also seeing a record number of children using food banks in Manitoba – 15,330 every month who are in both single parent and dual parent households.

The Harvest Voices 2022 report is now available for download from the Harvest website at [Harvest Voices 2022 - Harvest Manitoba](#)

Spokespeople for Harvest Voices 2022

Meaghan Erbus | Director of Network, Advocacy and Education | Harvest Manitoba

Bailey Morlock-Tellier | Advocacy and Education Coordinator | Harvest Manitoba

Vince Barletta | President and CEO of Harvest Manitoba

Rob | Harvest Client and Volunteer

Linda Neuls | Harvest Client

Erlinda De Guzman | Harvest Client

HARVEST VOICES CLIENT QUOTES

Paying Bills

“Sometimes I don’t just miss a meal to pay for other bills, sometimes I won’t eat for a week to make sure my daughter has enough for three meals a day.” ... “Sending her to school with enough food and snacks for the whole day often means I don’t eat enough, it’s not ideal but it’s what I have to do.”

“I’ve tried to get a job but what always ends up happening is they take that money off of my EIA cheque and I have less than what I would’ve had if I just stayed on EIA. It’s like they want me to stay in this box, because anytime I try to get out of my situation, they take money away and it feels like I can never get ahead.”

Affording Food

“I can’t afford to feed myself because of the prices of food nowadays, even with Harvest, it’s barely enough to survive.”

“The cost of food is going up, but your EIA cheques stay the same, so I can barely afford food. Because of this I’m buying less and eating less to make my hamper last a month. It’s really tough some months.”

“It’s to the point where we get what we can from the food bank and the only things we buy is eggs, milk, and bread. That’s all we can afford, sometimes we can’t even afford that.”

I go to grocery stores when I have bus fare to get there but the bus tickets are expensive and now the food is more expensive too, so I usually don’t shop for food.”

“I used to use the food bank a lot when I was younger in 2012-2016, and then I stopped because I found cheaper housing and had some extra money, but I started again in April of 2022 because of the high prices of everything and not having enough money for our basic needs.”

Health:

“My health limits my abilities to do day-to-day tasks, my memory is poor, and I’ve had seizures on the bus. I’m afraid to be out of the house because of seizures. I can’t call 911 if a seizure happens while I’m out because EIA only covers a home lifeline, and I couldn’t afford it otherwise.”

General:

“Too many people think they’re alone but they’re not. It’s when people think they’re alone, that’s when bad things happen. It leads people down a bad path. That’s why it’s so important to help out and to tell our story.”

“Poverty doesn’t look the way you expect it to. There are people all over the city who deal with poverty.”