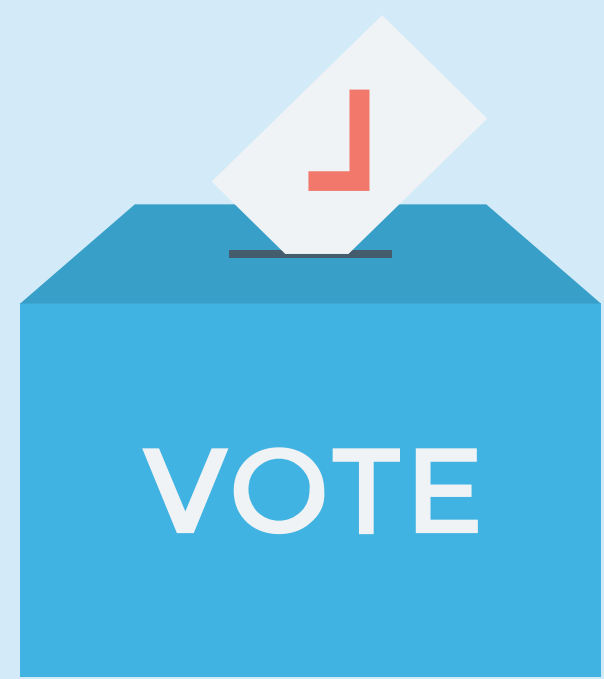




Municipal Election 2026 Fact Sheet

Food Insecurity

Guelph & Wellington Poverty Elimination Collaborative | August 2026

When everyone has enough income to afford the food they need, our whole community benefits. Yet too many people in Guelph and Wellington struggle to make ends meet. This election, vote for solutions.

Household food insecurity happens when people do not have enough money to buy the food they need. People experiencing food insecurity may eat less, skip meals, or go without food. They may also struggle to afford food that meets their health, dietary, or cultural needs. Food insecurity can have serious impacts on physical and mental health and is linked to higher healthcare costs.

Food insecurity is closely connected to poverty and inadequate income. When people do not have enough income to cover their basic needs, food is often one of the first places they have to cut back.

Food banks and community food programs provide important support, but they cannot address why people are unable to afford enough food in the first place. Lasting solutions require ensuring everyone has enough income to meet their basic needs.

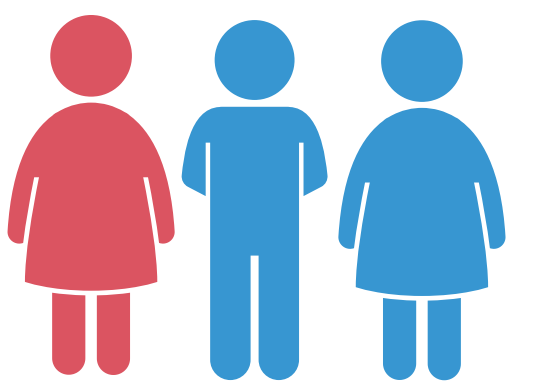
Why This Matters

Food insecurity is at a record high.



1 in 4 households in Guelph-Wellington experience food insecurity - the highest rate on record. That is nearly **13% higher than in 2019.**²

Every child should have the food they need to grow, learn, and thrive.



1 in 3 children in Ontario live in households that struggle to afford the food they need.³

Food insecurity doesn't affect everyone equally.

Colonialism, racism & systemic oppression create barriers to fair wages, employment, housing, and other opportunities, making it harder for people to have enough income for basic needs.⁴



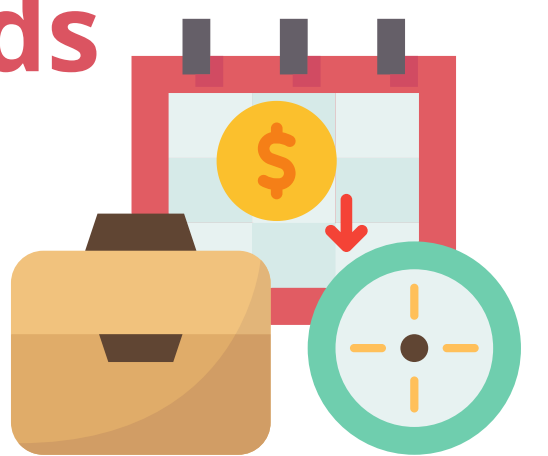
Most people experiencing food insecurity do not use food banks.



Due to barriers including dietary needs, transportation, stigma, and shame, only **25%** of food insecure households use food access services, such as food banks.⁵

A job alone is not enough to protect people from food insecurity.

60% of food insecure households have wages, salaries, or self-employment as a main source of income. Work should provide fair wages and decent working conditions that allow people to meet their basic needs.⁶



A nutritious diet is out of reach when incomes are too low.

The estimated cost for a family of four to eat healthy in Guelph-Wellington is **\$1187.49 per month** or \$273.30 per week.²



For some households, rent and food alone cost more than their entire income.

To afford just rent and food - let alone any other basic need expense...

- A **single person on OW** would require at least an **EXTRA \$782.01 per month.**
- A **single person on ODSP** would require at least an **EXTRA \$140.01 per month.**
- A **family of 4 on OW** (2 children & 2 adults) would require at least an **EXTRA \$109.49 per month.**²



What Municipalities Can Do

Municipalities cannot solve food insecurity alone, but local decisions can help close the gap between people's incomes and the cost of meeting basic needs. While food access programs provide important support, growing need makes it increasingly urgent to invest in prevention and solutions that address the root causes of food insecurity.

Municipalities can use their tools, partnerships, resources and voice to reduce financial pressures locally while advocating for the investments and policy changes needed from other levels of government.

1. Make every day life more affordable.

Examples:

- Invest in affordable and accessible housing and reliable public transportation
- Make municipal programs and services affordable for people with low income by factoring income into eligibility for subsidies, fee assistance, and other supports
- Meaningfully engage people with lived experience of poverty in planning services, infrastructure, and investments that affect their lives
- Consider the impact of municipal fees, user charges, and other costs on households with low incomes

2. Strengthen income security.

Examples:

- Become a certified Living Wage employer and encourage other local employers to do the same
- Partner with and support collaborative efforts to advance poverty elimination and system change
- Support and promote free income tax filing clinics and benefit navigation services
- Advocate to provincial and federal governments for adequate income supports and policies that ensure everyone has enough income to meet their basic needs



Learn More

Learn more about food insecurity, its causes and solutions.

2025 Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Monitoring Food Affordability Report and appendix:

🌐 Report: bit.ly/4yfAVVq

🌐 Appendix: bit.ly/4gCRhI7

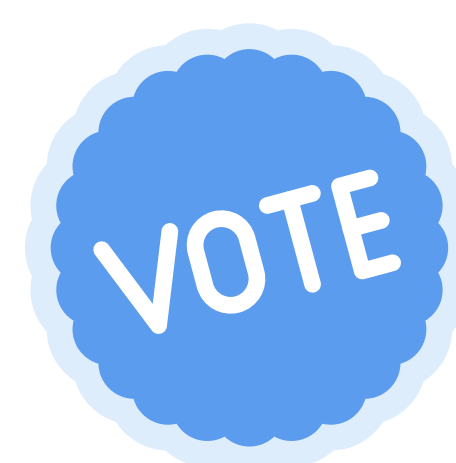
PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research:

🌐 proof.utoronto.ca

Right To Food's policy and advocacy work:

🌐 righttofood.ca/policy-and-advocacy

Take Action!



Your vote matters. Help choose leaders who will advance income-based solutions to food insecurity.

Ask a candidate: What actions will you take to ensure people have enough income to meet their basic needs, including food?

Support the Income Security for Food Security campaign: Join the movement for lasting solutions to food insecurity in Guelph-Wellington.

🌐 gwpoverity.ca/food-insecurity

1. Dietitians of Canada. *Dietitians of Canada Position Statement on Household Food Insecurity in Canada*. 2024. Accessed August 28, 2026.
2. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. *Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Monitoring Food Affordability Report 2025*.
3. PROOF. *New Data on Household Food Insecurity in 2024*. 2025. Accessed August 28, 2026.
4. Right To Food. *Latest Data Show a Deepening Food Insecurity Crisis in Canada: Bold Policies Needed*. 2025. Accessed August 28, 2026.
5. Our Food Future and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. *Guelph-Wellington Food Environment Assessment*. 2022.
6. Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA, Tarasuk V. (2023) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2022. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). <https://proof.utoronto.ca/resource/household-food-insecurity-in-canada-2022/>

