

## WHO'S HUNGRY 2009: KEY FINDINGS

**Food bank use in the GTA has rapidly increased in the past year due to the recession.**

Overall number of client visits: 1,030,568

Increase since 2008: 8%

Increase from January to March of this year compared to the same time period last year: 17%

Average per month: 85,881

**The largest portion of new clients is people who have lost their jobs or have had their hours cut. A substantial number are not accessing welfare because of their savings. Of the food bank clients who have been coming 6 months or less, reasons for visits include:**

Losing their jobs: 35%

Living on savings: 11%

Reduced hours at work: 6%

**The majority of people using food banks do so for a relatively short period of time.**

Percentage of clients who have used a food bank for 6 months or less: 37%

Percentage of clients who have used a food bank for 1 year or less: 55%

**Over one third of food bank clients are children. However, single adults remain the largest household type using a food bank.**

Percentage of food bank clients who are children: 35%

Percentage of food bank clients who are single: 41%

Children who go hungry at least once a week: 17%

Adults who go hungry at least once a week: 42%

**The majority of respondents are Canadian citizens, and many are immigrants who have been in Canada for 10 years or more.**

Percentage of clients who are Canadian citizens: 72%

Born outside Canada: 49%

Percentage of those not born in Canada who have been here 10 years or more: 46%.

**A significant percentage of respondents are highly educated, and include newcomers who cannot get work in their field.**

Percentage who have graduated college or university: 22%

Percentage who have a post graduate degree: 4%

**The cost of housing is the largest expense for most people.**

Percent of income spent on rent/mortgage including utilities: 76%

People who pay market rent: 74%

**Hunger in the GTA is the result of lack of money, not lack of food.**

Median monthly household income: \$980

Percentage who receive Ontario Works (OW) as their main source of income: 44%

**Being employed is not always a ticket out of poverty.**

Percentage of households with at least one person employed: 30%

Average hourly wage: \$10.90

Median hours of work per week: 20 hrs

Percentage without either drug or dental benefits: 82%

**People living in poverty have a high level of vulnerability to costly forms of debt in order to pay for their basic needs.**

Percentage of respondents who go into debt to pay for basic needs such as food, rent, or clothing: 77%

Percentage of respondents who have sold assets or property in order to pay their bills: 54%