

**HARVEST**

YELLOW FLESHED
À CHAIR JAUNE


Pommes de terre
Potatoes

4.54 kg

CANADA
NO. 1

OF CANADA
DU CANADA



2023-2024

IMPACT REPORT



VISION

Working together toward a healthier future where no Manitoban goes hungry.



MISSION

Our mission is to collect and distribute food to Manitobans in need, provide client-centred long-term solutions to poverty, and advocate for food security.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value compassion, collaboration, innovation, integrity, and stewardship.

2023-2024 IMPACT REPORT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Philip Poon – Board Chair

Shawn MacDonald – Senior Vice Chair/Incoming Chair

Brett Andersen – Vice Chair - Finance

Patty Gifford – Vice Chair – Human Resources

Sacha Nelson – Vice Chair – Governance

Barbara McNish – Director

Barry Pederson – Director

Dave Shambrock – Director

Celia Valel – Director

**as of March 31, 2024*

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**Cover photo provided by Scott Lao.*



Message from the CEO and Board Chair

A brand is more than just a name and logo; it's a promise you make to the people you serve. When Winnipeg Harvest became Harvest Manitoba in 2020, it was the continuation of a journey that has seen our organization serve more people in more places than ever before. This journey has been part of a larger commitment to serve communities across Manitoba with the same energy and equity that we have provided to Winnipeg for over 35 years. As we know, the need for the work of Harvest has never been greater – over 50,000 Manitobans now use food bank services every month, and tens of thousands more utilize other Harvest food programs in communities large and small. A big thank you once again to our donors, partners, staff & volunteers for all their work in 2023-24 to allow us to meet the unprecedented need.

This year, Harvest completed developing our first strategic plan as a province-wide organization. This plan focuses on four key areas of development as an organization to help us make good on our promise to serve Manitobans in need no matter where they live in the province. You can see a summary of our strategic plan and find a link to a full copy on pages 22 and 23 of this report. Thank you to our many stakeholders and partners across the province and beyond who participated in this critical planning process and who can continue to work with us as we move forward in the years ahead.

With many numbers and statistics in a report like this, it can be easy to miss what is most important – the individuals that we serve. As much as we continue to face record levels of demand for food banks and food insecurity, there are stories of hope as well. Stories of people like Yana on page 21 remind us that Harvest Manitoba is about so much more than just hampers; it's about hope. Stories like Yana's help to energize us here at Harvest every day, and we hope we will continue to inspire you to give what you can to help us build a healthier future for all where no Manitoban goes hungry.

*Thank you for your support.
With gratitude,*



Vince Barletta, President & CEO

Philip Poon, Board Chair

Our staff and Community Food Network at our annual town hall meeting.



Year in Review

Food bank visits across Canada in March 2023 hit record levels and coincided with the highest rate of general inflation in 40 years. That same month, Food Banks Canada released its annual "HungerCount" report, which revealed that 2 million Canadians visited a food bank each month. Manitoba was not spared from this unprecedented demand. By March, 108,000 Manitobans were relying on our food banks and programs, driven by factors like rising costs, job loss, immigration, and low wages. But there was hope. Despite these challenges, we witnessed incredible generosity from our community and retail partners, whose support was paramount in helping us meet this growing need.



Manitoba Poverty Statistics 2023

- **Food Insecurity Rate: 19.6%** (Source: Statistics Canada)
- **Child Poverty Rate: 20.7%** (Source: Campaign 2000)
- **Manitobans Feeling Worse off Compared to Last Year: 41.5%** (Source: Food Banks Canada)

Spring and summer were particularly eventful for Harvest Manitoba. We kicked off the season with Harvest Manitoba reclaiming over **\$1 million** in income tax refunds on behalf of our clients, supported by volunteers Steve Perlmutter and Paul MacKinnon. We also hosted our annual town hall meeting, where we updated our Community Food Network members on our activities over the past year and received feedback about improving our work. The summer had several successful events, beginning with Maxim Truck & Trailer's annual charity BBQ in support of Harvest Manitoba, which raised over **\$25,000**. Following this, our annual bike sale in June had a fantastic turnout, where we sold out all our bikes and brought our community together in a fun and engaging way.

Our annual golf tournament followed, raising over **\$75,000** to support our programs and feed a record number of Manitobans. Additionally, we hosted a special BBQ to honour David Northcott, Winnipeg Harvest's former Executive Director of over 30 years, so that friends, family, and community members could connect and celebrate his legacy.

Community members at our annual bike sale.



David Northcott and Marcy Markusa having a fireside chat at our "Victories over Hunger and Poverty" gala.



Harvest Manitoba thanks our incredible community, whose generosity in providing food, time, and funds sustains us every day of the year. It takes a province to feed a province, and it is because of YOU that we can come together to bring hope and nourishment to Manitobans who need it most.

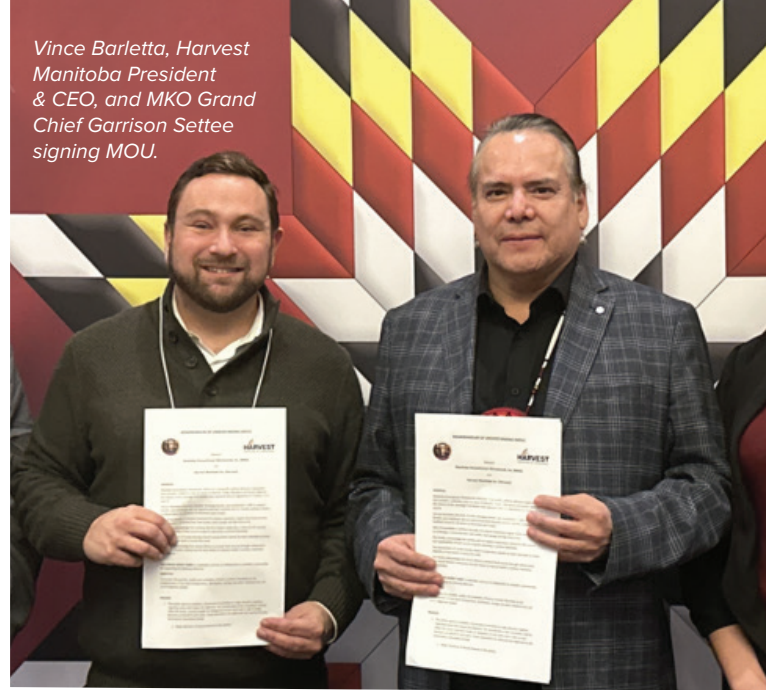
In September, we hosted our first "Harvesting Gratitude" soirée to show appreciation for our monthly donors and give them a behind-the-scenes tour of Harvest Manitoba so they could experience the impact of their generosity firsthand. October brought the much-anticipated return of our "Victories over Hunger and Poverty" gala, the first one since 2019, in honour of David Northcott. The event was a tremendous success, raising over **\$600,000** to support our ongoing pursuit of ending hunger in Manitoba. That same month, members of our team flew to St. Theresa Point First Nation and delivered **5,000 pounds** of nutritious food to this remote community that struggles with significantly high food insecurity rates.

November's Giving Tuesday raised **\$105,060** thanks to the support of 680 CJOB and host Brett Megarry, who broadcasted live from Harvest Manitoba and urged our community to donate. Our critical fundraising season began on December 1st with the release of our annual Harvest Voices report and CBC's "Make the Season Kind" campaign, which raised over **\$325,000**. Evanov's "Hope for the Holidays" radiothon raised an incredible **\$30,000** and **3,864 pounds** of food from Thor Plumbing & Heating, which was essential in helping us feed our neighbours in need during the season of giving.

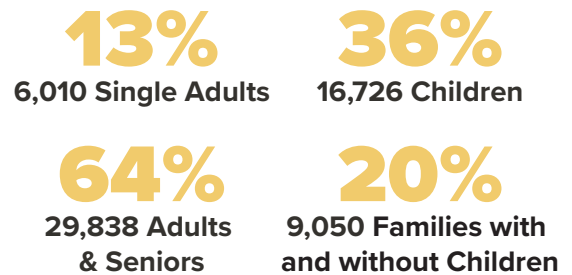
Strengthening partnerships with Indigenous organizations was a major focus for Harvest Manitoba this year. We entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) to improve food security rates in northern Manitoba. This MOU includes plans to establish the Thompson Hub and provide consistent food banking services in MKO communities.

Furthermore, a larger partnership, Wiiche'iwaymagon, was signed on December 13th, involving several First Nations and Indigenous organizations in Manitoba and Northwest Ontario, including Harvest Manitoba, Food Banks Canada, and Nutrition North Canada.

Vince Barletta, Harvest Manitoba President & CEO, and MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee signing MOU.

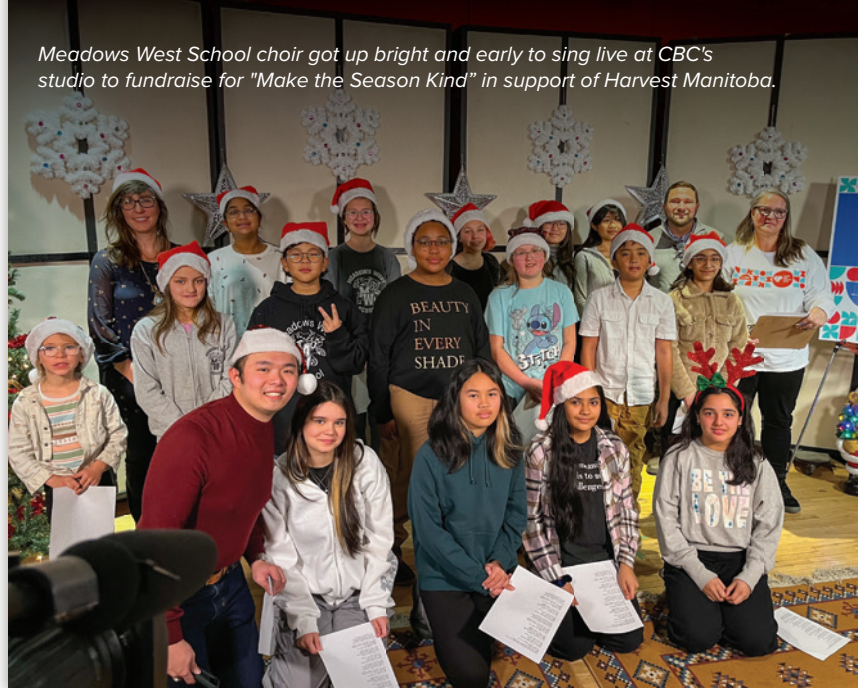


2023-24 Food Bank Client Demographic (based on monthly average)



Thank you to Payworks for being the presenting sponsor of our annual golf tournament!

2024 started on a high note. Harvest Manitoba was selected as one of the 2023 Non-Profit Employer of Choice Award (NEOC) organizations, which recognized our efforts to increase workplace satisfaction through employer-employee initiatives. We also unveiled our five-year Strategic Plan, our first roadmap to adapt and respond to the needs of our rapidly changing province. In March 2024, we concluded our fiscal year with another significant delivery of **23,683 pounds** of food by our staff to the isolated regions of Oxford House, God's River, and God's Lake.



Meadows West School choir got up bright and early to sing live at CBC's studio to fundraise for "Make the Season Kind" in support of Harvest Manitoba.

Your support was critical in helping us meet this growing need while expanding into additional communities in every corner of the province. Because of you, we've accomplished the following year after year:



Our generous monthly donors pictured at our Harvesting Gratitude event.

Today, we serve more people than ever before. Thanks to the support of our donors, retail partners, volunteers, and the community at large, we have met this increased demand and are in the fortunate position to expand our reach to even more communities in need. We remain optimistic about the future and are committed to continuing our work toward a healthier future for all where no Manitoban goes hungry.



HARVEST MANITOBA COMMUNITY FOOD NETWORK

Harvest Manitoba provides nutritious food to over 380 local and provincial community organizations. Our Community Food Network includes food banks, soup kitchens, daycares, meal and snack programs, Meals2Go, and many others. Thank you to our fantastic partner agencies who help us improve food security in every corner of the province.

We're excited to welcome the following organizations into our Community Food Network:

- Astum Api Niikinaahk
- Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence
- CENCADIAN Educational
- Centre d'apprentissage les Cheminots
- Helping Hands Centre of Brandon
- Kathy Guimond Support Services
- Long Plain School and Wellness Centre
- Makoon Transition
- McIvor Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church
- Nelson McIntyre Collegiate
- Polson School
- RCCG Rhema Sanctuary
- South District Off-Campus
- St. Andrews Woodhaven
- The Meeting Place
- The Salvation Army Heritage Park Temple
- Ukrainian National Federation Club
- United Church Halfway Homes
- Warmer Hearts Winnipeg
- Westminster Children's Care Centre
- Youville Diabetes Centre



HARVEST FIRST STEPS

Did you Know?

Over one-third of the Manitobans we feed every month are children. In our commitment to ensuring every child's best possible start in life, we launched the First Steps program in 2008. Through the generous contributions of our donors, this program offers support to struggling parents, including baby formula, cereal, and other infant care essentials.



This year alone, we've fed **1,800** babies every month. Thank you to our incredible donors whose support makes it possible for us to nurture healthy beginnings and brighter futures for our youngest Manitobans.



"I love the notes of affirmation. I put them up on my fridge at home. I've kept every note since last year."

Access to nutritious food is fundamental for student success, yet for many, weekends can be challenging for families when school meal programs aren't available. At Harvest Manitoba, we believe no child should go hungry, and no parent should worry about providing enough food for their family. That's why we initiated Meals2Go as a weekend breakfast program to provide students with child-friendly, nutritious food packs (including items such as cereals, yogurt, milk, fresh fruit, and a note of affirmation), ensuring they have access to food seven days a week.

Meals2Go began as a pilot project back in 2018, when volunteers and staff packed breakfast kits for all 350 Mulvey School students weekly. With improved attendance rates and increased mental and emotional well-being among the students, it was immediately clear that Meals2Go was a resounding success.

We are hoping to expand Meals2Go and onboard additional schools with a greater need for support to prevent child hunger and encourage healthy, active living for Manitoba's children. Because every child deserves to learn, play, and succeed!



Kin Canada
winnipegkinsmen

A special thank you to Winnipeg Kinsmen for their incredibly generous donation of \$300,000 for Meals2Go!

Did You Know?

95%

of students reported they were excited to come to school on Fridays to receive their Meals2Go kit.

63%

of teachers reported they now spend less money out of pocket on snacks and food for their students in their class.

100%

of principals reported an increase in attendance due to students' excitement to receive their Meals2Go kit.

75%-85%

overall attendance range on days that Meals2Go kits were delivered.





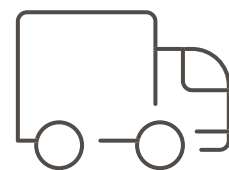
Northern Manitoba Initiatives

Our dedication to serving northern Manitoba is part of our commitment to ensuring food security for all. Guided by our Indigenous partners, our expansion of services in the north and Winnipeg is a collaborative effort which our network, partners, and team members take immense pride.

Today, Harvest Manitoba is one of the leading food banks in Canada that promotes and delivers food security programs in partnership with Indigenous communities. This year alone, we have delivered over **250,000 pounds** of healthy, fresh food by air and ice road spread over **26 trips** to Anishinew Okimawin. This includes a mix of non-perishable food items such as flour, cooking oil, beans, pasta, etc.

Additionally, we are proud to be the first food bank in Canada to participate in the Government of Canada's Nutrition North Program. Harvest Manitoba receives transportation subsidies to support the cost of cargo and ice road shipments to northern Manitoba, and we work closely with First Nations leaders to determine the most needed food supplies for their community. Currently, we serve four communities in the Island Lake region through this program.

We are excited about the future and the potential it holds for our work in northern Manitoba. Together, with Indigenous leadership and communities, we can create a brighter future where food sovereignty is a reality for all.



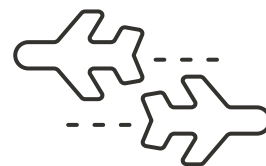
254,707 lbs.

of food delivered to remote First Nations communities



1st

Canadian food bank to partner with Nutrition North Canada and establish regular food bank operations in First Nations communities



26

Number of trips completed



Food Banks Canada CEO, Kirstin Beardsley, and Harvest Manitoba President & CEO, Vince Barletta, delivering food to northern Manitoba.



Watch our video delivering food to Garden Hill [here.](#)



Warehouse Training Program

Our warehouse training program continues to provide hope and opportunity for Manitobans facing barriers to employment. The 6-week program teaches trainees the necessary skills needed for jobs in the warehouse and distribution sectors. This year, we celebrated the completion of our 10th cohort and have graduated 100 individuals who have found employment with private sector employers in Manitoba.

The warehouse training program's achievements would not be possible without the incredible, lasting partnerships we've built with 39 supporting employers across the province. These partnerships have been critical in creating pathways to sustainable employment for our graduates. With their support, we're providing Manitobans facing adversity with the tools and opportunities they need to achieve improved financial and food security. Thank you to our supporting employers for helping our students thrive in the job market and beyond!



Learn more about our warehouse training program [here.](#)



Maple Leaf Foods, Scotiabank, and LITE's funding has been vital to our program's success.

Thank you for your generosity!



81%

Employment Rate



39

Number of supporting employers



100

Number of graduates



Market Garden

Harvest Manitoba proudly launched the Market Garden program this year. During Market Garden events, our staff and volunteers distribute healthy surplus food in communities with a greater need for support when food banks might be closed due to the holidays.

The benefits of this program are twofold: 1) we fight hunger by providing food to Manitobans who need it most, and 2) we promote environmental sustainability by rescuing and distributing food that otherwise would have gone to waste. By sharing this fresh food with our community members, we ensure that hardworking families, children, seniors, and struggling adults get the nourishment they need over the long weekends.

We will continue to host our Market Garden program during long weekends in 2024 and beyond.

Please visit: harvestmanitoba.ca/market-garden to stay updated on upcoming event dates and locations.



6

Number of Market Garden events



22,583 lbs.

of food rescued and distributed



1,059

individuals served



Urban Agriculture

This year, we expanded our urban agriculture initiatives at Harvest Manitoba to promote community gardening, which thrived again last spring.

At our on-site community garden, we have 12 raised planters that produce more than two dozen types of vegetables, which the public is free to pick. Through our Harvest Home Gardens initiative, we provide growing supplies, seeds, and seedlings to community groups and food bank clients to encourage at-home gardening. Additionally, we use a tumble composter for food waste from staff and volunteer lunches and recycle it back into the garden.

Our popular "Grow-A-Row" program, which encourages gardeners to set aside a portion of their garden produce to donate to Harvest Manitoba, received an incredible **14,349 pounds** of fresh produce in 2023, which we then distributed to our food bank clients. Thank you to our supportive community members who donated this delicious and nutritious food for our clients to enjoy!





Food Rescue

It's a sad reality that food insecurity impacts 1 in 6 Canadians, yet more than half of food is wasted. Over 35 million tonnes of food are lost or wasted annually in Canada, which is nearly \$50 billion in lost value and accounts for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

At Harvest Manitoba, we're doing our part to reduce that food waste, and last year, we committed to do so while minimizing our environmental impact. We are excited to share that we have truly delivered on that promise and have accomplished several significant milestones since.

Harvest Manitoba is at the end of a food value chain that sees 60% of all food wasted in Canada. We're dedicated to further exploring innovative ways to process food surplus for improved distribution to food banks in the province, including diverting from the landfill, increasing composting, upcycling food, and addressing food packaging issues.



4,200 tonnes
of greenhouse gases diverted



750+
passenger cars off the road



9,200,000 lbs.
of food rescued and distributed



\$32,000,000
value of food rescued

FOOD COLLECTED **FOOD SHARED**

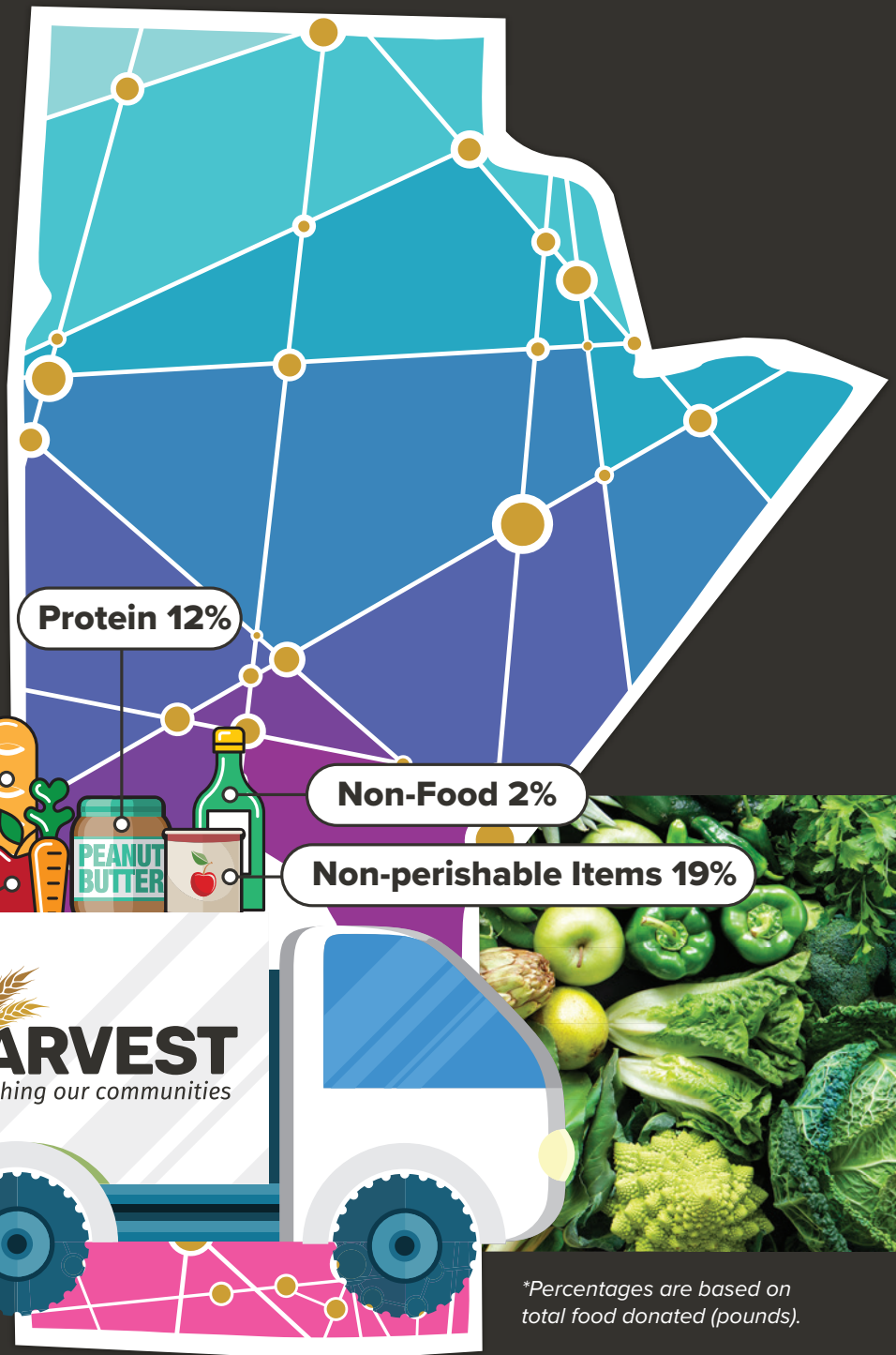
2023-24 Total Food and Grocery Items (pounds)

Bread/Cereal	230,000
Dairy	1,290,000
Fruit/Vegetables	4,600,000
Juice/Drinks	5,000
Protein	1,100,000
Non-Perishables	1,775,000
Non-Food	200,000

Total Food Donated (pounds) 9,200,000

Total Food Purchased (pounds) 3,850,000

Total Food (pounds) 13,050,000



Bread/Cereal 3%

Dairy 14%

Fruit and Vegetables 50%

Protein 12%

Non-Food 2%

Non-perishable Items 19%

HARVEST
nourishing our communities

**Percentages are based on total food donated (pounds).*

FOOD RESCUE NOW **AND IN OUR FUTURE**

At Harvest Manitoba, we work with our industry partners to rescue and recover food that might have otherwise gone to waste. Our CREW continuously assesses the quality of every donation, guaranteeing that only the best food finds its way to the tables of those who need it most. We will continue exploring ways to further reduce food waste and ensure every client has access to healthy and nutritious food while minimizing our environmental impact.

Donor Spotlight: Matt Lazarow

Every community has special people whose generosity shines bright and who are always willing to lend a helping hand. Matt Lazarow is one of those people, and we are incredibly grateful to have him as a donor.



Since 2018, Matt has supported Harvest Manitoba, showing up rain or shine to donate thousands of pounds of nutritious food. His generosity has made a true difference for countless hardworking families, children, struggling adults, and seniors facing food insecurity across our province.

Through his generosity and with his business Westrow Recruiting Solutions, Matt has contributed over an incredible \$100,000 worth of food, ensuring that our neighbours in need never go without. His ongoing support has provided comfort and hope to so many Manitobans, and we're incredibly grateful for his commitment to fighting hunger.

Thank you, Matt, for being such an invaluable part of our community and for helping us make a lasting impact!

Our Valued Partners

It takes a community to feed a community, and this sentiment is the essence of our work at Harvest Manitoba. Fighting hunger takes a collective effort, and our partners once again stepped up to the challenge to help us feed a record number of Manitobans.

We're truly thankful for the ongoing support of our partners. Without their contributions, we simply couldn't do what we do—feeding Manitobans facing food insecurity in need of a helping hand. Together, we're making sure no one in our community goes hungry.



We're excited to share the incredible difference Manitoba Pork has made with its generous donation of five large freezers and frozen pork to Harvest

Manitoba. This support has been a game-changer for food banks across the province, like the Carman Food Pantry in Carman, Manitoba.

Before the freezer arrived, the Carman Food Pantry had limited options for storing perishable foods. Now, they can safely store meat, vegetables, fruits, and even fresh milk for longer periods, ensuring nothing goes to waste. The donated 1,500 pounds of frozen pork has been a huge hit, and many clients who couldn't afford to buy meat have expressed how grateful they are to receive it. They can also accept larger donations with the new freezer, like a pallet of frozen French fries, and save items like bread and milk from one distribution day to the next.

Thank you, Manitoba Pork, for ensuring that our food bank clients have access to a variety of healthy and nutritious food!



MILESTONES IN GENEROSITY

Did you know Harvest Manitoba is the 3rd largest food distributor of its kind in Canada, and with our buying power, we can leverage every \$1 donated into \$10 for Manitobans who need it most. Your recurring donation will ensure we can meet the unprecedented demand for food aid in our province.



Our network includes and supports over

380

food banks and agencies across Manitoba.



In 2023/2024 an average

20,221

households visited a food bank each month



\$32 million

Over \$32 million in food was donated to Harvest Manitoba by our generous partners.



Harvest Manitoba collects and shares

13 million lbs.

of nutritious food with Manitobans facing food insecurity every year.

Our volunteers donated over

66,000

hours to meet the needs of our community.



As of March 2024, our network supported over

100,000

Manitobans every month.



HARVEST VOICES 2024



Veronika, Harvest Manitoba client and Warehouse Training Program student

Every year, Harvest Manitoba surveys communities across the province to better understand why people use food banks. “Harvest Voices 2023” is a report that provides real-world insight into how ongoing issues such as inflation, rising food costs, and increased cost of living impact food insecurity and poverty in our province. With over 500 client surveys completed and numerous stories of those with lived experience, this report paints a vivid picture of the daily challenges faced by Manitobans.

The voices that echo through this report, our food bank clients, have courageously shared the difficult choices they've had to make this past year. No Canadian should ever be forced to decide between paying for their medication, putting a roof over their heads, or skipping out on meals so they can feed their children instead. But we know from our findings that many people struggle with these impossible choices every day.

Harvest Voices 2023 is a powerful call to action that brings to light the stories of those who often go unheard. We will continue to amplify the voices of those facing food insecurity, create meaningful conversations with all levels of government and advocate for solutions to end hunger and poverty in Manitoba.

Key Findings:

150% increase in food bank usage in Manitoba since 2019, with a 30% increase in the past year

Over 50% of first-time food bank clients in Winnipeg were displaced Ukrainians at times

40% of Harvest Manitoba's clients are employed

Read the report here:



OR VISIT:

harvestmanitoba.ca/stories/harvest-voices-2023



Photos on this page were provided by Scott Lao.

Thank You Volunteers!

Volunteers are the backbone of Harvest Manitoba, and our work would not be possible without their support and loyalty. This year, our dedicated volunteers donated **66,742 hours** of their time— that's the equivalent of **32 full-time employees!**

Our volunteers have a variety of jobs to help ensure our operations run smoothly. From sorting and distributing food to providing administrative support, booking food bank appointments for our clients in our call centre, delivering food to our agency partners, and so much more, each volunteer helps us every step of the way to ensure we get food to Manitobans who need it most.

Thank you to our amazing volunteers for choosing to share your gifts with us and the thousands of Manitobans who rely on using a food bank every month. We treasure every moment you've spent with Harvest Manitoba to help us work toward a hunger-free province, and your compassion, commitment, and kind spirit are felt every day in our community.



Financial Update

Harvest Manitoba (Harvest) has always been about more than hampers – it is about hope. Our generous community gives us the tools and resources to assist our clients with nutritious food, but also to invest in training and education that will support them in their lives and future, and beyond temporary food support.

Manitoba is consistently the most charitable province, and this was no exception in 2023/24. Once again, donors generously provided food, funds, and their time to support our work and to help us serve the tens of thousands of Manitobans who rely on our organization.

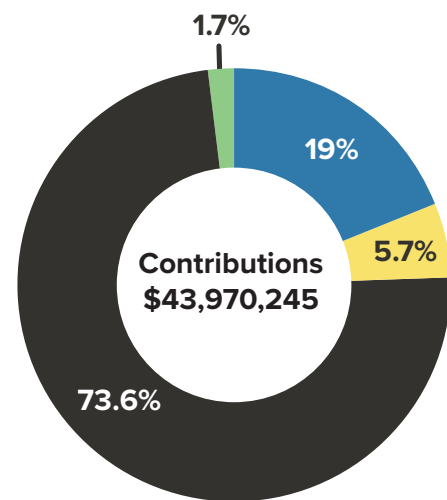
Since the pandemic began, food bank numbers have continued to rise, with an average of almost 110,000 Manitobans accessing food banks every month in the 2023/24 fiscal year. This is partly due to an increase in the number of Ukrainian clients and an expansion of our network, but is also due to the increased cost of living. The impacts of inflation have affected all Manitobans, and those with limited budgets have been stretched even further. The generosity of our donors has never been more critical.

Our grocery and industry partners have always played a critical role at Harvest. This year, more than \$32 million in food was donated to Harvest by our partners, allowing us to get this healthy food into hampers and onto kitchen tables.

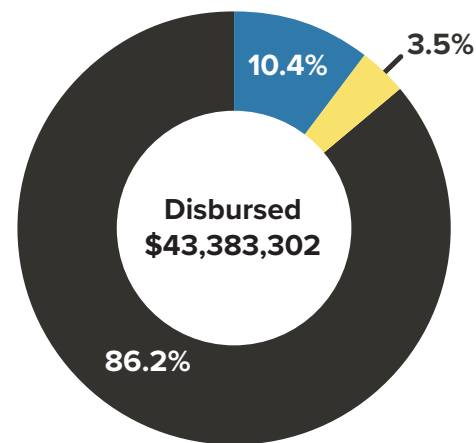
This fiscal year, Harvest received almost \$8.4 million in grants and in-kind and cash donations to further our work. The Province of Manitoba also provided unprecedented support to Harvest over the past two years. This year, almost \$2.5 million was provided for the purchase of food, the distribution of food to our network, and almost \$500,000 in grants to our agency partners.

As demand remains at a record high and as we reflect our mission of being Manitoba’s food bank, we will be making investments to bolster the organization. Some of the investments required in the coming years are outlined in Harvest Manitoba’s Strategic Plan, which is summarized on pages 22 and 23 of this report. With these changes, Harvest will become a more resilient and truly province-wide organization that supports Indigenous food security.

Without the inspiring support of donors, our work would not be possible. Thanks to those who lent a hand, donated nutritious food, and who designated their donor dollars to Harvest Manitoba this past year. Their investments of time, food and funds allow us to invest in training, support our food bank partners, and our food bank network. Thank you!



- Grants, Donations and In-Kind Support
- Extraordinary Provincial Support
- Donations of Food
- Other Contributions



- Administrative and Fundraising Costs
- Program, Volunteer and Support Services Costs
- Food Distribution

* A total of 9,200,000 pounds of food was collected at Harvest Manitoba in 2023/2024. Food is valued at \$3.52 per pound, an average value determined by Food Banks Canada.



Thank You Donors!

Thanks to the incredible support of our donors, a record number of Manitobans can rely on us for a consistent supply of healthy and nutritious food. With another year of rising food insecurity, we registered **16,453 new clients**, many of whom had to make impossible decisions like paying the bills or putting food on the table.



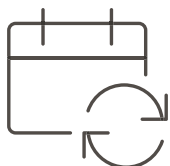
To our donors who have supported Harvest Manitoba this past year, thank you for helping us get food to our neighbours in need. Food insecurity remains a significant, ongoing issue in Canada, and we're incredibly fortunate to have such a generous community that helps us fight hunger every day of the year.

Donate Now!



2,447

first time donors



1,016

monthly donors



\$55

average monthly gift

HARVEST
365
MONTHLY GIVING | \$1/DAY

Join the
Harvest365
monthly
giving club!

Becoming a monthly donor provides Harvest Manitoba with a reliable resource stream that helps us plan and budget. With a minimum contribution of \$30/month, our buying power will ensure your recurring donation makes an even greater impact in getting food to Manitobans who need it most.

Yana's Story

Yana's life in Ukraine was filled with warmth, routine, and the promise of a bright future. She and her family were preparing to move into a new apartment, her son was excelling in school and swimming, and she found fulfillment in her work at a manufacturing company. Life was good—until the war began in February 2022, shattering her world and forcing Yana to make decisions no one should ever have to make.

“The feelings and emotions were overwhelming: fear of the unknown, fear for the future, fear for my child and my family. There was bitterness over the shattered life and the realization that life had divided into BEFORE and AFTER, with BEFORE never returning,” Yana recalls. The war brought despair as necessities like electricity and water became scarce, and their beautiful city was reduced to rubble by relentless bombings. Yana fled Ukraine twice, with the second escape taking her and her son to Canada in search of safety and stability. “The new life Canada offered would be better than the life we had, hiding from bombs,” she explains. With that belief, they made the three-day journey to Winnipeg, where they hoped to rebuild their lives.

“I now live in a peaceful and calm country, where I hardly fear the sounds of fireworks or loud noises.” - Yana

Their arrival in Canada was filled with relief, but also the harsh reality of starting over in a foreign country. It wasn't until Yana discovered Harvest Manitoba that she found a sense of belonging. Harvest became a critical support system that provided her with food, community connections, and the opportunity to give back as she adjusted to her new life and searched for employment. Yana then joined the Volunteer Services team, where she found a comforting environment that helped her grow both personally and professionally. “I wanted to immerse myself in the perfect world that was Harvest Manitoba for me,” she shares.

Yana is incredibly thankful for the support she received through Harvest Manitoba's warehouse training program, which taught her new skills and allowed her to create meaningful connections. “It's been a positive experience. My work helps so many people, my son is doing well in school, and we have so many plans and dreams for the future. I can say without a doubt—I love living in Canada, and I hope to stay here for a long time.”

To other Ukrainian newcomers facing similar struggles, Yana offers this message: “Believe in yourself and never give up!”



Strategic Plan 2024-2027

It takes a province to feed a province, and over the last year, we have been humbled once again by our community's generosity. With a 150% increase in food bank demand in Manitoba since March 2020, we are incredibly grateful to our supporters as we serve a record number of families and children struggling with food insecurity. However, we know that our path today is unsustainable. As an organization, Harvest Manitoba needs to change, adapt, and respond to the needs of a fast-changing province. This strategic plan – the first for Harvest Manitoba – is a roadmap to do just that. Our Board and staff will be implementing this plan over the next three fiscal years.



1 Manitoba's Food Bank

Our Vision

Highest standards of health, safety, access, and equity in our work all over Manitoba.

STRATEGIES:



Improving food service delivery.



Province-wide access to food programs.



Formalized framework for network connector, facilitator, and voice.



New, stable funding partnerships to support province-wide mandate.

2 Indigenous Leadership & Reconciliation

Our Vision

Innovate and improve access to service to all our relations, led by Indigenous people.

STRATEGIES:



Build relationships and trust. Listen and respond.



Formalize internal framework and advisors.

3 Voice for food security in Manitoba

Our Vision

Valuing the voices of those who struggle with food insecurity.

STRATEGIES:



Ongoing client engagement and empowerment to share their stories.



Strong, productive government and media relations.



Province-wide access to programs that sustainably improve client's lives.

4 Innovative, sustainable food network partner

Our Vision

Be a recognized leader and industry partner in efficient food distribution, reduced food waste and climate action.

STRATEGIES:



Expand capabilities for efficient food distribution, reclamation, and waste reduction.



Train and empower teams, embrace innovation, technology, and best industry practice.



Read the full strategic plan here!





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Harvest Manitoba is proud to work in collaboration with Food Banks Canada's Standards of Excellence, which ensure Canada's network of food banks and community agencies have access to safe and nutritious food for anyone who needs it within Canada.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Harvest Manitoba acknowledges that we are located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Anishininew, Dakota, Dene, and on the homeland of The Red River Métis.

We respect the sovereignty of each nation and the Treaties made on these territories. We are committed to continuously reflecting on our role as Treaty partners. We recognize the serious harms caused by colonialism and its lasting impacts on Indigenous peoples across our province, and our country.

Indigenous people have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to this territory. In the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration, we dedicate ourselves to moving forward with Indigenous communities. We honour the land itself and those who remain protectors of it, the Indigenous people of Turtle Island.