

PUT FOOD IN THE BUDGET and Ease the Burden on Emergency Food Programs

Help us to determine the disparity between the hunger in Ontario communities and what volunteers can reasonably address through food bank and community meal programs.

The recent OAFB (Ontario Association of Food Banks) Hunger Report 2010 confirms that:

- There has been a 28% increase in Food Bank use in Ontario from 2008 – 2010
- There has been a 25% increase in the number of meals served through meal programs offered by food banks which doesn't capture the growing number of meal programs offered by other groups and organizations.
- 85% of food banks across Ontario experienced food shortages in 2010.

By answering these questions, you will help us to demonstrate to the provincial government, that food banks and meal programs can no longer be expected to carry the bulk of responsibility for meeting the most basic of needs. It is time that the province began reducing its reliance on emergency food programs by playing its role in addressing the direct causes of hunger and poverty:

- Inadequate social assistance rates.
- Lack of good jobs with decent pay.
- A minimum wage that doesn't reflect the true costs of living in 2011
- Lack of Affordable Housing.

Six Questions for Food Banks, Meal Programs, Volunteers and Community Boards

1.) Have you witnessed an increasing demand on your program in the past 2-3 years?

2.) Does your Food Bank or Meal Program continue to have the capacity (food, volunteers space or other resources required) to meet the needs that you are presented with?

3.) As food prices rise, are you concerned about the current, mid or long-term capacity of your program to continue meeting the needs for food?

4.) Are you or your organization feeling overwhelmed about the prospect of meeting increasing needs with fewer resources, on an ongoing basis?

5.) Do you think that the provincial government has more of a role to play in addressing the causes of hunger and poverty which make your programs necessary? If yes, what would you like them to do?

6.) Will you endorse the **\$100/month Healthy Food Supplement** for all adults on social assistance in Ontario as one poverty reduction measure and a way of reducing the demand on your food bank or meal program?
