



Hunger Count 2015

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 two Medicine Hat non-profit organizations, Community Food Connections Association, and Community Assistance Network, determined the need to assess the community's level of food insecurity and how community organizations were responding to this need.

An initial survey, meeting, and report were completed. This year's report builds on the 2014 Hunger Count, with some additional questions and clarifications. The purpose of this report is to summarize the survey information obtained from the respondents of the 2015 Hunger Count Questionnaire. A survey was sent out to various organizations in Medicine Hat to discover what types of food services were being provided by the organizations. An invitation to take part in the Hunger Count discussion on May 26, 2015 was included with each survey. The primary goal of the Hunger Count was to continue discussion around hunger in the City of Medicine Hat. Another goal was to provide an overview of the types of services being provided and what organizations can do to move individuals/families towards food security and out of crisis.

THE FOOD COUNT

METHODS

A seven question survey was mailed to 109 agencies/organizations in April 2015 in addition to an invitation to the Hunger Count discussion. The organizations were asked to respond to the survey through email or mail by May 8, 2015. The seven questions were as follows (Appendix A):

1. What kind of food services do you provide to community members? I.e. Hot meals, food/grocery vouchers, food items, community/collective

kitchens, food buying clubs, community gardens/urban agriculture, creating and/or promoting food policy?

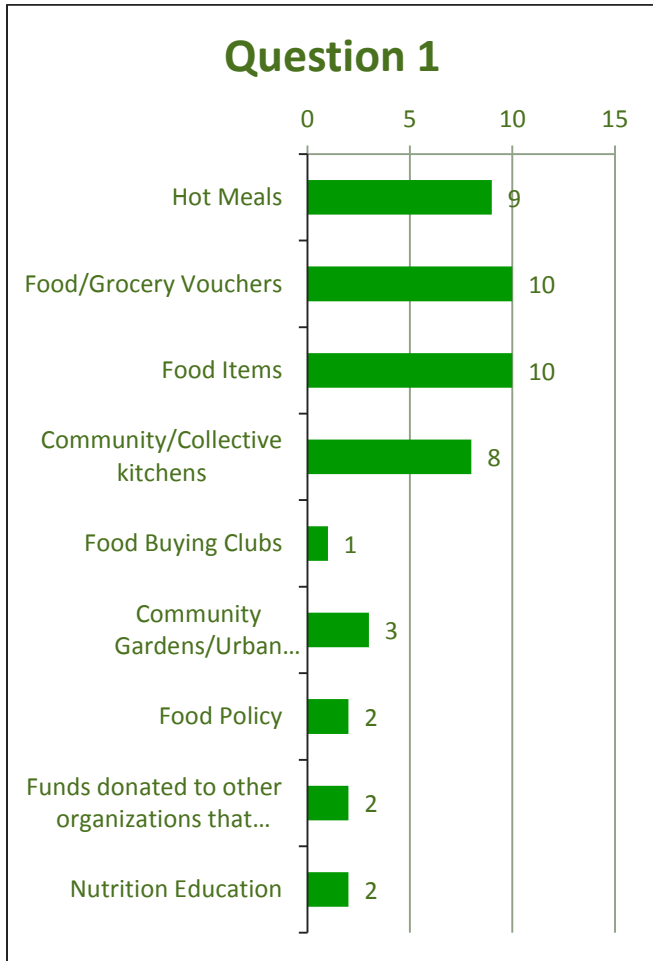
2. How often do you provide these services in your organization? Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Annually?
3. How many people were served in the previous year (either calendar year or your organization's fiscal year)?
4. What is the dollar value or weight of the services provided during that time?
5. In what capacity are your services being provided - crisis or ongoing food support or both?
Crisis Food Support – Emergency food such as that provided from a food bank, pantry, vouchers, hot meals, etc.
Ongoing Food Support – Capacity building through skills building such as community kitchens, community gardens, budgeting, etc.
6. Are there other agencies that you work with or refer to? Do you track the referral? If so, how many people have you referred to other organizations?
7. From where are you sourcing your food or funds that are being distributed? I.e. Food drives, corporate or private donations of goods or funds.

FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the data collected from the seven questions based on the 24 respondents, resulting in an overall response rate of 22%.

Two of the surveys were returned unopened.

Question 1: What kind of food services do you provide to community members? I.e. Hot meals, food/grocery vouchers, food items, community/collective kitchens, food buying clubs, community gardens/urban agriculture, creating and/or promoting food policy?



Question 2: How often do you provide these services in your organization? Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Annually?

	Hot meals	Food/Grocery Vouchers	Food Items (including snacks & hampers)	Community Kitchens	Food Buying Clubs	Community Gardens
As Needed		2	6			
Daily	8	1	2			
Weekly		1	4			
Bi-weekly			1	1		
Monthly		1		6	1	
Annually		1				
Seasonally						3

Question 3: How many people were served in the previous year (either calendar year or your organization's fiscal year)?

Each theme had varied responses to this question, so they will be listed for easier reading.

Hot Meals - Respondents reported serving:

- 15,000 people served annually
- 200 unique individuals (estimate) per year
- 645 snacks/week served to students in 1 school year
- 20-30 students/day
- 175 kids from 75 families daily for breakfast, lunch and snack
- 80 kids for a daily breakfast program
- 350 students able to access breakfast, lunch and snack program

Food/Grocery Vouchers –

- 26 vouchers annually
- Approximately 30 vouchers monthly
- 10 people annually

Food Items (including snacks and hampers) –

- 5 families a month receive a weekly hamper
- 1621 unique individuals in 1 year
- 356 vouchers or hampers distributed through 3 churches that work as a group.
- 100-110 people served/week
- 40-60 people/week
- 260 individuals in 1 year

Community Kitchens – Approximately 75 people participate in Community Kitchens annually.

Food Buying Club- One respondent recorded approximately 234 participants in the club in one year ordering food at wholesale prices each month.

Community Gardens – It was difficult to quantify the amount of people served, though there were 56 garden plots reported as well as 1 school garden reported.

Food Policy –

- 1 respondent serves individuals in 6 schools and in four school districts affecting over 16,000 students each year.
- 1 respondent serves the populations of Medicine Hat, Brooks & area, approximately 90,000 people.
- The CFCA Food Charter has 23 signatories representing various organizations and municipalities. It was difficult to quantify the amount of people served.

Question 4: What is the dollar value or weight of the services provided during that time?

Dollar amount per year- approximately \$174,700

Additionally:

Weight (lbs.) per year- 261,075lbs x \$4.51 = \$1,177,448.00

(\$4.51/lb is the multiplier for food value provided by the Medicine Hat & District Food Bank).

Question 5: In what capacity are your services being provided – crisis or ongoing food support?

- ❖ Ongoing support – 25%
- ❖ Crisis Support - 33%
- ❖ Ongoing and Crisis Support - 38%
- ❖ No response – 4%

Question 6: Are there other agencies that you work with or refer to? Do you track the referral? If so, how many people have you referred to other organizations?

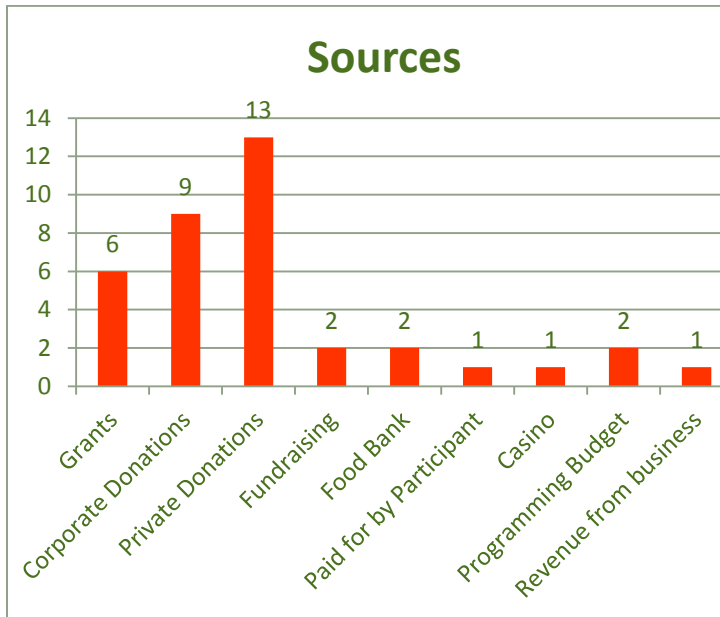
- ❖ Referrals tracked – 21%
- ❖ Referrals made but not tracked – 54%
- ❖ Referrals not made – 8%
- ❖ No response – 17%

Referrals

Of the respondents that stated that they do referrals (tracked or not), the following agencies were named as referrals: The Medicine Hat & District Food Bank, Bridges/Best Babies program, Community Food Connections Association, The Link Pantry, McMan Emergency Food Distribution, Hope Street Compassionate Ministry, Medicine Hat Community Housing Society, Salvation Army/Emergency Shelter, Champion Centre, Knights of Columbus and St. Vincent de Paul.

Question 7: From where are you sourcing your food or funds that are being distributed? I.e. Food drives, corporate or private donations of goods or funds.

Our respondents shared a variety of ways by which they obtain the funds and food for their programs:



DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

Hunger Count Meeting

On May 26, 2015 the Hunger Count Meeting was held at the Provincial Building. All respondents were invited to attend. The meeting was facilitated by Alison Van Dyke, Food Security Coordinator with Community Food Connections Association.

Evidence from the responses received from the survey and meeting shows that agencies and organizations are providing food support; either crisis or ongoing food support and in some cases, both. It is clear that agencies and individuals in Medicine Hat recognize the food security problem. The goal of the survey and meeting was to assist agencies in identifying how to focus on moving individuals towards a more food secure state rather than providing temporary relief and the continued need to access emergency food.

Appendix A

2015 Hunger Count Notes 10am-12pm, Tuesday, May 26th, 2015

1. Welcome & Introductions – Alison Van Dyke
2. Review of 2014 Hunger Count, changes in the community, new information, achievements, and new data collected – Alison Van Dyke
3. Food First Pilot Project – Celina Symmonds & Tammy Vanderloh
4. Facilitated Discussion – Alison Van Dyke
 - a. **If you think about the food security continuum, how do we help move people from crisis to increasing their own capacity?**
 - Refer to the Food Bank for tracking
 - Organizations that are currently using volunteers & funds for crisis programs could move that time & money to capacity building programs if they referred to the Food Bank.
 - Share information while maintaining existing systems – connected rather than centralized system.
 - The Food Security Continuum runs parallel to the Red Cross continuum of: Relief, Recovery, Rebuilding
 - Case Management coordinated through involved agencies.
 - An advocate who knows the system needs to be available for system users to help with accessing systems that can move them out of crisis.
 - More use of the CAN passport.
 - More referrals
 - b. **From your perspective what are some innovative solutions?**
 - Community Food Centre – modelled after “The Stop”
 - More social workers working on case management and meeting once or more a month with the community agencies.
 - Community Hubs – a “one stop shop” for those needing services.
 - Emergency hampers from the Food Bank at satellite locations for those with transportation issues.
 - Confidentiality waiver so that agencies can work together to assist a client.
 - 4 Project Connects a year in 4 different locations.
 - c. **What can we do to develop and support a community collaborative response to hunger?**
 - See answers above
 - d. **How do we help move our ideas into action?**
 - Agencies look at doing more referrals.
 - The entire community of social agencies look at forming a community hub.
5. Closing & Networking time