



Giving  
Hope  
Today



# Feeding Canada's Families:

## A Report on Salvation Army Food Services

**F**or the last 130 years, The Salvation Army in Canada has worked tirelessly to restore hope and dignity to Canadians living in poverty. As the largest non-governmental direct provider of social services in the country, The Salvation Army serves in more than 400 communities across Canada. Through a wide range of social service programs, which include shelters for the homeless, addictions services, thrift stores and feeding programs, The Salvation Army delivers critical services to the marginalized and overlooked people in our communities.

Since 2009, The Salvation Army in Canada has conducted an annual review of its feeding programs and centres, comprised of both food banks, soup kitchens or meal programs. The results of the study help us to better understand the services provided, the current client demand and whether or not donations are meeting that demand. In 2012, The Salvation Army saw donations remain relatively unchanged year-to-year, while client demand continued to increase. In fact, at Salvation Army food banks, 62 percent reported an increase in clients within the last 12 months. The same can be said for soup kitchens, 64 percent of which saw an increase in demand.

Our fourth annual report also reviewed programs designed specifically to accommodate the growing number of children and families that come to The Salvation Army seeking assistance. With almost 70 percent of food banks reporting an increase in the number of families served, it has become a priority for The Salvation Army to offer services to fit the unique needs of families. The report also examines the communal aspect of the meal experience, and the results indicate that the majority of clients eat in a group, conversing and enjoying meals together.

This year's findings are part of an annual survey of Salvation Army personnel who have direct involvement in food service and outreach. The survey and resulting report, "Feeding Canada's Families: A Report on Salvation Army Food Services," reviews food donation rates, current food-stock level, nutritional value of food offered to clients and the future outlook of food services.

For the fourth consecutive year, The Salvation Army is releasing a summary of its findings, including internal data on its food services and programs. Through the survey and reporting process, The Salvation Army hopes to gain a better understanding of the needs across Canada and stress the importance of providing a sense of dignity for all, whether it's a hot meal served amongst peers on a cold day, or having enough food on the shelves to help a family get through the week. The fight against hunger and poverty deserves our personal attention.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Q: How have food donations changed at food banks during the last 12 months?

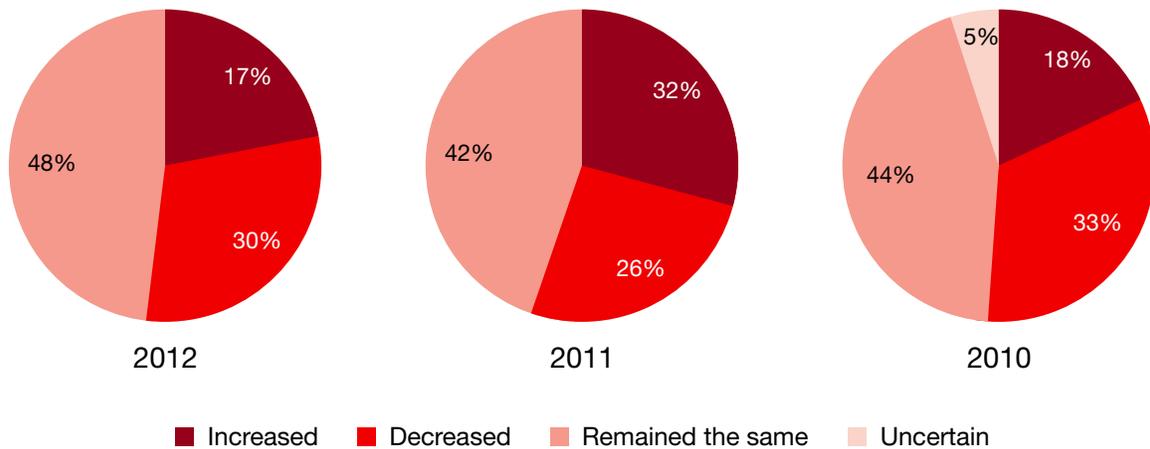
**Almost a third of Salvation Army food banks have seen a decrease in donations at their centres within the last 12 months.** This statistic is troubling, especially after last year's encouraging findings that 32 percent of centres were seeing an increase in donations – this year that number dropped to 17 percent.

More promising news resulted from this survey with nearly two-thirds of respondents reporting that their shelves were half-full to near capacity – an increase from last year's results. With the fall and winter months fast approaching, this shows promise that the needs of the community will be met when demand is typically at its peak.

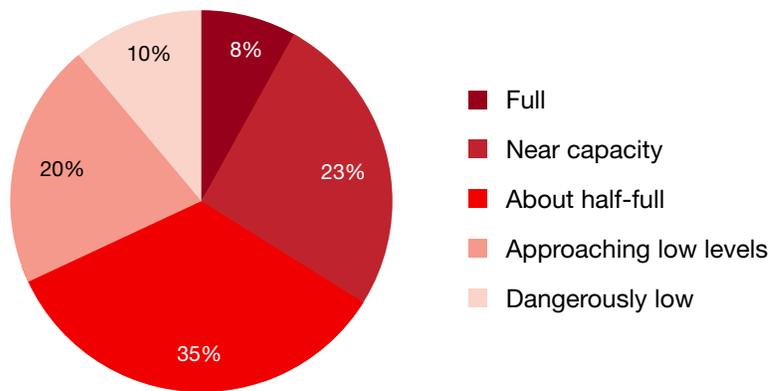
Additional findings include:

- **30 percent** of food banks reported a **decrease in donations** from year-to-year with the plurality of respondents, **48 percent, noting no change.**
- **66 percent** of food banks and soup kitchens reported that their shelves are **currently half-full to completely full.**
- **70 percent** of food banks and soup kitchens were certain or very certain that they would **be able to meet demand** for food services in the upcoming year.
- Year to year, more food banks, **66 percent, reported that their shelves were half-full to completely full** in comparison to surveys conducted in 2011 (64 percent) and 2010 (55 percent).

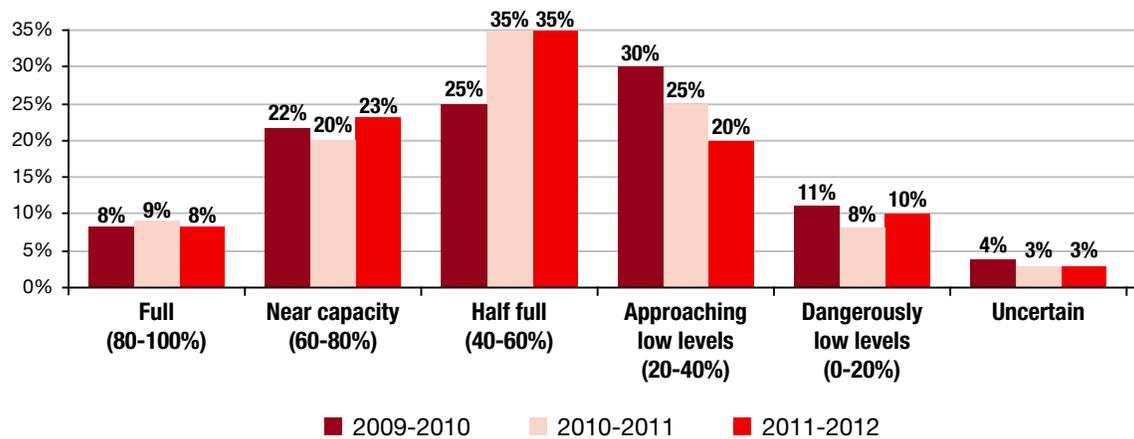
## Donation Levels Year-to-Year at Salvation Army Food Centres



## Shelves at Salvation Army Food Centres – 2012 Survey



## Food Levels at Salvation Army Food Centres Year-to-Year

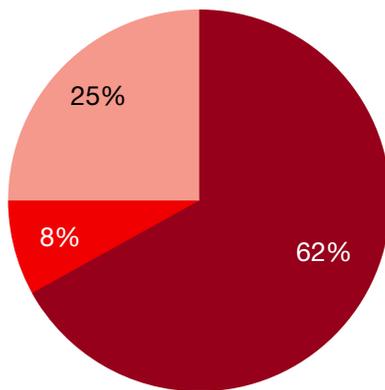


## Q: How has client demand for food services changed during the last 12 months?

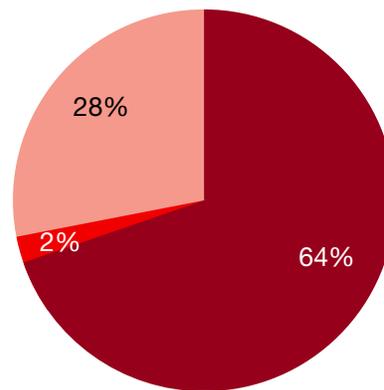
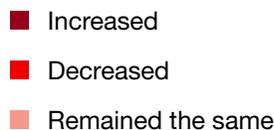
Following a trend seen in previous reports, **client demand increased year-to-year** at a time when donations are not increasing at the same rate. In fact, approximately **62 percent** of Salvation Army food banks reported an increase in clients.

The types of clients visiting The Salvation Army has also changed. With impacts of the recession still being felt today, more and more working people are using food banks, as are people recently laid off. In addition, new immigrants are using our services.

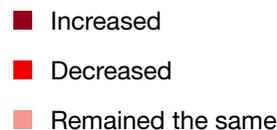
### Client Demand for Food Services:



#### Food Banks



#### Soup Kitchens



As fall turns to winter, and the holiday season begins, The Salvation Army is hopeful that food donations will match client demand, ensuring that everyone who comes to The Salvation Army in their hour of need is able to get assistance.

“Increasing demand and additional households accessing our food bank each month, without additional staff funding, means increasing reliance on volunteers and stretches the capacity of our current staffing levels.”

— Debra Johnston, Community Services Manager, London, ON

## Q. Do you have programs or services in place to serve families?... children?

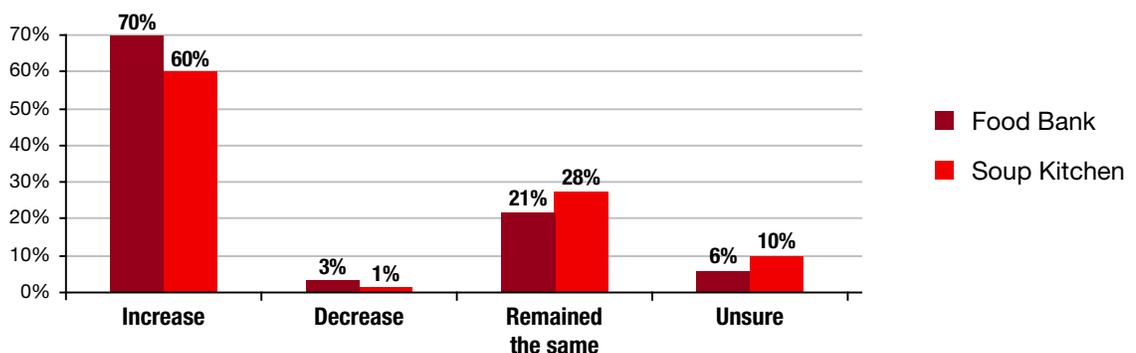
Not only are Salvation Army food programs seeing an increase in client demand, they are also seeing an increase in families and children utilizing food services offered by The Salvation Army. Within the last 12 months, both soup kitchens and food banks have seen an **increase in families requiring their services, with 60 and 70 percent reporting an increase** respectively.

While many Salvation Army food service programs are seeing more and more families and children walk through their doors, it's encouraging to find that there are many services in place to meet the growing need. Some examples are:



These programs are designed to give parents the proper tools to manage a household, give children the opportunity to succeed in school, while also taking a break from life's daily hardships to have fun as a family.

## Salvation Army Food Centres Reporting an Increase/Decrease in Families Seeking Assistance



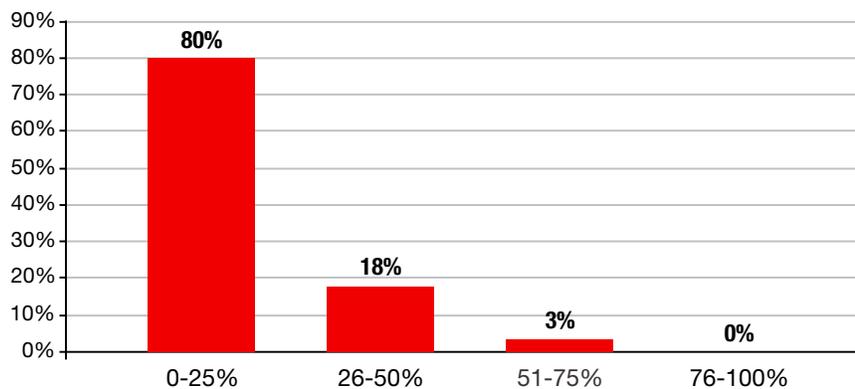
## Q. Please describe a typical meal time at one of your programs.

It's hard to imagine what it's like to have to turn to a food bank or soup kitchen in order to receive a hot meal each day, but for too many it is a reality that they must face, day in and day out. A Salvation Army survey released in 2010 revealed that fully 10 percent of the country – about three million people – have experienced homelessness at least once in their lifetime, with many of these individuals turning to Salvation Army food centres in their time of need.

This year's survey posed questions to help gain a better understanding of the clients that visit these centres and the atmosphere that exists at meal times between clients. The Salvation Army was encouraged to learn that **the vast majority, 80 percent, of clients that visit The Salvation Army for a meal eat with others and rarely alone.** This statistic highlights one important aspect of The Salvation Army – to provide a sense of dignity for all.

Meal time varies by program and location, but many respondents reported that the meal is served buffet style, with as many as 50-100 men, women and children being served at a time. Clients tend to interact with one another, engaged in lively conversations throughout the meal. Although many of our clients are going through difficult times, the ability to sit down for a hot meal amongst peers offers a sense of normalcy and dignity.

What percentage of your clients eat alone without really interacting with others?



“ We make sure the residents eat together to make it more of a family atmosphere. We discuss daily activities and stories.”

– Melissa Friesen, Kitchen Manager, Saskatoon, SK

## A Final Word

The Salvation Army recognizes that dignity comes in different forms. From a roof over your head, to a warm bed to sleep in at night, to a hot meal served in the company of others, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

Our fourth annual report, *Feeding Canada's Families: A Report on Salvation Army Food Services*, revealed that Salvation Army food centres share that desire and work to maintain a positive atmosphere through programs and services aimed at serving families and children and the communal nature of meal service.

Despite a year where client demand and food donations were unevenly matched, The Salvation Army was encouraged by many of this year's findings including:

- **66 percent** of food banks and soup kitchens reported that their shelves are **currently half-full to completely full**.
- **70 percent** of food banks and soup kitchens were certain or very certain that they would **be able to meet demand** for food services in the upcoming year.
- **Almost three-quarters** of respondents reported that their **volunteer rates have either remained the same or increased** year-to-year.

This year, as your family sits down together to eat Thanksgiving dinner, remember those down the street at the local soup kitchen who are doing the same. As more and more families and children encounter hardships, The Salvation Army will be there to provide assistance and support in any way that it can. With 86 cents of every dollar going directly to charitable programs, The Salvation Army provides dignity and hope to more than 1.8 million people in more than 400 communities across Canada.

To learn more, please visit: [www.SalvationArmy.ca](http://www.SalvationArmy.ca)



## Survey Methodology

The Salvation Army conducted an internal survey between July 10 and August 14, 2012, to learn about the current food-stock levels and trends at Salvation Army feeding centres nationwide. One hundred and sixty-seven staff members and administrators with first-hand experience working within The Salvation Army's food service programs were surveyed. Salvation Army feeding programs include food banks, food pantries, meal programs and street ministry outreach.

The survey was conducted online and received a national sample set from each of the six regions served by The Salvation Army in Canada: British Columbia; Alberta and Northern Territories; the Prairies; Ontario; Quebec; and Atlantic Canada.

This is the fourth year that The Salvation Army has conducted a study of this size and scope. The findings from the 2011, 2010 and 2009 food service reports can be found online at: [www.SalvationArmy.ca](http://www.SalvationArmy.ca)

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[www.SalvationArmy.ca](http://www.SalvationArmy.ca)  
or contact your local Salvation Army facility.



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