



**CENTRAL OKANAGAN
FOOD BANK**
NOURISH COMMUNITY. FEED HOPE.



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FOOD BANK**
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Purpose & Principles

Our core purpose is to provide full spectrum food aid to our community. Our programs not only alleviate the immediate and direct challenge of hunger, but work toward a more equitable and sustainable allocation of existing food already in our community, provide nutritional support in schools, and offer food and nutrition related education and resources for all members of our community.

We serve all individuals regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, ethnicity, language, disability, or health status. COFB has created programs to inherently target assistance toward our seniors, children, infants, pregnant mothers, and those with medically diagnosed dietary needs and restrictions.

Central Okanagan Food Bank respectfully acknowledges that we operate on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan people.

Organizational Scope

COFB serves the cities of Kelowna and West Kelowna. COFB is a proud member of Food Banks Canada, Food Banks BC, the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, and the Greater Westside Board of Trade. In recognition of its outstanding impact, COFB has been named to Charity Intelligence's Top 10 Impact: Canadian Food Banks of 2024.

Year in Review

2024 has been a pivotal year for the Central Okanagan Food Bank. Our 40th year in operation serving the Central Okanagan region, this year has been a testament to the extraordinary resilience shown by our community in the face of ongoing challenges.

The rising cost of living remains the most pressing issue for many, pushing families and individuals to seek support in record numbers. This year, we experienced a 43% increase in the number of clients we served, reaching an average of 10,168 clients each month. This growth is particularly notable among low-wage, dual-income households, underscoring the economic challenges our community faces. Now, in November 2024, our client numbers are continuing to increase as we see more than 12,000 clients monthly.

To address these challenges, we've worked hard to strengthen partnerships at every level. Strategic collaborations with large farms have enhanced our capacity to store and distribute fresh, nutritious produce on a larger scale, while our work with local growers, such as Helen's Acres Community Farm, Vibrant Veggie, and Paynter's Market, has ensured consistent access to high-quality, locally sourced food for our hampers. Our Perishable Food Rescue program has grown by 17% from last year, thanks to both our local farms and retailers working with us to divert food from the landfill. All together, these partnerships are helping us nourish our community in impactful and sustainable ways.

2024 has also been a year of innovation. The expansion of our Food for Thought School Meal Program, which now serves 42 schools within school District 23, reflects our commitment to tackling food insecurity among children. At the same time, our developing More than Food Program empowers clients to receive food and nutrition related education, resources, and life skills that assist in finding stability amidst experiences of food and financial insecurity. We aim to provide well-rounded food aid that lifts up our community by offering resources and opportunities to build a more stable future.

As we expand, we've celebrated our evolution this year with a fresh rebranding to distinguish our identity and presence in the community. It is increasingly important to us that we evoke the warmth, clarity, and food aid purpose we provide as our reach increases. Looking forward, we're working on opening a second satellite location in downtown Kelowna and exploring spaces in West Kelowna to better serve our population.

None of our growth and impact would be possible without the unwavering support from our donors, corporate partners, and community groups. Their generosity upholds our purpose to feed hope and nourish community.

We are grateful for what we've achieved together in 2024. Let us continue to strengthen and build on this foundation in the years ahead.



Trevor Moss
CEO



Tanja Halsall
Chair

2024 SUMMARY

10,168 individuals
served every month

122,023 visits
per year

147,577 school meals
across 42 schools

3,312,809 lb.
food donated

Numbers throughout this report reflect November 2023 - October 2024.

who we help

44% are
children
& youth

38% are
visible
minorities

19% are
seniors

35% are
working
households

We are an essential
community service.

43% overall client
increase
during 2024

MEETING THE DEMAND

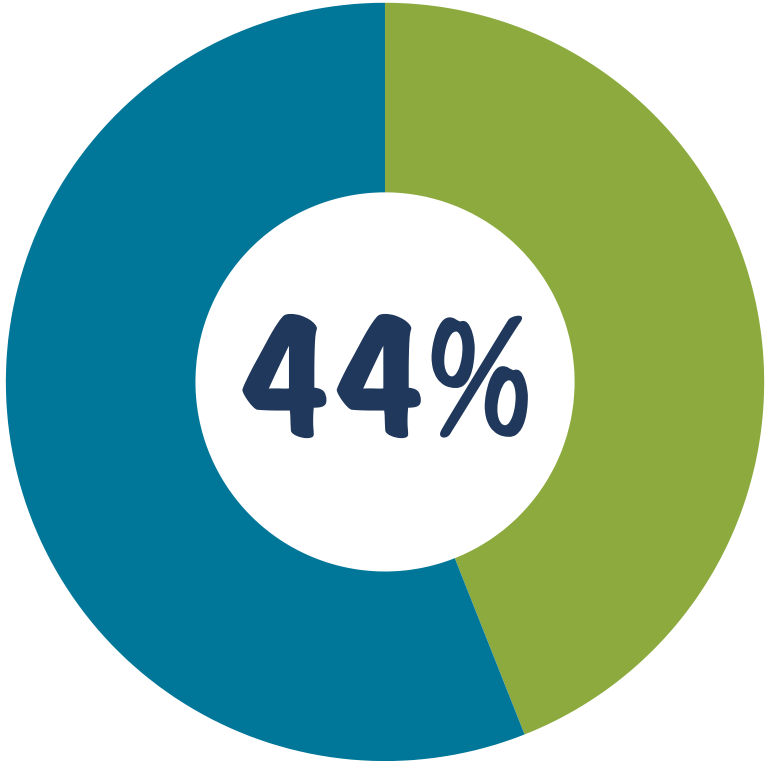
4,430 NEW CLIENTS

49% of clients rely on our support due to the COST OF FOOD

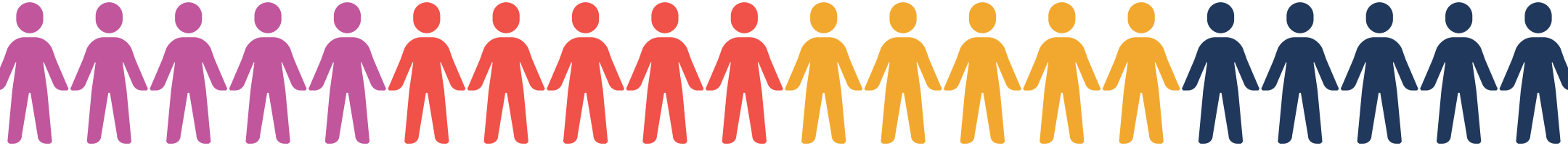


This year, we supported 4,430 new clients, reflecting the growing need for assistance in our community. These new connections represent 34% of the total individuals we served, highlighting the critical role our food bank plays in addressing food insecurity for families and individuals facing new challenges.

Whether they are navigating unexpected hardships or seeking a stable source of nutrition, we are honored to be a trusted resource for those in need.



44% of clients are Children and Youth under 18 years of age



Increasingly Common: Our Fastest Growing Demographic

35%
WORKING
FAMILIES



Our largest-growing demographic is two-parent working households. There has been a 43% increase in two-parent families served in the last 12 months.



FROM HUNGER TO HOPE

For 6 years, Chelsea, Eli, and their two children had been comfortable in their rented home in Kelowna. They were in a neighborhood they loved and the kids were doing well in their school- they were stable. But when the house was sold and they had to leave their rental, the family found themselves facing a housing market that no longer aligned with their budget.

When Chelsea and Eli first started looking for a new place to rent, they were shocked by the steep rise in rental prices. With no way to afford a similar home in their area where they wouldn't have to change schools for the kids, Chelsea and Eli signed a lease on a new rental that they knew was stretching their finances. "We thought we'd be able to make it work," Chelsea said.

It soon became clear that the higher rent was more than just a financial challenge- it was limiting their ability to cover other essentials. Despite their best efforts to budget carefully, the cost of rent, food, utilities, and everyday needs was unachievable. They couldn't seem to find a cheaper spot to rent for their family and were stuck in their too-expensive lease. Chelsea and Eli didn't want to fall behind on bills or cut food, but were in a tough situation.

The decision to go to the food bank wasn't easy. Like many, Chelsea and Eli didn't want to rely on external help. But when they received their first hamper from the Central Okanagan Food Bank, the relief was immediate. "It was such a huge weight lifted off our shoulders to see this box full of food for us," Chelsea says.



Food Aid:
Meeting the Immediate Need



Nutrition
Improvement
Program:
Our Hampers

Our Vitality program ensures families with children under 15 and senior clients receive balanced, essential nutrients. Clients are provided with dairy, seasonal produce, and high-protein items like meat, eggs, beans, lentils, legumes, and whole grains such as pasta and rice, promoting health and vitality for all ages.

This program supports 2,580 clients per month.

Vitality



Dietary Packs



Clients with dietary needs due to medical conditions, including acute and chronic illnesses, eating disorders, and food allergies, receive tailored foods to support their health. We provide a range of immune-boosting, gluten-free, low-fat, low-salt, and sugar-free options, along with fresh produce, dairy, and protein to help them thrive.

This program supports 920 clients per month.

COFB ensures aid reaches shelter points and frontline responders within 24 hours of a declared emergency. Our robust infrastructure ensures we are capable of procuring, storing, and mobilizing resources swiftly to respond to situations in which the food supply chain is disrupted.

At least 650 emergency hampers are prepared at all times.

Emergency
Response



Food Aid: Meeting the Immediate Need

Children make up 44% of our client base. Each month, we provide over 500 Tiny Bundles Hampers and 2,500 Snack Packs to children in need.



Nutrition Improvement Program

Tiny Bundles



Tiny Bundles supports pregnant mothers and families with children under one year old. Clients receive monthly hampers and weekly supplements like fresh produce, milk, eggs, and cheese.

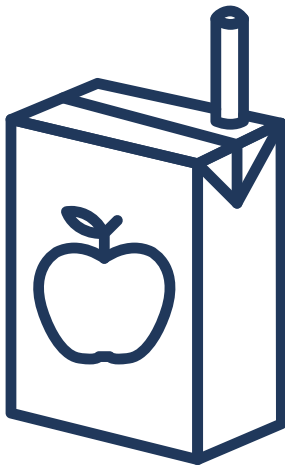
After birth, they are provided with diapers, wipes, baby food, and formula. This year, we reintroduced Healthy Baby check-ins with Interior Health community nurses!

This program supports 120 families per week.

Our snack packs offer children and youth aged 1-15 a one-week supply of ready-to-go, healthy snacks perfect for preschool, daycare, or school. Each pack is filled with nutritious items like yogurt, cheese, fresh fruits and veggies, granola bars, and juice—all purchased items providing program consistency—ensuring kids have the energy they need to thrive.

This program supplies over 30,000 snack packs each year.

Kids' Snack Packs



Holidays



Hampers are thoughtfully organized with all necessary items to prepare a special holiday meal for families, including our standard hamper items, plus turkey or ham, fresh seasonal produce, dairy, cranberry sauce, stuffing, jams, and desserts. There is a need for 30% more hampers this December compared to last year.

This year over 4,500 hampers are forecasted for distribution.

Food Aid: Meeting the Immediate Need

FOOD THOUGHT

 A PROGRAM OF COFB

This year, COFB launched the Food for Thought Program to provide nutritional support to children in School District 23 who would otherwise go hungry. Acquired from Hope for the Nations before the 2024-25 school year, we are continuing and growing this program’s legacy.

We understand the crucial link between proper nutrition and a child’s ability to focus on their studies, engage in activities, and thrive in their learning environment. Because every child is unique, each school prepares meals tailored to the specific requirements of its students.

Through Food For Thought, we’re not just filling stomachs; we’re nourishing futures.

375 weekly
take home
food
backpacks

5,000 school
meals
weekly

42
schools

supporting
over 1,200
children
weekly

At-Home Backpack Program

Outside of school, children in food-insecure households often don’t eat properly-or at all.

The Food for Thought Backpack Program provides food for children to take home and share with their families. You can help us feed hope to the impossible realities of hunger. It costs approximately \$30 to fill a child’s backpack with nutritious food for the weekend. We are looking to secure funding for the ever increasing requests for backpacks.

Well-nourished children have an equal chance to learn and succeed. This program ensures students are fed through the weekend so they can return to school on Monday with full stomachs.



\$30 TO FILL A
BACKPACK



\$2 PER
BREAKFAST
MEAL SERVED

“I volunteer with the breakfast program because no child should have to learn on an empty stomach. Hunger isn’t just about food—it impacts concentration, memory, mood, and motor skills. A well-fed child is a happier, more capable learner, and that’s why I help.”
- Nancy, Food for Thought volunteer

Breakfast Program

Having a nutritious breakfast helps children reach their full potential. The Breakfast Program operates in over 40 schools in the Central Okanagan: in Lake Country, West Kelowna, and Kelowna.

BC has one of the highest child poverty rates in Canada with approximately 20% of children living under the poverty level. Our Food Bank plays a vital role, helping families who depend on school breakfast and snack programs to meet their child’s nutritional needs.

The Breakfast Program ensures that all students have reliable access to nutritious food in a safe and supportive environment. This has been shown to help positively impact health and learning.

Food Aid:
Meeting the Immediate Need

Regional Hub Support:
Food Distribution

As a Food Banks Canada National Food Sharing Service Hub, we are part of a team of four distribution centres in BC that services regional catchments of outlying food banks.

Large case lot shipments of food are provided to the Central Okanagan Food Bank, which are broken down into more usable lots for smaller communities. These items are then shipped and shared out to 32 food banks across our region each month.*



336,009 pounds
distributed in
2023 fiscal year

531,397 pounds
distributed in
2024 fiscal year



Central Okanagan Food Bank's National Food
Sharing Service catchment area includes:

Armstrong, Castlegar, Cawston, Cherryville, Creston, Cranbrook, Enderby, Fernie, Golden, Grand Forks, Invermere, Kaslo, Kelowna, Kimberley, Lake Country, Lumby, Nakusp, Nelson, Oliver, Osooyos, Peachland, Penticton, Revelstoke, Salmo, Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Slocan, Sorrento, Sparwood, Summerland, Trail, and Vernon.

*Donations made in Kelowna and West Kelowna stay in our communities. This program works alongside Food Banks Canada and Food Banks BC to ensure regional food access throughout the rural Southern Interior of BC.

Food Aid: More Equitable & Sustainable Food Distribution

Food Rescue Program

There is a surplus of food that ends up wasted across our community. Foods that are absolutely viable but exist in surplus or look imperfect. Without a Food Rescue Program in place, this food would be directed to landfills as it is often considered unsellable, but not because it is in any way inedible.

Food is collected 364 days a year across our communities



Bulk items head into community agencies



Fresh items are added to hampers each day



COFB collects both fresh and non-perishable food from local retailers and producers across Kelowna and West Kelowna daily. Our goal is to retrieve as much viable yet unsellable food as possible from the community in order to work toward a more equitable and sustainable allocation of this existing food within our community. We aim to prevent food waste before it happens.

After acquiring these foods, COFB sorts and redistributes to our clients, local partner agencies, and out to our designated hub region of Food Bank BC’s Associate locations.



Manufacturers



Producers



Grocery
Retailers



Community



Government
Commodities



Farms

WHERE CAN SURPLUS FOOD COME FROM?



Restaurants &
Hospitality



Slight Bruising

REASONS FOOD IS RESCUED



Excess Supply



Outdated Packaging
(Not Out of Date)



“Wrong” Size or Shape

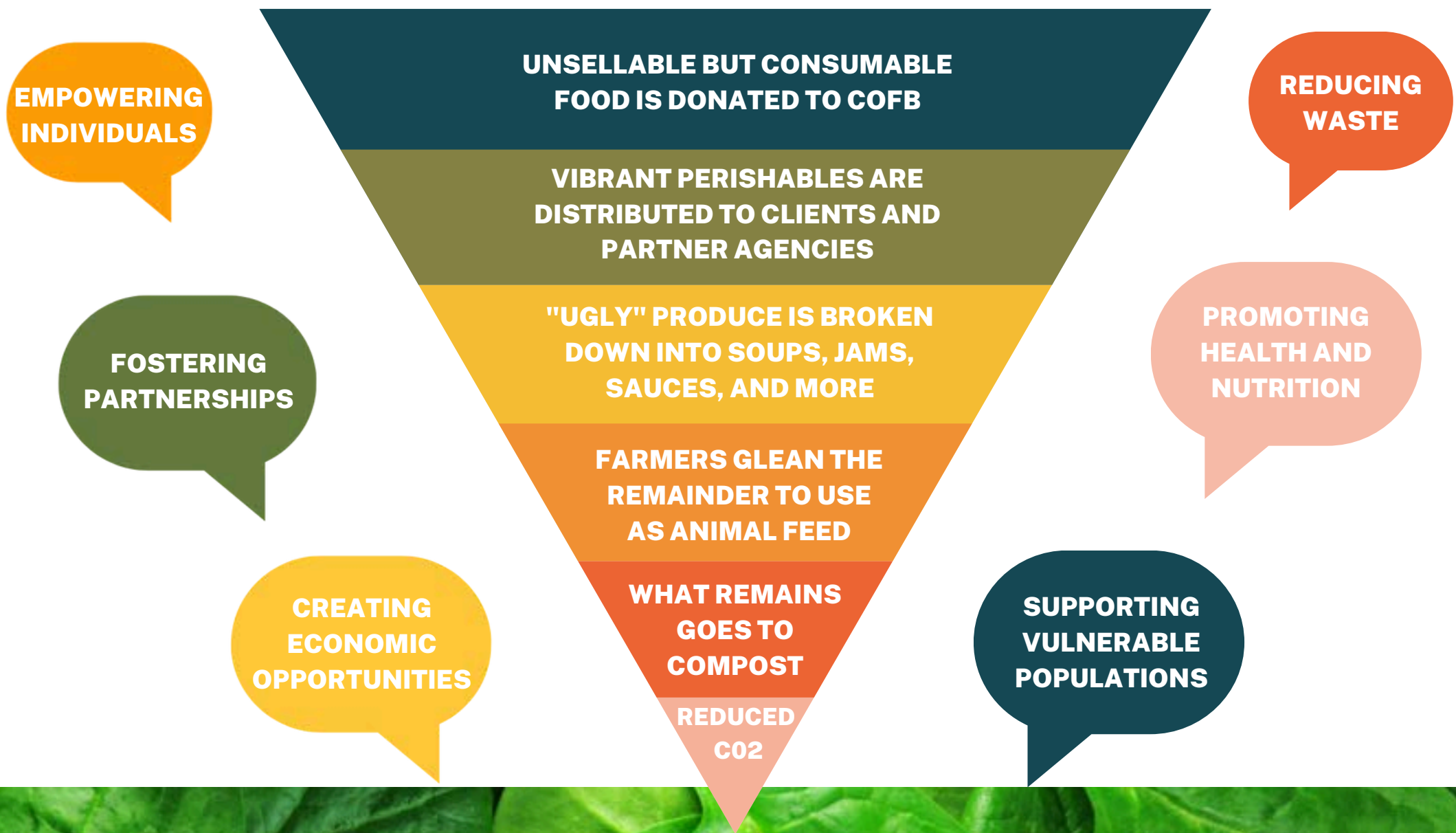


Bumper Crop



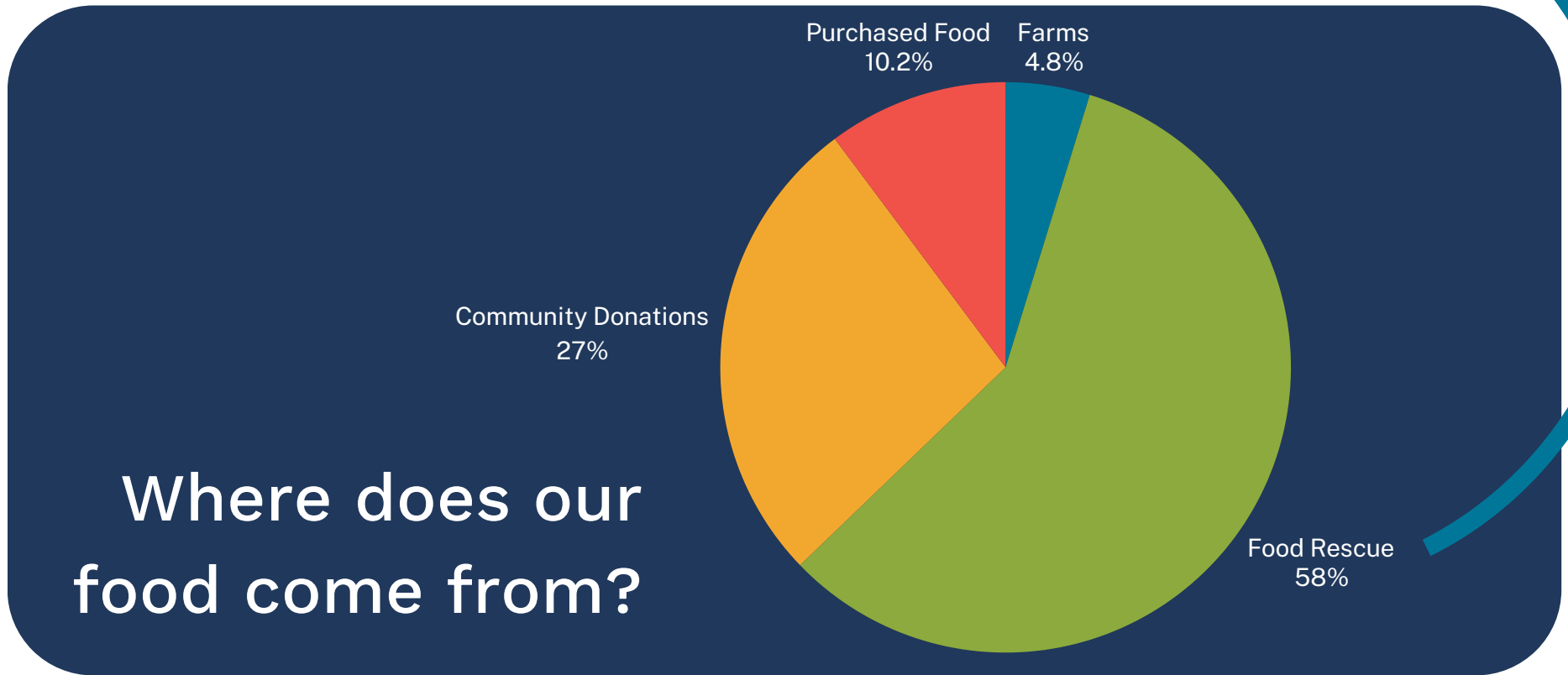
Not Selling Fast
Enough

Food Rescue Program



63% of the food we distribute is thanks to our Local Farmers & our Food Rescue Program

Millions of pounds of food are being diverted from the landfill.



Food Aid: More Equitable & Sustainable Food Distribution

Our Community Partners: Acting Together for a Cause



Food Retailers

More than 25 local food retailers across Kelowna and West Kelowna have partnered with us to provide surplus perishable foods, to make sure once they leave store shelves, they go into the hands of folks who need it most.

Save-On Foods · 6 locations | Superstore · 2 locations | Walmart · 2 locations | FreshCo | Costco | Safeway
Nester's Market · 2 locations | IGA · 2 locations | SunRype | Peter's Independent Grocer | No Frills | Choices
Urban Fare | Specialty Bakery | Okanagan Grocer | Cob's Bread | SunShine Market | Ellis Street Market



Local Agencies

We're grateful to work with over forty partner agency locations helping to support individuals who may also be food insecure in our community. To ensure equitable access to food, our partner agencies receive bulk foods and in turn provide food support to the people they serve each month; which means our reach in the community goes far beyond our registered clients.

All Are Family Outreach · BGC Okanagan · Childhood Connections · Canadian Mental Health Association
Elevation Outdoors · Freedom's Door · HOPE Outreach · Karis Society
Kelowna Community Resources · Kelowna Gospel Mission · Kelowna Women's Shelter
Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society · Mamas for Mamas · Meals on Wheels · Metis Mamawapowin
Metro Community & The Welcome Inn · NOW Canada · Okanagan College · Okanagan Nation Alliance
Okanagan Valley Pregnancy Centre · Pathways Abilities Society · Society of Hope · Salvation Army West
Kelowna · Senior's Outreach · Teen Challenge · Turning Points · Westbank First Nation



These hardworking partner agencies provide services for an additional 8,636 individuals in need monthly, helping us serve a total of almost 20,000 people each month.

Food Aid: More Equitable & Sustainable Food Distribution

Spotlight: Our Agricultural Partners



The Okanagan is abundant with food production.

Our community-minded agricultural partners make a unique impact on the lives of our clients, providing access to the freshest foods grown right in our community.

We are proud to nourish and grow relationships with farms and orchards in our community.

We want to specially thank and recognize the efforts of these many farms for feeding hope in our community with us.

171,960 lb. of fresh food was donated from local farmers this year.
The equivalent of **\$615,616!**

COFB collects produce from the Kelowna Farmers and Crafters Market twice per week. 10+ local growers consistently donate fresh fruits and vegetables that didn't sell at market.



Some of our donor farms in 2024:

Vibrant Veggie · Helen's Acres · Okanagan Fruit Tree Project · Lina's Garden · Day's Century Growers · The Farmlink Project · Taba Farms · Golden Valley Eggs · Allium Hospitality · Avery Farms · Crosby Organics · Bylands · Sandher Fruit Packers · and the many other farms we have run out of space for!



Did you know?

The BC Farmers' Food Donation Tax Credit is a non-refundable income tax credit to encourage farmers and farming corporations to donate certain agricultural products to registered charities.

Food Aid: More Equitable & Sustainable Food Distribution

Spotlight: Our Agricultural Partners

Helen's Acres donated 80,309 lb of fresh produce to us this growing season



Since retiring, Farmer Don has spent his summers gardening and donating his crops. He donated 9,966 lbs this year, all going directly into client hampers!

Our partner farm, the Vibrant Veggie Garden, hosted many volunteers and provided us fresh produce all season.



Okanagan Apples for Okanagan Kids

We're grateful to these amazing growers for supporting our local kids this year.

Day's Century Growers and Sandher Fruit Packers are generously providing apples for our Food for Thought school meal program at reduced or no cost for the 2024-2025 school year.

Paynter's Market has committed to providing the majority of apples to fuel our Snack Pack program for children 15 and under.

These incredible contributions ensure kids in our community have access to fresh, healthy food every day.



MORE FOOD

 **A PROGRAM OF COFB**

We believe that everyone deserves more than food; they deserve opportunities to thrive. That’s why, with the generous support of our community and The Stober Foundation, we proudly launched the More Than Food Program in June 2024. More Than Food empowers clients to receive food and nutrition education, resources, and skills that assist in finding stability amidst experiences of food insecurity.



LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Participants learn valuable skills such as cooking and nutrition classes, FoodSafe certification and culinary job training, and meal prep and grocery budgeting. These interactive sessions are led by experienced professionals.



PERSONALIZED NAVIGATION

Our program helps to provide clients with the resources necessary to address needs & goals. One on one navigation is available by appointment only.



REFERRAL NETWORKS

Our direct referral network aims to assist clients with understanding & finding different organizations in the community that are available for their specific needs.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Central Okanagan Family Hub: Played an integral role in the program’s launch and success by providing classroom space for workshops, including FoodSafe certification and upcoming holiday stress talks.

Kelowna Community Resources: Partnered in hosting workshops for single mothers.

YMCA: Delivered an impactful entrepreneurship course tailored to women and non-binary individuals.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

From our dedicated volunteers who have been essential to COFB for 40 years to our energetic corporate groups that get things done, volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization.

We could not provide the critical services we do without the dedicated, tireless work and support of our volunteer team.

For that, we are thankful and in appreciation every single day for each and every one of our invaluable volunteers.



33,877 hours
donated



\$1,134,540
of time value*

*value is calculated based on University of Maryland's
Do Good Institute, Aug 2023



"When I was growing up, there was nothing like the food bank. It's important to help and nice to see people thankful for what we do- our community is very generous."

-Helen, COFB Volunteer for 3 years

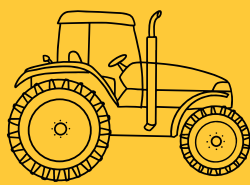


What's next for COFB?



NEW BUILDING IN WEST KELOWNA

Purchase land and a building for a new location to meet the rising demand in West Kelowna.



AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

Develop our relationships with area producers to keep local food supporting our community and centering local agriculture.



MORE THAN FOOD PROGRAM

Classes will continue to grow in number and reach for our client base, utilizing our new community kitchen and offering support surrounding food education and job training.



COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Our community kitchen is scheduled for completion early 2025. Our nutrition classes, pre-made freezer meals for clients, and community space will roll out this year.



CENTRAL OKANAGAN FOOD BANK

NOURISH COMMUNITY. FEED HOPE.

November 2024

