



# **HUNGER COUNT MONTREAL 2014**

**Report on the use of  
Emergency Food Aid services  
on the Island of Montreal**

**November 2014**

## Hunger Count Montreal 2014

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## About Moisson Montreal

Founded in 1984, Moisson Montreal is a major center for the collection, sorting and distribution of food for emergency food aid on the Island of Montreal. More than 200 community organizations receive goods from Moisson Montreal to meet the food needs and demands of individuals and families that they serve.

### OUR MISSION:

- Ensure an optimal food supply to the community organizations that provide assistance to people in crisis on the Island of Montreal.
- Foster the development of sustainable solutions to ensure food security.

### STATISTICS THAT SPEAK:

- More than **230 community organizations** across the Island of Montreal are serviced on a regular basis (and 65 sporadically) by Moisson Montreal throughout the year;
- According to the 2014 Hunger Count, **140,706 people, 38,345 of whom are children** 0-17 years of age (27% of the beneficiaries), receive food aid each month through partner organizations;
- Close to **13,2 million kilos of foodstuffs** and other basic products were distributed (an increase of 2,8 % in one year) representing a **value of \$ 74,8 million**;
- Moisson Montreal works closely with **235 agri-food businesses** to effectively collect their donations;
- In 2014, **7,595 volunteers** put in more than **82,577 hours** to help us continue our mission, which represents 40 full-time employees.

### EXTRAORDINARY LEVERAGE EFFECT!

Every 1 dollar received allows Moisson Montreal to redistribute **18 dollars' worth of food**. For example, a donation of \$ 15 enables us to distribute \$ 270 worth of food, which is an amount sufficient to feed **one family of four with healthy and nutritious food for over one week** (as determined by the Montreal Diet Dispensary).

### OUR BUSINESS:

- Receive, sort, store and distribute perishable and non-perishable food items;
- Strengthen the solidarity chain, while listening and ensuring a presence with the accredited partner organizations;
- Provide a stimulating learning environment and develop incentives for participants in various programs of social integration and employment;
- Organize or participate in major activities in the fight against hunger like: The Great Food Drive for Children (organized by Moisson Montreal) as well as La grande guignolée des médias;
- Ensure the creation and development of sustainable solutions for food safety, like for instance our Good Food Box program ([www.bonneboitebonnebouffe.org](http://www.bonneboitebonnebouffe.org)).

## **OUR FACILITIES:**

From 2008 to 2011, Moisson Montreal was the pilot project of the first major renovation venture ever undertaken by the *Coalition énergie et construction durable* for the account of an NPO. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of dozens of professionals and suppliers, Moisson Montreal now has facilities of 107 000 ft<sup>2</sup>, that are comfortable, well-appointed and optimal on the plan of energy efficiency.

In order to keep increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of food distributed to accredited partner organizations, Moisson Montreal constantly continues to expand its operations. Knowing that meat represents only 1% of the foodstuff distributed to people receiving food aid from Moisson Montreal (only 3,7 kilos per person per year), we launched in 2013 a meat recuperation program in collaboration with major food chains in Montreal. Today, about 8,000 kilos of meat are recuperated in each participating grocery store every month. The meat recuperation program will continue to grow and will be expanded in 2014-2015.

***Our Values:***  
***Respect, Integrity, Fairness, Solidarity, Commitment***

## About Hunger Count

Hunger Count is an annual survey of food banks part of the Food Banks Canada (**FBC**) network that is conducted throughout the country in the month of March. The survey's aim is to measure the use of food banks by community organizations all across Canada. As the largest Canadian food bank in terms of foodstuff distribution and within the framework of this national operation, Moisson Montreal produces its own Hunger Count based on the data it collects from the community organizations it serves across the island of Montreal.

Hunger Count is divided into three components:

- I. Representation of food aid from a **FOODSTUFF DISTRIBUTION** perspective;
- II. Overview of food aid from a **MEALS AND SNACKS** perspective;
- III. **RECOMMENDATIONS** from community organizations to reduce hunger in Montreal.

Due to the rather immediate nature of the collected data, the representation provided by Hunger Count is limited. The reason the survey is conducted in the month of March is because it best illustrates a time of year when food banks and community organizations are deemed to be operating normally. However, in practice, the number and type of people seeking assistance change throughout the year due to a variety of factors such as time of year, economic conditions, activities provided by the various community organizations, etc. Nonetheless, the Hunger Count document remains a very practical and informative tool that provides a better overall understanding of the needs of families and people seeking assistance from various emergency food aid services.

### A FEW DEFINITIONS

#### **Direct Organization:**

Community organization supplied directly from Moisson Montreal on a regular basis, at least once per month. In March of 2014, **208** out of **208** direct organizations completed the Hunger Count survey, thus the Hunger Count received a **100 %** participation rate. As of November 1<sup>st</sup> 2014, Moisson Montreal served 230 organizations.

Important notes to take in consideration:

In March 2014, 3 organizations were closed.

In March 2014, 8 punctual organizations didn't complete the questionnaire because they weren't provided foodstuff at that moment.

11 organizations were accredited during and/or after March 2014.

Please note that another group, comprising 65 organizations (non-accredited), was not required to complete the survey due to the sporadic quality of their requests for assistance.

#### **Foodstuff Distribution Program:**

The Foodstuff Distribution Program is essentially a representation of the following list of services offered by organizations:

- Food baskets distributed on set dates (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.);
- Community food shopping;
- Emergency food aid.

**Meal Program:**

The Meal Program is primarily comprised of the following food assistance services offered by community organizations:

- Prepared meals (ex. Meals on wheels)
- Snack distribution
- Cooking collectives and cooking workshops

**Household:**

One or more people living together under one roof. People may or may not be members of the same family.

## Hunger Count Montreal 2014: Key Results

### General Information

- ❖ In March of 2014, **208 organizations** received services from Moisson Montreal. **100% of these organizations** filled out the Hunger Count questionnaire. Three (3) other organizations were not required to complete the questionnaire due to the temporary closure during this period;
- ❖ Overall, **140,706 people** required some type of emergency food assistance from the 208 organizations that completed the Hunger Count compared with 135,347 in March of 2013;
- ❖ Overall, **3,348 households** declared having used a food bank for the **first time** in 2014, compared with 3,337 in March of 2013;

### Key Results: Foodstuff Program

- ❖ **70,558 people** used the Foodstuff Program in March of 2014, compared with 69,926 in 2013.
- ❖ Organizations offering Foodstuff Programs were able to fill **146,793 requests for aid** in the month of March 2014; a small decrease of 1,261 requests compared to March 2013.
- ❖ **58,1%** (40,988) of people who used the Program were adults versus **59,2%** in 2013;
- ❖ **41,9%** (29,570) of people who used the Program were children versus **40,8 %** in 2013.

### Key Results: Meal Program

- ❖ 392,826 portions of food were served in March of 2014, of which:
  - **308,999** were meals, including cooking collectives, meal on wheels portions, etc.;
  - **83,827** were snacks.
- ❖ The number of people who used the Meal Program is estimated at **70,148** compared with 65,421 in 2013, which represents a variation of 4,727 people (a 7,2% increase).

## Hunger: An Ever-present Issue of Concern

Moisson Montréal collects and redistributes foodstuffs to different community organizations across the Island of Montreal on a regular or immediate basis. We do not provide direct services to individuals and only intervene through our partner organizations operating programs to assist low-income households. Emergency food aid programs may be our partner organizations' primary activity, while at other times it is but one activity among a range of services being provided, including the social integration of new citizens to orientation activities and job search assistance to support for pregnant women, and helping families in crisis, etc. (Table 1). In fact, emergency food aid is not an end in itself. On a larger scale, it is one of several measures that must exist to support individuals and families who seek a better quality of life and greater independence.

**Table 1: Principal service offered by the partner organizations**

Principal Service	Organizations	%
Primarily food-related (Ex., food counter/emergency food-aid/food baskets, cooking collectives, soup kitchens, meals on wheels, etc.)	122/208	58,7%
Primarily non-food-related (Ex., shelter, day center, other services, etc.)	86/208	41,3%

### Present Throughout the Territory through Partner Organizations

Table 2 (page 9) represents a breakdown of the 208 organizations served by Moisson Montreal across the Island of Montreal. These organizations seek our services once or twice a week, every two weeks or even once a month, it all depends on their capacity to store or to distribute the foodstuffs supplied. On a more immediate basis, Moisson Montréal also meets a specific need in terms of supporting all organizations that plan cultural or recreational activities to break the isolation of certain groups of people. The following table illustrates the geographical analysis of organizations served by Moisson Montréal. The largest concentration of organizations is in Ville-Marie (33 organizations) and in Southwest Montreal (23 organizations).

**Table 2: Analysis of organizations served by Moisson Montreal, per borough, March 2014**

Borough	Number of organizations	Percentage
Ahuntsic/Cartierville	9	4,3%
Anjou	2	1%
Côte-des-Neiges/Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	12	5,8%
Dorval	1	0,5%
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve	10	4,8%
Lachine	6	3%
Lasalle	7	3,4%
Mercier	10	4,8%
Montreal-North	9	4,3%
Pierrefonds/Roxboro	6	2,9%
Plateau-Mont-Royal	19	9,1%
Pointe-Claire	3	1,4%
Rivière-des-Prairies/Pointes-aux-Trembles	7	3,4%
Rosemont/La Petite-Patrie	11	5,3%
Saint-Laurent	9	4,3%
Saint-Léonard	3	1,4%
South-West	23	11,1%
Verdun	5	2,4%
Ville-Marie	33	15,9%
Villeray/Saint-Michel/Parc-Extension	15	7,2%
Westmount	1	0,5%
Confidential/Others	7	3,4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### **Massive Work Load Requires the Contribution of our Fellow Citizens.**

The 208 organizations that completed the Hunger Count 2014 questionnaire reported that nearly **55% of their work is performed by volunteers**, evidence that the vitality of organizations operating in social and community fields depends not only on adequate financing but on the social commitment and the solidarity of Montrealers.

The table below presents a number of organizations that provide a specific food-related service.

**Table 3: Breakdown of organizations per service offered in March 2014**

<b>Service offered</b>	<b>Foodstuff</b>	<b>Meal or Snack Program</b>
Number of organizations	167/208	145/208
% of all respondents	80,3%	69,7%

Note: The grand total exceeds 100%, since one organization can provide more than one service.

## Section I: Foodstuff Distribution Program

The table below presents a summary overview of people on the Island of Montreal who sought food aid in the form of foodstuff distribution in the month of March 2014. The total number of people who used the Foodstuff Distribution Program in March 2014 is 70,558 compared with 69,929 in 2013, which represents a slight increase of 629 people.

**Table 4: 2013-2014 variations in the age of people using the Foodstuff Program in March 2014.**

Age Group	Number of people (2014)		Number of people (2013)		Variation (in % points)
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Children (0-17 years old)	29,570	41,9%	28,536	40,8%	1,1%
Adults (18-64 years old)	36,012	51%	37,654	53,9%	-2,9%
Adults (65 and over)	4,976	7,1%	3,739	5,3%	1,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70,558</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>69,929</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comments on Table 4: There is a slight decrease in the number of adults 18 to 64 years of age seeking assistance from the Foodstuff Program as well as in the number of children 0 to 17 years old. It is important to note that these two groups represent an important proportion of the users, 41,9% in 2014 (Increase of 1,1% compared to 2013).

However, there is a greater increase in the number of users who are 65 years old or older that benefit from the Foodstuff Program. In 2014, an increase of nearly 2 % was observed since 2013.

## Household Statistics

The following tables focus on the composition, income sources and housing conditions of households seeking assistance from the Foodstuff Program.

*Note: The total number of households surveyed is estimated at 25,533. Note that for each question, households that did not respond were excluded in an effort to present a clearer illustration of the actual situation.*

**Table 5: Composition of households using the Foodstuff Program in March 2014**

Household composition	Percentage 2013	Percentage 2012
Two-parent families	33,5%	34,4%
Single-parent families	22,1%	22,4%
Couples with no children	10,8%	11,9%
Single individuals	33,6%	31,3%
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comments on Table 5: We notice stability in the composition of households using the Foodstuff Program between 2013 and 2014. Following the trend since at least 2008, single individuals (with or without children) remains the group of respondents which call on the Foodstuff Program most frequently. This group of users constitute 55% of the people that sought help from the different provision programs in 2014. A slight augmentation of 2% was noticed since 2013.

**Table 6: Main sources of income for households using the Foodstuff Program in March 2013**

<b>Sources of income</b>	<b>Percentage 2014</b>	<b>Percentage 2013</b>
Social assistance	57,8 %	59,8 %
Employment	11,9 %	11,1 %
Student loan and/or bursary	4,1 %	3,7 %
Pension income	8 %	7 %
Employment insurance	4,5 %	4,6 %
No income	6,5 %	6,9 %
Other income	4,7 %	4,3 %
Private plan or CSST	2,3 %	2,6 %
<b>Total household respondents</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comments on Table 6: Even if we notice a slight decrease from 59,8% in 2013 to 57,8% in 2014, people living on social assistance continue to make up the largest group of the Foodstuff Program users. The proportion of households whose primary source of income is employment has increased from 11,1% to 11,9% in 2014. This confirms a trend that more and more workers call on the Foodstuff Program to fulfill their basic needs.

**Table 7: Housing conditions for households using the Foodstuff Program in March 2014**

<b>Housing conditions</b>	<b>Percentage 2013</b>	<b>Percentage 2012</b>
Homeowner	3,2 %	2,3 %
Rental housing	68 %	63,3 %
Social/subsidized social housing	19,8 %	25,3 %
Band-owned housing	0 %	0,1 %
Emergency shelter	1,8%	1,4 %
Group home or youth centre	0,8%	1,6 %
Living on the street	3%	2,6 %
Temporarily living with family or friends	3,4%	3,5 %
<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comments on Table 7: We perceived important changes in the housing conditions between 2013 and 2014:

- The percentage of rental housing increased of 4,7% ;
- The percentage of social/subsidized social housing decreased of 5,5%.

We can observe that close to 88% of households using the Foodstuff Program are tenants of private or social housing.

## Section II: Meal Program

Some organizations provide their clientele with meals prepared on a daily or occasional basis by volunteers or employees working in the Meal Program. Users are occasionally required to pay a token amount for the meal. In some cases, the meal provided by the community centre is the only nutritious meal of the day. Other services are grouped together under the umbrella of the Meal Program as per the framework agreed upon for the Hunger Count, such as snack distribution, cooking workshops, cooking collectives, etc. The final step of these services is the distribution of prepared food portions.

**Table 8: Number of meals and snacks served in March 2014**

Portions served	Number of portions 2014	Number of portions 2013	Variation 2013-2014 (%)
Meals	280,596	242,579	15,7%
Snacks	83,827	80,844	3,7%
Cooking Collectives	15,126	29,428	-48,6%
Meals on Wheels	13,277	10,637	-24,8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>392,826</b>	<b>385,987</b>	<b>1,8%</b>

*\*In 2013, many organizations only responded to the total number of portions served, which explains why the amount of portions does not equal the total.*

Comments on Table 8: We observe a significant increase of 15,7% in the number of meals served. It's important to note that a number of organizations only provided answers to the total number of meals served and not to the detailed categories.

**Table 9: Household composition of users of the Meal Program, 2013-2014 comparison**

<b>Household composition</b>	<b>Percentage 2014</b>	<b>Percentage 2013</b>
Two-parent families	15,1%	21,2%
Single-parent families	17,9%	19,5%
Couples with no children	10,7%	8,9%
Single individuals	56,3%	50,4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Comments on Table 9: Following the trend since at least 2008, single individuals (with or without children) remains the group of respondents which call on the Meal program most frequently. This group of users constitute about 75% of the people that appealed to the Meal Program in 2014.

### **Section III: Recommendations and Conclusions**

Every year, Food Banks Québec, through the Hunger Count operation, seeks to collect feedback from food banks and community organizations on government initiatives and public policies that would have the greatest impact on the fight against hunger. We asked that same question to the organizations that filled out the Montreal Hunger Count questionnaires. The six (6) recommendations that came up most frequently were as follow:

1. Increase the number of affordable housing possibilities;
2. Increase the availability/accessibility of rental housing;
3. Increase the support for mental health issues;
4. Increase the support and services to homeless individuals;
5. Increase social assistance benefits;
6. Increase pensions for seniors.

Within the framework of the Hunger Count 2014, the organizations recommendations towards public policy remain quite similar from year to year, but at different levels. For example, although it is still a priority in the list of proposals, increasing social assistance benefits is no longer mentioned as the main proposition by community organizations. Also, we can observe the growing importance, for community organizations, to increase the number of housing available and to make them accessible for everyone.

## Summary

It is clear that the problem of hunger is a big issue on the Island of Montreal. **It is important to note that the problem of hunger is likely more widespread than illustrated in the Hunger Count, which only recognizes the assistance, applied through Moisson Montreal's partner organizations during one month throughout the year.**

In the last three years, we can observe a constant increase in the number of users who are seniors and workers with low income that uses the services of food banks. Beyond the work that still needs to be done to ensure that optimum emergency food aid services are delivered, all the players involved in socioeconomic development, both locally and regionally, must focus their attention on developing sustainable solutions to provide Montrealers with the means to improve their quality of life in the long term, to take charge of their own lives and once and for all, to leave hunger behind.

When we know that as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, the minimum wage in Quebec is \$ 10.35 (*Commission des Normes du Quebec*) and that the average housing price for a two bedroom apartment in Montreal is \$ 730 per month, we can't emphasize enough on the importance of the work our partner organizations do in their community. Also, according to the results of the Rental Market Survey conducted in October 2013, the highest level documented was 1,399\$ in downtown Montreal and l'île des Soeurs, and the lowest was 608\$ in Mercier, 618\$ in Montreal-Nord and 621\$ in Villeray, Saint-Michel and Parc-Extension<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64411/64411\\_2013\\_A01.pdf](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64411/64411_2013_A01.pdf)