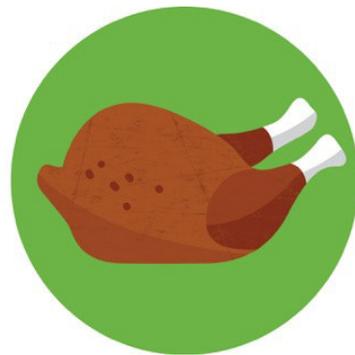




HUNGER COUNT MONTREAL

November 2015



**Report on the use of emergency food aid services on the
Island of Montreal**

Hunger Count Montreal 2015

Published by:

Moisson Montréal
6880 Chemin de la Côte-de-Liesse
Montréal, Québec, H4T 2A1
514 344-4494
info@moissonmontreal.org
www.moissonmontreal.org

www.facebook.com/moissonmtl
www.twitter.com/moissonmtl
www.linkedin.com/company/moisson-montreal

Research by: Geverny Hajjar

Written by: Alexandra Carpentier and Geverny Hajjar

About Moisson Montréal

Founded in 1984, Moisson Montréal is the largest food bank in Canada, thanks to its food recovery and distribution programs for emergency food assistance on the Island of Montreal. Close to 250 community organizations receive goods from Moisson Montréal to meet the food needs and demands of individuals and families that they serve.

OUR MISSION:

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

OUR VALUES:

- **Respect** the people we help, as well as our coworkers, volunteers and partners
- **Integrity** in all aspects and actions undertaken by volunteers and staff
- **Fairness** in the decisions made for all of our partners and in the sharing of food
- **Solidarity** to maximize Moisson Montréal's role and impact within the community
- **Personal** commitment to fight hunger on a long-term and daily basis

STATISTICS THAT SPEAK:

- **244 community organizations** across the Island of Montreal are serviced on a regular basis (and 53 sporadically) by Moisson Montréal throughout the year
- According to the 2015 Hunger Count, **146,230 people, 33,860 of whom are children** (23% of beneficiaries), receive food aid each month through our partner organizations
- Close to **12.6 million kilos of foodstuff** and other basic products were distributed, representing a **value of \$60.9 million**
- Moisson Montréal works closely with **235 agri-food businesses** to effectively collect donations
- In 2015, **7,828 volunteers** put in more than **76,275 hours** to help us continue our mission; the equivalent of having 42 full-time employees

OUR PROGRAMS:

- **Food Recovery Program in Supermarkets (FRPS):** Created in October 2013, this program is the first of its kind in Canada and offers a unique and sustainable solution to the problem of food insecurity and waste. Moisson Montréal has reached a province-wide agreement with Provigo, Maxi, Metro and Super C to recover unsold foodstuff, which are then distributed to community organizations. In two years, nearly 855 tons of food has been recovered, including 370 tons of meat, which represents savings of almost \$8 million for organizations. Moisson Montréal has won two awards for this program: the 2015 Corporate Citizenship (Supply category) award from Novae and the Élixir (Coup de Coeur category) prize from PMI.

- **Feeding Our Future:** Funded in collaboration with Sodexo Foundation, this program provides summer lunches to more than 1,000 children who receive subsidised meals during the school year. Moisson Montréal is proud to have participated in this program for the last 14 years.
- **Social and/or professional integration programs:** In collaboration with CRDITED, Moisson Montréal regularly welcomes volunteers with intellectual disabilities or pervasive developmental disorders to work alongside Moisson Montreal's employees every day. The goal is to help them develop autonomy, break isolation and acquire assorted skills.
- **Regroupement d'achat des organismes communautaires (RAOC):** The association between Moisson Montréal and Commerce solidaire has enabled more than 50 members of the RAOC network to benefit from considerable savings on purchased food items.

AN INVESTMENT THAT IMPACTS OUR SOCIETY!

To maximize the impact of its activities, Moisson Montréal ensures that the majority of food distributed comes from foodstuff donations and that expenses are minimized. About 95% of donations received are used to provide services to organizations and enable food distribution. Moisson Montréal's administrative fees are among the lowest in the country (only 1%). So every dollar invested in our organism has significantly increased value. A donation of \$100 has the power to feed 56 children between 0-5 years of age for a week.*

* According to calculations by the Montreal Diet Dispensary

About Hunger Count

Hunger Count is an annual survey of food banks that are part of the Food Banks Canada (**FBC**) network. It is conducted 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 Montréal produces its own Hunger Count based on data collected from the community organizations we serve across the island of Montreal.

The Hunger Count is divided into three components:

- I. Representation of food aid from the perspective of **FOODSTUFF DISTRIBUTION**
- II. Overview of food aid from the perspective of **MEALS AND SNACKS**
- 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 changes throughout the year due to a variety of factors, including season, economic conditions, activities provided by 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 other people seeking assistance from various emergency food aid services.

A FEW DEFINITIONS

Direct Organization:

- Community organization supplied directly by Moisson Montréal on a regular basis; i.e. at least once per month. In March 2015, 218 out of 218 direct organizations completed the Hunger Count survey, thus the Hunger Count achieved a 100% participation rate.
- In March 2015, 9 organizations were closed.
- In March 2015, 3 sporadic organizations didn't complete the questionnaire because they weren't being provided with foodstuff at that moment.
- 14 organizations were accredited during and/or after March 2015.
- Please note that another group, comprising 53 non-accredited organizations, was not required to complete the survey due to the sporadic quality of their requests for assistance.

Foodstuff Distribution Program:

The Foodstuff Distribution Program essentially represents 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 (i.e. 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 2015: Key Results

General Information

- ❖ In March 2015, **218 organizations** received services from Moisson Montréal. **100% of these organizations** filled out the Hunger Count questionnaire. Nine (9) other organizations were not required to complete the questionnaire due to temporary closure during this period.
- ❖ Overall, **146,230 people** required some type of emergency food assistance from the 218 organizations that completed the Hunger Count, as compared to 140,706 in March 2014.
- ❖ Overall, **3,354 households** declared having used a food bank for the **first time** in 2015, as compared to 3,348 in March 2014.

Key Results: Foodstuff Program

- ❖ **65,108 people** used the Foodstuff Program in March 2015, as compared to 70,558 in 2014.
- ❖ Organizations offering Foodstuff Programs were able to fulfill **146,793 requests for aid** in the month of March 2015; a small decrease of 18,850 requests over March 2014.
- ❖ **61.3%** (39,888) of people who used the Program were adults, versus **58.1%** in 2014.
- ❖ **38.7%** (25,220) of people who used the Program were children, versus **41.9%** in 2014.

Key Results: Meal Program

- ❖ **478,620 portions*** of food were served in March 2015, as compared to 392,826 in 2014 (a 22% increase). The breakdown is as follows:
 - **347,039** meals, including cooking collectives, meal on wheels portions, etc.
 - **108,434** snacks

**In 2015, many organizations only responded to the total number of portions served, which explains why the amount of portions does not equal the total.*

Hunger: An Ever-Present Concern

Moisson Montréal recovers and redistributes foodstuff 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, which operate programs to assist low-income households. In some instances, an emergency food aid program is a partner organization's primary activity, but in others, it is merely one in a range of services; these other services include social integration of new citizens, orientation activities, job search assistance for pregnant women, 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 be implemented in order to support individuals and families seeking a better quality of life and greater independence.

Table 1: Primary Service Offered by Partner Organizations

Primary Service	Organizations	%
Primarily food-related (Ex. food counter/emergency food aid/food baskets, cooking collectives, soup kitchens, meals on wheels, etc.)	129/218	59.1%
Primarily non-food-related (Ex. shelter, day center, other services, etc.)	89/218	40.8%

Active Throughout the Territory Via Partner Organizations

Table 2 (page 9) represents a breakdown of the 218 organizations served by Moisson Montréal across the Island of Montreal. These organizations seek our services once or twice a week, every two weeks or even once a month, depending on their capacity to store or to distribute the foodstuff 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. The following table illustrates the geographical analysis of organizations served by Moisson Montréal. The largest concentration of organizations is in Ville-Marie (40 organizations), in Villeray–St-Michel–Parc-Extension (20 organizations) and in Southwest Montreal (19 organizations).

Table 2: Analysis of Organizations Served by Moisson Montréal, per Borough, March 2015

Boroughs	Number of organizations	Percentage (%)
Ahuntsic–Cartierville	8	3.7
Anjou	2	0.9
Côte-des-Neiges–Notre-Dame-de-Grâce	15	6.9
Lachine	7	3.2
Lasalle	6	2.8
Mercier	11	5.0
Hochelaga–Maisonneuve	10	4.6
Montréal Nord	9	4.1
Pierrefonds–Roxboro	6	2.8
Plateau Mont-Royal	16	7.3
Rivière des Prairies–Pointe-aux-Trembles	7	3.2
Rosemont–Petite-Patrie	9	4.1
St-Laurent	9	4.1
St-Léonard	5	2.3
Southwest Montreal	19	8.7
Verdun	8	3.7
Ville-Marie	40	18.3
Villeray–St-Michel–Parc-Extension	20	9.2
Dorval	1	0.5
Pointe-Claire	1	0.5
Westmount	1	0.5
Confidential/Others	8	3.7
Total	218	100.0

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

Table 3: Breakdown of Organizations, Per Service Offered, March 2015

Service offered	Foodstuff	Meal or snack program
Number of organizations	170/218	158/218
% of all respondents	78.0%	72.5%

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

Massive Work Load Requires the Contributions of Our Fellow Citizens

The 218 organizations that completed the 2015 Hunger Count questionnaire reported that nearly **56% 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 solidarity of Montrealers as well. For example, Moisson Montréal needs an average of 50 volunteers to perform its daily operations.

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 March 2015. The total number of people who used the Foodstuff Distribution Program in March 2015 is 65,108, as compared to 70,558 in 2014, which represents a decrease of 5,450 people.

Table 4: 2014-2015 Variations in the Age of People Using the Foodstuff Program, March 2015

Age group	Number of people (2015)		Number of people (2014)		Variation (in % points)
Children (0-17 years old)	25,220	38,7	29,570	41.9%	-3.2%
Adults (18-64 years old)	36,338	55,8	36,012	51%	4.8%
Adults (65 and over)	3,550	5,5	4,976	7.1%	-1.6%
Total	65,108	100%	70,558	100%	100%

Note: There is a slight 4.8% increase in the number of adults 18-64 years of age seeking assistance and a 3.2% decrease in the number of children 0-17 years old. There has also been a slight 1.6% decrease of adults aged 65 and over who benefit from the Foodstuff Program.

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 22,831. 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, March 2015

Household composition	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2014
Two-parent families	27.9%	33.5%
Single-parent families	22.5%	22.1%
Childless couples	11.6%	10.8%
Single individuals	38.1%	33.6%
Total respondents	100%	100%

Note: There is stability in the composition of households using the Foodstuff Program between 2014 and 2015. Following the trend since at least 2008, single individuals (with or without children) remains the group of respondents who most frequently use the Foodstuff Program. This group constitutes 60.6% of all people who sought help from different provision programs in 2015. A 5% lift was noticed over 2014 statistics.

Table 6: Main Sources of Income for Households Using the Foodstuff Program, March 2015

Sources of income	Percentage	Percentage
	2015	2014
Social assistance	56.3%	57.8%
Employment	10.6%	11.9%
Student loan and/or bursary	5.1%	4.1%
Pension income	7.2%	8%
Employment insurance	4.3%	4.5%
No income	11.1%	6.5%
Other income	2.9%	4.7%
Private plan or CSST	2.5%	2.3%
Total household respondents	100%	100%

Note: Even if there was a slight decrease from 57.8% in 2014 to 56.3% in 2015, people living on social assistance continue to make up the largest group of Foodstuff Program users.

Table 7: Housing Conditions for Households Using the Foodstuff Program, March 2015

Housing conditions	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2014
Homeowner	1.8%	3.2%
Rental housing	67.6%	68%
Social/subsidized social housing	21.4%	19.8%
Band-owned housing	0.2%	0%
Emergency shelter	2.5%	1.8%
Group home or youth centre	1.3%	0.8%
Living on the street	2.4%	3%
Temporarily living with family or friends	2.8%	3.4%
Total respondents	100%	100%

Note: There were some definite changes in housing conditions between 2014 and 2015. The percentage of social/subsidized housing increased by 1.6%, while the percentage of homeowners decreased by 1.4%. Also, nearly 67.6% of households using the Foodstuff Program are in the private or social housing sector.

Section II: Meal Program

Some organizations provide their clients with prepared meals on a daily or occasional basis, delivered by volunteers or employees working in the Meal Program. Clients 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 they will eat all day. As per the framework agreed upon for the Hunger Count, other services are grouped together under the umbrella of the Meal Program; these include, snack distribution, cooking workshops, cooking collectives, etc. The final step of these services is distribution of prepared food portions.

Table 8: Number of Meals and Snacks Served, March 2015

Portions served	Number of portions 2015	Number of portions 2014	Variation 2014-2015 (%)
Meals	328,888	280,596	17.2%
Snacks	108,434	83,827	29.3%
Cooking Collectives	18,151	15,126	19.9%
Meals on wheels	12,516	13,277	-5.7%
Total	478,620	392,826	21.8%

*In 2015, many organizations only responded to the total number of portions served, which explains why the amount of portions does not equal the total.

Note: There was a significant 17.2% increase in the number of meals served. It's important to note that a number of organizations only provided answers for the total number of meals served and not for more detailed categories.

Table 9: Household Composition of Users of the Meal Program, 2014-2015 Comparison

Household composition	Percentage 2015	Percentage 2014
Two-parent families	17.2%	15.1%
Single-parent families	15.2%	17.9%
Childless couples	8.7%	10.7%
Single individuals	58.9%	56.3%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Following the trend since at least 2008, single individuals (with or without children) remains the group of respondents who most frequently use the Foodstuff Program. This group constitutes about 75% of all people who called on the Meal Program in 2015. There has also been a 2.1% increase in the number of two-parent families.

Section III: Recommendations and Conclusions

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

1. Develop a national strategy to reduce poverty
2. Increase the amount of affordable housing
3. Increase the availability/accessibility of rental housing
4. Develop a national food strategy
5. Increase support for people with mental health issues
6. Increase the provincial minimum wage

According to Hunger Count 2015, increasing the minimum wage and the amount of affordable housing has become a priority for community organizations, because of the rising cost of living.

Conclusion

Confronted with increasing demand for food assistance, Moisson Montréal can only reiterate its support of its 244 community organizations across the Island of Montreal. Although the Foodstuff Program has been reduced, the number of meals served has skyrocketed in 2015 (22% increase). It is important to note the limitations of this report. The Hunger Count only considers the situation of those receiving monthly assistance from our 244 partner organizations, so the issue of hunger is likely more widespread than indicated here.

In light of results obtained by the 2015 Hunger Count, it is fair to say that the portrait of people in need changes little from year to year. Single adults (with or without children) and people living on social assistance remain those who require the most urgent food assistance in Montreal. It must also be noted that the percentage of students receiving food assistance (5.1%) is increasing (3.6% in 2012).

This is why innovation and partnerships between socially oriented organizations and businesses is more important than ever. Investments in sustainable solutions to food insecurity, such as the Food Recovery Program in Supermarkets, will be needed as supply services expand to meet the growing demands of our organizations.