2025 EDMONTON'S FOOD BANK

CLIENT SURVEY REPORT

My family and I are very grateful for the Food Bank and do not know what we would have done without it. Thank you!

Client Voice - 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION 2-3

DEMOGRAPHICS 4-6

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION 7-9

EDUCATION & IMMIGRATION 10-11

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY & CULTURAL REPRESENTATION 12-13

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME 14-16

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS RISK 17-18

HEALTH & WELL-BEING 19-21

FOOD SECURITY 22-25

AWARENESS & USE OF SUPPORTS 26-28

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 29-30

OBSERVATIONS 31

RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION 32-33

Thank you for reading this report!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Edmonton's Food Bank Client Survey reveals a stark, unvarnished portrait of food insecurity in a city that continues to grow and grow more unequal.

This report draws on the direct voices and experiences of hundreds of clients. Their stories, supported by hard data, show that food insecurity cuts across age, gender, background, and household type. Persistent themes include poverty, underemployment, housing precarity, health challenges, and barriers to supports which remain stubbornly unchanged, even as Edmonton's population and demographics shift.

Key findings from the 2025 survey include:

- An increase in the proportion of clients with post-secondary education yet still facing chronic underemployment.
- Newcomers and recent immigrants continue to be overrepresented, highlighting ongoing challenges around credential recognition and settlement supports.
- A majority of households supported by the Food Bank are families with children, but single adults and seniors make up a growing segment.
- Indigenous clients, while still represented, appear at a lower proportion than in 2015 in hamper programs.
- Food insecurity is intensified by a toxic mix of rising housing costs, stagnant wages, health problems, and insufficient government or community support.
- Clients consistently run out of money before the end of the month, with many relying on credit, friends, and drastic cutbacks to get by.
- For many, the Food Bank is not a temporary solution, but a long-term necessity.

Comparative analysis with 2023 and 2015 shows that while some demographic patterns have shifted, especially an increase in newcomer clients and educational attainment, core challenges have deepened. Fewer clients report having connections to other support agencies and most cite insufficient income as the primary driver of food insecurity. These findings are a call to action for policymakers, funders, and partners: Edmonton's food security crisis is neither isolated nor short-lived. The recommendations at the end of this report are drawn directly from client voices and survey evidence, outlining tangible actions to move more Edmontonians from survival to stability.

INTRODUCTION

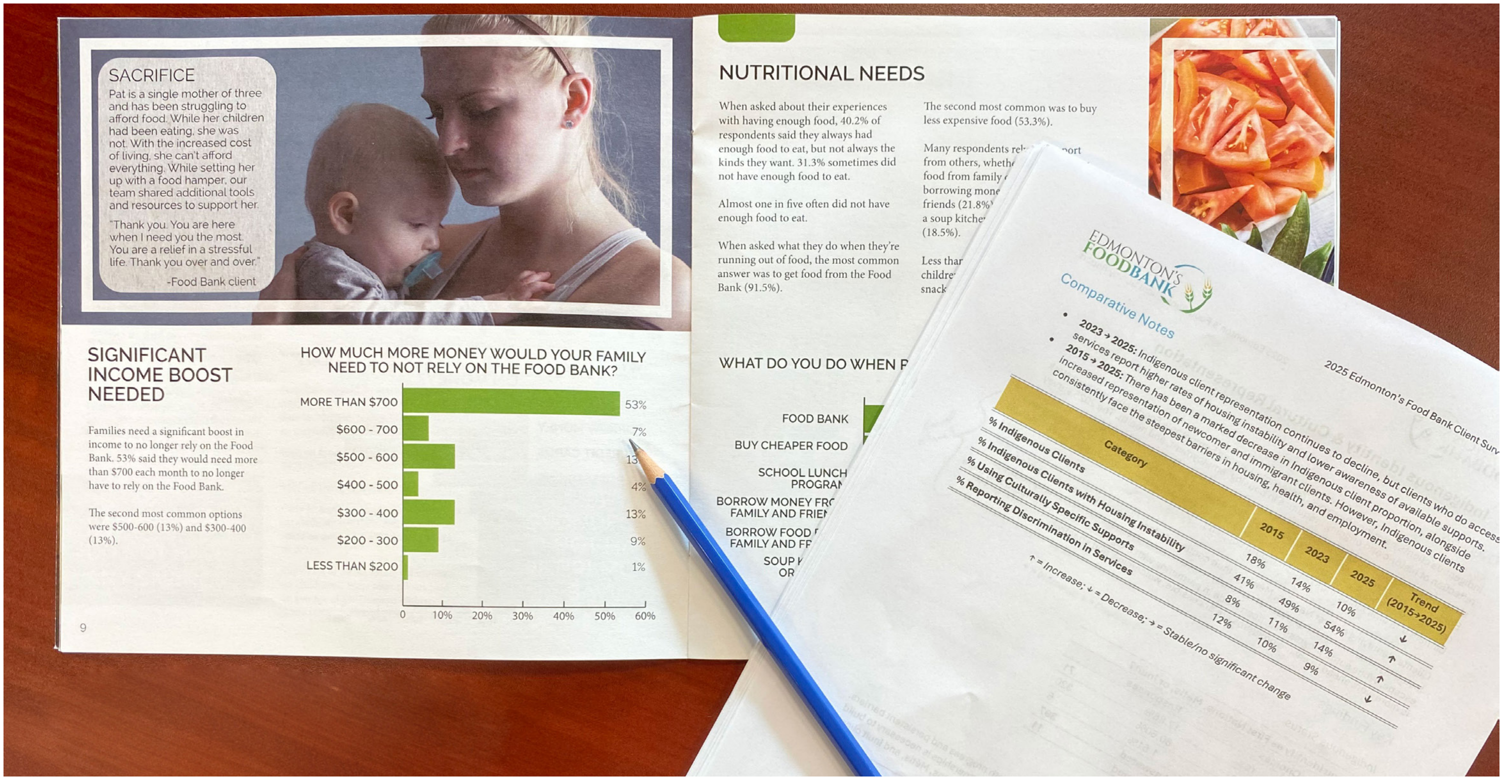
In 2015, Edmonton's Food Bank began formally collecting survey data from its clients to better understand the circumstances behind food bank use. In the decade since, Edmonton has seen population growth, rising living costs, major shifts in the labour market, and increasing pressure on housing affordability. Through it all, the client survey has provided a **direct line to the experiences and voices of the people who rely on this vital service.**

The Client Survey was designed to:

- Document who is using the Food Bank and why.
- Understand the economic, housing, health, and social conditions of clients.
- Identify trends over time, comparing 2025 results to those from 2023 and 2015.
- Highlight areas where service delivery, advocacy, and partnerships could have the greatest impact.

The value of this survey lies in its first-hand insight. While statistical indicators can show rising rents or stagnant wages, they cannot capture what it feels like to skip dinner so your children can eat, or to hold down two jobs and still face eviction.

By pairing data with client voices, this report makes those realities visible and impossible to ignore.



This report is structured around the same key themes as previous years:

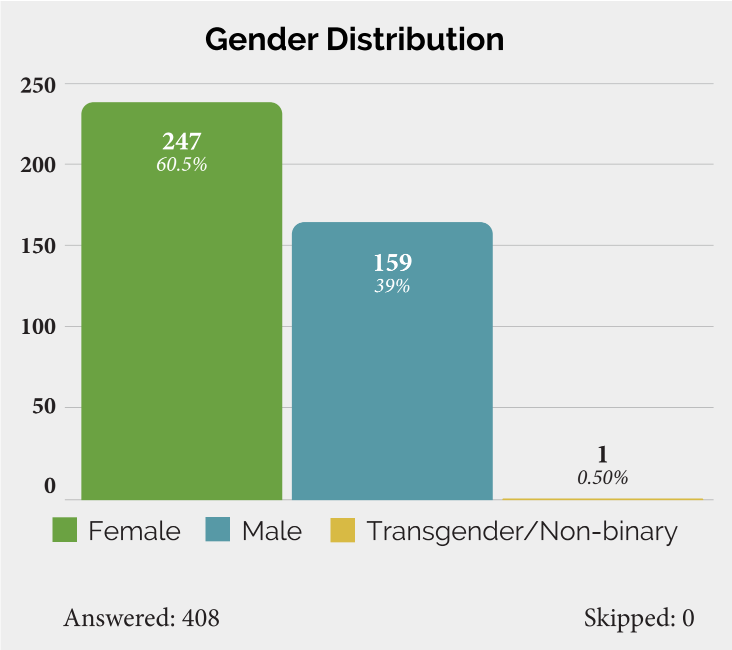
- **Demographics** – Who uses the Food Bank.
- **Household Composition** – The makeup of client households.
- **Education & Immigration** – The role of education and newcomer experience in shaping opportunities.
- **Indigenous Identity & Cultural Representation** – Unique barriers faced by Indigenous clients.
- **Employment & Income** – The realities of working poverty.
- **Housing & Homelessness Risk** – The scale of instability in shelter and housing.
- **Health & Well-Being** – How food insecurity affects health outcomes.
- **Food Security** – The depth of need.
- **Awareness & Use of Supports** – What services people know about and can access.
- **Observations** – Insights that cut across multiple themes.
- **Comparative Analysis** – Short-term changes (2023 → 2025) and longer term trends (2015 → 2023 → 2025).
- **Recommendations & Call to Action** – Clear, actionable priorities based on the evidence.

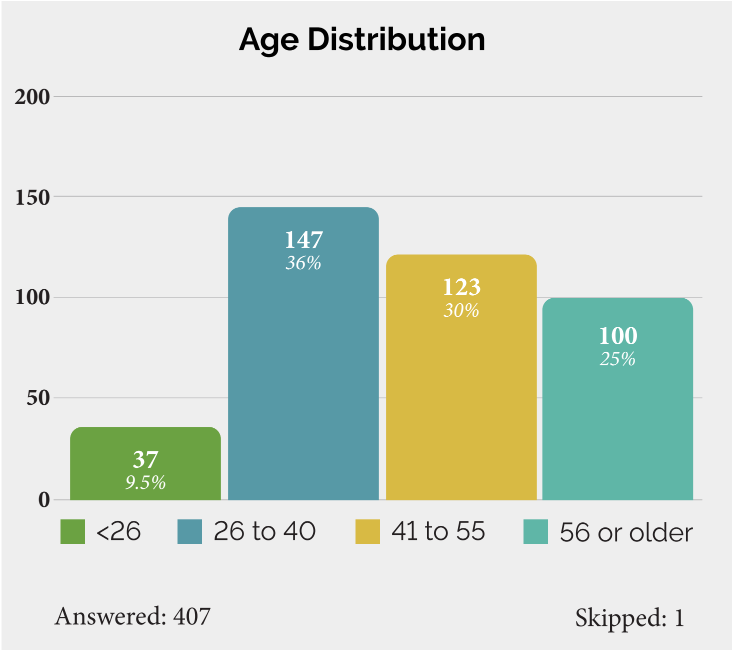
DEMOGRAPHICS

OVERVIEW

The 2025 survey reveals a complex and evolving client base. Women continue to make up a larger share of clients, but the gender gap has narrowed in recent years. Clients span all ages, with families with children and single adults remaining overrepresented compared to the general population. Seniors are a growing group, reflecting both demographic change and the pressure of inflation on fixed incomes. The Food Bank remains a vital support for people from every corner of the city, from lifelong Edmontonians to new arrivals.

KEY FINDINGS





- Female respondents account for **60.5%** of the sample.
- Seniors (65+) represent **9%** of respondents.
- Children make up **40%** of household members among surveyed households, based on respondent-reported adults/children counts.
- **Single-person households** represent **26%** of surveyed households; **single-parent households** represent **13%**.
- Respondents who identify as **First Nations, Métis, or Inuit: 18%**

COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

The percentage of female clients increased from 57% in 2023 to 60% in 2025. Seniors (65+) comprised 9.5% of the 2023 sample and 9% in 2025. Non-Canadian citizens totaled 37.5% in 2023 and 38.5% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

The proportion of female clients decreased from 66% in 2015 to 60% in 2025. Clients identifying as Indigenous declined from 34% in 2015 to 18% in 2025. Single-parent households declined from 35% in 2015 to 13% in 2025 (Calculated based on raw data).

9% OF RESPONDENTS ARE **SENIORS OVER 65**

Survey Participation Context Note

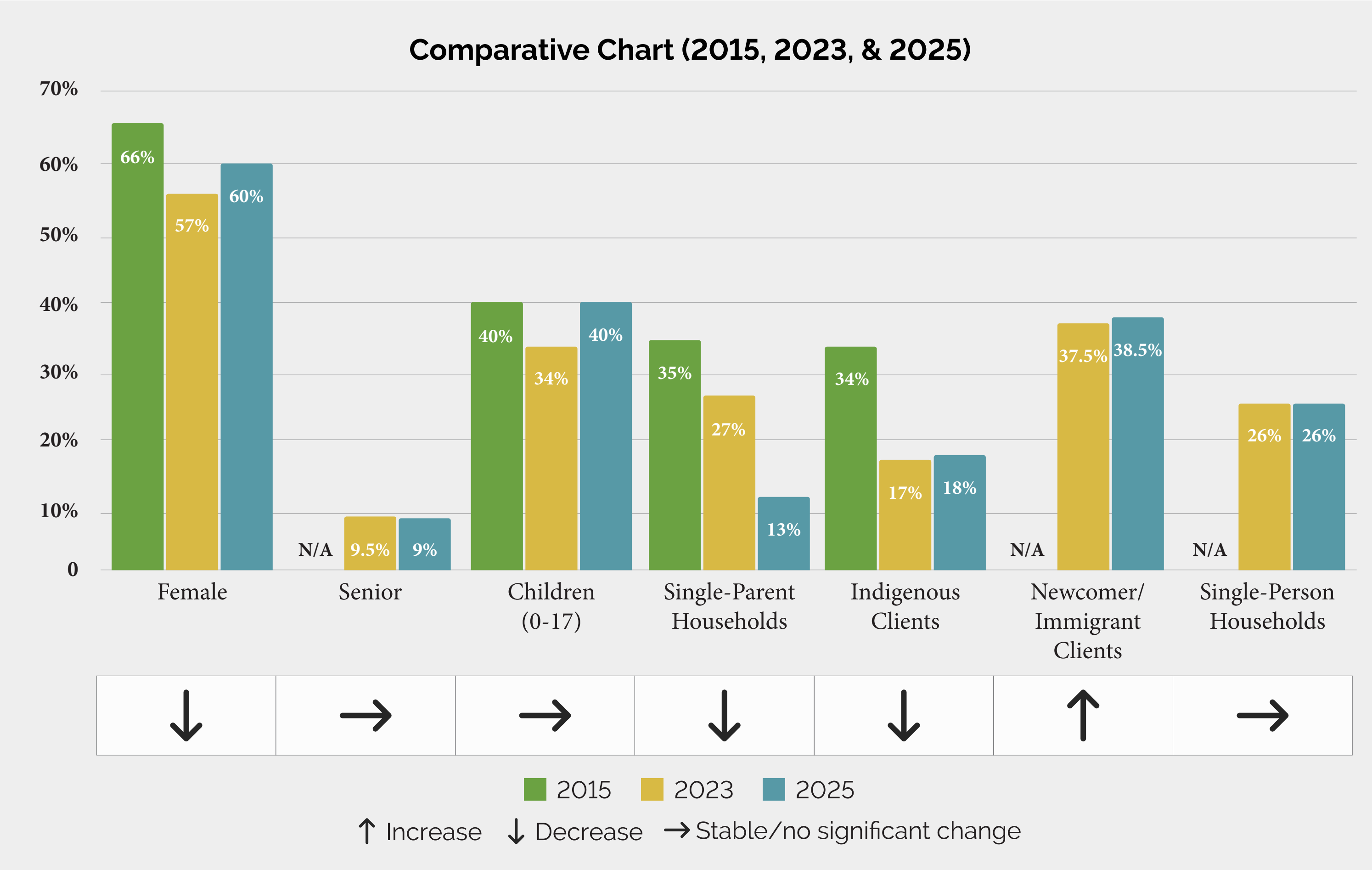
While survey findings reflect the experiences of participants, factors such as who typically picks up hampers, willingness to complete a survey, and comfort levels in interactions with staff and volunteers may influence responses. For example, although client database records show a roughly equal split between male and female clients, survey responses may over- or under-represent certain groups. Also the survey was completed with hamper program recipient while Edmonton's Food Bank offers a variety of services in Edmonton.

Indigenous Representation Context Note

Survey results indicate that 18% of respondents identified as Indigenous, while Food Bank database records show approximately 15% of users identify as Indigenous. Many Indigenous community members prefer to access support through Indigenous-led and Indigenous-run partner agencies rather than visiting Food Bank depots directly. In addition, some Indigenous people may choose not to self-identify in surveys due to past experiences of racial discrimination.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The demographic breadth of 2025 clients include seniors on fixed incomes or other like groups with disabilities, single adults balancing high housing costs, and newcomer families navigating complex systems requires services that are both universal and targeted. Universal measures reduce barriers for everyone; targeted approaches ensure cultural safety and relevance for specific groups like Indigenous clients and newcomers.



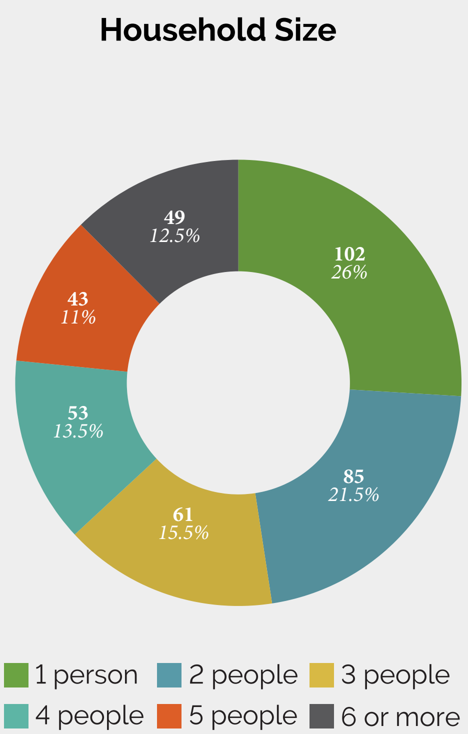
40% OF ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS **ARE CHILDREN**

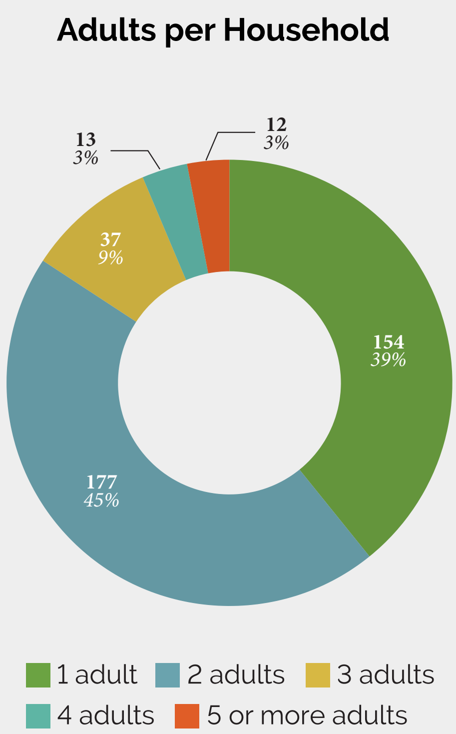
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

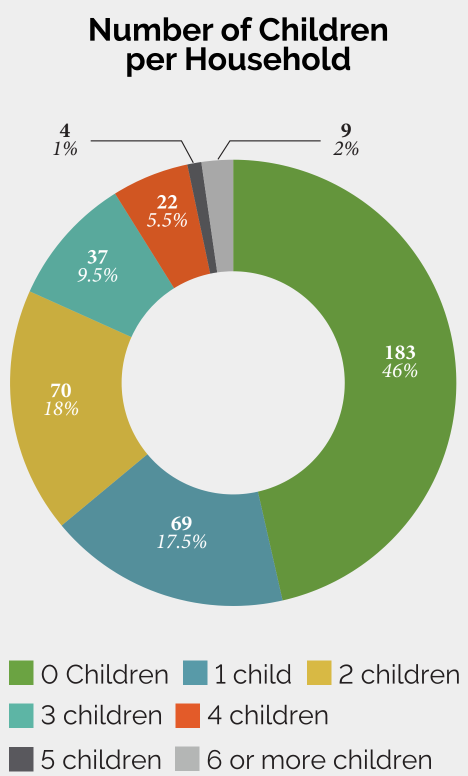
OVERVIEW

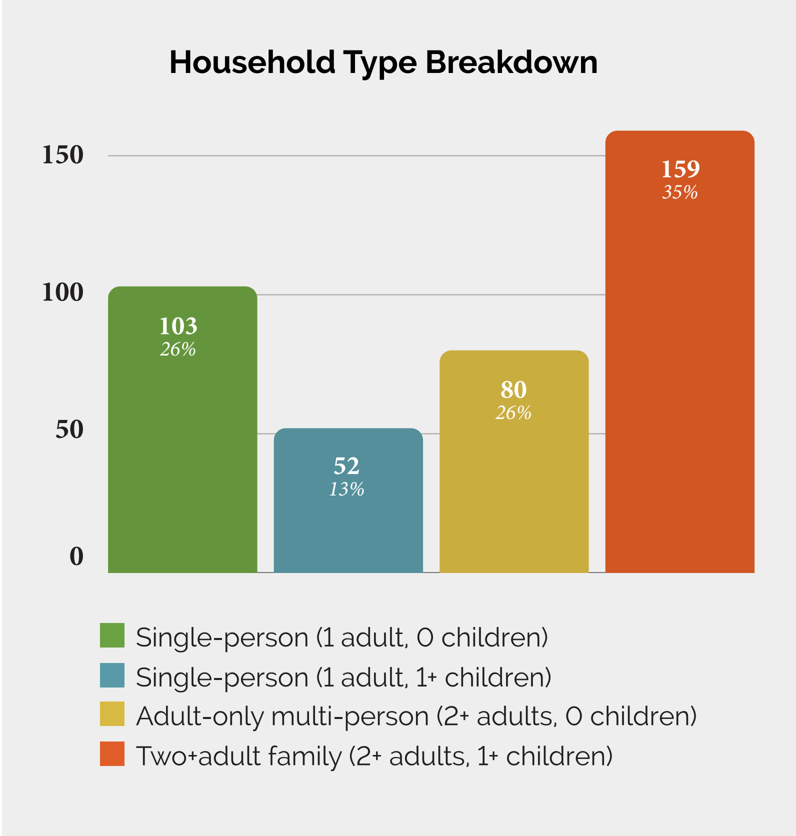
Household composition among Edmonton's Food Bank clients is as diverse as the city itself, but one thing is constant: food insecurity often has a ripple effect. In 2025, most households using Food Bank services include children or other dependents. Single-parent families, multi-generational households, and adults living alone are all highly represented, each group facing its own set of pressures. While the "classic" image of a Food Bank client might be a family with children, the data shows that single adults, seniors, and people sharing accommodations out of necessity are increasingly seeking help. Economic instability, unaffordable rent, and a lack of childcare options drive families to pool resources or stretch already limited budgets further than ever before.

KEY FINDINGS

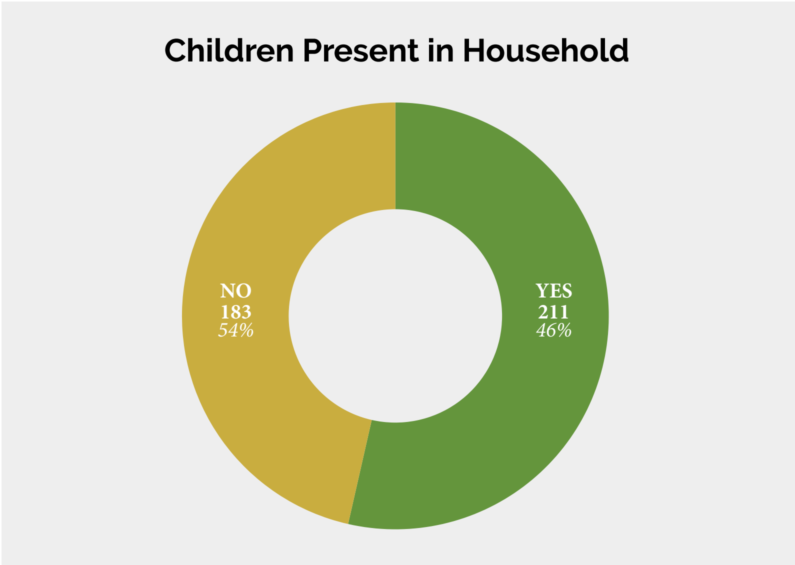








Household Type Breakdown
150
100
50
0
103
26%
52
13%
80
26%
159
35%
Single-person (1 adult, 0 children)
Single-person (1 adult, 1+ children)
Adult-only multi-person (2+ adults, 0 children)
Two+adult family (2+ adults, 1+ children)



Children Present in Household
NO
183
54%
YES
211
46%

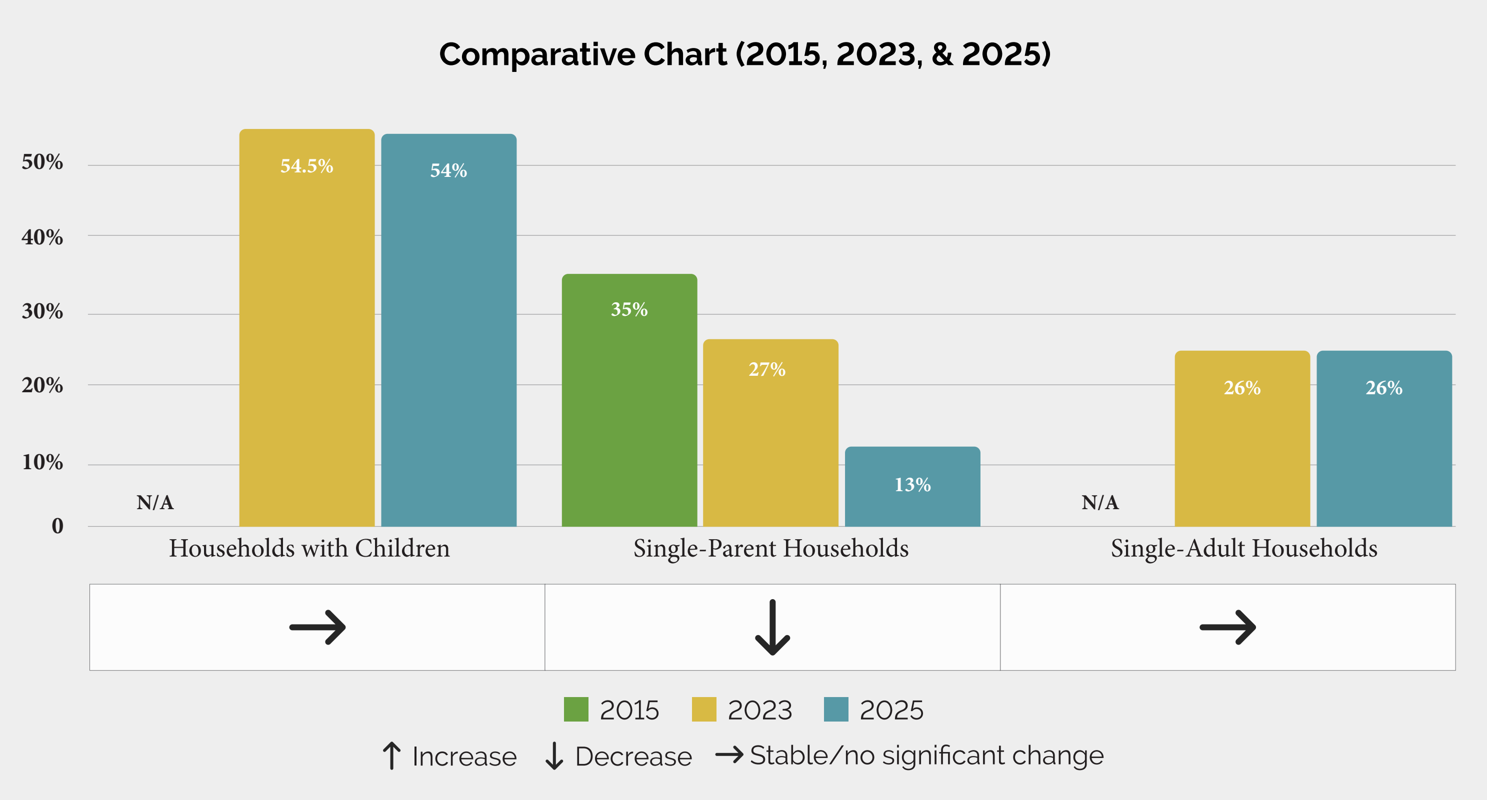
COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

The share of households with children decreased from 54.5% in 2023 to 54% in 2025. Single-parent households decreased from 27% in 2023 to 13% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

The percentage of single-parent households declined from 35% in 2015 to 13% in 2025.



WHAT THIS MEANS

Diverse and changing household structures including more single-parent, multi-generational, and shared living arrangements require flexible, family-centered supports. Services must recognize the realities of modern households, where caregiving responsibilities and financial burdens are often spread across extended families or roommates.

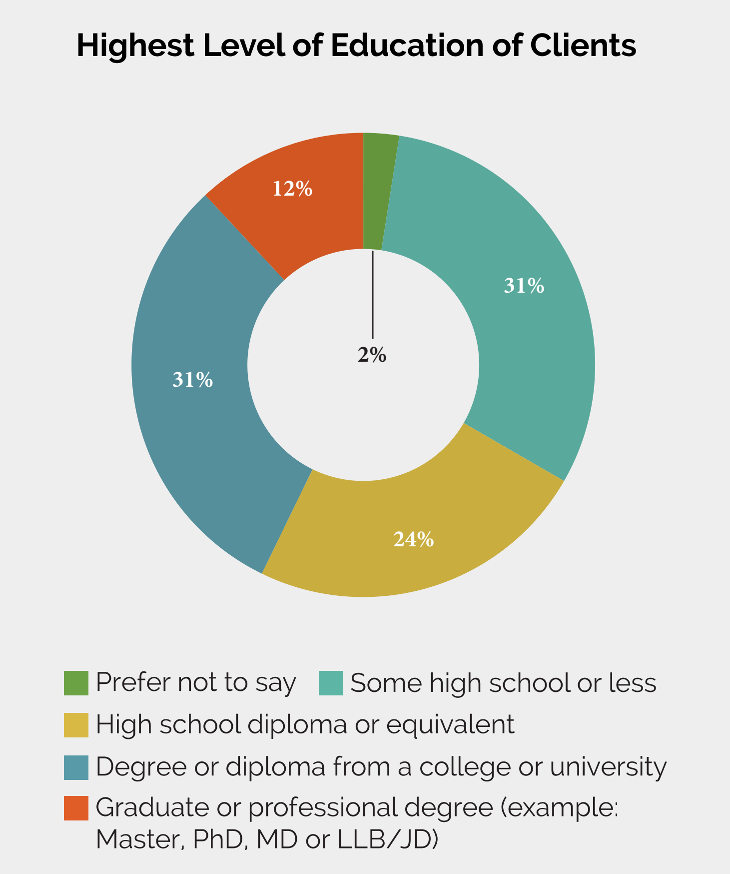
1 IN 4
HOUSEHOLDS ARE SINGLE-PERSON HOMES (26%)

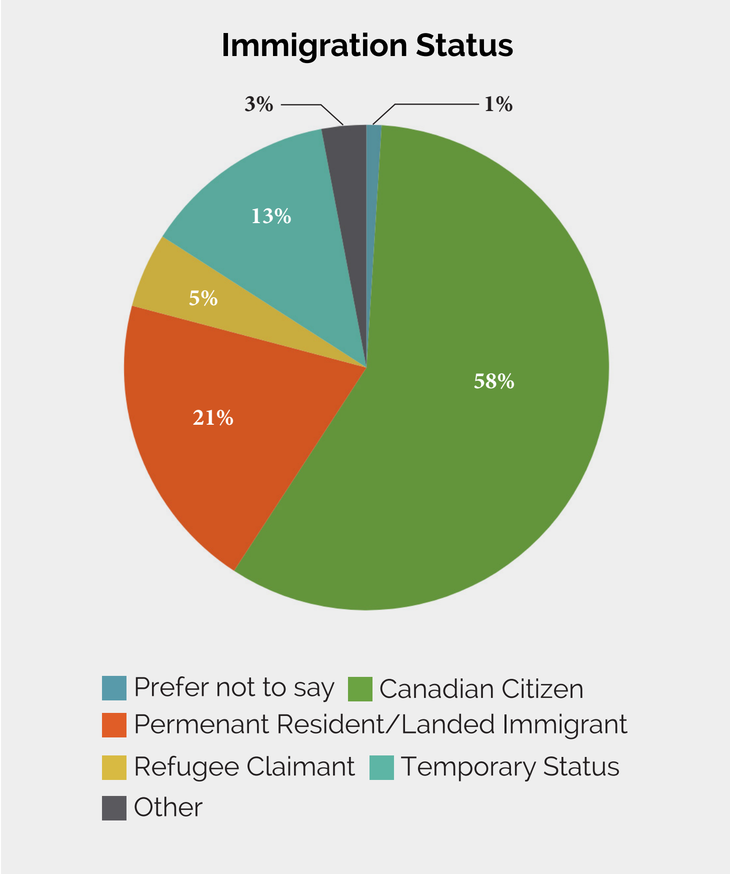
EDUCATION & IMMIGRATION

OVERVIEW

The 2025 survey confirms what client stories have long suggested: educational attainment does not guarantee economic stability for Food Bank users. A significant number of clients have completed high school, college, or university. However, the disconnect between education and secure employment is especially sharp for newcomers and immigrants, who make up a growing share of Food Bank clients. Credential recognition barriers, language proficiency, and limited access to professional networks leave many internationally trained individuals underemployed or unemployed. Food insecurity is not the result of a lack of effort or ambition. For many clients, especially recent immigrants, the path to opportunity is obstructed by systemic hurdles that persist even after years of living and working in Edmonton.

KEY FINDINGS





42% of respondents have completed post-secondary education or training and struggle to find stable work.

- Recent immigrants (arrived in Canada within the last 10 years) make up a disproportionately high segment of Food Bank users.
- Many newcomers with advanced credentials are working in low-wage or precarious jobs, well below their level of training.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Higher educational attainment does not guarantee economic stability, especially for immigrants and newcomers. Addressing systemic barriers like credential recognition, language, and job-matching will be critical to unlocking the full potential of skilled, but underemployed clients.

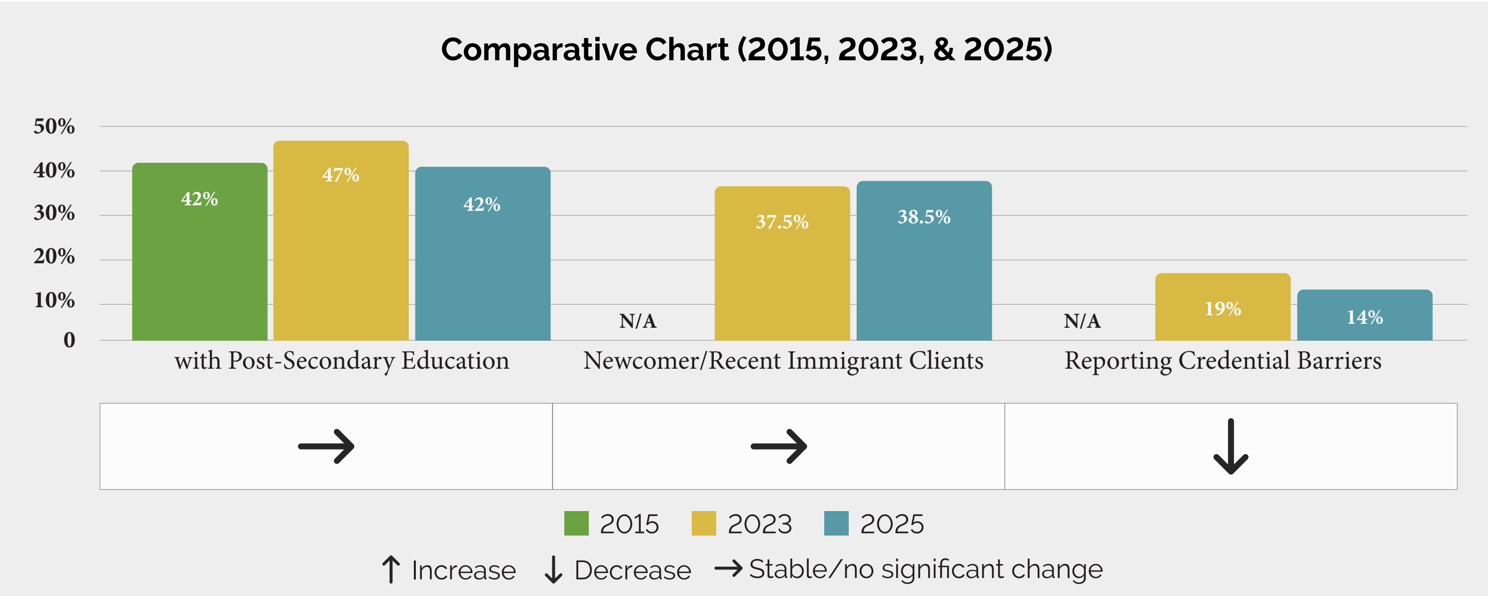
COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

The proportion of clients reporting post-secondary education was 47% in 2023 (38% + 9%) compared to 42% in 2025. Clients reporting employment barriers due to qualifications (not recognized in Canada) were 19% in 2023 compared to 14% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

In 2015, 42% of clients had attended college, university, or trade school, and in 2025, the same proportion (42%) held a degree or diploma.

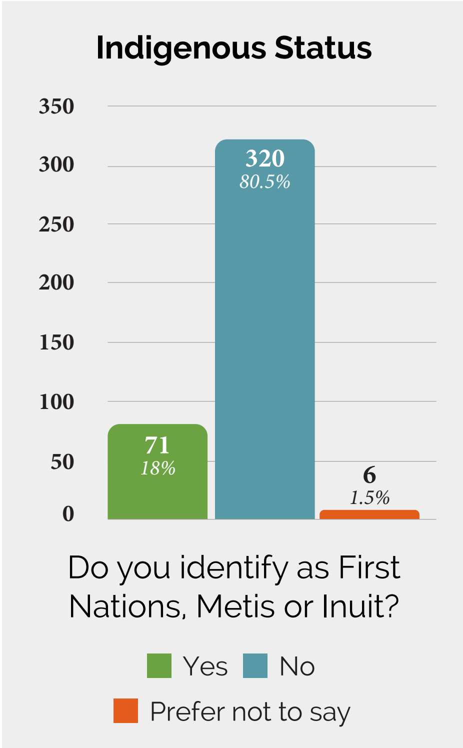


INDIGENOUS IDENTITY & CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

OVERVIEW

Indigenous clients have long been overrepresented among Edmonton's Food Bank users which shows a stark reflection of historic and ongoing inequities in housing, employment, and health. The 2025 survey shows some changes: while Indigenous representation among clients remains higher than in Edmonton's general population, the proportion has declined from previous years. The reasons may be complex. Clients identifying as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit continue to face unique challenges. Housing instability, discrimination, and lack of culturally relevant resources make food insecurity harder to escape.

KEY FINDINGS



Sometimes I don't feel comfortable asking for help. It feels like people judge where you come from.

Client Voice - 2025

FEDERAL INVESTMENT ON INDIGENOUS PRIORITIES

2015: **$11B**

2025: **$32B+**

INCLUDES EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE, HOUSING, AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

COMPARATIVE NOTES

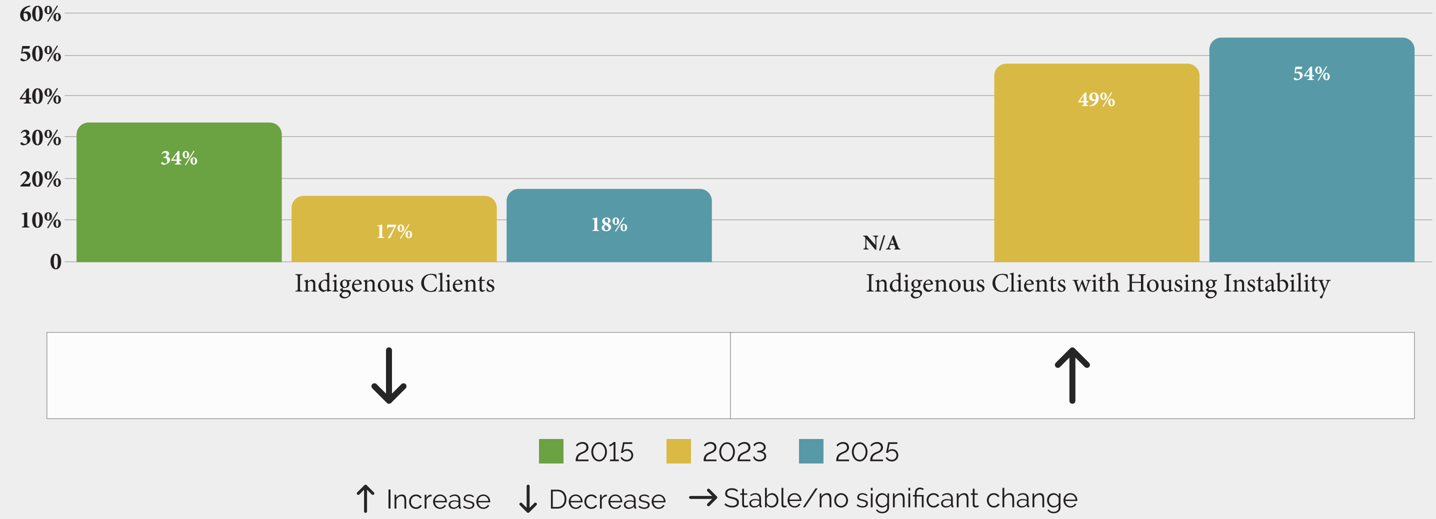
2023 → 2025

Indigenous client identification was 17% in 2023 and 18% in 2025. The cross tabulated data shows 54% of Indigenous clients reported housing instability in 2025 (compared to 49% in 2023).

2015 → 2025

Indigenous client identification declined from 34% in 2015 to 18% in 2025.

Comparative Chart (2015, 2023, & 2025)



EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

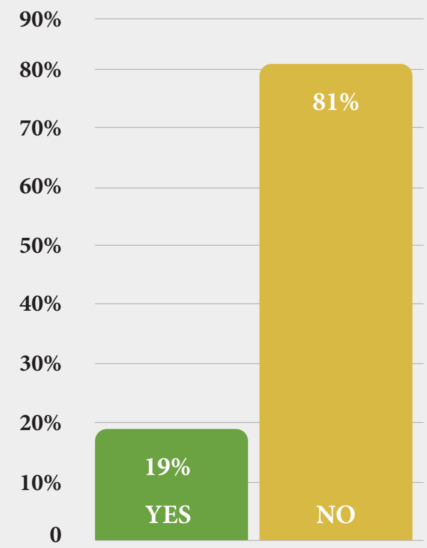
OVERVIEW

Having a job is no longer a reliable ticket out of poverty or hunger. Many clients work part-time, temporary, or gig jobs that offer little security, low wages, and no benefits. Others are in and out of the workforce due to health problems, caregiving responsibilities, or a lack of stable childcare. Household income remains well below the poverty line for most, and employment status is often no shield from economic hardship. Wage stagnation, inflation, and rising living costs have eroded the purchasing power of even those with regular employment. Social assistance and disability supports, meanwhile, have failed to keep pace with basic needs.

KEY FINDINGS

Employment Status

Are you currently employed?



> *I have two jobs and still can't make ends meet. Groceries are a luxury after rent and bills.*
>
> Client Voice - 2025

1 IN 3

RESPONDENTS DEPEND ON ALBERTA WORKS

Which forms of alternative sources of income did you receive in 2024?		
Answer Choice	**Responses**	
Support from friends or family	13.1%	52
Pension or investment income	4.5%	18
Employment Insurance (EI)	5.8%	23
Canada Pension Plan (CPP)	11.3%	45
Old Age Security (OAS)	4.8%	19
Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)	1.8%	7
Canada Child Tax benefit (Federal)	18.8%	75
Alberta Child Benefit (Provincial)	15.3%	61
Alberta Works	33.2%	132
AISH	17.3%	69
Student Loan	2.8%	11
None	6.0%	24
Other (please specify)	14.8%	59
	Answered	**398**
	Skipped	**10**

“

My family and I are very grateful for the Food Bank and do not know what we would have done without it. Thank you!

Client Voice - 2025

The percentage of clients reporting unemployment is at its highest level since the Food Bank began surveying and still struggle to find stable work.

- "Working poverty" is a defining reality: more than half of employed clients earn less than a living wage.
- Social assistance, disability, and seniors' benefits remain the primary income source for many, but are widely reported as inadequate.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Traditional employment is no longer a safeguard against financial hardship for many Food Bank clients. The rise of precarious work, stagnant wages, and inadequate income supports points to a need for stronger labour protections and more robust safety nets.

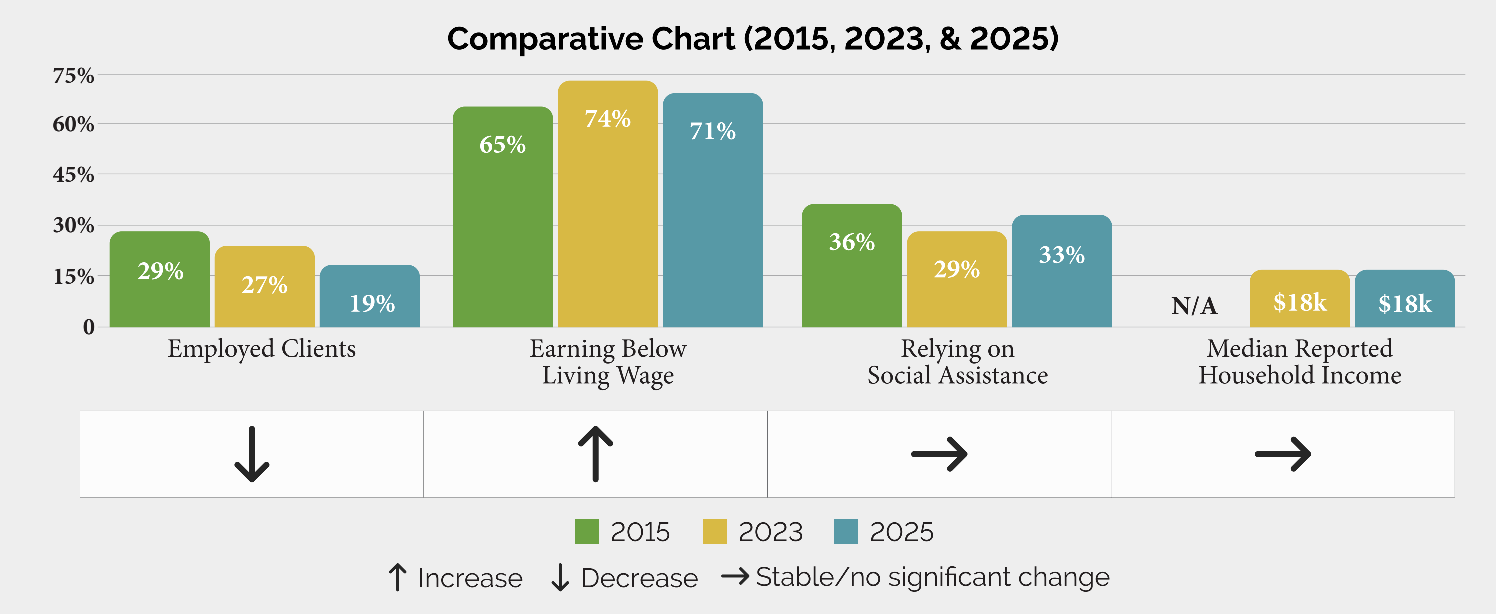
COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

The share of employed clients in the sample decreased from 27% in 2023 to 18% in 2025. For those employed, the percentage earning below a living wage was 74% in 2023 compared to 71% in 2025. Median reported household income remained stable at $18k.

2015 → 2025

Less participants are working from 29% to 18% in 2025. There is an increase, though slightly in relying on social assistance up from 29% in 2023 to 33% in 2025. Those who are working (over half or 54%) are in part time, casual and gig jobs where they are not likely receiving benefits, and their pay is probably low.

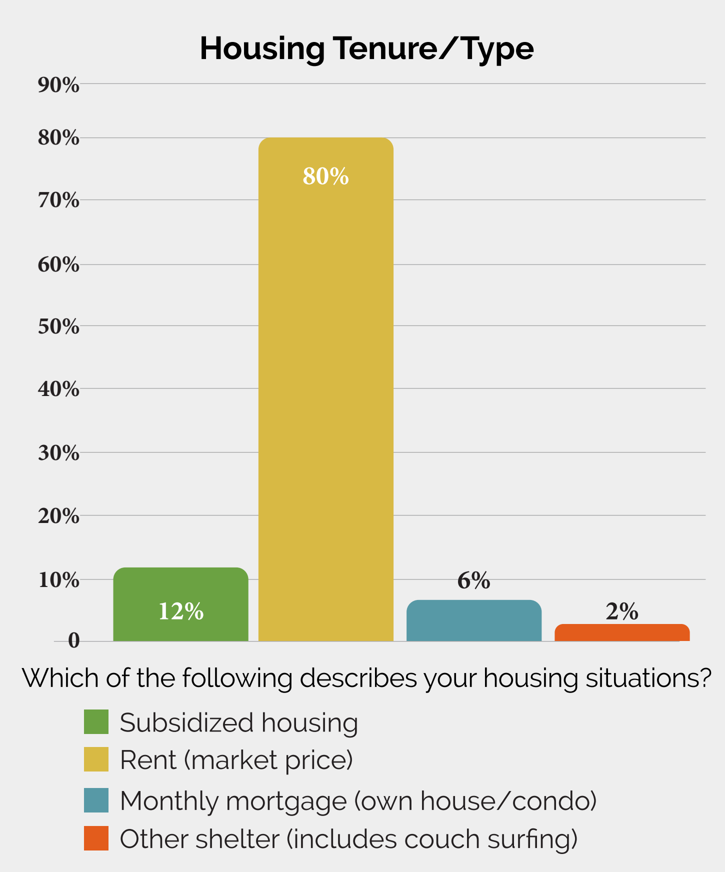


HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS RISK

OVERVIEW

For most of Edmonton's Food Bank clients, the line between "housed" and "homeless" is razor thin. The 2025 survey data confirm that housing costs are the single greatest driver of food insecurity. The majority of clients are renters and most spend far more than the recommended 30% of income on shelter. Many devote more than half their monthly income just to keep a roof overhead. Shared, overcrowded, and unstable living arrangements are increasingly common, while the risk of eviction and homelessness looms large. The cycle is self-reinforcing: when rent goes up or housing is lost, food budgets are the first thing to be cut. For some, the path to the Food Bank began with a job loss or a rent hike; for others, homelessness is a constant threat, only narrowly averted each month.

KEY FINDINGS



OVER HALF OF CLIENT HOUSEHOLDS SPEND MORE THAN 50% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING—WELL ABOVE THE "AFFORDABILITY" THRESHOLD.

> *The rent keeps going up, but my pay doesn't. Some months I don't know if we'll make it.*
>
> Client Voice - 2025

REPORTS OF RECENT EVICTION, COUCH SURFING, OR SHELTER STAYS ARE RISING, ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNGER CLIENTS AND SINGLE ADULTS.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Housing insecurity is a defining feature of food insecurity. As more clients spend a majority of income on rent or face unstable living conditions, interventions focused on affordable, stable housing are central to improving client outcomes and reducing reliance on community food supports.

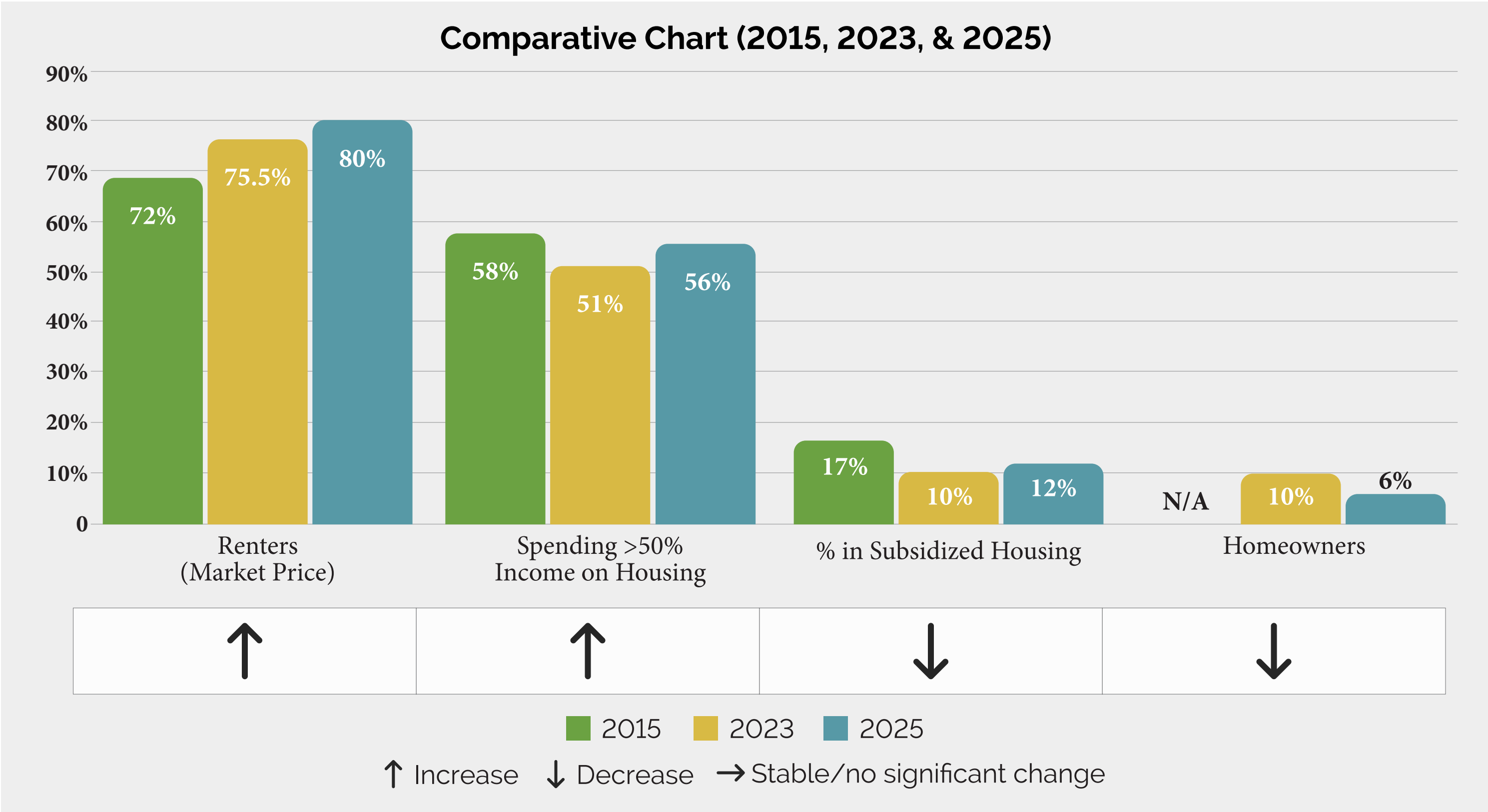
COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

Clients who rent at market price increased from 75.5% in 2023 to 80% in 2025. The percentage living in subsidized housing was 10% in 2023 compared to 12% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

The proportion of clients who pay market rent increased from 72% in 2015 to 80% in 2025. The percentage living in subsidized housing decreased from 17% in 2015 to 12% in 2025. At least 58% of respondents reported spending more than half of their income on shelter in 2015.



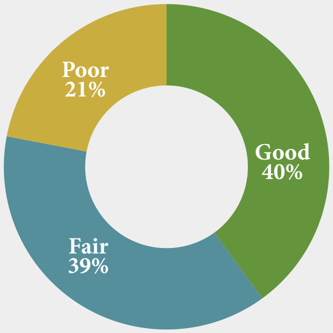
HEALTH & WELL-BEING

OVERVIEW

Health and stress track closely with income stability and housing security. In 2025, clients report a range of physical health statuses and, for many, higher stress compared to last year. Primary care access is uneven: some people have a regular family doctor, while others rely on walk-in clinics or defer care due to cost or availability.

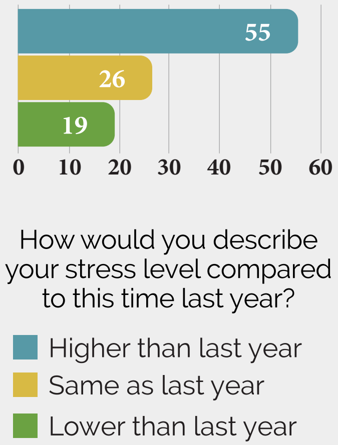
KEY FINDINGS

Self-Reported Physical Health



How would you rate your physical health?

Self-Reported Stress



How would you describe your stress level compared to this time last year?

- Over half of clients rate their physical health as “fair” or “poor”.
- Mental health challenges are widespread, with high rates of anxiety, depression, and stress related symptoms.
- Cost, lack of insurance, and transportation remain the leading barriers to getting needed care.

WHAT THIS MEANS

The high rates of chronic illness, disability, and mental health challenges among clients show that they are also health system users. Improving access to healthcare, including mental health services, medication, and dental must be a core part of any comprehensive response.

COMPARATIVE NOTES

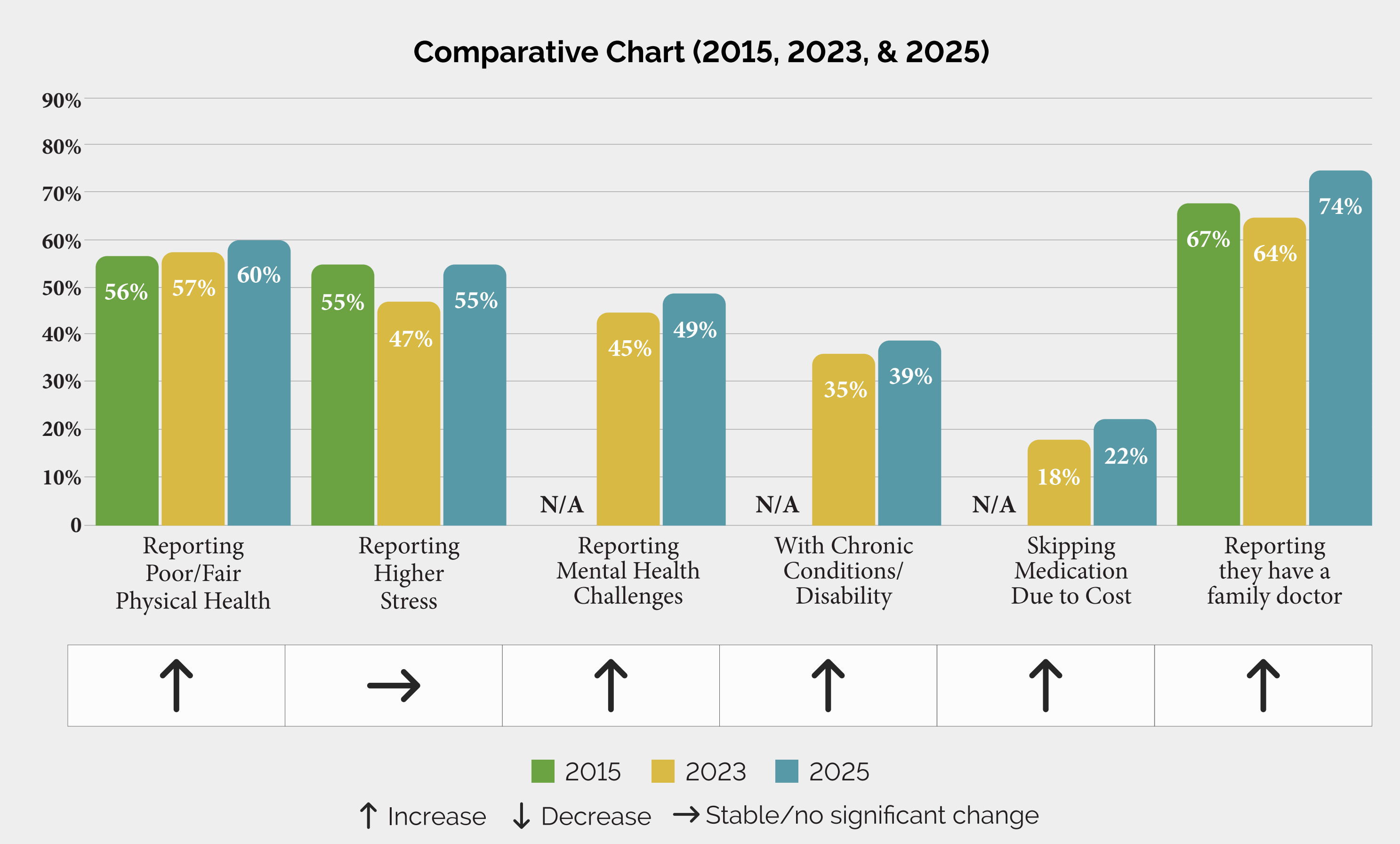
2023 → 2025

The percentage of clients rating their physical health as poor or fair increased from 57% in 2023 to 60% in 2025. Clients reporting higher stress than the previous year increased from 47% in 2023 to 55% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

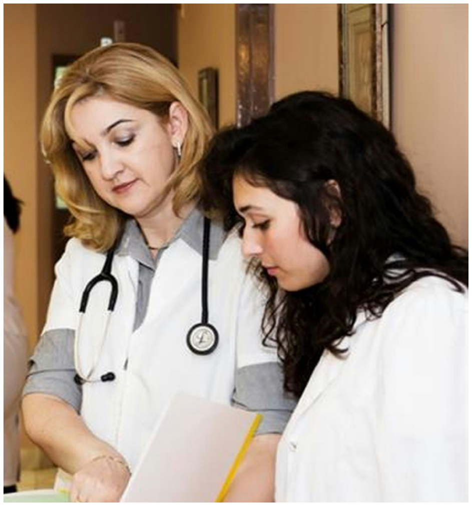
The proportion of respondents rating their health as poor or fair increased from 56% in 2015 to 60% in 2025. The stress levels were reported higher from 2023 at 47%, but the 55% is the same in both 2015 and 2025.

> *Sometimes I skip my medication because I need the money for groceries. Then my health gets worse and it's even harder to work.*
>
> Client Voice - 2025



FAMILY DOCTOR ACCESS CONTEXT NOTE

In 2023, 64% of survey respondents reported having a family doctor. By 2025, this increased to 74% (300 of 405 participants answered this question). This suggests improved access to primary healthcare among Food Bank clients, though some individuals may still face barriers to securing consistent medical care.



74%

HAVE A FAMILY DOCTOR IN 2025

FOOD SECURITY

OVERVIEW

Food security is having reliable access to sufficient, affordable, and nutritious food which is increasingly out of reach for many Edmontonians. The 2025 survey data reveals a deepening crisis: more households are skipping meals, relying on less nutritious options, and facing chronic anxiety about where their next meal will come from. Parents, in particular, often go without to ensure their children are fed first.

The Food Bank, once seen as a short-term emergency resource, has become a long-term support for many clients. Far from being a temporary stopgap, the Food Bank is now an essential part of the survival strategy for tens of thousands of Edmontonians every month.

KEY FINDINGS

Which of the following statements best describes your household in the past twelve (12) months?

Answer Choice	Responses	
You always had enough food to eat	11%	44
You had enough food to eat, but not always the kinds of food you wanted to eat	46%	186
You sometimes did not have enough food to eat	25%	100
You often did not have enough food to eat	15%	60
Not sure / do not remember	1%	5
Prefer not to answer	3%	12
	Answered	**407**
	Skipped	**1**

What do you do when you're running short on food?

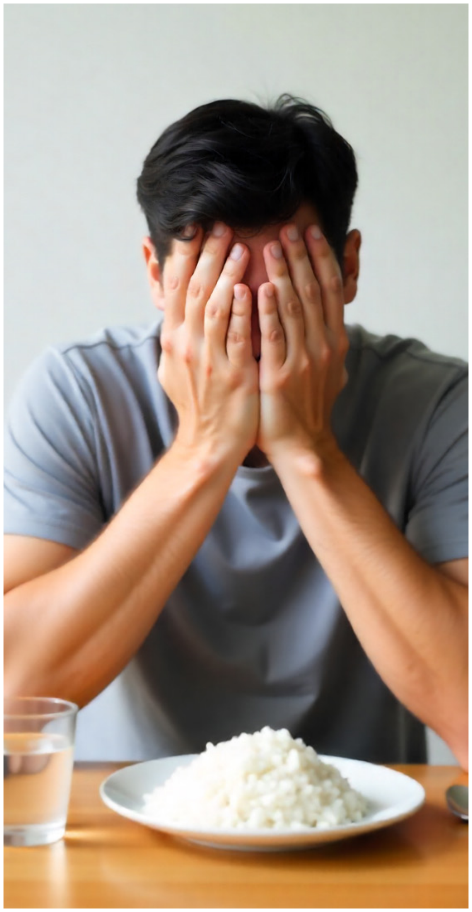
Answer Choice	Responses	
Buy less expensive food	46%	185
Get food from friends or relatives	23%	94
Get meals from a soup kitchen or church/religious centre	13%	52
Refer your children to a school lunch program	2%	8
Borrow money from friends or relatives	22%	90
Buy food on credit	13%	52
Sell or pawn possessions	10%	41
Skip meals so that your children can eat	12%	50
Other	1	4
	Answered	**407**
	Skipped	**1**

93% OF RESPONDENTS ARE RELYING ON THE FOOD BANK

It's not just one type of person. I worked my whole life and now I need help just to get by.

Client Voice - 2025

- A majority of clients report skipping meals regularly and often multiple times per week.
- Income is, by far, the most commonly cited barrier to adequate nutrition; food inflation and rent increases exacerbate the strain.
- Long-term reliance on the Food Bank has increased, with many clients using the service for more than one year.



WHAT THIS MEANS

Persistent meal-skipping and chronic food anxiety reflect the limits of charitable food assistance. Sustainable food security requires policies that address income, affordability, and equitable access to nutritious food.

OVER HALF OF FOOD BANK CLIENTS NEED AT LEAST **$400 MORE PER MONTH** TO SECURE THEIR OWN FOOD.

> *I eat less so my kids have enough. Sometimes I go without for days at a time.*
>
> Client Voice - 2025

COMPARATIVE NOTES

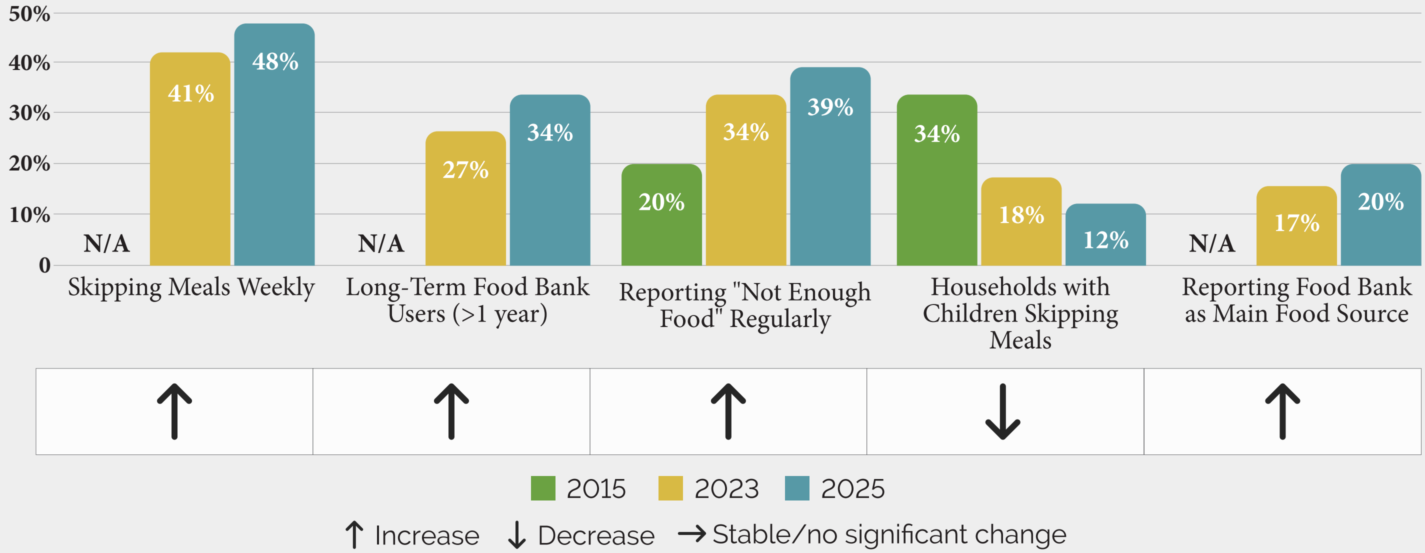
2023 → 2025

The percentage of clients skipping meals weekly increased from 41% in 2023 to 48% in 2025. Long-term Food Bank usage (over 1 year) rose from 27% in 2023 to 34% in 2025.

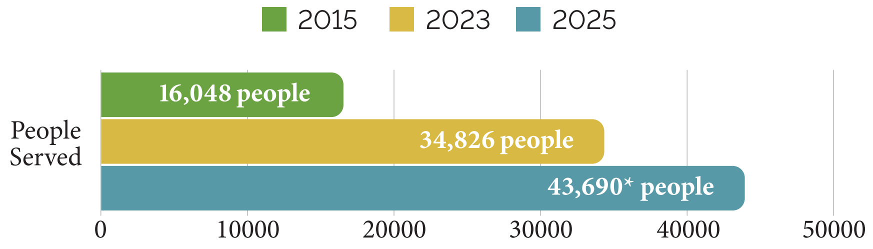
2015 → 2025

One-third of respondents (34%) in 2015 said they skipped meals so their children could eat, compared to 12% in 2025. In 2015, 20% of adults reported that they or a family member did not eat for 2–5 days in the month prior to the survey.

Comparative Chart (2015, 2023, & 2025)



AVERAGE MONTHLY CLIENT HAMPER RECIPIENTS



*2025: 43,690 (Jan to Sept. 2025)

A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS SAID THEY **SKIPPED MEALS** SO THEIR CHILDREN COULD EAT.

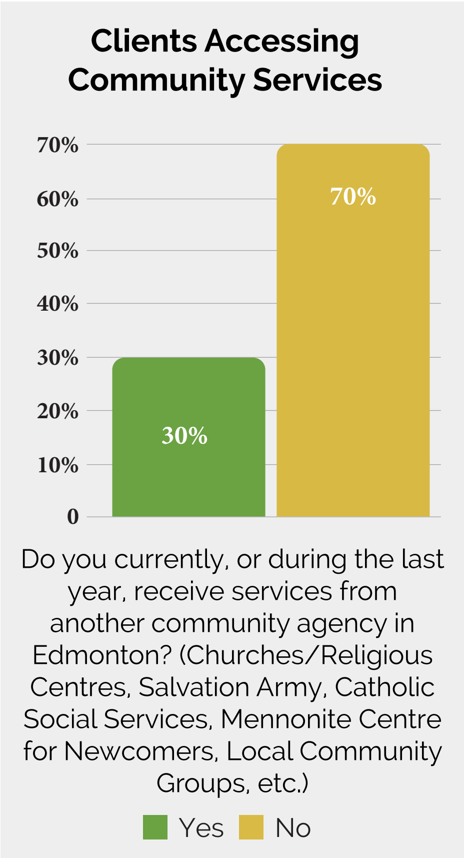
AWARENESS & USE OF SUPPORTS

OVERVIEW

Knowing about and accessing government and community supports is crucial for breaking the cycle of food insecurity. The 2025 survey shows that while awareness of some programs such as child benefits, rental assistance, and crisis grants has improved slightly, actual utilization remains stubbornly low. Many clients describe bureaucratic obstacles, lack of information, language barriers, and stigma as reasons for not pursuing available help.

There are also notable gaps between awareness and access: it is common for clients to know about a program, but report that eligibility rules, waitlists, or confusing application processes prevent them from receiving assistance. For newcomers and those with limited English, these barriers are often insurmountable without personal advocacy or agency support.

KEY FINDINGS



If yes, please check the type of service(s) you received during the past year:

Answer Choice	Responses	
Help getting government income support	18%	23
Help getting identification (e.g. health care, birth certificate)	13%	17
Help finding different housing	20%	26
Help finding employment or job training	17%	22
Help with immigration issues	8%	10
English language help	15%	20
Employment readiness	5%	7
Personal counselling	10%	13
Budgeting or money management	5%	6
Help finding a family doctor or primary care clinic	5%	6
Completing income tax return	15%	19
Help completing forms (AISH, etc.)	7%	9
Physical/mental health supports	8.5%	11
Disability services	7%	9
Other (please specify)	38%	50
	Answered	**130**
	No often support	**278**

- Awareness of major income support and housing programs has improved slightly over previous years, but only a minority of clients receive meaningful assistance.
- The gap between knowledge and uptake is widest among newcomers, Indigenous clients, and those with lower literacy or English proficiency.
- The most commonly reported barriers to accessing supports include complicated forms, inconsistent eligibility, and long processing times.

WHAT THIS MEANS

Awareness of supports does not always translate into access. Systemic barriers including confusing eligibility, language, and stigma, prevent clients from receiving help they qualify for. Simplifying access and providing navigators or advocacy will make supports more effective and inclusive.

> *Back home, I was a teacher. Here, my qualifications don't count and I can't find steady work.*
>
> Client Voice - 2025

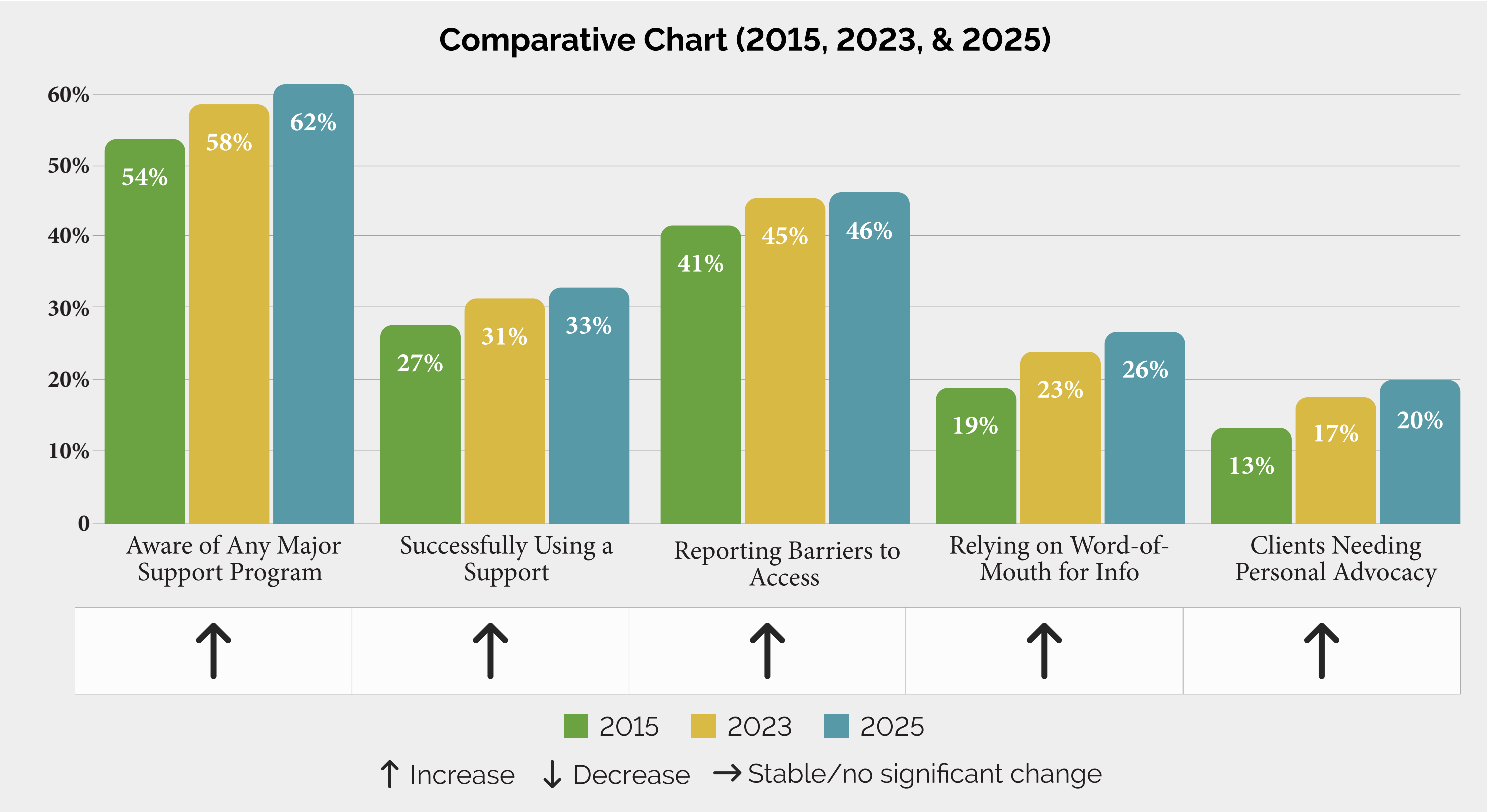
COMPARATIVE NOTES

2023 → 2025

Awareness of major support programs increased from 58% in 2023 to 62% in 2025. The successful uptake rate of supports increased from 31% in 2023 to 33% in 2025.

2015 → 2025

Awareness of major support programs increased from 54% in 2015 to 62% in 2025. Successful utilization of supports increased from 27% in 2015 to 33% in 2025.



I heard about rental support, but when I applied it was too complicated, and I got denied.

Client Voice - 2025

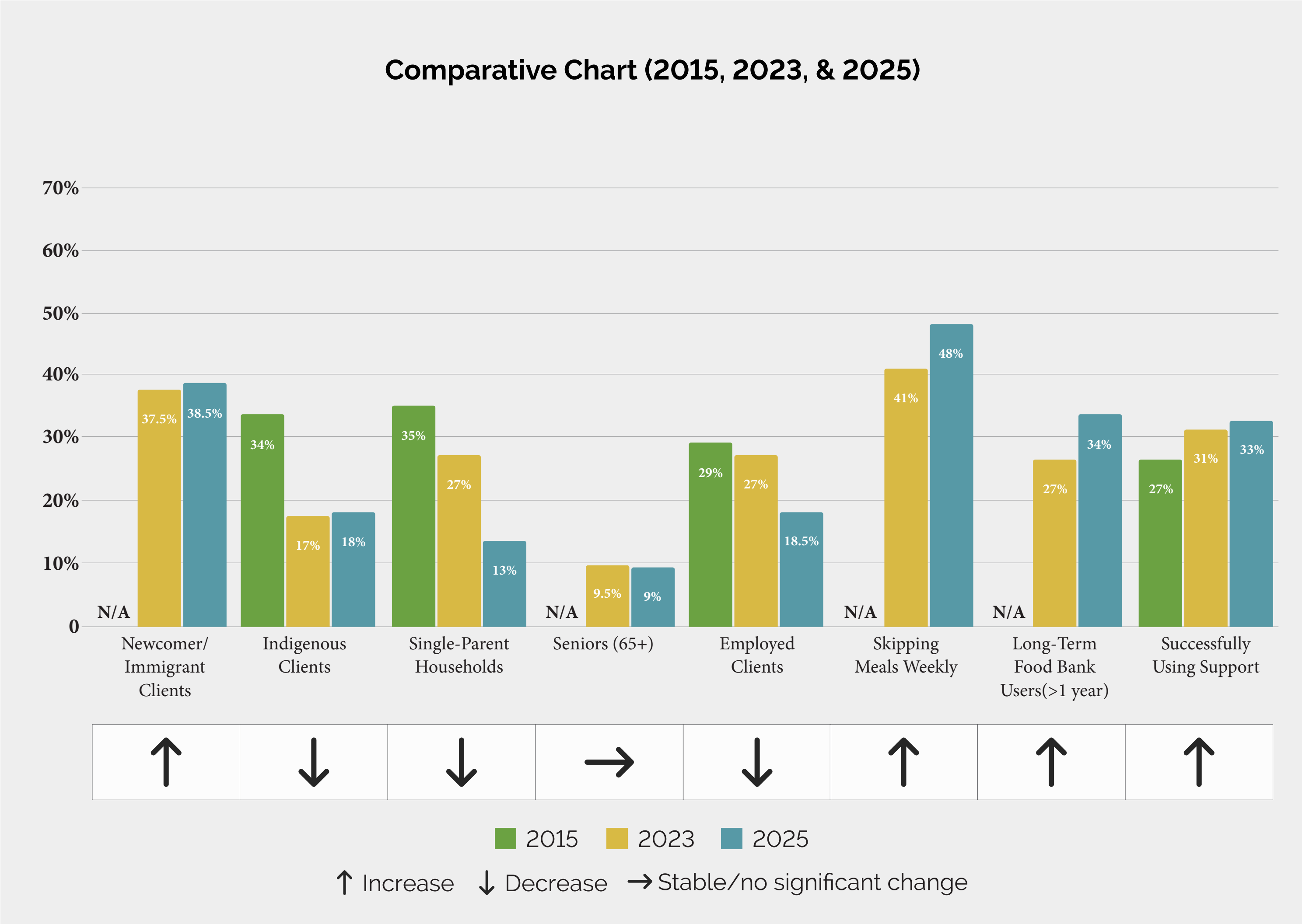
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A decade of Edmonton's Food Bank client surveys provides a unique lens on how food insecurity has evolved in the city. Comparing data from 2015, 2023, and 2025 reveals both persistent patterns and important new trends. Some groups such as newcomers, single adults, and seniors are increasingly prominent among clients. Other patterns, such as underemployment and housing precarity, have deepened across all demographics.

The comparative data reinforce one overarching message: while the faces of food insecurity change, the underlying drivers remain. High housing costs, stagnant wages, inadequate income supports, and systemic barriers have entrenched food insecurity as a chronic issue in Edmonton, rather than a temporary hardship.

Key Shifts & Persistent Themes (2015–2025):

- The proportion of newcomers and recent immigrants has increased, while Indigenous representation among clients has declined.
- The share of clients with post-secondary education has risen and so has the rate of underemployment and credential mismatch.
- Single-person and senior households now account for a greater share of Food Bank users, highlighting new vulnerabilities.
- "Working poor" is on the rise: more clients are employed; however, low wages and precarious jobs do not provide security.
- Clients spend a growing percentage of income on housing, with more reporting rent as their top financial pressure.
- Reliance on the Food Bank as a long-term support, rather than a short-term emergency resource has increased sharply.
- Barriers to accessing government and community supports persist, even as awareness grows.


Comparative Chart (2015, 2023, & 2025)
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0
N/A
37.5%
38.5%
34%
17%
18%
35%
27%
13%
N/A
9.5%
9%
29%
27%
18.5%
N/A
41%
48%
N/A
27%
34%
27%
31%
33%
Newcomer/ Immigrant Clients
Indigenous Clients
Single-Parent Households
Seniors (65+)
Employed Clients
Skipping Meals Weekly
Long-Term Food Bank Users(>1 year)
Successfully Using Support
↑ ↓ ↓ → ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑
2015
2023
2025
↑ Increase
↓ Decrease
→ Stable/no significant change

OBSERVATIONS

OVERVIEW

The voices and data from the 2025 client survey reinforce some uncomfortable truths. Edmonton's Food Bank is not serving a "fringe" population; it is supporting a cross-section of the city, including working families, single parents, newcomers, and seniors. Every story is unique and certain themes echo throughout the responses:

- The struggle to afford basic needs like food, housing, and medication is a daily reality for most clients, regardless of background.
- Many clients' express gratitude for the Food Bank, but a desire for dignity and independence remains strong. Most hope to leave food charity behind, but face real obstacles.
- The mental and physical toll of food insecurity is immense. Chronic stress, anxiety, and poor health are widely reported.
- Supports are often difficult to access; when they do exist, they are perceived as inadequate, complicated, or inaccessible for newcomers and people with disabilities.
- There is a strong sense of resilience among clients, but also growing frustration with systems that do not adapt to changing realities.

Food insecurity in Edmonton is neither a personal failure nor a short-term emergency. It is a systemic challenge that demands action at every level, from city council to provincial ministries, federal government, and community organizations.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CALL TO ACTION

OVERVIEW

The 2025 client survey doesn't just catalog hardship, instead it points the way to solutions. Every chart, every quote, and every trend in this report underlines an urgent need for policy, community, and systemic change. The following recommendations are drawn from both quantitative data and the lived experience of Food Bank clients.

1	**Increase Income Supports and Wages** Government should prioritize raising the minimum wage, indexing social assistance, and reforming disability and seniors' benefits to reflect actual living costs. Too many working Edmontonians and those on fixed incomes are unable to meet basic needs.
2	**Expand Affordable, Stable Housing** Municipal and provincial leaders must invest in affordable rental housing, expand rent subsidy programs, and enforce regulations to prevent rent gouging and unlawful evictions. Housing is the single biggest pressure point driving food insecurity.
3	**Address Employment Barriers for Newcomers and Indigenous People** Streamline credential recognition for internationally trained professionals and invest in targeted job matching and mentorship programs. Ensure the Federal government continues to invest in creating culturally safe, Indigenous-led pathways to employment and support.
4	**Improve Access to Health and Mental Health Care** Subsidize prescription medications, dental care, and vision care for low-income households. Expand access to mental health supports, with a focus on trauma-informed and culturally relevant care.
5	**Make Social Supports Simple, Accessible, and Inclusive** Reduce paperwork, provide supports in multiple languages, and fund navigators or caseworkers to help clients access the programs for which they qualify. Systems should work for the client, not the other way around.
6	**Prioritize Dignity and Client Voice** Edmonton's Food Bank will continue to prioritize dignity and client voice by centering Food Bank and anti-poverty programs on the experiences of those served. Whenever possible, the Food Bank should continue to invest in and support non-hamper responses to food insecurity such as community gardens, collective kitchens, and the Beyond Food program while expanding opportunities for people with lived experience to advise, lead, and evaluate services. This approach fosters a culture of dignity, choice, and empowerment.

7

Invest in Prevention and Upstream Solutions
Support early childhood programs, affordable childcare, and community development in neighbourhoods at risk for food insecurity. Prevention is always more effective and less costly than crisis response.

A FINAL WORD

Edmonton's Food Bank is committed to meeting immediate needs, but charity alone will never end food insecurity. Systemic, policy-driven change that is grounded in the real experiences of clients is the only path forward.

The findings of this survey are a roadmap. Now is the time to act.

SPECIAL THANKS

This survey and report gives voice to the people needing hampers from Edmonton's Food Bank. Confirming the survey questions, completing the interviews, compiling the data, and writing this report requires planning, sensitivity, and attention to detail.

We extend our appreciation to Susan Morrissey for her leadership and guidance throughout this process. Special thanks to Nicole Carruthers and Debbie So for compiling data and ensuring that we remained on schedule. Thank you to the Client Service Volunteers and Staff who interviewed hamper recipients with empathy.

In addition to the interviews completed at Edmonton's Food Bank, interviews were completed at the following community food depots. Thank you for your partnership and support.

- St. John the Evangelist Catholic Parish
- Maranatha Christian Reformed Church
- Blue Quill and Callingwood Mobile Depots
- West Meadows Baptist Church
- Beulah Alliance Church: West Campus
- McClure United Church
- St. Luke's Anglican Church
- St. Herman's Orthodox Church
- The Mustard Seed Health & Wellness Centre
- Anawim Place
- Robertson-Wesley United Church
- C5 North East Community Hub
- IslamicFamily

Finally and more importantly, thank you to the survey participants who shared their stores with us.

EDMONTON'S FOODBANK

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Providing food to our neighbours in need is a good thing, but it will not solve hunger in the long term. We ask that you share this report and our contact information with others. We encourage you to write and talk to decision-makers about changes to income-support programs and about how housing can become more affordable in our community. Poverty and hunger are complex issues that require proactive, comprehensive action.

In the meantime, people need to eat. Please consider a contribution of time, food, and/or money to Edmonton's Food Bank. Your support is appreciated!

Edmonton's Food Bank
11508 - 120 Street
Edmonton, AB T5G 2Y2

Mailing Address
PO Box 62061
Edmonton, AB T5M 4B5

780.425.2133 | edmontonsfoodbank.com