



FOOD Rescue
YELLOWKNIFE

Serving our community

Food Rescue Yellowknife Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Food Rescue Yellowknife Strategic Plan 2025-2030

1. Overview

According to the research compiled in *Food Insecurity in Northern Canada: An Overview 2020*, food insecurity is defined as “a situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food.” The Northwest Territories (NWT) has Canada's second-highest food insecurity rate. While the national rate of food insecurity is 12.7%, the NWT's rate is 21.6%. Over 30% of children in the NWT live in food insecure households, whereas the national rate is 17.3%. Consequences of food insecurity include physical and mental health issues such as malnutrition, infections, chronic diseases, obesity, distress, social exclusion, depression, suicidal ideations and attempts. In addition, food insecurity impacts learning and education outcomes. To help address food insecurity in the largest city of the NWT, Food Rescue Yellowknife (Food Rescue) was created.

Food Rescue Yellowknife (Food Rescue) is a charitable, non-profit volunteer organization that accepts safe and healthy food and distributes the reclaimed food through local social organizations to families and individuals in need of food. It operates five days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Food and other merchandise are either picked up from retail stores, wholesale distributors, and other sources or, in some cases, dropped off at our location. At the site, volunteers and staff sort and then distribute the items to agencies, schools, daycares, and other organizations that work with families, children, or individuals. These organizations use the food for their programs and services. Food Rescue works with 23+ community organizations weekly.

During the past 16 years of Food Rescue's operation, Yellowknife residents have observed the following community benefits of Food Rescue:

- Helps people in need of food security
- Delivers an essential community service
- Supports local social organizations

- Encourages collaborative local partnerships
- Conserves the environment
- Promotes recycling and composting practices

During the next five years, Food Rescue will continue to concentrate on its mandate of supporting social organizations that assist families and individuals in the Yellowknife area. In addition, and based on research conducted in 2023-2024 (see Appendix A), Food Rescue will implement the following initiatives:

- an educational outreach awareness program available to food donor staff, recipient organization staff, students, and the public
- a communications strategy that advocates for reclaiming food, reducing food waste, and conserving the environment
- a system for tracking Food Rescue's carbon footprint and investigating ways to reduce carbon emissions
- orientation and training materials for staff, volunteers, and board members

2. Organizational Structure

The Food Rescue Board of Directors is responsible for conducting the society's affairs in accordance with its objectives, bylaws, and the Societies Act and maintaining our charitable registration. There are eight directors on the Board and two honorary board members who have a long-term affiliation with Food Rescue. All the Directors are volunteers with committee or project responsibilities.

The site coordinator and driver staff manage day-to-day operations, working closely with the volunteer kitchen managers, kitchen helpers, and driver helpers. The volunteers rotate and play a significant role in the Food Rescue organization. In fact, Food Rescue could not operate effectively without these dedicated volunteers. On average, 25-30 volunteers work at the Food Rescue site each week.

We focus on reclaiming food from retail stores, wholesale distributors, and others. Current regular food donors include Yellowknife Direct Charge Co-op, Rochdi's Your Independent Grocer, and Inder's Your Independent Grocer. Several other businesses, such as Shoppers Drug Mart, mines, and expeditors, provide food donations on an occasional basis. Staff and volunteers redistribute the food to over twenty-three social organizations assisting needy people.

In addition, we help conserve the environment by saving food and products from landfills. Since inception (2008-2024), we have collected 2.1 million kg of food and products worth \$11.8 million (See Appendix B).

3. History

In March 2008, during a Homelessness Coalition Public Forum, Ruby Trudel had an inspired thought. What if edible food destined for the waste disposal site could be reclaimed, refurbished, and redistributed to people needing food through agencies represented by the Homelessness Coalition? This simple idea took root, grew and created an opportunity to address, to some extent, food security issues in Yellowknife and the surrounding area.

Food Rescue began in June 2008, with all food products processed in Laurin and Ruby Trudel's private home. They converted the garage into a warehouse. The kitchen became a workstation. Volunteers sorted, cleaned, repackaged, and prepared the food for distribution. Lorne Schollar's van became Food Rescue's food collection and delivery vehicle. Organic matter not fit for redistribution was composted in the Yellowknife Community Garden. Cardboard containers were recycled. Seven volunteers performed all the labour. The Yellowknife community began making monetary donations and volunteering at the site.

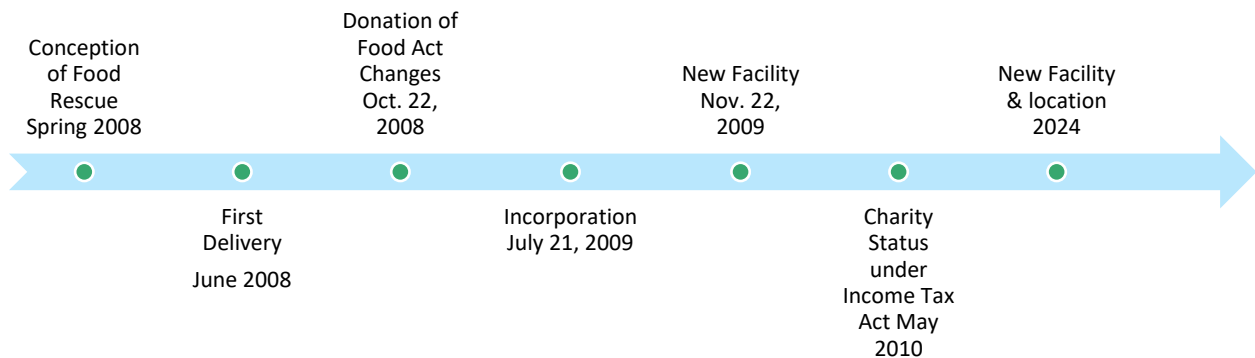
Food Rescue wishes to take a moment to recognize and remember Lorne Schollar. Lorne was a founding director of Food Rescue. Lorne had long been distressed by the wastefulness of our current society, especially concerning food waste. He recognized the contribution Food Rescue could make by providing valuable nutritious food products to people in need of food security in our community. Lorne's contribution to mentoring and supporting Food Rescue was

immeasurable. He believed in the importance of Food Rescue having its own vehicle and sold one of his vans to Food Rescue for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00).

By 2009, Food Rescue had grown too large to be housed at the Trudel's place. Matrix Aviation Solutions donated two double-walled insulated arctic camp kitchen tents. Central Mechanical Systems offered land on which to construct the new portable facility. Business personnel installed and connected the utilities and provided generous donations of material and labour. In November 2009, Food Rescue moved into its first location on Old Airport Road. In September 2024, Food Rescue relocated to a new site with new and refurbished facility structures.

Food Rescue also acknowledges the work of our two honorary board members, Margaret Henderson and Bryan Manson. Margaret was responsible for keeping Food Rescue operating when the founding members retired and continued to work as the volunteer site manager until 2020. She designed and implemented all the operational procedures and tracking and reporting systems in place at Food Rescue until 2023. Bryan took on the role of maintenance and repairs in 2011 and still helps when he is in Yellowknife. Both members have played pivotal roles within Food Rescue for many years and continue to advise the Board and staff regarding on-site operations.

Food Rescue is a registered society under the Societies Act of the Northwest Territories and a registered charity under the Income Tax Act.



4. Mission

Food Rescue will build a bridge between the sources of excess usable food and those in the Yellowknife area who need food.

5. Vision

In Yellowknife and the surrounding area, nutritious and useable food will not be wasted, people will not be hungry, and conservation practices will be implemented.

By 2030, Food Rescue will:

- rescue and distribute food to organizations in Yellowknife and the surrounding area
- be recognized as an organization that contributes to community food security
- serve as a role model for locally created and sustainable food security initiatives
- have well-trained staff in key positions to ensure day-to-day operations run smoothly
- have secure infrastructure (building and vehicle)
- have a strong and dedicated pool of trained volunteers
- have a full board of strong and committed leaders who provide planning, governance and accountability
- implement an educational outreach awareness program available to food donor staff, recipient organization staff, students, and the public
- develop and implement a communications strategy that advocates for reclaiming food, reducing food waste and conserving the environment
- establish a system for tracking Food Rescue's carbon footprint and investigating ways to reduce its carbon emissions
- develop comprehensive orientation and training materials for staff, volunteers, and board members

6. Values

Mission-driven - We work together to ensure Food Rescue serves as a bridge between the sources of excess usable food and those in Yellowknife and the surrounding area who need food security.

Sustainable practices – We implement sustainable, commonsense, efficient solutions that reduce food waste and hunger

Integrity—We are transparent, trustworthy, and committed to ethical and professional accountability in the management of our operations, resources, and relationships.

7. Taglines

Serving our community.

No food gets wasted, no one goes hungry.

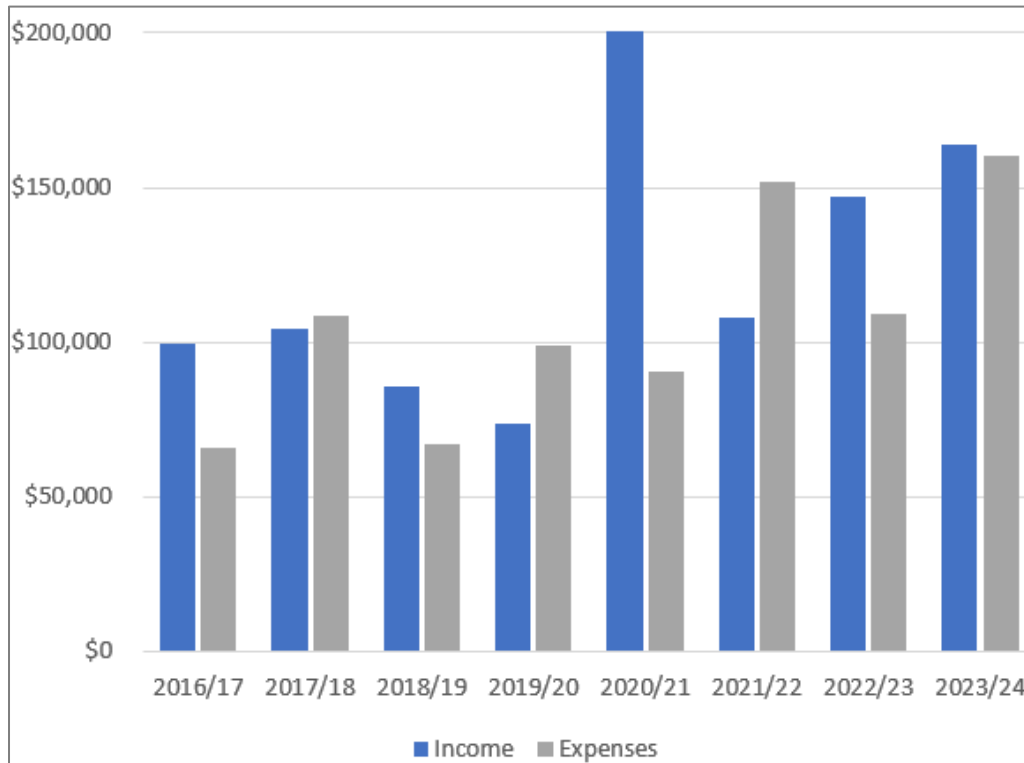
It takes a community to feed a community.

8. Goals/Objectives in Food Rescue Bylaws

- 1) Minimizing waste of food by accepting food products from donors;
- 2) Supporting organizations who work with people in need of food security;
- 3) Distributing reclaimed food when available within the community of Yellowknife and the surrounding area so that it is utilized to the best extent possible; and
- 4) Helping to conserve the environment through composting of food waste and recycling wherever possible.

9. Financial Information

Historical Income and Expenses 2016-2024



(Income was high in 2020/21 because we received a grant for a new van. Expenses were high in 2021/22 as we purchased the van. Income and expenses were higher than usual over 2022-2024 because of grants and expenditures related to the relocation of our facility.)

Overall, operating income and expenses exceed \$100,000 annually.

Future Anticipated Income and Expenses 2024-2029

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Income:					
Individuals	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Other Charities	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
Corporate donors	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Federal grants	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
Territorial grants	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Municipal grants	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Interest (GICs)	750	750	750	750	750
Bottle Depot	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
TOTAL:	107,750	107,750	107,750	107,750	107,750
Expenses:					
Promotion	1,000	1,020	1,040	1,061	1,082
Vehicle and Gas	9,000	9,180	9,363	9,550	9,741
Bank Charges	250	255	260	265	270
Office expenses	5,000	5,100	5,202	5,306	5,412
Utilities, maint.	20,000	20,400	20,808	21,224	21,648
Training	500	510	520	530	541
Payroll	68,000	69,360	70,747	72,162	73,605
Supplies	42,500	-1,694	-1,728	-1,762	-1,798
Other	2,000	2,040	2,080	2,122	2,164
TOTAL:	148,250	106,170	108,293	110,459	112,668
NET:	-40,500	1,579	-543	-2,709	-4,918

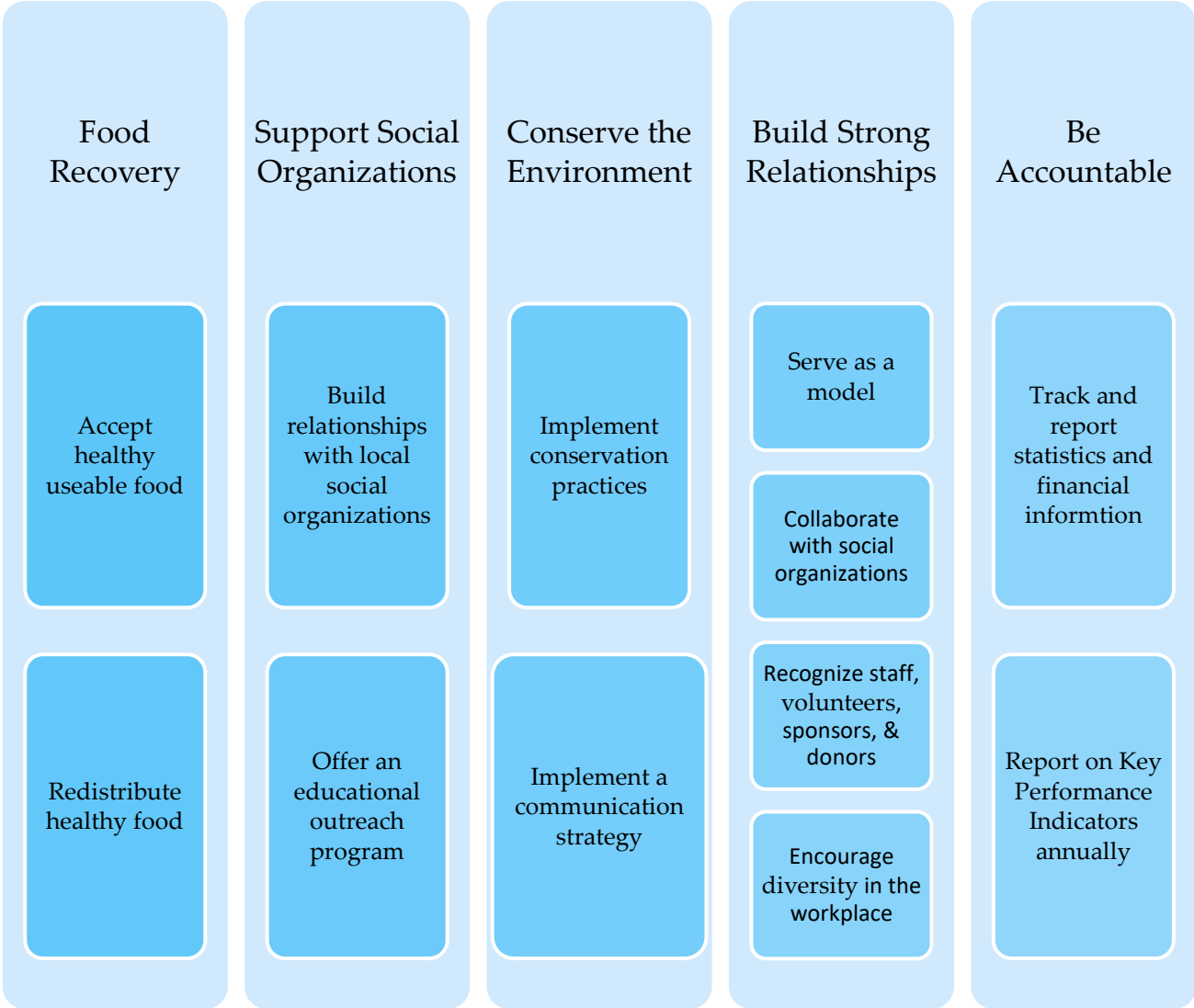
(Expenses in 2024/25 will be higher as we pay for relocation. The shortfall is covered by a surplus in 2023/24, created by grants received to help pay for the relocation.)

Expenses are expected to rise annually with inflation. We have not seen any increase in our grants, which may cause a larger deficit each year. We can increase our revenues through giving campaigns and by applying for larger grants.

Reserve Fund

Food Rescue has a policy of retaining up to \$75,000 in reserve for larger expenses or unforeseen circumstances. Our reserves are currently very healthy at over \$90,000. As a result, future small deficits are not a concern.

Food Rescue Matrix



Implementation Plan

Priorities	Key Initiatives	Actions	Outputs and Outcomes
<p>Food Recovery</p>	<p>Accept healthy, useable food Redistribute healthy food</p>	<p>Work with key food donors Find new food donation sources and opportunities to access additional food products Implement sustainable, commonsense, efficient practices that reduce food waste and hunger Offer educational sessions twice a year to key food donor staff on what Food Rescue will accept and what best before and expiry dates mean Implement a collection & distribution system that is consistent, streamlined and equitable Develop criteria for adding new organizations/programs to Food Rescue’s list of recipients</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of major food donors • Volume and value of food collected and distributed annually • Comparison of volume of food collected and distributed since 2008 • Annual increases and decreases in volume of food collected and distributed • Types of food collected annually • Educational sessions offered and conducted with food donors • Criteria developed for the addition of new organizations/programs • Streamlined operations in place at the site • Number of contacts with potential food donors <p>Outcome: Provide a non-wasteful alternative to food suppliers disposing of excess food</p>

<p>Support Social Organizations</p>	<p>Build relationships with local social organizations in Yellowknife and the surrounding area Offer an educational outreach program to organizations</p>	<p>Confirm recipient lists regarding food preferences quarterly Offer educational sessions to recipient organizations re: Food Rescue, use and storage of food, and best before date & expiry date terms Develop simple communication alerts & food nutrition information for recipient organizations Conduct quarterly check-ins Invite staff from recipient organizations to tour the Food Rescue site Develop simple food safety and storage materials that recipient organizations can use</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of recipient organizations by total, category, and length of time • Educational sessions offered and delivered to recipient organizations • Number and type of educational materials developed and provided to recipient organizations • Bi-annual reviews of food preference lists with recipient organizations • Bi-annual check-ins with recipient organizations • Number of invitations offered and accepted for tours of the Food Rescue site <p>Outcomes: Increased accessibility of nutritious food to organizations that serve clients in need of food security Better communication, recognition and engagement with recipient organizations</p>
<p>Conserve the Environment</p>	<p>Implement conservation practice Implement a communication strategy that focuses on raising awareness about food waste and advocates for change</p>	<p>Continue to divert healthy, useable food from landfills Compost and recycle Investigate ways to reduce Food Rescue’s carbon footprint</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of food composted annually • Recycling processes in place • Partnerships with local companies related to composting

		<p>Provide information to the public regarding food waste and climate change Advocate to the City of Yellowknife that commercial businesses implement composting programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation and composting practices over time and volume • Amount of food diverted from landfills annually • Type of information provided to the public re: climate change and food waste • Research on ways to reduce Food Rescue’s carbon footprint <p>Outcome: Better documentation of Food Rescue’s conservation efforts and practices</p>
<p>Build Strong Relationships</p>	<p>Serve as a model of a local food security initiative that is sustainable over time Collaborate with social organizations on food security matters Recognize staff, volunteers, sponsors and donors Encourage diversity in the workplace</p>	<p>Prepare orientation material for volunteers, staff, visitors and the public Make presentations at local clubs, business events, and government sessions related to social issues Prepare training material for staff and volunteers Develop a Food Rescue Human Resource Manual Conduct annual staff performance reviews Publicly recognize volunteers, sponsors and donors at events and on social media</p>	<p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of donors, sponsors and funders • Number of corporate contributors • Number of community donors (financial and in-kind) • Number of volunteers and volunteer hours • Number of staff • Number and type of orientation materials developed for staff, volunteers, and visitors • Number of staff performance reviews conducted each year

- Number of training opportunities provided for staff each year
- Development of training materials for the key Food Rescue staff and volunteer positions
- Communication strategy re: food waste developed
- Types of communication developed and published
- Number and type of partnerships
- Number of public acknowledgements of volunteers, sponsors, and donors
- Development of a human resources manual for Food Rescue staff

Outcome:

Better communication, recognition, and engagement with the public, volunteers, staff, sponsors, and donors

Be Accountable

Track & report Food Rescue statistics and financial information
Report on Key Performance Indicators

Prepare and present annual reports of progress in meeting strategic directions at Food Rescue Annual General Meetings
Present reviewed financial reports
Remain in good standing as a charitable organization and a non-profit society

Outputs:

- Review of annual revenue targets met/exceeded
- Historical and projected financial summaries completed and updated each year

Meet financial and narrative reporting requirements of funders

- Reviewed financial statements submitted at Annual General Meeting
- Strategic plan annual report by year submitted at Annual General Meeting
- Reports to funders completed
- Staff performance reviews completed annually
- Updated tracker systems in place – food collection, payroll, carbon emissions, fuel, etc
- Develop and maintain an Emergency Response Plan

Outcomes:

Ongoing financial sustainability

Ongoing sustainability through leadership, governance, collaboration, and operations

References

Leblanc-Laurendeau, Olivier. (2019) *Food Insecurity in Northern Canada: An Overview*, Publication no. 2019-18-E, Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Library of Parliament, Ottawa, 5 July 2019.

Sebastian, R., & Louis, J. (2022). Waste management in Northwest Territories, Canada: Current practices, opportunities, and challenges. *Journal of Environmental Chemical Engineering*, 10(1), 106930. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jece.2021.106930>

Appendix A: 2023-2024 Food Rescue Research Conclusions and
Recommendations

Research Conclusions (2023)

Are we meeting our goals and objectives?

Conclusion:

Yes, Food Rescue continues to support its goal of providing useable and nutritious food to those in need of food security and minimizing food waste through a system of food pickups and deliveries.

Food Rescue reduces food waste, supports organizations that work with families and individuals in need of food security, distributes reclaimed food to Yellowknife and Behchoko, and helps conserve the environment by diverting food from landfills and through composting and recycling efforts.

Evidence:

1. Minimizing/reducing food waste

Statistics 2008-2023:

Total food collected – 1,937,833 kg

Total food distributed – 1,858,771 kg

Total food composted – 79,062 kg

Statistics 2022-2023

Total food collected – 149,732 kg

Total food distributed – 142,883 kg

Total food composted – 6,849 kg

Daily average – 618.7 kg/day

Annual percentage recovered – 94.87%

Food Rescue Yellowknife began in 2008 to build a bridge between the sources of excess usable food and those in Yellowknife and the surrounding area who need food security. Food donors utilize best practices to minimize food waste, such as discounting food close to its best before date and diverting food to local organizations, including Food Rescue. A shrink/loss amount is inevitable for grocery stores even with better tracking and ordering systems, and Food Rescue is available to reclaim this food.

2. Supporting organizations involved in improving food security

Food Rescue works with approximately 24 social organizations whose primary focus includes:

- Alleviating food insecurity due to poverty and homelessness,
- Addressing safety, emergency services, health/social issues, and
- Providing programming and education.

Food Rescue has provided food to 63% of the organizations for over six years and has worked with food donors for 14+ years, demonstrating long-term commitment and participation.

100% of the organization and food donor respondents believe Food Rescue's objectives align with their goals and objectives.

95% of the recipient respondents rated their satisfaction with Food Rescue as very satisfied.

3. Distributing reclaimed food

All 22 recipient respondents confirmed that the reclaimed food is distributed to those needing food security, such as income support clients, low-income residents, people experiencing homelessness, street people, shelter users, families, persons with disabilities, children, youth, and seniors.

83% of recipient respondents indicated they did not have waitlists.

In addition to the reclaimed food from the three major grocery store donors, Food Rescue received and distributed food donated by ten other food donors, including mines, expeditors, various businesses, and individuals.

4. Conserving the environment

Statistics 2008-2023:

Total food collected – 1,937,833 kg

Total food distributed – 1,858,771 kg

Total food composted – 79,062 kg

Total food recovered – 96%

The total food recovered is equivalent to 176.1 school buses.

Food Rescue accepts and distributes donations of reclaimed food and helps to conserve the environment through composting and recycling efforts.

Food Rescue has been working with the three main grocery stores in Yellowknife for 14+ years.

Food Rescue and the three grocery stores share common values and objectives regarding reducing waste and conserving the environment. The food donor respondents stated that two of the benefits of working with Food Rescue were diverting food from landfills and conserving the environment.

What are the challenges we might face over the next seven years?

The recipient organization and food donor respondents identified the following challenges that Food Rescue might face in the next several years:

- Funding availability and access for Food Rescue's operations and maintenance support
- Slight decreases in food donations from grocery stores
- National practices imposed on Northern food donors, such as the Second Harvest Food Rescue App, directly connect businesses with surplus food to social service organizations that will put it to great use. The concept works well in southern Canada but is unnecessary in Yellowknife, as Food Rescue is the only organization dedicated to collecting food from food donors
- Greater demand for food products from recipient organizations
- Staff turnover
- Volunteer support
- Competition for food donations
- Fear of using food that is beyond the best before date

Recommendations for New Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The following recommendations express the views of the respondents interviewed during Phase 1. Once volunteers and staff are interviewed in Phase 2, they will be considered further.

Administration

- Fundraise and have a food drive once a year.
- Identify new food donors.
- Recruit a Food Rescue trainer who provides educational workshops to stakeholders.

Operations

- Review the schedule for pick-up times from food donors and delivery times for recipient organizations and look for ways to accommodate the donors and organizations if possible.
- Consider options for operating later in the day, on weekends and holidays, and during the Christmas break.
- Improve the predictability of what will be delivered weekly to organizations (confirm recipient lists of preferences quarterly).
- Offer educational sessions twice a year to grocery store staff on what Food Rescue will accept and *what best before* and *expiry dates* mean.
- Offer educational sessions twice a year to recipient organizations on how Food Rescue works, how to use and store certain products, and what the terms "*best before*" and "*expiry date*" mean.
- Ensure that recipient organizations understand that Food Rescue has limited control over the amount of food donated and the type of food available.
- Develop simple communication alerts to recipient organizations and food donors regarding holiday closures, changes in delivery times, and changes in volunteers and staff.
- Conduct check-ins quarterly with recipient organizations and food donors.
- Develop criteria for adding new organizations/programs to Food Rescue's list of recipients.

Strategic Approaches

- Education and training (staff, volunteers, recipient organization staff, food donor staff, and the public)
 - Tours of Site

- Utilization of existing resources and training programs (Second Harvest)
- Training manuals and digital photos
- Communications
 - Improve communication systems in all operational areas and with all stakeholders

Recommendations for New Strategic Plan 2025-2030

The following recommendations express the views of the volunteer respondents surveyed in Phase 2.

Volunteerism:

- Continue to maintain a flexible volunteer schedule
- Continue to provide manageable time commitment volunteer opportunities such as one morning a week for a three-to-four-hour duration
- Continue to operate in teams
- Continue to ensure operations are streamlined and well-organized
- Continue to honour and respect volunteers
- Invite more businesses to participate in volunteer days and events (like the Dillon Consulting model)
- Provide a general orientation folder to new volunteers regarding recipient organizations, staff names and primary contacts, roles, and emergency procedures

Operations

- Research better containers for storing and preserving food as single-use plastic containers tend to be an issue – BPA is found in plastics and leaches into food
- Reorganize and reconfigure the kitchen workspace area, as the prep space is too small
- Reorganize and reconfigure the cold storage space and the fruit and vegetable space (often, there is not enough space for all the dairy donated, and an enclosed cold space for fruits and vegetables would reduce the number of fruit flies present at certain times of the year)
- Replace the taps and faucet on the larger sink and level the smaller sink with the counter
- Meet with the Kitchen Managers to determine if a detailed operations manual is needed
- Consider a “designated list of volunteers who are on the “spare” list (if they are not called often, they may lose interest)
- Research ways to collaborate with other food organizations to enhance food security through local food production

Relocation

- Provide updates on the relocation and new facility
- Ensure the new location is accessible by public transportation

Events

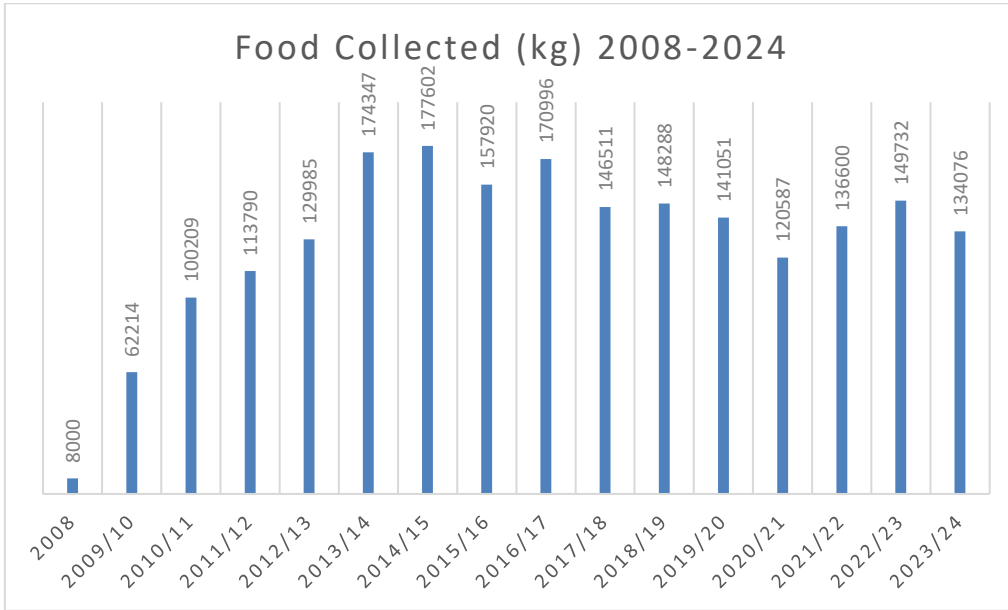
- Have a volunteer appreciation event once a year
- Have a volunteer/recipient organizations event (like a meal together) once a year

Strategic Approaches

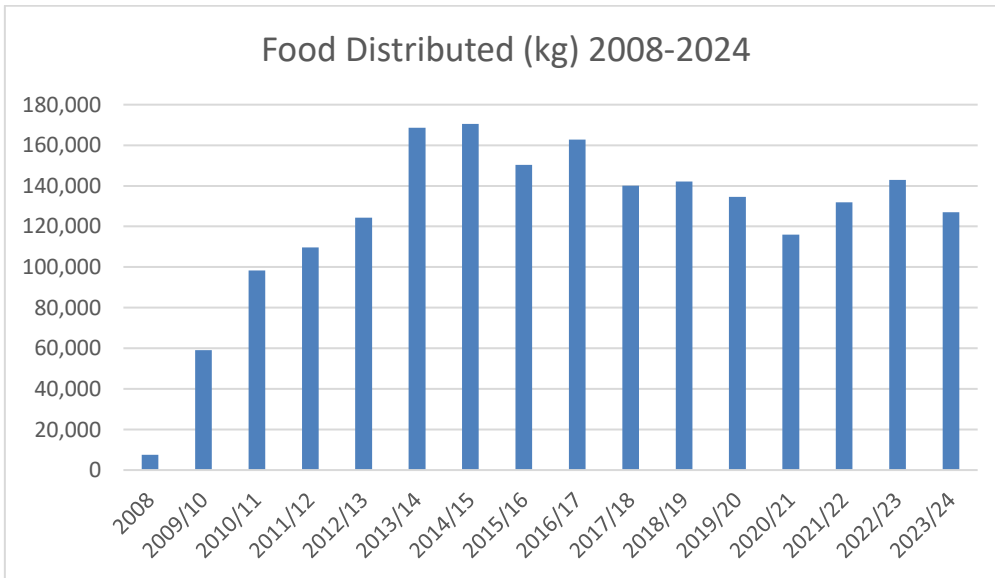
- Education and training (staff, volunteers, recipient organization staff, food donor staff, and the public) – orientation folder for new volunteers
- Communications
 - Improve communication systems in all operational areas and with all stakeholders
- Cultivate business/Food Rescue volunteer partnerships

Appendix B: Food Rescue Statistics

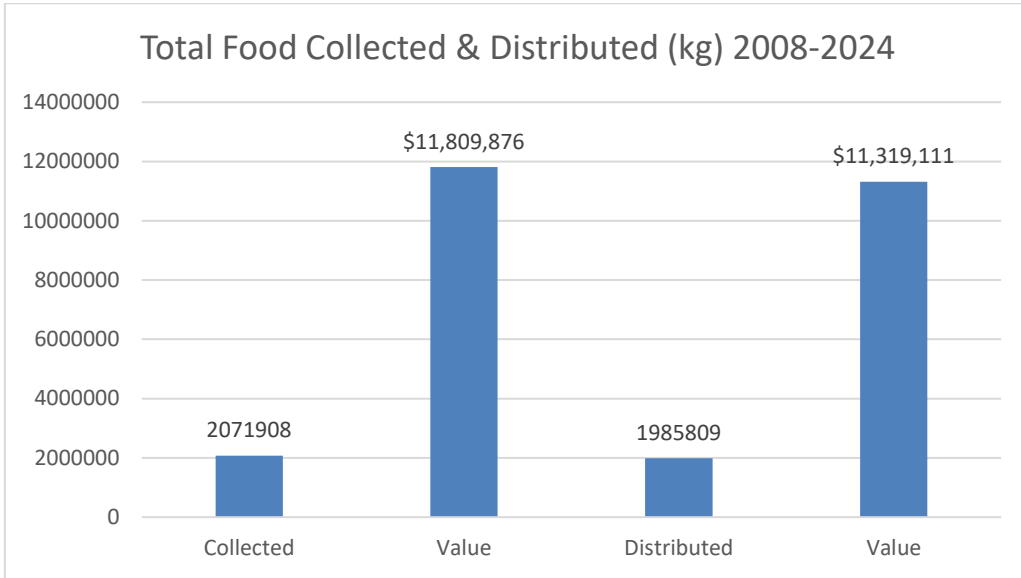
Annual increases and decreases in volume of food collected 2008-2024



Annual increases and decreases in volume of food distributed 2008-2024



Total food collected and distributed since 2008



Since inception, the total food volume collected is 2,071,908 kilograms, and the total food volume distributed is 1,985,809 kilograms. According to Food Bank Canada, the current value of food is \$5.70 /kg.

Conservation and composting since 2008

