

Press Release — for Immediate Release

Going hungry in Whitehorse

WHITEHORSE, Yukon Territory, June 8, 2022 — The food security crisis in Whitehorse is real and growing says new research. The Yukon Energy Food Security Network compared data from 2021 to data from 2016. It shows demand for emergency meal support programs is exceeding supply — by a significant degree.

Data was collected from 16 local, non-profit and government programs. An approximate number of emergency meal supports distributed during 2021 was calculated and correlated to census data from 2016.

“The findings are quite distressing,” says Dave Blottner, Executive Director of the Whitehorse Food Bank. *“We can see that Whitehorse people are served by a hodgepodge of emergency meal supports and that those supports are unable to keep up with demand.”*

The data revealed that emergency support programs provide about 2000 meals a day. However, after distribution, there were another 5000 meals missed daily by citizens for reasons including affordability, accessibility, quantity and personal or cultural taste.

“The programs in place are generally meant to get people through a crisis,” says Kristina Craig, Executive Director of the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition. *“Programs are being overwhelmed and there is no end in sight,”* she adds.

The worrying trend can be attributed to growing demand coupled with insufficient funding for food programs, dramatic increase in food costs, and supply chain changes, says Chris Pinkerton, Coordinator for the Yukon Energy Food Security Network. *“This work demonstrates that relying on providers of emergency meal support to address the level of food insecurity in Whitehorse is simply not enough,”* he said. *“The first step is admitting that Food Insecurity is a growing problem in the Yukon. The next step is for Government, local businesses, and Yukoners to come together to participate in local food networks. By better understanding where barriers to food security exist, we can work together to overcome them.”*

The Yukon Energy Food Security Network was established to increase food security in Yukon, raise awareness and build stronger food systems, and to reduce reliance on emergency food supports.

For more information or to obtain an interview with the Yukon Energy Food Security Network, contact:

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