community food centres
CANADA good food is just the beginning

Open Letter Urging Federal Action on Food Insecurity

April 14th, 2025

Sent by email to all party leaders.

Dear Mr. Carney, Mr. Poilievre, Mr. Singh, Mr. Blanchet, Mr. Pedneault and Ms. May:

Millions of Canadians are struggling to afford food, and the crisis is deepening. In 2023, 8.7 million people—1 in 4—faced food insecurity due to financial hardship, a 49% increase since 2020. Families, children, workers, folks on fixed incomes, and people with disabilities are being pushed to the brink, with Indigenous and Black communities being especially impacted.

Food insecurity isn't about laziness or a lack of food—Canada produces enough to feed everyone. The issue is affordability. Wages haven't kept pace with rising costs, and our social programs are inadequate. Employment no longer guarantees financial stability, as many workers are trapped in low-wage, precarious jobs. In fact, 67% of food-insecure households in 2023 relied on wages, salaries, and self-employment income for their primary source of income, yet still can't afford to meet basic needs.

Our federal social safety net is outdated. Employment Insurance (EI) has not been reformed in decades, leaving many workers without adequate support. Almost half of households that received EI as their primary income in 2022 faced food insecurity. The recent measures introduced by the government are temporary solutions, not lasting reforms. Charities like food banks—never meant to be a permanent solution—are now overwhelmed, serving over two million people, a number which represents but a small fraction of those struggling to eat.

As frontline organizations and advocates, we see the devastating effects of hunger every day. We witness the toll it takes on individuals and families—physical and mental health suffering, children going to school hungry, workers exhausted from trying to make ends meet, and entire communities struggling to survive. Hunger is not a personal failure; it is a systemic failure—the result of policy choices and a labour market that fails to protect people from poverty.

The economic disruption caused by Trump's tariff decision is already creating greater economic instability. Rising costs of essential goods will further strain household budgets, with price increases and job losses hitting the most vulnerable hardest. Our communities, already facing staggering grocery bills and mental health challenges, need stronger systems in place to support them. Now is the time for transformative change.

Canada is wealthy, yet millions still can't afford enough food or decent housing. This must change. In this election, we're demanding bold, accountable action to tackle food insecurity and poverty—no more delays, no more excuses.

Collectively, we envision a Canada where no one goes hungry, where Indigenous food sovereignty and traditional food systems are respected and restored, and where wages and social benefits ensure everyone can afford the basics. A country where communities thrive without relying on charity.

We urge all parties in this election to commit to measures that would both mitigate the worst impacts of the trade war and pave the way towards cutting food insecurity in half by 2030. These measures include strengthening existing income security benefits such as the Canada Child Benefit and the new Canada Disability Benefit, and introducing a Groceries and Essentials Benefit – a reimagined GST/HST credit providing immediate and meaningful relief for millions of our most marginalized neighbours.

Central to these efforts is the urgent need to collaborate with Indigenous Nations, ensuring the restoration and protection of their sovereignty over food systems and prioritizing their needs in addressing food insecurity. Given that Indigenous and racialized communities are disproportionately affected by poverty, they will also benefit significantly from strong income security measures.

As organizations working on the front lines, we see firsthand the human cost of hunger. It's time for a change. We need better governance and stronger action to ensure that no one in Canada is left behind. Will you take a stand and strengthen our social safety net to ensure everyone has a dignified seat at the table?

We look forward to hearing your party's plans to address growing food insecurity and inequality.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Community Food Centres Canada

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centres communautaires d'alimentation du CANADA la bonne nourriture n'est qu'un début

Lettre ouverte pressant le gouvernement fédéral d'agir contre l'insécurité alimentaire

14 avril 2025

Envoyée par courriel à tous les chefs de parti.

Monsieur Carney, Monsieur Poilievre, Monsieur Singh, Monsieur Blanchet, Monsieur Pedneault, Madame May,

Des millions de Canadien·ne·s ont du mal à se procurer de la nourriture, et la crise ne fait qu'empirer. En 2023, 8,7 millions de personnes, ou une sur quatre, ont connu l'insécurité alimentaire en raison de difficultés financières, soit une augmentation de 49 % par rapport à 2020. Les familles, les enfants, les travailleur·euse·s, les personnes à revenu fixe et les personnes en situation de handicap sont au bord du gouffre, et les communautés autochtones et noires sont particulièrement affectées.

L'insécurité alimentaire n'est pas une question de paresse ou de manque de nourriture – le Canada en produit suffisamment pour nourrir tout le monde – mais plutôt une question d'abordabilité. Les salaires n'ont pas suivi la hausse des coûts, et nos programmes sociaux sont inadéquats. Le fait d'avoir un emploi ne garantit plus une stabilité financière, car beaucoup de travailleur·euse·s sont coincé·e·s dans des emplois précaires et mal rémunérés. En fait, en 2023, 67 % des ménages en situation d'insécurité alimentaire avaient comme principale source de revenus des salaires, des revenus de travail salarié et de l'auto-emploi, et malgré ça , ils n'ont quand même pas les moyens de subvenir à leurs besoins essentiels.

Notre filet social fédéral est désuet. L'assurance-emploi (AE) n'a pas été réformée depuis plusieurs dizaines d'années, privant beaucoup de travailleur·euse·s d'un soutien adéquat. Près de la moitié des ménages qui comptaient sur l'AE comme principale source de revenus ont connu l'insécurité alimentaire en 2022. Les récentes mesures prises par le gouvernement sont des solutions temporaires et non des réformes durables. Les organisations caritatives comme les banques alimentaires, qui ne devaient jamais être une solution permanente, sont aujourd'hui submergées et viennent en aide à plus de deux millions de personnes, un chiffre qui ne représente qu'une petite fraction de ceux et celles qui ont du mal à se nourrir.

En tant qu'organisations et militant·e·s de première ligne, nous constatons chaque jour les effets dévastateurs de la faim. Nous voyons les ravages qu'elle fait sur les individus et les familles : des problèmes de santé physique et mentale, des enfants qui vont à l'école le ventre vide, des travailleur·euse·s épuisé·e·s d'essayer de joindre les deux bouts et des communautés entières qui luttent pour leur survie. La faim n'est pas un échec personnel.

C’est un échec systémique : le résultat de choix politiques et un marché du travail qui ne parvient pas à protéger les personnes de la pauvreté.

Les perturbations économiques causées par la décision de Trump d’imposer des droits de douane créent déjà une plus grande instabilité économique. L’augmentation du coût des biens essentiels pèsera plus lourdement sur le budget des ménages, et les hausses de prix et les pertes d’emploi frapperont davantage les plus vulnérables. Nos communautés, qui doivent déjà composer avec des factures d’épicerie incroyablement salées et des problèmes de santé mentale, ont besoin de systèmes plus solides pour les soutenir. Il est grand temps d’opérer des changements transformateurs.

Le Canada est un pays riche, mais des millions de personnes n’arrivent quand même pas à manger à leur faim ou à se loger convenablement. Il faut que ça change. À l’occasion de ces élections, nous exigeons des mesures audacieuses sollicitant des engagements clairs pour lutter contre l’insécurité alimentaire et la pauvreté. Fini les retards, fini les excuses.

Ensemble, nous rêvons d’un Canada où personne ne souffre de la faim, ou la souveraineté alimentaire et les systèmes alimentaires traditionnels des Autochtones sont respectés et rétablis et où les salaires et les prestations sociales permettent à chaque personne de subvenir à ses besoins essentiels. Un pays où les communautés s’épanouissent sans dépendre de la charité.

Nous exhortons tous les partis en lice à s’engager à prendre des mesures qui permettront à la fois d’atténuer les pires effets de la guerre commerciale et de faire en sorte que l’insécurité alimentaire soit réduite de moitié d’ici 2030. Parmi ces mesures figurent la bonification des prestations de la sécurité du revenu comme l’Allocation canadienne pour enfants et la nouvelle Prestation canadienne pour les personnes handicapées, ainsi que la création d’une Allocation pour l’épicerie et les besoins de base – un crédit pour la TPS/TVH repensé qui apportera une aide immédiate et substantielle à des millions de nos concitoyen·ne·s les plus marginalisé·e·s.

Au cœur de ces efforts : la nécessité urgente de collaborer avec les Nations autochtones afin de garantir le rétablissement et la protection de leur souveraineté sur les systèmes alimentaires et de faire de leurs besoins une priorité dans la lutte contre l’insécurité alimentaire. Puisque les communautés autochtones et racisées sont touchées de manière disproportionnée par la pauvreté, elles bénéficieront énormément de mesures fortes en matière de sécurité du revenu.

En tant qu’organisations travaillant sur le terrain, nous sommes les premières à constater le coût humain de la faim. Il est temps que les choses changent. Nous avons besoin d’une meilleure gouvernance et de mesures plus énergiques pour faire en sorte que personne au Canada ne soit oublié. Prendrez-vous position pour renforcer notre filet de sécurité sociale et vous assurer que chaque personne puisse s’asseoir dignement à la table?

Nous avons hâte de connaître les solutions de votre parti pour lutter contre l’insécurité alimentaire et les inégalités grandissantes.

Merci de l’attention que vous portez à cette question urgente.

Cordialement,

Centres communautaires d’alimentation du Canada

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