

## Greater Vancouver Food Bank and Sustainable Development Goals

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) is committed to our vision of creating healthy communities through fair and effective food systems. We strive to keep evolving with our work in food recovery and waste reduction.

### The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the United Nations established the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). This agenda serves as a guide for sustainable practices that enhance both the planet and the quality of life for its inhabitants (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024).

The *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs* created the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) to support this initiative. This division monitors Members' progress and provides support to help them address and alleviate global challenges (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024).

As an organization focused on creating fair and effective food systems, the GVFB recognizes that we must play our part in advancing these objectives. We are concentrating on specific targets that align with our mission and values, utilizing the indicators established by the UN to achieve them. The GVFB will focus on supporting three of the 17 UN goals.

1. Zero Hunger
2. Responsible consumption and production
3. Climate Action

Source (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2024)





## 1. Zero Hunger

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

*2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year long.*

In 2022, Statistics Canada found that 9.9% of the population was living below the poverty line (Statistics Canada, 2024). Data from Food Bank Canada’s annual Hunger Count supports these findings, showing that in 2023, 1 in 6 people who accessed a food bank were employed. (Food Banks Canada, 2023).

At the GVFB, our data shows the top three causes of food insecurity are the rise in food costs, housing costs, and either low wages or not enough working hours to sustain a proper income. In the 2023 Statistics Canada’s Canadian Income Survey, 8.7 million Canadians within 10 provinces were experiencing food insecurity, with children making up 2.1 million of that number (Proof Food Insecurity Policy Research , 2024).

Statistic Canada classifies food insecurity under three categories:

### Marginally Food Insecure

People who worry about not having enough food and limit their selection when choosing to more affordable food.

### Moderately Food Insecure

People who do not have the quality of nutrition or the quantity of food they require due to financial reasons.

### Severely Food Insecure

People who are missing meals (sometimes for days) and/or limiting their eating due to financial reasons.

## How the GVFB Contributes to Zero Hunger

### Weekly Food Support

The GVFB supports an average of 15,000 clients per month in Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminister and the North Shore. Each week clients receive a menu with over 65% fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, dairy products and proteins. Clients are provided an allotment based on the size of their family and receive 10 – 15 items per person, each week. Last year we distributed 9M lbs. of food to clients and agencies; 4.75M lbs. went to our client distribution centers, and 4.25M went to our network of agencies.

### Nutrition Program Packs

On top of our weekly food supplement, the GVFB provides monthly Nutritional Program Packs. These program packs were implemented in 2019 to ensure further nutrition for the most vulnerable people in the community, seniors and children. Created in consultation with a licensed dietician, these programs packs offer additional food to those who have additional age-related dietary requirements. Learn more about our [Nutritional Program Packs](#).

### Agency Partners

The GVFB is proud to partner with 150 Community and Provincial Agencies, including housing agencies, after school programs, community kitchen groups, transition houses, first nation centers, and other food banks. By partnering with agencies, the GVFB can widen our reach and better meet the needs of multiple different food programs throughout our catchment area, and beyond.

In 2024, the GVFB provided over \$450,000 in grant funding to 106 of our Agencies. These grants will go towards food security initiatives, refrigeration systems, kitchen equipment, program labour or to directly purchase food, to continue providing for their clients. The sustainable change they help our agencies achieve increases both the scope and efficiency of their food programs. Learn more about our [Agency Partners](#).



## 2. Responsible Consumption and Production

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

### *12.3 By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses*

As a country, Canada produces approximately 1.5% of all food in the world and consumes only 0.6% of all global food production (Canada, 2009, Modified: 2016). This means that Canada has the capacity to feed every Canadian and is one of only a few countries globally that qualifies under the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization as a self-sufficient country in terms of food production (Stone, 2024).

According to ReFeed Canada's impact summary, 58% of the food in Canada is wasted across all aspects of the Canadian supply chain, amounting to 35.5 million metric tonnes. Of this amount, a surprising 32% (or 11.2 million metric tonnes) could be avoided (ReFeed Canada, 2022).

## **How the GVFB is Contributing to Responsible Consumption and Production**

### **ReFeed Canada Partnership**

In 2021, the GVFB began our partnership with ReFeed Canada, a nutrient recovery organization in Langley, BC. ReFeed's work focuses on redirecting surplus and unused food to community partners, or if not edible, turning it to healthy livestock feed, organic fertilizers, and compost. The compost is further used to support their commercial-scale worm farm that helps to revive and regenerate local farmland, by utilizing the worm castings as a fertilizer. ReFeed and the GVFB work together to redistribute edible, nutritious food to those in need, reducing food waste in our community. Any food that is not fit for distribution is sent back to ReFeed where it becomes part of this zero-waste ecosystem.

### **Food Preservation Project**

What started with a delivery of recovered apples from ReFeed Canada, quickly became a new pilot project in food preservation. Rejected by retail partners, due to their smaller size, the apples were labelled as waste and destined for the landfill. Knowing that we couldn't distribute this quantity of apples quickly enough to ensure freshness, we searched for a way to stretch the lifespan of the produce. The result was a series of freeze-dried apple chips, with a 25+ year shelf life and 97% of the nutrients of a fresh apple. Not only does this address the issue of perfectly healthy and nutritious food going to waste, but it will be valuable in terms of nutrient focused food for remote, food insecure areas of our province.



## 3. Climate Action

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

### 13.2.2 Total greenhouse gas emissions per year

Of all the food produced globally, roughly 25% is wasted. This waste contributes to 6% of all greenhouse gas emissions (Ritchie, 2020). This mass waste occurs due to supply chain issues and cosmetic retail requirements for products. By finding ways to disrupt this distribution problem across Canada, we can achieve a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

## How the GVFB is Contributing to Climate Action

### BC Farmer Tax Credit

The BC Farmers' Food Donation Tax Credit (FTC) is a non-refundable income tax credit designed to encourage farmers to donate certain agricultural products to registered charities. The GVFB has been working with BC farmers to educate them on the credit and using the surplus food donations we receive through this program to support GVFB clients and food banks across BC. By donating farm fresh products, farmers can gain tax credits for the following year. Through these relationships, we can reduce surplus food waste and build strong partnerships between farmers and food banks. From January to June 2024, the GVFB received a record 375,000 lbs. of fresh produce as FTC donations directly from farmers.

### Strategic Partnerships

A great example of strategic partnerships with the GVFB's work with Farmlink, a food rescue organization based in California, and started by a group of students during the pandemic. Distraught over the staggering amount of farm fresh produce that was being sent to landfills in the States, they began connecting farmers directly with food security organizations. In 2024, Farmlink connected with the GVFB to distribute surplus potatoes still available from the previous year's crop in Alberta. We managed to distribute these potatoes across BC, through our network of agencies and other provincial food banks. We were also able to connect Farmlink with Food Banks Canada, to help facilitate an equitable distribution of recovered produce across the country from future Farmlink donations

## Final Thoughts

As our CEO, David Long has said for years: “There’s no shortage of food, there’s just a distribution problem”. No one should go to bed hungry, and nutritious food should not end up in landfills. Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive and strategic approach from stakeholders who are willing to extend themselves and be part of the solution. The GVFB provides nutritious, healthy food to those in need, and we will find innovative ways to fulfill this mission.

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