

# Food Security



## The Issue

Too many Manitoba households struggle to put food on the table. According to Winnipeg Harvest, nearly 62,000 Manitobans visit food banks each month to help make ends meet; nearly half of these are children. This is what we call household food insecurity or hunger: people do not have money to buy enough food for a healthy diet. Household food insecurity is a common issue faced by people accessing Employment and Income Assistance benefits. But most people who are food insecure have a job; they just do not get paid enough to buy groceries on top of other expenses like rent. Too much work is low paid and part-time. Household food insecurity is common in Northern and remote communities where food prices are especially high, and the food that is available is often low-quality. It also exists in major centres. Winnipeg Centre is the federal riding with the third highest rate of child poverty in Canada.\*

## The Province's Role

We know that when low-income families have more money, they spend it on necessities like food, clothes and better housing. Federal income programs like Old Age Security and the Canada Child Benefit make it possible for many families to make ends meet and get the food they need. For its part, the provincial government can use existing programs by doubling the EIA Basic Needs budget and bringing the minimum wage up to what is a living wage (\$16.58/hr) to ensure that no one needs to rely on food banks. It can also strengthen local food economies by investing more in the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, and by working with the federal government to better coordinate programs to keep food prices reasonable in Northern and isolated communities. It could also build on the success of the Mincome Project of the 1970s and implement a basic income so no Manitoban would need worry about having enough to eat.

## Questions to Ask

- What will your government do to make sure that all Manitobans have the money they need to maintain a healthy diet?
- What will your government do to ensure that good quality nutritious food is available and affordable for people in Northern and remote Manitoba communities?

*\* Campaign 2000 Child Poverty by Riding Report, June 2018  
Food Matters Manitoba. "Alternative Provincial Budget 2019: Food Security Backgrounder"*