

Food Insecurity in York Region

Presentation to the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

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Purpose

York Region Public Health offers programs and services that contribute to a reduction in food insecurity of York Region residents

The purpose of this presentation is to receive feedback from the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee on the specific food insecurity experiences of persons with disabilities, and suggestions for reducing food insecurity in persons with disabilities in York Region

Consultation Questions to Consider

- What is your community's experience of food insecurity and are there any special considerations for people experiencing a disability?
- In your opinion, what is the best or most important way York Region Public Health can support action on food insecurity in your community?
- What additional information would you like to know?

Agenda

- Terminology: Food security compared to food insecurity
- Impacts of food insecurity on health
- Prevalence of food insecurity
- Responses and solutions to reduce food insecurity
- Consultation questions

Terminology

Food Security

- Access to food that is
 - affordable
 - culturally preferable
 - nutritious
 - safe
- Food systems are resilient, ecologically sustainable, socially just, and honour Indigenous food content/information

Food Insecurity

- The inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints
- Income-related

Three Categories of Food Insecurity

- **Marginal food insecurity:** Worry about running out of food and/or limited food selection due to a lack of money for food
- **Moderate food insecurity:** Compromise in quality and/or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food
- **Severe food insecurity:** Miss meals, reduce food intake, and at the most extreme go day(s) without food due to lack of money

Impacts of Food Insecurity on Health

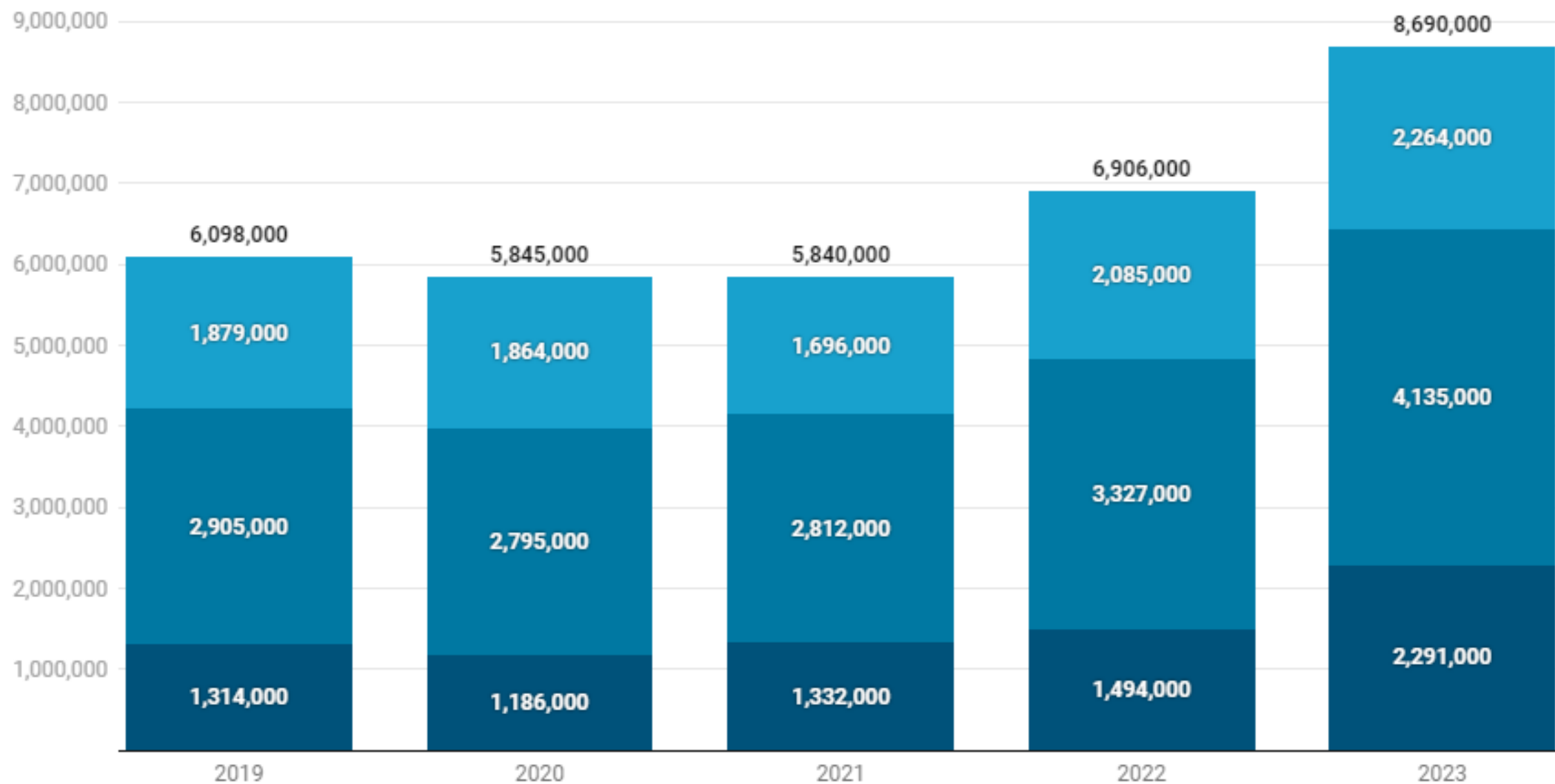
Food Insecurity and Health

- Food insecurity is a serious public health problem
- Food insecurity affects mental health and physical health in children and adults
- Please see York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee Presentation Backgrounder for more information on health impacts of food insecurity

Prevalence of Food Insecurity

Number of people living in food-insecure households in the ten provinces, 2019-2023

Food insecure, severe Food insecure, moderate Food insecure, marginal



Prevalence of Food Insecurity

- People with disabilities appear to be affected to a greater extent by food insecurity
- Adults who use mobility devices in Canada have higher odds of food insecurity even with differences in socio-demographic characteristics

Source: Schwartz N, Tarasuk V, Buliung R, et al. Mobility impairments and geographic variation in vulnerability to household food insecurity. Social Science & Medicine. [Mobility impairments and geographic variation in vulnerability to household food insecurity - ScienceDirect](#)

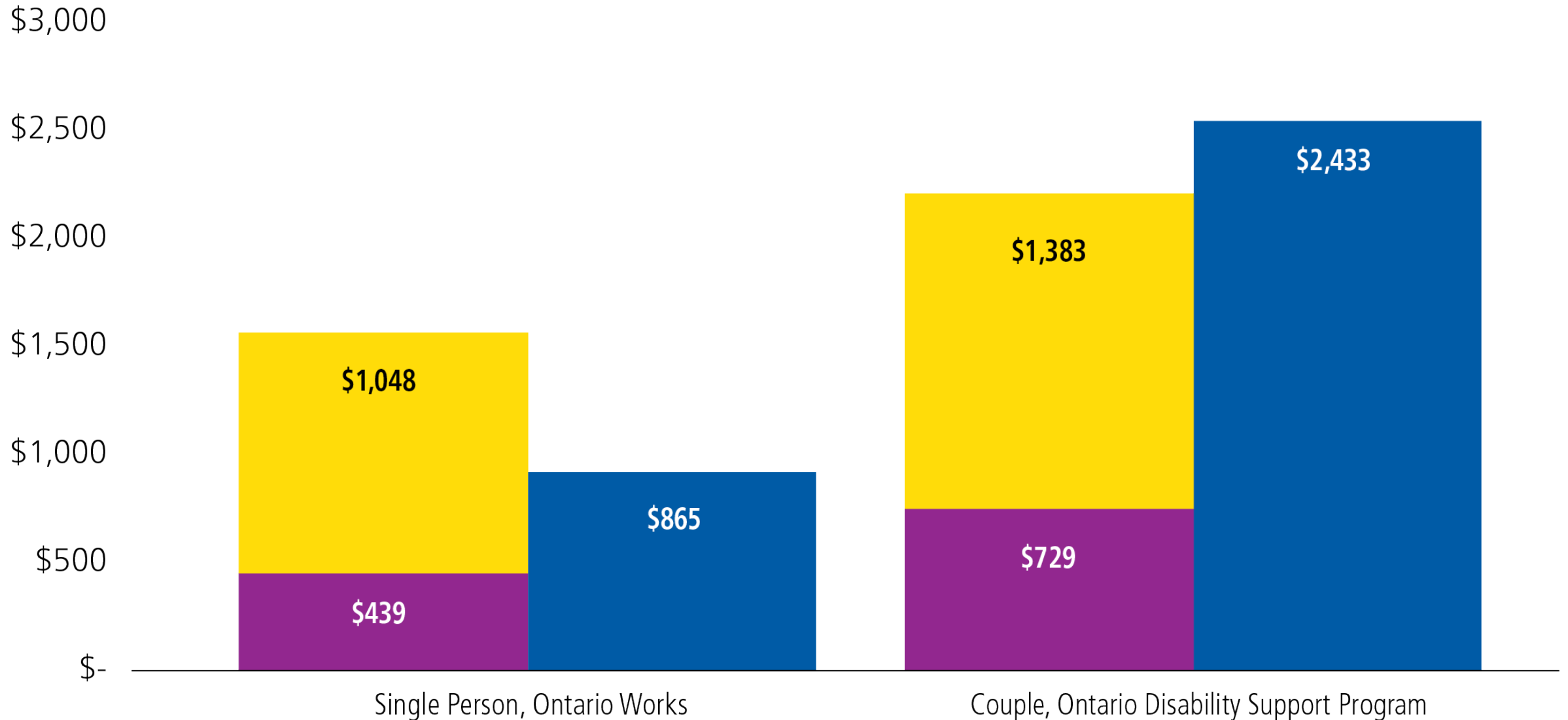
Nutritious Food Basket Survey

- Annual survey conducted by York Region Public Health
- Collect lowest prices for a month's worth of food from nine grocery stores
- Cost of food is compared to local rental rates and income from social assistance in several income scenarios
- Report available on [York.ca/foodinsecurity](https://york.ca/foodinsecurity)

Source: Regional Municipality of York. Food insecurity in York Region: the 2023 Nutritious Food Basket. 2023 Accessed June 6, 2024. [York.ca/foodinsecurity](https://york.ca/foodinsecurity)

Nutritious Food Basket Survey

Income Rent Food



Source: Regional Municipality of York. Food Insecurity in York Region: the 2023 Nutritious Food Basket. 2023.
Accessed June 6, 2024. [York.ca/foodinsecurity](https://york.ca/foodinsecurity)

Responses and Solutions to Reduce Food Insecurity

Food programs Cannot Reduce Food Insecurity

- Food programs do not address the cause of food insecurity, which is inadequate income
- Food programs have other important benefits:
 - Food banks
 - Community gardens
 - Community fridges
 - School meal programs
 - Soup kitchens
 - Food gleaning
 - Food budgeting workshops
 - Food rescue programs
 - Cooking groups

York Region Food Initiatives

- Community Investment Fund Priority - Food Security System Development. Supporting collaboration with food banks and others to:
 - Map existing food security resources in the community
 - Convene Emergency Food Cluster Table
 - Develop online presence

Reducing Food Insecurity Through Policy

- Basic income
- Canada Child Benefit (CCB) and Ontario Child Benefit (OCB)
- Social assistance rates

York Region Public Health Food Insecurity Initiatives

- York Region Food Network
- York Region Food Council
- York Region Emergency Food Cluster
- York Region Food Collaborative
- Georgina Community Action Table Employment and Income Generation Working Group
- Ontario Dietitians in Public Health Food Insecurity Workgroup

Consultation Questions

What is your community's experience of food insecurity and are there any special considerations for people experiencing a disability?

Consultation Question 1 of 3

In your opinion, what is the best or most important way York Region Public Health can support action on food insecurity in your community?

Consultation Question 2 of 3

What additional information would you like to know?

Consultation Question 3 of 3

Thank you!

For more information please visit [York.ca/foodinsecurity](https://york.ca/foodinsecurity)
or email Tracy.Woloshyn@york.ca

