

# MYTHS ABOUT FOOD BANKS

**MYTH:** Any person can just walk up to the Food Bank and get food – no questions asked.

**FACT:** All clients of the Food Bank must go through a detailed screening process. Clients are most frequently referred by their social worker, church or other community agency.

**MYTH:** People who really don't need the food are always getting it (i.e. people who drive nice cars or wear nice clothes are always in line to get hampers).

**FACT:** The Food Bank provides an emergency food service to those who demonstrate genuine need. Anybody can find himself or herself in financial crisis. "If you have just been laid off, would you sell your car or use it to get another job?" It is not possible for anyone to discern client traffic from the continuous flow of donors, volunteers and good Samaritans who graciously deliver hampers each week.

**MYTH:** Only "lazy" people with no jobs get food from the Food Bank.

**FACT:** The Food Bank serves a very diverse cross section of people in the community including seniors, single parents, recent immigrants and many others. Many of the clients are working poor. When making minimum wage, many clients need to have at least two jobs and still cannot make ends meet.

**MYTH:** The Food Bank is constantly wasting food – "I've seen food thrown out in the garbage behind the warehouse."

**FACT:** All food must meet levels of food safety and quality control standards prior to being distributed to our clientele. Unsafe food items that do not meet these standards must be discarded.

**MYTH:** The Food Bank must spend a lot of money on salaries because there are so many people working at the warehouse.

**FACT:** Primarily volunteers operate the Interfaith Food Bank. Interfaith has over 10 volunteers per day, who are working to keep the doors open, while hired staff members manage the day-to-day functions associated with keeping the food bank "in business".

**MYTH:** The Food Bank duplicates services offered by other organizations in the community.

**FACT:** The Food Bank works with many partner organizations to deliver services in collaboration to avoid duplication. This includes numerous community-based organizations such as Chinook Health Region, Family Centre, Lethbridge Public Library, churches and schools. Interfaith Food Bank provides a mix of programs and services in one location.

**MYTH:** The ongoing operations at the Food Bank are funded by the Government.

**FACT:** Interfaith Food Bank does not receive funds from the provincial or federal government to support its food distribution programs. The City of Lethbridge contributes approximately 3% of our operating budget annually to complement its Social Policy in our community. We are a bridge between the community and those in need, and are only able to distribute what we are able to recruit from within the community.



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