



FOOD STASH FOUNDATION

**2023**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

Food is too valuable to waste

[foodstash.ca](http://foodstash.ca)

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# Our Year at a Glance

Food Stash Foundation is a registered charity established in 2016 to prevent good food from going to waste and provide dignified food access to promote a thriving planet and a healthy community.

We rescue over 120,000 pounds of surplus perishable food a month from 30 local grocery stores and wholesalers. We deliver about 80% of this healthy food to 36 community-serving partner organizations, and provide the other 20% directly to community members through weekly Rescued Food Box home deliveries, a Rescued Food Market that serves over 100 people per week, and a 24/7 open access Community Fridge.



**1.5 million lbs** TOTAL FOOD RESCUED

**1.1 million** meals' worth of FOOD DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY

**4768** DELIVERED TO LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS  
Rescued Food Boxes

**117 tonnes** NET GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS AVOIDED  
CO2 equivalent

**12,000** SERVED BY COMMUNITY PARTNERS WEEKLY  
individuals

**only 2.4%** OF FOOD RESCUED HAD TO BE COMPOSTED

# Message from ED & Board Chair

In the 2022 Annual Report, we talked about change and how constant it is in the charitable sector. As Food Stash enters its 8th year of operations, we are increasingly talking about finding stability - while remaining flexible and responsive!

With at least 4 more years on our lease, we are relishing the stability of our warehouse space. We have optimized the layout to receive and distribute multiple pallet-sized food donations at once, organized processes to enable the smooth operations of our programs, and filled every extra nook and cranny with a buzzing community hub that includes 8 other organizations and local businesses.

In 2023 we relaunched our Rescued Food Market and established it as one of our core programs. We hired dedicated Market staff and set up a new membership model. With community consultation, we shifted from a pay-what-you-feel model to a membership fee (\$2 per week) model. Members now have a dignified shopping experience with consistent appointment times and steady service delivery.

We also streamlined the systems that support our community partner and home delivery programs. The onboarding processes are fair and consistent and annual surveys provide an organized way to collect feedback and assess impact. Because these two programs address ongoing and often long-term needs in the community, there is minimal member turnover; we have taken a measured approach to maintaining and opening waitlists to manage community expectations responsibly.

This operational stability and improved operational efficiency has enabled us to keep 1.5 million pounds of good food from going to waste in 2023 and provide dignified food access to 36 other community organizations, 120 low-income households with disabilities or long-term illnesses, an average of 101 average Market members each week and countless community members through our community fridge.

And finally, we are also cultivating financial stability. We are taking an “enterprising approach” to our work, acknowledging that we provide services to corporations and communities and that those services have value. With careful consideration and consultation, all our programs now include a responsible amount of cost recovery through nominal delivery and membership fees. We also earn revenue by sharing our space and charging a fee for corporate group volunteering experiences. These initiatives are small in isolation, but together they are moving the dial to improve our financial resilience.

We look forward to further embracing and enhancing this stability in 2024 and beyond. We thank each of you who also contribute to our increasing stability by generously and consistently donating your time, energy, money and/or expertise to help further our mission and serve our community. We especially thank the *səlilwətaʔt*, *Skw̓xwú7*mesh and *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* Peoples who have stewarded the land upon which we work and enjoy this stability.

Yours in community, Joben & Carla



# Food Donors

Food Stash collects fresh surplus food from grocery stores, wholesalers and farms. The food is donated for aesthetic reasons, overstocking, cancelled orders and approaching best-before dates. We complete over 80 regular food pickups per week.

**49**  
TOTAL FOOD DONORS IN 2023

AVERAGE OF  
**28**  
FOOD DONORS PER MONTH



**Choices Markets** became a food donor in early in 2023 through the FoodMesh network. (FoodMesh helps connect businesses with surplus food to organizations that put the food to good use.) We now pick up from the Cambie Street Choices seven days a week.

We hired a new driver and added a third daily pickup route to make full use of our cargo van and increase our number of food pickups. The new food sources and extra route enabled us to deliver food to 7 new community partner organizations.



*“Food Stash has been an outstanding organization to collaborate with through our Grocery Rescue program and Nourishing Our Neighborhoods. It is great to be a part of their effort to reduce food waste and support members of the community affected by food insecurity. We appreciate their level of communication and professionalism. Their dedication to not only reducing food waste but striving for long-term solutions is inspiring.”*

*- Melissa Pasquarelli, Associate Store Team Leader, Whole Foods Market Burnaby*



We welcomed increased engagement from **Whole Foods Market** staff at various locations. They led a “Stuff the Van” event to donate extra food to our community partners, invited our Executive Director Carla to speak about community impact to BC store leadership at their BC Culture Champion Day, and fundraised for Food Stash through their holiday Give Local campaign.

We strengthened our partnership with **Dan Foss Couriers & Freight**. Dan Foss helps us rescue and redistribute even more food by incorporating large volume, pallet-sized food donations from outside of Vancouver into their existing routes and delivering them to Food Stash. In 2023, Dan Foss delivered 95 pallets of food donations (approximately 63,000 pounds of food) to Food Stash!

# Community Partners

Food Stash delivers fresh surplus food to 36 Community Partners across Vancouver, helping to feed more than 12,000 individuals each week. For a quarter of our Community Partners, 50% to 100% of their food needs are fulfilled by Food Stash deliveries.



***"The high-quality ingredients that we receive from Food Stash have been absolutely pivotal to the success of our Recovery Meal Program. Our Recovery Program started with a mere 100 meals. Now we've committed to a minimum of 300 meals each day. These meals aren't just harnessing the potentially wasted nutrients, energy and emissions associated with this food. These meals are providing some of the most marginalised folks in our country with reliable and thoughtful support...[our] Food Stash partnership means that we can continue to provide dignified meals made with love."***

***- Ash MacLeod, Executive Director, A Better Life Foundation***

Our Operations & Food Recovery Manager invested a lot of time in building and strengthening relationships with our Community Partners through regular site visits. Our drivers continue to foster these positive relationships daily.

We also streamlined and updated our Community Partner registration and onboarding process. All these changes and the dedication of our Community Partners resulted in a 100% response rate to our annual feedback survey.

Our Community Partners reported saving over \$1 million thanks to food donations from Food Stash

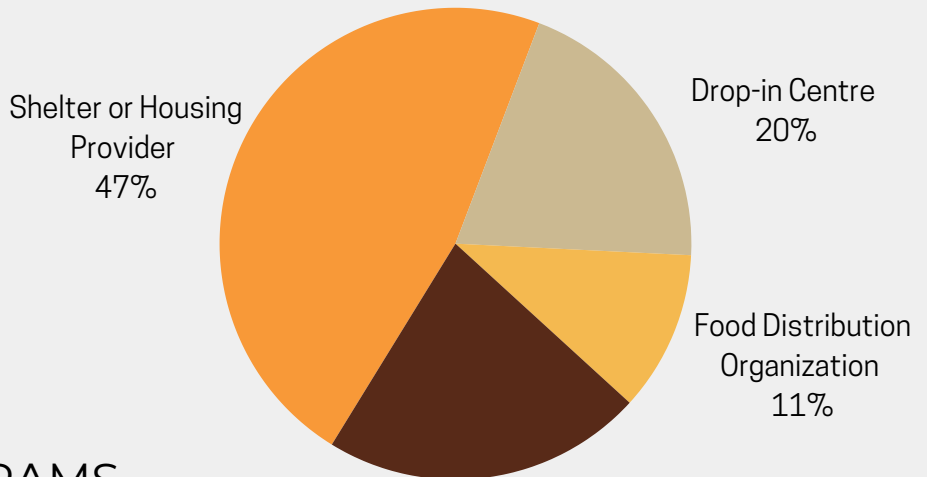


# Community Partners Continued



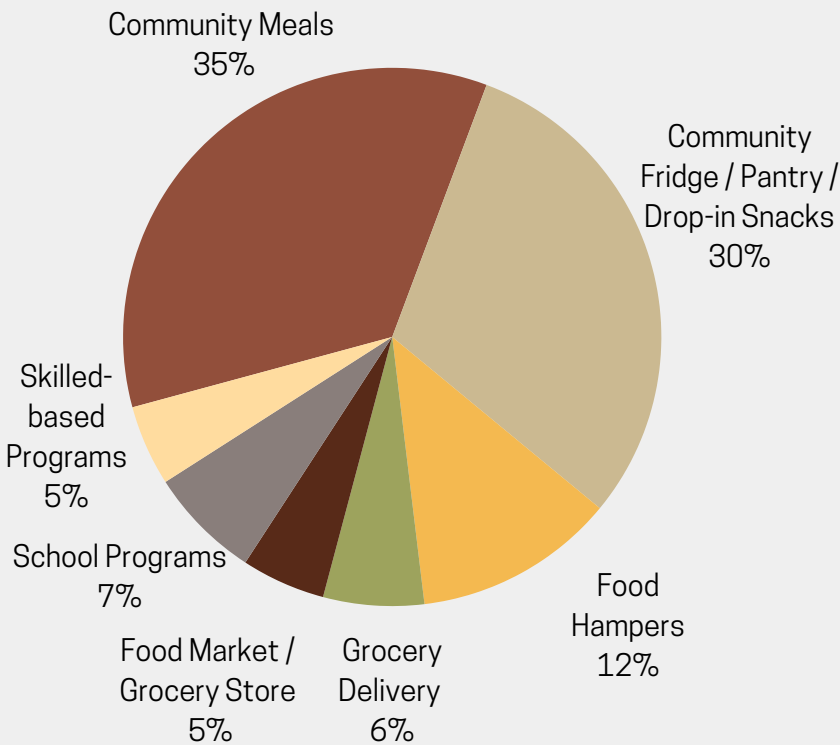
Photo: ishot.ca

## TOP 3 TYPES OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS

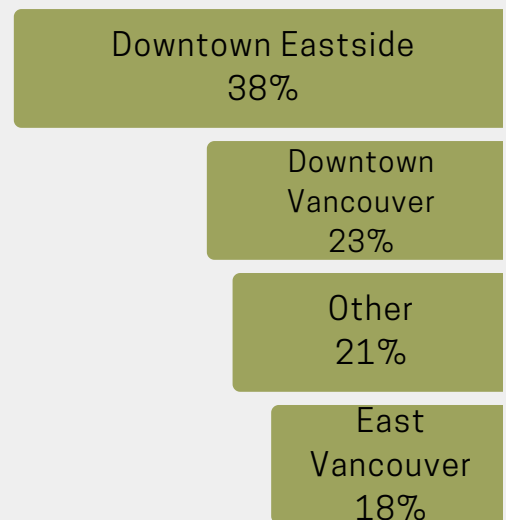


Remaining 22% range from school programs to employment readiness training to Neighbourhood Houses

## TYPES OF FOOD PROGRAMS



## NEIGHBOURHOODS SERVED



## TOP POPULATIONS SERVED

Newcomers / Refugees  
14% of partners



Indigenous, Metis, First Nations  
10% of partners



People Struggling with Substance Use  
10% of partners



# Rescued Food Box

The Rescued Food Box (RFB) home delivery program is one of Food Stash's longest standing programs. With a focus on serving people with low incomes and disabilities or long-term illnesses, our incredible team of staff, volunteers, and partner delivery drivers sort, pack, and deliver rescued perishable food to each member's home. For a \$10 fee, members receive a weekly delivery of approximately 25 pounds of veggies and fruits, protein-rich foods, and other grocery staples customised to their needs and preferences, valued at about \$100. The RFB Program provides nourishment and a dignified experience.

**110**

HOUSEHOLDS  
RECEIVED  
DELIVERY BOXES

**127,639**

LBS OF FOOD  
DISTRIBUTED IN  
RFB PROGRAM

2023 was a year of streamlining the RFB Program. We partnered with Fresh Prep, a certified B Corp and Vancouver-based meal kit delivery service, as our sole delivery partner.

Working with Fresh Prep has helped us stretch our limited resources further and opened the door to future program growth. Fresh Prep has even taken on the “dirty work” of sanitizing our reusable bins and program supplies, freeing up valuable Food Stash staff and volunteer hours for other initiatives.



**86%**

IDENTIFY AS BEING  
DISABLED OR  
HAVING A CHRONIC  
HEALTH CONDITION

**100%**

IDENTIFY AS  
LOW INCOME



\*238 individuals

We implemented a new annual member survey to collect feedback, confirm need and eligibility, and establish community guidelines. We overhauled how we track and manage the program equipment like bins, ice packs, and thermal pouches. We also invested a lot of energy and time into getting to know our members, meeting them where they are at, and listening to their feedback.

**Before the Rescued  
Food Box 45%**

of members stated they were unable  
to have balanced meals



**After the Rescued  
Food Box only 6%**

of members stated they were unable to  
have balanced meals



# Rescued Food Market

The Rescued Food Market is a low-barrier, weekly market open to everyone. In 2023, we served an average 101 community members each week, providing dignified and stigma-free access to nutritious groceries. Shoppers each took home over 25 pounds of veggies, fruits, dairy, meat and alternatives, and other staples per Market visit.

**101**  
AVERAGE PEOPLE  
PER MARKET

**82,030**  
LBS OF FOOD  
DISTRIBUTED IN  
2023

***“What I like best about coming to the Rescued Food Market is you can run into familiar faces, and feel like you’re contributing to reducing waste in the city.”***

**- Rescued Food Market Member**

This year, we held community consultations to rethink and improve on our old first-come-first-serve Market model. We hired a dedicated and multilingual part-time team to work at the Market every Thursday, and in April we introduced our new Market Membership model.

**69%**  
IDENTIFY AS  
WOMEN &  
GENDER-  
DIVERSE\*

**63%**  
ARE SENIORS\*

**78%**  
SAID THEY AGREE OR  
STRONGLY AGREE  
THAT THEY FEEL PART  
OF A COMMUNITY



The re-envisioned Rescued Food Market has been a big success, providing streamlined, frontline service to our community with minimal barriers. Members sign up for 3 months, are given reserved appointment times to access the weekly Market and pay a nominal membership fee of \$2 per market visit. This system has eliminated long lineups and wait times and has allowed us to plan ahead, stocking the Market according to the number of members registered.

If you want to hear more from our market members, [click here](#).

\*This data is from a recent 3-month Market membership cycle.

# Community Fridge

**3751 lbs**

**OF FOOD INTO THE COMMUNITY  
FRIDGE FROM AUG - DEC**

The concept of a 24/7 community fridge, where anyone can contribute food and anyone can take food, is catching on around Vancouver and the world. Community fridges provide low-barrier food access and are a great form of mutual aid. We love the “give what you can, take what you need” and no policing approach to food access that community fridges offer.

***“Just wanted to say thanks for having a place like this. It sure helps...there are people that care still so when I want to give up on life, I found this place and it feels like a home and gets me through so thank you.”***

**- Community Member**

After a hiatus of nearly a year while we relocated, we were able to relaunch the community fridge near our new warehouse in Mount Pleasant in August. It was truly a community effort involving:

- funding from TELUS
- donated wood from Great Northern Way Scene Shop
- donated carpentry skills from Chris at SPEC BC
- a partnership with the CoFood Vancouver Community Garden to provide a safe, secure and beautiful home for the fridge
- a partnership with the Vancouver Community Fridge Project and its volunteers to help stock and clean the fridge regularly

Not only did we relaunch the community fridge, but we also added a community pantry with shelves and a cupboard for dry goods.



# Volunteers

We are lucky to have over 80 active volunteers who create such a warm and welcoming environment. Volunteers from all walks of life come to Food Stash to reduce food waste in our community, help others, and make friends.

**3463**

VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

Not only individuals can get involved, but corporate and school groups can, too! Our group volunteer program is a great team-building opportunity and raises public awareness of food waste and food insecurity issues in Canada. It is always a refreshing feeling to share our work with a group of people who are brand new to it all.

**80+**

INDIVIDUAL  
VOLUNTEERS

In 2023, we created a volunteer training program with a comprehensive Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Orientation sessions. Our Volunteer Orientation sessions allow all new volunteers to meet each other, receive training on how to safely and effectively play a part in rescuing and redistributing food, and build familiarity with our space and team. Similarly, the Volunteer Handbook gives a detailed view of our organization and operations.

**35**

VOLUNTEER  
GROUPS



Photo: ishot.ca



***“Volunteering at Food Stash enables me to make a positive difference in my community, and to our planet. The issues we face can seem daunting, but being able to turn anxiety into action, and knowing there are people out there that genuinely care makes me realize that change can happen with the smallest steps.”***

**- Orla McGuinness**

We are so grateful to each and every Food Stash volunteer! Along with our summer volunteer appreciation BBQ, we had our first winter volunteer party, and it was a wonderful chance to spend time celebrating and visiting with each other while enjoying seasonal food-themed crafts.

# Community Engagement

Community engagement at Food Stash is highly varied and includes academic research partnerships, public outreach and education, events and workshops, and active involvement in local food rescue and advocacy networks.

It is through community engagement initiatives that we network and strengthen relationships with like-minded organizations, raise public awareness of the environmental impact of food waste and the social challenge of food insecurity, and advocate for change.

## Highlights of 2023:

- **Hosted or participated in 45 events!** Including collaborating with Chef Brad Hendrickson to host several sold-out fermentation workshops and learn how to make kombucha! Workshops support our mission and are a fun way to build skills and reduce food waste.
- **Hosted two film screenings with panel discussions:** *Just Eat It*, a documentary on food waste which inspired Food Stash's beginnings back in 2016, and *Food is My Teacher*, a 2023 documentary with food researcher Dr. Tammara Soma exploring how food builds and repairs relationships, hosted with Vancouver Food Runners.
- **As host organization of the Mount Pleasant Food Network** (part of the Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Networks), we ran a Food Security 101 workshop, began an asset and needs scan for the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood, and brought together a dozen member organizations monthly to share resources and build a strong food security network. We also joined forces with the Vancouver Food Justice Coalition and continue the systems-change work started at the Food Justice Town Hall in October 2022.



24

EVENTS HOSTED  
BY FOOD STASH

WITH  
391

ATTENDEES

14

EDUCATIONAL  
TALKS

# Sustainability

Food Stash has always had a twofold mission that is equally environmental as it is social. Over the last year, with the help of GHG Accounting Services Ltd., we dug into our carbon emissions reporting while continuing to operate as sustainably as possible.

**3861**

LBS OF  
COMPOSTABLES  
DIRECTED TO RWL

**117**

TONNES CO<sub>2</sub>-EQ\*  
AVOIDED



Throughout 2023 we continued working with GHG Accounting to establish a baseline and understand the greenhouse gas emissions impacts of our work. We confirmed that our food rescue efforts consistently avoid more emissions than they produce and that in 2023 the total CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent avoided was 117 tonnes! This is like taking 27 cars off the road for a year.

With the help of Brightspot Climate and an anonymous donor, we replaced a diesel-powered refrigeration unit on one of our food rescue trucks with one powered by solar and battery power. This change resulted in a remarkable emissions reduction of 12.7 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>-eq - a 79% decrease from when we used the diesel-powered unit! This reduction is like taking 3 gasoline-powered cars off the road for a year.

In 2023, we solidified our partnership with Regenerative Waste Labs (RWL), a circular economy consulting firm and testing lab that uses a part of our compost for compostable product research and testing.



***“Our Regenerative Waste Labs team works with businesses to evaluate the compostability and environmental impacts of innovative new products. We rely on a steady supply of inedible food waste to fuel our compost bins. With Food Stash just down the road, our process is low-impact when gathering materials for testing. We're especially proud to partner with an organization doing vital work to increase food security right here in Vancouver.”***

***- Love-Ese Chile, Managing Owner, RWL***

\* Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>-eq) is a measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential by converting to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide.

# Financials

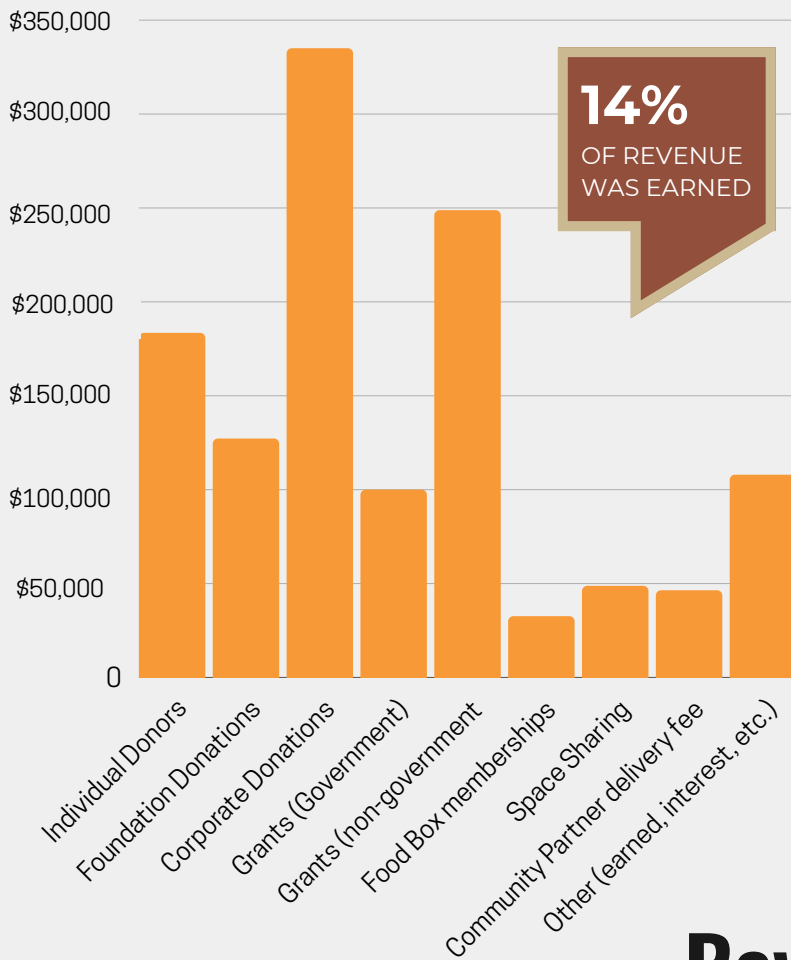
Total Revenue: \$1,230,398  
 Total Expenses: \$1,183,261  
 Surplus/(Deficit): \$47,137

**In-kind contributions**



Food Donations: \$4,763,181\*  
 Volunteer Hours: \$69,260\*\*

## Revenue

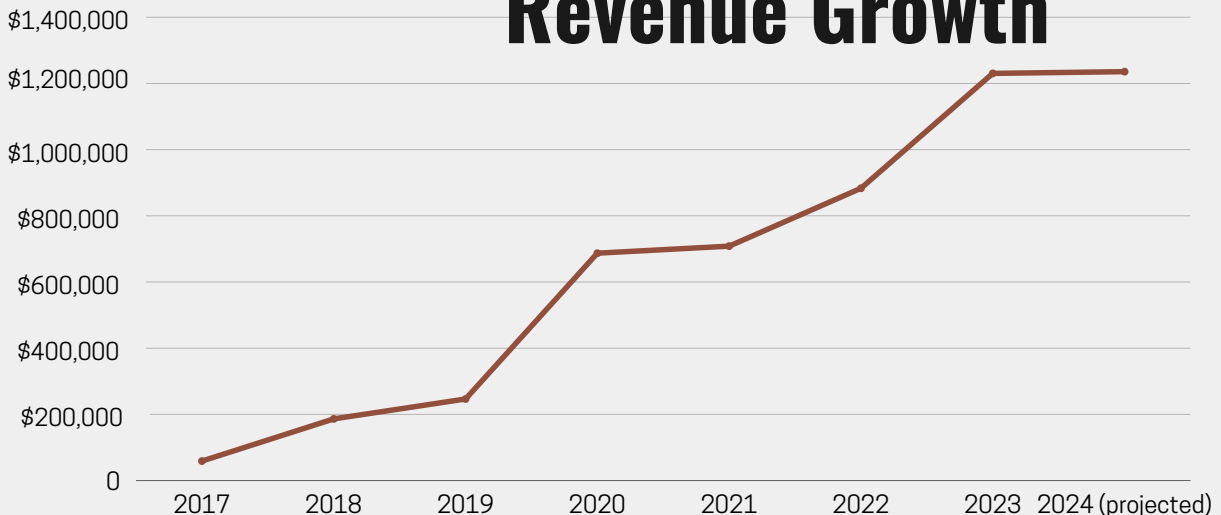


## Expenses



Salaries & rent are considered program costs. Administration includes office expenses, advertising and accounting fees.

## Revenue Growth



\*based on \$3.21/lb of food (Food Banks Canada)

\*\*based on \$20/hr

# Donors

Food Stash donors are the reason we can serve the community and reclaim the value of good food that would otherwise go to waste. We rely on and appreciate every person who gives a gift of money, resources or time, as well as their thoughtfulness and generosity.

Thank you to every supporter for helping our community and planet thrive, and for sharing our vision of a more fair and sustainable food system! There are too many supporters to name.

Below are a few of the companies and foundations that gave generously in 2023.



Fostering a lifetime of milestones. Together.



United Way  
British Columbia



- The Hamber Foundation
- The Wolrige Foundation
- Lightburn Family Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation
- MakeWay Foundation - Wonderful Life Fund
- Nancy & Andrew Stonkus (Stonkus Family Foundation)
- Nicola Wealth Gives Back Private Giving Fund, held at Nicola Wealth Private Giving Foundation



Photo: ishot.ca

# Looking Ahead



We are looking forward to continuing to host more fun and engaging workshops and other events that build skills and awareness about food waste! We are always open to ideas or collaborations for food waste-related workshop topics.



We will continue to advocate for food policy change by collaborating with like-minded groups, city officials and other decision-makers to reduce food waste.

To be able to serve more community partner organizations or community members in need of healthy food, we'll continue to reach out to food retailers, wholesalers, and producers and encourage them to donate the edible food they are unable to sell.



Forming relationships with more food donors is an ongoing challenge for Food Stash and the other food rescue organizations we work with. Finding these new food donors is also a huge opportunity to keep even more good food from going to waste.



We're also committed to continuing to improve the function and environmental sustainability of our three food rescue vehicles.





**“As a disabled person who lives with a chronic illness, this program is essential to my survival. Having access to nutritious foods and not having to stress about going hungry helps keep me healthy and really increases my well-being. A huge thank you to all the staff and donors!”**

**- Rescued Food Box Member**



**Donate today!**

Together we can prevent good food from going to waste while providing dignified food access to promote a thriving planet and healthy community.



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