

# FIGHTING FOOD INSECURITY IN HAMILTON

Update to the Emergency and Community Services Committee  
December 05, 2024

## Presenters:

Radhika Subramanyan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hamilton Food Share  
[radhika@hamiltonfoodshare.org](mailto:radhika@hamiltonfoodshare.org)

Julie Conway  
Operations Director  
Living Rock Youth Resources  
[julie@livingrock.ca](mailto:julie@livingrock.ca)

Deborah Walsh  
Senior Manager, Business  
Hamilton Food Share  
[deborah@hamiltonfoodshare.org](mailto:deborah@hamiltonfoodshare.org)



The Emergency Food Network, consisting of Hamilton Food Share and the 16 member agencies provide food and products to people in Hamilton struggling with poverty and hunger.



In 2023 Council approved after a request from this group, an emergency grant of \$625K

- fully utilized for food purchases and distributed by end of fiscal yr.

In 2024 Council approved the full request of \$1.25M

- \$625K for food and personal products
- \$625K for staffing and infrastructure

to Hamilton Food Share and the member agency food banks and food programs

## Evolution of the Emergency Food Network

- recognition that more direct opportunity for community decision-making was needed
- consensus-building and transparency were key factors
- enhancing trust and collaboration vs competition
- meetings were not meeting the needs of our food banks

Two working groups were created:

1) Leadership

2) Logistics





# Participatory Budgeting and Allocation for 2024/25



## Updated Food Allocation Formula

- Traditional Method: Based solely on the number of visits to each food bank.
- New Approach: Includes number of visits and a weighted factor based on reliance on HFS.
- Outcome:
  - Three larger food banks agreed to receive less food.
  - More equitable support for smaller food banks.

# Participatory Budgeting and Allocation for 2024/25

## Updated Grant Process

- Traditional Method: HFS privately reviewed and approved grant requests.
- New Approach: The group collaboratively decides which grants and amounts to approve, based on shared funding needs and objectives.
- Outcome:
  - Increased awareness of community needs.
  - Enhanced support through a more efficient, inclusive system.





In addition to the distribution and provision of food and personal products, the Leadership working group recognized the following projects as part of overall the work plan:

- 1) Involvement of people with lived experience
- 2) Development of a more complex allocation tool encompassing other factors (specialized populations, regional issues etc)
- 3) How to better align with housing strategies and create synergies with this sector
- 4) Link2Feed project - creating a one-stop food bank appointment process from anywhere in Hamilton

5) Specific foods based on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging - procurement and allocation

6) Branding -- “emergency” no longer demonstrates the ongoing levels of food insecurity

7) Indigenous food security alignment - aligning with the City of Hamilton’s Urban Indigenous Strategy and and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s recommendations

8) Digital communications - creating an app to streamline communications across the food security network

# STATUS UPDATE 2024/25:

## FOOD AND PERSONAL PRODUCTS

- Hamilton Food Share is finalizing orders and negotiations with vendors
- Food should be distributed to food banks/programs by the end of January 2025





# Hamilton's amazing food banks and food programs

They get the job done despite all of the following:

Partially-paved driveway and the truck getting towed out of the mud

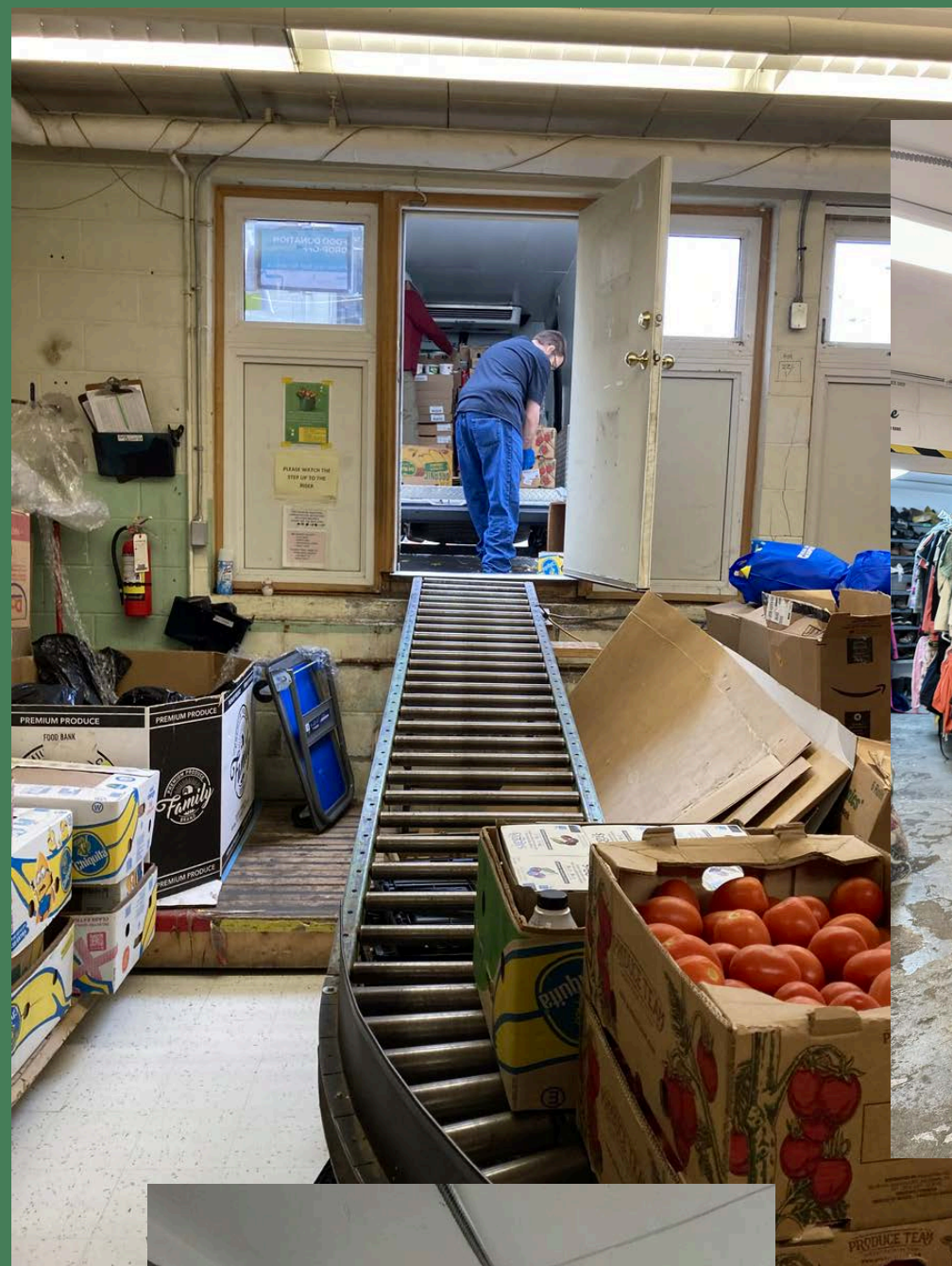


Storage spots that have low ceilings and hard to get in



A staff shortage across food banks, making it hard to reduce wait times, stock shelves, and stay open.



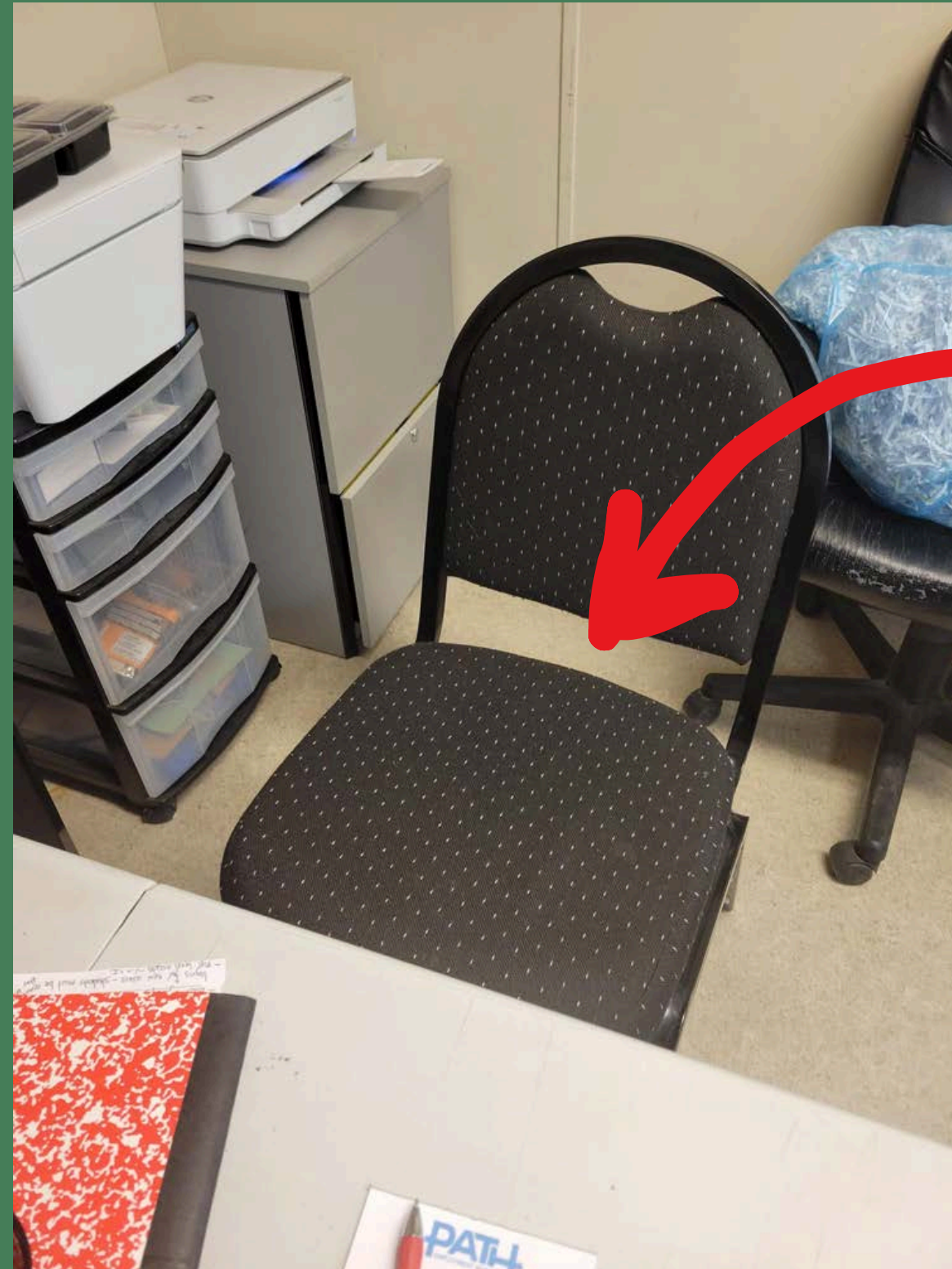


Lack of storage space, docks,  
fridges, and freezers ---  
everything you need to store  
and provide food to the  
community



After the participatory grant process,  
the City funding will provide:

- increased levels of staffing,
- freezers,
- air conditioner, lighting/painting
- drop ceilings
- storage equipment
- safety supplies
- cabinets/shelving
- finishing paving a driveway





# THANK YOU

## On behalf of :

Presenters:

Radhika Subramanyan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Hamilton Food Share  
[radhika@hamiltonfoodshare.org](mailto:radhika@hamiltonfoodshare.org)

Julie Conway  
Operations Director  
Living Rock Youth Resources  
[julie@livingrock.ca](mailto:julie@livingrock.ca)

Deborah Walsh  
Senior Manager, Business  
Hamilton Food Share  
[deborah@hamiltonfoodshare.org](mailto:deborah@hamiltonfoodshare.org)

