



# Newsletter

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## Best place on earth -- for food banks

### *More children, families forced to rely on food banks in B.C.—study*

Policies of the B.C. Liberal government have “cut apart” the social safety net in our province, and the result has been a massive increase in the number of children and families who are forced to rely on emergency aid from food banks just to get by, says a just-completed study prepared by the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB).

“Staggering,” is how Charles Seiden, executive director of the national food bank group, describes the steep rise in the number of B.C. children who receive food bank assistance.

According to the Hunger Count 2004 survey prepared by the CAFB, the number of B.C. children depending on food banks increased by 8,000, or 42 per cent in just one year. In all, just shy of 85,000 British Columbians relied on food banks during the March 2004 study period. That’s up by 16 per cent compared to 2003.

Nationally, just over 840,000 Canadians received food bank assistance in 2004, up 8.5 per cent from a year earlier.

What’s behind the deteriorating living standards for B.C. children and families? Seiden blames the policies of the Campbell government, which he describes in published media reports as “a very conservative government” that has “decimated” social services in the province.

Other B.C. food bank officials note a pronounced increase in the number of students and working families getting help because of rising tuition fees and high housing costs. The study also observes that “people who used to donate small regular amounts are now standing in line for food.”

[Click here](#) to download a .pdf copy of the Hunger count 2004 study produced by the Canadian Association of Food Banks.

Source: BCGEU

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