



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Friends In Need Food Bank Reports Record Demand and Growing Community Impact in April 2026

**For Immediate Release - Maple Ridge, BC – May 7, 2026**

Friends In Need Food Bank is reporting a continued surge in demand for services across Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, with April 2026 marking one of the busiest months in the organization's history.

In April alone, the food bank recorded **3,009 visits**, serving **1,001 households and 2,235 individuals**, including **93 newly registered clients**. This represents a **15% increase year over year in visits and the highest households served per week on record**, highlighting the growing pressure faced by families, seniors, and individuals across the community. For comparison, 5 short years ago in April 2021 the food bank saw 516 unique households visit 1,519 times.

“More people than ever are turning to the food bank for support,” said Kim Boekhorst, Executive Director. “We’re seeing working families, seniors on fixed incomes, and individuals who never expected to need help now relying on our services to get through the month.”

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### A Community Food Hub Beyond Traditional Food Banking

Friends In Need continues to evolve beyond a traditional food bank, operating as a **central food distribution hub** supporting a wide network of community partners, including outreach organizations, shelters, recovery programs, and youth services.

Key programs include:

- **Secondary School Meal & Snack Program**, supporting over 2,700 students weekly across School District 42
- **Seniors Program**, including dedicated distribution and home delivery for vulnerable seniors
- **Pitt Meadows distribution** at Grace Church, serving growing numbers of local families
- Partnerships with community outreach organizations such as local church groups, addiction & mental health services, and services targeting the unhoused populations.

These programs ensure that food reaches individuals where they are most in need—supporting not only nutrition, but dignity, stability, and connection.

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## Environmental and Food Recovery Impact

The organization's **Perishable Food Recovery Program (PFRP)** continues to generate meaningful environmental and social impact. Through partnerships with most local grocers in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, our three vehicles operate daily—seven days a week, 364 days a year—collecting perishable food that would otherwise go to waste. As a result, 100% of the food we recover is diverted from the landfill.

In April 2026:

- **38,500 kilograms of food was recovered** – nearly 85,000 pounds – however, that number unfortunately represented a 12% decrease from the previous month
- This equated to approximately **57,200 meals provided**
- And resulted in over **108,200 kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced**

Of all food recovered:

- **81% was redistributed for human consumption**
- **17% supported local farmers** – many report first hand that this program offsets nearly 50% of their livestock feed
- Only a minimal 2-3% was diverted to the green bin

Since its inception in 2019, the program has repurposed +7.9 million pounds of food while significantly reducing environmental impact.

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## Rising Demand, Tightening Supply

Despite increased efficiency and community support, the food bank is facing growing challenges.

“We are being asked to do more with less,” said Boekhorst. “Demand continues to rise, while food supply—particularly from grocery partners—is becoming less predictable.”

In a recent example, the organization reported running out of produce, deli and bread an hour prior to closing on May 1—an occurrence that underscores the strain on resources.

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## No Government Funding and Critical Infrastructure Needs

Friends In Need Food Bank operates **without any recurring funding from any level of government**, relying entirely on donations, successful grant writing, and community partnerships. As demand increases, so does the need for reliable infrastructure. One immediate priority is the replacement of an aging refrigerated transport vehicle—critical to the food bank’s daily recovery and distribution operations. The estimated cost to replace the unit exceeds **\$100,000**, representing a significant but necessary investment to maintain service levels.

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## Community Call to Action

For over 30 years, Friends In Need Food Bank has remained committed to its mission: **Ensuring no one in our community goes hungry**. As demand continues to rise, community support has never been more important. “We cannot do this alone,” said Boekhorst. “It takes a community working together to ensure that no one is left behind.”

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## About Friends In Need Food Bank

Friends In Need Food Bank (FIN) has been serving Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows since the early 1980s and was formally established as a registered society in 1993. FIN is the only food bank operating in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows that is a member of both Food Banks BC and Food Banks Canada. The organization operates multiple distribution programs and supports thousands of individuals each week through food access, outreach partnerships, and community-based services. FIN is also currently working through the Food Banks Canada Standards of Excellence accreditation process, further strengthening its governance, operations, and service delivery to meet national best practices.

We recognize the unceded and traditional territories of the Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations. We respectfully acknowledge the many nations who are represented by the urban Indigenous population in the Ridge Meadows Community.

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## Media Contact:

Kim Boekhorst  
Executive Director  
Friends In Need Food Bank Society  
 604-466-3663 ext. 204  
 [Director@FriendsNeedFood.com](mailto:Director@FriendsNeedFood.com)  
 [www.friendsneedfood.com](http://www.friendsneedfood.com)