

The Pathways study is a **longitudinal study** which documents the pathways of community food security programs use among **1000 first-time food assistance users. The participants were recruited between September 2018 and January 2020, within 106 community organizations** offering food assistance programs in four administrative regions of Québec (Montréal, Lanaudière, Mauricie-Centre-du-Québec, Estrie).

This study is the **first of its kind in Canada** due to its longitudinal nature and the large number of food insecurity related variables that will be studied.

The study provides access to unique **data never collected before** relating to the pathways of first-time food assistance users in Québec, including how and if they regain their food security.

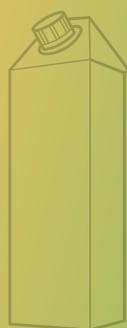
Food banks: a last resort solution

Using food banks is one of the last strategies used by people facing food insecurity in order to obtain food. Food banks provide individuals in vulnerable situations with a **means to meet a basic and essential need**, that is to feed themselves. Then, they may focus their energy on other priorities to get out of their precariousness.

Profile of first-time food assistance users



46% of new food assistance users experience severe food insecurity.



This indicates an extreme level of deprivation that can include going without food for an entire day, which may lead to unwanted weight loss.



Three quarters of new food assistance users report incomes of less than \$20,000 annually.



People living in food insecurity are **often active members of society.**

Almost half of new users were either employed, actively seeking employment or in school.

Preliminary findings of the study

Food insecurity is experienced differently depending on life settings, **with rural areas showing the greatest vulnerability.**



Food banks are the gateway to community organizations for 85,6% of respondents.

The physical and mental health of new food assistance users is lower than that of the general population.

