

CALGARY FOOD BANK CLIENTS AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE CASELOADS

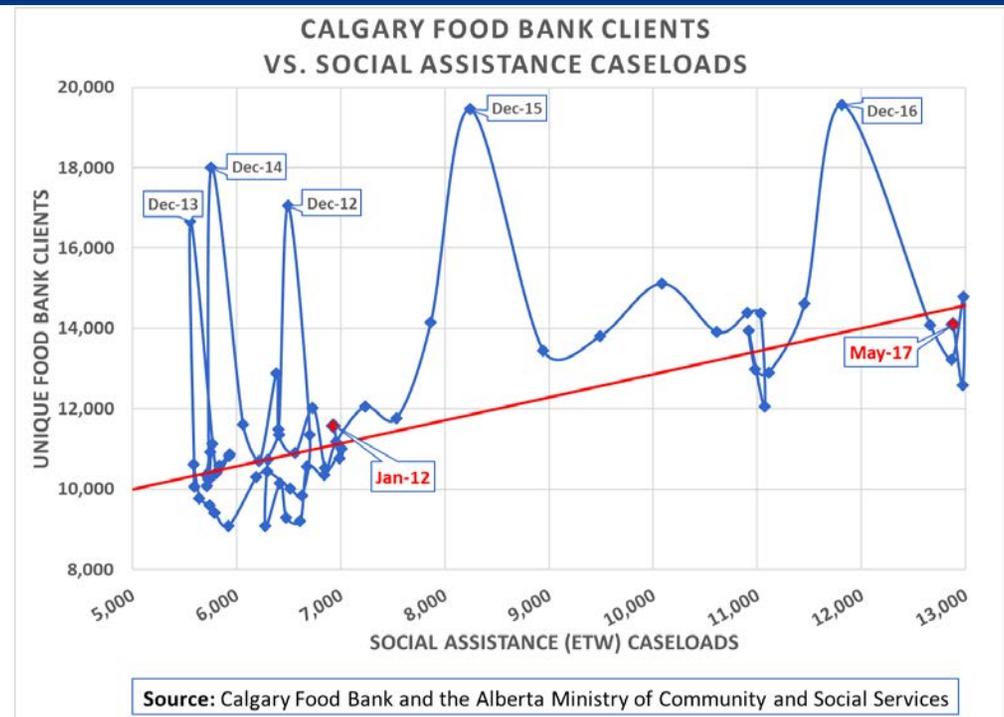
The social safety net consists of various government programs as well as services funded and provided through different private organizations.

The social safety net includes health and employment insurance, the Canada and Quebec pension plans, old age security, workers compensation, and provincial social-assistance programs. It also consists of the contributions of family, friends, and a great number of charities and faith-based organizations that seek to serve needs not directly met by government programs. In Calgary, part of the non-government sector that caters to those in need is the Calgary Food Bank.

The points in the following graph, identify the number of social assistance caseloads (classified as *Expected to Work - ETW*) in the Calgary region, and the number of clients of the Calgary Food Bank for each month, beginning in January 2012 and ending in May 2017. The influence of the December holiday season on the number of clients served by the Food Bank is evident. Each December, the Food Bank serves, on average, the needs of an additional 6,700 clients relative to other months.

In Calgary, every 100 additional social assistance caseloads are associated, on average, with an additional 57 clients of the Food Bank.

By removing the influence of the December holiday season on the number of Food Bank clients, we find a statistically significant relationship between the number of social assistance cases and the number of Calgary Food Bank clients. The relationship, identified by the red trend line in the figure,



shows that after controlling for the December influence, every 100 additional social assistance caseloads is associated, on average, with an additional 57 clients of the Food Bank. This trend suggests that the economic conditions, which cause individuals to rely on social assistance, are also those that contribute to an increased use of the Food Bank. From January 2012 to August 2015, the number of social assistance caseloads and the number of Food Bank clients varied relatively little. From the fall of 2015 to May 2017, however, there was a dramatic increase in the number of social assistance cases and a significant increase in the number of Calgary Food Bank clients.

Particularly during the December holiday season, many of those in need and especially those who fall through the cracks of the social safety net, rely heavily on the help provided by charities and other organizations. You can help by giving generously. The Social Policy research team at the School of Public Policy wishes you the very best for the holidays and a Happy New Year!