



Ottawa Food Bank
La Banque d'Alimentation d'Ottawa

Ottawa Food Bank – Youth Food Security Volunteering Program (2026) Information Sheet

We're looking for 15 youth, aged 14–18, to join a fun, engaging, and meaningful volunteer program that builds skills, develops leadership, and helps make Ottawa a more food-secure community.

What the Program Is About

Food insecurity affects 1 in 4 households in Ottawa. The Ottawa Food Bank saw over half a million visits last year, underscoring the urgent need for community action. This program gives youth an opportunity to learn about food insecurity, volunteer behind the scenes, and lead community efforts that make a real impact.

What Youth Will Gain

- Hands-on experience with food sorting, events, and (optional) farm activities
- Weekly learning sessions with Ottawa Food Bank staff and other insightful perspectives
- Leadership and teamwork development
- Support from a dedicated student program supervisor
- Experience running a food/fund drive
- 40–100 volunteer hours tracked
- A certificate, reference letter, and practical experience for resumes and applications

Program Schedule

April–December 2026

Summer (July & August)

- Food sorting + learning sessions
- Wednesdays & Fridays, 8:30 AM–1:30 PM
- Youth attend as regularly as possible; required for completing 40-hour certificate

Fall (September–December)

- One community involvement project, one event shift, optional advocacy experiences, and leadership roles.

Transportation & Locations

- Activities take place at:
 - Ottawa Food Bank warehouse (East end) Regular during summer
 - Ottawa Food Bank farm (south of Stittsville) Optional May to September
 - Community event sites across Ottawa, Optional September to December
- Youth travel to and from sites independently
- Farm volunteering requires a parent/guardian to attend due to open-farm safety; future group-supervised farm days may reduce this requirement



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- Typical warehouse drop-off: 8:45 AM

What Youth Will Do

- Sort and prepare donated food
- Learn from staff in short interactive sessions
- Participate in experiential learning opportunities
- Help plant, tend, or harvest at the farm (optional)
- Volunteer at events
- Lead or support a food drive or fundraiser
- Optional: participate in advocacy events or speak publicly
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Work is not speed-based; youth are encouraged to take breaks and work safely.

Eligibility & Selection

We welcome youth who are:

- Caring and community-minded
- Open to learning
- Reliable with communication
- Interested in making an impact

No previous volunteering is required.

Application includes:

- Written questions
- Virtual screening
- In-person interview for top candidates

Parent Involvement & Communication

- Youth are the primary communicators; staff will contact parents if needed
- Mid-program and end-of-program updates will be shared
- Parents only participate if attending farm shifts (optional events are flexible)
- Behaviour and attendance expectations follow Ottawa Food Bank policies

Safety & Supervision

- Youth are supervised at all times by a dedicated staff member, with additional staff/volunteers present on site
- First-aid trained employees are present in every department
- The main youth supervisor will be vetted, and youth are supervised
- Each environment (warehouse, farm, events) has daily reviewed safety protocols
- Emergency contacts for all youth are embedded in volunteer profiles for immediate access
- Moderate risks (fatigue, weather conditions) are addressed through orientation and ongoing guidance



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- The Ottawa Food Bank maintains insurance coverage for all staff, volunteers, and visitors

Program Outcomes

- Youth finish with a certificate, tracked hours, and a summary of participation
- Participants may continue volunteering after the program
- Future opportunities may include leadership positions or student staff roles
- Youth reflections will be shared (with permission) on Ottawa Food Bank channels

To Apply

Apply here: **[Youth Food Security Volunteering Program 2026 application](#)**

Email volunteer@ottawafoodbank.ca if you have further questions or seek more information.