

LINK2FEED

Link2Feed is a user-friendly, cloud-based software that enables food banks and their agencies to collect, manage and track client data and usage statistics.

The program allows you to complete intake and record visits to improve client relationships and make reporting easy.

It is an affordable and accessible alternative to traditional tracking methods, which protects client data and keeps information secure.



Food Banks
Canada



Using Link2Feed is not just about collecting statistics - it's about a movement that brings food bankers from around Canada together to identify the root causes of hunger/poverty and uses data to address them.

About 40% of the food bank network is already using Link2Feed for client intake.

Food Banks Canada is implementing Link2Feed across the country so that we can advocate for food -insecure Canadians in a more robust and meaningful way.

- ✓ Client intake efficiency
- ✓ Multi-program tracking
- ✓ Increased security
- ✓ Ease of reporting
- ✓ Network unification
- ✓ Forecasting demand



Visit <https://www.link2feed.com/> to learn more.

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WHAT IS LINK2FEED?

Link2Feed is a user-friendly, cloud-based software that enables food banks and their agencies to collect, manage and track client data and usage statistics. An affordable and accessible alternative to traditional tracking methods, Link2Feed protects data from physical disturbances and computer system crashes.

Link2Feed also offers a 24-hour support team to manage user issues and provides free product enhancements based on the changing needs of food banks.

By moving to the Link2Feed system, you can increase accountability to your donors, your board and your community while also collecting the data needed to better understand and meet the needs of your clients.

HOW WILL IT BENEFIT MY FOOD BANK?

1. **Intake Efficiency-** The Link2Feed system allows for quick collection of pertinent client information through an online database. The robust search feature makes it easy to search for a client by their name, birthdate or by another individual, such as partner or dependent, who is recorded in their profile. Link2Feed also offers several automated fields such as postal code generator, net income calculator and age population to increase efficiencies in the initial intake process.
2. **Increased Security-** All data in the Link2Feed portal is protected by 128-bit encryption (the same level of security used in online banking) and an extended SSL security certificate (a third-party site authentication). Access to client information can be limited by security profiles and additional security features prevent users from accessing the portal from outside of the agency.
3. **Cloud Based-** As an online database, Link2Feed eliminates the need for food banks to purchase expensive on-site servers and install software on multiple computers. Using internet-based software also allows for ongoing support and product enhancements at no additional cost.
4. **Network Unification-** Unifying our network on one system allows us to better track client behavior and serve their needs. Further, the real-time reporting features ensure timely, equitable distribution of goods to our partner agencies.
5. **Ease of Reporting-** Agencies will no longer be required to manually complete Hunger Count visit reporting as it can be completed, in real-time, through the Link2Feed system. This enables member agency personnel to focus on the needs of their clients.
6. **Cost Reduction-** Joining Link2Feed as a network reduces the financial burden on smaller agencies that can benefit from, but not always afford, a database of this caliber.

HOW SECURE IS THE SYSTEM?

The Link2Feed system uses the same level of security as online banking. For a full explanation of security features, click [here](#).

HOW IS CLIENT PRIVACY PROTECTED IN THIS SHARED DATABASE?

There is currently no way for individuals to easily pull lists of client information as per international data best practices.

Anywhere where there is a list required (for example, the appointment module), it only shows the name of one person in the household and no other identifiable information. This is far more secure than paper lists and does not allow other visitors to view other client personal information.

This is further protected in Link2Feed by the automatic timeout feature that locks a user out after a period of inactivity. With the paper form, it is just sitting on a desk and could be accessed by anyone at any time.

All user profiles are fully customized to provide only the relevant information for that job function. For example, only someone given the "Agency Intake" role can see any client information. Even further, if required, someone with the "Agency Intake" role could be blocked from seeing any pages of the client profile except for the "Services" page.

WHO OWNS THE DATA?

The organization entering the data is the owner of that data. Link2Feed does not own any of the client information.

WHAT TECHNOLOGY IS REQUIRED?

Only a computer with an internet browser (Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari) as well as an internet connection are required to use Link2Feed. A full list of minimum specifications can be found [here](#).

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Food Banks Canada will cover initial startup fees, which range from \$499 to \$9,499 per food bank. Monthly licensing fees are on a sliding scale depending on how many clients your food bank serves. The fees range from \$35.00-\$400.00 per month.

CAN I IMPORT MY OLD DATABASE?

Database importing is not recommended. Due to the number of duplicates, inaccuracies and mixed-fields found in most databases, the work required for food banks to correct this information when it is imported into Link2Feed is greater than the time required to input client information from scratch. Further, importing a database also compromises the validity of reports because of the inaccuracies mentioned above.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ENTER A NEW CLIENT AND RECORD A NEW VISIT?

Thorough testing of the Link2Feed system by multiple organizations has indicated that adding a new household takes an average of five to seven minutes and only needs to be done the very first time a client visits any organization in the network.

After this, it only takes approximately 20 seconds to record a visit.

HOW WILL I MANAGE WAIT TIMES?

It takes approximately five to seven minutes to complete the initial intake process for each client; however, as each *subsequent* visit only takes 20 seconds to record, agencies are seeing drastic decreases in the time it takes to serve clients in the long-term. Other Link2Feed clients have done the following to manage the wait times present in the first month:

1. **Client Communication-** One month prior to going live on the Link2Feed system, agencies have displayed posters explaining the database change to clients in order to inform them of potential wait times and confirm the information they will be required to bring at that time. This not only prepares clients, but also ensures they have the proper information with them, speeding up the initial intake process and reducing wait times.
2. **Multiple Computers-** As each Link2Feed user has an individual user account, multiple computers can be used simultaneously to do intake. As time progresses, these two lines can be separated: one for the initial intake process and one to record visits for those who have completed the initial intake at a previous visit.
3. **Snacks-** Providing additional snacks to clients helps to make the transition more enjoyable for them.
4. **Merged Intake-** Some agencies have spent a period of time processing some visitors using their old process and some in the new system to help reduce wait times. It is important that if this is a requirement, that the strategy is reviewed between network and agency and reasonable timelines for 100% implementation be identified. Please also keep in mind that if you do this, your visit data will not be accurate during this period.

It is important to remember that during this time of transition, ensuring clients get food is most important. Be sure to leave time at the end of the food distribution period to give food to those who were unable to be entered into the system due to wait times.

HOW WILL OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS LEARN HOW TO USE THE SYSTEM?

The Link2Feed portal is incredibly user-friendly and has been designed to be used even by individuals with limited technical knowledge.

Food Banks Canada will run webinars to give basic start-up training and answer any initial questions. Within the Link2Feed portal there is a user manual ([Learn More Here](#)) that can be downloaded and printed as well as a series of online help videos ([Learn More Here](#)) demonstrating how to use each feature within the portal.

HOW IS THE CLIENT DATA BEING USED?

Client information will only be accessed by those given authorization within the food bank. The provincial association and Food Banks Canada will also have access to anonymized raw data (this means that the clients will always remain anonymous in external reporting). The decision to share client data with the provincial association and Food Banks Canada amplifies your local community efforts in order to advocate for food-insecure Canadians in a more robust and meaningful way. Government professionals will not access the information within Link2Feed at any time; it is intended strictly for the use of the food bank.

WHAT WILL I DO IF I HAVE AN ISSUE WHEN I START USING THE SYSTEM?

There is a full user manual and training videos found in the "Support" section of the portal. If there are questions that cannot be answered using these materials, you can contact Marni Wolf at (416) 248-2215 or marni@foodbankscanada.ca