

# Six Nations food bank looking at new building

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Writer

The Six Nations Food Bank is looking to build a brand-new, 2000 sq. foot headquarters in Ohsweken but first, it needs to find the money.

Increased demand from the food bank's ever-growing client base, which, recently hovered at around 1,300, means the current building on Fourth Line Road can't continue to serve their needs efficiently.

Mary Monture, chair of the food bank's board of directors, doesn't have an estimate yet for how much a new building will cost but she says they've managed to save up \$100,000.

"We need land and we need a building," said Monture. "We have a situation in the building that we're currently in: it's been nicely donated to us rent-free for the past

year....but right now, we don't know month to month whether we're staying there. We're waiting for word every month."

Monture said "What we are looking for is a central location within the village of Ohsweken, if possible, because we find that the elders have a hard time getting to the current location that we're at unless they have a ride. Some of them can walk but not as many as we had before."

The current building is located on Fourth Line road in front of the Community Hall but Monture says they'd rather be located in the village. The food bank used to be located behind the Ohsweken plaza.

"We are trying to determine a permanent location," said Monture.

The Six Nations Food Bank,

which opened in 2012 and used to operate under the name Agape Food Bank, relies on donations from businesses and individuals.

They have to buy the food and pay a full-time coordinator.

Monture appealed to Six Nations Band Council for help last week, asking for either land or money or both to help them in their quest to secure a permanent new food bank with a loading dock, a storage area, small office, and a place for food service.

"We're looking at about 2,000 sq. feet," Monture said. And although the food bank has \$100,000 in savings, that's not enough to get a new building up and running, she said.

They need enough money to go towards either the purchase of land or the building or both.

They've managed to save that money by cutting costs on salaries and other small measures that have added up over the years.

But with the rate the food bank's clientele is increasing, said Monture, the agency might have to dip into those savings in order to be able to continue to operate.

Clientele and visitors are increasing monthly as are the costs for food service, said Monture.

Grand River Employment and Training pays for the coordinator's salary, while donations largely support the operation of the food bank, she said. The Community Trust fund is providing a grant to the food bank for a van to pick up food donations.

"We just don't have anything available right now to pick up large quantities and skids so we are getting a van which



**Six Nations Food Bank. (TIN File Photo)**

will help tremendously," Monture said.

According to the agency's statistics, older single people tend to frequent the food bank the most. With an aging population, that number will likely increase.

The food bank is open to the

public every Thursday and the first and last weeks of every month are the busiest times. Most visitors attend twice a month.

The board has to conduct a feasibility study first to determine the cost of a new building.