A Guide to Current and Emerging Practices in Food Security

London Poverty Research Centre
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Introduction

In the fall of 2013, the Sisters of St. Joseph and the London Food Bank joined together in a joint venture to develop a Poverty Research Centre in London. This project has been funded, in large part, by the London Community Foundation.

The Poverty Research Centre is intended to be a central repository of local data, information and knowledge and features a self-service data base that will enable decision-makers, service providers and citizens to more deeply understand poverty in London.

The Poverty Research Centre is unique in London as it focuses on the gathering of research, data and information within its three priority areas:

1. Mental health and housing
2. Food security
3. Precarious work

One aspect of this project is to document and share current and emerging practices for responding to poverty in local communities. This is being done in order to help stimulate ideas and actions that can be used for our community.

This Current and Emerging Practices Guide provides examples of community and government responses to food insecurity ranging from providing emergency responses to addressing root causes. Due to the vast amount of information found in the course of researching this topic, this Current and Emerging Practices Guide provides a sampling of programs, initiatives and actions addressing food insecurity and is not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Defining Food Security

On the face of it, food security may seem like a simple thing to understand – food security means having enough to eat. But when you start looking deeper, food security is not so simple. Hunger occurs when need is greater than availability. But explaining why need exceeds availability means understanding that the reasons are complex, linked to the supply of food in a region, a household’s ability to obtain food and an individual’s ability to prepare, serve and consume the food, and any combination of these (DeRose, Messer and Millman).

It was in the mid-1970’s that the formal concept of food security originated, primarily focusing on food supply – its availability and price stability. In the early 1980’s, the reality that some people were unable to obtain adequate food on a consistent basis was recognized. Definitions of food security were broadened, to reflect the concern with adequate nutrition and well-being. By the early 1990’s there were over 200 different definitions of food security in published writings (Commodity Policy and Projections Service. Commodity and Trade Division).

Why does a definition matter?
Having a definition helps people, organizations and government understand the food security problems experienced by individuals, households, and communities. It helps to focus local and government responses to the problems. And it helps in measuring how well these responses do at addressing problems.
These definitions can be categorized into two general frameworks: individual or household food security, where the unit of measurement is the individual or household; and community food security, where the unit of measurement is the community.

Household Food Security
Is the household’s ability to obtain and use safe, nutritious, healthy food. A family is food secure if they have enough money to buy food and the time to prepare and serve it in a manner that yields the best nutrition, on an ongoing basis (Investing in Rural People). Food security defined in this way is one element of a broader food strategy (Bloom). (Provincial Health Services)

Community Food Security
Is a community’s capacity to produce, distribute and acquire food (Food Action Research Centre). Measurement within this framework is about the state of food security, encompassing the full range of food chain activities - production, processing, distribution, nutrition, and health and public policy. Food security is achieved when there is zero hunger, there is a sustainable food system, and food is healthy and safe (Food Secure Canada).

Food security is inclusive of the food system, food policy and food related policy, and individual capacity:

A sustainable food system that supplies enough safe and healthy food

Ability to access nutritious food – such as transport to shops, financial resources

Adequate knowledge to purchase, prepare and serve healthy food

Complete Food System
The Connection between Lack of Food Security and Poverty

For the purposes of the Poverty Research Centre, we are interested in food security and insecurity at the individual or household level. Food security (or the lack thereof) is correlated with income or financial resources (Provincial Health Services Authority and ActNowBC). While it is true that not all people who are poor are food insecure and that not all people who are food insecure are poor, those in poverty are at higher risk of food insecurity (Food Action Research Centre). According to the Wisconsin Food Security Project, “Food security is fundamentally linked to economic security” (Wisconsin Food Security Project. Applied Population Lab, University of Wisconsin). In addition to households with lower income, higher rates of food insecurity are seen among groups that are at higher risk of low income, such as:

- Social assistance recipients
- Female lone parents
- People who do not own a home
- Aboriginal people (PROOF).

Seniors and immigrants may also be at higher risk for food insecurity. Other risk factors linked to food insecurity include: the cost of food and the cost of non-food essentials, geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and having low food literacy (Howard and Edge).

Case Study: Cheryl lost her job due to health problems. While she waits for surgery, she and her three children rely on Ontario Works. After her rent is paid, she buys as much food as she can with the little income that is left and then turns to the food bank for help. The food bank is good for canned goods and cereals. Her family has her and her children over for dinner regularly. Despite these strategies, Cheryl still doesn’t feel like she is able to provide consistently healthy food because she does not have an adequate budget for groceries.

(Oudshoorn and Shelley)
Food Security and Health

Food security matters because of its impact on health. PROOF (Food Insecurity) succinctly reports the research confirming this impact:

“Poverty and household food insecurity can separately lead to poorer health. Food-insecure adults report poor health, including mental, physical and oral health, and chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, depression, and fibromyalgia. Household food insecurity also affects people’s ability to manage chronic health problems.

Children who experience hunger are more likely to have poorer health. Multiple episodes of hunger among children over time are associated with higher odds of chronic conditions and asthma.”

Oxfam’s Global Food Index asks the following:
- Do people have enough to eat?
- Can people afford to eat?
- Is food of good quality?
- What are the health outcomes of people’s diet?

Canada ranks 25th out of 125 countries, with top rankings in the first three index areas, but among the worst with respect to health outcomes, measured by relatively high rates of diabetes and obesity.

(OXFAM Canada)

The CEO of the Santa Barbara Food Bank, Erik Talkin, looks at this connection from a food literacy perspective. In his blog, The Myth of Hunger, Talkin writes, with supporting references that while “Food insecurity is generally a symptom of depressed wages and benefits keeping people either on the edge of poverty or trapped within it... The most prevalent problem we face is malnutrition (Talkin, The Myth of Hunger).”

Canada’s Food Strategy Recommendations:
To increase household food security and access to healthy food:
- Nutrition programs
- Tax credits and incentives for food donations
- Improved distribution strategies
- Pricing strategies
- Subsidies to make nutritious food more affordable in areas where the market cannot fully meet needs
- Programs to improve food literacy, food security, and food emergency contingency and continuity plans (Bloom)
CASE STUDY
The Food bank of Santa Barbara County is trying to redefine what a food bank can achieve in transforming the health of communities through good nutrition. The Santa Barbara Food bank provides food, in one way or another, to one quarter of the people in the County. The Food bank is committed to taking a negative thing — hunger — and through combined community efforts transforming it into a positive thing — health. They do this through the provision of food, education and empowerment, building food literacy — the ability to budget, shop, cook, and use food responsibly. For example, part of the Food bank’s solution to building a food secure community involves teaching people how to grow their own food, connecting them with the tools and resources needed, and allowing the community to donate produce from their own properties.

Programs include:
Children’s Health Initiative: in addition to providing food, children’s food programs provide produce, food literacy training, skills to make healthy food choices, and physical activities while building a community around food. Specific programs include: kid’s farmers market, food literacy in preschool, teen cooking, healthy school pantry, and Picnic in the Park program — a summer meal program offered in parks throughout the county

Seniors: providing a grocery bag of staples to low income seniors
Mobile farmer’s market and mobile food pantry

Backyard bounty – connecting local farmer’s and gardeners to food bank users, including offering the opportunity for users to participate in harvesting

Key community partners contributing to make these programs work include: supermarkets like Whole Foods, individuals living with food insecurity, churches, community centres, the housing authority, parks and recreation department, and the community at large.

http://www.foodbanksbc.org/
http://www.foodbanksbc.org/documents/FeedtheFuture-APresentationofOurMissiontoTransformtheHealthofSantaBarbaraCounty_000.ppt
Addressing Food Insecurity – Canada’s Policy Environment

Unlike the United States, Canada does not have a coordinated government response or food strategy to address the problem of food insecurity (PROOF); however, there is indication of movement towards a national strategy. In 2009, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada released Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada). Recently, the Conference Board of Canada released “Canada’s Food Strategy” (Bloom), which outlined a number of strategies and recommendations for a national food strategy according to five elements:

- Industry prosperity
- Healthy food
- Food safety
- Household food security
- Environmental sustainability

PROOF is an international, interdisciplinary team of researchers committed to reducing household food insecurity. PROOF that has received funding from the Government of Canada’s health research investment agency, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), to conduct research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity. The five year grant was awarded in 2011. PROOF projects include: the cost of food insecurity, current policies and food insecurity, material conditions necessary for household food security, modeling the impact of interventions on household food insecurity and understanding how food insecurity is framed as a policy issue.

Given the link between poverty and food insecurity, poverty policy is an important component of a food security strategy. Longer term solutions that address income levels and/or rising costs of
essentials like food, shelter (including heat and energy), transportation, health care and clothing respond to many of the risk factors associated with food insecurity. Ontario’s Poverty Reduction Strategy sets a policy framework that aims to reduce the number of children living with low income. Even the current, minimal policy interventions of the Poverty Reduction Strategy have had an impact in reducing the levels of child poverty in Ontario. The National Child Benefit and Ontario Child Benefit, the Working Income Tax Benefit and progressive tax redistribution policies are income related policy measures that aim to increase the disposable income of low-income households.

Measuring Food Security

Over the last 20 years, a great deal of research has been conducted to determine ways to measure food security and insecurity. Efforts to measure experiences have focused on direct measures of household food security by collecting information about experiences directly from individuals about their personal food habits, as well as those of other members of their household. Since 2004, the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) has included a Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM). This module was adapted from the food security measurement method developed in the United States which has been used to monitor household food security in the U.S. annually since 1995. The HFSSM focuses on self-reports of uncertain, insufficient or inadequate food access, availability and utilization due to limited financial resources, and the compromised eating patterns and food consumption that may result. The HFSSM contains 18 questions about the food security situation in the household over the previous 12 months. Each question specifies a lack of money or the ability to afford food as the reason for the condition or behaviour. The questions range in severity from worrying about running out of food, to children not eating for a whole day. Ten of the 18 questions are specific to the experiences of adults in the household or the household in general (Adult Scale), while eight are specific to the experiences of children under the age of 18 years in the household (Child Scale). See the questions below.

### Adult Scale
- You and other household members worried food would run out before you got money to buy more
- Food you and other household members bought didn't last and there wasn't any money to get more
- You and other household members couldn't afford to eat balanced meals
- You or other adults in your household ever cut size of meals or skipped meals
- You or other adults in your household ever cut size of meals or skipped meals in 3 or more months
- You (personally) ever ate less than you felt you should
- You (personally) were ever hungry but did not eat
- You (personally) lost weight
Based on the responses to the questions, Health Canada uses three categories to describe the food security situation experienced by households:

- **Food secure:** None, or one, indication of difficulty with income-related food access
- **Moderately food insecure:** Indication of compromise in quality and/or quantity of food consumed
- **Severely food insecure:** Indication of reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns (Health Canada)

For 2011/2012, key findings about the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) Health Region include:

- 6.9% of households were experiencing food insecurity, with 4.0% experiencing moderate food insecurity and 2.9% experiencing severe food insecurity
- Rates of household food insecurity (both moderate and severe) have remained similar in Middlesex-London region from 2007/2008 through to 2011/2012
- These rates are similar to those for the province of Ontario and Canada overall
• The largest reported increase in household food insecurity rates were for persons age 20 to 34 years in the MLHU Region, between 2007 and 2012
• Food insecurity rates were higher for females than males for the MLHU region (Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 105-0547)

Current and Emerging Practices

Historically, communities responded to the local hunger problem by feeding the hungry with soup kitchens, meal programs and food banks. Traditionally, these have been “mercy” programs, providing “needy” people with food that had been donated or purchased. They rely on volunteers – volunteers run close to 40 percent of food banks in Canada (Food Banks Canada).

The first food bank in Canada opened in 1981 in Edmonton, Alberta. While food banks were intended to be a temporary measure, today, there are more than 800 food banks and 3,000 food programs in Canada (Food Banks Canada). Food banks are recognizing the need to change – the food available does not usually meet the requirements of a nutritious diet and they do not contribute to longer term solutions to food insecurity (Howard and Edge).

Food banks are repurposing – evolving from organizations that were “food banks first” to multi-faceted organizations that seek to engage food bank users and the broader community in ensuring food security. They offer/provide a range of programs, taking a more comprehensive approach to food insecurity. The CEO of Santa Barbara’s food bank envisions the transformation of food banks being in the hunger business to food banks being in the health business; employing an empowerment model that adopts a “get involved” mindset rather than “get in line” (Talkin).

While food banks of the past may have focused on acquiring as much emergency food as possible, with limited consideration or capacity for nutrition and health, the food banks of today are incorporating considerations of food quality, nutrition and variety, skill-building and community development.

At the front-line of responding to food insecurity, emerging models respond to the three dimensions of food security – availability, affordability and capacity. Retail focused initiatives,
good food boxes, coupon clipping, voucher programs and community gardens are examples of local actions that focus on increasing the availability of affordable and nutritious food. Community kitchens, community gardens, and nutrition education target food literacy or capacity.

What Works

But do community development and skill building activities such as those listed above reduce food insecurity? Do voucher programs and retail initiatives work? What is needed in order for an initiative to be successful? Research in this area is still in the early stages.

According to PROOF, community development activities such as community kitchens and gardens are not effective at reducing food insecurity at the household or individual level (PROOF) (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk). Preliminary research on a Food Families initiative in London found that couponing did increase families buying power (London’s Child and Youth Network). American research on food vouchers, consistent with local research on Harvest Bucks suggests that produce vouchers that can be redeemed at local markets do benefit users and vendors, particularly if coupled with cooking tips and recipe ideas (London Child and Youth Network).

An evaluation of an initiative to increase the availability of fruit and vegetables in corner stores in food desert areas found that providing samples, recipe tips and cooking instructions were important components to encourage people to purchase healthy food (Centre for Human Nutrition, Bloomberg School of Public Health. UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention). This finding is consistent with other work that has found that simply making healthy food available healthy food in food desert areas is not enough to increase people’s purchase and use of healthy food (Sadler, Gilliland and Arku).

A process evaluation of community food action initiatives in British Columbia (van der Woerd and Mactier) provides some useful findings. The food action initiatives aimed to: increase awareness of food insecurity, increase access to local healthy food, increase food knowledge and skills, increase community capacity to address local food security, and increase the development and use of policy that supports community food security:

- At the end of the first two years of the project, awareness of food insecurity had increased as a result of the engagement of partners, participants, and volunteers. Clear and consistent communication strategies are needed to support awareness raising activities.

- The evaluators found it challenging to assess whether or not access to local healthy food increased, particularly among the low income population as a result of initiatives such as cooking clubs, community kitchens and community gardens. Research conducted in
Toronto, Ontario found that community gardens, community kitchens and children’s food programs intended to alleviate the problem were not effective due to low participation rates (Kirkpatrick and Tarasuk).

It is clear that there is more work to be done with regards to evaluating the effectiveness of food programs. There is no “one size fits all” response to community food security. Knowing local circumstances and being clear about program purpose and goal are key to an effective program (Provincial Health Services Authority and ActNowBC). When developing an initiative, activity or program:

- Perform an environmental scan to assess how the activity integrates into the community
- Map community assets
- Develop a logic model
- Establish common indicators and collect baseline data
- Have an evaluation plan


The Local Role

Food Policy Councils

Food Policy Councils are also developing across Canada to support and integrate an increasing number of community food initiatives and encourage the development of policy that supports a food system that is both just and sustainable (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy). One of the primary tools Food Councils utilize to coordinate their work is a Food Charter – a document that highlights a community’s vision for a healthy and sustainable food system (see section below). Communities in Canada that have a Food Policy Council include: Vancouver, Kamloops, Quesnel, North Thompson Valley, South Okanagan, Kaslo, Shushwap, Calgary, Edmonton, Grand Prairie, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Waterloo Region, Rainy River Valley, Sudbury, Guelph-Wellington, Halton, Haliburton Highlands, Thunder Bay, and Windsor-Essex County.
Food Charters

Food charters are emerging as a starting point for many communities seeking to strengthen their local food system (Jaquith). Food charters articulate a particular community's values regarding food security and set the stage for collaborative community responses. For food charters to realize their potential as an influencer in the local food system, continued efforts in community mobilization are needed; resource investment is needed to develop and implement strategic plans in order to achieve measurable impacts (Metzger and Aurini).

Many Canadian communities have developed There are many other examples of food charters, including: Durham Region, Guelph Wellington, Halton, Hamilton, Kawartha Lakes, Vancouver, Victoria, Prince Albert, Kingston Frontenac and Lennox & Addington, Simcoe, Sudbury, Toronto and Waterloo are among some of the Canadian municipalities with food charters. Guelph Wellington has a toolkit to help eaters, growers, businesses, policy makers and community food projects take action to make Guelph-Wellington a vibrant, sustainable food secure community.

Asset Mapping

Community Asset Mapping is another important starting point for communities. Community asset mapping as it relates to food security includes mapping and creating an inventory of local resources including food sources, meal programs, food and food pantries. Some examples of this include:

- Hamilton Public Health Services and North Hamilton Community Health Centre produce a Food Access Guide for the City of Hamilton on an annual basis. This PDF document is intended for use by health and social service providers to refer clients to free or low-cost food or meals (http://www.hamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7F312728-445C-44E0-AA97-2C4DABD8A82D/0/FoodAccessGuide.pdf)

- Ripe Near Me is a grassroots, web based directory connecting food growers to buyers. Growers can post their produce and location and buyers can search for locally grown food. The website includes identification of locations where free produce is available on publicly grown land. Listings are user-generated (http://www.ripenear.me)

Featured Model: London’s Food Charter

London’s Food Charter (London’s Child and Youth Network) emerged from the community’s shared priorities of eliminating poverty and increasing healthy eating.

This Charter establishes a vision of London as a food secure community where there is:

- A just and sustainable food system that contributes to the economic, ecological, and social well-being of our city and region which balances local production and fair international agricultural trade;
- Sufficient personal income and resources to ensure safe, nutritious foods in adequate amounts for everyone every day;
- Ready access to quality grocery stores, farmers’ markets and other food sources which provide safe, nutritious and culturally-appropriate foods;
- Opportunity for residents to become food literate; and,
- Opportunity for residents to grow and sell food within the City.
London has a number of resources including:

- Help Yourself Through Hard Times, a directory of social and health services including meal programs and food banks ([http://info.london.on.ca/](http://info.london.on.ca/))


- Middlesex London Get Fresh Eat Local: ([www.eatlocalondon.com](http://www.eatlocalondon.com))

An important step in asset mapping is assessing various programs for how they stack up against alignment with the factors of a food secure community (see graph for more details) (Ledgely).

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Examples of Local Responses to Food Insecurity

This document focuses on local efforts to respond to food insecurity with some examples of government funded and administered programs. Some of the responses are grassroots, others emerge from community development initiatives and others reflect the evolution of charity-based programs like food banks. For the purposes of this document, programs have been categorized, but many programs are on one of a suite of programs. Increasingly, local responses are multi-faceted.
Common responses include food banks which are evolving to be more than front-line organizations that collect and distribute food to individuals, community-based charitable programs like meal and snack programs, and community development initiatives like collective kitchens, food literacy, and community gardens. Additionally, food co-ops, low cost grocery stores, mobile markets and food hubs aim to make food more affordable.

The intent of this document is to provide our local community with some examples of initiatives and programs that may be tried here and to provide links to tools and resources that support the successful implementation of sustainable responses.

The examples provided focus on community level responses to food insecurity, organized as follows:

- Community Food Centres
- School, mMeal and vVoucher Programs
- Food bBanks as Food hHubs
- Community Kitchens and Gardens
- Good fFood Boxes
- Retail
- Advocacy and Community Research

**Community Food Centres**

A Community Food Centre is a space where people come together to grow, cook, share, and advocate for good food. They centres are a place where people access healthy food, learn and have opportunity to learn skills and develop behaviours that will help them have healthier diets. The notion of a community food centre is based on the perception that food security is broader than hunger, touching on social issues and related policies in the areas of poverty, health, social cohesion, and the food economy. It exists to innovate grass-roots-level programs that are based on the view of food having social, cultural and material significance (Scharf, Levkoe and Saul).

The Community Food Centre model was developed at The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto. The Stop started as a food bank over 30 years ago. Over the years, it incorporated political and social initiatives when the organization saw that simply handing out food did little to help people move out of poverty or become engaged in their community. In 2009, in response to growing interest, The Stop’s program director co-wrote a Metcalf Solutions paper called *In Every Community a Place for Food* that lay outlined the rationale for and intricacies of the model, and proposed a way to bring that model to other communities. At the end of Community Food Centres Canada’s (CFCC) pilot phase in 2012, there were three operational community food centres, all located in Ontario and featured in this Guide with another four
underway. CFCC has a goal of developing five to nine new CFCs between 2014 and 2017.

CFCC measures impact in five key areas: reducing hunger and increasing access to healthy food; improving health; building social capital; increasing civic engagement; and strengthening the local food economy. They use a cost-benefit analysis when developing programs and have developed program logic models for existing programs. Evaluation objectives are:

1. To identify and capture appropriate indicators to measure short, medium and long-term impacts across all CFCs.
2. To introduce practical and easy-to-use tools that make evaluation easier.
3. To develop evaluation activities that are respectful of program participants.
4. To ensure that information collected is used to make changes at both the program and agency levels.
Featured Program: The Table Community Food Centre in Perth, Ontario.

The Table is a community built around food. The Good Food Bank provides fresh, whole healthy food options in a warm and friendly environment. Because The Table doesn’t believe just any food is good enough, they have started a Core Food Initiative to make sure that healthy, nutrient rich foods are always available in the food bank, and to encourage people to select healthy foods by offering incentives for selecting core foods and offering samples.

The Core Food List:

- Perishables: Milk, fresh local eggs, lean meat, bread - whole grain/whole wheat, when possible
- Canned goods: Whole, diced or crushed tomatoes, vegetables, tomato paste and sauce, pasta sauces, seafood, beans and dried beans, baked beans
- Grains: Dried pasta, rice, oats, grains and seeds, low sugar breakfast cereals, flour: Peanut butter, sugar (brown and white)

The Good Food Bank looks like and functions as a grocery store. People visiting the Good Food Bank are provided with food points that they can spend: 70% of food points are to be spent on core foods. Core foods are found on the core food shelves. The cost of core foods is less than the cost of non-core foods. Free samples of simple, healthy meals are offered.

The Table’s Community Kitchen offers community meals, runs a fitness and nutrition program, and cooking and food literacy programs, including a test kitchen program. There are special programs for dads, children, pregnant moms and their partners, and seniors.

The Table re-connects people with the joy of growing food. The Table has two community gardens, offers growing workshops, and is planting a food forest. The food forest will provide a source of local fruits, nuts, and herbs as well as acting as a demonstration site for ecological gardening and a place where people can learn about growing and harvesting edible perennials.

Community Action Training brings together community members to take action on issues of poverty and other social, political, environmental and economic injustices. It builds the capacity of community members to become effective change-makers through individual coaching and group workshops.

www.thetablecfc.org
Examples of Local Community Food Centres

The Local Community Food Centre in Stratford provides community meals, a number of different food skills programs, and a food distribution warehouse. The Storehouse is The Local’s on-site warehouse that takes-in, stores and redistributes large-scale donations and strategic wholesale purchases of healthy food with a focus on fresh, local and sustainably produced food. Food is distributed to local food banks, community meal providers, student nutrition programs, and not-for-profits such as shelters and group homes. http://thelocalcfc.org/

The Stop is the model on which Community Food Centres Canada is built. It strives to meet the most basic food needs of low-income Torontonians while combating diet-related illness, reducing social isolation, and supporting local agriculture. The Stop’s programs include community kitchens and gardens, cooking classes, healthy drop-in meals, peri-natal support, a food bank, outdoor bake ovens, food markets, and community action programs. http://www.thestop.org/

The NorWest Co-op CFC became Operational in 2014 in Manitoba, the and is one wing of the NorWest Co-op Community Health Centre. While NorWest already offered some food-related programming, the organization identified food access as a key challenge for area residents. Programming will includes a lunch program, community kitchens and gardens, a low-cost market, and civic engagement. http://www.norwestcoop.ca/community-food-centre/

School, Meal and Voucher Programs

In addition to food banks, school programs, meal programs, and voucher systems provide free access programs to targeted populations. U.S. interventions of particular interest to PROOF include the U.S. National School Lunch Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as there is some evidence that school lunch programs help students’ educational performance and outcomes (Roustit, Hamelin and Grillo) as well as health outcomes (Gundersen, Kreider and Pepper). Ontario’s School Nutrition Program (http://www.osnp.ca/program-guidelines) provides Provincial funding to local programs for purchasing nutritious food for children and youth. In order to receive the funding, local programs must raise 85 percent of the program cost.

In 2012/2013, 72 schools in London participated in the Student Nutrition Program. A total of 9,216 students were served over 1.5 million meals
**Featured Program: United States National School Lunch Program**

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted program established under the National School Lunch Act in 1946. The School Lunch Program is usually administered by State education agencies which operate the program through agreements with school food authorities.

Public or nonprofit private schools of high school grade or under and public or nonprofit private residential child care institutions may participate in this program. Participating schools get cash subsidies and food from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements, and they must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children. School food authorities can also be reimbursed for snacks served to children through age 18 in after school educational or enrichment programs.

Any child at participating schools may purchase a lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Local school authorities set their own prices, but are required to operate their meal services as nonprofit programs. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents.

Students and families must apply through the school for reduced-price meals. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program)

**Examples of school programs, voucher programs and community meals.**

**FoodShare School Programs**

FoodShare takes responsibility for the Community Development Team of Toronto Partners for School Nutrition, which is based at FoodShare and provides intensive on-site support for 682 programs, in 463 schools across the City of Toronto. Their Field to Table Schools Program provides food education in schools. The Good Food Café models a universal and healthy school cafeteria in two high schools and one elementary school. The Bulk Produce Program for Schools and Community Groups makes fresh vegetables and fruit available at an affordable price to school programs. [http://www.foodshare.net/schools](http://www.foodshare.net/schools)

**Harvest Bucks Program London**

Harvest Bucks are vouchers used to buy fresh vegetables and fruit at participating farmers’ markets in London, Ontario. Bucks expire at the end of each calendar year (e.g., December 31, 2014). Harvest Bucks are intended to be distributed as part of a community program that includes food skills opportunities and promotion of healthy eating. [https://www.healthunit.com/harvest-bucks](https://www.healthunit.com/harvest-bucks)
**Featured Program: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly referred to as Food Stamps)**

SNAP is a Federal initiative providing nutrition support to low income households. The initiative is administered at the State level. All welfare recipients and low income individuals and households with both net income that is at or below the poverty line and gross income that is 30% below the poverty line are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. In this case, net income is calculated to be the household’s income after allowable program deductions have been made such as 20% of employment income is exempt as income, a standard deduction based on household size, and excessive shelter costs. Gross income is the amount of income before these program deductions.

The maximum amount of SNAP benefits that can be received, the SNAP allotment, is based on the cost of a market basket, adjusted annually. Family size and income determine the amount of the benefit for each household. SNAP households are expected to pay about 30% of their resources on food. A household’s allotment is adjusted annually. Periodic reporting is required. SNAP benefits can be used to buy to buy foods for the household to eat, such as breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, dairy products and can be used to buy seeds and plants which produce food for the household.

Adults without disabilities between the ages of 16 and 60 are required to register for work, participate in workfare and/or employment training. Individuals between 18 and 50 who do not are only eligible to receive benefits one 3 month period within 36 months.

In most States, people can apply online to determine potential eligibility. They must then complete the application in person. Many States issue benefits through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) debit cards that can be used at authorized food stores and Farmer’s Markets. Benefits are automatically loaded onto the card each month.

To receive authorization, retailers and Farmer’s Market vendors apply online. To be authorized, stores must meet certain criteria including selling food from at least 3 of 4 basic food groups on a continuous basis. Training materials are offered to vendors who are eligible to accept SNAP.

http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap

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**Aim for 8 Fruit and Vegetable Voucher Program**

Aim for 8 is into its sixth year of operation. Chatham Kent Public Health Unit has partnered with various farmers’ markets and local vendors to offer a Fruit and Vegetable Voucher Program since 2008. This program provides residents with $10 vouchers that can be used to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers. The majority of vouchers are distributed through community partners, including Ontario Works. There are no eligibility requirements and households do not need to submit an application. The general public is able to pick up a voucher at participating grocery stores and farmers’ markets on specific dates. Information about the locations and times are posted on the website as well as disseminated via a media release.

http://ckphu.com/category/healthy-living/?s=aim+for+8
**CalFresh California**
Formerly known as California’s Food Stamp Program, CalFresh is California’s SNAP program, described in the Featured Program box. myfoodstamps.org is the website that was built with the goal of increasing participation in the food stamps program by providing resources and functioning as a program information portal.

**Picnic in the Park**
The Santa Barbara Food Bank provides free nutritious meals to children in the county during the summer as part of the USDA Summer Food Service Program. Healthy summer meals are served at various locations countywide, Monday through Friday, for ten weeks. There are no income requirements, and any child under the age of 18 is welcome to come and receive a free, delicious lunch every weekday during the summer. Activities, games, and enrichment lessons are also offered.

**Quebec’s OLO Program (Nutritional Aid for Pregnant Women)**
This program provides low income pregnant women with essential foods (an egg, a litre of milk and a serving of orange juice every day) as well as vitamin and mineral supplements during the final 20 weeks of pregnancy.
The OLO program is available through local health and social service centres. Pregnant women must go to their local centre to apply for the aid which is distributed in the form of coupons.

**Food Banks as Food Hubs**
Formally defined, a food hub is an “organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.” Less formally, it can mean a warehouse where local farmers store and sell their produce or it can be a virtual local food networking site that connects producers, buyers and consumers (The Popularity and Potential of Regional Food Hubs).

In 2011, the Ontario Liberal government announced the creation of a Local Food Act meant to support and promote food grown in Ontario and allow schools and hospitals to buy more local food. Regional food hubs are one way to give shape to this Act.
In the context of hunger, food banks as food hubs adopt the lens of hunger as a distribution issue rather than a scarcity issue. Food hubs allow “food banks and other providers to look more deeply at the issue [of hunger] and work to resolve nutritional problems directly linked to poverty. So, instead of a scarcity mentality, it provides a new viewing lens to say well we’ve got the food, we just have to get it to where it’s needed (Hunger Distribution Problem. How Calgary Food Bank is Changing Food Logistics)

**Food Banks**
- Charity model
- Passive – donations sought and redistributed
- Charity
- Respond to symptoms not causes

**Food Hubs**
- Social enterprise model
- Proactive – purchasing, growing, processing
- Innovative programming can address root causes
Featured Program: FoodShare Toronto

FoodShare Toronto is a nonprofit community organization whose vision is Good Healthy Food for All. Founded in 1985 to address hunger in Toronto communities, FoodShare takes a unique, multifaceted and long-term approach to hunger and food issues. FoodShare runs hunger relief, fresh produce, cooking schools, and growing programs which reach over 159,000 children and adults per month in Toronto. These programs include Student Nutrition, Field to Table Schools, the Good Food Cafe, Focus on Food youth internships, the Good Food Box, Good Food Markets, Fresh Produce for Schools and Community Groups, Baby and Toddler Nutrition, Community Kitchens, Field to Table Catering, the FoodLink Hotline, Power Soups, Community Gardening, Composting, Beekeeping and Urban Agriculture.

Three of the programs are featured below:

• Field to Table Catering is a social enterprise that creates healthy, delicious, culturally diverse food for local community organizations. It is an integral part of FoodShare's training, employment and education focus. The catering coordinator is a graduate of the first Focus on Food training program. Successive groups of Focus on Food participants have learned about nutrition and gained cooking skills through working with Field to Table Catering.

• Partnering with Black Creek Community Farm – the Farm is an intergenerational place of learning and training where youth reconnect to the story of their food, a new generation of urban farmers is trained, and the community gathers to celebrate. The farm is supported by community residents who harvest the healthy fresh produce to feed the local community, York and Ryerson universities and the World Crops Project.

• The Good Food Box (GFB) is a nonprofit fresh fruit and vegetable distribution system created and operated by FoodShare. Individuals place orders for boxes with volunteer coordinators in their neighbourhood and receive a box of fresh produce, on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly cycle. There are four different boxes from which to choose, and two different sizes. A small box costs $13 and a large costs $18. Organic produce boxes cost $24 and $34 depending on size. http://www.foodshare.net
The following are examples of food hubs.

**Quest Food Exchange**
Quest Food Exchange has a mandate to offer marginalized individuals access to healthy, affordable food. This is a social enterprise model that has become a food distribution hub. Quest Food Exchange delivers the following programs:

- Not for profit, low cost grocery markets
- Bulk food orders for social service agency food programs
- Community training kitchen

[http://www.questoutreach.org/](http://www.questoutreach.org/)

**Food Bank for Westchester**
The Food Bank for Westchester is the core of the county’s emergency food distribution network. It solicits, acquires, warehouses and distributes food to over 265 front-line hunger-relief programs throughout the county, including food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and adult, child- care and treatment centres. The Food Bank collects, warehouses, and distributes food and grocery products donated by the food industry and the USDA and purchased by the Food Bank for Westchester in bulk quantities at the best prices.

[http://foodbankforwestchester.org/about_us/about_us.shtml](http://foodbankforwestchester.org/about_us/about_us.shtml)

**Second Harvest**
Second Harvest works with grocery retailers, food manufacturers, food distributors, the Ontario Food Terminal, St. Lawrence Market, event planners, hotels and restaurants to prevent good food from going to waste. Donated food, primarily perishable, is distributed to over 200 frontline social service agencies. In addition to food rescue and distribution, Second Harvest has an employment program called, Harvest Kitchens. This program trains adults and youth with barriers to employment in food preparation job skills training.

[http://secondharvest.ca/](http://secondharvest.ca/)

**Common Market Food Hub**
Common Market connects wholesale customers to farmers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware by marketing and distributing good food to schools, hospitals, grocers and workplaces. Common Market is a mission-driven enterprise, seeking to provide nutritious, affordable, locally grown food to all, including the most vulnerable communities.

**Kamloops Food Bank**

Kamloops Food Bank has a vision of a hunger free community with a mission of sharing food, feeding hope, and strengthening community. Programs include: general and specialty hamper programs, baby bank, community gardens, employment programs, and Food Share. Through Food Share, people are able to access produce, breads, dairy and baked goods twice a week. Major grocery stores, bakeries and other food outlets donate their close dated, perishable food to the Food Share seven days a week. The Food Bank, sorts, cleans and places this food in cold storage for distribution as soon as possible. 

http://kamloopsfoodbank.org/

**Vancouver Food Bank**

The Vancouver Food Bank was originally intended to provide temporary relief to the hunger crisis resulting from the economic recession. It now has a new vision: to provide accessible, healthy and sustainable food for all and a new mission: to empower people to nourish themselves by providing access to healthy food, education and training.

Programs provided include:
- Community Angels Food Runners, a food recovery program
- Community Kitchen Programs
- Providing food to food depots and agencies providing meal programs
- Kids’ Picks which provides preschoolers aged 18 months to 6 years with a supplemental bag of healthy, ready-to-eat snacks and information for parents on childhood nutrition and good eating habits.
- Basics for Babies food bags

https://www.foodbank.bc.ca/

**York Region Food Network**

York Region Food Network (YRFN) was initially established in 1986 as a multi-agency initiative organized to coordinate food drives and act as a liaison between food banks and agencies in York Region with food access programs. Today, the YRFN programs include community gardens and kitchens, a gleaning program, good food box, community support, and an aquaponics program. http://yrfn.ca/programs/

upStream is a social enterprise, commercial aquaponics facility created by a partnership between the York Region Food Network and a local social entrepreneur. The aquaponics program educates all residents on the local food system and provides avenues for all residents to have opportunities to access fresh, locally grown, organic food. In the 1,000 foot workshop, this project engages youth in the community to cultivate 800 heads of lettuce each month, and raise 150 tilapia each year. The food produced will be distributed via YRFN’s Good Food Box program, and sold to the Newmarket Farmers’ Market, and contracts with independent restaurants and cafes in Newmarket’s downtown core. http://www.upstreamaquaponics.com/
Community Kitchens and Gardens

Community kitchens and gardens are two types of community-based food security programs that aim to increase access to nutritious and affordable food as well as increase the capacity of individuals to prepare healthy meals. Community kitchens appear to have social benefits, providing people with social interaction and enhanced coping skills, as well as helping to improve nutritional habits; however, they do little to resolve severe and chronic food insecurity (Provincial Health Services Authority and ActNowBC).

Evaluations of community garden initiatives suggest the following benefits: community organization is facilitated, community involvement and life satisfaction, and nutritious eating habits. However, the cost of setting up and maintaining a community garden is not
An Ottawa study found that it cost $3,000 to $5,000 to set up a community garden assuming land availability and volunteer labour. The return on this investment is not known at this time. A U.S. study estimated that a 10 foot by 20 foot garden would cost $200 per year and could yield $70 to $540 worth of vegetables per year. (Provincial Health Services Authority and ActNowBC). Research conducted by PROOF suggests that low participation rates by low income households limits the value of community gardens as an effective food security program (PROOF).

Food Families is an emergent model in which a group of neighbourhood families come together on a regular basis to form a network that supports, encourages and mentors one another using food as a focus. The goals of Food Families are to build skills that increase families’ buying power and to increase the sharing of practical and affordable ways to eat. Preliminary results of an evaluation of a Food Family program held in the Argyle neighborhood in London, Ontario from October 2013 to April 2014 which brought together a group of neighbourhood families on a regular basis found that:

- Families were able to buy more with the same amount of money as a result of learning new ways to save money on food
- Food literacy and confidence in kitchen skills were improved
- Feelings of community connection increased
- (London’s Child and Youth Network)

The following table includes more examples of community kitchens and gardens.

**Just Food**

Just Food was originally known as the Ottawa Food Security Council. It started in 1999 when community members concerned about food security met with staff from the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) regarding the role that local food alternatives such as community gardens and food-related community economic development initiatives can play in a greener more inclusive city. Today, Just Food is the hub for a range of food supply projects that include small area farming, community garden network, farm internship, community supported agriculture, food literacy, and links to community food resources.

[http://justfood.ca/](http://justfood.ca/)

**Calgary Health Region Collective Kitchen Program**

This program provides food insecure populations with opportunities for nutrition education and socialization. The Program provides:

- assistance with the initial set-up of new collective kitchens
- training for volunteer Kitchen Coordinator
- presentations to explain Collective Kitchens

Collective Kitchens are made up of small groups of people (usually 4 to 6 per group) who get together and cook for themselves and their families. The participants share their knowledge,
skills and energy to prepare lower cost, nutritious meals for themselves and their families.

Groups decide on which meals to make, and at the second meeting most prepare 3 to 5 main dishes to take home. Groups are assisted by a coordinator who is either a volunteer or a staff person from a sponsoring agency. Anyone interested and able to spend 8 hours per month can join the program at a minimal cost.

http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/?s=food%20insecurity&post_type=interventions&cat=0

**B.C. Food Skills for Families**

This program of the Canadian Diabetes Association aims to teach healthy eating, shopping and cooking skills for the purposes of building healthy families and healthy communities while serving those at risk for chronic disease. The program is a hands-on, 6 session, weekly cooking program taught by lay individuals from the community. These facilitators of the program received training through a Train the Trainer Mentorship Program that was developed by Master Trainers representing each health region in the province. A standardized, best practice curriculum was written to meet the unique needs of each of the target populations.

http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/resource/food-skills-families

**Food Not Lawns – London Chapter**

“Intentionally building community as a necessary step in ensuring local food security,” Food not Lawns is As collective of gardeners (anyone can join) who organize seed sharing and plant exchanging events. This group provides information and workshops on starting your own garden, seed starting, and garden design. Members share their own resources and expertise within their neighbourhoods/communities.

http://www.foodnotlawnslondoncanada.org/

**Growing Power, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Growing Power provides opportunities for individuals and communities to work together to promote food security and sustainable food production practices. Growing Power has projects that fall into three areas:

- growing – farming and farming demonstration
- educating – providing technical support for farming and gardening, youth programs, volunteer opportunities, and active involvement in food policy initiatives
- Food production and distribution – demonstration greenhouses, farmers’ co-operative, and farm-to-city market basket program

www.growingpower.org
Canal Gardens Community Greenhouse, Sault Ste. Marie
Canal Gardens Community Greenhouse is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of healthy communities through gardening, skills training, sustainable agriculture, and improved local food security. The Canal Gardens Community Greenhouse is a proposed project that is a partnership between Ontario Works, John Howard Society and Canal Gardens, aimed at providing Ontario Works participants with skills and training as well as providing opportunities for community connections. It includes community garden plots, a commercial greenhouse and header house and processing facility. The Greenhouse Project is intended to provide internship opportunities that will help people gain employment.

Good Food Boxes

Good Food Boxes provide community members with access to locally produced food on a regular basis at costs that are lower than grocery store costs. Good food box programs act like large buying clubs with centralized buying and coordination. They purchase food in large quantities from local farmers. Consumer costs are kept low as there is little overhead and volunteers often help administer the programs. While Good Food Boxes may meet the objective of delivering locally produced, nutritious food at a reduced cost, they may have little impact on eating habits (Provincial Health Services Authority and ActNowBC), particularly among low income households due to low participation rates (PROOF).

The following includes more examples of Good Food Box programs.

Hamilton Good Food Network
Hamilton’s Good Food Box program serves over 500 people, delivering fresh and local produce boxes to a variety of locations across Hamilton. The boxes cost $15, about $10 less than what it would cost to purchase the same food in a grocery store. The boxes are not customizable. The Good Food Box is a project of Environment Hamilton.
http://environmenthamilton.org/view/page/good_food_box
In 2012, the City of Hamilton Council passed a motion in support of a one year pilot project to distribute fresh fruit and vegetables to single Ontario Works (OW) clients, as single individuals receiving OW benefits continue to be the most at risk for insufficient access to healthy food. This project was a direct response by the municipality to the lack of adequate income among single OW clients to purchase healthy food.

The Food Box was approved as a one year pilot project, to provide fresh food to 500 single Ontario Works recipients. This is an interesting good food box program as the majority of programs are promoted to the general population, with just less than 40% being promoted specifically to individuals and families on lower incomes, and only two programs targeting strictly individuals and families living on low incomes.

Each month, participants are provided with 6 to 8 fresh produce items valued at $15 per box. The pilot was evaluated and the following are the key findings:

- 52.7% of participants reported changes as a result of receiving the box (eating more vegetables and fruit, not needing to buy or get food that is not affordable or not available at the food bank, eating or feeling better)
- 47.3% reported that if they did not get the food box they would have no other way to obtain vegetables and fruit

Ottawa Good Food Box
The Ottawa Good Food Box is a non-profit, community-based program. The Ottawa Good Food Box was developed in 1996 by a group of Community Developers and Community Nutritionists as a way of reaching out to those in the community who were not accessing adequate fresh fruits and vegetables. Customers may order different size boxes and may select an organic food box. Prices range from $5 for a fruit bag to $25 for a medium sized box (2 or 3 people) of organic food. A large box, enough for a family, costs $20.
http://www.ottawagoodfoodbox.ca/?page_id=14

The Good Food Box (Victoria)
The Good Food Box is a non-profit alternative distribution system for fresh produce. Produce is purchased in large quantities from local and regional farmers and/or local purveyors. Food prices are about half of prices in local grocery stores and chains. The packing, marketing, and distribution of the boxes are funded largely by volunteer labour and in-kind donations. The Good Food Box partners with churches and community agencies for order and pick-up. Online ordering is available.
http://thegoodfoodbox.ca/about/

Retail

Lack of transportation and living in a food desert area are risk factors for food insecurity. Food deserts are “disadvantaged areas of cities with relatively poor access to healthy and affordable food” (Larsen and Gilliland). People with low income are more likely than others to experience one or both of these barriers to accessing healthy food at affordable prices. Strategies to address these issues include social enterprise retail programs, food co-ops, engaging corner store owners, and mobile markets.

These strategies provide people living with low income the option of purchasing healthy food at affordable prices within their neighbourhood. The following table includes more examples of food security initiatives in the area of retail.
**Featured Program: Regina Food Bank Grocery Store, Regina**

The Regina Food Bank operates a small grocery store called the Village Market Grocery Store. Food for the store is purchased wholesale which allows this nonprofit agency to sell at cheaper prices. As a store, their goal is not to make a profit but to feed people and give them good food. Examples of prices compared to the average at other retail stores:

- 2L 2% milk is $2.55 compared to $3.43
- 1lb of ground beef is $3.25 compared to $4.59
- Sliced loaf of bread is $1.40 compared to $2.15
- 10lb bag of potatoes is $4.00 compared to $5.61
- 500g peanut butter is $3.00 compared to $4.76

As of April 2014, anyone from the general public can shop at the store.

https://www.facebook.com/reginafoodbank/page_map

**London Food Co-op**

The London Food Co-op aims to provide members with organic, natural, sustainably produced produce at fair prices. Customers of the store are also members. Membership fees include an annual fee of $40 up to a lifetime maximum of $400 plus weekly service fees of $4 to $8 depending on household type to cover operating costs. Weekly service fees may be offset/waived with a few hours of volunteer time in the store. Anecdotally, the costs of items available through the co-op are lower than the cost of comparable items available through a grocery store.

http://londonfoodcoop.org/

**Quest Food Exchange – Not For Profit Grocery Markets**

Quest operates four not-for-profit grocery markets where clients can shop by referral. (from whom?). These markets are not open to the public at large. The clients of partnering Social Service Agencies are able to have access to healthy food at an affordable price, and are empowered to make their own choices about...
what they purchase. Markets offer food as seen in most other retail stores: fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, bread, canned goods, desserts, meat, vitamins, and household items.

http://www.questoutreach.org/food-programs/low-cost-grocery-markets/

Baltimarket Healthy Stores

The Baltimore Healthy Stores initiative aims to improve the nutrition environment in communities with a high low income rate by:

• engaging with corner stores to increase the availability of healthier food options in stores, and providing guidance on how best to select healthy and affordable food options
• increasing awareness and skills of patrons to select and prepare healthier foods through point-of-purchase promotions

Baltimarket Healthy Stores is one of a suite of community-based programs that aim to improve the health and wellness of Baltimore City residents by using food access and food justice as strategies for community transformation.

http://www.baltimorehealth.org/
http://www.baltimorehealth.org/BCHD%20Childhood%20Obesity%20Healthy%20Stores%20Grant%20PRL%20FNL%20February%202014.pdf
http://www.centertrt.org/?p=intervention&id=1093
https://my.americorps.gov/mp/listing/viewListing.do?id=54264

Baltimarket: The Virtual Supermarket Project (VSP)

This is a Health Department program that uses an online grocery ordering/delivery system to bring food to neighborhoods with low-vehicle ownership and little access to healthy foods (commonly called food deserts). The VSP enables neighborhood residents to place grocery orders at their local library branch, school or senior/disabled housing site or from any internet enabled computer or device. Residents pick up their order weekly at their community site. The delivery cost is paid by the Health Department.

http://www.baltimarket.org/virtual-supermarket/

FoodShare Good Food Markets and Mobile Markets

FoodShare works in partnership with community organizations and neighbourhood leaders to run Good Food markets in neighbourhoods where healthy food might not be otherwise available. The markets sell top-quality fresh produce purchased from local farmers and the Ontario Food Terminal on market day. It is also a venue to share tools, training and ongoing support to community partners and residents who manage all operational aspects of the market. The Mobile Good Food Market is a truck that travels across Toronto selling affordable fresh food in neighbourhoods selected through consultation with local communities and analysis of access gaps.

http://www.foodshare.net/good-food-markets
http://www.foodshare.net/mobilegoodfoodmarket
Community Shop in Goldthorpe

The Community Shop helps ensure that cheap food reaches people who may need a helping hand to achieve financial independence. Persons living in a specific geographic area and in receipt of some form of government support are able to shop at this supermarket. The supermarket is stocked by redistributing surpluses that exist in the food supply chain. Prices for good food may be as much as 70% below normal retail prices. The Community Shop also provides an interactive programme of wider support available free of charge in the Community Hub from budgeting and debt advice to cookery classes.

http://community-shop.co.uk/

New Orleans Fresh Food Retail Initiative

The Fresh Food Retailer Initiative (FFRI) is an innovative new financing program created by the City of New Orleans to increase the number of supermarkets, grocery stores, and other fresh food markets in low-income, underserved communities across Orleans Parish. The intent of the program is to enable operators to open, renovate, or expand retail outlets that sell fresh fruits and vegetables. The program will provide direct financial assistance to retail businesses by awarding forgivable and/or low-interest loans to supermarkets, grocery stores, and other fresh food retailers.


Advocacy and Community Research

Many of the initiatives and programs listed in this guide are short or immediate term responses to food insecurity. Canadian research indicates that participation rates by food insecure households in community development programs like community kitchens, community gardens, farmers’ markets and good food boxes are low (PROOF). As well, the scale of the problem of food insecurity may be greater than the capacity of local initiatives.

Below are some examples of tools that are being used to help community members to identify local needs, create and implement action plans and identify areas for advocacyacy areas. These tools may help those concerned with food insecurity develop both immediate and longer term responses to food insecurity in the community.
Neighbourhood Food Advocates (NFA) Initiative: A Baltimarket Program

This program aims to engage and organize residents in food desert communities to develop plans of addressing food inequity. NFAs are residents in Virtual Supermarket Program (VSP) neighborhoods who work together with the VSP community organizer to create community-driven approaches to increasing food access, which includes community meetings that consist of setting priorities for neighborhood food security efforts and planning for projects to meet the goals of their top priorities. The VSP community organizer works with NFAs by connecting them to trainings to increase knowledge and skills; continuing the implementation efforts to increase healthy foods, recruiting other residents, and secure other sources of funding for projects.

https://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Planning/BaltimoreFoodPolicyInitiative/VirtualSupermarket.aspx

Thought About Food?
A Workbook on Food Security &nd Influencing Policy. This workbook is intended to provide tools and information to inspire communities to come together and act to make food security a reality for everyone. Developed by Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University, June 2005.
http://foodthoughtful.ca/

The Table Community Food Centre Community Action Training
Community Action Training is a 12 week course that explores the root causes of poverty and inequality while building skill sets in effective communication, conflict resolution, goal setting, storytelling, boundaries and self-care. Graduates of the program are eligible to apply to become Peer Advocates in the Community Advocacy Office. Advocates offer resources, referrals, and support on a wide array of issues from replacing lost identification, to helping fill out paperwork, to conducting a housing search.
http://www.thetablecfc.org/community-action-training

Just Food Community Assessment Toolkit
The Where’s the Food toolkit guides a group of community members through conducting research about food issues in their neighbourhood or community. The Where’s the Food toolkit was developed specifically for Ottawa neighbourhoods to understand the food issues in their community. Volunteers work together to gather information about the food services, programs, and issues that are important in the community, and use this research to plan for action.
http://justfood.ca/community-food-assessment-toolkit/
Tasmanian Food Access Research Coalition
The project has developed a number of Tasmania specific tools for measuring food security including:
• Food outlet audit tool which identifies categories of the various food outlets
• A Market basket survey (healthy food basket) – a list of 44 nutritious food items representing what a typical household would eat over a 2 week period.
• Community focus group questions
• Household Food Security Survey
Local communities determined the model used to collect data – some used expert consultants, others used community food researchers.
Tasmanian_Food_Access_Research_Coalition_factsheet_-_FINAL.pdf

Brighton Food Security Project
This project aimed to increase collaboration and referral pathways between local service providers; run food programs which teach nutrition, food budgeting and healthy cooking skills; and work with the community to identify local initiatives that meet the needs of the Brighton Local Government Area (LGA). The pilot highlights the importance of community consultation to identify the barriers in a particular community. In the Brighton LGA, the major barrier was lack of public transport, so the trial of the doorstopper bus reduced the barriers to healthy eating in the community. The project found that responses to food insecurity will be different in each community and must be tailored to local needs.
Brighton_Food_Security_Project_Factsheet_FINAL.pdf

Vibrant Communities Canada – Food Security
Vibrant Communities Canada is a pan Canadian collaborative of cities and provinces working to reduce poverty. This collaboration rests on five core principles: poverty reduction over poverty alleviation; work comprehensively to address root causes of poverty; build on the existing assets in a community; bring people together from all sectors; and learn together to scale up change. Vibrant Communities Canada's link to resources related to food and agriculture
http://vibrantcanada.ca/resource-library/food-security
Appendix: List of Food Security Definitions

Individual and Household Food Security Definitions

- “The concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences (World Health Organization).”.

- “When all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Committee on World Food Security). More plainly put: “People are food secure if they can produce or buy the food they need and always have enough food for a healthy balanced diet” (Committee on World Food Security).

- Food secure households have access, at all times throughout the year, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. (Health Canada).

- Household Food Security exists when everyone has access to safe, nutritious food of the variety and amount that they need and want, in a way that maintains their dignity.

- Food Insecurity means members of a household have difficulty accessing, or worry about not having enough food for an active, healthy life.

- Food security also exists when people are able to earn a living wage by growing, producing, processing, handling, selling, and serving food, as well as when our planet is protected for future generations.

- Community Food Security exists when all community residents have access to enough healthy, safe food through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance, and social justice (Food Action Research Centre).

- More than being able to afford your next meal: Food that is: Affordable, Accessible, Nutritious/sSafe, Sustainable, Diverse. It is when people have: Knowledge – where, what, how, Resources – financial, tools
(basic supplies to prepare food), Dignity – choice, culturally appropriate (Ledgely).

- Food security is a goal. It is concerned with the protection and distribution of existing food systems. Food sovereignty describes how to get there. *Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.* Three goals: zero hunger, sustainable food system, healthy and safe food (Food Secure Canada).

- (Household) Inadequate or insecure access to adequate food due to financial constraints. Three categories: Marginal – one food insecure condition; Moderate – compromise quantity and/or quality of food consumed by adults and/or children in household; and Severe - reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns among adults and/or children. (PROOF) (Health Canada).

- Food insecurity refers to the experience of not having enough food or access to enough healthy food. It can also be applied to regular reliance on emergency food relief (Tasmanian Food Security Council).

- Lacking assured access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life – household level (Wisconsin Food Security Project. Applied Population Lab, University of Wisconsin

- Household food insecurity means experiencing periods of difficulty in accessing safe and nutritious food each year. (Bloom).

- Food insecurity is a term used to define a state where nutritious food is unavailable or inaccessible or the supply is unstable. Food insecurity ranges from “the fear of not being able to provide or obtain food, to hunger due to food shortages.” (Howard and Edge).

**Community Food Security Definitions**

- Community Food Security is “A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice.” A secure food system is one that is accessible, nutritious, acceptable, and sustainable (FoodNet Ontario).

- Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their
dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Canada’s Action Plan).

- Community Food Security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally appropriate, nutritionally sound diet through an economically and environmentally sustainable food system that promotes community self-reliance and social justice (Community Food Security Coalition).

**Aspects of Food Security**

The four pillars of food security are availability, access, utilization, and stability. The nutritional dimension is integral to the concept of food security” (Committee on World Food Security).

The determinants of food security involve food access and supply. Access involves the resources and capacity to acquire and use food such as transport to shops, financial resources, access to social eating environments, knowledge and skills about nutrition, and food choices (Tasmanian Food Security Council).

Achieving food security requires that the aggregate availability of physical supplies of food is sufficient, that households have adequate access to those food supplies through their own production, through the market or through other sources, and that the utilization of those food supplies is appropriate to meet the specific dietary needs of individuals (Riley, Mock and Cogill).

**Food Security Foundations**

The Wisconsin Food Security Project (Wisconsin Food Security Project. Applied Population Lab, University of Wisconsin) identifies four foundations of food security:

1. Sufficient jobs at living wages, affordable housing and health care, adequate transportation options, and an adequate safety net
2. Having a range of affordable and accessible food outlets and healthy food choices, including options ranging from supermarkets to farmers markets to community gardens
3. Accessible federal/government nutrition programs like School Breakfast Program, Summer Food Program, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
4. Sufficient emergency resources with convenient times and locations, adequate supply and variety, and offered with dignity

Works Cited


—. Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Information Note. undated.


—. "Food Families Preliminary Results." grey literature. 2014.


The London Poverty Research Centre is a central repository of local data, information and research, and features a self-service database that will enable decision-makers, service providers and citizens to more deeply understand poverty in London.

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