

# HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

## THE ISSUES WE FACE

### FOOD INSECURITY

Rates of food insecurity across Canada are either rising or persisting. **More than 4 million Canadians struggle to afford enough to eat and 1 in 6 children in Canada are affected by food insecurity.**<sup>1</sup>

### LOW WAGES AND INADEQUATE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES

People are hungry because they are poor. This includes the working poor and people on social assistance. **62% of food insecure households are employed. 61% of households that rely on social assistance as their main source of income are food insecure.**<sup>2</sup>

### CHARITABLE SECTOR CAN'T KEEP UP

The charitable food sector works hard to pick up the slack, but many organizations are under-resourced and can't meet the demand for their services. **38% of food banks have had to cut back on the amount of food they provide because of insufficient resources.**<sup>3</sup> And many food insecure households don't use food banks because of the stigma associated with them.<sup>4</sup>

## OUR RECIPE FOR CHANGE

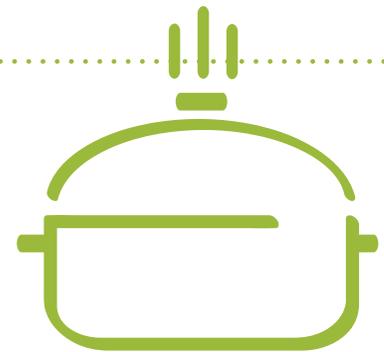
- 1. Offer dignified food access programs**, operate them to the highest standards of health and quality, and use the most accountable, transparent policies possible.
- 2. Meet immediate needs and provide the opportunity for social connection** and links to other Community Food Centre programs and community resources.
- 3. Involve those affected by food insecurity** to volunteer in programs and play leadership roles. Create ways for those affected by food insecurity to push for policy responses that address the issue at the scale of the problem.

### KEY INGREDIENTS

- Warm, welcoming, and non-judgemental staff and volunteers
- Bright, beautiful spaces
- No intrusive questions, line-ups, or means testing
- Fair and consistent food distribution
- Healthy, delicious, and high-quality food (focus on local and sustainable sources)
- Connections to other supports, programs, and services

## PROGRAMS ON THE MENU

- + Community meals
- + Affordable produce markets
- + Healthy food distribution
- + Healthy snack programs for kids



## THE CHANGE WE'RE COOKING UP



## THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

**“I got more vegetables in today’s lunch than I can afford to buy in a month.”**

-Community member at Dartmouth North Community Food Centre (Dartmouth, NS)

**88%**

of people surveyed say their Community Food Centre is an important source of healthy food.<sup>5</sup>

**“It helps me with food. I would have a much more difficult time making ends meet without it.”**

-Community member at The Local Community Food Centre (Stratford, ON)

<sup>1,2</sup> PROOF (2014). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Food Banks Canada (2013). HungerCount 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Conference Board of Canada (2010).

<sup>5</sup> CFCC (2018). 2017 annual report.

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

Charitable # 83391 4484 RR0001

@aplaceforfood  
Community Food Centres Canada



**community food centres**  
CANADA good food is just the beginning



# SPOTLIGHT: HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS PROGRAMS

A snapshot of healthy food access programs offered by Community Food Centres across Canada. These programs aim to increase access to healthy foods, reduce social isolation, and strengthen community connections for people living on low incomes.

The programs listed below reflect the work happening at the following Community Food Centres (CFCs):  
The Alex CFC (Calgary, AB) - Dartmouth North CFC (Dartmouth, NS) - Hamilton CFC (Hamilton, ON)  
The Local CFC (Stratford, ON) - NorWest Co-op CFC (Winnipeg, MB) - Regent Park CFC (Toronto, ON)  
The Stop (Toronto, ON) - The Table CFC (Perth, ON)

## COMMUNITY MEALS

All are welcome to enjoy good food and conversation. Diners are served by friendly volunteers while seated around communal tables. Each CFC designs their meal programs to best fit the needs and preferences of their community. Meals are made with nutritious ingredients and with diverse palates and diets in mind.

### ABORIGINAL LUNCH

The Alex CFC partners with their local Aboriginal Friendship Centre to host a biweekly community lunch featuring traditional foods, singing, drumming, and smudging ceremonies.



## AFFORDABLE PRODUCE MARKET

A growing number of CFCs run weekly or biweekly markets, providing fresh fruit and vegetables and other nutritious foods at a very low cost year-round, increasing access to healthy food in a lively, social setting.

### GOOD FOOD MARKET & CAFÉ

Dartmouth North CFC pairs their affordable market with a Good Food Café so participants can grab a table and enjoy complimentary snacks and warm drinks while visiting the market. Similar market and café programs are run at The Alex CFC, Hamilton CFC, and The Local CFC.



## HEALTHY FOOD BANK

Healthy food bank programs help to address emergency food needs, offering a variety of fresh produce and pantry staples for individuals and families to choose from. These food banks make the experience of coming for assistance as dignified as possible, avoiding lineups and means-testing, and creating a warm and welcoming environment.

### HEALTHY FOOD POLICY

The Table CFC's food bank has a healthy food policy that identifies "core foods" like fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins. These items are prioritized and explicitly requested as donations.



## HEALTHY KIDS SNACK PROGRAMS

CFCs run creative snack programs that get kids excited about eating fresh fruits and veggies while powering up their growing bodies. These are run as stand-alone programs or as add-on activities at markets or community events.

### BIKE-POWERED BLENDING

At NorWest Co-op CFC, kids cheer each other on as they take turns blending up fruit and yogurt smoothies with a bike-powered blender. Kids are challenged to try new fruits to expand their palates.

