



FOOD
BANKS BC



Public Health
Association of BC

**Division of Community
Engagement and Food Systems**

Community Food Systems Development

Backgrounder



Overview

Food insecurity in BC is at an all time high and organizations providing hunger relief assistance are experiencing increasing demands in the communities they serve in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, a cost of living crisis, and the on-going climate emergency. *Food access organizations* refer to hunger relief operations/organizations such as non-profits, charity organizations, Indigenous organizations or Nations, and social enterprises providing food provisions through food hampers, good food boxes, meal programs, community kitchens, community gardens, community food hubs, or other programs designed to feed people. Achieving long-term community food security requires capacitating food access organizations to better meet immediate needs while serving as leverage points for regional food system transformation. A roadmap developed in collaboration with food access organizations and food system stakeholders is needed to identify a path forward.

In 2021, the [Public Health Association of BC \(PHABC\)](#) published the [Food Access Across BC Report](#) which investigated the state of food access organizations following the Covid 19 pandemic. Building off this work, a pilot project was carried out in collaboration with [Food Banks BC](#) and food access organizations in the Northern BC region. This project collected local context-specific strengths and challenges for food access and identified factors that contribute to food systems transformation. The project resulted in the forthcoming *Strengthening Food Systems and Dignified Food Access in Northern BC* Report.

Informed by these recent investigations and supported by the Government of BC and Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Food Banks BC and PHABC are now conducting a provincial-wide examination of local context-specific challenges and interventions for improving food access and identifying leverage points for food systems transformation in the remaining regions (i.e. communities served by Island Health, Interior Health, First Nations Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health Authorities).



Project Objectives

Community food security is the condition when “all community residents obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone” (Hamm and Bellows, 2003: 37). The Community Food Systems Development project aims to explore pathways for achieving greater community food security across BC through:

1. Developing a food access typology to capture the spectrum food access models/programming in BC.
2. Identifying the unique local context-specific challenges that food access organizations are experiencing.
3. Identifying place-based assets, opportunities, and leverage points for food system transformation.
4. Working with participants to identify and prioritize interventions that are appropriate for their local context.
5. Sharing these findings and collect additional insight from key stakeholders to formulate recommendations.

What we are asking from food access organizations in BC

Members of the PHABC team will be reaching out to managers, executive directors, and other leadership members of non-profits, charity organizations, Indigenous organizations or Nations, and social enterprises that run food access programs in British Columbia to participate in our Community Food Systems Development survey, interviews, and focus groups.

To determine eligibility and participate in the survey, please contact Julia Gellman, Manager of Community Food Development admin.cefs@phabc.org.



Estimated timeline for community engagement

- **Mar 2024:** Survey
- **Apr–Jun 2024:** Site visits and interviews
- **Jul–Aug 2024:** Focus groups and participatory analysis
- **Oct 2024:** Present findings and recommendations, and collect feedback from participants
- **Mar 2025:** Publish full report and other knowledge translation materials

About Food Banks BC (FBBC)

[Food Banks BC](#) is comprised of 107 hunger relief organizations throughout British Columbia and member of [Food Banks Canada](#). We support our members and other agencies through the provision of resources that assist their efforts to tackle hunger in communities they represent. Beyond our membership, we work with numerous agencies that specialize in providing food access support to equity-deserving groups, including racialized populations, refugees, Indigenous communities, seniors, and migrant workers. Food Banks BC is committed to supporting the need for urgent hunger relief services now, while taking the necessary actions to eliminate the need for these services altogether and working towards a hunger-free British Columbia.

About the Public Health Association of BC (PHABC)

The [Public Health Association of BC](#) is a registered charity organization (est. 1953) that promotes and protects public health by actively working to advance the development and implementation of healthy public policy, by encouraging and facilitating research that supports public health, and by cooperating regionally, nationally, and internationally with partner organizations. We fulfill our mission through advocacy, collaboration and engagement activities throughout the spectrum of public health practices and systems. Our vision is a fair and healthy British Columbia for all.



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