

NO MONEY, NO FOOD

Understand the real reasons why people are hungry



What is food security?

“Food security” is a broad definition, referring to when all people, at all times, can get enough food to be healthy and active. This includes being able to afford safe, healthy food in the community that meets not only their nutritional requirements but also their preferences and cultural requirements.

It can be divided into two smaller definitions:

1. Household food insecurity: not having enough safe, nutritious, and appropriate food because of lack of money.
2. Community food security: when everyone has access to safe, nutritious, and appropriate food through a sustainable and just food system. It is about the whole community, rather than just individuals.

Food insecurity in New Westminister and British Columbia by the numbers*

* New Westminister Food Security Action Plan and Sustainability Framework (2018)

- In 2013–2014, **10.2% of adults (18+)** experienced food insecurity in New Westminister. (This is higher than the Metro Vancouver average of 7.2%)



- In 2016, about **33,000 children and youth (0–17)** in British Columbia received food from a food bank.

- In 2017, an average week saw **429 people served by the Greater Vancouver Food Bank in New Westminister.** **3,432 pounds of food distributed per week.**



- In 2017, **50,183 meals** (breakfasts and lunches) were served by the **Union Gospel Mission in New Westminister.**



- Between 2008 and 2016 there was a **32.5% increase in food bank usage in British Columbia.**



Why does it matter?

Food security is essential to health and overall well-being of adults, children, and the whole of society.

Food insecurity is linked to:

- chronic health conditions including diabetes and high blood pressure (in adults)
- mental health conditions including anxiety and depression (in adults and children)
- mental health conditions such as hyperactivity and inattention (in children)
- increased costs to public healthcare

COVID-19 and Food Insecurity

In May 2020 almost 1 in 7 (14.6%) Canadians indicated that they lived in a household where there was food insecurity in the past 30 days (Stats Canada Survey).

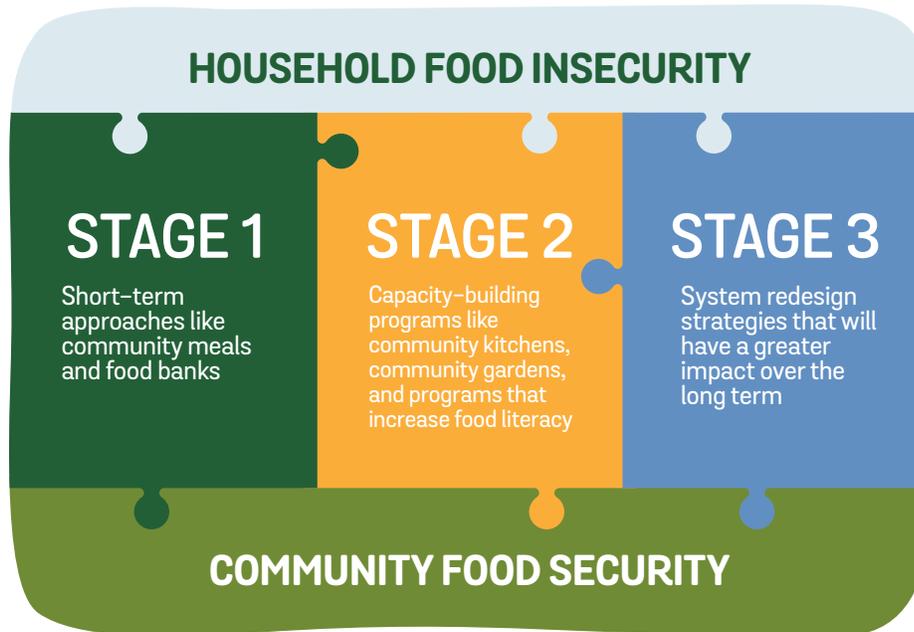
In New Westminister, new neighbourhood-based and city-wide food programs were added to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community, the working poor and those newly in need could access food. By August 2020, local hamper programs were supporting 1070 households weekly and meal programs were feeding 1318 individuals weekly (local data).

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The Food Security Continuum – THREE STAGES OF SUPPORT



COVID-19 and Basic Income

COVID-19 has created the possibility to have a different conversation about food insecurity; one that addresses income the real cause of food insecurity.

The need for a basic income is now being discussed at both the provincial and federal levels as a strategy to address the needs of Canadians and support the COVID-19 recovery plan.

Most approaches focus on Stage 1. These “food charity” supports are helpful for emergency measures, but don’t address the root cause of household food insecurity. To fix a problem, we need to tackle its underlying cause.

Basic income to fight food insecurity

The root cause of household food insecurity is poverty, not food prices. Poverty is when people don’t have the funds needed to support their basic needs, such as food and shelter. An income-based problem requires an income-based solution.

Basic income may sound expensive, but it is less costly than poverty.

Simply put, a basic income program would provide individuals with a minimum income, regardless of employment status. It’s different from social assistance because people often lose benefits if they work – they are “punished” for working to increase their income.

But why would we just “give people money”? Actually, we already do...for seniors! And we know that it improves household food insecurity: once low-income adults reach the age of 65 and become eligible for seniors’ pension programs (a form of guaranteed basic income), their risk of being food insecure drops by 50%.*

In comparison to welfare/social assistance, basic income:

- maintains an individual’s dignity
- is empowering, allowing households to choose when, where, and how to choose and prepare their preferred foods
- is not conditional
- addresses the root cause of food insecurity

* Source: Food Costing in BC 2017 report.

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What can you do?



- Learn more by reading the [NW Community Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), the [Poverty MythBusters Series](#), and the Everybody Needs to Eat Food Insecurity [MythBusters](#) series.
- Help change the perception of household food insecurity from a food problem to an income problem: whenever hunger issues are brought up, link it to the need to reduce poverty.
- Spread the word to family, friends, on social media, and in your day-to-day life.
- Ask politicians their position on food insecurity and basic income.
- If you are an employer, consider working with a local organization like the WorkBC Employment Centre to provide part-time work for someone in need of extra supports to enter the work force who could benefit from the extra income.
- Support and/or follow organizations on social media that support poverty reduction to address household food insecurity, such as:
 - The NW Community Food Action and NW Homelessness Coalition Society's Facebook pages where you can watch for opportunities to get involved.
 - NW Homelessness Coalition Society: to learn more, contact Betina Wheeler, Coalition and Projects Coordinator at admin@nwhomeless.ca or visit nwhomeless.ca.
 - The New Westminister Poverty Reduction Committee: to learn more, contact Lisa Paterson, Committee Coordinator, at Lisa.Paterson@gov.bc.ca.

You may have noticed that “supporting food programming by volunteering or providing food or monetary donations” is not included in the list above. This is because food programs, while necessary, are band-aids that treat the symptoms, not the cause, of food insecurity. The suggested actions above are ones that help promote longer-lasting real change.

If you are interested in volunteering or supporting community food resources, the following organizations provide food supports to community members in need:

UNION GOSPEL MISSION

658 Clarkson Street
604.525.8989

ugm.bc.ca

GURDWARA SAHIB SUKH

347 Wood Street (Queensborough)
604.521.6933

www.sukhsagar.ca

HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL

514 Carnarvon St.
604.521.2511

www.holytrinitycathedral.ca

ST. BARNABAS ANGLICAN CHURCH

1010-5th Ave.

604.526.6646 www.stbarnabasparish.ca

SALVATION ARMY

325 - 6th Street
604.521.0363

www.salvationarmy.ca

AUNT LEAH'S PLACE

816-20th Stret
604.525.1204

auntleahs.org

GREATER VANCOUVER FOODBANK

604.876.3601

foodbank.bc.ca

DOUGLAS COLLEGE

Only for current students

www.thedsu.ca/our-services/food-bank

MUSLIM FOOD BANK

Located in Surrey

muslimfoodbank.com

LOWER MAINLAND PURPOSE SOCIETY

40 Begbie St.

604.526.2522

www.purposesociety.org

ST. AIDAN'S FOOD HUB

1320 7th Ave.

604.836.8400

www.dontgohungry.ca



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