



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

PLANNING FOR

Food Security

A Toolkit for the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

Since time immemorial, First Nations people in BC have had intimate and long-standing relationships with the land, forests, oceans and waters, creating vibrant and sustainable food systems. All aspects of life supported a sustainable and safe food system that relied upon hunting, fishing, gathering, preserving, storing, distributing, trading and more.

Stories shared and Indigenous methods of research show that individuals, families and communities did not worry about long-term food security and were prepared in the event of short-term food shortages. Colonialism, the Indian Act, reserve systems and ongoing colonial policies have had devastating impacts on Indigenous food systems in BC and across Canada. Other pressures such as industrialization, population levels and environmental impacts mean that today's food system is very different than it was for our ancestors.

During a global pandemic such as the one we are currently experiencing, food systems can be disrupted and lead to additional food security challenges for communities. There is an opportunity, however, to take more control over the community-level food system. With this toolkit, your community can make short-, medium- and long-term plans for food security using a food systems approach. This toolkit includes ideas, templates, tools and information to support your planning.



Why is food security so important?

A food-secure environment is one where acceptable and safe food and water are available and accessible to everyone at all times.

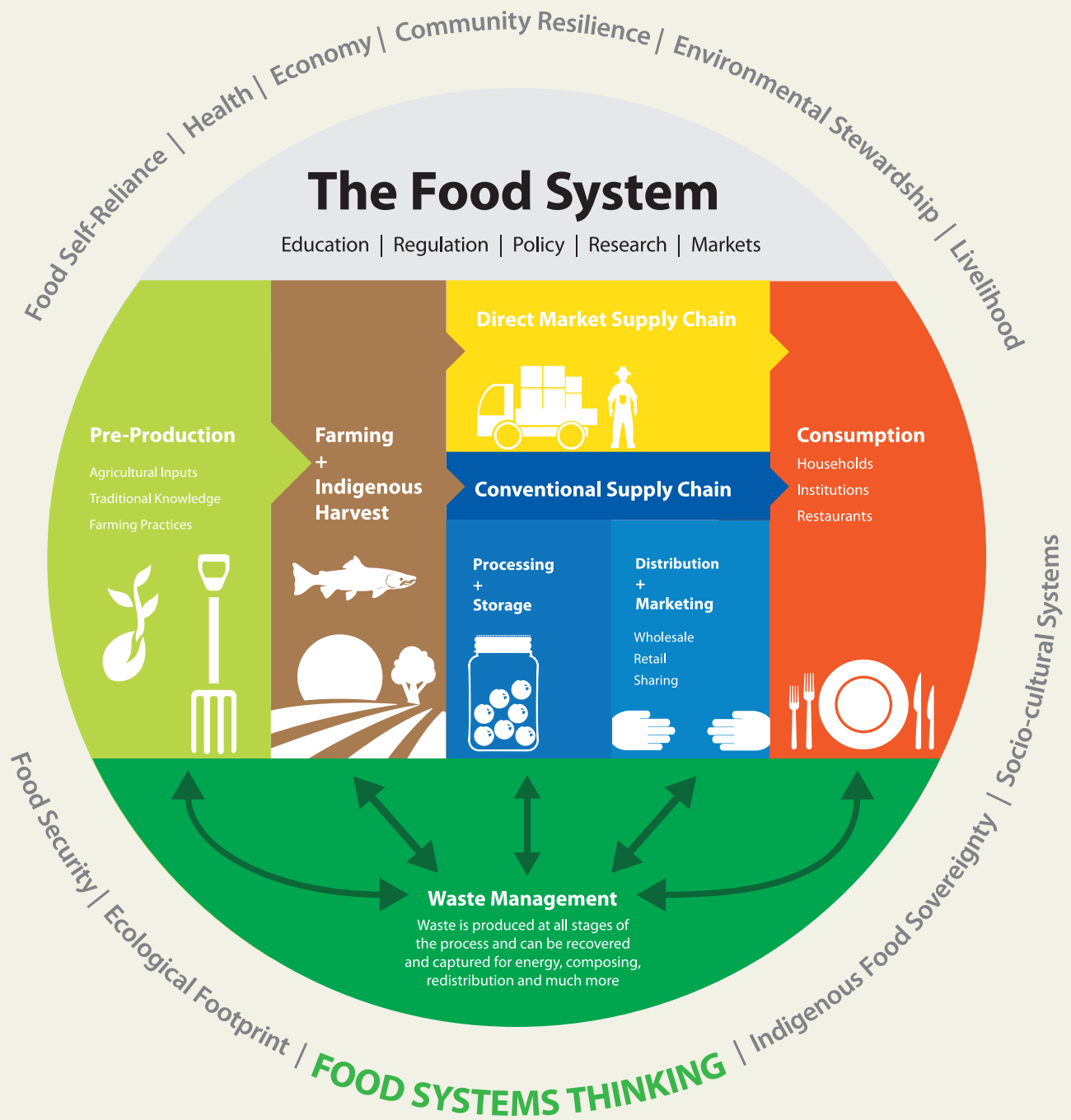
Food sovereignty is the right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. Food sovereignty also includes the right to define and control our own food and agriculture systems, including markets, production modes, food cultures and environments.

There are three main components of food security:

- **Food availability** means that enough food is physically present for the entire population. Food is in grocery stores; is grown on farms or in gardens; is found on the land or in rivers, lakes and oceans; has been preserved and stored; or has been provided by emergency food services.
- **Food access** means that individuals can obtain available food. People can access food in many ways, including harvesting, hunting, fishing, growing, buying and bartering, as well as through gifts, community food programs or emergency food services. Food access is ensured when households have adequate resources such as land, money, knowledge or social connections to get enough nutritious food.
- **Food utilization** refers to the way people's bodies can use the food they eat. Making the best use of foods depends on proper food storage and processing, overall nutrition and health status, the availability of clean drinking water, and adequate health and sanitation services. Having the skills and knowledge to cook, preserve and store food helps our bodies get the most nutrition from the food we eat.

Thinking of the food system as a whole during the COVID-19 pandemic supports a wholistic community approach to making a food security plan. The model on the next page can help us see all the interconnected elements of the food system.





Model kindly provided by the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems at Kwantlen Polytechnic University.

Putting Food Systems Thinking into Action

The food systems thinking model shown above is a good starting point for decision makers and community leaders when making food security plans for their community members (including community members living away from home).

Every community is unique and has its own set of assets (useful or valuable things, people or qualities) and needs. What your food system looks like has a lot to do with your community's vision, strengths, collaborations, geographic location, population, services, traditions and culture, local food production capacity and many other factors. This is why a self-determined approach with community decision-making and buy-in is the best approach to food security planning.

The information below uses a food systems thinking perspective to offer some ideas or areas of action. Some of the ideas are short-term planning approaches or quick solutions to address immediate needs (like the resolution of hunger), while others are medium- or long-term ideas for food security planning.

The toolkit also contains two appendices. Appendix A includes templates for your community to create a food security plan and Appendix B lists some of the food security funding opportunities available during the current pandemic.



Ideas and Areas of Action

BUILDING A FOOD COMMUNITY

Pre-production (Education and Training)

- Draw upon knowledge from Elders and Knowledge Keepers to learn about the land and determine which food production methods work best for your community
- Use technology to support long-term food skill development for community members
 - Stay connected through videoconferencing, Facebook live, posting videos online and using other social media sources if this technology is available in your region
 - Offer cooking and food skills training in dehydrating, smoking, deer skinning/butchering, fish cleaning, canning, stews, fruits/veg, pickling, etc.
 - Share recipes and cookbook demos
 - Share knowledge about breastfeeding and infant feeding ([FNHA Resource](#))
 - Obtain food safety training through recognized courses like [FoodSafe](#)
- Create paid community food positions to fish, hunt, dig or harvest food for the broader community; this is a great way to support Indigenous food systems and skill development along with community development
- Employ a full-time food sovereignty co-ordinator who can help strengthen the local food system, revitalize traditional food practices and provide food skills for community
- Connect with a local dietitian, Knowledge Keeper and/or community food champions
- Share recipes and cookbooks, particularly if people are getting food that is new to them
- Conduct a [Food Asset Map](#) of your community or Nation to get a wholistic picture of where food is bought, grown, gathered, prepared and distributed
- Join the [Indigenous Food Systems Network](#) and access their resources
- Check resources available through the [BC Food Security Gateway](#)



SHARING THE WEALTH OF THE LAND

Farming and Harvest

- Create opportunities for your community to learn about the foods of your territory, which could include hosting knowledge transfer events or virtual plant walks to learn about wild foods
- Plant traditional medicine planter boxes
- Create a traditional plant medicine teaching garden
- Co-ordinate and support hunters, fishermen and harvesters to get food to community, either whole or in prepared meals
- Support boat owners and food harvesters to gather food for community in a safe and equitable way
- Find and source out spaces to plant community and individual gardens; consider indoor tower gardens or cold frame garden beds for communities living in the north
- Host your own garden virtual workshops by sharing videos, resources, online links or how-to articles
- Connect with local farmers and food growers in your area to buy food, seeds and starter plants
- Build relationship with agriculture supports in your area to identify existing and potential training opportunities (e.g., between partners such as BC's Agriculture & Seafood Program, BC Indigenous Agriculture Development Program, and Kwantlen Polytechnic University Faculty of Horticulture)
- Network with neighbouring communities on farming, growing, and harvesting initiatives to share and learn from each other



REVITALIZING THE GREASE TRAILS

Navigating the Supply Chain

- Revitalize historic trade routes and relationships with neighbouring communities
- Connect with local farmers for land, produce and collaboration
- Link in with local food programs for donations of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Connect with food banks, food hubs, food share networks and others if these resources are available in your community
- Source food directly from distributors (e.g., Sysco)
- Order food from a participating online [BC Farmer's Market](#)
- Contact your nearest food bank or program to determine their current approach to food distribution during the pandemic

SAVING FOR A RAINY DAY

Preparing, Preserving and Storage

- When cooking for the whole community, add a mentoring component to support knowledge sharing
- Hire a community cook for a community food delivery program
- Prepare meals for Elders and children who are out of school
- Develop a traditional food and plant pantry for emergencies, children and Elders, managed by a food sovereignty co-ordinator
- Consult your local Environmental Public Health Officer for support and advice on safe food preparation
- Organize canning workshops with experienced canners or contact your Environmental Public Health Officer for recommendations
- Check out FNHA's [Canning Guide](#)



GIVING GIFTS OF FOOD

Distribution and Marketing

- Check out FNHA's resource on [Sharing the Harvest during a Pandemic](#)
- Have food staples or good food boxes delivered every two weeks (if possible, include recipes in the boxes for food items that may be new to recipients)
- Distribute grocery gift cards (ensure families are able to use the gift cards before distributing)
- Set up a plan to regularly distribute cooking essentials, spices and oils
- Promote breastfeeding; secure infant formula or access breastmilk from a bank if available

TAKING CARE OF OURSELVES - FOOD IS MEDICINE

Consumption

- Food safety is especially important right now. This [link](#) from the BC Centre for Disease Control has the most up-to-date information on food safety and COVID-19
- Eating with others is important for our wellness. If you live alone, make a FaceTime or video chat date to eat with a friend or family member. If you live with family, make time to enjoy your meal together

Planning Tools

Creating a plan for a full food system and whole community approach to both emergency food security planning and long-term planning is important. Use Appendix A to help you begin planning emergency food security measures in your community.

Here are a few options to help you get started:

- Take a look at the [FNHA Health and Wellness Planning Toolkit](#), which includes some great tools that your community or organization can use.
- Conduct a SWOC (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges) to help your community or organization identify the assets and resources already available and identify any existing gaps that need to be filled. The SWOC template is included in the [FNHA Health and Wellness Planning Toolkit](#) and has also been included below.
- Check out this [Planning Template](#), a useful tool for making a community food security plan.
- Review the BC long-term food security initiatives [information package](#).



Appendix A: Worksheets

Community Food Systems Thinking Action Planning Worksheet

First, think about activities that can help you get started. Then consider the resources required to help you achieve your goals. Finally, use the last column to help determine a reasonable timeline to accomplish that goal. Continue with this method until the table is full.

Food Systems Action Area	Activities	Resources Required (Funding, People, Time, Supplies, etc.)	Timeline
Building a Food Community (Pre-Production and Education)			
Sharing the Wealth of the Land (Farming and Indigenous Harvest)			
Revitalizing the Grease Trails (Navigating the Supply Chain)			
Saving for a Rainy Day (Preserving and Storage)			
Giving Gifts of Food (Distribution)			
Taking Care of Ourselves - Food is Medicine (Consumption)			

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Worksheet

A SWOC analysis is a useful tool your community can use to assess its current state and set a path for implementing a new project or plan, including a community food security plan.

Catalysts to Achieving Objectives

INTERNAL STRENGTHS

What are your strengths? Some examples might be culture and traditions, wellness activities, people, resources, funding, plans, policies and procedures.

How can these strengths be supported and advanced?

Barriers to Achieving Objectives

INTERNAL WEAKNESSES

What are your weaknesses? Some examples might be resources, staff, funding, plans, policies and procedures, operational activities.

What are some potential solutions or alternatives?

Catalysts to Achieving Objectives

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Where are there opportunities? Think about partnerships, governance, political and legal factors, funding, and environmental opportunities.

How can these opportunities be supported or leveraged?

Barriers to Achieving Objectives

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

What external challenges do you face? Some examples might be governance, political and legal factors, funding, environmental issues, crises and emergencies.

What are some potential solutions or alternatives?

Appendix B: Grant funding available for short- and long-term food security

ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR FOOD SECURITY

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUNDING

Indigenous Services Canada

Funds have been made available to all First Nations communities in BC and were transferred April 1, 2020. ISC has a food security team that is responsible for supporting communities in ensuring food security needs are met.

Email: aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca

[Website](#)

Vancouver Foundation

Community Response Fund: Grants from \$10,000-\$50,000 are available to support qualified recipients in BC who are providing front-line services to vulnerable populations whose staff, volunteers, programs and operations have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

[Website](#)

Vancouver Sun Adopt-a-School Grant

The Vancouver Sun Children's Fund Society's board is liquidating \$100,000 from an emergency fund to be used to help new programs ensure students continue to receive food during the COVID-19 crisis school closures.

[Website](#)

Breakfast Club of Canada

The Breakfast Club of Canada is issuing special grants for community organizations to help ensure children and families have access to food during the crisis.

[Website](#)

Second Harvest

This new funding program helps local community organizations from across the country access food, funding or both.

[Website](#)

Community Food Centres Canada

Provides re-opening grants for community organizations in mid-May, with a specific focus on remote, northern and Indigenous communities.

[Website](#) or [Good Food Access Application Form](#)

Community Foundations of Canada

Funding available through the Red Cross and United Way will be announced soon following an anticipated announcement by the federal government regarding food funding.

[Website](#)

PROVINCIAL FUNDING

PlanH Community Connectedness Grant

This grant provides \$5,000 each for up to 15 local governments to support multi-sectoral projects that foster relationship-building among community members. The deadline has been extended to July 15, 2020.

[Website](#)

PlanH Healthy Community Engagement Grant

This grant provides \$15,000 for up to five local governments to support communities to take multi-sectoral approaches to explore, learn and initiate equitable community engagement strategies. The deadline has been extended to July 15, 2020.

[Website](#)

President's Choice School Nutrition Grant

Up to \$10,000 to cover costs associated with purchasing food for daily school meal programs. This grant is intended to supplement the existing funding, allowing for higher quality, more sustainable programming. Applications submitted before May 30 will be notified by June 15. Applications submitted after May 30 will be reviewed and notified monthly.

[Website](#)

President's Choice Nutrition Education Grant

Up to \$10,000 to cover the costs associated with programs like cooking classes, farm tours and dietitian services or equipment like green houses, growing towers and composting systems. Applications are opening soon; check the website for details.

[Website](#)

LARGE-SCALE FUNDING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS

British Columbia Council for International Cooperation Sustainable Development Goals Funding Program

The 2030 Agenda is a 15-year global framework centred on the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Up to \$100,000 will be provided for projects that identify and implement innovative approaches or complement and augment existing activities that work toward achieving two or more of the following objectives:

- Enhancing multi-stakeholder efforts in support of the 2030 Agenda
- Raising awareness and support for the 2030 Agenda in Canada
- Ensuring that Canada's progress on the 2030 Agenda is inclusive of vulnerable or marginalized groups
- Fostering and integrating Indigenous and local knowledge into approaches and efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda

[Website](#)

Community Gaming Grants

Funding of \$100,000-\$250,000 to expand upon pre-existing programs that have been in place for at least one year. Multiple streams will be funded, including arts and culture, environment, and human and social services (including food security). Various application dates throughout 2020.

[Website](#)

Indigenous Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative

Funds of up to \$500,000 per year, with multi-year funding available. Eligible activities are categorized into two streams:

1. community readiness and development and
2. Indigenous agriculture and food systems. Proposals will be accepted until September 30, 2022.

[Website](#)

BC Indigenous Agriculture Development Program

The program provides two steps of financial support to work with a B.C. Ministry of Agriculture pre-approved Qualified Business Consultant. Services include feasibility analysis, financial and business planning, and skills development for agriculture and food production and processing, including for community food security.

[Website](#)