



Civil Society Input to a Renewed Food Policy for Canada

Discussion results Food Security

On May 9th, 2023, Food Secure Canada (FSC) held an open consultation on the future of food policy in Canada. [Watch the plenary recording and explore results from all discussion groups here.](#)

To provide context for the discussion group on Food Security (2019 - 2023), FSC prepared a [backgrounder](#) summarizing current federal Food Policy language, instruments, and financing.

Recommendations to Government for 2023 Food Policy for Canada

Organized based on the [six-dimensional framework](#) for food security from the [High Level Panel of Experts](#) of the Committee on Food Security (2020).

Availability - Ensuring sufficient food supply.

- Strengthen the Canadian food supply.
- Support food producers over corporations by trusting and empowering smaller producers of meat and vegetables.
- Build resilient local community food systems and local food infrastructure

Access - Ensuring physical, social, and economic access for all eaters.

- Consider the intersectionality of food security and adopt a rights-based approach, working towards food justice.
- Emphasize the importance of defining and discussing the concepts of food security and household food insecurity separately.
- Tackle food insecurity in alignment with the poverty reduction strategy, and address the tensions between housing costs, food costs, and meeting basic needs.

- Set a target for food insecurity reduction, as recommended by the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council, to provide a framework for accountability. The target should consider the severity of food insecurity and be accompanied by concrete plans grounded in the evidence on effective policy interventions to reduce food insecurity, in order to be meaningful. All of the evidence from research on food insecurity data points to the need to improve the adequacy and stability of incomes for low-income households (PROOF).
- Align the target with Canada’s Sustainable Development Goals commitment by 2030, particularly Goal 2, below:



SDG Goal 2: “Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.”

- A renewed 2023 Food Policy should continue towards a whole-of-government approach and build upon existing relationships established between AAFC, ESDC, and Health Canada through the 2019 Food Policy. To achieve meaningful and sustained reduction in household food insecurity in Canada, it is necessary to establish food insecurity reduction as a policy objective for federal income supports (such as Canada Child Benefit, Canada Workers Benefit, Employment Insurance, etc.) for low-income households and as a central consideration for the design of these supports.

- While older adults/seniors generally benefit from universal income supports, it is important to recognize that other demographic/socio-economic factors influence their food insecurity, such as physical mobility (reduces ability and access to healthy, culturally appropriate food and meal preparation), immigration status, connection to community, and gender. This reinforces the need for careful management and evaluation of programs and the status of different groups, with an intersectional lens.

- Establish a universal livable income floor beneath which no one can fall. This can and should be achieved by increasing existing diverse government income supports and tax credits, implementing a mandated livable minimum wage, and providing subsidies for necessities of life (e.g., rent), complemented by well-designed basic income schemes with social safeguards and public review.

- Monitor food affordability.

Utilization - Ensuring safe and nutritious food which meets dietary needs and food preferences for an active and a healthy life.

- Recognize the under-consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and seeds, and make these foods more affordable at the point of sale.
- Address the low alignment with Canada's dietary guidelines. Unhealthy eating, for largely systemic reasons, is estimated to cost \$13.8 billion a year in direct healthcare expenditures.

Stability - Ensuring the constancy of the three dimensions above, at all times.

- Encourage a wide diversity of food, farmers, and food providers to build resilience into the food system.

Agency - The capacity of individuals or groups to make their own decisions about what foods they eat, what foods they produce, how that food is produced, processed, and distributed within food systems, and their ability to engage in processes that shape food system policies and governance.

- Create a national food security task force that collaborates across departments and sectors, sets measurable targets, implements accountability measures, and is anchored in a real food systems approach.
- Review the distribution of power and control in the agrifood system, addressing the systemic issue of corporate globalization and concentration of power and land.
- Examine the relationship between the cost of production, distribution of profits, and power in the food system.
- Build solidarity with Indigenous peoples and farmers.
- De-commodify food and decentralize control to the community level, allowing communities to identify their own challenges, develop solutions, and meet their own needs with available support and funding. Build communities that have ownership and control of their own food system, food acquisition and non-market ventures.

Sustainability - *Food system practices that contribute to the long-term regeneration of natural, social, and economic systems, ensuring the food needs of the present generations are met without compromising food needs of future generations.*

- Develop local and regional solutions and provide support to Indigenous communities.
- Use agriculture as a tool to tackle food insecurity by providing community organizations with additional financing to purchase food from local farmers.
- Recognize the unique sustainability challenges faced by cities that are unable to grow their own food.



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