

# YORK REGION

## FOOD CHARTER ACTION DOCUMENT



Attachment 2 - CMS26-001 YR Food Charter Action Document

York Region Food Council	Working Groups	Municipal Gov	Regional Gov	Organizations	Businesses	Public Institutions
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### Equity, Social Justice & Food Security

Advocate at all levels of government for evidence-based policies which have been proven to reduce food insecurity. This could include advocating for the implementation of a livable minimum wage, increasing social assistance rates and enhancing the Canada Disability Benefit.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support partners with the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments. Use these tools to support the development of robust policies that ensure adequate incomes so that all York Region residents have equitable access to food.	✓	✓	✓			
Collaboration with governments and community partners in First Nations, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities to determine priorities for action to address food insecurity and poverty.	✓				✓	
Increase awareness of poverty, food insecurity, and income related issues for politicians, policymakers and the public through channels such as social media, events, and press releases.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Empower people with lived experience of food insecurity and poverty to create systems change through peer advocacy while offering the appropriate support and infrastructure (e.g., peer networks, compensation).	✓	✓			✓	
Collaborate with the York Region Food Council in the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments.					✓	

## Health & Well-Being

Advocate for coordination between governments for policies that support peoples' access to food (e.g., affordable housing, employment, and transit policies).



Support dignified food access initiatives directed by those with lived experience (e.g., fresh food vouchers, food co-ops, low-cost markets/grocers, grocery gift cards).



Improve funding to school food programs to increase food access in schools (e.g., breakfast programs).



Increase the availability of culturally relevant food locally (e.g., procurement policies that support cultural food businesses, making them more available in publicly owned buildings; promoting innovation and growth of warm climate produce, through incubation spaces or grants for farmers to trial new crops).



Promote nutrition and food literacy in schools and the community, including body liberation and the importance of creating positive relationships with food, culture and the land, through social media, outreach, workshops, posters, etc.



Implement food procurement policies for institutions (including schools, hospitals, government buildings, recreation centers) to support local food businesses and producers while providing fresher, more culturally relevant foods.



## Local Agri-Food Sector

Advocate at the provincial level for reduced barriers (e.g., labour, capital, land access) for young and diverse farmers to start viable farm and food businesses that serve their communities.



Advocate at the provincial level for improved financial supports for new farmers through affordable crop insurance programs and income support so farmers can make a livable wage growing food.



Advocate at the provincial and federal levels to create stronger labour and legal protections for migrant farm workers to have secure work, living wages and pathways to permanent residency.



Connect communities to where food is grown, hunted and gathered and grow food closer to where people live.



Make connections, support agri-food players (e.g., producers, distributors, packaging, retail, research) and raise awareness/show the value of the sector.



Promote jobs within the agri-food sector as viable career paths to attract and retain youth and job seekers to the sector.

Work with educational institutions and the Government of Ontario to develop and offer farm-focused education and learning opportunities such as incubators, college programs, co-op opportunities, job training, and mentorship.



Work with higher levels of government to provide grants to implement sustainable innovation and technology in the agriculture and agri-food sector.



Connect communities to where food is grown, hunted and gathered and grow food closer to where people live. For example:

- Collaborate with the agri-tourism sector and incentivize communities to visit farms
- Host community events to promote local agriculture (like fairs or competitions) that reflect the cultural diversity of York Region.



## Local Agri-Food Sector (Continued)

Remove barriers (e.g., explore updates to By-laws) for community members to access public land for local food production purposes.

Reduce barriers (e.g., labour, capital, land access) for young and diverse farmers to start viable farm and food businesses that serve their communities.

Increase access to land for individuals, communities, new farmers, and especially for equity deserving groups<sup>1</sup> who face additional barriers to accessing land.

Increase access to land for new and small-scale farmers through:

- Farm incubators<sup>2</sup>.
- Information sharing about land access and develop a way to match prospective growers to available land.
- Alternative ways to access land (e.g., Rouge National Urban Park, conservation authorities, etc.).

## Environmental Stewardship

Support Indigenous knowledge holders in sharing their knowledge on ways to preserve and protect land.

Create and support policies that preserve agricultural land, farming, natural harvesting areas, and local food production. Incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into the preservation and protection of land.

Advocate for the creation of affordable housing without jeopardizing farmland and natural harvesting areas through urban intensification.

## Environmental Stewardship (Continued)

Advocate for the protection of farmland and natural harvesting areas through land use policies that prioritize agriculture such as increased housing density and keeping agricultural land in agricultural uses.	✓	✓				
Advocate for municipal governments to embed language that supports the value of food into all policy.	✓	✓				
Embed language that supports the value of food into all policy.				✓		
Establish and invest in more community food growing spaces close to where people live. Use an equity lens to implement municipal policies and standards that promote community gardens and set clear processes for the establishment of community gardens.				✓		
Prioritize community growing and agricultural uses for land when reviewing municipal master plans and development applications.				✓		
Pilot circular food economy initiatives (e.g., reusable containers and utensils program in mall food courts) and support organizations and businesses to make initiatives financially sustainable.				✓		
Create policies and practices that work in collaboration with municipalities, communities and businesses (from farms to grocers) to increase sustainability and prevent and reduce food wastage (e.g., biomass energy generation, organic waste processing infrastructure, small scale composting).				✓		
Create partnerships and work with the provincial government and post-secondary institutions to carry out research for environmental practices for sustainable agriculture (e.g., cover crops, cultural foods, programs for farmers) to assist in climate change mitigation.				✓		

## Environmental Stewardship (Continued)

Provide grants to assist with farm management practices that increase environmental protection.				✓				✓
Engage in knowledge mobilization around Best Management Practices <sup>3</sup> in Agriculture to increase public awareness of these practices and how climate change impacts the food system.				✓	✓			
Embed language that supports the value of food into all policy.			✓					
Establish and invest in more community gardens and community farms close to where people live.								
Use an equity lens to implement municipal policies and standards that promote community gardens and set clear processes for the establishment of community gardens.			✓					
Prioritize community growing and agricultural uses for land when reviewing municipal master plans and development applications. Meaningful engagement and partnerships with First Nations communities in conserving biological and cultural diversity.								
Increase access to composting bins in public spaces, municipal facilities, and public events.			✓	✓	✓			✓
Meaningful engagement and partnerships with First Nations communities in conserving biological and cultural diversity.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Continued use and evolution of Best Management Practices in agriculture to mitigate and adapt to climate change and a growing population.						✓		✓

## Knowledge & Sharing

Increase public and stakeholder awareness of community resources and programming.	✓	✓					
Work with First Nations leadership to bridge western and Indigenous knowledge on food and land through events and initiatives.	✓	✓					
Fund and promote accessible food literacy resources and hands-on programming on topics such as growing and agriculture, sustainability and environment, food waste, cooking, preserving, and composting.			✓	✓	✓		
Establish lending libraries for kitchen equipment and garden tools and promote existing initiatives.			✓	✓	✓		✓
Increase public and stakeholder awareness of community resources and programming.			✓	✓			
Increase community access to physical spaces for growing and cooking, food training, and connections.			✓				
Run school programming that encourages food discovery and food skill building.				✓			✓
Promote seed preservation and plant/seed exchanges.			✓		✓		

## Community & Culture

Develop plan to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action within the York Region Food System.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create opportunities for supporting, sharing and learning between organizations and agencies that are already fostering food security.	✓	✓					
Host events with and for youth to learn about the food system and create change-makers.	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Build a community of service providers to support community organizations and foster collaboration.	✓	✓					
Create a knowledge hub and support network for community organizations and First Nations Communities to connect, share resources and ideas, and advocate.	✓	✓					
Support community organizations in cooking and serving culturally appropriate food or meals by providing resources and learning opportunities.	✓	✓					
Host events and workshops celebrating cultural food and promoting cross-cultural exchange (e.g., Municipal-run food festivals, chef showcases, cultural cooking classes).			✓	✓	✓		