

# Everything Going On

2022 Mission Food Asset & Need Scan



# Mission Food Asset and Need Scan

Winter 2022

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This project was led by Union Gospel Mission, with a goal of assessing the current state of food access, needs, key stakeholders, and gaps in Mission, B.C, particularly considering significant changes made because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Thank-you** to these individuals and organizations for their input, commitment, and guidance: City of Mission Staff, Hope Central, L.I.N.C Society, Mission Community Services, Mission Farmers Market Association, Mission Friendship Centre, Mission Youth House, Northview Community Church, SARA for Women, The Rotary Starfish Backpack Program, St Joseph Food Bank, and the Union Gospel Mission Lydia House and Outreach Teams.



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**Updated:** April 22, 2022

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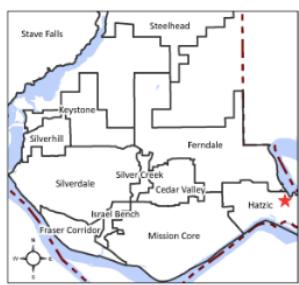
# Introduction

This report assesses the state of food access for vulnerable individuals in Mission BC, within the traditional homelands of the Stó:lō First Nations people, particularly the Scowlitz, Matsqui, Katzie, Sumas, Kwantlen and Leq'á:mel. We offer it with gratitude and humility as we continue to learn about the rich, yet often painful and inequitable history of this region<sup>1</sup>.



Included is a summary of key informant interviews with staff and volunteers from churches and community organizations that run supportive food programs for vulnerable individuals. This report is not an exhaustive list of food supports in Mission, but instead aims to capture the overall availability of – and need for – further programs.

Several interviewees used the phrase, “everything going on,” as they detailed the changes they had to make in response to the pandemic, the extreme weather and floods experienced this past year, and the poverty-related, every-present life challenges



that existed pre-COVID. Interviewees also talked about how, despite these challenges, *everything will go on*, including the seasons and cycles of weather, food growing and processing, and the support provided to those in need in Mission. Additionally, there is a commitment from service providers to go on building their supports on the principles of equity, transformative justice, and diversity<sup>2</sup>.

Recommendations are made with a particular focus on community meals and emergency programs that started or shifted with COVID-19. This report highlights strengths, key stakeholders, and gaps in service; and then charts ways to build on the good work being done.

This report also reflects our commitment to work towards the recommendations made in the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada as we aim to understand and address the lasting impacts of residential schools and other discriminatory practices. In particular, we are guided by the Call to Action 19, which outlines the need to measure and close gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://native-land.ca/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mission.ca/city-hall/mayor-council/council-meeting-schedule/public-hearings/neighbourhood-map/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

## Framing

Evidence tells us that food programs do not end hunger – only adequate income will do that<sup>4</sup>. Still, every shared meal, bag of groceries, and personal story matters as we work alongside our vulnerable neighbours and those with the power to influence the policies, budgets, and systems that could eliminate food insecurity and chronic poverty.

Although it will be some time before we understand the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, already we know that on top of the challenges that already existed, the virus impacted the ability of nearly half of Canadian residents to meet their financial obligations and essential needs.<sup>5</sup> Beyond economic factors, all of us have felt the psychological and social stress caused by uncertainty and evolving restrictions. A recent public health survey on COVID-19 found that 34% of individuals in Mission reported **poor to fair mental health** and 61% are **concerned over the health of vulnerable family members** (these statistics and others noted below from 2021 are from the same source).<sup>6</sup> In response, the pandemic also inspired new levels of collaboration, creativity, and generosity.

## Demographics

In 2021, Mission reported a population of 41, 519, an increase of over 10, 000 people (30%) from 2001 data<sup>7</sup>. While many who call Mission home live stably and securely, following is a summary of factors where individuals are not thriving.

Canada uses the Market Basket Measure (MBM) of poverty, which estimates the income required to meet basic needs for a family, considering community size, location, and household composition. For 2019, the MBM for a community the size of Mission was \$44, 046<sup>8</sup>. Costs have certainly risen since then. In 2017, over 2000 people in Mission reported an income under \$30, 000. In 2021, 30% reported that it was difficult to meet their financial needs, and 40% used financial supports or services. For about 17% of Mission residents, employment changed for the worse. Another 14% reported that employment changed for the better<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Tarasuk V, Mitchell A. (2020) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2017-18. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

<sup>5</sup> Men F, Tarasuk V. Food insecurity amid the COVID-19 pandemic: food charity, government assistance and employment. Canadian Public Policy 2021; Published online. Available from: <https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cpp.2021-001>

<sup>6</sup> <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/bccdc/viz/BCCOVID-19SPEAKSurveyRound2/BCCOVID-19SPEAKResults>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mission.ca/city-hall/departments/economic-development/statistics/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110006601>

We often think of poverty as the inability to afford adequate food and other basic needs. In Mission, 13% of people reported that they were worried that food will run out before they get money to buy more, which is just below the provincial average of 14%.

One's ability to stock and prepare food is also closely linked with one's home status. In 2021, 4% of people in Mission reported feeling housing insecure, fearing they will have to move within the next six months, as they can no longer afford their home, while 48% reported increased conflict or disruption in their home setting.

Poverty and food insecurity are connected to an inability to participate in society, including hosting family and friends, and building up the connections that are necessary for mental health. Such factors are hard to measure, but in 2021, 11% of people in Mission reported often feel lonely, and 57% feel a weak sense of community belonging.

Such stresses also impact other health-impacting behaviours. Almost 48% avoided accessing healthcare after the pandemic was declared, and nearly half of those surveyed have one or more health conditions associated with an increased risk of more severe COVID symptoms. Almost 27% are sleeping less. During the pandemic, 18% of people in Mission reported drinking more alcohol, and 9% increased their use of cannabis. Alcohol consumption declined for 17%, and 2% decreased cannabis use.

Poverty and stresses like a pandemic disproportionately affect certain demographic groups, such as new newcomers to Canada or non-permanent residents, individuals with no post-secondary education, Indigenous individuals, Black individuals, other visible minorities, and those with a non-English first language. The 2017 census reported a visible minority population in Mission of 4480, of which about 65% are South Asian.

Single parents also struggle, balancing work and family care on one income. Of all families with children in Mission, 1700 are **lone-parent families**, three-quarters of which are female-led, and face acute social and economic challenges.

We appreciate the City of Mission, the BCCDC, and Stats Canada for compiling this data. Such information is best considered in light of the lived experiences of individuals. Ideally, our conversations with food providers should be placed alongside interviews with individuals experiencing food insecurity, though that is beyond the scope of this project. In what follows, we explore some of the food and other supports, then changes and challenges faced by support providers. Next is a summary of who the service-providers see as being particularly vulnerable or underserved in their community, and how we might move forward together towards food security for the entire population.

## **Food Supports**

To address the growing need for food security, several churches and organizations offer food programs and other supports. The **Appendix** summarizes the meals and hampers that different programs have made available (as of Winter 2022). Although these are quality supports, not everyone who needs assistance can reach them, and those who do reach them do not necessarily find them an easy or adequate source of food.

Significant changes were made in response to COVID-19. All in-person meal programs were paused as host buildings closed, volunteers were unable to come onsite, distancing measures were required, and we did not know what was safe, particularly for older and vulnerable adults. Several new, temporary, programs were introduced such as takeaway meals and expanded grocery hamper programs. More specific changes forced by the pandemic are detailed later in this report.

Overall, usage of food programs has risen during the pandemic. Significant resources were (and some still are) available to organizations (i.e., new grant streams, increased donations, or unexpected surplus food such as donated perishables from restaurants under closure orders). But these supports are neither reliable nor sustainable.

## **Other Programs and Supports**

Individuals who struggle with access to food also often need support with housing, labor, financial, and health services. Food providers also referenced offering or connecting their guests to grief support, substance abuse counseling, and related mental wellness care. When food programs closed because of pandemic restrictions, lack of capacity, or funding, regular attenders also lost other sources of support and connection. Some organizations made themselves more accessible, providing outreach and meeting individuals where they spend time during the day (particularly homeless individuals), but in many cases, staff were not able to connect with their regular clients.

Several interviewees talked about long-standing relationships with their program guests and clients, and thus worried about their mental health, ability to access relevant information, and overall ability to cope. The fear and uncertainty we all felt through different stretches of the pandemic have a greater impact on lower income individuals, given that they often lack the funds to bulk buy and take similar actions to protect their households.

Some support providers observed that when new services or programs opened in Mission, the number of clients visiting their program declined, but the amount of food they had to offer stayed the same. In some cases, this allowed them to offer better service and meals to the clients who did visit their program.

## Program Logistics and Changes

The pandemic forced service providers to make significant changes in food sourcing, preparation, and serving. Following are some of the ongoing challenges that service providers talked about.

Food Storage	Several interviewees talked about how Mission lacks a facility where <b>large amounts of food can be stored and processed</b> for vulnerable individuals during a crisis. On an organizational level, there often is food available for donations, but it must be picked-up, stored, and distributed safely. If foods are perishable (which is desirable, as such items are often more nutritious), they must usually be consumed within a few days. Organizations can only accept food donations if they have adequate storage space, particularly cold storage. As demand grows, some organizations are looking at how they can add to the food sorting and storage space.
Types of Food	When planning meals for vulnerable individuals, food providers in Mission talked about aiming to provide <b>large portions</b> with good <b>quality protein, plenty of vegetables</b> (when possible), and generally, nothing too spicy. They also aim to further tailor what they offer to their population, particularly foods that young people prefer for school programs and foods that would be familiar to people from different ethnicities. <b>Rises in food costs</b> make this even more challenging.  One service provider commented that a significant amount of fresh, nutritionally dense food is <b>grown in Mission</b> , but little of that makes it into the charitable programs. Instead, what is offered is often highly processed, but to support health, individuals need good food. Certain health challenges require higher cost foods, particularly for individuals with allergies, or who need nutrient dense food because of compromised immunity.

Natural **disasters** and **extreme weather**, such as the heat dome or atmospheric river and floods experienced in 2021 have **ripple effects into the food sector**, particularly charitable programs. Infrastructure damage, transportation challenges, and focus shifting to those who are acutely vulnerable, all impact negatively on those who have more

chronic challenges. While local food is preferable in many ways, larger suppliers can usually withstand these shocks with fewer impacts.

On the positive side, these challenges help us learn about where we are vulnerable and make logistic and infrastructure plans that will withstand future shocks. This includes ensuring our **water** supply is protected.

Some support organizations do not offer food programs, or have no license to serve food, yet recognize that they **cannot connect well with clients who are hungry**. These organizations do not usually have a budget for food, so rely on donations and occasional grants, to allow them to provide snacks. The food they can share is usually non-perishable, and not highly nutritious. This is particularly a dynamic for programs aimed at at-risk youth.

Vulnerability	<p><b>How vulnerable individuals access food</b> must also be considered, not just volume or quality. Service providers talked about finding ways to include choice, such as setting up food banks with shelves where individuals can pick the foods they want. Some invite a contribution for food, such as a small price for groceries, or the ability to work in the program. Grocery store gift cards, when available, allow clients to pick their own items (or volunteers to shop for them), which provides "freedom around food" as one interviewee articulated.</p> <p>Agencies that provide special items like <b>hampers for Christmas</b> saw an increased demand and some angst around not having enough food, especially not enough seasonal and nourishing food.</p>
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Access and Registration	<p>Several interviewees talked about the <b>shame and stigma</b> connected with accessing charitable food, especially for those who are needing to do so for the first time. Organizations aim to make their operations as <b>low-barrier</b> as possible, with a simple registration, often allowing clients to self-identify, rather than prove their need.</p> <p>And still, when the need for food outgrows an organization's ability to respond (one organization reported a 15% rise in new faces), a stricter <b>registration system</b> can be fairer to their target community, ensuring that those who access the finite resources live in Mission, have financial need, and are not accessing more than what is fairly available, leaving nothing for others. Several service providers talked about the tension when guests from Abbotsford and other parts of the Fraser Valley show up at their programs looking for food and other support. They want to be generous, but also want to focus on the needs in their community.</p>
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**Interpersonal Challenges** While the service providers interviewed for this report primarily talked about the gratitude they received from their program participants, there are – as in any human interactions – some challenges. The changing restrictions around how we could gather were at times **confusing** for all of us. When this **frustration** led to clients refusing to wear masks or observe other expectations, tensions could rise. Some clients can come across as “picky” when the food available does not meet their needs or preferences, although we must understand the drive to speak up and advocate for oneself and one’s family.

## Rescued Food

Food providers talked about their commitment to providing good quality food that met their client’s preferences, was (mostly) not expired, was nutritious, and provided good variety. Rescued food (which was discarded by food processors, grocery stores, or restaurants) cannot meet the needs of vulnerable individuals or fully support a community meal program, so when it is part of the charitable food response, extra care must be taken.

<b>Baked Goods</b>	<b>Bread and pastries</b> available from bakeries like Cobb’s and Bear Paw, provide some nourishment, and may offset some grocery bills, but are not the nutrient dense protein and produce that people need to support health.
<b>Consistency</b>	Occasional food donations are available from restaurants, catering companies, and other service providers, particularly during a crisis or when the restaurants had to close (i.e., Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'a of Abbotsford, the FRAFCA Friendship Centre of Surrey), but these are <b>not consistent</b> , and one cannot plan a program around them.
<b>Food Safety</b>	<b>Expired food</b> can still be appropriate to consume, but individuals need knowledge of <b>food safety</b> to ensure that it will not cause foodborne illness.
<b>Transportation</b>	Some service providers talked about driving to pick up food donations in Surrey, Port Coquitlam, and other cities in the Lower Mainland, which takes significant time and an appropriate <b>refrigerated vehicle</b> . When the vehicle is unavailable, needing repairs, or was stolen, as was the case for one service provider, <b>extra costs</b> incur.

**Financial donations** are still needed to supplement the donated foods with items appropriate for the aging population among their clientele, culturally appropriate foods

for people from different ethnic backgrounds, and baby food for young families. People living with chronic diseases like HIV and heart disease need more nutrient-dense foods, which are costly.

## **Addressing Needs Beyond Food**

While we do need access to a regular supply of good food, it is only really nourishing if it also feeds our whole persons. Food program providers talked about addressing needs beyond acute hunger and chronic malnourishment.

<b>Outreach</b>	Food programs provide opportunity for <b>outreach</b> staff to make connections with community members and learn what other challenges they are facing. One community pantry matches guests with a <i>personal shopper</i> who converses with guests while they select their items.
<b>Food Preparation and Literacy</b>	To use fresh food, particularly what can be bought with the Farmers Market Coupons, individuals must have a <b>stable living situation</b> and <b>knowledge</b> of how to prepare the food. While many of the individuals who access food do have such knowledge, some recipes and <b>education</b> are often included in food supports.
<b>Faith</b>	<b>Spiritual hunger</b> is often adjacent to any physical malnourishment. Most faith communities are open with their beliefs in the programs they run, and are culturally sensitive, recognizing that their guests may or may not be interested in conversations around spiritual matters. Those in Faith communities are examining together how their spirituality is best shared in respectful and life-giving ways.

Beyond basic provision of staples and fresh food, several in Mission also talked about the **current efforts and future potential of growing food**, meeting the goals of training new farmers, and helping them get their food businesses established, and contributing fresh, seasonal food to the community. The main barrier to this is **access to land**, so there is some exploration into yard sharing as seen in other communities.

## **Changes Beyond Food**

Each wave or round of restrictions brought both challenges and new supports. For example, when cafés and restaurants closed, perishable food donations increased for community programs, but the outbreaks (and similar stresses) have ripple effects. Need for food supports increases, but availability of staff and volunteers decreases, and the surplus food still needs to go somewhere.

Other key challenges beyond food procurement:

<b>Hospitality</b>	Hospitable, sit-down meal programs had to shift to to-go meals for safety, which decreases opportunity for connection and conversation.
<b>Finances</b>	There is a <b>financial and time cost</b> to the necessary safety protocols, such as mask wearing and extra disinfecting of equipment, surfaces, and common touchpoints.
<b>Environment</b>	The <b>environmental cost</b> (and dollar value) of using single-use dishes, necessary for safety and capacity, especially when there are fewer volunteers available and more staff on sick-leave.
<b>Agency</b>	While the crisis led to much generosity and a “we’re all in this together” atmosphere, the restrictions and distancing lead in many cases to a <b>decrease in agency</b> , as vulnerable guests were no longer able to help the programs that they had been part of.

## Underserved Populations

A crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affects vulnerable individuals, as many of the existing supports disappeared or changed, challenges emerged and compounded, and such individuals have less of an economic buffer to respond to challenges. We asked service providers who they see as the most underserved and struggling populations in Mission.

<b>Low Income Workers</b>	Those who earn a low wage was the first response by many service providers when asked who is still vulnerable to food insecurity. These individuals often live <b>paycheque-to-paycheque</b> and are one step or stress away from homelessness or other serious impact on their ability to cope. Any <b>unexpected expense</b> often means further cutting into what they spend on food. Many individuals work low-pay, precarious jobs, such as those in the service industry, and thus were without income when their employer had to close because of pandemic restrictions, or the individual had to isolate because of COVID exposure.
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These individuals are not visible, so not as many services set-up for them, and because they earn an income, it can be extra shameful to admit they are not coping and ask for help, and they do not qualify for some of the available supports. For those who rely on meal support, options are only available some days, or during their work shifts.

Seniors	<b>Seniors</b> who need food support (i.e., have low income and do not live in subsidized housing), particularly Sikh, Indigenous, and Metis Elders may struggle. As rent and transportation costs increase, but income stays the same, food quality and quantity is often compromised. Some elders have reported that they would starve if it were not for the regular food supports. Many do better when they are able to access their pension and Old Age Security funds.
Lone Parent Families	<b>Single parent families</b> , especially given need to provide food, housing, childcare, and other necessities on one income, or on social assistance.
Homeless Individuals	<b>Homeless</b> or precariously housed individuals are always food insecure, as they lack a place to store and prepare food, even if they could afford to purchase some groceries. Any food options need to be appropriate (i.e., ready to eat, or easy-open cans).
Home-Bound Individuals	Vulnerable individuals who cannot leave their home on their own, especially those who are seniors, or live with disabilities or mental health challenges, cannot access food supports like drop-in meals. It is often regular program client who inform staff about their neighbours in need, so staff can follow up as able.
At-Risk Children and Youth	At-risk children and youth in poverty are particularly vulnerable. Inadequate support and nutrition in early years will have life-long impacts on <b>physical development</b> , and on our relationship with food.
	Many young people get a significant number of calories from <b>snacks and highly processed food</b> (i.e., Mac & Cheese, instant noodles), so organizations that work with youth are building their food literacy programs, ensuring that their clients learn basic cooking and food safety skills.
Newcomers to Canada	<b>Newcomers</b> and individuals with <b>language barriers</b> , who do not know about the supports they can access are often vulnerable to food insecurity. Some service providers noted a rise in requests for support from people with different ethnic backgrounds. Some have lived in Mission for years, but are needing support for the first time.

## Pandemic Lessons

This unprecedented season led all of us to prioritize safety as we never had before, and we had to figure out what that meant practically. As we move out of the pandemic, we

will open programs and dining spaces gradually and offer a hybrid model (both sit-down and take-out meals) to ease into our new *normal*. Services like buffet meals and self-serve offerings will take longer to reintroduce. Each program will have to custom fit public health recommendations to their setting and population. Food program staff also highlighted these key lessons learned this past year.

<b>City Policy</b>	The City of Mission has a community garden policy, but not a detailed food security policy that fits both the rural and urban elements of Mission. The Mission food sources are particularly vulnerable in winter months, when food cannot be grown local, and during extreme weather.
<b>Weather Events</b>	<b>Shocks</b> to food access like COVID or floods particularly impacted seniors and those who were immune compromised. Several organizations expressed their commitment to providing healthy, sustainable food for these individuals, not just high volumes of food.
<b>Service Industry</b>	The <b>Service Industries</b> kept us going through the crises of the last year, and we must ensure they are adequately supported, compensated, and recognized, especially when their work is unsafe and their ability to earn their income is precarious.
<b>Relationships and Connections</b>	<b>Relationships</b> between agencies and with clients are invaluable. There is significant evidence of collaboration in Mission, and that must remain a priority. When a trusted relationship between service providers and clients exists, or between people working for different agencies, programs could shift more readily. Similarly, when Farmers know who regularly uses the Coupon Program, they would often provide extra discounts on their produce.  When an organization starts, significantly changes, or stops a program, there is often ripple effects on other programs. Communication helps plan for these changes.
	Food is a <b>connector</b> – while we knew this before the pandemic, several people talked about recognizing it in a more profound way. Organizations were able to provide food (i.e., take-away meals and hampers) to those in need, but when they could not share a meal, or even a cup of coffee with their community, guests, staff and volunteers all felt something was missing. Some organizations re-introduced sit-down meals later in 2021, and found their guests eagerly returned.
<b>Preparedness</b>	When a crisis hits, changes happen quickly. Interviewees talked about how we must be as <b>prepared</b> as possible, both as individuals, and as a city, and have clear <b>leadership</b> , so staff and volunteers know who to

turn to for direction. At the same time, we must be **adaptable**, as some things we cannot foresee or prepare for. Through the pandemic, we learned that we are more adaptable than we thought we could be.

<b>Resilience</b>	Several service providers talked about how we learned that we can be more adaptable than we thought, but we must continue to build our resilience – personally, as organizations, and as a community.
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## Recommendations

While this season has been hard in unprecedented ways, the sense of everyone being in this together was a positive outcome. All levels of society were affected, and we will all have to work together to address the vulnerabilities in our community. It will take a different kind of thinking, but it is not impossible to lift people out of poverty.

<b>Mental Health Challenges</b>	We must continue to build supports for individuals with <b>mental health challenges</b> , and ensure those who run food programs have the skills to respond compassionately to program guests (i.e., training in Mental Health First Aid <sup>9</sup> ) and know how to refer individuals to appropriate supports. We must continue proactively addressing the natural fears and anxieties we will encounter as we interact more and more, which may be expressed as angry outbursts. We must not punish such responses, but respond with <b>trauma-informed care</b> <sup>10</sup> and patient deescalating hostility <sup>11</sup> .
<b>Lived Experience</b>	Hearing from <b>those who rely on food supports</b> was beyond the scope of this scan, but to really understand what the needs are and what really helps meet deep needs, those who struggle with food insecurity should be engaged sensitively.
<b>Working Relationships</b>	Continue to <b>foster good working relationships between different organizations, keep the focus on dignified food sharing</b> . We must work to have each agency contribute their strength (e.g., some have space and a licensed kitchen, some have more connections to vulnerable clients).
<b>Leadership</b>	Many food programs are <b>volunteer-run</b> or have a coordinator with only enough hours to manage program logistics. While these kinds of programs contribute significantly to the net of care, they are less likely to contribute to <b>planning conversations or addressing larger, systemic challenges</b> of poverty and chronic health challenges. Therefore, the

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mhfa.ca/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.bcmhsus.ca/health-professionals/clinical-professional-resources/trauma-informed-practice>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.jibc.ca/course/de-escalating-hostility>

agencies in a position to do so, must take the lead. Where there is direction to mobilize the community, as there evidently is a strong will to support neighbours in Mission.

Funding	There are <b>grants</b> available for organizations who provide food, but it takes significant time and skill to apply successfully for them. Those on the front lines and working at capacity to meet the needs of their vulnerable clients appreciate support accessing these grants.
Technology and Social Media	Many learned to use technology in new ways through the pandemic, joining virtual meetings and engaging over social media. While platforms like Zoom and Facebook can be helpful, we need to ensure those without access to technology and the internet are supported.
Data Collection	We must know that current state of supports, needs, gaps, and how different policies and events (i.e., income assistance rates or changing weather patterns) affect those who are vulnerable in our city. We aim to next update this report in 2024, unless there is enough change and uncertainty to warrant revisiting it sooner.

## Areas for Further Research/Exploration

Gaps in Health Outcomes	We recognize the need to <b>measure and close gaps in health outcomes</b> between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, but we did not find specific data on food insecurity for vulnerable Indigenous individuals in Mission. Research into the needs and cultural assets must be guided by the community.
Trauma-Informed	While we have learned much about what a <b>trauma-informed response</b> is and why it is necessary for vulnerable individuals, we can continue to work towards putting these practices in place.
Registration	Many food programs are open to all, aiming for low barrier support, but as needs grow, programs can get overwhelmed, becoming unable to provide quality supports. Some form of <b>inter-agency registration</b> can help tailor support for individuals and ensure equitable access (e.g., link2feed). <sup>12</sup> Several interviewees talked about the potential of more intentional referrals to organizations that can meet the specific needs of those who come for food support.
Sustainable	Several food providers talked about their questions around when providing <b>charitable food</b> actually helps their community, and when it enables further dependence. Providers are working towards more

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.link2feed.com/>

development focused support for their community, but are committed to not letting those who are most vulnerable go hungry in the process. Agencies want to serve **sustainable food**, but it will take further conversation on what this means and how we get there.

## Conclusion

Although life is settling after the upheaval of the last two years, we will continue to be in a season of change for some time. We have the opportunity to use lessons learned through the pandemic as the ingredients for enhanced food security and community resiliency. In our conversations with food providers, this understanding of both the social and the physical benefits of sharing food is clear.

There are encouraging old and new community supports in Mission, and with *everything going on*, there is evident resiliency, as service providers are pulling together to support each other and our community. As one interviewee said, "Our community figures out how to fill in the gaps!"

## Appendix – Food Supports in Mission

This is not an exhaustive list of available food supports in Mission, as some organizations give out hampers, coupons, or gift cards to their clients. These numbers also vary from week to week, and as the seasons change. This list was updated in April 2022 with information from the Mission Community Services Society. Other agencies also reported an increase in demand for their supports in the months since this data was originally gathered.

Organization	Drop-In Meals/Day or Week	Hampers and Groceries	Other Notes and Future Plans
Hope Central	~200 (Breakfast + Dinner 3 days/week)		450 people receive support each month, including those who are on the streets and receive modified hampers
Mission Community Services	325 meals/day (7 days/week)	240 hampers/month + 550 Christmas hampers given in 2021	Also coordinate Meals on Wheels + Grocery Deliveries
Mission Farmers Market Society		\$21 Coupons for 100 families to spend at the farm markets	Always more interest than there are coupons available; only in growing season (May - Nov)
Mission Friendship Centre Society	250 hot lunches/week + 30 bag lunches; Elders Luncheon, Elders Tea	Switched to giving gift cards for 131 Elders + 330 Families	Outreach staff walk around community offering support
Mission Youth House	Youth can drop in for a meal M - F		
Northview Community Church	250 - 300 meals - weekly Sunday hot meal weekly breakfast at a high school	Community pantry with donated food + purchased fresh items + dairy	
SARA for Women	Used to serve a drop-in meal, but it closed when COVID was declared	~10 food packs/week on outreach walks	
Starfish Backpack Program		~80 backpacks with food sent home with vulnerable children each school week	Food purchased at cost from local grocery store
St Joseph Food Bank		~900/month (people can come 2 x in a month)	Also provide food for 13 associations in Mission
Union Gospel Mission Mobile Outreach Van	~25 meals/ Outreach trip (2/week) + 60 meals 1 Saturday/month		Some emergency funds and supplies available for acute needs