



Healthy Eating Initiatives: Information Sheet

A part of the Local Food Security Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook section is part of the [Food Security Handbook](#) - a toolkit to provide local elected leaders with inspiration, initiative and case study examples, resources, sample motions/reports, and tools to support local climate action.

The Handbook is a living document, which means we will be adding your successful motions as they happen, and it provides an up-to-date, real-time guide to the change being driven by Climate Caucus members from coast to coast to coast.

Are we missing any key resources? [Submit it here](#) or [email us!](#)

The foods we eat have a big impact on our personal wellbeing, as well as the health of our planet. Municipalities can help by informing community members on what a healthy, climate-smart diet looks like, and 'walking the talk' in their food procurement policies.



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Initiatives

Climate Caucus has ranked the following initiatives from beginner to expert, based on Complexity to implement, Staff time & expertise, and Political capital. Please note, these rankings are our own best judgements.

-  Green Square = Beginner
-  Blue Square = Intermediate
-  Black Diamond = Advanced
-  Double Black Diamond = Expert

Nutritional education and skills training



The Basics:

- Ask staff to develop a program to improve food literacy so that people understand how to cook and eat a wide variety of foods that may be locally available, seasonal, and low carbon to produce.

Examples:

- [The Growing Together initiative](#) - This campaign has brought over 20 agencies together to actively support people to grow their own food for physical and mental health and greater fresh food access

Support harvest festivals and other events that promote local food



The Basics:

- Support can be through funding, promotion, staff time to help coordinate, etc.

Examples:

- [Flavour Trails](#) (Saanich Peninsula), BC



- The Saanich Peninsula Flavour Trails started as a community event that was coordinated by district staff. It has now been taken on by CRFAIR, and is funded by the district to promote local farmers and food processors.

Create policies to provide healthy food options at public venues and facilities



The Basics:

- Ensure that all food or beverages, coordinated or supported by council meet Canada's Food Guide. This includes at sponsored events, within vending machines, concessions/canteens, coffee-room refrigerators and snack boxes.

Examples:

- [City of Kelowna Healthy Foods and Beverage Sales Implementation Plan Memorandum](#), BC

Case study: Orangeville, ON, [Healthy Food Vending Machine](#)

The Orangeville Food Bank has partnered with the Town of Orangeville and Orangeville Public Library to launch a community vending machine. The vending machine will be located at the Mill Street library branch and will include healthy food options, such as veggie sticks, wraps, salads, and sandwiches, prepared by the food bank's community kitchen. All items will cost 25 cents.

Reduce animal products in city food-procurement



The Basics:

- Reducing meat intake, especially red meat, and increasing intake of plant-based foods is one of the quickest ways to mitigate climate change.
- Cities can reduce emissions by reducing animal consumption and increasing the availability of plant-based options in city-provided meals., such as in long-term homes, shelters, child care centres and at special events.



Examples:

Case study: City of Toronto, ON

In 2022, the City of Toronto created a consumption-based emissions inventory which found that the procurement of food for municipally-delivered programs was 46 ktCO₂e which is about two per cent of the total corporate CBEI. The largest sources of corporate emissions were from construction and maintenance, utilities, and transportation. Among City Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations (DACs), the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Toronto Water (TW), and Transportation Services (TS).

Of the food procurement emissions, nearly half were from beef and lamb consumption, which comprised only three per cent of total food purchased by weight.

In 2019, the City of Toronto adopted the Cool Food Pledge, committing to reduce the GHG emissions associated with its food procurement by 25 per cent by 2030 relative to a 2019 baseline. The City can meet its Cool Food Pledge target through shifting menus away from beef and land and towards plant-based options with some low-emission meats (such as seafood and poultry).

In addition to the Cool Food Pledge's commitment to reduce food emissions, the City of Toronto has also adopted a goal of maximizing local, organic and fair-trade procurement.

- [Toronto, Cool Food Pledge, Report for Action](#)
- [City of Toronto, Diets for a Cool Planet: Healthy Sustainable Diets for Toronto](#)
- [Motion](#)

Support or establish a community kitchen



The Basics:

- Community kitchens are kitchens that are accessible to public use, where small groups of people can meet to cook meals together.
- Community kitchens are often linked to learning opportunities, teaching how to prepare nutritious meals from scratch.
- Community kitchens have the added social benefit of eating and cooking with others, in a time where more and more meals are being eaten alone.



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- Community kitchens are often located in food banks, churches, schools, universities, and community centres.
- Some cities have created interactive tools to search for community kitchens:
 - [Surrey, BC](#)
 - [Vancouver, BC](#)
- Support can also come in the form of funding, promotion, staff time.

Examples:

- [Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, Ottawa, ON](#)
- [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, ON Community Kitchen Facilitator Manual](#)

Resources:

- [Community Food Centres Handbook, Kitchen Confidential: How to start a community meals program](#)

Climate Caucus Resources

[Climate Caucus Municipal Grants List](#) - detailed list of relevant municipal grants
[Policies and Resources Library](#) - list of motions, bylaws, council reports and briefing notes

