

Abdul Malik Chukwudi (Mayoral Candidate)

My Vision for Advancing Food Security in Edmonton

Dear the Food Security and Food Justice Edmonton (FSFJE) Network,

Thank you for this important invitation and for your tireless work advancing food justice, dignity, and equity in our city. As a candidate for Mayor of Edmonton, I believe food security is not only a moral imperative but also a foundation of public health, economic resilience, and community wellbeing.

Below are my responses to your questions:

1. Vision and Leadership

The City of Edmonton has a critical leadership role in ensuring every resident has access to safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. Food security is a shared responsibility across all levels of government, but municipalities are the closest to the people — and therefore best positioned to coordinate, enable, and remove barriers.

I do not believe the City is currently doing enough. Food insecurity has worsened due to inflation, rising housing costs, and underinvestment in community infrastructure. As Mayor, I would advocate for a stronger City role — one that brings together community organizations, local producers, and policymakers to ensure food justice is embedded into all City decisions, from housing and zoning to social programs and climate adaptation.

2. Existing City Commitments

Plans like *Fresh: Edmonton's Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy*, *ConnectEdmonton*, and *The City Plan* contain valuable principles but lack measurable outcomes and sustained funding. I would introduce a **Food Security Action Framework** that aligns these plans with clear performance metrics, annual progress reporting, and accountability to community stakeholders.

This means tying City targets on local food production, waste reduction, and access to affordable food to our budgeting and land-use decisions — ensuring that food justice moves from strategy to real implementation.

3. Access to Land and Infrastructure

Expanding access to land and community infrastructure is key to local resilience. I would simplify permitting and leasing processes for **urban farms, rooftop gardens, and community gardens**, particularly on underutilized City land

Partner with schools, nonprofits, and Indigenous communities to create **shared community kitchens and food innovation hubs**.

Support **rooftop and greenhouse initiatives** in both new developments and retrofitted public buildings, enabling year-round local food production.

Food should not have to travel thousands of kilometers to reach Edmonton tables when we can empower local growers and small producers here at home.

4. Community-Led Food Initiatives

Community organizations and mutual aid networks have carried this city through tough times. The City should meet them where they are — not with red tape, but with resources and collaboration.

I would: Establish a **Community Food Partnership Fund** to support food hubs, cultural food programs, and grassroots distribution networks.

Provide **small grants and in-kind support** (such as land, storage, and logistics assistance) for community-led food initiatives.

Integrate **food literacy and nutrition programs** into recreation centres and libraries to build long-term capacity and reduce reliance on emergency food systems.

5. Intersection with Broader Social Issues

Food insecurity cannot be solved in isolation. It is directly tied to **housing affordability, income security, and mental health**.

I would advocate for **affordable housing development under \$500,000**, rent stabilization, and fair wages to ensure families can afford both housing and healthy food.

Expand **community mental health and addiction supports**, especially in areas affected by poverty and homelessness.

Promote **climate resilience** through urban farming, composting, and water conservation programs that protect local food systems from environmental shocks.

6. Advisory and Collaborative Approaches

I strongly support the creation of a **Social Good / Non-Profit / Social Services Advisory Panel** — and food security organizations must be at that table.

They are the frontline experts who understand community needs, cultural diversity, and systemic barriers. I would ensure FSFJE and similar organizations have a **permanent advisory voice** within City governance, with direct input into funding, policy, and emergency preparedness planning.

Building a food-secure Edmonton is about dignity, inclusion, and resilience. No child, senior, or family should have to choose between rent and food. As Mayor, I will work to make food justice a cornerstone of our city's renewal — through collaboration, local empowerment, and practical leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my vision, and for all you do to nourish our communities.

Warm regards,

Abdul Malik Chukwudi

Candidate for Mayor of Edmonton

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