

Northern Health Healthy Communities E-Brief

February 2023

Let's Talk about Food Affordability in Our Communities

Food costs are rising. How does this impact health? To answer this question, we need to think about the relationship between food costs, other fixed costs of living (e.g., housing), and household income. Household income is not keeping up with inflation rates and those lowest on the income spectrum are most affected.



Source: [Adobe Stock](#)

Everyone should have access to enough food that is nutritious, safe, and meaningful to them, but this is not the case. “Household food insecurity” is defined as worrying about having enough food or not having sufficient food due to financial constraints. Inadequate incomes force people to make difficult decisions, for example, between heating their home and buying healthy food.

The North reports both [high food costs](#) and [higher rates of household food insecurity](#) than other areas of BC. Many northern communities, especially those that are rural and remote, have added [costs and barriers to food access](#) as well. Every few years, the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) monitors and reports on food prices. To do this, they randomly select full-service grocery stores across the province and capture the costs of a specific list of foods. The 2022 report, Food Costing in BC, is expected to be released soon. This report, and new, more comprehensive [definitions for food security and food insecurity](#), can support community-level food security work.

Key messages:

- Poverty is the root cause of household food insecurity.
- Food-based initiatives and charities (e.g., community gardens, food banks) can provide benefits such as social connectedness and emergency relief but are unable to fix the root cause of food insecurity.
- Community-level planning and action focused on poverty reduction and improving equity are needed:
 - Consider how decisions and actions made will affect poverty and consider what other supports could help to improve local poverty or equity issues ([a social planning approach](#)).
 - Actions like public transportation subsidies may not directly affect food, but they do allow community members to have more money to spend on healthy food, or other health needs.
 - Connect with others working to reduce poverty in your community.
- Learn about and promote poverty-reducing and food security strategies such as:
 - [TogetherBC: British Columbia's Poverty Reduction Strategy](#)
 - [The Living Wage Campaign](#)
 - [Universal Healthy School Food Programs](#)

Resources (toolkits, reports, websites)

A Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks

This [resource](#) describes community-based strategies and initiatives to reduce poverty, including measures related to poverty and low income and strategies directed at early childhood development.

Organizational Assessment Tool for Substance Use and Stigma

This [tool](#) was developed in partnership with Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CASPSA) to help organizations identify policies, along with environmental and cultural factors that contribute to substance use stigma and discrimination. It can assist organizations in developing strategies for reducing stigma to create safer, more supportive environments and build policies and practices that are supportive and inclusive for staff, volunteers and individuals seeking care.

Respiratory Illness Resource for Indigenous Communities

The new resource “[Feeling Sick with Cold, Flu or COVID-19](#)” has tips to help stop the spread of respiratory illness and is located on the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) [Indigenous Community Resources](#) page.

Roundtable on Climate Change and Health with Dr. Theresa Tam

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Public Health Agency (PHAC) co-hosted a roundtable event with Dr. Theresa Tam, the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, and speakers that are doing climate change work in BC. The [webinar recording](#) features Tea Creek, an award-winning Indigenous-led, culturally safe, land-based Indigenous food sovereignty and trades training initiative in Northwest BC.

Events & Learning Opportunities

School Garden Mentorship Program

Dates: February 2 to October 12, 2023

Farm to School BC is offering a series of free monthly after-school [online workshops](#) to support K-12 educators in BC with planning, creating, or revitalizing a school garden.

ISPARC Engagement and Education Webinar Series

Dates: February 6 to 9, 2023

The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council (ISPARC) Engagement & Education Project [webinar series](#) will cover topics that affect young women and girls in their participation in sport and physical activity and provide tools to address the safety and well-being of female participants within programs.

BCRPA Strategic Snapshot Session: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Date: February 8, 2023

BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is hosting a free [webinar](#) with short presentations on promising practices and lessons learned from projects designed to support equity, diversity, and inclusion. Gather information to help inform recreation and parks planning, projects, facilities, or staffing in your community.

Northern Indigenous Food Ways: Learning Circle Series for K-12 Educators

Date: February 15, 2023

Farm to School BC is hosting a free [webinar series](#) for educators, led by local Indigenous Knowledge Holders, to support educators with learning about Indigenous food ways and teachings. The next session is hosted by Dr. Daniel Sims, University of BC Associate Professor, who will share how contact and colonialism have affected Indigenous food ways.

Farm to School BC Planting the Seed Conference: Call for Proposals

Deadline: February 15, 2023

Farm to School BC welcomes [proposals](#) for their first conference, Planting the Seed, on May 17 to 19 at the University of British Columbia. All individuals or groups that support food literacy for K-12 school communities are invited to submit ideas for a workshop, poster, short talk or story, or original research oral presentation by February 15. Bursaries may be available to help cover travel costs and accommodations.

BCRPA Strategic Snapshot Session: Reconciliation

Date: March 1, 2023

BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) is hosting a free [webinar](#) with short presentations about the process of reconciliation in BCRPA member communities throughout BC. Gather information to help inform your community's unique approach to reconciliation through recreation and parks projects, initiatives, services, and facilities.

Funding Opportunities

Connecting Communities BC

Deadline: February 15, 2023

The [Connectivity Funding Program](#) supports expanding high-speed internet services to under-served rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

2023 First Nations Harm Reduction Grants

Deadline: February 17, 2023

First Nations communities, First Nations health service organizations, and peer/drug user groups may be eligible for [funding](#) to provide a community-driven harm reduction event or initiative. To be eligible, the event or initiative must be held before March 31, 2024.

Access to Action: Increasing Access to Physical Activity for Canadian Students

Deadline: February 28, 2023

The [Access to Action Grant Program](#) supports schools and equity-deserving children and youth in delivering and accessing high quality sport and physical activity programming before, during, and after school. Schools, school divisions, and community sport organizations working with schools are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$20,000 for projects in the 2022 to 2023 school year.

Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grants

Deadline: March 1, 2023

The [Garden Grants](#) program provides a \$3000 grant to support new or existing edible educational gardens. All Canadian K-12 school or non-profit organizations that serve school-age children can apply.

Imagine Community Grants

Deadline: March 3, 2023

The Northern Health [Imagine Community Grant](#) supports community-based projects with a focus on mental wellness, community diversity, harm reduction, climate health action, food security, active living, and/or community safety. Northern BC community organizations, schools, Indigenous organizations, and local government are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$10,000.

Indigenous Centre for Cumulative Effects Community Funding Program

Deadline: March 6, 2023

The Indigenous Centre for Cumulative Effects (ICCE) invites Indigenous communities and organizations to apply for funding to support cumulative effects initiatives. The main objective of ICCE's [Community Funding Program](#) (CFP) is to support community-led projects to help build and enhance the capacity of Indigenous communities for cumulative effects management, monitoring, and assessment in their territories, using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach.

Rapid Housing Initiative Funding

Deadline: March 15, 2023

The [Rapid Housing Initiative](#) provides funding for local governments looking to build new housing and/or purchase existing buildings that will be rehabilitated or converted into permanent affordable housing.

Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program

Deadline: March 17, 2023

The intent of the [Poverty Reduction Planning & Action program](#) is to support local governments in reducing poverty at the local level and to support the Province's poverty reduction strategy, TogetherBC.

Community Gaming Grants

Deadline: April 30, 2023

[Community Gaming Grants](#) provide \$140 million annually to not-for-profit organizations throughout B.C., to support their delivery of ongoing programs and services that meet the needs of their communities. This page includes information about these grants, including eligibility criteria, grant amounts, how and when to apply and more.

Reclaiming My Language: A Course for Silent Speakers

Deadline: May 31, 2023

[Reclaiming my Language: A Course for Silent Speakers](#) is an Indigenous-developed program to support Silent Speakers to reclaim their language and begin speaking again. First Peoples' Cultural Council provides funding of up to \$35,000. BC First Nations communities and Indigenous organizations are eligible to apply.

Climate Fund Finder

Deadline: Ongoing

Planning a climate action project? Need financial support? Not sure where to start? The [Funding Finder](#) is the tool for you. By answering a few questions, you'll be on your way to learning which programs fit your program best. If you're still looking for project ideas, the Funding Finder can show you a range of possibilities to help spark your imagination.

Northern Healthy Communities Fund

Deadline: Ongoing

Local governments, Indigenous communities, and non-profit organizations that provide supports and services to people in expanding communities near the Coastal Gaslink and LNG Canada projects can apply for project funding through the [Northern Healthy Communities Fund](#).

Northern Health Stories

Attaining a work permit in Canada as a healthcare worker

One of the privileges I have working as a recruiter with Northern Health is that I get to see the exciting journeys people take when choosing to work in rural healthcare. Some of the most compelling examples have been assisting healthcare workers join Northern Health from areas outside Canada...[continue reading](#).

See the latest stories at stories.northernhealth.ca

E-Brief Information

The Healthier Northern Communities [E-Brief](#) is produced by [Northern Health's regional Population and Preventive Public Health program](#).

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