

Rural Food Charter Development Guide

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In association with Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, FoodNet Ontario, and Huron Perth Farm to Table Network, this food charter development guide has been created with the purpose of providing informative resource regarding food security, food policies, food strategies, and food charters.

Are You Interested in Having ...

Flourishing Farms?

- Local food and agriculture production that not only nourishes Huron County, but provides food to other provincial, national, and international markets?

Food for all?

- A sufficient quantity of healthy, wholesome food options for all residents of Huron County?

Environmental sustainability?

- Decreased greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprints, and an increased emphasis on the importance of personal food practices?

If you answered YES to any of the above, the development of a Food Charter will be of interest to you!

“Food is recognized and celebrated by all!” – City of Kawartha Lakes Food Charter

Definitions



"Food Systems" - Michigan State University

Food Security exists when all people, at all times, have access to affordable, culturally appropriate food through just and healthy systems for sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

- *Canada's Action Plan for Food Security, 1998*

Food System is used to describe the entire set of processes involved in the production and consumption of food. It includes everything from production to consumption, and back again.

Food Policy is a decision made by an organization that affects how food is produced, served, protected, and disposed of. Food policy is a vehicle to help move us toward community food security. Policies define what needs to be done, who will do it, and how it will be completed.


A **Food Strategy** provides direction and guidance to implement current national and local policy on the problems in society posed by our current food system. A strategy pulls together the thinking, research, good practice and action around the topic of food.



"Canadian food security policies and programming will have greatest impact if they support smallholder farmers' efforts to build resilient agricultural and food systems that are based on local solutions, able to feed communities, and are strong enough to withstand shocks."

- Gord Hume, *The Local Food Revolution*

What is a Food Charter?

- ✧ A food charter is a document to help guide policy makers, communities, and residents with regards to good. It comes about through public consultations and discussion groups where various stakeholders express their needs, concern, and visions about the future sustainability of our food system.
 - ✧ These ideas form the basis of their own unique, local, community food charter.
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- ✧ When the local municipal council adopts a food charter, it becomes a public document to guide decision-making.



- ✧ According to Gord Hume, author of *The Local Food Revolution*, a food charter encourages farmers to direct more of their production to local markets; the purchase of local food by restaurants in the area; enhanced composting; and the adoption of nutrition education programs in local schools.

Food Charter Process

Food security remains a relatively new endeavor for Canadian provincial and territorial governments, where policy development is only beginning to take place.

1. Form a **Food Policy Council**, or committee of members dedicated to creating a sustainable food system for the region or community
2. Initiate and build support for the development of a **Food Charter** through research, promotion, and the collection of external resources (grants).
3. Hold **Food Forums** in the community to discuss the creation of a local food strategy, including the Food Charter.
4. Develop a **draft** Food Charter, followed by **community consultation**.
5. **Finalize** and **present** Food Charter to local government, municipal council, and other community stakeholders to encourage adoption. This includes building online support via Internet.
6. **Incorporate** Food Charter into all aspects of community planning activities, educational programs, and recreational facilities.



Food Charter Benefits

There are a multitude of benefits that extend from the development of a food charter; all of which include benefits to community members, stakeholders, and local businesses.

✧ Activate Civic Engagement

- Public participation creates opportunities for residents to be involved in public policy.

✧ Articulate an Overall Vision for Food Policy

- Brings together many different policy streams including health officials, city council, sport and recreation, as well as local business/restaurant owners.

✧ Facilitate Collaboration

- Provides opportunities for leadership, vision, and the expansion of traditional thinking roles between various individuals.

✧ Catalyze Actions

- Spin off activities and programs from the Food Charter directly benefit the community and promote strong households.

✧ Benefit the Environment

- Promote the importance of personal food practices, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions.

Current Food Charters

✎ Durham Region

✎ Manitoba

✎ Sudbury

✎ Guelph-Wellington Region

✎ City of Kawartha Lakes

✎ Toronto

✎ Vancouver

..... and many more !

What Will a Food Charter Do?

✧ Address the Affordability of Food

- Specifically with regards to farmers incomes and the amount of food dollar returning to the producer.

✧ Address Access to Transportation

- Develop an appropriate infrastructure system that enables easy access to healthy, locally produced food.

✧ Focus and Promote the Nutritious Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

- Develop knowledge exchange programs that emphasize these benefits for community members of all ages.

✧ A Summarizing Document

- Identify and outline the existing programs and initiatives in place

✧ Address Next Steps

- Extension programs including food preparation skills, food preservation methods, and the importance of fresh food vs. packaged.

Who Can Use a Food Charter?

- ✓ Families
- ✓ Community Groups
- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Nutrition Groups
- ✓ Municipal Governments
- ✓ Workplaces
- ✓ Institutions

References

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