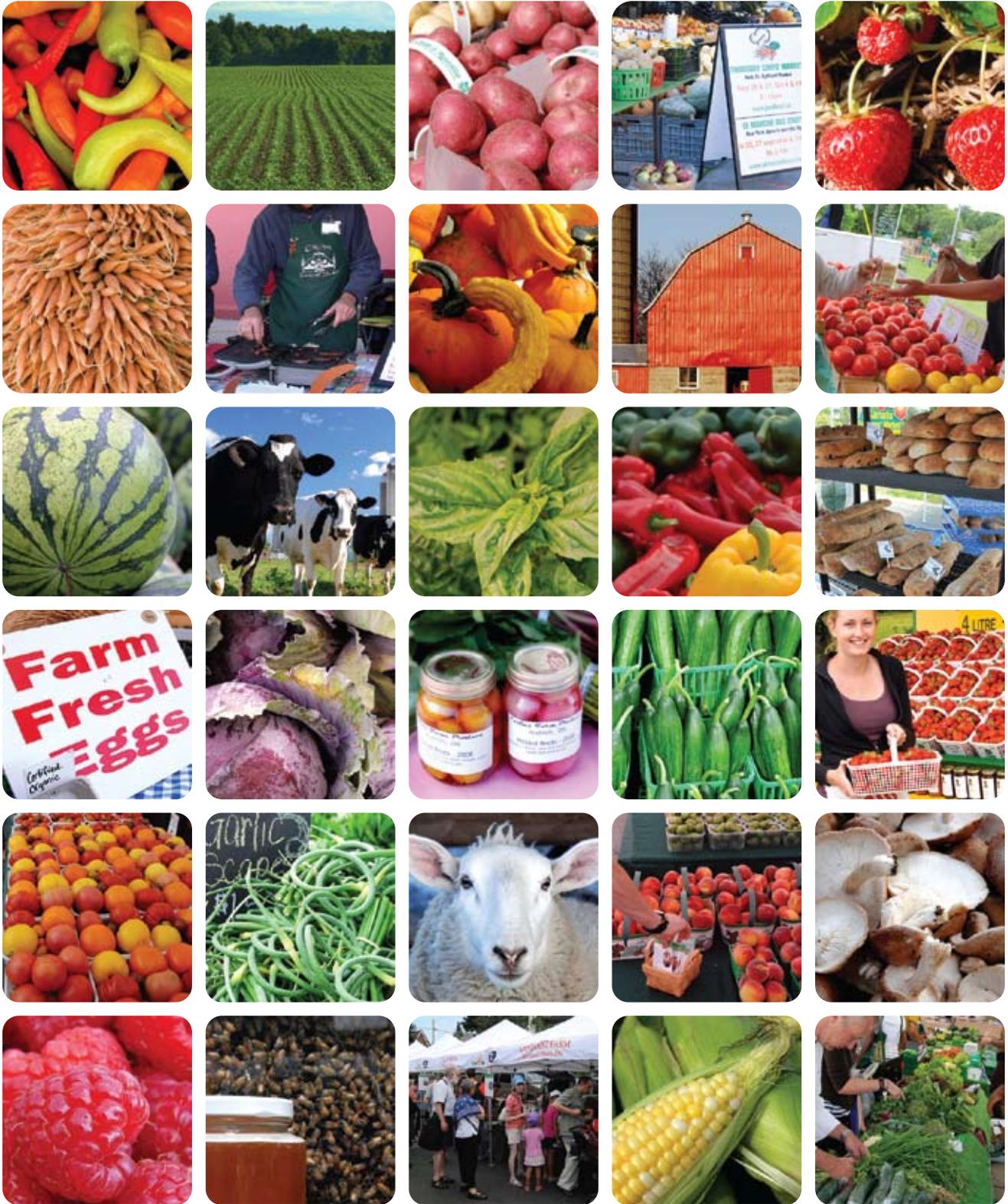


Where's the Food?



Finding out about Food in Your Community

Where's the Food?

Finding out about Food in Your Community

Ottawa, Ontario

Thank you for your interest in finding out about this project!

This guide was created by the project team of Food for All: An Ottawa Community Response. Its development was a collaborative effort between university and community team members of Food For All. The guide was piloted in 2 Ottawa communities, Sandy Hill and Fitzroy Harbour, and has been edited based on those experiences.



Food for All began as a 2-year project in March 2009, funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research. It received an additional 1 year funding supplement in 2011, and will continue at Just Food thereafter.

Through this project, we seek to understand and share knowledge, and take steps in the Ottawa area to meet food and farming needs that are identified in different communities. The core components of the Food for All project are:

- The development of municipal food policy recommendations through community engagement
- Building community capacity around food security issues and responses
- The development and pilot of a Community Food Security Assessment (this guide)

The team wishes to thank Suzanne Pigeon, for her work on research and development of this guide. Photos, unless otherwise noted, are used with permission of Tracy Lamb, Mopani Communications.

May, 2011



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www.justfood.ca/foodforall

Welcome!

This booklet is a guide for a group of people who share a common neighbourhood and are interested in food issues. The questions will help your group to find out what food outlets and services exist in the community, and what doesn't exist - but perhaps should. It will help develop a clearer picture of food in your community. At the end of the day, while the quality of information gathered is important, even more important is what we learn together as we share what we know.

If you are interested in food and your community, read on.

Participating in a *Where's the Food* research team can help to build connections within your community, highlight what your community is already doing well, and identify ways that your community can take action to enhance the food services and resources that are available.

Assessments also contribute to our overall picture of food in Ottawa, and your neighbourhood is an important piece of that puzzle! The more we learn about our city and its many communities, the more capable we become to take action to build a better food system in our region.

Everybody is welcome to participate, and each research team is supported by Food for All, as well as a partnering organization that works in the community on a regular basis. Visit the website, or contact us, to find out which neighbourhoods are currently working on a *Where's the Food* assessment.

For questions about the Food for All project or other Just Food activities, check out our website, www.justfood.ca/foodforall or call 613-236-9300 x301.

Thank you for being a part of this project!



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Glossary

The following key terms are found at various places throughout the Toolkit.

Neighbourhood: The physical space in which a group of people live, work, go to school, and play. This can be as small as a single building, or a much larger geographic area. Neighbourhoods can be defined in any way that residents see fit.

Community: A group of people that have something in common that binds them together in some way. A community is held together by a mutual interest, shared physical space, or common understanding because of shared experience. In this guide, we use the term 'community' to refer to the group of people that this assessment considers.

Healthy Food: In this guide, healthy food refers to appropriate amounts of the foods that meet daily nutrient needs and promote health. Healthy food contributes to overall health and vitality, and minimizes the risks to obesity, as well as diseases like heart disease, cancers, and diabetes.

Local Food: There are many different ways of defining local food. In this guide, our local food region refers to food in the City of Ottawa, the Counties of Prescott-Russell, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry, Leeds & Grenville, Lanark, Renfrew, and Frontenac in Ontario, and the City of Gatineau and the Outaouais in Quebec.

Community Food Security: Community food security exists when all community residents have physical and economic access to sufficient, culturally acceptable and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Community food security implies community responsibility for building a local and sustainable food system that enhances everything from personal self-reliance to global social justice.



Household Food Insecurity: Household food insecurity refers to families or households that do not have a stable supply of healthy, adequate, and appropriate foods. There are a number of different ways for measuring household food insecurity, including using statistics on income and the cost of living, as well as conducting surveys or focus groups.

Access: In this toolkit, access is used in different ways to describe the ability to get food. It can refer to physical accessibility (i.e. whether a location is wheelchair accessible), economic access (i.e. whether food is affordable), or availability (i.e. if there are no food stores, a community does not have good access to food).

Community Food Assessment: A process in which an organization or a group of community members works together to explore food in their community, with the intent of assessing the options, services, spaces, and programs that affect community food security.

LICO: LICO is a definition used by Statistics Canada and refers to the “low-income cut off”. It is the level of income used to determine whether or not a family or household is considered to be in poverty compared to the rest of the population in the area in which they live.

Ottawa Neighbourhood Study: A research study conducted by the University of Ottawa that compiles a variety of data on all Ottawa neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood profiles and other information are available online at www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca.

School Food Policies: Some schools have policies around food. These may outline anything from the type and sources of foods used in the cafeteria, times of day that food is eaten, how students are to be involved in the preparation of food, to policies around school gardens, extra-curricular activities, and how food is used as a fundraiser for the school.

Canada’s Nutritious Food Basket: The national nutritious food basket (NNFB) is a tool for monitoring the cost and affordability of a nutritious diet. Around 60 different foods are used in the NNFB to represent a healthy diet for males and females in various age groups. Information from the NNFB is used by local public health units to collect the price of the items and to determine the cost of the basket for each gender and age group.

Farm-Gate Sales and Farm Stands: These two terms are similar but distinct. Farm stands refers to a stand located off the farm where you can buy products directly from the farmers. Farm stands can be located anywhere, and are often found in urban areas. Farm-gate Sales, on the other hand, refer to the practice of driving onto the farm to purchase products directly from the farmer on their farm.



FOOD IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



Section 1: Getting Started - An Overview of Our Community



This section is to help your group get started, and develop a broad picture of your community by identifying some key factors that influence your community.

Getting Started

To get a *Where's the Food* research team started in your community, approach Food for All to see if there is a group already in progress or in the planning stages. It is important that each research team has at least one trained facilitator, usually from an organization or group that works in your neighbourhood. Food for All will help to organize this.

As a member of the research team, you are expected to stay in communication with the facilitator, attend team meetings if you can, and to participate in the research tasks and discussion. Everybody is welcome. Each research team may choose to work a little differently, but the process will likely include some (or all) of the following steps:

- Letting others in your neighbourhood know about the research that will be taking place in the community
- Holding an introductory meeting to get to know one another and discuss the project, and the different research components of the toolkit
- Dividing up the research tasks and gathering data – this may also include prioritizing which sections are most important for your neighbourhood
- Meeting together as a group to discuss your findings and determining whether there are more components to research
- Discussing how the information that your team has collected compares to what your group knows and experiences in the community



- Documenting your team’s work using maps, photographs, or by compiling a summary of the information collected
- Making this information available to your wider community through a community meeting, newsletter articles, flyers, presentations, or by posting results online
- Taking action by organizing or joining food initiatives in or around your community



(Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, 2010)

Collecting Information in the Community

You don’t need to be an expert to collect information in the community - everybody can do community-based research! Aside from gathering information, research can also help to build connections in your community.

When approaching people, organizations, and businesses to gather information, introduce yourself and the *Where’s the Food* project. If possible, make use of connections that already exist between your team members and the organizations or groups that you will contact. Let them know that you are participating in a community project about food issues in the neighbourhood, and that the results that your team gathers can be made available to them when the project concludes. You can present them with an information letter that includes contact information for your research team’s facilitator(s), as well as contact information for the Food for All project. If they have questions that you cannot answer, direct them to contact your research team facilitator or Food for All. A clear and up-front introduction will build connections in the community, and will make it easier for you to gather the information that you are looking for.

Be sensitive to the working language of the school, business, or organization that you are contacting. For example, it may be a challenge for a French speaking school to provide information in English, and vice-versa. Planning these details in advance can save a lot of time, help to build strong relationships and lead to greater success for your project team.

Once you have collected information about the location of the various services, programs, and resources that you are assessing, you can use the OC Transpo website to estimate how long it would take to get to each location by bus, and estimate the cycling or walking time from your neighbourhood using Google maps.

If you’re unsure - ask your group or your team’s facilitator. Community-based research is fun but sometimes it’s not straightforward; questions are always welcome!

Possible Outcomes

There are many different possible outcomes of your work. The research is meant to help identify possible actions that could strengthen your community's food resources and services. If there is need and interest in your community, your *Where's the Food* research team can play a role in establishing any number of food initiatives – some examples might include:

- Spreading awareness about the food programs and resources that already exist in your community but that may not be well known
- Hosting workshops, film screenings or information sessions about gardening, preserving food, or other food issues in your neighbourhood
- Building a new community garden, or a garden at a local school
- Establishing new distribution sites for the Ottawa Good Food Box, a CSA, or a farmer-run food box program
- Starting a group to pick berries, forage for wild edibles, or do gleaning
- Supporting your neighbourhood emergency food program through a food- or volunteer-drive, or by growing a row in your garden to donate to your local food bank

Spearheading a food initiative doesn't have to mean starting from scratch. There are a number of resources and organizations that are already active on many of these issues in Ottawa. Food for All can help your group to get in touch with these people and the resources that will support you in doing this work. And, if your group decides not to pursue any follow-up actions, your work will have contributed to an overall picture of food issues in your neighbourhood, and in the Ottawa area.

A Picture of Your Community

A great deal of statistical information and neighbourhood maps have been gathered and compiled by the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS). Your community may define your boundaries differently than the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study does. Start with this data, and then think about how your community matches this data, or what might be inaccurate, based on what you know about your community. Statistical data and maps will be useful when it is time to discuss the rest of the information that you will collect.

Mapping your Community Food Security

Maps are great resources for looking at food in our communities. The use of maps gives readers important information quickly and effectively. Maps can show a variety of details, from the location of community gardens to the distribution of grocery stores. They can be used to indicate which food resources are available in an area and which are lacking, but often, official maps do not include information that is important in understanding community food security.

In Ottawa, maps of food resources for each neighbourhood are available through the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study website: www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca and will be provided to your community. The Ottawa Neighbourhood Study has compiled community maps that include information about services such as the one pictured below, of the Sandy Hill neighbourhood. This guide asks you to compile and collect information regarding the location of food services, organizations, and activities in your community that might not already be on the maps provided. Keep track of locations and addresses and a more complete map can be created at the end of your team's research.



Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2010

Statistical Information on Your Community

The Ottawa Neighbourhood Study has also compiled statistical information which can help to paint an overall picture of your community. Statistical information on your community will be provided to you in the first community meeting as a place to start.

A Picture of Your Community

Community Characteristics

Population Size
Age Groups
Ethnic Groups
Percent and Makeup of Recent Immigrants
Percent of lone parent families
Percent who have completed different levels of education
Percent of who speak English, French, non-official language
Percent in the work force and unemployment rate
Percentage of farmers by occupation

Income

Average income in neighbourhood
Percentage of neighbourhood residents that spend more than 30% on housing
Percentage of neighbourhood residents, children, and seniors living below the LICO

Community Health

Percentage of children in the community with low birth weight
Rates of obesity/overweight individuals in the community
Proportion of neighbourhood population that consumes at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day
Percent who are in good or excellent self-rated health
Percent who are inactive in leisure time

Our Physical Community

Area
Housing type
Greenspace area
Area in parks, area in community gardens, and area in farmland
Bike/Walking paths
Public and Separate Schools

Food Retail, Availability and Accessibility

Grocery Stores
Specialty Stores
Convenience Stores
Fast-Food outlets
Restaurants
Distance of each from the population centre of the neighbourhood
Density: Number of each per thousand population



Section 2: How are we as a community growing, gathering and preparing food?



This section includes information on how to assess food in the community by looking at community gardening, gleaning, collective kitchens, and school food initiatives.

Community Gardening

What is it?

Community gardens are shared spaces where community members come together to grow fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other plants. Community gardens vary in appearance, and plants might be grown in any free and fertile space ranging in size from small window boxes to large fields. In cities without a lot of greenspace, community gardens may be on rooftops.



(Ross & Simces, 2008)

Why is it important?

Community gardens provide local, fresh, and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Community residents work together to create something that they will all benefit from. Food from community gardens is often more affordable than purchasing the same quality of food from stores. Community garden space is more critical in neighbourhoods where people do not have large enough (or any) backyards to do their own gardening. However, they can also be important for suburban and rural communities, as people of all ages can learn how to grow healthy plants by sharing skills and information while interacting with others. Community gardens can thus play an important social role in communities. Assessing community gardens can show the size and location of gardens, as well as how well the gardens are being used, the level of demand for additional gardens, and possible greenspace available for gardening.



(Ross & Simces, 2008)

How can your community assess community gardening?

To assess community gardening in your neighbourhood, start by contacting the garden coordinator of any gardens that are a part of the Community Gardening Network. It may be difficult to assess other forms of communal gardening that takes place in the neighbourhood. Discuss with your group what types of gardening are important in your neighbourhood. You can also call Community Associations or Community Houses, cultural and religious organizations, and other community centres to see if they are aware of informal community gardening that may exist. Sometimes, these calls may help to identify if there is interest or space in the community to start a new garden, as well.

Community Gardening	
Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information in Ottawa
How many community gardens are there within your community and where are they located?	Community Gardening Network; Garden Coordinators
If there are no community gardens in your community, what is the location and distance to the community garden(s) closest to your neighbourhood (in km)? How long does it take to walk there? To bus there?	Google maps OC Transpo routes
Average Size of Plots (measured in metres)	Speak with the Garden Coordinator or Gardeners directly; Site Visits
Are there food bank plots in the Community Garden, if so, how much food is harvested (by weight) and where does it go? Are there children's garden plots?	Speak with the organizers of the Food Bank plot directly; Speak with Garden Coordinator
How many people are on a waiting list to access a community garden in your neighbourhood?	Garden coordinators; Community Gardening Network
Are there other informal communal gardens in your neighbourhood?	Ask around in the community; discuss within your group



Food in Schools

What does this refer to?

Schools can play an important role in community food security, not just for students, but for the entire community. Some examples of school food initiatives include: school gardens and greenhouses, student meal programs, school kitchens, and classes on food and nutrition.

Why is it important?

School food initiatives can provide students with a sense of community while delivering components of the educational curriculum in a hands-on way. By being directly involved in growing, harvesting, and cooking food, students learn about food and the environment, while also building skills in cooperation and teamwork which can be used throughout their lives. School food initiatives can also help to promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition. Participating in school food initiatives can be beneficial for more than just students – parents and seniors can be involved to share their skills and to learn together with their children. In some cases, schools may be able to provide kitchen or garden space for community members as well as students and their families to meet, learn, and take action on food issues.

How can your community assess this?

To begin, refer back to the list of schools from Section One. This list may not contain private schools – such as Waldorf, Montessori, or cultural schools, charter schools or homeschooling associations. If there are these types of schools in your community, it is important to include them when appropriate.

Before calling the school, find out if anyone in your group has kids at a particular school and could make a direct connection with a teacher or principal. It can be much easier to get information that way. If not, then simply call the main number for the school and ask who is best to speak to about some of these questions. Refer back to the suggestions for collecting information in the community in the **Getting Started** section.



(Barbara, 2009)

Food in Schools

Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information in Ottawa
<p>Basic information about the schools in your neighbourhood: Location – address Ages/grades taught School Board/type of school (eg. Waldorf, CEPEO, etc) School population</p>	<p>Start with list from ONS; contact schools or school boards directly. Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>
<p>School gardens: Are there school gardens? Where are they located? What size are they? What foods are produced and how are they used? How many students and teachers are involved? Is there wider family or community participation? If so, approximately how many people and how often?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p> <p>Canadian Organic Growers – Ottawa chapter of Growing Up Organic</p>
<p>School greenhouses Is there a greenhouse at the school? What foods are produced and how are they used? How many students and teachers are involved? Is there wider family or community participation? If so, approximately how many people and how often?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>
<p>Kitchen facilities Does the school have kitchen or commercial kitchen facilities? If there is a commercial kitchen, how is it currently used? Are there any school activities or courses in which students and teachers use the kitchens – if so, how many people involved? Does the wider community have access to using these facilities? If so, how many people and how often? If not, could they have access, and how would a community group organize this?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>



<p>Food-related courses and curriculum: Does the school offer any food-related courses or curriculum? If so, how many students/teachers take part in these courses? Is there wider community participation in any of these courses? If so, how many people and how often?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>
<p>Other Food-Related activities, programs, projects: Are there any other food-related activities, programs, events or projects taking place at the school? What type of activity, program, or project? How many teachers, students, and staff are involved? Is there wider community participation in any of these activities? If so, how many people and how often?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>
<p>School Food Policies: Do any of the schools have school food policies specific to their own school (ie. Not including Ontario Ministry of Education food policies or policies put in place by the school board)? <i>If yes, please ask for a copy.</i></p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly</p>
<p>Cafeterias and Vending Machines Is there a cafeteria in the school? If so, who runs it, and what types of food and drinks are sold? Are there vending machines in the school? If so, what types of food or drinks do they sell?</p>	<p>Survey of schools in neighbourhood: Call schools directly For types of food, you may refer to the Food Availability Checklist.</p>

Nutritious Food Programs in Schools

What are they?

School meal programs address food insecurity by providing students with free or reduced-price, nutritious meals before, during, or after school hours. These programs can be an important supplement for those students who would not otherwise get enough – or healthy enough – food elsewhere. Some schools may provide full meals, such as breakfast or lunch. Other schools might supplement students’ meals - for example with snack or milk programs. Some schools will keep a food cupboard stocked for emergencies or for when students forget their lunch.

How can your community assess food gathering?

There is no one way to determine the extent of these activities. However, after the information has been collected, you can discuss and analyze what the information can tell you about these types of questions:

- Are these types of activities important in your community?
- If so, are there ways that we could increase these types of activity?
- Can the people who know how to identify wild edibles in your community teach others?
- Is there a way to increase garden sharing?
- Do people know where food that can be gathered grows - and can this information be shared with others?

Community Gleaning Projects

What is it?

Gleaning is when people harvest food that would otherwise go to waste; this food may be in fields, on fruit trees, or thrown away. It is a hands-on activity and it is usually driven by volunteers in the community. Sometimes, community food organizations will work together with local farmers and community volunteers to organize the harvest of leftover produce straight from the fields. In other cases, a group of neighbours or an organized community group might work together to harvest berries, fruit or maple syrup. Any number of activities can be classified as community gleaning projects – it will depend on the type of food that grows in the community, and the way that people organize to collect it.



(Cone, LLC, 2009)

Why is it important?

People participate in gleaning because it is an opportunity to access food that would otherwise not be eaten. It is also an opportunity to work together as a community and to learn about how different types of foods can be harvested and eaten.

How can your community assess gleaning?

Community gleaning projects are difficult to assess. In most cases, gleaning projects aren't formalized or advertised widely. To assess community gleaning projects, you may wish to ask around within your community, put a notice in the community paper (a simple example below) and we've included some indicators here which you may choose to use.

Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information in Ottawa
Are there community gleaning projects in your neighbourhood?	Walk through neighbourhood, Community Newspaper, Posters
Are there farms in or near your neighbourhood that allow gleaning?	Buy Local Food Guide - call area farmers directly
Are there areas in your neighbourhood where food is growing that could be harvested (or areas that could be used for community gardens)? If so, who owns or manages these areas?	Walk through neighbourhood to identify areas; Land Registry Office for ownership information
Are there farms in or near your neighbourhood that participate in the Community Harvest program of the Ottawa Food Bank?	Ottawa Food Bank - Community Harvest Ontario program

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Here is an example, from Fitzroy Harbour of an ad about gleaning that ran in the *West Carleton Review*.



Fruit, veggies, maple syrup?

Study seeks locals who share produce

It may be something as simple as a farmer who gives away excess fruits or vegetables. If you participate as an individual or group in these gleaning activities anywhere in the Fitzroy Harbour area, please email nevil.hunt@metroland.com or call 613-623-6571 so your information can be included in the study.

A food study focused on Fitzroy Harbour is trying to track down gleaners – growers or consumers who harvest or collect wild or excess foods.

If you share locally-grown food or enjoy the extra food from local farms – sometimes called gleaning – a study of the food eaten around Fitzroy Harbour wants to know. The data will be used to establish where Harbourites get their food.

613-623-4284 ROYAL LEPAGE
 E-mail: t.stavenow@bell.net
 Terry Stavenow, Broker
 GALE REAL ESTATE
 INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED, BROKER

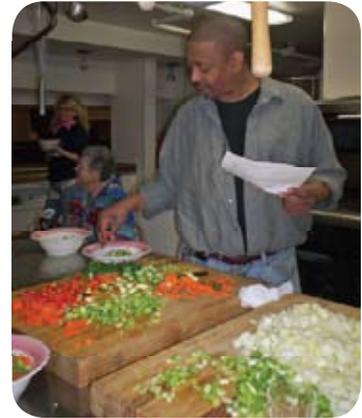
ROYAL LEPAGE
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 28

IMMEDIATE OCCUPANCY
 CLOSE TO RECREATION

Community Kitchens

What are they?

Community kitchens (also referred to as collective kitchens) are shared kitchen spaces where people come together to prepare and eat food. Some community kitchen programs might include additional components such as preserving food in season, learning about a particular style of cooking, learning how to start a food-related business, or learning English or French as a second language. Often, community kitchens bring together a group of people that share common food practices or needs – such as single people cooking for one, families cooking for young children, or people cooking for diabetics. However, community kitchens may be used for any kind of gathering that features communal food preparation and eating.



(Furbush, 2008)

Why are they important?

Community kitchens are great initiatives because people can share their knowledge with one another to improve cooking skills, learn new ways to save money on groceries, and swap recipes, tips, and practices. They can also provide positive social experiences, and often, friendships are made as people socialize and learn from one another in this unique experience.

How can your community assess them?

Community kitchens can be difficult to assess, because they may be run as smaller programs within larger community organizations, or they may be informal activities organized by a community group or faith group. Asking around at organizations, community associations, and other community groups may be the best way to find out about community kitchens in your neighbourhood.

Community Kitchens	
Potential Indicators	How to get information
How many community kitchens are there in the neighbourhood, and where are they located? What food skills or needs do these community kitchens focus on?	Food Link Directory Ask around in the Community

Section 3: Where do we buy food?



This section contains information on how to assess different options for purchasing food in your community, including buying directly from farmers and at farmers' markets, participating in buying clubs and food box programs, and buying from stores in or near your community.

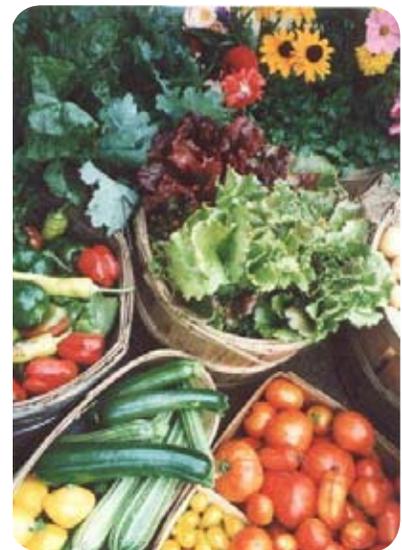
Community Shared or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

What is it?

In CSA programs, a farmer grows food for a predetermined group of community members. Community members enter into an agreement of purchase with the farmer prior to the start of the growing season. CSA farms then offer weekly delivery or pick-up of vegetables, and sometimes fruit, herbs, meat, and other products. This arrangement helps local farmers to cover some of the up-front costs of the farm's yearly operating budget, like labour and seed.

Why is it important?

A CSA partnership provides economic stability for farmers, and high quality, local produce for community residents. Community members are invested in the costs, risks, and rewards of growing food along with the farmers. Participating in a CSA can also be a valuable learning experience, as members are often provided an opportunity to visit or volunteer on the farm at different times throughout the growing season.



(CSA-MI, 2010)

How can you assess it?

The Buy Local Food Guide contains a list of CSA farms in the Ottawa region. Some list drop off points in the city. For others, you may need to call the CSA farmer directly or visit their website to see if they deliver to a point in or near your neighbourhood.

Community Supported/Shared Agriculture (CSA)	
Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information in Ottawa
Are there any CSA farms in your neighbourhood? If so, how many people from your community are involved?	Just Food for location; Contact CSA farmer
Are there any CSA drop-off points in your community? If so, how many people from your neighbourhood are involved in the CSA? If not, where is the nearest CSA drop-off point to your community? Are any people from your neighbourhood involved in this CSA?	Just Food website; Contact CSA drop-off point coordinator as determined through the CSA farmer

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Farmers' Markets, Farm-gate Sales, and Farm Stands

What are they?

Farmers' markets, farm-gate sales, and farm stands are all places where fresh produce and prepared foods are sold directly to the public by local farmers. Farmers' markets are most often in urban areas, while farm-gate sales occur at the actual farm itself. Farm stands can be found in a variety of locations.



Why are they important?

By selling directly to consumers at farmers' markets, farm stands, and through farm-gate sales, farmers receive a greater return than they would receive by selling to grocery suppliers, and consumers benefit from being able to purchase high quality food. The farmers can also provide consumers with direct information about the food they are buying and how it was produced. There are financial spin-offs into the community when we support local economic development. Additionally, "food miles" are decreased compared to larger food systems, where produce often travels great distances from other countries before it arrives in our communities.

How can your community assess them?

Use the Buy Local Food Guide to get information about the Farmers' Markets, Farm-gate Sales, and Farm Stands in and near your community. In addition to the indicators below, you can use the **Food Availability Checklist** in this toolkit. It asks questions about the types of foods that are available – this tool can be used at a variety of food retail locations, including farmers' markets, grocery stores, corner stores, etc. The Food Availability Checklist is described in greater detail in the Food Options section.

Farmers' Markets, Farm-Gate Sales, and Farm Stands

Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information
<p>Where is the closest farmers' market(s) to your community located?</p> <p>When is it open (days/hours/months)?</p> <p>Is it within walking distance (how many km)?</p> <p>If not, is there public transportation available? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there?</p> <p>How many farmers attend the farmers' market(s) in or closest to your neighbourhood?</p> <p>If you are in a rural area, how many of these farms are located within your community?</p>	<p>Just Food's Buy Local Food Guide;</p> <p>Attend Farmers' Market and make observations;</p> <p>Google Maps;</p> <p>OC Transpo</p>
<p>Are there any farm stands in your community?</p> <p>If not, where are the nearest farm stands to your community?</p> <p>Are these farm stands within walking distance (how many km)?</p> <p>If not, is there public transportation available? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there?</p> <p>When are they open?</p>	<p>Just Food's Buy Local Food Guide</p> <p>Visit the farm stands;</p> <p>Google maps;</p> <p>OC Transpo</p>
<p>Are there any farms with farm-gate sales in or near your community?</p> <p>If so, are they within walking distance (how many km)?</p> <p>If not, is there public transportation available? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there?</p> <p>When are they open?</p>	<p>Just Food's Buy Local Food Guide</p> <p>Visit the farms;</p> <p>Google maps;</p> <p>OC Transpo</p>
<p>Use the Food Availability Checklist, described in the Food Options section, to assess the types of food available at the farmers' markets, farm stands, and farm-gate sales that your group feels are significant.</p>	

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Food Box Programs

What are Food Box programs?

Food box programs are alternate types of food distribution systems that provide a wide variety of healthy foods to recipients at reasonable prices. These programs may be initiated by farmers, community organizations, or by community members. In Ottawa, one example of a food box program is the Ottawa Good Food Box. Like other food box programs, the Ottawa Good Food



Box is a food buying club, in which neighbourhood groups come together to order a number of Good Food Boxes for families in the area. (Large, medium and small boxes, as well as an organic box or a fruit-only bag can be purchased.) The Good Food Box incorporates locally produced food whenever it is possible. A distribution site and volunteer coordinator are chosen, and people in the neighbourhood can then order and pay in advance for their Good Food Boxes.

Why are food box programs important?

Fruits and vegetables are vital to our health and well-being. Yet, only 40.2% of Ottawa residents eat the recommended number (more than 5) of servings of fruit and vegetables per day. Because fruits and vegetables are often more expensive than highly-processed, less healthy foods, people on low incomes are often unable to buy fruits and vegetables sufficient for good health. Some food box programs and food buying clubs, like the Ottawa Good Food Box, aim to keep the cost of healthy foods reasonable for families. Others focus on sourcing products locally, or on organic food. Food box programs provide a variety of high quality fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods, which can help families and others achieve improvements in the quality of their diets. With some food box programs, you have the option of ordering online and the food boxes can be delivered, which can help make it easier for people who find it difficult to get to the grocery store and/or carry all their groceries home.

How can your community assess them?

You may need to use several different techniques to assess Food Box programs in your neighbourhood. You can find information about the Ottawa Good Food Box online or by phone, and about farmer food box programs by reading the Buy Local Food Guide. Other programs may be organized informally. If you think that Food Box programs could be an important means of accessing food in your community, you may wish to place an ad in the community paper, or ask around. Increasingly, people are asked to order online for Food Box programs. We've included access to internet as one way to indicate how this would be feasible for people who do not have their own computer.

Food Box Programs	
Potential Indicators	Where to get information
<p>Are there any Ottawa Good Food Box distribution sites in or near your neighbourhood? If so, how many Ottawa Good Food Boxes are delivered to your neighbourhood each week?</p>	Ottawa Good Food Box
<p>Are there any farmer-run food box distribution sites in or near your neighbourhood? If so, how many of these boxes are delivered to your neighbourhood each week?</p>	Just Food's Buy Local Food Guide; Coordinator of food box distribution site
<p>Are there any food buying clubs or cooperatives active in your community?</p>	Ad in community paper; ask in the community, Google
<p>Are there any public libraries with free internet access in your community? Are there other organizations that provide free internet access to the public in your community?</p>	Ottawa Public Libraries; Community Health and Resource Centres



Food Stores and Restaurants in the Neighbourhood

What is it?

This section concerns stores that sell food that consumers prepare and eat at somewhere else (e.g. at home). These stores include supermarkets, grocery stores, delicatessens, bakeries, fruit and vegetable markets, meat and fish stores, dairy stores, candy stores, convenience stores, and cooperative stores. We have classified these types of stores into 3 broad groups: grocery stores (full range of food and household goods), specialty stores (fruit and vegetable stores, butcher shops, fish stores, etc), and convenience stores, as well as restaurants and fast-food restaurants in your neighbourhood.



(Murphy, 2009)

Why are they important?

To be food secure in some neighbourhoods, it is important that there are nearby locations where consumers can buy affordable and healthy food. Higher numbers of supermarkets per capita in neighbourhoods have been related in many cases to better diet and lower rates of obesity among residents.

How can your community assess availability of food stores?

The indicators below address both availability and accessibility of different types of food stores in your community. The Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (ONS) contains data about the location of food stores. You may also want to tour your neighbourhood to ensure that the ONS list is accurate, as stores frequently change. You may also choose to assess the types of foods that are sold in vending machines in community buildings.



(Adam Gibbard, 2010)

Availability and Accessibility of Food Stores and Restaurants

Potential Indicators	Where to Get Information in Ottawa
<p>How many grocery stores are there in your neighbourhood, and where are they located? If none, where is the nearest one? Are they within walking distance (how far in km from the centre, or from different parts of your community)? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there? What is the average taxi fare to get there?</p>	<p>Refer to Ottawa Neighbourhood Study; Tour neighbourhood Google maps; OC Transpo</p>
<p>How many specialty stores are there in your neighbourhood, and where are they located? If none, where is the nearest one? Are they within walking distance (how far in km from the centre, or from different parts of your community)? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there? What is the average taxi fare to get there?</p>	<p>Refer to Ottawa Neighbourhood Study; Tour neighbourhood Google maps OC Transpo</p>
<p>How many convenience stores are there in your neighbourhood, and where are they located? If none, where is the nearest one? Are they within walking distance (how far in km from the centre, or from different parts of your community)? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there? What is the average taxi fare to get there?</p>	<p>Refer to Ottawa Neighbourhood Study; Tour neighbourhood Google maps; OC Transpo</p>
<p>How many restaurants are there in your neighbourhood, and where are they located? If none, where is the nearest one? Are they within walking distance (how far in km from the centre, or from different parts of your community)? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there? What is the average taxi fare to get there?</p>	<p>Refer to Ottawa Neighbourhood Study; Tour neighbourhood Google maps; OC Transpo</p>

<p>How many fast food outlets and fast food restaurants are there in your neighbourhood, and where are they located? If none, where is the nearest one? Are they within walking distance (how far in km from the centre, or from different parts of your community)? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there? What is the average taxi fare to get there?</p>	<p>Refer to Ottawa Neighbourhood Study; Tour neighbourhood Google maps; OC Transpo</p>
<p>What are the other important locations in your neighbourhood where food can be purchased?</p>	<p>Discuss as a group, and use the Food Availability Checklist.</p>
<p>Use the Food Availability Checklist, described in the Food Options section, to assess the types of food available at the food retail outlets that your group feels are significant.</p>	

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Section 4: What are the barriers to accessing healthy food and how does our community respond?



The barriers that this section examines are income, transportation, skills and information, and food options.

Poverty, Household Food Insecurity and Emergency Food Responses

What is household food insecurity?

People are food insecure when they don't have reliable access to a varied and nutritious diet, or when they need to sacrifice other things such as paying bills or buying clothes in order to pay for food. Food insecurity is closely linked to poverty. Families and individuals with low incomes are forced to make difficult decisions. Money is often needed to pay housing costs before any other needs such as buying food can be met.

Why it is important to assess household food insecurity?

Communities and neighbourhoods cannot be food secure unless all residents are food secure.

Poverty affects everyone's ability to live productive, healthy, and happy lives. As household income decreases, so does the likelihood of being food insecure. Children, in particular, experience high rates of food insecurity, and it is estimated that one out of every five children in Canada lives in a home with an income below the low-income cut-off (LICO); in Ottawa, this rate is 16.8%. Many of those who live in food insecure households can't get enough food to feed themselves and their families, and the food that they can afford is limited in selection and nutritional value. Children living in poverty are also more likely to experience health and learning problems throughout their lives, and children who do not get adequate nutrition may lag in their physical, mental, and social development. Adequate nutrition is necessary to perform well at school or at work.



(Barbolet et al., 2005)

Food Insecurity and Health

Food insecurity has negative consequences on physical and mental health; it can also be socially isolating. People who are food insecure are less able to afford healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat products, and whole-grain products. Children and adults that experience hunger or are not eating a well-balanced diet are more likely to suffer poor health – including stomach aches and headaches, iron deficiency, obesity, and many other health problems. Food insecurity is also related to an increased likelihood of obesity, which can lead to many medical risks and complications, as well as a decreased quality of life. Food insecurity is also associated with increased stress, anxiety and depression.



(Capital Food Bank of Texas)

How can your community assess food insecurity?

Please look back to the information provided by the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study at the beginning meeting to remind yourself of the following indicators which give a snapshot of food insecurity in your neighbourhood.

Household Food Insecurity	
Potential Indicators	How to get information
<p><i>Indicators on Income that Relate to Household Food Insecurity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of neighbourhood residents living below the LICO Percent of children living below the LICO Percent of seniors living below the LICO Percentage of neighbourhood residents that spend more than 30% on housing 	<p>Refer back to data from Ottawa Neighbourhood Study</p>
<p><i>Indicators on Health that Relate to Household Food Insecurity:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of children in the community with low birth weight Rates of obesity/overweight individuals in the community Proportion of neighbourhood population that consumes at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day Percent who are in good or excellent self-rated health 	<p>Refer back to data from Ottawa Neighbourhood Study</p>

What are emergency food programs?

There are various services that provide emergency food relief for individuals and families. Often, their success depends on volunteers and community members. These services include soup kitchens (organizations that provide free meals), food banks (non-profit organizations that distribute food donated by citizens and corporations), Meals-on Wheels (low-price meals delivered by volunteers to seniors or others with disabilities) and other emergency food services.

Why are they important?

Charitable food assistance programs are designed to provide immediate, but temporary relief so that people without enough to eat do not go hungry. These programs are very important for those who cannot access enough food for themselves or for their families.



(Furbush, 2008)

How can your community assess emergency food programs?

Each of the organizations listed below has a website that you can visit to get general information, but to get specific information about your community, you may want to speak with a staff person at the Food Bank agency, soup kitchen, or other services in or near your neighbourhood. Please refer to the notes in the Getting Started section on contacting organizations.

Food Banks	
Potential Indicators	How to get information
Number, location, and hours of operation of food banks in your neighbourhood (including food cupboards and other distribution sites). Are these distribution sites open to the public, or designated for a particular group? Are these distribution sites within walking distance of your community (how many km)? If not, is public transportation available? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there?	Ottawa Food Bank; or neighbourhood distribution sites OC Transpo
Total amount of food that these outlets distribute in your community (by weight) per week, month, or year.	Ottawa Food Bank; or neighbourhood sites
Number of visits made to all food bank distribution points in your community each week, month, or year	Ottawa Food Bank; or neighbourhood sites

Proportion of recipients that are adults and proportion that are under age 16 at the food bank distribution sites in your community.	Ottawa Food Bank; or neighbourhood sites
Has the amount of food distributed increased or decreased over the past 3 years at your local distribution points? If so, by approximately how much?	Ottawa Food Bank; or neighbourhood sites

Soup Kitchens

Potential Indicators	Where to get information
Number, location, and hours of operation of soup kitchens in your neighbourhood. Are they open to the public, or designated for a particular group? Are they within walking distance of your community (how many km)? If not, is public transportation available? How long does it take to bus there? How long does it take to drive there?	Food Link Directory
How many people are served a meal at these soup kitchens each week?	Speak with Coordinator of soup kitchen directly

Meals on Wheels

Potential Indicators	How to get information
How many people in your neighbourhood receive Meals on Wheels services each week?	Meals on Wheels Ottawa

Other Indicators of Charitable Food

Potential Indicators	Where to get information?
What other types of emergency food services are there in your community? Where are they located, what are their hours of operation, and are they open to the public or to a designated group?	Ask around the community



Transportation to Food Stores

What is this?

This section looks at the ways that food stores and services are accessed. It is useful to know how people are getting from their home to their local food stores and other services and back again. Individuals and families commonly walk, drive, or take public transportation in order to get to these places. Some people have a harder time at getting to the grocery store than others, and this affects their eating habits. It is important for community members to explore the problems and benefits of the different types of transportation.



(Environment Victoria, 2008)

Why is this important?

Transportation to food outlets is not always simple, and if there are only a few grocery stores in a community, getting to them can be a struggle. For some people transportation to buy food can take a lot of money out of limited budgets. Those who live in the city and rely on public transportation may have long bus routes to the local food stores and services. For people in rural areas, the only option may be to drive to the nearest food services, which can be a problem for those who cannot drive or do not own a vehicle. For people who walk long distances, there is a limit to the number of heavy bags of food they carry, and this forces them to pick and choose the types and amounts of food that they can buy. It is important to learn more about which people have a hard time getting to food outlets so that we can think of ways of making the process easier.

How can you assess transportation?

While public transportation routes are relatively straight-forward to assess in urban areas, many suburban and rural areas have little or no access and must rely on either private means or other forms of arrangements. You can start by looking at OC Transpo and bicycle route maps to see how well your community is served. However, it may be difficult to collect information about other modes of transportation to food stores across the City. It may come down to asking people in the community how they get to the food stores or other food outlets.

Transportation to Food

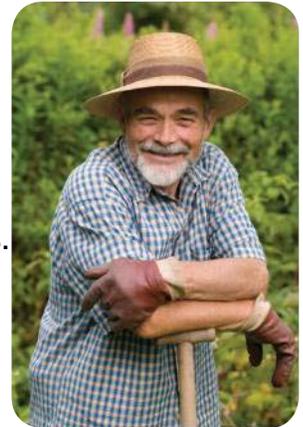
Potential Indicators	How to Get Information
<p>Rural areas: Does your community have public bus access? Do you have park n' ride, community organized carpooling, grocery bus runs, etc?</p> <p>Urban areas: How many bus routes service your community? Are there areas of your community that are not accessible by bus? Are any of these routes equipped with bike racks? Where in your community can you purchase bus tickets or passes? What is the ridership rate of public transportation?</p>	<p>Ottawa City Transpo OC Transpo, ParaTranspo</p>
<p>Do any of the main grocery stores provide delivery services? If so, what is the cost for delivery to your community?</p>	<p>Call main grocery stores and ask</p>
<p>Are there any carpool, shuttle, or other services to transport people in your community to supermarkets or other food stores? If so, which areas do they service, how often do they run, and are they open to the public or to a designated group?</p>	<p>Ask organizations in your community (churches, community associations, resource, health centres, cultural organizations, etc.</p>
<p>Are there bike lanes or paths that connect your community to food stores? If so, what is their location?</p>	<p>City of Ottawa Cycling Map</p>
<p>Is there car sharing in your neighbourhood? If yes, where is the car share parked and how many community members participate?</p>	<p>VrtuCar</p>



Skills and Information

What is it?

This section focuses on the ways in which people in your community can access information about food and food choices, and can develop or share their food skills. Food skills, such as cooking, gardening, food storage and preservation, are also important. There are a variety of programs and projects designed to help people to learn food skills, or to provide information about food, health, nutrition, and local and global food systems. In addition to community kitchens, school curriculum and children's gardens assessed earlier, what other options are there for developing food skills and getting information for either children or adults?



Why is it important?

In order to make informed food choices, it is important to have access to information about nutrition, food labelling, the links between food and health, and how our food system works. Without food skills and information, it can be difficult to make informed choices. When people do not know how to cook, shop on a budget, or do not know where they can access fresh and nutritious foods, their wellbeing may suffer. Understanding how the food system functions can also enable people to work towards creating a food system that is just and sustainable for all.

How can your community assess this?

You may need to use a variety of different techniques to assess food skills and information in your neighbourhood. Start by contacting the organizations that provide services in your neighbourhood. An internet search may also be useful. Organizations that you contact may be able to recommend others that provide food skills or food information programs, as well.

Food Skills and Information	
Potential Indicators	How to get information
Is there a Community Dietitian that works in your community? Do you have a Public Health Nurse or Dietitian that works on these issues in your community? Are there any other Public Health or community programs about food or nutrition available in your community?	Ottawa Public Health; Ottawa Coalition of Community Health Centres
Has a Community Food Advisor been active in your neighbourhood?	City of Ottawa
Is there a 4-H club in our near your community? How many young people are involved?	Canadian 4-H Council

Is there a Junior Farmer club in or near your community? How many young people are involved?	Junior Farmers Association of Ontario
Are there other food programs, courses, workshops, clubs or information available to members of your community?	Just Food; Community Health/ Resource Centres; Community Association; other community organizations

Food Options

What is it?

One component of community food security is the availability of the right *kinds* of foods. For cultural or religious groups within a community, it may be very important to be able to access certain types of foods, foods produced in a particular way, or certain spices and ingredients common in their cuisine. For newcomers to Canada, it may be very difficult to find the types of foods that they are comfortable preparing. For people with particular health needs, for example celiac disease, it may be difficult to find the foods that they need to stay healthy.



(Squidoo, LLC, 2010)

Why is it important?

Communities are made up of diverse groups of people with different needs. It is important to consider what kind of food options are important to the people in your community, and how well these food options are fulfilled. This can point to areas that need to be improved.

How can your community assess it?

It may be difficult to assess food options in your community. To assess the cultural appropriateness of foods in your community, you may wish to consult with cultural, religious, or newcomer to Canada organizations in your community. You may wish to refer back to the statistics and demographics that you collected in the first section – these data may provide information about the types of groups in your neighbourhood that you might consult. If your group thinks that other important types of food options may not be available in your community (eg. foods for people with diabetes or celiac disease), you can research the availability of these foods by asking people in your community, and while you look through grocery stores in your area. The **Food Availability Checklist**, found in the **Working Documents** section, can help to assess the food options that are available in your community in key food stores, farmers’ markets, and other places where your community gets food.

SECTION 5: Putting it all together



What does this mean for your community?

Once you have finished collecting information, your group will discuss and analyze your findings. At this time, you may wish to revisit some of the statistics, maps, and other information that you started with. Some questions that you may want to ask include:

- Does the information that we collected accurately reflect what we know about our community?
- Are there other food services or resources that we know of that play an important role in our community?
- How does food security in our neighbourhood interact with food security in nearby neighbourhoods?
- What kinds of actions, if any, would be appropriate and feasible for our community to take to address food security?

If your group noted any gaps, missing information, or areas that were covered in lesser or greater depth than others, you will want to note this in any summary document or presentation that you create.

Documenting and sharing your work

It is important to document all of the work that your research team conducted. Keep track of all of the results, including aspects of the research that you weren't able to assess. These results can be posted online or distributed throughout the community. Your team may wish to circulate your results in a community newspaper, post them on bulletin boards, or place hard copies in heavily travelled areas in the neighbourhood. You may also wish to bring a copy of your results to the businesses, individuals, and organizations that you approached to collect information. Or, you may choose to share this information through presentations at your Community Association or at other community events – it's up to you!

Before you go

You will be asked to complete evaluation forms about the research process and this guide. Your feedback will be used to improve the project and will help to ensure that the *Where's the Food* research process is interesting, informative, and meaningful for other neighbourhoods. In addition to these evaluation forms, your research team may also wish to discuss the process and the project as a group.

Thank you for being a part of this project!

Contact Information

Here's how you can contact the groups and organizations listed in the sections above.

The **Ottawa Neighbourhood Study** is online at www.neighbourhoodstudy.ca, and can be contacted by email: info@neighbourhoodstudy.ca.

Community Gardens: For a list of community gardens and their Coordinators in Ottawa, go to: www.justfood.ca/community-garden-network/gardens.php or call the Community Gardening Network Coordinator at (613) 236-9300 x309.

OC Transpo: You can contact OC Transpo for information including maps, routes, fares, and accessible transit through their website: www.octranspo.com, or by telephone: (613) 842-3600

Canadian Organic Growers (COG) works with schools to establish school gardens. You can contact the Ottawa chapter by telephone: (613) 244-4000, email: ottawachapter@cog.ca, or online: www.cog.ca/chapters/ottawa.

Ottawa Carleton Learning Foundation School Breakfast Program: For information about Ottawa's school nutrition programs, please contact the Ottawa Carleton Learning Foundation's School Breakfast Program. Their website is: education.ocri.ca/education/school-breakfast-program, and their telephone number is (613) 828-6274.

Elementary School Milk Program: To find out if schools in your area participate in the Elementary School Milk Program, you can use an online tool found at: www.milkschool.ca/ontario-parents.

City of Ottawa Public Health: For information on the programs and services offered by Ottawa Public Health, including Public Health Dietitians, Nurses, and other programs, please call the Ottawa Public Health Info Line: (613) 580-6744.

City of Ottawa School Age Nutrition: For information on other school nutrition programs in Ottawa, you can visit the City of Ottawa's School Age Nutrition website, here: www.city.ottawa.on.ca/residents/health/living/nutrition/school/index_en.html.

Ontario Land Registry Offices maintain information on ownership of lands within each municipality. The number for the Land Registry Office of Ottawa-Carleton is (613) 239-1230.

The Ottawa Food Bank can provide information about food distribution points in your community. You can contact the Ottawa Food Bank by phone: (613) 745-7001 (ask to speak with Michael Howard about food bank distribution sites, or to Jason Gray about the Ottawa Food Bank's gleaning program, Community Harvest Ontario), email: foodbank@theottawafoodbank.ca, or on the web: www.theottawafoodbank.ca.

The **Food Link Directory** is a listing of community programs and services promoting access to food in Ottawa. You can the 2009 version of the Food Link Directory online at www.justfood.ca/foodlink.php. For updated information, contact the **Community Information Centre of Ottawa** by dialing '211'.

Buy Local Food Guide: For the contact information of CSA farms, farmer-run food box programs, farm stands, farmers' markets, and farm-gate sales in Ottawa, please refer to the Buy Local Food Guide, which is available online: www.justfood.ca/. You can also obtain a printed copy of the Buy Local Food Guide by contacting Just Food, (613) 236-9300 x 301.

The Ottawa Good Food Box is run through the Centretown Community Health Centre. For information on this initiative, e-mail goodfoodbox@centretownchc.org. Their phone number is: (613) 860-6767.

Savour Ottawa promotes local food in Ottawa. Restaurant and retail stores who are members of Savour Ottawa source from farms that have undergone a verification process to ensure that their products are produced locally. To see a list of Savour Ottawa members, go to the website: <http://www.savourottawa.ca/members.php>. This program is expanding all the time.

Meals on Wheels Ottawa, also known as the King's Daughters Dinner Wagon, can be contacted by phone: (613) 233-2424, email: service@mealsonwheels-ottawa.org, or online: www.mealsonwheels-ottawa.org.

Vrtucar is a non-profit car-share service in Ottawa where people can use a car for a short period of time. To find information about car locations and number of people participating, look online: www.vrtucar.com or call: (613) 798-1900.

Contact **The City of Ottawa Cycling** for information on bike routes. A free map of these routes is online, <http://www.ottawa.ca/residents/onthemove/travelwise/cycling/>.

Community Food Advisors: To find out more about Community Food Advisors, you can call the City of Ottawa department responsible for this program, (613) 580-6744 x 23574.