

# Community Ideas Factory

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



## Creating Vital Solutions

**Sheridan** | Applied Research  
and Innovation



## Acknowledgement of the Territories

We begin by acknowledging Halton Region as the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe Nation, Huron-Wendat of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We also acknowledge the many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who now call Halton home. We are grateful for the opportunity to have conducted the research on this land.

## Special Thanks

To our friends



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# About:

## The Community Ideas Factory

The Community Ideas Factory is a community-college partnership exploring social innovations within the charitable sector of the Halton Region. It is a collaborative research project between Sheridan College and the Oakville Community Foundation. The goal of the project is to change the philanthropic granting process in Oakville so that it is more bottom-up, participatory, and evidenced-based. The principle community partner on the project is The Foundation (OCF). A community organization tasked with managing and disbursing donor contributions for philanthropic projects in the Town of Oakville. The Community Ideas Factory is made possible by the College-Community Social Innovation Fund of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

## Core project team



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## Community Project Partner: Oakville Community Foundation

The Oakville Community Foundation plays an influential role in the Town of Oakville by linking philanthropic families and organizations with the needs of the local community. Managing the contributions of Oakville's generous donors, The Foundation seeks to ensure that funds are utilized in a way that they can continually make an impact on the local community year after year. As the 10th largest Community Foundation within the Canadian Community Foundations of Canada network, The Foundation helps to ensure that the philanthropic efforts of Oakville's donors are utilized in meaningful

and sustainable ways.

This research would not have been possible without the efforts and support of our community partner, The Foundation who helped make all of the appropriate connections between the researchers' academic world and the Region and charitable sectors in the Region. We would especially like to express our sincerest thanks to and appreciation of our friends, partners, team members, and contributors Sarah McPherson and Wendy Rinella of the Foundation.



## A Note From The Oakville Community Foundation

The Oakville Community Foundation will turn 25 years old next year in 2019. While it has over \$100 million in assets under management, it controls very little of the granting off of its assets. The majority of granting is under the auspices of donor-advised funds, providing the original donors the ability to make decisions about granting off of the earnings of their funds. The Foundation controls very little, up to 5% of the average of \$3 million that the Foundation grants annually.

In the past The Foundation had run competitive granting programs similar to other charity funding organization based on community research that it had developed in its Vital Signs® report. The Foundation's community granting involved a general application process to a number of its Community Funds and would see upwards of 90 charity applications per year. The Foundation would engage a number of grant reviewers, some being Fundholders,

to review the applications and then make recommendations to a Granting Task Force which in turn would make recommendations to the Board.

In 2016 Charities could apply for up to \$10,000 for a grant, a consolidation from previous granting rounds of a \$5,000 maximum for each of two annual granting rounds. However if they collaborated with other charities their efforts could result in a grant over \$20,000. Based on the 2015 Vital Signs report Charities were applying for funding to address issues of the equity gap, affordable housing inclusion and mental health in Oakville. Many of the issues identified required significant investments to move the needle on these large scale challenges.

As part of the granting review process, Fundholders would be contacted by phone or email to determine their interest in supporting one or more of the project applications based on their interest and past support of certain

charities. At its most successful, Fundholders stewardship would assist in doubling or tripling the amount of funding available to charities. For example Fundholder stewardship would result in an increase from Foundation funds of \$120,000 to \$292,000 with additional Fundholder support in the 2017 community granting round.

Up until 2017 The Foundation's grant application process was a paper based process. The granting infrastructure was labour and time intensive for a 4-5 month period. The addition of the online granting system sped the administrative process up by two weeks but it was still not fully integrated in the financial management system nor did it address the resources dedicated to the internal review process and Fundholder stewardship. The process required significant internal resources to distribute 10% of The Foundation's granting dollars.





Under its 2016-18 three year Strategic Plan, "Building More Effective Philanthropy," The Foundation sought to reduce the overlap and duplication, not only across the charitable sector for those delivering charitable services to the public, but to reduce the overlap and duplication of the multiplicity of granting bodies and thus the multiplicity of grant applications by charities to funders. The Foundation's granting infrastructure also mirrored the granting infrastructure at other charity funding organizations. At the same time The Foundation sought to make its granting processes more efficient, adopt new technologies, and reduce the time and labour intensiveness of the process for charities, and itself.

In 2016 The Foundation conducted a survey of its members by Ipsos and found that while Fundholders valued the role of The Foundation, they wanted to have greater interaction with charities and each other, and at the same time the opportunity to be introduced to new and more impactful community granting.

The impetus for the collaboration with Sheridan College, who had helped facilitate Creative Problems Solving sessions with Community Partners to develop the Vital Signs research in 2015, was to not only identify the issues as it did in its report but to leverage community knowledge to create solutions to the biggest challenges facing the community. Community Ideas Factory enabled The Foundation to "live the values of the Vital Signs."

So there were a number of competing challenges The Foundation had at play when it began the Community Ideas Factory partnership in 2016.

- » Duplication and overlap in charitable activities
- » Duplication and overlap in funder's granting programs, infrastructure and processes
- » Integrating Vital Signs into its day to day activities
- » Limited Fundholder engagement in community granting and desire to be engaged directly with each other and charities
- » Significant Foundation resources dedicated to grant review, and Fundholder Stewardship for relatively small granting dollars.
- » Limited grants \$10-20,000+, to address significant challenges.
- » Need for more efficient technology in the granting and integrated with Foundation financial management

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Rinella".

Wendy Rinella, CEO

The Oakville Community Foundation







# Background:

## The Community Ideas Factory

In 2016, the Oakville Community Foundation approached the Sheridan research team for assistance in improving the efficiency and effectiveness in their grant application and disbursement process. The Foundation and Sheridan agreed that a collaborative approach by service users (clients) and service providers (agencies) to create funding proposals was preferable. This collaborative approach differed from the more traditional practice of service providers developing their own proposals in response to an RFPs from The Foundation, separately and without knowledge of what other agencies were doing.



# Collaborative Approach's Advantages

Enhanced Communication	Reduced Duplication	Better Teamwork	Increased Education
			
A better alignment between the strategic funding priorities of the requests for proposals and the needs and priorities identified by service users and service providers	Reduction in proposal duplication and inter-agency competition in funding competitions	Improved inter-agency coordination, collaboration, and resource-sharing in proposal development and new program planning.	Increase the independence, awareness, and capacity of marginalized populations by utilizing their knowledge & feedback on the services they use.

These conversations materialized as “The Community Ideas Factory,” a project that utilizes Sheridan’s and creativity expertise, spaces, and resources in supporting The Foundation’s efforts to implement a more collaborative funding process. The sectors which are the focus of this project are the key areas outlined in The Foundation’s Vital Signs report, namely affordable housing, food security, employment equity and wrap-around support services. In 2016, the project team secured funding for the initiative from the College-Community Social Innovation Fund of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The project team were guided by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) -a standing advisory committee for the Community Ideas Factory project. PAC members include representatives from Food for Life, the Halton Poverty Roundtable, the United Way of Oakville, and the YMCA of Oakville.

# Research Approach

The Community Ideas Factory is conceived of in three phases. Each sector, housing, food security, employment equity and wraparound services, goes through each of the three phases.

## Phase 1: Literature review



A literature review is conducted to identify best practices in social innovation in the target sector. The previews in this booklet are not the full report but can be found online at:

[communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)

## Phase 2: Gathering of local data



Data is gathered to get a better understanding of the experiences of service users in the Halton Region. The method in which the data is collected depends on the needs and availability of existing information of each sector. Methods included environmental scans, focus groups, data visualization and online surveys.



## Phase 3:

Creative Problem-Solving facilitation



The information and data from Phases 1 & 2 are used to engage a diverse group of stakeholders (including service users and service providers) in creative problem-solving sessions with a view towards creating social innovations for greater efficiency and/or effectiveness in the target sector.

## Phase 4:

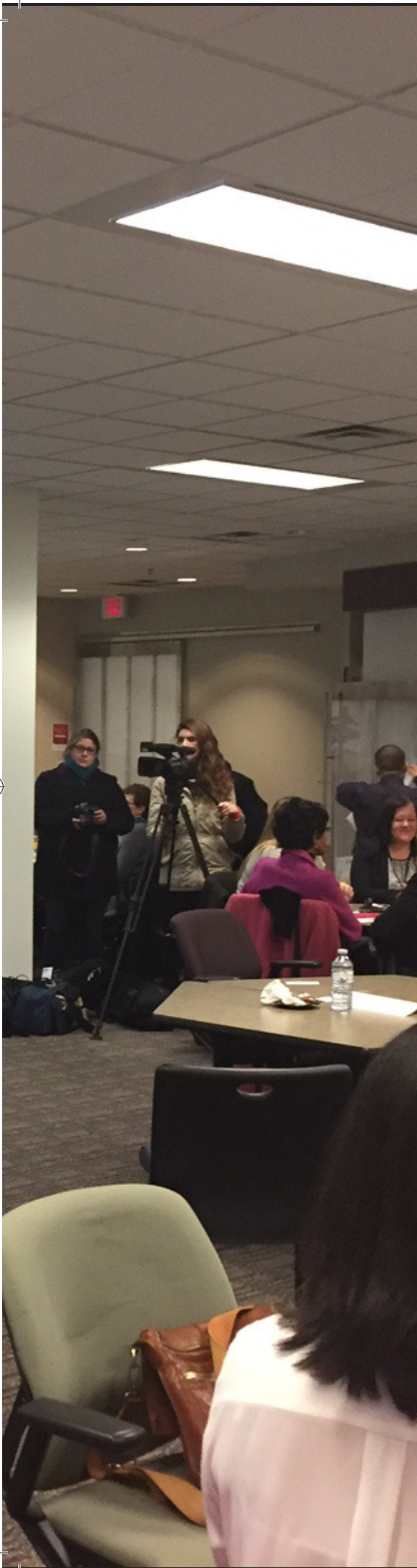
The Philanthropitch



The work on each sector culminates with the “philanthropitch” – a presentation of the evidence and newly created ‘project concepts’ to a roundtable of Oakville’s most significant philanthropists for funding consideration.







# Sector:

## Housing Affordability

### *"What does housing affordability mean?"*

Affordable Housing is housing with market price or rent that is affordable to households of low and moderate income, spending 30% of their gross household income without government subsidies, with sufficient income remaining to meet other daily living needs.

# Phase 1

## Literature Review

### Housing

It is estimated that roughly 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night. This in turn results in an estimated 235,000 people experiencing homelessness in Canada each year. Importantly, research suggests 80% of Canada's homeless population are considered "hidden" (couch surfing, seeking refuge in abandoned buildings and temporary accommodations). While these numbers provide some general context, the academic community and those who provide services for the homeless, agree that a lack of quality data coupled with the challenges of comparing data between regions within the province make any attempt to quantify homelessness in Ontario problematic. With this in mind, a one-night count in Toronto in 2013 found over 5000 people living on the streets. Located roughly 20 kilometers away from the Halton Region, in Hamilton a total of 3,149 people relied on an overnight shelter in 2014. The 2016 Halton Region Point in Time Count located 264 individuals or heads of family who were identified as homeless.

While the causes of homelessness are multiple, Canadian scholarship has highlighted how precarious employment, economic hardship, unequal access to opportunities (employment/education) and a

general lack of affordability within the housing market throughout the province are major contributing factors that push people onto the streets. Because these issues affect so many, Canada's homeless population is diverse comprised of men and women, young and old. However, a growing body of literature would suggest that indigenous Canadians, those who suffer from mental illness as well as members of the LBTTQ communities are overrepresented amongst Canada's homeless population. Women and children attempting to escape abuse at home also represent a significant portion of Canada's homeless population.

Over the last 20 years in Canada a majority of the responses to homelessness have been reactive, focusing on providing temporary shelter and basic needs. While emergency shelters, social service agencies and the non-for-profit sector play an important role in responding to homelessness and caring for those who live on the streets throughout Canadian cities (including the Halton Region), preventing people from being displaced onto the streets is perhaps one of the most important ways to eradicate homelessness in Canada. With this in mind, whether reacting to the existing homelessness problem or attempting to prevent it, research suggests that collaboration between all levels of government and



amongst neighbouring municipalities is crucial. At the same time, at a local level, municipal government and service providers must acknowledge that there is no “fits all” solution to homelessness. In other words, although sharing best practices are important, municipalities must also be aware of the challenges unique to each local region.

### The Housing-Homeless Link

As provincial data suggests, since 1990 the average cost of a home in Ontario has far exceeded increases in average household income. Not unlike other municipalities in Ontario, in the Halton Region rising housing costs continue to threaten housing stability for some residents increasing the probability of displacement. As outlined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), in order for Canadians to achieve housing stability, they should not spend more than 30% of their income on shelter. For those Canadians who rent, the CMHC’s 30% threshold includes rent and utilities. According to data collected in 2011 in the Halton Region, over half of all non-family households (people who live alone or share housing) use over 30% of their income to pay for shelter. Likewise, in Halton, over 45% of lone parent families, 30% of

coupled families without children and 27% of families with children use more than 30% of their income to pay for shelter.

According to the Region of Halton, the affordability threshold when purchasing a new house is \$357,200. Comparably, the average new home in the Halton Region cost \$845,981. Rising housing costs throughout the Region mean that in 2015 only 580 units (31% of new sales) fell below Halton’s affordability threshold. Unsurprisingly, 99.5% of the new units that fell below the affordability threshold were townhouses or apartments. While these units meet the affordability threshold, housing advocates have pointed out that suitability is often problematic (e.g. older children having to share bedrooms or sleep in common areas of the unit). Issues of affordability and suitability also affect those residents who rely on the rental market.

This preview for the Housing Sector’s literature review is not the full report but can be found online at:

**[communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)**



# Phase 2

## Focus Groups

### Issues & Gaps

#### Individual



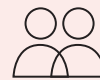
Gaps in providing housing for youth, seniors and multi-generational families, and individuals with health and ability needs



Transitional housing is for a limited time and does not allow individuals ways to become self-sufficient



Programs and services are siloed requiring individuals who need multiple services to go to different locations with various dates, times and requirements



Front-line & case workers fulfill multiple roles when meeting with the needs of their clients

#### Community



High cost of living makes affordable housing out-of-reach



Frontline workers want to work together but lack the time and capacity to facilitate effective collaborations



Disparity of services e.g. homeless shelters between the north and south of Halton



Organizations do not know what other organizations do or the services they provide



Many organizations are trying to be a 'catch-all' rather than focussing on their areas of expertise



Landlords overtly discriminating against renting to people who are on social assistance or receiving disability payments

#### Government



Rent-geared-to-income housing waitlists are extremely long



Lack of clarity in how funding decisions are made



Lack of public transportation limits people's ability to stay in their community while being able to access services, work in other communities



Funding continues to become available for 'innovative solutions' which rarely seems to include building more housing



Two-tiered government system is a challenge because Region is responsible for housing and municipalities for planning



Frustration at being told to innovate when service providers are already creative including solutions to a myriad of difficulties their clients experience in addition to innovating in order to stretch dollars



Unclear guidelines for which level of government to go to leads to uncertainty of where to focus funding requests



Short-term funding is problematic because funding is often cut short as the program is gaining momentum

In October 2016, fifty individuals working within the housing community participated in six focus groups to discuss the major issues and gaps in services that their particular organizations experience. The findings from these focus groups suggest that housing needs must be addressed at the individual level, community level and at the government level.

## Recommendations

### Individual



Build new affordable housing complexes to increase access



Institute a revolving schedule to increase shelter capacity



Facilitate house sharing for seniors, lone parent families, and youth



Need multiple strategies and practices to address the complex nature of people's lives and needs



Enhance wraparound programming as it is beneficial and meets the multiple and complex needs of clients

Creatively reimagine spaces for housing and shelters:



Utilizing warehouses, industrial complexes, commercial properties for large families



Repurposing closed facilities (e.g. schools and hospitals) for shelters or individual apartments with shared kitchen facilities



Using faith-based spaces, businesses, banquet halls and schools for emergency shelters

### Community



Provide frontline workers opportunities to network with each other to develop and strengthen partnerships and capacity for collaboration



Funding agencies should collaborate so that larger pools of money could be made available to make real and effective change



Leverage potential philanthropic community members to help address housing affordability



Educate all residents that there are low-income residents in their community



Educate homeowners on the pros of becoming landlords and considering renting to low-income individuals



Evaluation tools should accompany all new programming and be done on existing programs



Bring related organizations, e.g. police and hospitals, to the table



Institute one hub where vulnerable populations apply for all the services they may require simultaneously rather than having to locate and secure individual services

### Government



Implement a Region and sector-wide computer program so clients fill out one detailed application for all required services



Region to act as a collaboration hub to help facilitate effective networks and to navigate funding applications



Offering rebates or tax breaks to homeowners willing to renovate their houses to become landlords



Longer-term funding to sustain already successful programs rather than the continued expectation for new innovations



Invest in accessible education would improve the quality of life for many individuals



Offer credential programs for highly educated immigrant populations

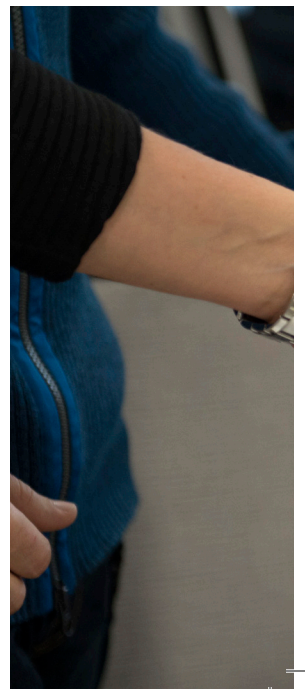
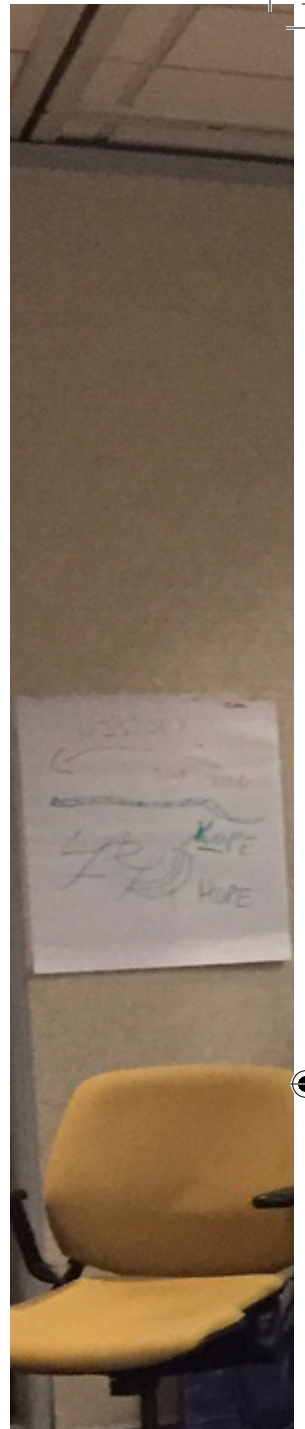
# Phase 3

## Creative-Problem Solving Workshop

Following the October focus groups and in celebration of National Housing Day, over 130 people were invited to participate in a creative problem-solving workshop. The goal of this workshop was to collectively identify fundable solutions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of social housing service delivery in Halton Region. Invited participants represented a diverse group of stakeholders in the sector; including charitable donors, agencies, and service users.

### Proposed & Fundable Solutions

- » Develop an educational campaign to eliminate the prevalent 'Not-in-my-backyard' (NIMBY) syndrome throughout Halton.
- » Develop a Community Hub to wraparound clients rather than working separate from other service agencies (social assistance, mental health, legal aid, food programs, employment supports for example).
- » Cultivate a system of resource sharing to reduce duplication within the sector.
- » Create greater client participation in planning and solutions.
- » Build or renovate current structures that would not normally be seen as conventional housing models.
- » Engage more effectively with the private sector.
- » Collaborate with funding agencies to increase potential funding to create a meaningful impact.
- » Stream-line services following the Habitat Canada model
- » Construction a sharing forum where all individuals working in the housing sector come together monthly to discuss the state of affairs within their organizations to better facilitate collaboration







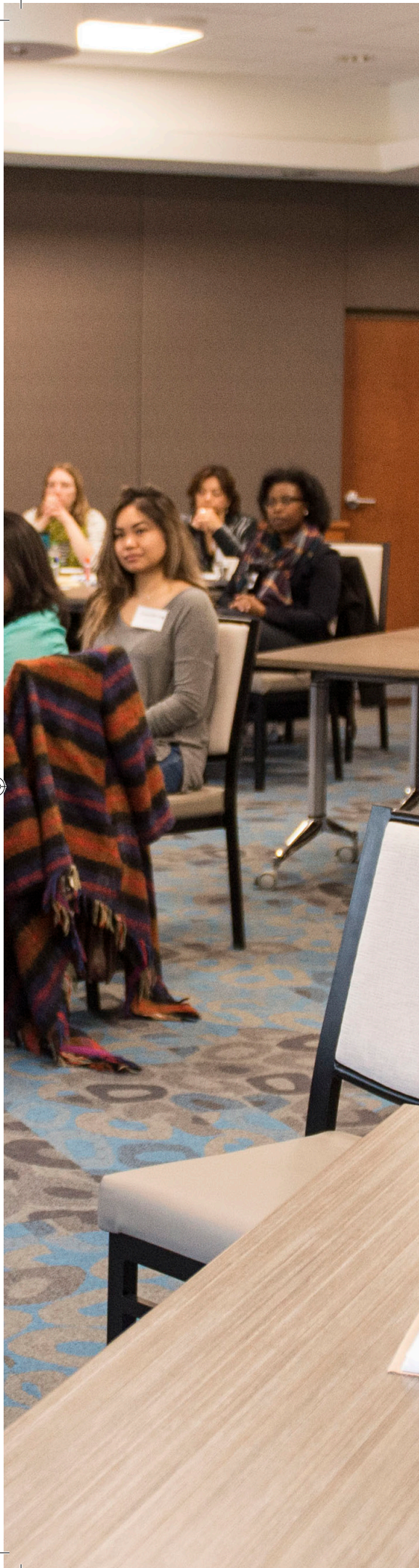
Community Ideas Factory











# Sector:

## Food (in)Security

***"What does food (in)security mean?"***

Food insecurity is when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development, and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution or inadequate use of food at the household level.



# Phase 1

## Literature Review

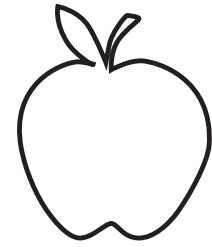
During the last 30 years, food banks have played an active role in the Canadian social landscape. Ever since the appearance of the first food bank in Edmonton in 1981, these charitable organizations have persistently increased in size and number, while food bank employees and volunteers constantly make efforts to adapt to the growing and shifting needs of food insecure individuals and communities. Today, there is a new paradigm shift which questions the role of food banks within the communities in which they operate, as well as society on the whole. Even though food banks were first established during the 1980s to deal with emergency food needs, the increase in chronic food bank use has proven troublesome for food banks to keep up with the ever growing demand under current models. (Tarasuk et al. 2014; Tarasuk, Dachner, & Loopstra, 2014; Miller, 2013).

A Toronto-based report on the usage of food bank conducted by Loopstra and Tarasuk (2012) found that almost all families communicated concern about meeting food needs or being unable to do so. Thirty percent of families were identified as severely food insecure, 32 percent were moderately food insecure, and 13 percent were marginally food insecure. This study also reported that an overwhelming 91 percent of families indicated they would have needed to spend more money to meet the needs of their household compared to the previous month at the time of the interview (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). In March of 2012 alone, about

882,188 Canadians received support from food banks, a whopping 31 percent increase from March 2008 (Food Banks Canada, 2012). The recognition that food banks are no longer just providing temporary hunger relief but also spearheading the fight against chronic food insecurity has caused food banks and their supporters to challenge the present situation and advocate for a systemic change.

Current food bank system in Canada has been challenged by numerous academic research. For instance, Loopstra and Tarasuk's (2012) study reported that twenty-two percent of families expressed the feeling that their food needs were unmatched with what was provided at food banks, and the poor quality of foods that were offered made it not worthwhile for them to use food banks. However, there is a misconception that food banks are responsible for providing 100 percent of grocery needs for households, when in fact, most programs intend to supplement food.

Even when food is provided from the food bank, this does not guarantee adequate daily nutrition for families. Respondents felt food banks do not fresh foods, healthy foods, or foods that met their dietary restrictions (e.g., Halal). They also described receiving rotten fruit/vegetables, "junk food," foods that were past their "best before" dates, and/or only canned foods (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2012). Research that reviewed studies on food bank systems across different countries, including Canada, by Bazergahi, McKay, and Dunn



(2016) also revealed that clients desired a greater range of foods, particularly more fruits, vegetables, dairy and meats. Additionally, clients who are new immigrants also wished for more culturally appropriate foods, as well as greater consistency across food items and quantities, especially for staple items and special needs food, such as age and health appropriate foods.

Apart from the increasing demand of diverse food from the food banks, studies also demonstrate the need to restructure the way food bank operates. Warren (2011) examined two single mothers' experiences as former food bank clients and found that food bank users struggled with feelings of pride and their need to provide for their children when using the food bank for the first time. They explained how most often food banks were their only option to get groceries. This was especially true since after all the bills were paid, social assistance payments did not leave much money. One mother explained that it felt horrible, rent took most of her paycheck  $\frac{3}{4}$ , leaving only  $\frac{1}{4}$  left for utilities, food and gas or bus fare. This illustrates the need to restructure the food bank delivery to help clients access their needs with dignity. Relating to this, Bazerghi, McKay, and Dunn (2016) also raised the difficulty culturally and diverse populations experienced accessing services, communicating their needs, receiving information, using unfamiliar foods and participating in nutritional workshops.

In order to revamp the food bank model for increased impact and efficiency towards community food security, a scan on food banks' operations and initiatives have been conducted to obtain a better understanding of what's working within food banks across Canada and identify best practices. We believe this is needed in order. A major shortcoming of food banks is the nutritional content of the food being provided. In its 2016 Hunger Report, the Ontario Association of Food Banks (OAFB) recognized the importance of a balanced diet which must include fruits, vegetables, lean meats and grains, especially for children who require proper nutrition for their cognitive development and ability to learn. In addition, organizations such as Second Harvest and Food for Life focus on sourcing fresh, nutritious food to all food programs, regardless of OAFB membership.

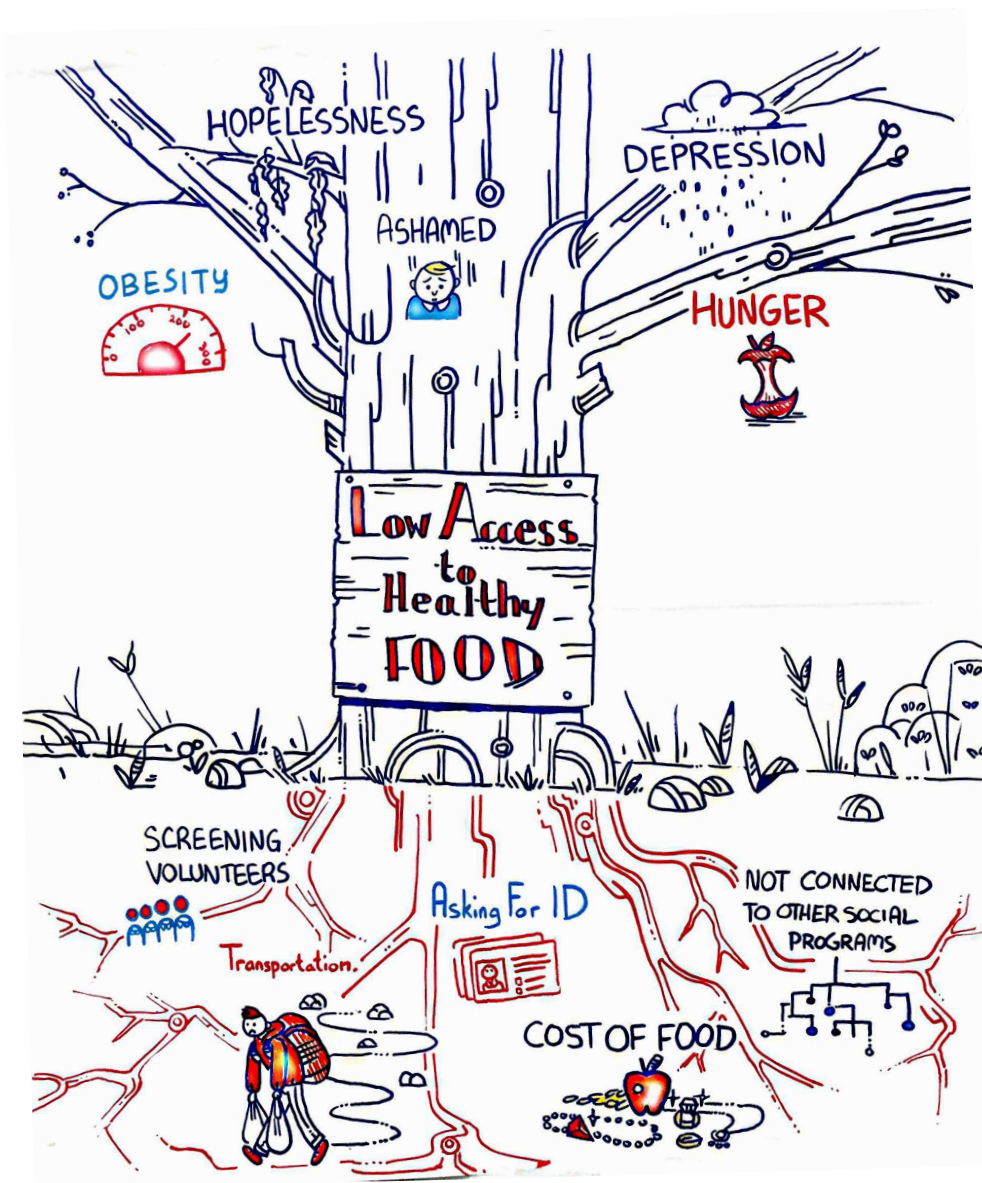
This preview for the Food Sector's literature review is not the full report but can be found online at:

**[communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)**

Food (in)Security

# Phase 2

Focus group & data visualization



By Hayden Maynard  
Bachelor of Illustration, 2016





## Findings: Consequences of food insecurity



**Mental Health:**  
Mental health issues as a result of being hungry or concerned about potential hunger: hopelessness, depression, lethargic, stress, anxiety.



**Physical Health:**  
The most discussed consequence was a deterioration in physical health including being chronically hungry and skipping meals so that there was enough food for their children.



**Isolation:**  
Limited ability to socialize outside of the home due to lack of funds; unable to entertain in the home due to housing conditions and lack of money to feed guests. Inability to provide food for their children resulted in them having to move back in with family or rely on family handouts in both food and money which resulted in family breakdown.



**Emotional Health:**  
Emotional well-being deteriorated with seniors articulating they never imagined that after working and paying taxes for the majority of their lives that they would end up in a situation where they needed to rely "on handouts" to survive and parents feeling shame and embarrassment for their inability to provide for them.



**Generational Issues:**  
Fear about reproducing poverty in children's lives. Lack of food results in poor school performance because the children can't concentrate. Stigma felt if child attends school food program.



**Financial Crisis:**  
Being so hungry that they made the decision to forgo paying bills, such as hydro and rent, to purchase food and an inability to concentrate from lack of food resulted in employment loss.

## Findings: Barriers to healthy food access



**Quantity, Quality, Variety:**  
Food at food banks are often low in nutrients and high in sugar and starch. There is a lack of food labelling or ability to accommodate food allergies, dietary restrictions nor a availability of culturally specific foods.



**Stigmatizing experience:**  
Stigma associated with the need to access any type of help at all, but especially the embarrassment of not being able to provide basic nutrition for their family. Feeling judged by wealthy community members, other food bank users, and food bank/program staff.



**Navigating Access:**  
For example, knowing where the food banks are located, transportation to the food banks, gaining access to healthy food at the food bank, and providing proof of food insecurity to gain access to healthy food.



**Lacking financial means:**  
Not being able to afford healthy food because of low income



## Solutions:

### Building an ideal food program



**Intake Process:**  
Better intake process which doesn't result in burden of proof of poverty.



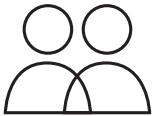
**Transportation/Access:**  
Food programs that offer delivery services, especially for the elderly, lone parents of young children and for those with any type of disability. Ensure food banks and programs are accessible by public transit (e.g. hours of operation coincide with when that bus route runs)



**Sensitivity training:**  
To help decrease discrimination, all individuals who work (e.g. for pay or volunteer) including administrators and board of directors should be trained on working with vulnerable populations



**Improve quality and variety:**  
Increase access to healthy food, food that meets the needs of varying health and cultural needs (diabetics, gluten allergies, vegans, halal), 'kid friendly' food and formula and baby food.



**Programming:**  
Community based cooking and nutritional classes, weekly community dinners to provide food and help with social isolation, community gardens where neighbours can actively participate in growing their own food.



**Communication Strategies:**  
Advertise food programs through informational posters or pamphlets through weekly email updates, phone calls and door-to-door advertising for those who don't have access to a phone or the Internet. The information listed should include all programs and services offered throughout the entire region, hours of operation, intake requirements and access.



**Wraparound services:**  
Those who are access food programs are also most likely to require the help of other social services. It would be more efficient and effective if all these services were centrally located.

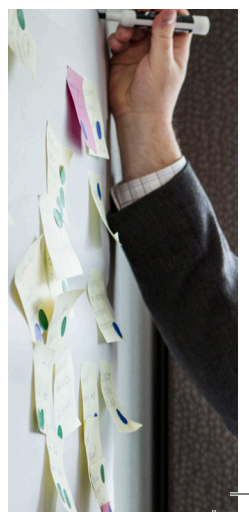
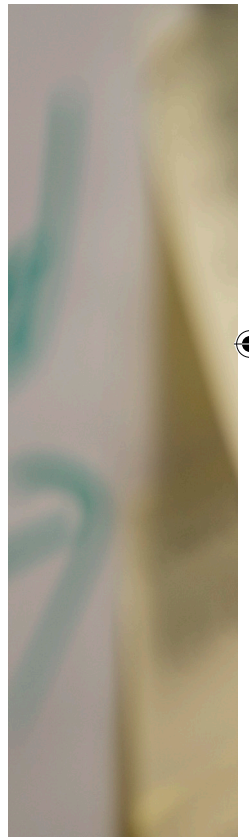
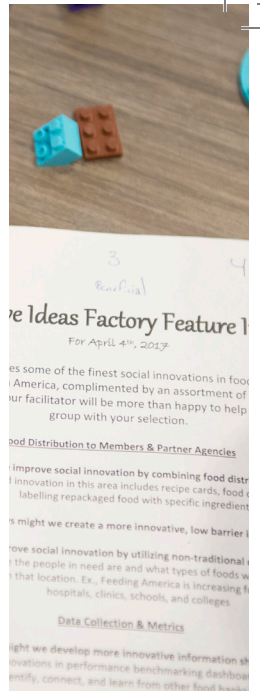




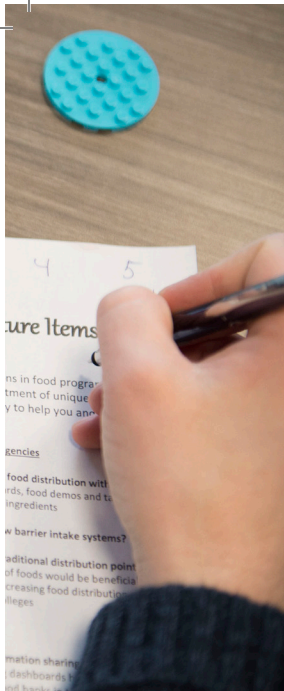
# Phase 3:

## Creative-Problem Solving Workshop

After completing the data visualization with the neighbours, a CPS workshop was held with stakeholders in the food sector. In total, 37 people representing 27 organizations (not-for-profits, public, and private) participated in the workshop. The participants were briefed on the findings of the literature review and data visualization and were tasked with coming up with innovative fundable solutions. After going through the four steps of CPS, participants developed solutions focused on improving intake systems, distribution of food, food literacy and community partnerships. They also highlighted the need to embed food services within other services in the community such as housing and social assistance.









# Phase 3: Proposed Fundable Solutions

Five ideas emerged during the three phases of research. The following fundable solutions were all individually identified at each phase of the research as best practices during the literature review, during the visual data collection with the neighbours and during the creative-problem solving sessions with the service providers. The exception to this is the idea of ‘building relationships with local farmers and farm associations,’ which was not identified during the neighbours portion of the research.



- ✓ Best Practices (Phase 1)
- ✓ Neighbours' Feedback (Phase 2)
- ✓ CPS Sessions (Phase 3)

## Streamlined Intake System

This begins with identifying and cataloguing the needs, preferences of members as well the resources and service availability in the system. The literature is replete with examples programs utilizing new technology to build membership profiles, utilize data analytics, and match user profiles with services and information. Variations on this innovation may include the use of membership cards, integrated online registration of members, centralized database platforms, and streamlined communication links to other resources and social services

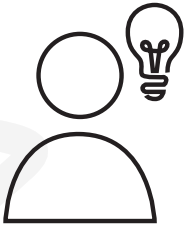


- ✓ Best Practices (Phase 1)
- ✓ Neighbours' Feedback (Phase 2)
- ✓ CPS Sessions (Phase 3)

## Accessing Non-Traditional Distribution Points

This begins with identifying where the people in need are and what types of foods would be beneficial to distribute from that location. Literature is replete with examples of food programs increasing food distribution through non-traditional sites (ex. hospitals, clinics, schools, and colleges). Neighbours affirm these findings by stating benefits of more localized, neighbourhood centric food distribution sites. CPS session highlights value of ‘MobileHub’ programs for more localized service distribution





- ✓ Best Practices (Phase 1)
- ✓ Neighbours' Feedback (Phase 2)
- ✓ CPS Sessions (Phase 3)

## Community-based Food Literacy, Skills, and Growing Programs

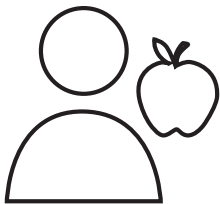
This begins with engaging communities (at times, users and non-users alike) in an effort to build people's capacity for sustainable, food management. The literature is replete with examples of new programs that give members a greater voice in activities and that increase member agency and ownership through literacy, growing, and preparation training and exchanges. Neighbours highlighted the cultural and social value of 'community gardens', 'seed-saving' initiatives, and 'community dinners'. CPS session ushered in a number of solutions for increasing community bonds and social relationships through community/ peer-to-peer food exchange, recovery, and sponsorship programs.



- ✓ Best Practices (Phase 1)
- ✓ Neighbours' Feedback (Phase 2)
- ✓ CPS Sessions (Phase 3)

## Linking Food Programs to Other Social Service Programs

This begins with the recognition that food insecurity is often linked to other social needs. The literature is replete with examples of food banks partnering with community social service providers to connect members with other services such as dental, legal, financial, and employment opportunities. CPS sessions highlighted these linkages and provided several practical ways by which food programs might leverage existing community assets to coordinate services across organizations

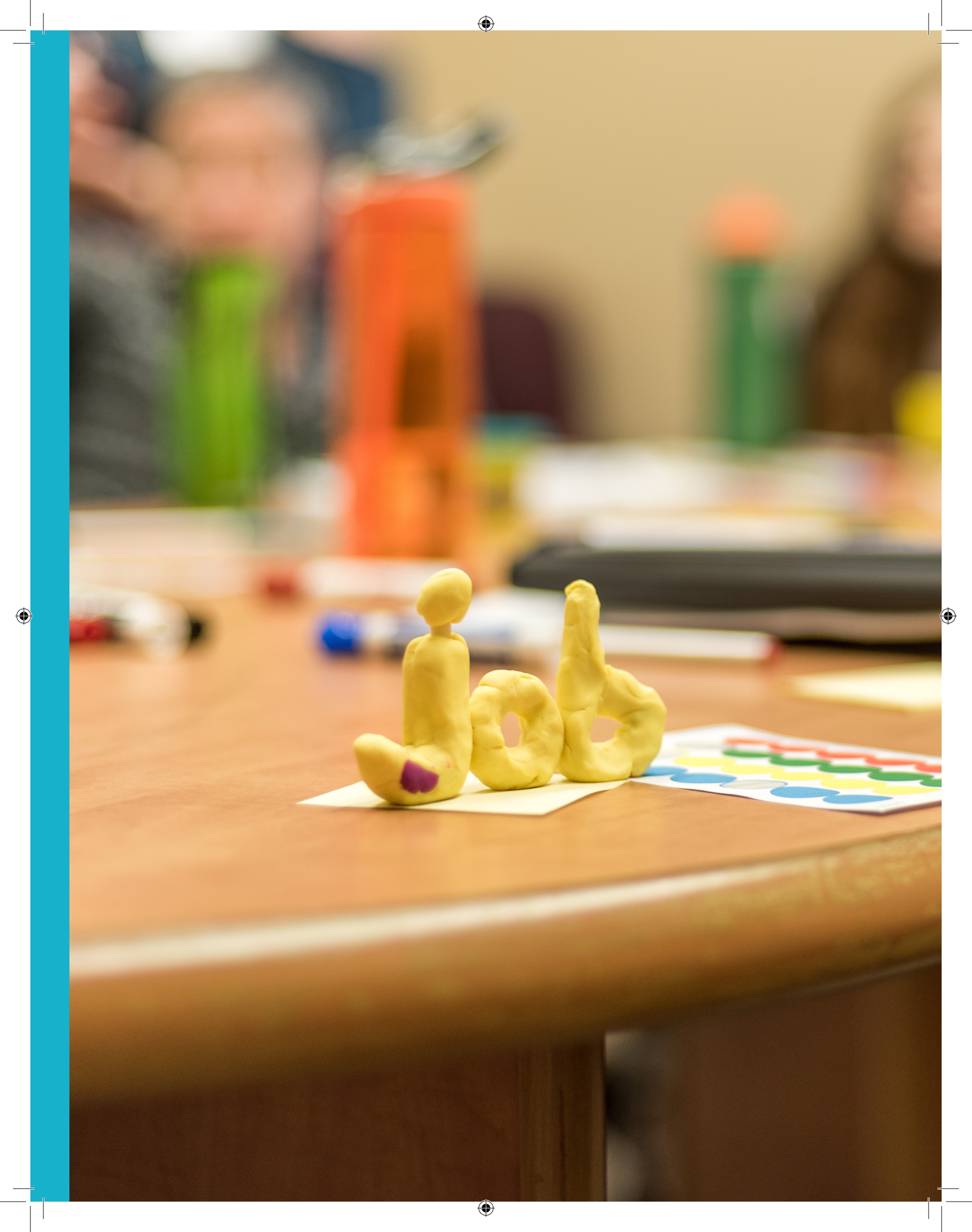


- ✓ Best Practices (Phase 1)
- ✓ Neighbours' Feedback (Phase 2)
- ✓ CPS Sessions (Phase 3)

## Building relationships with local farmers and farm associations

This begins with the recognition that local farms are key stakeholders in the food programming system. The literature is replete with examples of joint purchasing relationships, brokerage enterprises, and food growing partnerships that help local farmers grow their business while simultaneously providing the food bank with fresh produce. Such partnership have the potential for increasing food literacy, employment, and educational programming in addition to enhancing production and distribution of local food.









# Sector:

## Employment Support

*"What is employment support?"*

Employment Supports are organizations that help clients get training, build skills or find a job



# Phase 1

## Literature Review

### Environmental Scan

The first step of research in this sector was to complete an environmental scan of the current Employment Support Programs offered throughout the Halton Region. First, we accessed the Halton Information Providers' (HIP) employment/training database and completing a preliminary assessment of the listed organizations to determine whether they would be of interest to the research project at hand. Next, we created an "organizational profile" template to layout a format for the interviews that he would conduct with organization al representatives. Employment services representatives were contacted by phone and interviewed. During the phone interviews, which lasted between twenty and thirty minutes, detailed notes were taken on the representatives' responses to the questions outlined in the organizational profile template.

### Target Client Segments

Greater than 70% of the organizations interviewed provide services to either the general population, newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, or some combination of these three client segments. Despite the apparent logic in the breakdown of target client segments, there remains concern that certain client segments are being neglected. For instance, many of the organizations who target persons with disabilities communicated that they do not yet have the competencies to effectively serve people struggling from mental health issues. Similarly, while youth are typically eligible to use the services offered by organizations targeting the general population, they may face unique struggles in attaining employment, such as a lack of work experience, different abilities than older individuals, high levels of debt accumulated through fruitless postsecondary degrees, and work habits that are altered from those of past generations

This preview for the Employment Sector's literature review is not the full report but can be found online at:

***[communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)***

# Phase 2

## Online surveys

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Originally, focus groups were to be conducted with people who had previously, or were currently, accessing the services of any Employment Support agency in the Halton Region. However, the response rate was extraordinarily low. The research was adjusted from qualitative focus groups to surveys that included both quantitative and qualitative components. In total 148 people seeking employment through the help of one of the identified agencies participated in the survey. Complete survey results can be found online at [communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)

The findings from the surveys indicated many areas where Employment Supports had gaps in services. Halton Region has a highly educated and qualified unemployed population thus job seekers asserted that the agencies needed to move services beyond entry level positions in the labour market and to create bridging and/or social networking opportunities so that socially isolated individuals could meet others in the community and gain social capital. They also asserted that increasing skills based workshops and self employment opportunities would be advantageous.



# Phase 3

## CPS Workshop

A Creative Problem Solving workshop was held in December 2017. A total of 15 people registered for the event, representing 7 organizations. Two focus groups were conducted for the first two hours of the research day. Participants were split between two groups.

Through the focus groups, Employment Support providers recognized that there were group specific issues such as lack of Canadian experience, low youth and senior job placement and difficulty helping those with complex needs such as disability, mental health and addiction issues. The majority of the focus group discussions focused on how services could be improved for the client. Employment support providers also recommended wraparounds to better serve clients complex needs.

## Proposed Fundable Solutions:

**‘Centralized Talent Hub’** for Employment Ontario programming in the Halton Region. Participants envisioned a more stream-lined system to help employers, job seekers, and job developers (and their agencies) alike navigate, manage and access relationships, programs, and services across the system.

**‘Social Enterprises’** as a program innovation concept for improving efficiencies in the Employment Ontario system. While various definitions abound, social enterprises are loosely understood to refer to business ventures, operated by non-profits, which sell goods or services in the market for the purpose of creating a blended financial and social return on investment.







# Sector:

## Wraparound Services

The findings from the affordable housing, food insecurity and employment supports all pointed to the need for programming that wrapped around individual clients. The purpose of wraparound is to connect participants with other services while giving the individual skills that encourage resiliency, healthy choices, and emotional and mental stability. Thus, the final stage of this research has shifted focus to bringing the community together to envision how they can work collaboratively to better service those in need. In the month of March a series of Creative Problem Solving sessions were held with diverse stakeholders representing housing, employment supports, food security, mental health, legal aid and government. Specifically, two Creative Problem-Solving sessions were held at the Queen Elizabeth Community Centre in Oakville.





Findings from the sessions confirmed much of what had been found in the literature. Specifically, findings from our 'wrap-around' sessions revolved around six central themes:

- » Wrap-around programs, where they exist, have the capacity to improve the flow and coordination of the information b/w users and providers
- » Wrap-around programs, where they exist, can improve the communication of information about programs and offerings across provider network
- » Wrap-around programs hold the potential to enhance our ability to connect members with other/different service providers
- » Wrap-around programs, if executed correctly, may improve coordination and client information-sharing between social service providers
- » Wrap-around programs, executed in a holistic way, have the potential to engagement and involvement of client's personal support network in a more complete and effective manner.
- » Wrap-around programs may enable data-driven decision-making

Beyond these central themes, participants also highlighted that wrap-around approaches do exist throughout the network, albeit mostly in an informal manner. It was also acknowledged that a new approach for 'wrap-around coordination' may already be in the works; as embodied and outlined in the Halton's Model for Collaboration, Planning and Action.





# Phase 4

## The Philanthropitch



### Bottom-up Findings

The central aim of the Community Ideas Factory project was to assist The Foundation in its effort to transform its process of allocating philanthropic dollars; rendering the process more responsive, efficient and strategic through the adoption of a participatory framework. Towards this end, the triangulation of the data from the literature review, PRA exercises, and CPS workshops served an important first step by allowing the project team to identified a list of pressing needs in the current housing, food, and employment equity sectors.

Once the researchers had triangulated data, they were able to identify some emergent themes and recommendations for action. This information was then communicated by the researchers to The Foundation. Additionally, the research teams was invited to present the findings to a meeting of key Fundholders (The Funders Roundtable) in November 2017. Given the timing of the project, findings from the first two sectors (housing and food security) were communicated. Through a deliberative process, members of the Roundtable, in turn, agreed to provide funding for some of the identified priorities in Affordable Housing and Food Security.



### Identified Data and Opportunities



## BeCause Oakville RFP's Process

These Funding commitments materialized in the BeCause RFP Process; the issuance of Requests for Proposals (RFP's) in December 2017 for projects supporting the strategic areas identified in our CIF research. In January 2018, The Foundation received 9 proposals from local non-profits, charities, and other stakeholders that focused on the strategic priority areas.

On May 1, 2018, The Foundation hosted a 'philanthropitch' event wherein the short-listed applicants were invited to present, discuss, and 'pitch' their proposals to the 30 Fundholders in attendance.



## Presentation and pitches



## Successful projects

Using a new technology called "Community Suite", Fundholders were enabled to 'vote with their philanthropic dollars' by directing their contributions towards the short-listed proposals catalogued in the "Community Suite" online portal.. At the same time, The Foundation agreed to match Fundholder contributions with their own community granting dollars.

The result of this process was the approval of \$257,000 in funding for the following three projects:

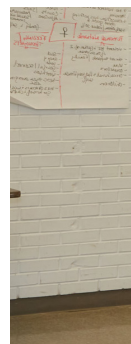
- » Affordable Housing Halton Initiative - Position Paper on Alternative Housing for Halton
- » Home Suite Hope - Margaret Garden Community Project
- » The Faith and Common Good - Community Resilience Hub.



# What's Next...

While the Community Ideas Factory identified the need for the Foundation to leverage community knowledge by actively engaging those “custodian” organizations to develop fundable solutions, it also acted as a turning point for The Foundation to provide greater engagement of its Fundholders. The Foundation turned the traditional approach to stewardship on its head, enabling the Fundholders to decide where the Foundation’s community granting funds should flow through matching their choices. It also freed the Foundation from some of its traditional grant review and stewardship infrastructure.

The CIF more than achieved its objective of developing the solutions to the challenges identified in the Vital Signs research, it has also provided a new granting process that allows Fundholders to be directly engaged in selecting the priorities, and stewarding the Foundation’s granting dollars.





## Key changes the Foundation plans to move forward with:

- » The Foundation will continue to research and report on significant community issues, and at the same time provide that intermediary step to develop the “fundable solutions” to address those challenges before it issues a call for proposals/or granting requests. Community groups will be invited to develop solutions for its upcoming report in 2019.
- » The model for greater Fundholder participation through the ThinkIn and Survey, Philanthropitch and stewarding of community matching funds will continue.



In 2019, The Foundation plans to invite all members of the community to the Philanthropitch and give them the opportunity to contribute to funding the solutions as its granting catalogue. The catalogue can be readily offered to the public through its website as appropriate.

The Community Ideas Factory achieved more than it set out to by intersecting with the other priorities and demands of the Foundation to create a new model of community engagement empowering charities and funders to actively align their priorities and interests through a new research based granting process.





# The Importance of Continued Support for Social Innovation Research

For more than two decades, the Canadian government has been funding applied research collaborations between colleges and small-and-medium enterprises. Through its College-Community Innovation (CCI) funding program, the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) has actively sought to increase innovation in local economics by enabling Canadian colleges to work with local companies on projects that facilitate commercialization as well as technology transfer, adaptation and adoption of new technologies. In 2016, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) followed suit by launching a new pilot initiative: the College-Community Social Innovation Fund (CCSIF). The objective of CCSIF Grants is to foster social innovation by connecting the talent, facilities, resources and capabilities

of Canada's colleges with the research needs of local, community-based organizations and local communities, more broadly. Since its initial launch, CCSIF grants have supported numerous academic-community projects across Canada that, for example, seek to alleviate poverty, integrate vulnerable populations, increase access to healthy food, combat bullying, and promote a greater sense of global citizenship. For those on the front-lines of social justice work, colleges have shown themselves to be a valuable resource and ally in terms of their ability to mobilize new technologies, equipment, resources and other capabilities in support of beneficial social change efforts. For the colleges, affording students the opportunity to work directly on applied research projects for social change provides invaluable experiential learning



opportunities for students that allow them to hone their technical skills while simultaneously developing the softer aptitudes and social awareness that characterize global citizens.

The Community Ideas Factory was made possible by a grant from the CCSIF. Through this grant, we hope, in our own small way, that we have contributed to positive social change in the Halton Region. We also hope that in providing our students with an opportunity to work on the front-lines of this research, we have helped to promote a greater sense of social awareness, empathy, and understanding within them. We also note that at our own institution, the CCSIF pilot initiative has supported several other academic-community partnerships for beneficial social change. These include the work of our colleague, Dr. Kirsten Madsen and her anti-bullying initiative for older

adults and Dr. John Helliker and his collaboration with HuffPost RYOT, Legend3D and SK Films on a virtual reality project that seeks to promote greater global citizenship and commitment to social action.

We are pleased to learn that the Canadian government has extended the CCSIF pilot (now managed by NSERC) with a contribution of an additional \$10 million dollars. While this is a welcomed extension, it still remains only a drop in the bucket of the governments overall investment in academic research in Canada. Given the scope of social problems in Canada and the remarkable return on investments in social innovation research, we count ourselves amongst the growing chorus of voices advocating for the continued support and sponsorship of this beneficial form of research.





[communityideasfactory.wordpress.com](http://communityideasfactory.wordpress.com)

## Special Thanks

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