

# Food Share Network Action Plan

Working Document – July 31, 2014

Prepared for the Victoria Foundation,  
Food Share Network and our beautiful Community



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## Executive Summary

**Purpose:** This Action Plan is designed to serve as a guide for coordination, collaboration and cooperation during the preliminary phase of developing the Food Share Network.

**Background:** The Food Share Network is emerging as a response to several issues faced by stakeholders, including people served, food providers, donors, funding partners and others. People accessing food bank and meal services could benefit from a more efficient and coordinated system. Food providers are challenged with getting appropriate quantities and quality of grocery items. Food donors have become weary of increasingly numerous asks. Funding partners are seeking to fund food providers that are collaborating to use limited resources in an efficient manner. There is a broad consensus on shifting toward a focus on food security and self-reliance as a means to create a healthier and more resilient population.

The Victoria Foundation provided initial funding to the Mustard Seed to develop a collaborative strategy for addressing these issues.

**Strategy:** Based on engagement with a diverse mix of stakeholder organizations, the project team and Steering Committee developed the following strategic cornerstones:

**Vision:** All residents of the Capital Region enjoy food security.

**Mission:** The Food Share Network is an innovative umbrella that enhances food security in the Capital Region through collaboration and cooperation among food banks, community centres, donors and other participating organizations.

**Core values:** empowerment; dignity and respect; food and community; stewardship; collective impact.

The Food Share Network intends to contribute to the enhanced health of people and communities through achievement of the following seven

**measurable outcomes:**

1. Enhanced partnership, collaboration and cooperation among food serving organizations
2. Systemic change through collective advocacy
3. Improved efficiency and safety for people accessing non-profit food services, along with strengthened community links and access to resources that support self-sufficiency
4. Increased involvement of people served in creating food security and food literacy
5. Improved quality and suitability of food services, with increased provision of fresh, local and organic food
6. Improved coordination of food distribution, with greater efficiency for donors and service providers
7. Improved environmental performance of non-profit food operations

**Governance and structure:** The Food Share Network is forming with leadership from a Steering Committee, comprised of senior representatives from a diverse mix of food service providers, food access organizations, and related allies. The Network has also formed a Working Group, comprised of operational staff from participating agencies. In addition, various task groups are convening for specific purposes. All of these bodies have clear terms of reference.

The Network intends to provide leadership and work together toward the following **specific objectives:**

1. Develop the Network
2. Share information among non-profit food services, coordinate and collaborate toward common goals
3. Cooperatively advocate on behalf of people who are food insecure

4. Explore bulk purchasing and centralized food collection and storage
5. Transition toward community-based, decentralized food distribution
6. Collaborate in one-stop service information and referrals, and explore common client data

For each of these objectives, the Plan identifies initial actions, who will lead, who else will be involved, and timing.

The Food Share Network intends to monitor and evaluate collective impact across all of its intended outcomes. The Action Plan identifies suggested indicators and measurement methods for each. A Shared Metrics Working Group will provide leadership on further development and implementation of the evaluation strategy. This way, the Food Share Network will demonstrate its effectiveness and practice ongoing learning through collaborative evaluation at a regional scale.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Victoria Foundation for providing this community grant to undertake this community project and those donors contributing the most appreciated funds. These include the Orion Fund and Helen May Noxon Fund; the Marymax Fund; the Alexandra Fund; and the Sutherland Family Fund. Without these incredible gifts this project and process to streamline social service food access in Greater Victoria would not have been possible. The collaboration and intentionality stemming from the community of non-profits, funders and government actors has truly been remarkable, leading to this solid action plan that will enable food access non-profits to provide better services and supports to at-risk and low-income communities, including street/homeless, aging in place seniors, people with disabilities and families. Moreover, this grant has helped us craft the seven initial steps of transitioning away from the traditional food bank emergency food model, to a more inclusive and healthier model addressing the root causes of food insecurity and poverty in Greater Victoria.

We would also like to thank our amazing partners who have encouraged and supported this project most notably Marg Rose, who provided timely and effective leadership, facilitating amazing community engagement and keeping the project focused and moving forward. Further, our colleagues in the non-profit community who took time from their demanding and important work to provide leadership and input into the crafting of this action plan to truly make it a community driven process. We would like to thank the Steering Committee: Tracy Cullen, Colin Tessier, Angela Hudson, Colleen Hobson, Suzanne Cole, LeAnn Dolan, Brian Cox and Kelly Greenwell. Our thanks to the working groups as well including Shonna Bell, Correen Coons, Abby Cronk, Grant Crosswell, Kim Cummins, Kirk Fremont, Don Helliwell, Pat Humble, Patricia McKay, Donna McKenna, Jim Pungente, David Rand, Danielle Stevenson, John Sylwester, Peggy Wilmot.

The Mustard Seed would like to extend a special thanks to our consultant team of James Pratt, Carolyn Fast and Jason Found for their hard work, commitment and invaluable expertise that made this project possible. Additionally, thank you to Vancouver Food Bank, Calgary Interfaith Food Bank, Winnipeg Harvest, Toronto's Daily Bread and Nanaimo's Loaves and Fishes for providing advice, experience and advice to the project. Finally, a big thank you to the wonderful Mustard Seed staff who have worked tirelessly to start moving these initiatives forward on the ground with our excellent community partners.



June 4, 2014 – Food Share Network Steering Committee



June 12, 2014 – Food Share Network Working Group

# 1. Introduction

## Purpose

This action plan is designed to serve as a guide for coordination, collaboration and cooperation during the preliminary phase of developing the Food Share Network.

## Background

The Food Security Roadmap was developed in spring 2013. The sessions were hosted by the Victoria Foundation, Horner Foundation, United Way of Great Victoria, and Vancity; 43 key stakeholder groups and food security organizations in the region took part. This process identified gaps in the food system and highlighted areas for collaboration. Food Service agencies were highlighted as a key sector where collaboration could lead to great efficiencies and better outcomes for the clients that the sector serves.

There are an estimated 16,000+ individuals and over 1,000 families in Greater Victoria who are food insecure, as identified in the Food Banks Canada 2014 Hunger Count Survey.

In 2013, The Mustard Seed received a grant from Victoria Foundation to complete a Business/Action plan to streamline social service food access in Greater Victoria. This entailed increased collaboration of existing services provided by multiple agencies. No comprehensive and collaborative food access strategy or system currently exists in this region.

Thus far groups attending meetings, collaborating, and contribution to the Food Share Network to date include:

- 910 Club
- Burnside Gorge Community Association
- Esquimalt Neighborhood House
- Fernwood Neighborhood Resource Group
- Food Funders Network
- Island Health
- James Bay Community Project
- Living Edge
- Our Place Society
- Quadra Village Community Centre
- Rainbow Kitchen

- Saanich Neighborhood Place
- Salvation Army ARC
- Salvation Army Stan Hagen Centre for Families
- Shelbourne Community Kitchen
- St. John the Divine
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Sooke Family Resource Society
- The Mustard Seed Victoria
- Victoria Community Food Hub
- Victoria Cool Aid Society

### **Why Create the Food Share Network? (Rationale)**

Some of the factors driving this initiative are that:

- People accessing food bank and meal services could benefit from a more efficient and coordinated system – which would value their time and safety
- Food providers are challenged with getting appropriate quantities and quality of grocery items
- Food donors have become weary of increasingly numerous asks
- Funding partners are seeking to fund food providers that are collaborating to use limited resources in an efficient manner
- There is a broad consensus on shifting toward a focus on food security and self-reliance as a means to create a healthier and more resilient population
- There is strong potential for improved relationships among food serving organizations – toward partnership, collaboration and cooperation



## 2. Strategic Foundation

### Vision

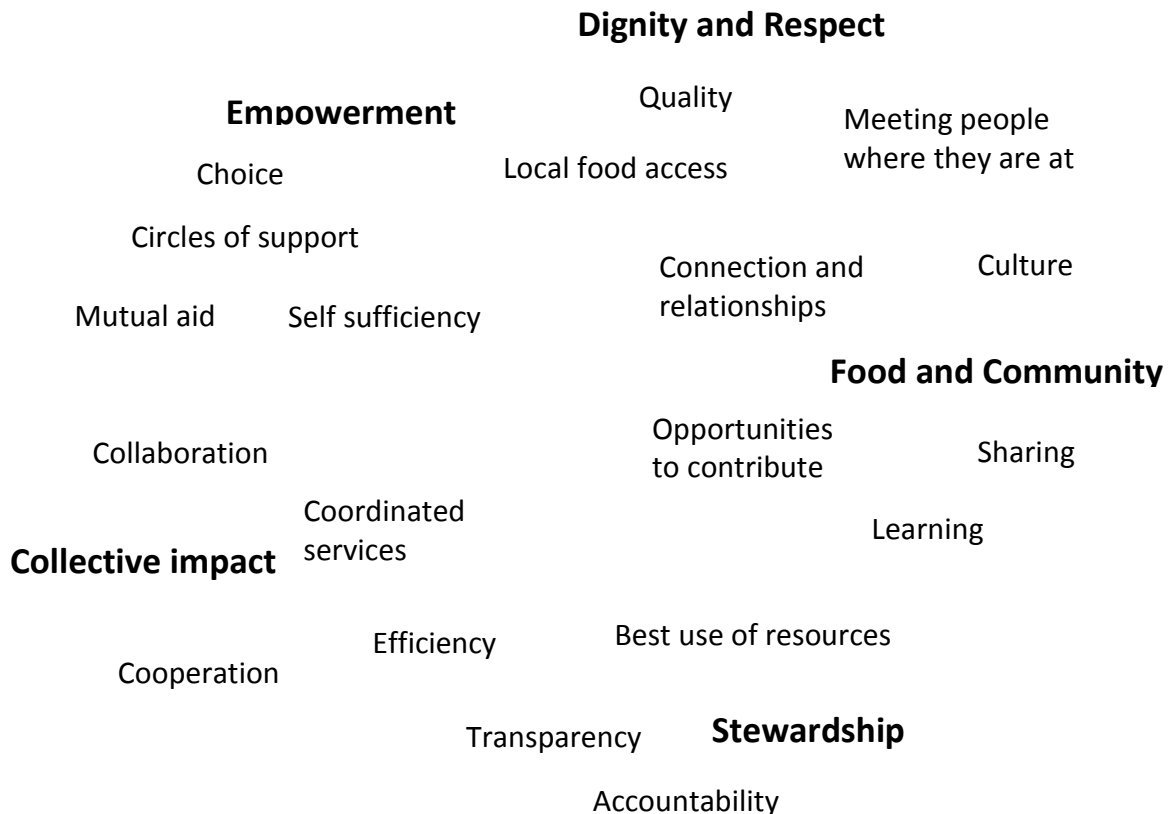
All residents of the Capital Region enjoy food security.<sup>1</sup>

### Mission

The Food Share Network is an innovative umbrella that enhances food security in the Capital Region through collaboration and cooperation among food banks, community centres, donors and other participating organizations.

### Values

The Food Share Network and the participating organizations share the common values: empowerment; dignity and respect; food and community; stewardship; collective impact. These core values and additional values are illustrated below:



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<sup>1</sup> The Food Share Network defines **food security** as follows: all people have ongoing access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food from sustainable, non-emergency sources.

## Measureable Outcomes

The Food Share Network contributes to the enhanced health of people and communities through achievement of the following seven intended outcomes:

1. Enhanced partnership, collaboration and cooperation among food serving organizations
2. Systemic change through collective advocacy
3. Improved efficiency and safety for people accessing non-profit food services, along with strengthened community links and access to resources that support self-sufficiency
4. Increased involvement of people served in creating food security and food literacy<sup>2</sup>
5. Improved quality and suitability of food services, with increased provision of fresh, local and organic food
6. Improved coordination of food distribution, with greater efficiency for donors and service providers
7. Improved environmental performance of non-profit food operations

## Governance

The Food Share Network is forming with leadership from a Steering Committee (initially known as the “Advisory Committee”), comprised of senior representatives from a diverse mix of food service providers, food access organizations, and related allies.

Committee roles in this developmental phase are to:

1. Make decisions regarding the vision for Food Share Network, drawing on input from the Working Groups (front line and operational staff)
2. Provide direction on further stakeholder engagement
3. Develop and update the Food Share Network Action Plan, with support from the project team (the Mustard Seed project manager and consultant team)
4. Monitor and evaluate implementation of the Action Plan
5. Develop key documents, such as MOUs (memorandums of understanding) between partner organizations

The Steering Committee makes decisions by consensus, so that each member at the table is fully empowered. The Steering Committee will form ad hoc “Task Groups” with relevant staff

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<sup>2</sup> The Network defines **food literacy** as the ability to understand food and to develop skills across the lifespan in order to navigate, engage and participate within a complex food system, making decisions to support the achievement of personal potential and maintenance of health and well-being.

and outside experts to complete action items that will coordinate with one another at the Working Group level.

### 3. Action Plan

The Food Share Network (FSN) intends to provide leadership and work together in the following objectives:

1. Develop the Network
2. Share information among non-profit food services, coordinate and collaborate toward common goals
3. Cooperatively advocate on behalf of people who are food insecure
4. Explore bulk purchasing and centralized food collection and storage
5. Transition toward community-based, decentralized food distribution
6. Collaborate in one-stop service information and referrals and explore shared client data

For each of these objectives, tables identify initial actions, who will lead, who else will be involved and timing. This plan is designed as a “living, breathing” document that will be updated on an ongoing basis as opportunities and challenges emerge and implementation proceeds. Updates will be completed by the project team based on working group consultation, with final approval by the Steering Committee.

#### Objective 1: Develop the Network

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Provide high-level leadership	FSN Steering Committee	Member Boards	Ongoing
Provide operational leadership	FSN Working Group		Ongoing
Secure and steward funding and in-kind resources to support FSN development	Mustard Seed		Ongoing
Provide staff and consultant support to FSN	Mustard Seed / consultant team		Ongoing
Explore the potential future development of the network into an umbrella organization	FSN Steering Committee		Ongoing

## Objective 2: Share Information, Coordinate and Collaborate

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Share information on fundraising calendar and coordinate timing	Colin Tessier Angela Hudson	FSN Steering Committee	Ongoing
Explore common standards for food quality assurance (distribution standard, best before and expiry dates – “eat always, eat sometimes, eat never”)	Vacant	Vacant	Ongoing
Form working committee on shared metrics	Rudi Wallace	Vacant	October 1, 2014
Explore existing metric sets such as Demonstrating Value	Rudi Wallace	Vacant	Ongoing

## Objective 3: Cooperatively Advocate

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Develop a working group to explore points of initial collective advocacy	Donna McKenna	Rudi Wallace	
Share information on current and upcoming advocacy campaigns	Vacant	Vacant	
Develop a strategy and initial collaborative campaign	Vacant	Vacant	
Connect with shared metrics working group to explore which data could be used for community education	Rudi Wallace	Vacant	
Connect with City of Victoria Youth Council for community outreach component	Vacant	Vacant	

## Objective 4: Explore Centralized Purchasing, Food Collection and Storage

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Develop a 'good community partner' brand for participating suppliers	FSN Steering Committee	Danielle Stevenson	
Develop working group to explore initial bulk purchasing options	Danielle Stevenson	Vacant	
Share information on pricing	Vacant	Vacant	
Explore commissioning farmers to grow for bulk purchase	Vacant	Vacant	

## Objective 5: Transition toward Decentralized Food Distribution

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Find ways to reduce travel to access food for clients	Rudi Wallace	Vacant	
Mid-term and end point evaluations of decentralization pilot	Rudi Wallace	SNP FNRG Rainbow Kitchen Cool Aid Society	Oct. 7, 2014 - mid; Dec. 2, 2014 - final;
Run pilot distribution point at Rainbow Kitchen - Esquimalt	Sally Challenger	Jessica Woods Ray Jessen Rudi Wallace	Sept. – Dec. 2014;
Run pilot distribution at Saanich Neighborhood Place - Tillicum	Patricia McKay	Jessica Woods Ray Jessen Rudi Wallace	Jul. – Dec. 2014;
Run pilot distribution point at Cool Aid Society's Downtown Community Centre	Donna McKenna	Jessica Woods Ray Jessen Rudi Wallace	Sept.- Dec. 2014;
Run pilot distribution point at Fernwood NRG - Fernwood	Shonna Bell Abby Cronk	Jessica Woods Ray Jessen Rudi Wallace	Jul. – Dec. 2014;

Develop inter-agency model of transportation; investigate lease of a vehicle	Rudi Wallace		Ongoing until funding is located
Develop strategy to address clients with mobility issues; invite Saanich Volunteers, Volunteer Victoria, Capital City Volunteers and James Bay Community Project to participate	Rudi Wallace		January 1, 2015;
Connect with relevant networks, organizations and individuals	Rudi Wallace		Ongoing
Identify gaps in capacity with participating and relevant organizations	Rudi Wallace		January 31, 2015 upon completion of pilot phase

### Objective 6: Collaborate in One-Stop Service Information and Referrals, and Explore Shared Client Data

Action	Lead	Others involved	Timing
Explore 211 Service	Rudi Wallace	BC 211, United Way of Greater Victoria	Ongoing
Develop working group focused on shared metrics	Rudi Wallace		October 1, 2014;
Explore the creation of a central client information database	Rudi Wallace		Ongoing until completed

## 4. Evaluation and Performance Measurement

Food Share Network intends to monitor and evaluate collective impact across all of the intended outcomes (goals). The table below shows suggested indicators and measurement methods for each. The Shared Metrics Working Group will explore existing indicators being employed by members of the network.

Measurable Outcomes (Goals)		Indicators	Measurement Strategies
1	Enhanced partnership, collaboration and cooperation among food serving organizations	Opinions of leaders and staff of food serving non-profits and allies if there is enhanced collaboration.  Number of collaborative activities undertaken through FSN (purchasing, advocacy, distribution)	Online survey, focus group(s)  Ongoing consultation at the Steering Committee and working groups
2	Systemic change through collective advocacy and improved decision-making related to food security by governments and other key stakeholders	Decreased need for food access services  Increased stability of food access agencies  Number of clients becoming self-sufficient	Census data  Food Banks Canada Hunger Count  Client feedback surveys, and  Client follow-up
3	Improved efficiency and safety for people accessing non-profit food services, along with strengthened community links and access to resources that support self-sufficiency	Opinions of clients if food access has become simplified, and is increasingly meeting their needs  Number of clients now deemed 'self-sufficient'  Number of community members "pathed" to programming and/or resources	Client feedback surveys  Volunteer surveys  Staff surveys

4	Increased involvement of people served in creating food security and food literacy, self-help and mutual aid in food growing/processing/preparation /sharing – and related skill sets	Number of clients participating in programming Number of clients finding self-sufficient food security	Client surveys Client tracking through shared database*
5	Improved quality and suitability of food services, with increased provision of fresh, local and organic food	Amount of local organic food available in local food service	Track purchases/donation of local organic food
6	Improved coordination of food distribution, with greater efficiency for donors and service providers	Reduction in the number of locations a family needs to visit to meet food security needs Transition from emergency food services to programming in staff hours and budgeted hours	Client feedback survey Budget percentages allotted to self-sufficiency programs versus emergency food access
7	Improved environmental performance of non-profit food operations - reduced food waste, reduced travel to access food, and reduced distance food is transported	Amount of food in lbs. produced locally Amount of food in lbs. that is composted Distance that clients travel to access food hampers	Track the amount of local food purchased Track lbs of food sent to garbage Client surveys

The Shared Metrics Working Group will provide leadership on further development and implementation of the evaluation strategy. This way, the Food Share Network will demonstrate its effectiveness and practice ongoing learning through collaborative evaluation at a regional scale.