

Case for Support



farm to
Cafeteria
Canada

How **you** can help **nourish** change

The challenge is complex.

School food environments in Canada are multifaceted and dynamic. They are influenced by intersecting systems of food, education, health and more across a country that is geographically, economically and socially diverse.

Schools in Canada are not designed with food in mind

- Canada is the only G7 country without a national school food program, and is ranked **37th out of 41 countries** in providing nutritious food to kids.¹
- Nutrition, food skills and understanding food systems are not part of core curricula in Canada and **educators struggle to embed food literacy** into their classrooms due to a lack of expertise, resources, and funds.



Food systems contribute significantly to climate change



- **26%** of global greenhouse gas emissions come from food.²
- Conventional or industrial food systems **pollute** waterways, erode soils and **threaten** biodiversity loss.³
- Our current food systems drive more access to, and consumption of, ultra-processed foods and will continue using more land, making it **increasingly impossible** to use land for crops that enable healthy and sustainable dietary patterns.⁴

Children in Canada aren't receiving the nutrition they need

- In 2022, almost **1.8 million children** in Canada were reported to be **living in food-insecure households**, up considerably from 2021 during unprecedented inflation.⁵

- **More than 50%** of the energy intake of children in Canada between 4-18 years comes from ultra-processed foods.⁶

- Rising Rates of diet-related illness are estimated to cost Canadians **\$15.8B** annually.⁷



There is unrealized economic development potential in local food



- **\$4.8 billion** could be contributed to local economies in Canada by 2030 with a local procurement target of just 30% in a national school food program.⁸

- There is a current **disconnect** between the potential to economically support farmers and other local food providers with school food programs in Canada, and the actual practice of procuring and distributing local food in schools.



“ Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth.

-EAT Lancet Report, 2019



F2CC is Uniquely Positioned to Address the Challenge

Farm to Cafeteria Canada exists to transform how food is experienced, learned and celebrated in all schools across Canada.

A holistic approach to school food

We believe that food is a powerful connector, both to place and to others. Encouraging curiosity through food and food systems, and fostering these connections, allows children to learn how the health of their community and the planet is connected to their own health and wellness.

We understand that school communities are the experts in what their children need most, but they often don't have the tools to get there.

We grow the capacity of diverse school communities across the country to foster vibrant school food systems by connecting students to food and the local systems that produce it. We do this by focusing on 3 elements:

- 1) providing access to **healthy* local food in school**;
- 2) engaging students in **hands-on learning** through food; and
- 3) **connecting students to their broader communities**, including those involved in their local food system.

**We understand "healthy food" can mean different things to different people. We define it as food that provides the nutrients needed to maintain health, feel good, and enjoy life, and we believe that it should consider people's physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs, including being culturally appropriate and responsive.*



We refer to these 3 elements as the **Farm to School Approach**, or, to better reflect the diversity of local and traditional foods that can be enjoyed in schools from coast to coast to coast, the “local food to school” approach.



Local food to school can be used interchangeably with farm to school. It is the preferred term in some regions and Indigenous communities. It reflects a diversity of local and traditional foods, many of which are not sourced from a farm. We encourage schools to use the language that resonates most within their own community.







Across Canada, **Farm to Cafeteria Canada** has become a **go-to-resource** for educators, partners and funders seeking to transform food systems and empower youth through food literacy.

We achieve our mission by enabling, evaluating and sharing lessons learned from demonstration projects that are designed by communities, for communities.

Our work centres around four strategic pillars:



Grow

We inform, empower and equip school communities to transform school food systems.



Connect

We bring together partners, schools, practitioners and mentors to learn from each other and amplify impacts.



Fund

We provide school community grants and knowledge exchange supports.



Inform

We lead and participate in a variety of activities to inform school food policy at the national, provincial, territorial, and local levels.





Our Impacts

62,000+

Students reached

10

Provinces and territories

\$1.6M

In grants provided directly to K-12 schools

90%

Of schools report serving Indigenous students



Public Health

92% of schools report students' awareness of healthy eating increased.



Education

85% of schools increased students' hands-on food literacy (e.g. growing, harvesting off the land, preserving and cooking, and composting food).



Environment

95% of schools report students have a greater knowledge and are more aware about gardening, agriculture, and the environment.



Community Economic Development

91% of schools recognize themselves as leaders among other institutions in the procurement of healthy and sustainable food.





“ F2CC has created a network of like-minded people and organizations across Canada and there is enormous value for our local organization, and nationally, by bringing us all together.

-F2CC provincial partner





“ — Learning the art and science of gardening allows students to experience the joy of nurturing something that grows. It puts them in touch with the ecosystems that nurture us, body and soul. Students learn how to take what the garden produces to create healthy meals, they help operate a self-sufficient greenhouse and they learn to manage a food program. They learn important financial lessons and life skills. Nothing teaches like experience does.”

-Alan Macdonald
Teacher & F2CC grant recipient

Alan is pictured with a sunflower he grew from a seed obtained on a field trip at the 2019 National Farm to School Conference, hosted by F2CC.



“ —

Our inaugural salad bar served 125+ kids a free salad on the day that North America recalled romaine lettuce, and the best part is we didn't have to worry, because we had grown it ourselves. It had been picked by the urban farming kids, it had been sent to the cafeteria and prepped by the culinary arts kids, and it showed up on the salad bar. To us that was a real great way to start this and say, look, we can make this work - even when the rest of the world is scared of lettuce we can celebrate ours.”

- Derek Brez
Teacher & F2CC grant recipient





“ When you want something to grow, you need to start with the children.

-F2CC Learning Circle participant

There is an opportunity and the time is now.

The Government of Canada has committed to working with provinces, territories, Indigenous partners, municipalities and stakeholders to develop a National School Food Policy and to work toward a national school nutritious meal program.

In a recent series of engagements to inform this commitment, stakeholders stressed that school food programs in Canada should take a holistic approach which:

- Respects and values the practices and cultures of First Nations, Inuit & Métis people
- Integrates food literacy education and links it to curricula
- Creates opportunities for student involvement
- Boosts local food production and economic development⁹

How You Can Help

Realizing the holistic vision for school food in Canada requires immense collaboration and investment in capacity building.

Across the country, **momentum is building for change in school food.** Parents and guardians, food providers, educators, and **school food champions are working hard** to create school food environments that are healthier for their students, communities and the planet. **They can't do it alone.**

Your gift will give diverse school communities across Canada **access to the essential resources and support they need.**



We are **seeking** contributions
from **supporters like you** toward
4 priority initiatives



4 Ways to Give



Nourishing Indigenous Food & Foodways in Schools

Along with 14+ committed partners from across Canada, we're collaborating with Indigenous school communities to support efforts to get more Indigenous food and foodways into schools while also introducing a diversity of educators, food service personnel, and administrators to new and different ways of understanding the complex relationships between Indigenous food and foodways, reconciliation, healing and education.

An investment in this priority area will provide opportunities for school communities, including Indigenous families, to experience school food activities as a reflection of cultural vitality.



Developing a National Educator Training Institute

Grounded in evidence-based frameworks and informed by practicing educators, academics, and NGO partners, we're creating a first-of-its-kind National Farm to School Training Institute to equip educators with knowledge, tools, resources, connections and inspiration to grow their capacity to design and implement engaging and equitable, food literacy programs that centre inquiry-based pedagogies and place-based learning.

An investment in this priority area will help design accredited courses and tools to increase the knowledge, enthusiasm, and confidence of educators across Canada to bring curricula to life through food, reaching thousands of students from coast-to-coast-to coast each year.





Expanding School Grant Offerings

Building on nearly 10 years of successful grant program delivery in schools, we're seeking to expand our grant offerings to meet the many and diverse needs of school communities where they're at in their journey to transforming their school food environments.

An investment in this priority area will provide more schools across the country with the critical infrastructure they need to improve their school food environments so that more of Canada's 5.5 million school-aged children feel welcomed and nourished in mind, body and spirit when they're at school.



Supporting Local Food Procurement and Distribution

In partnership with the Arrell Food Institute Graduate Research Program at the University of Guelph, we're exploring the barriers and opportunities to procuring and distributing a diversity of local foods to schools so we can develop policy and program guidelines to:

1) meet the unique needs of school food systems; 2) support farmers and producers of different sizes to sell and distribute their products to schools; and 3) do so while protecting the integrity of the agriculture and agri-food sector in Canada.

An investment in this priority area will support the next steps and help put ideas into action, building the essential pathways, infrastructure and relationships that will connect schools and local food providers in Canada.





Will you join us?

Together, we can transform how food is experienced, learned and celebrated in ALL schools across Canada.



Farm to Cafeteria Canada Society is a Registered Canadian Charity, #738633601RR0001



To learn more about how you can partner and support, please contact:



Jesse Veenstra
Executive Director



jveenstra@farmtocafeteriacanada.ca



604-561-9970



farmtocafeteriacanada.ca

References

1. Unicef Canada (2017). Unicef Report Card 14: Child Well-being in a Sustainable World. Available at: <https://www.unicef.ca/en/unicef-report-card-14-child-well-being-sustainable-world>
2. Ritchie, H., Rosado, P., and Roser, M. (2019) Environmental Impacts of Food Production. As cited on Our World in Data. Retrieved from: <https://ourworldindata.org/environmental-impacts-of-food>
3. Food and the Environment (n.d.) Food Print. Retrieved from: <https://foodprint.org/the-total-footprint-of-our-food-system/issues/food-and-the-environment/>
4. Leite, F.H.M., Khandpur, N., Andrade, G.C., Anastasiou, K., Baker, P., Lawrence, M., and Monteiro, C.A., (2022). Ultra-processed foods should be central to global food systems dialogue and action on biodiversity. *BMJ Global Health*. 7(3): e008269. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8895941/>
5. PROOF. (2023) New data on household food insecurity in 2022. Retrieved from: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/>
6. Moubarac JC. Ultra-processed foods in Canada: consumption, impact on diet quality and policy implications. Montréal: TRANSNUT, University of Montreal; December 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/-/media/pdf-files/canada/media-centre/hs-report-upp-moubarac-dec-5-2017.ashx>
7. Loewen, O.K., Ekwaru, J.P., Ohinmama, A., Veugelers, P.J. (2019). Economic Burden of Not Complying with Canadian Food Recommendations in 2018. *Nutrients*. 11(10); 2529. Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6835951/>
8. Ruetz, A. & Fraser, E. (2019). National School Food program a short-term opportunity for jobs creation and economic growth. Canadian Science Policy Centre. Retrieved from: <https://sciencepolicy.ca/posts/national-school-food-program-a-short-term-opportunity-for-jobs-creation-and-economic-growth-2/>
9. Government of Canada (2023). National School Food Policy Engagements - What we heard report. Retrieved from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/school-food/consultation-school-food/what-we-heard-report-2023.html>

Land acknowledgement

F2CC's office is located on the unceded lands of the Coast Salish peoples – xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and selílwitlh (Tsleil-Waututh) nations and we work across the diverse lands of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of what is now called Canada. We are committed to reflecting, honoring, and amplifying Indigenous voices, perspectives, and values in our work. Learn more at <https://www.farmtocafeteriacanada.ca/nourishing-relations/>

