

Executive Summary

About the Project

Rethinking Food Charity: A Community Conversation was an 8-month project to reenvision the scope and role of food charity in Newfoundland and Labrador. It had three stages:

- ▶ **Stage 1:** Online surveys for both food program providers and People with Lived and Living Experience of food insecurity.
- ▶ **Stage 2:** Focus groups with both food program providers and People with Lived and Living Experience of food insecurity.
- ▶ **Stage 3:** A large in-person gathering.

Rethink Food Charity: Themes

- 1. Accessibility:** Reducing physical and administrative barriers to accessing food.
- 2. Stigma and Dignity:** Building a system without shame.
- 3. Choice:** People living with food insecurity shaping the support they receive.
- 4. Collaboration:** Food programs working together and sharing resources.
- 5. Advocacy:** Food charities raising their voices for change.
- 6. Income Solutions:** Recognizing that the root cause of food insecurity is poverty.

Recommendations for the Provincial Government

- ▶ Immediate, decisive action on structural changes that would raise incomes (such as a higher minimum wage, higher income support rates, and a basic income).
- ▶ Establish a five-year Food Charity Transformation Fund to support organizational transformation and collaboration in the food charity sector.
- ▶ Provide long-term funding to a shared delivery service and 211 service.
- ▶ Continue the Food Security Working Group.
- ▶ Participate in national dialogues around food insecurity and food charity.



Recommendations for the Food Charity Sector

Theme	#	Recommendation	Timeline
Accessibility	1A	Stop using income testing and similar eligibility criteria.	Immediately
	1B	Consult with service users to adjust opening hours.	6 months
	1C	Make all food program spaces fully accessible.	3–5 years
	1D	Stop using MCP numbers as client identifiers.	1–3 years
	1E	Establish shared service standards.	2–3 years
Stigma and Dignity	2A	Reorganize to avoid outdoor lineups.	1 Year
	2B	Universal training for food program volunteers and staff.	3–4 years
Choice	3A	Expand gift card programs.	Immediately
	3B	Move to a “grocery store” model for physical food distribution.	1–3 years
Collaboration	4A	Support the establishment of a shared delivery service.	Immediately
	4B	Establish shared staff roles responsible for wraparound support.	1–2 years
	4C	Consider merging organizations.	1–3 years
Advocacy	5A	Convene regularly around key advocacy issues.	Immediately
	5B	Lean into support from national partners.	Immediately
	5C	Collaboratively fund advocacy work on behalf of the food charity sector.	1–3 years
Income Solutions	6A	Ensure food program staff are paid a living wage.	1 year
	6B	Centre the need for income solutions in organizational communications.	1 year
	6C	Formally commit to membership in campaigns and coalitions working towards income solutions.	1–2 years