Brant Food Charter Toolkit

Draft 7

May 2019

We acknowledge that we are on the land that is the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinabek, and Haudenosaunee Peoples.

# What is a Food Charter?

A food charter is a statement that is made by a community. It talks about how a community wants their food system to be cared for. A food charter helps people talk and learn about their food system: what’s going well and what can be made better. It is not a law, but is a starting point for the local government and for people planning community activities. A food charter helps brings together voices from many different parts of a community[[1]](#footnote-1).

# How Can a Food Charter Be Used?

**At home**

* Join a community garden or try growing a food garden
* Take time to eat together, wherever you are
* Learn about household [food insecurity](https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/)[[2]](#footnote-2) and effective solutions to fix it
* Buy locally grown food from farmer’s markets, grocery stores, and local farms
* Learn about [community supported agriculture](http://csafarms.ca/wp/)[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Ask your local councilor about a green bin program or start your own composting system
* Freeze or preserve fresh food instead of throwing it away
* Learn about Indigenous food sovereignty and land based food knowledge
* Buy “imperfect” vegetables and fruit
* Join a community program to learn how to grow or prepare food
* Teach your family or friends how to grow or prepare food from scratch
* Become familiar with other cultures and their food
* Volunteer with a community food or nutrition program
* Find ways to get, grow, or learn about local food with [Feed Brant](http://www.feedbrant.ca)[[4]](#footnote-4)

**At work:**

* Develop workplace policies that support healthy eating
* Pay employees a [living wage](http://livingwagecanada.ca/files/2114/1518/9093/living_wage_final3.pdf)[[5]](#footnote-5), so that healthy food is affordable to everyone
* Establish locally grown food purchasing guidelines that emphasize healthy food
* Support a food garden or composting program at your workplace
* Provide reusable flatware and dishes at events to reduce waste
* Have healthy snacks and beverages available in vending machines
* Provide tap water instead of bottled water to drink
* Encourage staff to bring litterless lunches
* Include staff members of various cultural backgrounds by celebrating culturally appropriate foods
* Support staff members with their needs to honour cultural and ceremonial practices
* Learn about the [Nine Essential Elements of a Healthy Workplace Nutrition Environment](https://www.odph.ca/upload/membership/document/the-nine-essential-elements-of-a-healthy-workplace-nutrition-environment_1.pdf)[[6]](#footnote-6)

**At School:**

* Improve your school’s nutrition environment using [Bright Bites](https://brightbites.ca/)[[7]](#footnote-7) resources and support
* Celebrate your healthy school by participating in [OPHEA’s Healthy Schools](https://www.ophea.net/healthy-schools-certification)[[8]](#footnote-8) recognition program
* Advocate to offer a [universal student nutrition program](https://foodsecurecanada.org/community-networks/healthyschoolfood)[[9]](#footnote-9) to increase the availability of healthier foods
* Use [Fresh from the Farm](http://www.freshfromfarm.ca/home.aspx)[[10]](#footnote-10) for fundraising with local foods
* Implement food composting programs in school
* Host “litterless lunch” events to reduce waste and promote homemade lunches and environmentally friendly practices
* Limit access to highly processed foods within the school setting
* Share information on diverse and culturally appropriate foods to include all students
* Implement cooking classes and food skills workshops for students
* Plant a school food garden so students can learn where food comes from and how food grows
* Restrict commercial marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children, including advertising through education materials, prizes, incentives and giveaways
* [Sign a petition](https://www.thepetitionsite.com/133/783/509/urge-the-governement-of-ontario-to-make-at-least-one-food-nutrition-course-compulsory/?src=referrer&campaign=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.food-literacy.ca%2Fpetition.html)[[11]](#footnote-11) calling for a mandatory food literacy and nutrition courses in schools

**By Growers:**

* Share extra garden produce with a neighbour or a local food program
* Learn about or support a [gleaning program](http://canadianfoodstudies.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cfs/article/view/264)[[12]](#footnote-12)
* Join a grassroots organization to help build a sustainable food system
* Join a [farm linking tool](https://farmlink.net/)[[13]](#footnote-13) that connects people to agricultural opportunities
* Use [regenerative agricultural practices](https://regenerationcanada.org/en/about-us/)[[14]](#footnote-14) that protect air, water, and soil for future generations
* Support education initiatives (e.g. farm tours, garden crawls) that teach people where food comes from
* Learn food growing practices from those who hold local Indigenous [knowledge](http://oursustenance.ca)[[15]](#footnote-15)
* Advocate for protection and use of farmland, forests, waterways, and urban land for food production

**By Decision Makers:**

* Make locally grown, healthy, affordable food available at events in your organization and in [community facilities](https://www.odph.ca/upload/membership/document/2017-05/getting-started-final.pdf)[[16]](#footnote-16)
* Be an example within your own organization regarding local food buying practices
* Support measures that [address poverty](https://fcm.ca/Documents/issues/Poverty_Reduction_EN.pdf)[[17]](#footnote-17), the root cause of food insecurity
* Support initiatives such as community gardens and edible forests
* Implement policies that protect food producing land, forests, waterways, and urban land for food production
* Implement policies that protect air, water, soil and green space for future generations
* Support a green bin program and household composting
* Install water bottle filling stations in community facilities
* Support the economic availability and sustainable livelihoods of food growers, producers, and processors
* Strengthen Indigenous food sovereignty by enabling the local harvesting of game meat and other foods by creating supportive policies
* Support skill building across the food system workforce
* Protect the rights of Seasonal Agricultural Workers
* Fund community initiatives that teach skills related to all aspects of the [food system](http://www.hclinkontario.ca/images/sustainable_food.pdf)[[18]](#footnote-18)

# Definitions

**Community supported agriculture (CSA)**

Consists of a group of people who support a farm operation. This way the farm belongs to the whole community. Farmers and consumers provide support for each other, and share the risks and rewards of food production.

Adapted from: United States Department of Agriculture. (2018). Community supported agriculture. Retrieved from: <https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/community-supported-agriculture>

**Dignity**

The concept that all people have an inner worth or value. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* includes this concept.

Source: Schachter, O. (1983). Human dignity as a normative concept. *Am J Int Law*, 77*(4),* 848-854. https://doi.org/10.2307/2202536

**Food system**

All processes involved in growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, consuming, and disposing of food and packaging. A sustainable food system works in a way that maintains and enhances the quality of land, air and water for future generations, and allows people involved to earn a living wage.

Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy Group. (2017). Ontario food and nutrition strategy: a comprehensive evidence informed plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://sustainontario.com/work/ofns/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Ontario_Food_and_Nutrition_Strategy_Report.pdf>

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**Household food insecurity**

Inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. It ranges from worrying about running out of food, to eating less healthy food or smaller meals, to going whole days without eating, due to lack of money for food.

PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research. (2018). Household food insecurity in Canada. Retrieved from: [https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity](https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/)

**Living wage**

The hourly wage that a person needs to earn to cover their basic expenses and participate in their community. A living wage is not the same as minimum wage. A living wage reflects the actual costs of living and participating in a specific community.

Ontario Living Wage Network (n.d.). What is the living wage? Retrieved from: <http://www.ontariolivingwage.ca/what_is_the_living_wage>

**Regenerative agriculture**

Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. By capturing carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, regenerative agriculture aims to reverse global climate change. At the same time, it offers increased yields, resilience to climate instability, and higher health and vitality for farming communities.

Terra Genesis International. (n.d.) Regenerative agriculture: A definition. Retrieved from: <http://www.terra-genesis.com>

**Sustainable**

Does not compromise the environmental, economic, health, or social well-being of present and future generations.

Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy Group. (2017). Ontario food and nutrition strategy: a comprehensive evidence informed plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario. Retrieved from: <http://sustainontario.com/work/ofns/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/07/Ontario_Food_and_Nutrition_Strategy_Report.pdf>

1. Adapted from: Sustain Ontario. (n.d.). Food Charters in Ontario and Beyond. Retrieved from: <https://sustainontario.com/resources-2/food-charters-2>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://csafarms.ca/wp> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [www.feedbrant.ca](http://www.feedbrant.ca) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://livingwagecanada.ca/files/2114/1518/9093/living_wage_final3.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.odph.ca/upload/membership/document/the-nine-essential-elements-of-a-healthy-workplace-nutrition-environment_1.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://brightbites.ca> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.ophea.net/healthy-schools-certification> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://foodsecurecanada.org/community-networks/healthyschoolfood> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.freshfromfarm.ca/home.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [https://www.thepetitionsite.com/133/783/509/urge-the-governement-of-ontario-to-make-at-least-one-food-nutrition-course-compulsory](https://www.thepetitionsite.com/133/783/509/urge-the-governement-of-ontario-to-make-at-least-one-food-nutrition-course-compulsory/?src=referrer&campaign=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.food-literacy.ca%2Fpetition.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. <http://canadianfoodstudies.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/cfs/article/view/264> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://farmlink.net> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://regenerationcanada.org/en/about-us> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. <http://oursustenance.ca> [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.odph.ca/upload/membership/document/2017-05/getting-started-final.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://fcm.ca/Documents/issues/Poverty_Reduction_EN.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.hclinkontario.ca/images/sustainable_food.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)