

May 31, 2017

Poverty Reduction Strategy Office
Ferguson Block 6th Flr
77 Wellesley St W
Toronto, ON M7A 2T5

Via email: PRSO@Ontario.ca

Re: Ontario's First Food Security Strategy (OFFSS)

Dietitians of Canada (DC) congratulates the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office on taking a broad, inter-ministerial approach to reducing poverty and addressing the supports needed for security of income and basic needs, including housing and food. Below, we are pleased to contribute and respond to [Building Ontario's First Food Security Strategy – Discussion paper](#), with specific reference to initiatives and positions taken by Dietitians of Canada. As Canada's professional association for Registered Dietitians, we strive for excellence in advancing health through food and nutrition, and promote evidence-based advice. Through our pan-Canadian system of Regional Executive Directors, we reach out to provincial governments, as well as the federal government.

Key Recommendations from Dietitians of Canada for Ontario's First Food Security Strategy (OFFSS) include:

1. Comprehensive and coordinated strategy to ensure access to adequate income and food
2. Clear definition of household food insecurity and food security/food systems at the community/provincial level, to ensure actions aligned with desired outcomes
3. Income security prioritized, to reduce household food insecurity in the immediate future
4. Mandatory annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity
5. Connection with local communities, drawing from Public Health expertise and leadership

Ontario

480 University Avenue, Suite 604
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1V2

TEL: 905.330.1407

EMAIL: jennifer.buccino@dietitians.ca

6. Addressing the additional and unique challenges related to household food insecurity and physical access to food among Indigenous Peoples
7. A coordinated approach to food policy development and a plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario: The Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy
8. Improve food security through sustainable food systems and promote access to healthy and sustainable foods in food environments.

The attached document provides details for each DC recommendation above and includes a few additional comments about the OFFSS discussion paper. As well, the document contains an Appendix, which itemizes specific actions that could be implemented as part of a Food Security Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Dietitians of Canada thanks the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office for this opportunity to comment on discussion about building Ontario's First Food Security Strategy. The broad dimensions and inter-ministerial cooperation within the strategy bode well for a comprehensive approach to reducing poverty, reducing/eliminating household food insecurity and improving food security across the province and especially at community levels.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Buccino, MEd RD CDE
Regional Executive Director, Northwest and Central Ontario
jennifer.buccino@dietitians.ca
pat.vanderkooy@dietitians.ca



Pat Vanderkooy, MSc, RD
Manager, Public Affairs

cc:

Candice Einstoss, OSNPPH Co-Chair Candice.Einstoss@york.ca
Mary Ellen Prange, OSNPPH Food Security Workgroup MaryEllen.Prange@hamilton.ca
Pegeen Walsh, OPHA Executive Director PWalsh@opha.on.ca
Valerie Tarasuk, PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research valerie.tarasuk@utoronto.ca
Lynn Roblin, Ontario Food & Nutrition Strategy co-lead LRoblin@opha.on.ca
Rebecca Truscott, Ontario Food & Nutrition Strategy co-lead Rebecca.Truscott@cancercare.on.ca
Sustain Ontario info@sustainontario.com Attention: Phil Groff
Helen Haresign, VP Development, EatRight Ontario helen.haresign@dietitians.ca

Attached:

Dietitians of Canada detailed response to Ontario's First Food Security Strategy

Dietitians of Canada response: Ontario's First Food Security Strategy

Dietitians of Canada (DC) congratulates the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office on taking a broad, inter-ministerial approach to reducing poverty and addressing the supports needed for security of income and basic needs, including housing and food. Below, we are pleased to contribute and respond to [Building Ontario's First Food Security Strategy – Discussion paper](#), with specific reference to initiatives and positions taken by Dietitians of Canada. As Canada's professional association for Registered Dietitians, we strive for excellence in advancing health through food and nutrition, and promote evidence-based advice. Through our pan-Canadian system of Regional Executive Directors, we reach out to provincial governments, as well as the federal government.

Dietitians of Canada offers the following key recommendations for Ontario's First Food Security Strategy (OFFSS):

1. Comprehensive and coordinated strategy to ensure access to adequate income and food:

(In response to OFFSS Context and Proposed Long-Term Vision and Approach)

We (DC) understand the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office is a 'hub' through which the programs and policies of over twenty Ontario government Ministries will be/are coordinated, through a strong and unified, all-of-government approach. This approach is critical to successfully address the complex issues of inadequate or insecure household incomes that cause household-level food insecurity, while also promoting overall food security for communities, including physical access to food, ensuring a sustainable food supply and support for food literacy and skill development. Recognizing current federal government work to develop [A Food Policy for Canada](#) and a [Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the implementation of Ontario's first Poverty Reduction Strategy, Breaking the Cycle, since 2008](#), as well as many municipal-level food-based initiatives through Public Health Units and other municipal government agencies, we know how important it will be to coordinate with federal and municipal government initiatives addressing similar problems. The first recommendation in [DC's position and recommendations](#) is to address food insecurity through *“Development and implementation of a pan-Canadian government-led strategy that includes coordinated policies and programs, to ensure all households have consistent and sufficient income to be able to pay for basic needs, including food.”*

2. Clear definition of household food insecurity and food security/food systems at the community/provincial level, to ensure actions aligned with desired outcomes:

(In response to OFFSS Context and Proposed Long-Term Vision and Approach)

Dietitians of Canada supports the vision articulated in OFFSS - “a province where every person has access to high-quality, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, to support them in leading healthy and active lives”, which essentially describes the outcome when food security exists at a community/provincial level.

While DC certainly agrees that Ontario's First Food Security Strategy should support healthy eating and enhance/sustain food security for all, we are concerned that the solution for household food insecurity, an *income*-based problem, is conflated with food security at a community/provincial level and framed within a strategy that focuses on food-based actions.

Our overarching concern regarding this focus areas in the discussion paper is the conflation of food insecurity and food security. This is reflected in the discussion questions for this focus area, wherein responsibilities and approaches to both food insecurity and food security are intermingled. [Dietitians of Canada](#) and the [Ontario Society for Nutrition Professionals in Public](#)

[Health](#) (OSNPPH) have mutually endorsed position papers and made recommendations to address household food insecurity (and the first action area in the OFNS is “increased individual & household food security”. The DC position on household food insecurity has been endorsed by many health professional associations and health organizations (see www.dietitians.ca/foodinsecurity)

Household food insecurity is defined as “inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints” (by DC and many other organizations/groups). This focus should be addressed through *income-based solutions* in response to the *cause* of household food insecurity. Indeed, the OFFSS discussion paper acknowledges that addressing food insecurity will require “access to an array of social services and supports”, addressing “financial assets” (OFFSS Focus Area #3). These distinctions are important in policy design, so that actions align with objectives and desired outcomes, measured with sensitive and accurate indicators. The implementation of food-based programs (e.g., food charity from food banks, community gardens, school snacks and meals, collective kitchens) has not been demonstrated in research to substantially reduce the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity within the population, or even on a consistent basis within a household. This lack of association is not an indication of failure of these programs, but instead of a need to set clear objectives, with relevant outcomes, measured using appropriate indicators (e.g., knowledge gained, skill development, increased confidence and opportunity for positive social interaction).

Food charity is not an appropriate or sustainable ‘solution’, and policies directed toward supporting this system for food distribution can be confusing – they may appear to be serving immediate need, but they could also draw attention away from greater need that remains within the population. Food banks are used by as few as one-fifth of food insecure households, for a variety of reasons, including shame, and often cannot supply more than about 3 days worth of food per month, as described in DC’s background paper on household food insecurity.

3. Income security prioritized, to reduce household food insecurity in the immediate future:

(In response to OFFSS Context and Proposed Long-Term Vision and Approach)

Dietitians of Canada supports the commitment of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office, stated within the OFFSS discussion paper – “*in the immediate future*, [the Ontario government] is *focused* on closing the gap in realizing those benefits for the over 595,000 food insecure households in Ontario”. It is the [position of Dietitians of Canada](#) that household food insecurity is a serious public health issue with profound effects on physical and mental health and social well-being. It is imperative that the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in Ontario be reduced. We commend the OFFSS discussion paper’s use of PROOF 2014 data (instead of Statistics Canada data), since PROOF clearly identifies marginal food insecurity as part of the food insecure population, which is also associated with greater risk for ill health and chronic disease, and does not include households with marginal food insecurity together with food secure households.

DC recommends that the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Ontario address income gaps and inequities sufficiently, as the priority action to reduce the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in Ontario. When income supports are inadequate, households continue to experience food insecurity. Food is a more elastic expense, purchased with any money available after paying for housing and other essential needs. When incomes are inadequate and do not stretch far enough to provide money for food, the resulting food insecurity is an *income* problem (not a food problem that requires a food solution, especially since food charity in Canada is entirely inadequate to meet needs and does not provide access to food with dignity). DC also strongly encourages and supports strategies to provide access to affordable housing, as described in our position paper, since lower housing costs (a substantial portion of a household’s budget) leave more money in the budget for food, and certainly saving more money than any

amount of budgeting and shopping for cheap food could accomplish. Food insecure households need adequate and secure income to have economic access to food with dignity.

Within [DC's position and recommendations](#) (first recommendation, as quoted above), there is a list of evidence-based actions to address insecure income, many of which can be accomplished through provincial government jurisdiction, even though the paper was written as a national-level document.

DC recommends the following actions within a poverty reduction strategy to address the variety of circumstances leading to income inadequacy/insecurity in vulnerable households – we note that many of these *types* of actions have already been implemented in Ontario, but evidence of sufficient/adequate *impact* from these actions remains to be determined:

- sufficient income protection for low income households relying on precarious employment and low wages
- improved benefits for households with children under 18 years, especially households led by a lone parent
- improved benefits for low income, unattached individuals
- increased social assistance and disability pension rates to ensure individuals and their households have enough income to pay for basic needs, including food
- investigation of the feasibility of a guaranteed annual income that ensures all vulnerable households can have access to sufficient income assistance to meet basic needs *
- more investment in subsidized, affordable and stable housing options, including the provision of housing for individuals/households who are homeless
- financial assistance that equitably addresses the higher cost of food in remote and northern regions of Canada, whether through Nutrition North Canada or other programs.

** DC agrees that it is important to drive innovation for new ways to get solutions. A fundamental and innovative approach to improving food security in Ontario will be to **address the root cause of household food insecurity – inadequate and insecure income**. We commend the Ontario government in its recent launch of [Ontario's Basic Income Pilot](#), as per our correspondence with your Ministry's office. (This action could be part of the OFFSS Focus Area #4: Driving innovation!)*

4. Mandatory annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity:

In [DC's position and recommendations](#), our Association recognizes food insecurity as a sensitive and accurate indicator of income inadequacy and therefore an excellent choice as an outcome indicator with which to measure the success/impact of a Poverty Reduction Strategy. The third recommendation in [DC's position and recommendations](#) is: "*Commitment to mandatory, annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in each province and territory across Canada, including among vulnerable populations. Measurement of household food insecurity must be included in impact/outcome evaluation of strategies to reduce poverty and household food insecurity*".

DC's recommendation regarding measurement of household food insecurity points to the need for all provinces and territories to ensure surveillance of food insecurity, and to analyse these results with marginal food insecurity as a separate category of insecurity. It is extremely unfortunate that there was no Ontario-specific collection of data measuring household food insecurity in 2015/16 through Canada's CCHS surveillance, as [recently revealed by PROOF](#). When the prevalence and severity of food insecurity remains the same and is not substantially reduced, this outcome should be considered *an indication of insufficient progress in the reduction of poverty and/or insecure income* – whether because of the amount of income support was insufficient (e.g., amount of income from social assistance is inadequate) and/or gaps in policy coverage (e.g., no programs available to support households with unexpected crises, precarious or part-time income).

5. Connection with local communities, drawing from Public Health expertise and leadership:

(in response to OFFSS Focus Area #1: Empowered Communities)

DC supports a strategic direction of making space for community-level solutions to address regional differences in food systems and food security. We recommend these regional solutions be supported through existing structures within municipal government, drawing from the expertise and leadership of Public Health Units, including the unique food security expertise of dietitians. We refer you to [DC's response to consultation on the Ontario Public Health Standards \(OPHS\)](#). DC's feedback focused on maintaining important elements of evidence-based practice such as program evaluation, and the importance of access to healthy food and the food environment – all of which are very relevant to the implementation of OFFSS. DC's response to the OPHS was compiled by working with other public health nutrition organizations including the Ontario Society for Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH), the Nutrition Resource Centre (NRC) and the Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) – an indication of the degree of consensus and collaboration amongst these organizations, representing an existing network for implementation & evaluation.

In Ontario, dietitians working in Public Health Units have been leaders and drivers of policy change and implementation to support healthier food environments. Dietitians have led initiatives to introduce nutrition standards and food policy in schools, recreation centres and other public/municipal buildings. Some also support workplace health programs. DC, NRC and OSNPPH worked together to provide key input and guidance on [Menu Labelling](#), now implemented in Ontario.

6. Addressing the additional and unique challenges related to household food insecurity and physical access to food among Indigenous Peoples:

(in response to OFFSS Focus Area #1: Empowered Communities)

In [DC's position and recommendations, the second broad recommendation](#) is: "*Implementation of a federally-supported strategy to comprehensively address the additional and unique challenges related to household food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples*". While the federal government has most of the responsibility for issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples, provinces and territories also address income insecurity and can provide supports for the improvement of food security among Indigenous persons.

DC's recommendations for action include:

- commitment to implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- fair resolution of disputes over access to lands and resources recognized by Indigenous and Treaty rights
- sufficient supports to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples who are hunting, fishing or gathering/cultivating traditional/country foods
- improved access to and ability to afford healthy store-bought or market foods in all First Nation reserves and northern and remote communities, and
- sufficient supports to improve opportunities in education and employment.

DC also recognizes the role of federal government support through Nutrition North Canada subsidies and/or other programs to address household food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples. To this end, we have responded directly to the [Nutrition North Canada consultation](#), including a discussion of the need to directly address household food insecurity.

7. A coordinated approach to food policy development and a plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario: The Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy:

(in response to OFFSS Focus Area #2: Integrated food initiatives built with collective impact)

Dietitians of Canada supports the integration of evidence-based initiatives with shared vision. To this end, we recommend integration of the [The Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy](#) (OFNS) which was developed through an extensive, intersectoral consultative process, including representation and support from Dietitians of Canada. In response to your question about “partners or stakeholders are missing from this discussion”, we urge you to engage fully with the OFNS stakeholders in this provincial food security strategy. The goal of the OFNS (launched in January 2017) is to strengthen Ontario’s food systems and improve the health and well-being of Ontarians and its mission is “to develop a cross government, multi-stakeholder coordinated approach to food policy development and a plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario”. The strategic directions of the OFNS include healthy food access, food literacy and skills and healthy food systems – all contributing to food security and health in general, with 25 action areas and *many* recommended actions that can inform action plans within OFFSS (See Appendix A).

As well, we draw attention to the *expected outcomes* described within OFNS and commend these for evaluation of OFFSS. The leaders of OFNS have acknowledged that the strategy is intended to work across government, fostering an inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder coordinated approach to decision-making around food policy and program development – very much like the proposed OFFSS. For OFNS to succeed, the leaders state it would require a coordinated provincial office and advisory council to address food and nutrition policy and programming, a systematic approach to measurement, monitoring and analysis of key indicators, and sufficient capacity and resources to support all elements of the strategy – all of which could be implemented through the OFFSS.

8. Improve food security through sustainable food systems and promote access to healthy and sustainable foods in food environments:

(in response to OFFSS Focus Area #3: Food Security is about more than food)

We commend the OFFSS for its recognition that “Food Security is about more than food”. Whereas food insecurity at the household level must be addressed through household-level income security, improvement of food security at a community level requires policies that support physical access to food, sustainable food systems and increased food literacy and skills – as per the actions described within OFNS and the OFFSS discussion paper.

In response to your discussion paper’s question about “the role that the private sector could play in increasing income-related food security”, we note that [DC’s position and recommendations](#) addressing household food insecurity recommends approaches that focus responsibility on government leadership. While there are limited benefits from community-based food charity for a minority of households living with food insecurity, [DC’s position and recommendations](#) (“Current Responses to Household Food Insecurity”) has argued for caution with respect to approaches dependent on food charity, with concern that funding for income support to reduce household income insecurity may be deemed less urgent.

In the introduction to focus area #3 of the OFFSS discussion paper, the five assets essential to food and nutrition security are itemized, based on a recent publication authored by two members of Dietitians of Canada. Consideration of the physical, social, human and natural assets will be essential to determine priority actions that will improve food security at the community/provincial level. We refer you to [DC-Ontario’s response to the Ministry of Education’s consultation on its Well-being Strategy](#), wherein DC’s input focused on food- and nutrition-related aspects of well-being and recommends several actions that will contribute to both well-being and food security.

We recognize there will be many considerations for capacity within various provincial ministries contributing to and supporting actions related to OFFSS, under the broader Poverty Reduction Strategy. We commend you in taking these first steps to integrate and coordinate approaches that support food security at the community/provincial level.

With respect to OFFSS focus area #4, an Ontario-based innovation already in place to provide evidence-based food and nutrition information to Ontarians is [EatRight Ontario](#), a tele-dietitian service supported by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The promotion and continued funding of the EatRight Ontario Dietitian Advisory Service was highlighted in [DC-Ontario's 2017 Budget Recommendations](#) to ensure its continued success and enhance its role in keeping Ontarians healthy. Dietitians of Canada applauds the continued provincial support from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, making it possible to provide this valuable resource in Ontario, giving Ontarians free and direct access to the trusted advice of Registered Dietitians.

Additional comments:

a) About the four Focus Areas of OFFSS:

We have indicated where our feedback addresses one of the four focus areas of the OFFSS discussion paper. In our view, Focus Areas #1, 2, and 4 appeared to be primarily process-oriented, while Focus Area #3 included more discussion of issues/actions specific to addressing food insecurity and food security. It is our expectation therefore that the design and implementation of the OFFSS will not necessarily be similarly structured.

b) Defining “affordability”:

In the Context section of OFFSS, we considered the phrase “...will look at factors that influence affordability. It will also explore initiatives to reduce the rate of food insecurity through targeted initiatives that increase access for all Ontarians”. The ‘affordability’ of food requires a more clear definition, since it can be considered from different perspectives, such as

- is the price of food sufficiently high to be fair for producers and other stakeholders within the food system, providing a fair and adequate income for all workers within the value chain? (e.g., fair price for commodities to provide adequate income for farmers, fair conditions and appropriate income for migrant workers) income)
- do households have sufficient money to buy adequate and sufficient food? (e.g., vulnerable households require income support to be able to buy food and pay for other necessities)
- will Ontarians living in remote regions have sufficient physical and economic access to food? (e.g., fewer food markets/stores within reasonable distance, increased distribution costs added to price of food).

While consumers may worry about rising food costs, the proportion of income spent on food in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada is quite low (about 10% of median income) – suggesting that most consumers can “afford” to pay for food. Concerns about the rising price of food, which may be necessary for others in the food sector to receive adequate incomes and fair prices for their production, are generally voiced in the context of the *rate of increase* in food prices being greater than rates of increase in incomes. Nevertheless, there are many households in Ontario who cannot “afford” food because their income is inadequate – for these households, ‘affordability’ will be improved when more income is available to pay for necessities.

The unique concerns for physical and economic access to food in remote areas of Ontario is challenging – when food prices are so high, due to distribution costs, that they do indeed require a substantial portion of income to pay for food, government-led solutions may include examination of subsidy for transportation, tax credits to support the incomes of people living in remote areas. Furthermore, the cost of living and relative adequacy of a household income will depend on other factors of ‘affordability’ – for example, rural areas affected by high cost of hydro for heating and lack of grocery stores within a reasonable distance; urban areas where the increases in cost of housing have risen disproportionate to incomes. Hence, issues of

'affordability' will require unique and targeted policies/actions to address the root cause of lack-of-affordability issues in certain regions and for certain households. These considerations will all need to be addressed within the broader elements of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

c) DC responses to consultations listed within "OFFSS Current Efforts":

Dietitians of Canada has contributed to consultations on several of the "Current Efforts" listed in the OFFSS and supports continuation of these efforts. Examples include DC-Ontario responses and recommendations to [Ontario's Healthy Kids Panel](#), the [Northern Ontario Agrifood Strategy](#), [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#) and [Ontario Budget 2017 Recommendations](#). A full list of recommendations for actions to address both household food insecurity and food security at the community and provincial levels, please see Appendix A.

Appendix A - Summary of Actions Recommended by Dietitians of Canada

Household Food Insecurity:

(from [DC position and recommendations to address household food insecurity](#))

- Development and implementation of a [pan-Canadian] government-led strategy that includes coordinated policies and programs, to ensure all households have consistent and sufficient income to be able to pay for basic needs, including food
- A variety of actions that will address income insecurity and poverty:
 - sufficient income protection for low income households relying on precarious employment and low wages
 - improved benefits for households with children under 18 years, especially households led by a lone parent
 - improved benefits for low income, unattached individuals
 - increased social assistance and disability pension rates to ensure individuals and their households have enough income to pay for basic needs, including food
 - investigation of the feasibility of a guaranteed annual income that ensures all vulnerable households can have access to sufficient income assistance to meet basic needs
 - more investment in subsidized, affordable and stable housing options, including the provision of housing for individuals/households who are homeless
 - financial assistance that equitably addresses the higher cost of food in remote and northern regions of Canada, whether through Nutrition North Canada or other programs.
- Annual monitoring and reporting of the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity
- Use the measurement of household food insecurity as an indicator of impact/outcome of strategies to reduce poverty and household food insecurity

(from the [OFNS actions](#))

- Address the root cause of food insecurity by supporting policies to improve individual and household income, e.g., basic income guarantee, adequate minimum wage and social service allotment, affordable housing, affordable childcare, seniors care, public transportation, education and training, and employment).
- When setting the rates for social assistance, minimum wage and the Special Diet Allowance, ensure nutritious food is accessible to all people in Ontario by using the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket and other locally appropriate costing exercises, in addition to the cost of housing (reported by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation).

Food Security in communities and across Ontario:

(from [DC position and recommendations to address household food insecurity](#))

- Address the unique challenges (in addition to income security) of food insecurity among Indigenous Peoples, including these actions:
 - commitment to implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
 - fair resolution of disputes over access to lands and resources recognized by Indigenous and Treaty rights
 - sufficient supports to remove barriers for Indigenous Peoples who are hunting, fishing or gathering/cultivating traditional/country foods
 - improved access to and ability to afford healthy store-bought or market foods in all First Nation reserves and northern and remote communities, and
 - sufficient supports to improve opportunities in education and employment.

(from [DC-Ontario's response to the Ministry of Education's consultation on its Well-being Strategy](#))

- Incorporate food literacy and food skills education throughout the K-12 curriculum. The OFNS highlights the importance of food skills in increasing consumption of vegetables and fruit; school-based food literacy and food skills education is included in the OFNS Strategic Direction 2.14
- Have Registered Dietitians develop nutrition-related curriculum to ensure that current evidence provides the foundation for curriculum, and that misinformation is avoided
- Improve the school food environment by promoting healthy food choices at special events and fundraising activities. Fresh from the Farm: Healthy Fundraising for Ontario Schools (www.freshfromfarm.ca) helps schools raise funds by selling fresh Ontario root vegetables and apples
- Ensure that the Ministry of Education School Food and Beverage Policy (PPM150) undergoes a comprehensive evaluation to determine its effectiveness in supporting healthy eating; results of the evaluation should be used to inform revisions as needed.

(from Dietitians of Canada [Ontario Budget 2017 Recommendations](#))

- Promotion and continued funding of the EatRight Ontario Dietitian Advisory Service to ensure its continued success and enhance its role in keeping Ontarians healthy
- Adequately resource the proposed Food Security Strategy, ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged in development of the policies and programs to ensure healthy, safe, and culturally acceptable foods
- Development of a coordinated Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy to support the goal of making Ontario the healthiest province, including policies to reduce food insecurity and increase food literacy

(from DC recommendations to [Northern Ontario Agrifood Strategy](#))

- policies to support food processors to create healthy food and beverage options for recreation centres and schools can satisfy multiple objectives. Examples of OFNS suggested actions in this area include:
 - Support farmers and processors in producing healthy and safe in-demand products.
 - Ensure that transportation, processing and distribution capacities are adequate and secure for perishable and non-perishable products.
 - Enact policies that ensure that the cost of food is equitable in all communities in Ontario.
 - Provide infrastructure that ensures the efficient storage, transportation and distribution of food to all areas of Ontario.
 - Support farmers and processors in delivering healthy, local and sustainable food in demand at equitable prices.
 - Market and promote healthy, local and sustainable food with existing and new partners and communities.
 - Invest in education and training in food production and processing to promote careers in the food industry.

(recommended [Actions from the OFNS](#), which is supported by Dietitians of Canada)

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS Strategic Direction

- Increase the availability of equitably-priced, safe, healthy, local and culturally appropriate food in childcare, preschools, schools, colleges, universities, long-term care facilities, hospitals, recreation centres, workplaces and other public facilities.
- Establish a universal student nutrition program in all Ontario public schools and in all First Nations communities.
- Support and ensure accountability of programs that increase physical and economic accessibility of healthy, safe, culturally appropriate food to rural and remote regions of

Ontario.

- Support community food access and production solutions that promote the availability and affordability of fresh, locally or regionally grown food, and create opportunities to implement and expand these initiatives (e.g., fresh vegetable and fruit boxes, preparation of traditional food, farmer's markets, community food hubs, multicultural community gardens).
- Support community-based social enterprises that increase access to healthy, safe, affordable and culturally appropriate food.
- Ensure that food safety, quality and sustainability systems are in place and clearly documented, and that food quality is promoted.
- Conduct research that looks into the effect of subsidizing nutritious ingredients, beverages and food.
- Develop healthy, local and sustainable food procurement targets for public sector institutions (e.g., childcare, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, long-term care, day care and other public sector food services).
- Provide incentives and training to enable public sector institutions to meet the healthy, local and sustainable procurement targets.
- Enact policies that ensure that the cost of food is equitable in all communities in Ontario.
- Provide infrastructure that ensures the efficient storage, transportation and distribution of food to all areas of Ontario.
- Support farmers and processors in delivering healthy, local and sustainable food in demand at equitable prices.
- Market and promote healthy, local and sustainable food with existing and new partners and communities.
- Identify healthy, local food clearly to consumers through labels and signage.
- Implement harmonized policies across public facilities to reduce the availability of high-calorie, low-nutrient food, beverages and snacks (e.g., childcare, preschool, elementary and high schools).
- Conduct research that measures the effect of taxing non-nutritious ingredients, food, beverages and snacks.
- Engage with municipal, regional and community planning departments and committees in planning for food access.
- Support the development and implementation of community-based land use management plans and policies for food access, in addition to production.
- Conduct a policy review of Ontario regulations to identify contradictory regulations and encourage community planning, zoning and funding that supports healthier food choices, develops and promotes the local food sector, and reduces access to unhealthy food choices (e.g., food deserts, food swamps).
- Support the development and implementation of municipal, regional and community food councils that can advise on food access and policy creation.

HEALTHY FOOD SYSTEMS Strategic Direction

- Ensure that existing and new programs and policies support the economic viability of farms, including family farms, and support sustainable livelihoods of those working in food systems.
- Increase public and private investment in food innovation, research and development.
- Update programs with promising practices to enable farmers to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Maintain and improve programs that mitigate market risks.
- Develop and support regulations and reduce barriers for programs that make local and sustainable food more readily available.
- Continue to adapt the Provincial Policy Statement to clearly direct the protection and preservation of viable farmland.
- Legislate clear and enforceable arrangements for the conservation of productive

- farmlands and ensure that farmland remains affordable.
- Support the creation of viable succession plans to support farmland, forests, waterways and urban land preservation.
 - Develop city, regional and community land and waterway use policies for food production.
 - Promote the use of available urban land for food production.
 - Support innovation in the protection and use of land, waterways and forests for food acquisition and production.
 - Ensure that succession planning tools and mentoring programs are available to encourage generational farm transfers and diverse new entrants.
 - Ensure that there is training and education available to farming and food enterprises to promote implementation of human resources best practices and training.
 - Provide extension services, training, incentives and support to create sustainable livelihoods within food systems.
 - Invest in education and training in food production and processing to promote careers in the food industry.
 - Invest in education and training in traditional food, such as harvesting, hunting and gathering, to promote expansion of traditional procurement methods.
 - Support farmers and processors in producing healthy and safe in-demand products.
 - Ensure that transportation, processing and distribution capacities are adequate and secure for perishable and non-perishable products.
 - Ensure proper training and equipment is provided to work safely.
 - Enforce employment and occupational health and safety standards to ensure safe working and living conditions for all workers.
 - Provide protection, support and compensation for injured workers and those in unsafe living and work conditions.
 - Maintain identifiable standards for Ontario food products, including environmental, food safety and processing standards.
 - Ensure that Ontario is recognized as a leader in environmentally sustainable food production.
 - Promote the advantages of supporting local food to consumers
 - Work with large- and small-scale food businesses/ producers to identify challenges presented by regulations and their enforcement, and develop innovative solutions that continue to protect the public interest.
 - Improve education and awareness of regulations and compliance requirements for food providers.
 - Develop regulations and policies to encourage innovation and success by all-scale producers and distributors, and explore alternative food distribution methods.
 - Support innovations in genetics, production and processing practices to improve the food and farming sector.
 - Work with farmers, food providers, food businesses and financial institutions to develop new financing approaches for food businesses, as well as beginner and re-strategizing farmers.
 - Ensure that resources used as farm and food production input supplies are readily available at competitive prices (e.g., energy, water).
 - Ensure that leading-edge communications technology is available across Ontario.
 - Provide education and incentives to reduce waste in food growing, processing, distribution, retail and food service.
 - Implement infrastructure that facilitates the efficient storage and transportation of perishable goods.
 - Ensure that consumers are knowledgeable on food handling and preservation methods.
 - Provide education, incentives and enabling policies for composting and by-product repurposing.
 - Provide expanded support for food reclamation efforts.

- Encourage production practices that enhance soil organic matter and health, increase the use of renewable resources and enhance agri-ecological diversity (i.e., support biodiversity enhancements).
- Engage in and support research on resilient practices.
- Ensure a sustainable supply of fish through fisheries conservation measures and replenishment initiatives.
- Protect waterways to ensure sustainable and safe fisheries.
- Conduct research to ensure sustainable aquaculture and fisheries.
- Protect existing wild lands from development and degradation for the purpose of enabling wild food procurement.
- Develop quantification techniques to accurately value ecological services from farmland and ecological farming activities.
- Develop tracking mechanisms and third party certification of the value of ecological services.

FOOD LITERACY AND SKILLS Strategic Direction *(selected for focus on food-related skill vs nutrition/health knowledge)*

- Include evidence-based food literacy education about nutrition, food, growing, harvesting, gathering and producing food, and food skills development as a mandatory part of the curriculum at all grade levels.
- Provide and support economically accessible public health and community-based food literacy programs for individuals and households to develop food skills (e.g., growing, harvesting, hunting, selecting, preparing, and safety) in school and community settings.
- Support development of food skills and nutrition education resources and programs for use in preschools, schools, workplaces, and community and recreation facilities that meet each community's needs.
- Provide support to increase healthy eating knowledge and food skills through an ongoing marketing and promotion campaign in collaboration with existing and new partners and communities.
- Provide access to free food and nutrition information and education about healthy eating (e.g., EatRight Ontario, local public health units, Ontario Public Health Association – Nutrition Resource Centre, Community Food Advisor program).
- Require food manufacturers, retailers and food services to provide consistent, clear and visible nutrition information about the food they sell (e.g., align their efforts with existing groups working on this issue) to enable consumers to make informed and healthy food choices.
- Ban commercial advertising of food, beverages and snacks targeted at children and youth under 12 years of age (at a minimum – *recommended to under 17 years*).
- *Note: For additional nutrition and health actions, related to food, refer to Action Areas 2.4 and 2.5.*