

Grow Back Better: Our Food Future's 10-point COVID Recovery Plan

In January 2020, we officially launched Our Food Future — Guelph-Wellington's ambitious initiative to create Canada's first circular food economy. COVID-19 highlighted and exacerbated many of the system-level challenges Our Food Future aims to resolve. In response, our 10-point recovery plan is refocusing ~\$1.6 million in Federal Smart Cities funding, over the next 18 months to support social and economic recovery efforts within the longer term goals of the initiative.

Priority: Increasing access to affordable, nutritious food

1. *Emergency Food Relief — immediate food distribution*: The SEED is working with partners to prepare and deliver 100,000 nutritious food boxes between April – October (1200 – 4000 food boxes per week) including fresh foods, frozen meals and shelf-stable goods free of charge to community members in need through contact-free home delivery. **Total funding**: \$90,000; **Launch**: Underway, scaling up

Harve\$t Impact Community Donation Platform: To address direct food and logistical costs for the SEED's Emergency Food Home Delivery Program, the Harve\$t Impact Fund will launch a new online community funding platform. **Total funding**: Goal of raising \$100,000+ in matching community donations; **Launch**: Early May 2020

2. *Supporting Vulnerable Residents — identifying needs and coordinating action*: We're working with community partners to identify the barriers vulnerable residents face in accessing affordable, nutritious food during the pandemic and to leverage best practices to provide supports. **Total Funding**: Existing resources; **Launch**: work underway

3. *Get Growing!*: To boost local food production, we will support Gardening at Home, starting with children's gardening kits (Kids Get Growing); launch a call for urban agriculture projects and help new Canadians grow food from their home country. **Total funding**: \$155,000; **Launch**: May/June 2020 – program running to June 2021

Priority: Supporting new and existing food businesses

4. *Seeding Our Food Future — micro-grant project*: To support economic recovery, we will provide advice, resources and grants of up to \$5,000 to ~40 new and existing food system businesses and social enterprises. Also, beginning in June 2020, businesses and collaborations, including not-for-profits will be able to apply for \$10,000 in 0% financing. **Total funding**: \$200,000 for micro-grants, \$50,000 to support delivery partners and \$120,000 for business support/advisory services; \$300,000 leveraged for loans from local Community Futures Development Corporations
Launch: May 27/2020

5. *Launch Harve\$t Impact Fund*: In response to community needs, we will accelerate the launch of the Harve\$t Impact Fund, making financing available sooner to businesses and social enterprises to drive innovation and economic recovery. With the early launch of the fund, there will be an immediate call for private and institutional investment partners, with a capitalization target of \$2 million. **Total funding**: \$500,000; **Launch**: applications Fall 2020; investments beginning January 2021

6. *Business Tools and Services for the Food Sector to Reduce Waste*: Provision Coalition will offer virtual workshops for micro-sized businesses and provide food loss and waste prevention consultation to eight

local food businesses to increase their circularity and profitability. **Total funding:** \$250,000;
Launch: Applications begin May 2020

Priority: Taking action to strengthen regional food system resiliency

7. Connecting Food Producers and Consumers — accessing local markets online: To support local food producers, the Smart City Office will be partnering with the **Open Food Network**, an open source, not-for-profit, to make an e-commerce platform available to help farmers' markets across Guelph and Wellington County create online sales channels. **Total funding:** \$10,000 to allow free access for 2020 for interested Guelph and Wellington markets; **Launch:** May 2020

8. Enabling Distribution and Delivery Models for Online Food Delivery: Working with partners we will support the development and testing of new distribution and delivery models that meet the needs of producers, businesses and consumers and align with evolving Public Health guidelines. **Total funding:** \$60,000; **Launch:** Neighbourhood pilot Summer 2020

9. Leveraging Food System Data to Help Our Partners Innovate and Respond to the Changing Market: A key part of Our Food Future is collecting and sharing data. We are conducting a food and waste flow study, launching a data collaboration platform, and piloting ways to find new value in waste. **Funding:** \$150,000, in partnership and with matching funding Alectra GRE&T Centre
Launch: Summer 2020

10. Community Steering Committee Food Resiliency Table: Through our Community Steering Committee, we will convene a Food Resiliency Table to champion and support this plan.