



Ontario Dietitians in Public Health
Diététistes en santé publique de l'Ontario

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Nick Saul, CEO, and Brian D. Lawson, Chair, Board of Directors
Community Food Centres Canada
80 Ward St., Suite 100
Toronto, ON M6H 4A6
Via email: nick@cfccanada.ca and info@cfccanada.ca

Re: Feedback on *Beyond Hunger: The hidden impacts of food insecurity in Canada* report

January 19, 2021

Dear Mr. Saul and the Board of Directors for Community Food Centres Canada (CFCC),

[Ontario Dietitians in Public Health](#) (ODPH) is the independent and official voice of Registered Dietitians working in the Ontario public health system. ODPH provides leadership in public health nutrition by promoting and supporting member collaboration to improve the health of Ontario residents through the implementation of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

We are writing to you about your recent report, *Beyond Hunger: The hidden impacts of food insecurity in Canada*. The ODPH Food Insecurity Workgroup reviewed the report with great interest. We were pleased to see that much of the messaging in *Beyond Hunger* is consistent with our updated, newly released [Position statement and recommendations on responses to food insecurity](#) (*Position statement*). In particular, both documents highlight that strengthening the food charity system will never be enough to address food insecurity in Canada, and that income solutions to food insecurity are needed. Both reports also call for improved measurement of food insecurity and setting targets for its reduction. In *Beyond Hunger*, the inclusion of stories from people with lived experience with food insecurity are particularly moving and impactful. These voices add a human element to the statistics presented, and hopefully will help decision makers understand the perspective of what it is like to live with food insecurity in Canada.

We were surprised however, and concerned that *Beyond Hunger* does not specifically call for a basic income as one of the policy recommendations in 5.3: Invest in Income Policies. We have noted the CFCC website does include [information](#) about basic income and food insecurity, indicating past support for and promotion of a basic income guarantee as a policy measure to reduce food insecurity. In addition, CFCC did endorse the previous version of the ODPH 2015 *Position statement*, which very specifically called for a basic income to address food insecurity in Canada. As a national organization positioned as a leader in the food insecurity movement, it seems amiss that it not be included in *Beyond Hunger*, given the mounting evidence that continues to emerge about the positive impact of a basic income on food insecurity. In our updated [Position statement](#), we have summarized the significant body of evidence



to-date that illustrates a guaranteed basic income has the potential to reduce food insecurity on a population level. From the perspective of people with lived experience, we know that food insecurity decreased among participants of the [Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project](#) while they received a basic income.

As you know, food insecurity is a serious human rights and social justice issue in Canada that is worsening as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the opportunity to discuss highlights from the *Position statement* related to basic income and food insecurity, and why we feel it is a necessary policy recommendation to address food insecurity in Canada. It is more important than ever that food insecurity advocates are aligned on key messaging and policy recommendations that are evidence-informed, income-based, comprehensive, and consider vulnerable groups across the lifecycle.

One example of such alignment of messaging is the [Ontario Basic Income Network petition on food insecurity and basic income](#). CFCC can show support for a basic income by signing on as an organization. In addition, ODPH has created a [letter template](#) that can be adapted for use with advocacy directed to decision makers. Both of these opportunities for action can be shared with CFCC staff and community members. Thank you for taking the time to review this letter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Erin Reyce, RD
Co-chair, ODPH Food Insecurity Workgroup

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