



## **Abstract Title:** The North End Food Coalition

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### **Introduction/Background**

Since 1971, the North End Community Health Centre (NECHC) has been providing collaborative, multi-disciplinary health services to the North End Halifax community. Beyond a clinic, NECHC strives to address the social determinants of health. Food insecurity is experienced by many of our community members. NECHC's nutritionist and social worker along with health profession interns have begun short and long term initiatives. The Good Food Box, a popular program but admittedly a "band aid solution", grew into a larger project to influence policy change through a new initiative, the North End Food Coalition – a first voice project.

### **Purpose**

Two levels of action exist around poverty reduction and food insecurity, ground level and governmental. There is a perceived lack of communication between these ground level organizations and governmental level organizations. The purpose of the Food Coalition project is to mobilize our community and share their first-hand, lived food insecurity experiences in a first voice campaign to influence change and policies at a governmental level.

### **Approach or Action**

The project has been broken into 3 distinct stages.

1. The goal of the first stage is to examine the need for such a coalition by data collection. Analysis of this research demonstrates that food insecurity is present in the North End of Halifax.
2. The goal of the second stage is to create a map of food resources in the community to establish what is being done to address food security. The food map will become a network for communication.
3. The goal of the third stage is to run focus groups to assess the perceived gap in first-voice use in food security initiatives in the North End of Halifax.

## **Outcomes**

The information from the focus groups will be used to determine the areas of food insecurity the community experience the most. This first voice primary data will be used to shape future campaigns to advocate for policy change.

## **Conclusion**

Food insecurity affects our communities in Nova Scotia and around the world. Getting good food and costly fruit and vegetables in the hands of individuals is important work. Supporting community advocacy will impact policy and create change. We believe using a first voice approach to share lived experiences around food insecurity will influence policy change and improve the health of the Halifax North End and Nova Scotia.

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