



EMERGENCY FOOD PLAN

for Thunder Bay, ON

V2-2024

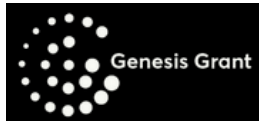
A photograph of a person in a red shirt, likely a volunteer, working in a kitchen. They are surrounded by numerous white containers filled with prepared food, ready for distribution. The scene is overlaid with a blue gradient.

PREPARED BY:
THUNDER BAY + AREA FOOD STRATEGY

EMERGENCY FOOD PLAN FOR THUNDER BAY, ONTARIO

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Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy
Ontario, Canada



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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE THE PLAN POSSIBLE

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NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO WOMEN'S CENTRE
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This first version of the Emergency Food Plan was written by Courtney Strutt, in the capacity of Emergency Food Plan Coordinator.

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Executive Summary

This Emergency Food Plan (EFP) has been developed to address the challenges related to food access and its associated impacts on health and wellbeing during emergency events in the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario, with connections to the six surrounding municipalities and Fort William First Nation. It does this through identifying potential hazards and risks to food access in order to prepare, plan, and respond in the most effective manner. The scope of emergency response within this plan is to address emerging food access challenges resulting from emergency events, especially for vulnerable populations, for medium to high impact events.

The EFP has been developed to act as a public strategy to compliment the City of Thunder Bay's Emergency Plan. This plan offers the municipality a coordinated network of civil society actors with expertise in food access, as well as a commitment to provide key physical infrastructure and human resources in the event an emergency food response is needed. Much of the food relied on by the population of Thunder Bay and its surrounding municipalities comes from Winnipeg and Toronto and is highly reliant on a single highway transportation corridor. This makes the city's food supply vulnerable to disturbances and in need of a plan to address arising food access challenges due to disruption. Research conducted by the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy (TBAFS) on local food response during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic illustrated that community-based and social service-based organizations are best suited to respond to the food security challenges of medium or high impact emergencies, especially when working in collaboration.

The development of the EFP has been coordinated by the TBAFS in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay and a group of primary partners with expertise in food security and food access. The plan is stewarded through the TBAFS chaired Food Access Coalition and the TBAFS Coordinator, who acts as a steward of the plan.

1. Introduction

Background & Rationale

Emergency food planning is an emerging field of study and practice that has grown out of global lessons learned about being prepared to respond to increased food security challenges at a cross-sectoral level in the face of emergency events. In an era increased geo-political tensions, climate crises, and rising rates of inequality, disruptions to ‘business as usual’ within the food system are occurring with increasing frequency. Many of these disruptions have the potential to impact food access on a large scale, a reality that communities need to prepare for through both response to and mitigation of impacts.

Like other municipalities around the world, the City of Thunder Bay and its immediate surrounding areas were caught unprepared by the impacts on the food system due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, there was no coordinated local body in place to address the increase of food insecurity the pandemic revealed and deepened, particularly the impacts faced by already vulnerable populations. Acting quickly in response to this gap, civil society organizations, institutions, and agencies came together in an ad-hoc way to ensure that no one went hungry.

In late 2020 the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy (TBAFS) took on coordinating this informal group and undertook research on the emergency food response that occurred during March—June 2020. This resulted in the publication of a report entitled *Learning from Emergency Food Response During COVID-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario*.¹ This research identified the need to create an emergency food response plan for Thunder Bay and its surrounding communities to be better prepared to address food access challenges across the region in the face of future emergency events.

The development of this Emergency Food Plan (EFP) has been coordinated by the TBAFS in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay and a group of primary partners with expertise in food security and food access. The plan is stewarded through the TBAFS chaired Food Access Coalition and the TBAFS Coordinator, who acts as a steward of the plan.

Why have an Emergency Food Plan?

The EFP has been developed to act as a public strategy to compliment the City of Thunder Bay’s Emergency Plan. The municipality could enact and utilize such a plan because it offers:

¹ Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy, (2022). Learning from Emergency Food Response During COVID-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Retrieved from http://tbfoodstrategy.ca/files/8616/4556/2702/FINAL_TBAFS_2022_Learning_from_Emergency_Food_Response_During_COVID-19.pdf

- A coordinated network of local organizations, institutions, and government bodies with expertise in addressing food access needs and challenges, as well as a plan outlining key roles and responsibilities for a response;
- Physical food access infrastructure that can expand and contract city-wide (e.g., buildings for distribution, vehicles, phone lines, industrial kitchens, etc.);
- Commitments from key organizations and agencies to lend additional in-kind resources to an emergency food response (e.g., paid knowledgeable staff);
- Clear, comprehensive messaging to the public about how and where to get food;
- Ability to contact hard to reach populations and support in the ‘last mile’ of food delivery for those with accessibility challenges;
- Ability to sustain a response over an extended period if needed; and
- Ability to identify when social or economic pressures are affecting food insecurity within the community.

Partners Network

At the time of writing, the EFP for Thunder Bay has been developed through leveraging the knowledge and expertise of those in the community involved in the all-the-time emergency of chronic food insecurity. The EFP is comprised of the following key partners:

- **Primary Partners**—The primary partners consist of representatives from key organizations, institutions, and government bodies with identified expertise and critical resources in local food access. The primary partners will make up the initial assembly of any food response and have committed to taking on key pieces of coordinating a response. This group was identified through the research conducted on emergency food response during the pandemic and their continual involvement in this work. For a complete list, see *Appendix A – Primary Partners List*.
- **Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy**—The steward of the EFP is the TBAFS Coordinator. Ongoing stewarding responsibilities required to keep the plan up to date and relevant include amending the plan as required, hosting an annual primary partners meeting, keeping contacts updated, and activating the plan when needed.
- **Food Access Coalition**—The Food Access Coalition (FAC) is a network of organizations and agencies across Thunder Bay that offer food access support on a regular basis. The FAC is coordinated by the TBAFS with a mandate to meet regularly to keep one another updated on the work they are doing and push forward advocacy on food access issues, as well as ensure maintenance of the EFP over time. The FAC also provides the EFP with connection to supportive partners who can provide additional in-kind contributions for an emergency food response (e.g., delivery, distribution, human power) without taking on coordinating responsibilities. Membership of the FAC is constantly evolving and an up to date database of member information is held by the TBAFS Coordinator.

- **City of Thunder Bay**—The municipality is a key partner in this work, with the Manager of Community Strategies within the Department of Development and Emergency Services sitting at the primary partner’s table. This provides direct connection with the City’s Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG) during times of emergency.
- **Fort William First Nation**—Fort William First Nation (FWFN) is a sovereign nation with its own governance body and emergency plans. FWFN is informed of this plan and how they can connect with the EFP and its determined response, including having a representative at the primary partners table, should they chose to.
- **Rural Municipalities**—There are six municipalities within the census metropolitan area of Thunder Bay: Conmee, Gillies, Neebing, O’Connor, Oliver Paipoonge, and Shuniah. All these jurisdictions have their own emergency plans, although they rely on the same resources as the City of Thunder Bay. While there will not necessarily be representatives from each of the rural municipalities at the primary partners table, they are informed of this plan and how they can connect with the EFP and its determined response if needed.

Ratification of Plan

On November 27, 2023 the first version of the EFP (EFP V1-2023) was ratified by the 11 partner organizations that made up the primary partners table at that time: Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy, City of Thunder Bay, Dew Drop Inn, Lakehead Social Planning Council, Red Cross, Northwestern Ontario Women’s Centre, Regional Food Distribution Association, Roots Community Food Centre, Salvation Army, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit.

A ratification event was held on that day after the first tabletop exercise of the plan, with the media and invited guests in attendance. By that date, nine of eleven organizations had signed their three-year agreements of cooperation committing the partners to participating in the EFP’s activation and ongoing maintenance and stewardship.

Plan Development & Record of Changes

The EFP was developed over the course of 2022-23 upon publication of the background report *Learning from Emergency Food Response During COVID-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario*. The group of primary partners was established, research conducted on the intersections of emergency planning and emergency food response, and an initial meeting of primary partners occurred. In this meeting a modified Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment (HIRA) of Thunder Bay from the lens of food security was conducted to shape the scope of the plan. From there, the concept of operations was flushed out through individual conversations between the EFP Coordinator and each of the primary partners, resulting in a working draft shared with all primary partners for review, revision, and final agreement at a primary partners meeting in November 2023. Any changes to the EFP from EFP V1-2023 will be recorded in *Appendix D — Record of Changes*.

2. Purpose & Scope

Purpose

The purpose of the EFP is to address the challenges related to food access and its associated impacts on health and wellbeing during emergency events in the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario (and the six surrounding municipalities and Fort William First Nation when partnership is requested). It does this through identifying potential hazards and risks to food access to prepare, plan, and respond in the most effective manner.

Objectives

The objectives of the EFP are to:

- Ensure food access for all residents during emergencies (and especially vulnerable people and/or those living with chronic food insecurity);
- Keep essential food access services open during emergencies (e.g., daily meal services, food banks) or modified in a way that allows for expanded access to food;
- Support social equity in regard to food access during emergencies through employing an ethic of dignified food access in all facets of the response;
- Support the return of ‘normal’ food access activities as quickly as possible, while considering how food insecurity needs may have been changed by the emergency;
- Maintain a network of partners who commit to key roles and responsibilities;
- Ensure a stewardship and maintenance procedure; and
- Identify and implement future objectives for strengthening the EFP.

Scope + Scale

The scope of emergency response within this plan is to **address emerging food access challenges resulting from emergency events, especially for vulnerable populations, within the City of Thunder Bay**. Within this plan, *emergency* is defined as an unforeseen combination of circumstances that calls for immediate (short-term) action due to an urgent need for assistance or relief. The term *vulnerable populations* is used to encompass different social and economic reasons why someone may experience food insecurity on a regular basis. According to research and the experience of frontline groups, this may include unhoused people, seniors, those living with mental health or addictions, people on a fixed income, Black or Indigenous people and families, and single-parent households, to name some of the most prevalent risk factors.²

While many of the **hazards and risks** being planned for overlap with the City of Thunder Bay’s Emergency Plan (e.g., flood, winter weather, infrastructure failure, etc.) the EFP seeks to address the impacts and challenges these types of emergencies will place specifically on the food system and the ability for the population to maintain access to food.

² Tarasuk, V., & Mitchell, A. (2020). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2017-2018*. University of Toronto. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

The EFP also recognizes the **necessary distinction between chronic food insecurity and short-term food insecurity caused by an emergency**. In Canada, household food insecurity means inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints and can range from worrying about running out of food or limited selection due to cost, to at its most severe missing meals, reducing intake of food, or going days without food.³ Chronic food insecurity refers to the persistent inability to meet minimum food requirements over extended periods of time, often resulting from extended periods of poverty, lack of assets, and/or inadequate access to financial resources.⁴

Chronic food insecurity is an ongoing issue that effected almost 16% of Canadian households in 2021,⁵ an issue that has seen the development of a charitable food access sector dedicated to supporting people made vulnerable by food insecurity on a regular basis. Research suggests that those facing chronic food insecurity are at an increased risk when faced with the additional strains of an emergency.^{6 7} Given that, the EFP's primary partners make up key players within local community-based organizations, agencies, and institutions who have expertise, resources, and infrastructure to address food access challenges at a community level. Employing an ethic of dignified food access within the response means recognizing people's dignity and offering access to quality food on their terms and delivering it in a way that is free of stigma and judgement. Dignified food access can look as different as the ways in which people need to access food, but it always includes the core principles of respect and trust, care and empathy, and non-judgemental support. For more information on this, see the community research report and handbook *Dignified Food Access: A Framework for Action and Handbook for Organizations* authored by Roots Community Food Centre (2021).

Currently the **geographic scale of the EFP** is at a local level, and currently includes the City of Thunder Bay. The EFP recognizes that the wider census metropolitan area extends to six rural municipalities and Fort William First Nation, which is not within the scope of this plan as each maintain their own jurisdictions and emergency plans. These jurisdictions are informed of the EFP and are welcome to participate in its ongoing maintenance or its activation in times of emergency. Thunder Bay's food system is intrinsically linked to those of the smaller regional communities in northwestern Ontario, however the current capacity of the plan can only address the metropolitan area.

The conditions for activating this plan include medium or high impact emergencies at a local, regional, or national scale that will impact Thunder Bay's ability for food to be brought in, distributed fairly, and/or safely consumed. See *Table 1 - EFP Activation Levels* on page 13 for more detailed information on activation levels.

³ Tarasuk, V., & Mitchell, A. (2020). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2017-2018*. University of Toronto. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

⁴ FAO. (2008). *Introduction to the Basic Concepts of Food Security*. <https://www.fao.org/3/al936e/al936e00.pdf>

⁵ Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) *Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021*. Toronto: *Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF)*. Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

⁶ Fonseca, A. (2021). *Hungry for Change: A Community Where no one is Hungry*. NorWest Community Health Centres.

⁷ *Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy, (2022). Learning from Emergency Food Response During COVID-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario.*

Situation Overview

Thunder Bay's Geographic & Socioeconomic Context

Thunder Bay is a mid-sized city located on Anishnaabe-aki, represented today by Fort William First Nation, and signatory to the Robinson-Superior Treaty of 1850. The city is in the boreal forest of the Canadian Shield along the north shore of Gitchi Gami (Lake Superior) in Ontario, Canada. As of the 2021 census, the population of the Thunder Bay metropolitan area stands at 146,862 people.⁸ This figure only represents permanent residents of Thunder Bay, however, and doesn't account for the role that Thunder Bay plays as a hub city for the health and social services to many rural and remote communities and First Nations in northern Ontario. Thunder Bay is the only major urban center within 700km. To the north, there is no year-round road access to over 30 remote First Nation communities located between the city and Hudson's Bay.

The census metropolitan area of Thunder Bay includes the City of Thunder Bay, six rural townships (Conmee, Gillies, Neebing, O'Connor, Oliver Paipoonge, and Shuniah) and Fort William First Nation. Within this make-up, approximately a quarter of the population lives rurally, which is important when thinking about potential food access challenges during times of emergency. As of the 2016 census, approximately 13% of the population identified as Indigenous,⁹ although a study conducted by Anishnawbe Muskiki in 2020 puts the number of Indigenous people at two to three times higher than what was reported on the census.¹⁰ The City of Thunder Bay has the highest per capita urban Indigenous population in Canada and is faced with deep structural issues of anti-Indigenous racism, all of which are important contexts when considering chronic food insecurity and equitable access to food.

Thunder Bay's Food System Context

As with many North American settler communities, Thunder Bay is highly reliant on the global food system to feed itself. Located in the boreal forest within growing zones 3 and 4, Thunder Bay's natural environment makes it difficult to grow food in the winter months. While local food production and processing is a growing industry,¹¹ it does not make up the primary means by which the community feeds itself.

Currently, most of the community's food is transported from Winnipeg and Toronto via Highway 11/17, making the community highly reliant on external jurisdictions and single transportation routes for this critical resource. From the junctions of Shabaquah Corners to the Nipigon Bridge (approximately 164 km) this route is made up of only one two-laned highway. While other access points exist, this major transportation corridor for food relies on the accessibility of one arterial highway, making supply chains vulnerable to disruption. Given that it is a hub city, Thunder Bay is also called upon to assist rural and remote communities with food access during times of emergency.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810000801>

⁹ Statistics Canada. (2017a). *Focus on Geography series, Census 2016*.

¹⁰ Smylie, J. (2020). *Our Health Counts Thunder Bay: An inclusive community-driven health survey for Indigenous peoples in Thunder Bay*.

¹¹ Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy. (2022). #tbay in Season. Retrieved from <https://tbayinseason.ca/>

Another critical issue in Thunder Bay's food system is the ongoing crisis of chronic food insecurity and how this is connected to emergency food access. Due to the presence of systemic poverty in Canada, there are many demographic groups that disproportionately experience food insecurity: low-income households, lone-parent families, people who rent rather than own their homes, children, Indigenous people, racialized people, single parents, newcomers, and residents of Northern communities.¹² According to data from the Lakehead Social Planning Council conducted in 2018, 15% of the population in Thunder Bay earn less than the Low-Income Measure, indicating the presence of a key risk factor for chronic food security in the community.¹³ The high percentage of Indigenous people who call the city home indicates the presence of another key risk factor for food insecurity. The EFP keeps the realities of chronic food insecurity front of mind in its planning while focusing on addressing the added pressures on food security from unforeseen, community-wide emergencies.

Plan Development

This plan was informed and guided by several key processes and information. A key source of information were the findings from the report *Learning from Emergency Food Response during Covid-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario*, conducted by TBAFS in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay, beginning in the fall of 2020. The guiding question behind this research was to understand the food access landscape in Thunder Bay before the pandemic and how it changed in response to the emergency to learn lessons to inform the creation of an EFP. This was done by engaging with the community on two levels: surveying over 40 social service-based organizations in Thunder Bay who offered food access support during March – June of 2020; and surveying over 150 people who received food access support from social service-based organizations during March – June of 2020. The report paints a picture of the current food access support system, offers overarching lessons about providing emergency food response, and makes recommendations to a variety of stakeholders about tackling chronic food insecurity and future emergency food response. For more information, see the report *Learning from Emergency Food Response during Covid-19 in Thunder Bay, Ontario* (TBAFS, 2022) on the TBAFS website.

A modified Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment (HIRA) process was conducted with the primary partners table in May 2022 to better identify and plan for hazards that the community faces regarding food security during emergencies. When it comes to using a HIRA process to plan for emergency food, an adapted version of Emergency Management Ontario's 2019 risk scoring tool was created to consider the context of food access during emergencies. Not all hazards that may be identified in a community's general emergency plan will apply to the context of food access. (e.g., medical supply shortage, space object crash, etc.). Therefore, when selecting hazards to focus on for emergency food planning they must carry a high degree of potential to impact food access at a mass scale. For details on this, see the *Modified HIRA Process* and *Modified HIRA Risk Scoring Tool* on the TBAFS website.

¹² Tarasuk, V., & Mitchell, A. (2020). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2017-2018*. University of Toronto. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

¹³ Lakehead Social Planning Council. (2018). *Building a Better Thunder Bay for All: A Community Action Plan to Reduce poverty, 2018 - 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.lspc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018-Poverty-Reduction-Strategy.pdf>

The HIRA process helped to narrow the focus of initial emergency food planning to preparing for the impacts of medium risk events, with both slow and rapid onsets. This process identified that while there are unique elements to any crisis that can be helpful to prepare for, in the context of food access it may be more beneficial to focus on the general characteristics of medium to high-risk events (as opposed to incident specific plans). For more information on the findings of the HIRA discussion, including scope of emergency food planning and potential community consequences, see the document *HIRA Findings* on the TBAFS website.

This plan was also inspired by the City of Thunder Bay's COVID-19 Severe Weather Response Plan, which demonstrated a format for connecting multi-sectoral emergency response initiatives into the City's Emergency Plan, while allowing for flexibility and responsiveness of these independently mandated agencies.

For more information on the plan development process, see the published article *Creating a municipal-level emergency food plan: Lessons from Thunder Bay, Ontario*.¹⁴

Actions Taken to Minimize Impacts

A final component of a situation overview is to acknowledge the actions taken to help minimize the impact from identified hazards. Regarding emergency food planning and preparation in Thunder Bay, the following actions are underway:

- The TBAFS is working towards conducting a food system assessment for Thunder Bay;
- The Food Access Coalition, a network of social service-based organizations experienced in food access for vulnerable populations, has been formed and meets regularly;
- The Food Access Coalition maintains the EFP as one of its objectives;
- Partnerships have been established between the TBAFS and key municipal staff on addressing emergency food access strategies; and
- Identifying gaps to support stronger prevention and mitigation of crisis situations, as well as prevent or mitigate logistical challenges that impede emergency food response.

Limitations of the EFP

The limitations of the EFP at this point include:

- Lack of a formal food system assessment for Thunder Bay, which would include a comprehensive risk assessment of the food system to inform emergency planning;
- This EFP is being constructed via a body separate from (but in partnership with) the municipality given that the control and knowledge of food access infrastructure is not owned or operated by the City;
- Limited inclusion of for-profit food producers, distributors, and retailers to date; and
- Not currently able to include an element of regional response for rural and remote communities and First Nations due to limited capacity and the need for network growth;
- Lack of sustainable coordination funding.

¹⁴ Levkoe, C.Z., & Strutt, C. (2024). Creating a municipal-level emergency food plan: Lessons from Thunder Bay, Ontario. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2024.134.016>

3. Concept of Operations

The EFP utilizes the overarching principles of an incident command structure (ICS), commonly used in emergency response environments in Canada and around the world. This system is based on command and control principles developed by the military and was created as a tool for responders from multiple jurisdictions to work together to better respond to incidents. An ICS delineates job responsibilities and organizational structure to manage day-to-day operations of an emergency response.¹⁵ Utilizing this structure will allow the EFP to be seamlessly integrated into municipal emergency response structures if needed.

The research conducted by TBAFS surrounding the EFP clearly indicates that increased collaboration would have made it easier for organizations to support an emergency food response and that there is a need for clear roles and responsibilities, driven by those with experience in providing food access support. Pulling from these overarching emergency planning resources, research conducted locally on food response, and an understanding of the local context, the following concept of operations as depicted in Figure 1 was created.

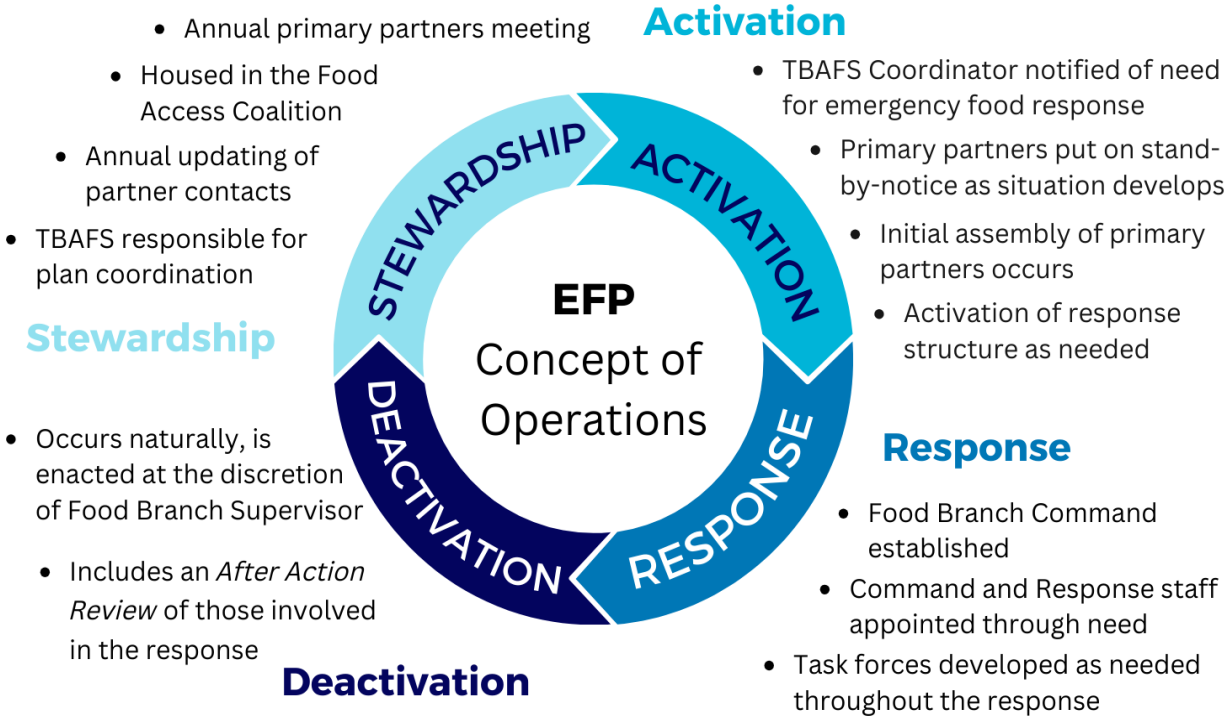


Figure 1: EFP Concept of Operations

¹⁵ Emergency Management Ontario. (2008). IMS-100: Introduction to the Incident Management System (IMS) for Ontario.

Decision making within the plan has two levels. While branch command, command staff, and general staff will have the authority to make operational decisions during activation, response, and deactivation phases, collective decision making is required during the stewardship phase. The EFP relies on the participation of independently managed organizations and institutions, all with their own mandates and processes. As such, it is important that consensus-based decision making occurs with primary partners when it comes to plan development and maintenance. Consensus means all parties agree with the decision being made. With such a large group, the consensus process is achieved through the use of visible signals that show levels of agreement – agree, unsure, does not agree. Decisions can be passed if the majority of the group agrees along with a few who are unsure; if there are more people who are unsure then agree or someone who disagrees, then follow up is needed to modify the decision.

Key roles and responsibilities are highlighted in this plan, in some cases even listing specific partners. While this helps provide clarity quickly, these roles will always have to be re-evaluated upon activation to determine partner availability and capacity in the moment. The initial assembly will allow for reassessment of resources and responsibilities; it is important that partners don't take on a role that hasn't been discussed or assigned to them to avoid confusion. Any functions not specifically delegated remain the responsibility of Food Branch Command.

Financially, the EFP will not be able to reimburse any costs to partner organizations unless directed by Food Branch Command. As much as possible, the EFP will seek to acquire funds that can be shared amongst key sections of the plan when needed. The intent of the plan is to leverage key in-kind resources from partners needed for an effective response (e.g., paid staff, physical infrastructure, vehicles, etc.) while reducing the financial burden of sourcing food and/or additional funds on individual organizations. See *Appendix J – Finance Strategy* for more details on funding a response.

ACTIVATION

The EFP would be activated if a situation arose that had the potential to affect the ability of people to access or prepare food in Thunder Bay & Area (e.g., specific geographic locations, critical infrastructure damage, vulnerable populations, etc.). This could include:

- Situations that come with intensity and little warning that last a relatively short time (e.g., natural disaster, power outage)
- Longer duration events, particularly those of a social or economic nature (e.g., pandemic, recession)
- A localized emergency that prevents a partner from operating who provides regular food access services (e.g. Dew Drop Inn, RFDA)

It is important to recognize that the partners involved in the EFP are operating at a base level of emergency food response all the time because of the high rates of food insecurity in the community. This is why there is non-profit food access infrastructure to lean on in an

emergency. To understand the scale and scope in which the EFP can support a municipal emergency response, the following response levels have been created in Table 1.

Table 1: EFP Response Levels

	Exposure	Scope	Resources Needed	Examples
Level 1: Chronic Food Insecurity Response	Challenges to accessing food localized and ongoing	Vulnerable populations	Organizational-level funding and donations	Ex. Need for daily meal services, regular food banks, low-cost produce, food programming
Level 2: Broadened Scope of Response	Inability to access food and/or prepare food affecting a new subset of the population; coordinated approach needed	Specific geographic locations or mid-low-income bracket households, as well as vulnerable populations	Organizational-level funding, donations, in-kind contributions; external and gov't funding	Ex. Isolated natural disaster; recession; low-grade pandemic
Level 3: City-Wide/Area Response	Inability to access food and/or prepare food widespread; challenges faced getting food into the city	Impact felt by the majority of the population, including vulnerable populations	Organizational-level funding, donations, in-kind contributions; external and gov't funding; major disaster relief	Ex. One element of critical infrastructure damaged; widespread natural disaster
Level 4: Catastrophic Response	Access to food is scarce; systems have broken down	Entire population	Major disaster relief	Ex. Multiple elements of critical infrastructure damage; global telecommunications failure

NOTE: A Level 4 response is listed to demonstrate that the EFP realistically confronts all possibilities of disruption, however it must be noted that many EFP partners are not likely to be equipped to support a Level 4 response. In these circumstances, there would not likely be regularly functioning agencies therefore the power and capacity of this group becomes limited.

The plan can be activated by any member of the primary partner’s table or by the City of Thunder Bay. In either instance, the person notifies the TBAFS Coordinator (or alternate) of an activation request. An activation request might look like:

- A clear and determined emergency, likely signalled by the City’s MCEG or another form of government. Upon notification, an initial assembly is executed within 24 hours.
- Frontline organizations(s) bringing forward early warning signs of significantly increased food access needs or food shortages.
- A primary food access provider is not able to operate and requiring support to meet chronic food insecurity needs.

Those bringing forth the request and the EFP Coordinator determine what level of activation is needed. It can be difficult to know when to call an initial assembly when a situation is in the grey area between a crisis and the pressures of chronic food insecurity, or in prolonged situations of increased poverty that impact people’s ability to purchase food. The activation levels for the EFP increase in scale according to the known severity and impact of the situation. These levels are tiered, allowing for advance preparation and scaling up. The activation levels can be found below in *Table 2: EFP Tiered Activation Levels*.

Table 2: EFP Tiered Activation Levels

LEVEL	ACTION TAKEN
1. Stand-by-Notice	TBAFS Coordinator contacts each Primary Partner to notify of a possible initial assembly and get a status update on each organization.
2. Food Branch Command Established	The Food Branch Supervisor is in place and monitoring community trends/needs, states of emergency or warnings, and updating primary and support partners of the situation. Command Staff may also be established at this point, as well as contact with the City Liaison.
3. Initial Assembly	An initial assembly of the primary partners table is called. During an initial assembly, a collaborative strategy for activating the EFP response structure is determined by the primary partners. If possible, initial assembly will occur in-person at the base and staging area. Hybrid or virtual can be utilized when needed.
4. Activation of Response Structure	Activation of the full breadth of the response structure (see <i>Figure 2: EFP Response Structure</i>) as per the determined strategy. This could include activation of FAC members and designated food response facilities (see <i>Appendix E—Designated Food Response Facilities</i>), as well as the signing of just-in-time agreements with partners (see <i>Appendix F—Just-in-Time Agreement Template</i>).

During an initial assembly, the purpose is to develop a collaborative strategy for response based on available information and resources of key partners. This will clarify the response structure roles required for each unique response and the capacity of partners at the time, and inform initial actions. The determined response may or may not involve all the sections of the response structure or require the participation of all primary partners. Meetings of the Food Branch Command roles will happen throughout the emergency food response.

Currently, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army have signed memoranda of understanding with the City of Thunder Bay’s Municipal Emergency Control Group to play specific roles relating to food during emergencies, particularly within the first 72-hours. This support can buy crucial time for the EFP to rally a more sustained response if needed. It is important to note there will be trigger points within emergency situations that bring the jurisdiction of response from the local to provincial or federal level, which would require a re-evaluation of the EFP response.

RESPONSE

The response structure uses the template of an Incident Command Structure to help quickly and effectively organize an emergency food response, as well as easily streamline the EFP into the City's larger Emergency Plan protocols. Not every situation will require all sections to be activated; in smaller scale situations, one person may be able to take on several functions.

Figure 2: EFP Response Command Structure outlines the key components of the EFP's command structure during a response.

EFP-V2 Food Branch Response Structure

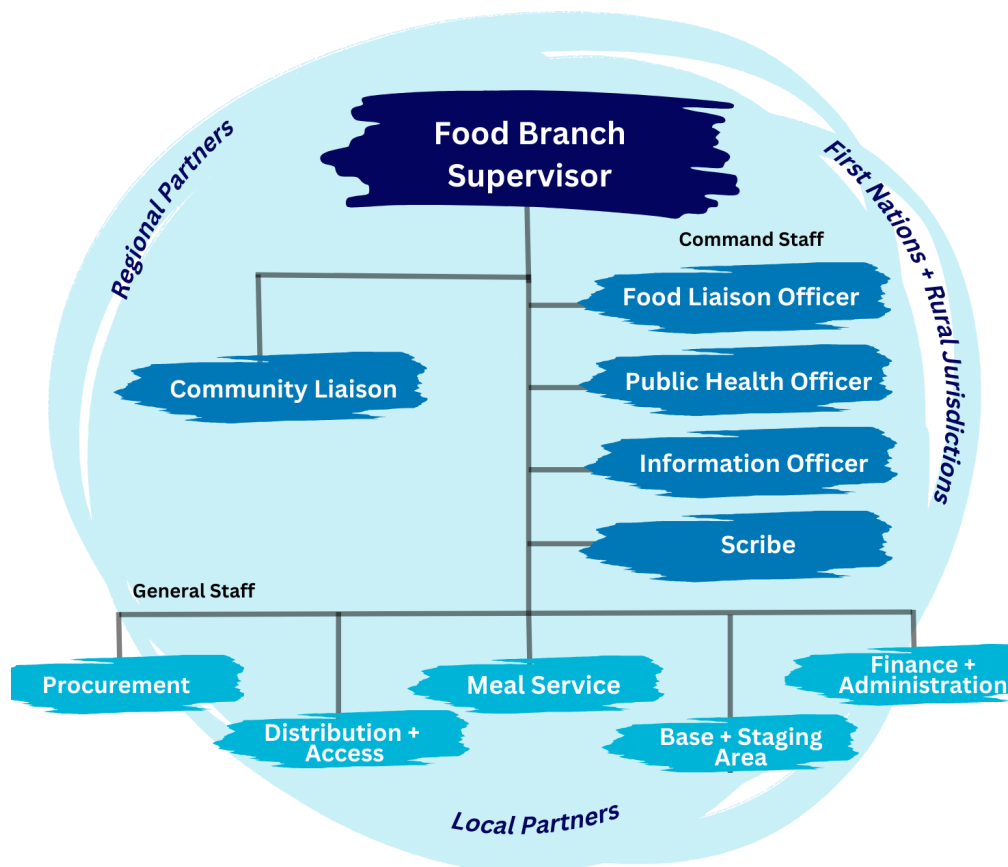


Figure 2: EFP Response Command Structure

On the following page, *Table 3: Responsibilities of Command Structure Roles* breaks down the intended responsibilities of each role and any primary partners who have been assigned specific roles in the command structure.

Food Branch Command: Responsible for having a birds-eye view of the response in order to set the response priorities. This entails establishing end goals for set periods of time and communicating that to all staff in order to collectively determine response objectives and implement action through determined strategies and tactics. Food Branch Command is comprised of a Food Branch Supervisor (determined by primary partners during activation), the City of Thunder Bay’s Liaison, and all Command Staff officers.

Command Staff: Command staff are made up of the Food Liaison Officer, Public Health Liaison Officer, Information Officer and the Scribe. Each of these roles covers an essential component of response that will not require the forming of task forces, reporting directly to the Food Branch Supervisor.

General Staff: General staff is made up of the necessary sections for food response: Procurement, Distribution & Access, Meal Service, Finance & Administration, and the Base & Staging Area. Each of these sections is run by a lead that reports to the Food Branch Supervisor and are tasked with actioning the response objectives and reporting back to Command, which may require the initiating of task forces.

Base & Staging Area: The base and staging area is a central location that can be used to host Food Branch Command as well as receive non-food equipment and personnel (i.e. paid staff, volunteers) from partners.

Table 3: Responsibilities of Response Structure Roles

Role	Partner	Responsibilities
FOOD BRANCH COMMAND		
Food Branch Supervisor	A primary partner of the EFP with IMS-200 training, as determined through the initial assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set priorities and objectives for the whole response and hold a birds-eye view of all response structure roles and actions. ▪ Determine the planning cycle of response (i.e. what meetings need to happen, when, who need to be there, what products need to be ready, timing of planning cycles, etc.) ▪ Call and lead meetings of Food Branch Command. ▪ Monitor severity of the situation and calls for appropriate activation and deactivation levels. ▪ Communicate directly with the City of Thunder Bay’s Liaison. ▪ Communicate directly with all Command and General staff. ▪ Coordinate the needs/requests of Command and General staff for human resources with Food Liaison Officer. ▪ Share directives and outcomes with partners. ▪ Review and approve information to be shared publicly. ▪ Direct activation of regional and local partners as needed. ▪ Ensure the recovery strategy guides decision making throughout the response to aid sustainability long term. ▪ Could be designated as incident command of the City’s overall emergency response if it was a food related emergency. ▪

Community Liaison	Representatives of a community working with the EFP (i.e. City of Thunder Bay, FWFN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with the Food Branch Supervisor on behalf of the community's emergency response team. ▪ Sit at the community's emergency response table and provide two-way communication between both bodies. ▪ Coordinate high-level requests for infrastructure, resources, and funding at the municipal level. ▪ Provide updates to community leadership as needed. ▪ Approve Food Branch Command communications about food, as aligned with the community's official response.
Scribe	Unassigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Take notes that capture decision making processes and outcomes during all Food Branch Command meetings. ▪ Ensure notes are shared with the Food Branch Supervisor and uploaded onto the shared Google Drive for primary partners.
COMMAND STAFF		
Food Liaison Officer	TBAFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Communicate with frontline organizations, Fort William First Nation, and rural municipalities about their needs and provide this information to Food Branch Command. ▪ Activate needed regional and local partners as directed. ▪ Provide updated assessment of local partner resources and coordinate logistics and support requests. ▪ Stay connected to partners to understand their ongoing capacity. ▪ Work with volunteer coordinators of key partners to source volunteers (e.g., DDI, RFDA, Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.). ▪ Coordinate dispatch of volunteers to the base & staging area. ▪ Share updated information with regional and local partners.
Public Health Liaison Officer	Thunder Bay District Health Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Ensure and uphold health and safety compliance of food response (e.g., food safety, physical safety). ▪ Provide health and safety recommendations for volunteers and response staff, especially in relation to mental health and trauma. ▪ Ensure all utilized locations meet health codes. ▪ Liaise with health inspection teams at the Health Unit. ▪ Act as a conduit to relevant public health resources.
Information Officer	Unassigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Utilize the communication strategy (see Appendix I) to guide the work of informing the public about food access. ▪ Coordinate with 211 to establish a public inquiry line and registration for food support if needed. ▪ Provide information to Command about food needs from the public, partners and media sources. ▪ Ensure information to be shared publicly is approved by community liaison(s). ▪ Establish key messages and media products and support the updating of key organizational websites. ▪ Broadcast approved emergency food access instructions via traditional (i.e. print, radio) and digital media (i.e. social, website) when requested. ▪ Consult Food Branch Supervisor and Community Liaison(s) about restraints on release of information. ▪ Handle media interactions or requests for information. ▪ Work with local Radio Amateurs of Canada group, if required.

RESPONSE STAFF		
Procurement Lead	Regional Food Distribution Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Procure the food needed for the response (i.e. global supply chain, local producers). ▪ Coordinate reception of food at the Food Distribution Hub (RFDA building unless otherwise specified). ▪ Coordinate the packaging of large quantities of food for delivery to distribution sites. ▪ Coordinate delivery of food to distribution sites at urban, rural, and regional levels as determined by the situation. ▪ Form action task forces as needed to support procurement and ensure execution of those task force objectives. ▪ Capture data on amount of food delivered to distribution hubs.
Meal Service Lead	Dew Drop Inn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Determine which distribution sites need cooked or bagged meals. ▪ Coordinate the preparation and packaging of cooked and/or bagged meals for needed distribution sites. ▪ Coordinate a pop-up 7-day-a-week meal service program on the south side of town if needed. ▪ Form action task forces as needed to support meal service and ensure execution of those task force objectives. ▪ Capture data on the number of meals distributed to distribution sites.
Distribution & Access Lead	Unassigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with the Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Coordinate central distribution sites for public access of food, based on the scale of the situation, needs, and available food response facilities (See Appendix E – Designated Food Response Facilities). ▪ Activate distribution sites and manage the needs of the sites (e.g. physical space, volunteers, food quantity). ▪ Establish and coordinate a food delivery system for those unable to make it to central access points. ▪ Coordinate where volunteers are needed to support frontline and last mile access of food. ▪ Form action task forces as needed to support distribution and access and ensure execution of those task force objectives. ▪ Capture data on the number of people receiving food (and the sites).
Financing & Administration Lead	Unassigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor. ▪ Implement the financing strategy (See Appendix J), including management of the Emergency Food Fund. ▪ Advocate for and raise emergency food funds at federal, provincial, and local levels. ▪ Maintain an understanding of where there is money within the response and where funds are needed, and direct funds accordingly. ▪ Sign JIT's with organizations receiving funding on behalf of the EFP response. ▪ Manage a collective accounting process to keep track of how funds are being spent throughout the response. ▪ Collect and organize data about the response from Command and General Staff (e.g., funds, amount of food, # of ppl accessing). ▪ Compile updates from all staff in between planning meetings to share with the Food Branch Supervisor ahead of the next planning cycle. ▪ Form action task forces as needed to support finance and administration and ensure execution of those task force objectives.

Base & Staging Area Lead	Roots Community Food Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate directly with Food Branch Supervisor ▪ Provide and manage a physical base & staging area location for Food Branch Command. ▪ Receive and coordinate any redirected staff or volunteers and check them in to the base & staging area. ▪ Direct volunteers to their postings and provide them with information about their role and who they will report to. ▪ Check-in with volunteers and response staff who have been deployed to ensure needs are met and avoid burnout. ▪ Address any conflicts or altercations involving volunteers. ▪ Receive any equipment for the response and check it in. ▪ Direct equipment to where it is needed.
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DEACTIVATION

Deactivation of the EFP will occur at the discretion of the Food Branch Supervisor and the advice of command and general staff and partners. Each response will be different, requiring its own deactivation and recovery processes which will occur naturally over the life span of the response. Steps towards deactivation must take into consideration the status of regular food access systems and deactivate accordingly to ensure chronic food insecurity needs remain met while accounting for recovery of personnel and resources.

The deactivation levels for the EFP are tiered, allowing for flexible scaling up and down as needed, while ensuring clear communication about how to access food throughout the transition. The activation levels can be found below in *Table 4: EFP Deactivation Levels*.

Table 4: EFP Deactivation Levels

LEVEL	ACTION TAKEN
1. Preparation Meeting	Food Branch Supervisor calls for Food Branch Command meeting to discuss a strategy for deactivation.
2. Initiate Deactivation Strategy	Food Branch Supervisor initiates the determined deactivation strategy, ensuring clear communication to all command and response staff, partners and the public.
3. Initiate Recovery Phase	Move into preparing and supporting organizations to resume their regular responsibilities and duties. Utilize the recovery strategy (see <i>Appendix H – Recovery Strategy</i>) to guide the work of ensuring a sustainable approach to deactivation.
4. Debrief	<p>Food Branch Supervisor to initiate an After Action Review involving all Food Branch Command staff and lead roles. Records will be kept of this debrief and used to update the EFP accordingly.</p> <p>A debrief will aim to review operating procedures (e.g. what happened, what went well, didn't go well, lessons learned, and applying those lessons learned to operations and plans identify</p>

	<p>what elements were missed, were there inefficiencies, what gaps need to be addressed in the plan moving forward, etc.)</p> <p>An opportunity to provide feedback on the response should also be made available to other food responders and those who received food access support as a part of deactivation. This will provide additional important data for improving the EFP moving forward. See <i>Appendix G—Debrief Survey</i>.</p>
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STEWARDSHIP

Ongoing maintenance and updating of the EFP is an essential component of the concept of operations. There are several ways that the EFP will be stewarded:

- **Annual Primary Partners meeting:** This annual meeting each fall will serve as an opportunity for all primary partners who are signatories to the EFP to review the plan, conduct a tabletop simulation exercise, and advise on necessary changes. This will also serve as an opportunity to foster strong relationships between essential partners.
- **Housed in the Food Access Coalition:** The intention is for the EFP to be housed in the Food Access Coalition (FAC). As a standing agenda item at FAC meetings, the EFP will stay present in the minds of partners and offer an opportunity to provide relevant updates about the EFP and work through recommendations for continual strengthening. By virtue of the EFP being housed in the FAC, the EFP will be informed by the cross-sectoral advocacy work of the Coalition, ensuring that the EFP is responsive to changing social and economic contexts.
- **Annual updating of partner contacts:** Partners will be contacted prior to the annual primary partners meeting each fall to ensure contact information is up to date and ensure commitment to the EFP.
- **Stewarded by the TBAFS:** The TBAFS will assume responsibility for the coordination work of the plan that include planning and hosting the annual partners meeting, providing updates and connection with the FAC, updating partner contact and infrastructural resource information, and activating the plan when required.

It is also important for there be an eye to the future in terms of how the EFP will be strengthened and improved over time. The annual tabletop exercise is an opportunity to address any necessary changes, updates or additions to the plan, which will continue to evolve the “Moving Forward” section of the plan. The plan will also be strengthened through ongoing networking and relationship building, both within the FAC and regionally.

4. Stakeholder Roles

There are many stakeholders that contribute to and make an activation of the EFP possible, each with their own roles and responsibilities. *Table 5: Stakeholder Roles* outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders outside of an emergency and during an activation of the plan.

Table 5: Stakeholder Roles

Stakeholder	Responsibilities outside of an emergency	Responsibilities during an activation of the EFP
Primary Partners (See Appendix A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Food Access Coalition quarterly meetings and initiatives. • Share information about organization resources. • Attend annual primary partners meeting and tabletop exercise. • Support plan development and updates. • Notify the EFP Coordinator of any changes to organizational representatives and contact information. • Sign an Agreement of Cooperation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring any warning signs of a potential food-based emergency to the EFP Coordinator. • Attend an initial assembly to determine situation specific activation of response structure. • Assume lead roles as per the determined response. • Provide in-kind contributions within organizational capacity (i.e. paid staff, vehicles).
Food Access Coalition Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Food Access Coalition quarterly meetings and initiatives. • Share information about organization resources. • Notify the EFP Coordinator of any changes to organizational representative and contact information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain communication with the Food Liaison Officer. • Provide in-kind contributions within organizational capacity (i.e. paid staff, vehicles) as needed. • Provide connection with hard-to-reach populations.
Local Partners (i.e. businesses, producers, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about organization resources. • Notify the EFP Coordinator of any changes to organizational representative and contact information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain communication with the Food Liaison Officer. • Offer contributions within operating capacity as needed.
EFP Coordinator (held by the TBAFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected to support partners and chronic food insecurity work. • Host quarterly FAC meetings. • Maintain an updated contact list and food access infrastructure inventory. • Update the plan as per partner directives. • Ensure designated food response facilities are prepared for response. • Plan and host annual primary partners meeting and tabletop exercise. • Ensure updated EFP information is shared with primary partners and physical copies located at the base and staging area. • Share information about the EFP locally, regionally, and nationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate the primary partners table as per relevant activation level. • Host initial assembly to determine situation specific activation of the response structure. • Assume any position that is needed within the response structure.

City of Thunder Bay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected to partners and chronic food insecurity work through the FAC. • Provide relevant updates about the City’s Emergency Plan. • Include EFP Coordinator in City emergency exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a representative assumes of the role of Community Liaison for the City of Thunder Bay. • Provide requests and direction from the City’s MECG to Food Branch Command.
Designated Food Response Facility (see Appendix E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected to partners and chronic food insecurity work through participation on the FAC. • Work with EFP Coordinator to ensure facility is ready to respond if needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Await activation from Food Branch Command. • Willing and able to sign a Just-in-Time agreement for facility use. • Provide free and open access for EFP response staff to the facility.
Community Jurisdictions (i.e. Rural Municipalities, Fort William First Nation, Tribal Councils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay connected to the work of the EFP through the TBAFS Coordinator and EFP Coordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request support of the EFP if needed. • Provide relevant updates about circumstances within the jurisdiction.

5. Moving the EFP Forward

It is anticipated that each successive version of the EFP will identify actions to be taken to strengthen the plans effectiveness, keeping it growing and moving forward. This section highlights the actions identified in EFP-V1 2023 that have been achieved, the actions that have carried over into EFP-V2 2024, and the actions that have been newly identified by the primary partners during their first tabletop exercise in November 2023.

Achieved Actions (since EFP V1-2023)

- Connected with Emergency Management Ontario to establish two-way communication about how the EFP can support local response and the ways in which the province can better support emergency food response specifically.
- Presented the final plan to City Council, the Municipal Emergency Control Group, and any other relevant City personnel to inform them of the EFP’s purpose, scope, and process.
- Utilized local media and internal and social media of partners to share about the purpose, rationale, and scope of the EFP with the general public.
- Used a diverse range of media and presentations to share the EFP with other communities regionally and nationally.
- Continued to build the network and advocacy strength of the Food Access Coalition.

- EFP partners must remember that the chronic food insecurity experienced in our city means that “Level 1” activation is occurring all the time. Advocacy about the need for a basic income or better social safety net is a constant part of this work.
- Determined and onboarded alternates for each primary partner organization and ensure representatives have decision making authority for their organization.
- Initiated a Food Access Infrastructure Assessment.
- Developed a communications plan through a Primary Partners working group.
- Developed a financing and accounting plan through a Primary Partners working group.
- Developed a recovery strategy for the EFP through a Primary Partners working group.
- Trained 10 organizational representatives in IMS-100 and IMS-200.
- Ensured information sharing of key documents amongst Primary Partners.
 - Hard copies at base & staging area of plans, food infrastructure database, key contacts, and copies of relevant City emergency plans.
 - Develop a shared Google Drive that hosts digital copies of the updated plan, contact information, meeting notes, database, and other relevant resources.

Carried Over Actions

Underway

- Conduct a critical food infrastructure inventory with all Food Access Coalition members to develop (and maintain) a database of crucial food response resources, network wide.
- Utilize the inventory development process as a way to reengage all current FAC members, update contact information, and clarify what FAC membership means.
- Agree on decision making process, for during an activation and making changes to the plan, and a meeting structure for any Food Branch Command meeting.

Ongoing

- Engage Fort William First Nation and the six surrounding municipalities with the plan, including what their partnership might look like and how to stay connected.
- EFP Coordinator and Primary Partner member’s, when possible, to participate in Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) offered trainings around emergency response.
- Continue to expand the TBAFS’s network and collaboration amongst food producers and distributors, which would also benefit an emergency food response.
- TBAFS to actively fundraise for sustainable wages for an EFP + Food Access Coordinator.
- Continue to collaborate and share information with the public and with other communities doing this work through a variety of mediums.
- Advocate for more consistent funding to support food access infrastructure so that it exists when it is needed in an emergency.
 - The pandemic openly showed that the non-profit and charitable sectors are a “shadow subsidy” that governments rely on when responding to an emergency. If this infrastructure (both physical and human) is to exist in a reliable way during times of emergency, non-profits need to be supported, not fought or forgotten, in maintaining their infrastructure and capacity.

Short Term Priorities

- Expand membership on the FAC to include private businesses, food producers, and other key organizations and institutions.
- Work to streamline the use of designated food response facilities during emergencies:
 - Identify and secure permission to use central neighbourhood locations for food distribution during emergencies. (See *Appendix E – Designed Food Response Facilities* for neighbourhoods that still need facility partnerships)
 - Ensure designated food response facilities are considered essential by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) during emergencies and have been inspected and approved for use before the need to activate in an emergency.
 - Develop an agreement with the City of Thunder Bay, Synergy North, Enbridge Gas and any other critical infrastructure providers to ensure designated food response facilities receive priority standing during a high-impact emergency.
- Address the issue of how to source backup power (i.e. generators) for designated food response facilities.

Medium-Long Term Goals

- Work with primary partner organizations outside of emergency times to learn more about their internal emergency plans and business continuity planning to determine how these might impact their ability to support a response.
- Form a basic understanding of community demographics in relation to food insecurity to inform needs, resources, and ensure appropriate support during a response through local research, such as the TBDHU's *Food Atlas* and yearly *Cost of Eating* report.
- Consider how to address dietary restrictions and needs within the response.
- Make a simple webpage that provides up to date and easily accessible information about where to access food in Thunder Bay. This could become an electronic version of the *Where to Get Food in Thunder Bay* brochure that can be easily updated with new information during times of emergency.
- Stay connected with Agriculture & Agri-food Canada in relation to the national emergency food plan and how Thunder Bay's EFP can support nationally planning.
- Conduct a HIRA on all designated food response facilities to determine potential hazards and risks associated with the sites, ensuring alternates identified for each neighbourhood.
- Develop contacts for, and familiarize command staff with, the processes for accessing the infrastructure of City facilities, school boards, post-secondary institutions if needed.

Newly Identified Actions (through EFP-V2 2024 ratification process)

- Establish an Emergency Food Fund through the Thunder Bay Community Foundation.
- Establish forms and templates for:
 - o Financial record keeping during a response
 - o Information sharing from Command and General Staff to the Information Officer
 - o Volunteer check-in
- Create an information dissemination contact sheet (make sure this is updated bi-annually)
- Ensure multiple people are trained in various IMS roles for a response:
 - o IMS-100/200 – Food Branch Supervisor
 - o IMS-250 – Information Officer
 - o Scribe
- Ensure organizations who hold a specific role have built in redundancy with who could take on this role from within their organization (i.e. Public Health Officer, Procurement Lead, Base & Staging Are Lead, Meal Service Lead, Food Liaison Officer, City Liaison)
- Re-word agreements of cooperation and JIT template to cover the issue of liability
- Conduct an education and awareness campaign (through the TBAFS, but unbranded)
 - o Share information about emergency food response and access (i.e. magnets)
 - o 12-month social media loop; every month has a different theme (i.e. specific hazards to be prepared for, information for people to know, etc.)
 - o Send information out through FAC partners as a way to practice disseminating information more widely

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Appendix A—Primary Partners List

The following are the organizational or business stakeholders who make up the signatories of the Primary Partners Table for the Emergency Food Plan as of the second version, EFP V2-2024. The names of representatives and contact information has been removed for this public document.

ORGANIZATION	Signed Commitment Period
City of Thunder Bay	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026
Dew Drop Inn	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026
Lakehead Social Planning Council	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026
Northwestern Ontario Women’s Centre	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026
Canadian Red Cross	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026 (pending)
Regional Food Distribution Association	November 27, 2023 – September 26, 2026
Roots Community Food Centre	November 27, 2023 – September 26, 2026
Salvation Army	November 27, 2023 – September 30, 2026 (pending)
Thunder Bay & Area Food Strategy	November 27, 2023 – September 26, 2026
Thunder Bay District Health Unit	November 27, 2023 – September 26, 2026
Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre	November 27, 2023 – September 26, 2026
Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board	Invitation phase
NorWest Community Health Centre	Invitation phase

Appendix B—Agreement of Cooperation Template

Agreement of Cooperation

To

Execute the Emergency Food Plan for Thunder Bay

Between

The members of the Primary Partners Table

And

The Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy

For

A three-year duration, beginning in August 2023

This Agreement of Cooperation is in support of the collaboratively built Emergency Food Plan (EFP) for Thunder Bay, stewarded by the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy. This agreement outlines the broad roles and responsibilities that the signatory organizations are committing to as a part of the Primary Partners Table of the Emergency Food Plan.

The agreement recognizes that all signatory organizations are independent entities, either as non-profit organizations, charities, public institutions, or businesses, that are committing to the actioning of a cooperative food response during emergencies through voluntarily participation.

As a signatory to this agreement, the below representative is committing their organization or business to:

- If necessary, activating the Emergency Food Plan as per the activation procedure outlined in the plan (p. 12 - 14).
- Sending a representative with authoritative power to the initial assembly of the Primary Partners table when an emergency is called;
- During initial assembly, supporting the appointment of a Food Branch Supervisor and all required Command or Response staff roles as per the response structure, contributing in-kind human resources from their organization or business wherever possible.

- During initial assembly, communicating what organizational resources can be committed to the response (i.e. skilled, paid, humans; vehicles; phone lines; physical space; etc.).
- Ensuring the continued participation of any committed resources throughout.
 - If the circumstances of what can be contributed change, informing the Food Branch Supervisor immediately.
- For any Command or Response staff role agree to by an organization’s representative, this person agrees to:
 - Fulfill the specific responsibilities assigned to that role as per *Table 2: Responsibilities of Response Structure Roles* (p. 16 - 17).
 - Participate in ongoing response meetings throughout the duration of the emergency, bringing forward all relevant concerns to the Primary Partners table.
 - Inform the Food Branch Supervisor immediately if anything changes about the organization’s capacity to provide support previously agreed to.
 - The organization agrees to allow this person to use their paid work time to support the needs of the EFP.
- All relevant representatives from primary partner organizations participate in a debrief of the response as soon as possible once the event has been declared over.

Signatories of this agreement may be asked to sign a Just-in-Time Agreement with the City of Thunder Bay or with the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy during an emergency response to support additional roles or resources (i.e. use of infrastructure).

This Agreement of Cooperation will be in effect from the signatory date in 2023 to September 30, 2026, upon which time all Primary Partners will be asked to discuss and reconfirm their commitment to the Emergency Food Plan.

Signatories:

A. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____ Date: _____

B. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____ Date: _____

C. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

D. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

E. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

F. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

G. Organization/Business: _____

Signing Representative (Name & Role):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

EMERGENCY FOOD PLAN FOR THUNDER BAY

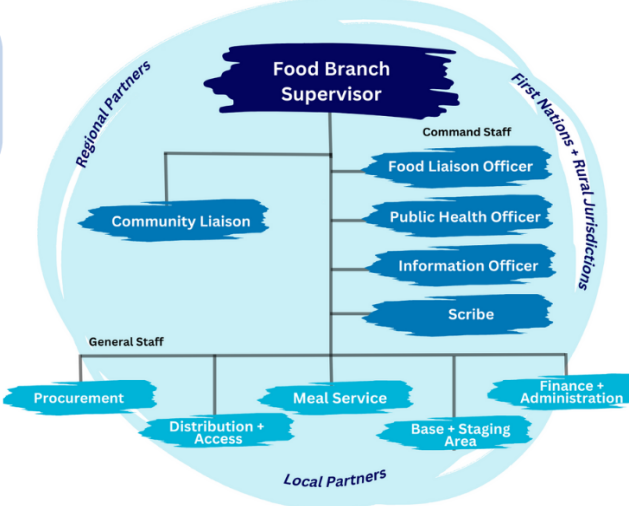
PURPOSE
Coordinates a civil society response addressing **food access challenges and associated impacts** on health and wellbeing **during emergency** events at a local level, utilizing modified Incident Management System (IMS) principles.

CURRENT SCALE
City of Thunder Bay, with recognition of the interconnectedness with Fort William First Nation and the six surrounding municipalities and townships.

- KEY STAKEHOLDERS**
- **Primary Partner** organizations, those that activate and steward the plan
 - **Food Access Coalition** member organizations
 - **EFP Coordinator**, through the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy
 - **Municipal Emergency Control Group** representative(s) from local jurisdictions
 - Local **food producers & businesses**
 - Designated Food Response Facilities

SCOPE
Address **medium or high-level impacts from emergencies** that impact a community’s ability to bring food in, distribute it fairly, and/or ensure safe preparation and consumption for larger subsets of the population, with a **particular focus on those impacted by chronic food insecurity.**

EFP RESPONSE STRUCTURE



www.tbfoodstrategy.com/emergencyfood/

- WHAT A RESPONSE PROVIDES**
- **One collaborative table** for a coordinated, whole-of-society approach to localized emergency food response
 - Access to **barrier-free food** for all who need it during emergencies (*Ex. Hampers, meals, last-mile delivery of food, coordinated use of resources*)
 - Social equity in food access through an ethic of **dignified food access**
 - Support the **return of regular chronic food insecurity programs** as quickly as possible



Appendix D—Record of Changes

EFP-V1 2023 to EFP-V2 2024

The first version of the EFP was written by Courtney Strutt over the course of 2022 and 2023 in consultation and discussion with the original eleven members of the Primary Partners table which included: City of Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy, Dew Drop Inn, Lakehead Social Planning Council, Canadian Red Cross, Northwestern Ontario Women’s Centre, Regional Food Distribution Association, Roots Community Food Centre, Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, and the Salvation Army. This version was officially ratified in November 2023 and will serve as the beginning point for EFP maintenance, stewardship, and use.

Specific changes made from EFP-V1 2023 to EFP-V2 2024 include:

- Updated *Figure 1: Concept of Operations*
- Updated decision making structure of the concept of operations phases.
- Updated *Figure 2: Food Branch Response Structure* to reflect new roles:
 - Information Officer
 - Distribution & Access Lead
 - Fundraising & Administration Lead
 - Scribe
 - City Liaison was changed to “Community Liaison” to reflect liaison role any municipality, township or First Nation may have when interacting with the EFP
- Updated *Table 3: Responsibilities of Response Structure Roles* to reflect newly added roles and adjust previous roles responsibilities.
- Updated activation process.
- Updated deactivation process.
- Updated *Table 5: Stakeholder Roles*.
- Updated *Section 5 – Moving Forward* to reflect actions taken, those carried over, and new actions identified.
- Updated *Appendix E – Designated Food Response Facilities*
- Added new appendices:
 - Appendix H – Recovery Strategy
 - Appendix I – Communications Strategy
 - Appendix J – Financing Strategy

Appendix E—Designated Food Response Facilities

Through the development of the EFP it has been determined that having a set of designated food response facilities to make up the key physical infrastructure of an emergency food response is essential. Identifying these locations prior to an emergency will ensure inspections and approvals are up to date or expedited for approval during emergencies to allow for their prompt use in an emergency response.

These locations have been chosen for their geographic locations (which offer touch points across the city), their prior connection to food distribution work, and their infrastructure (i.e. open spaces for distribution, refrigerators, etc.)

The below organizations have volunteered their space if needed during an emergency food response. This commitment means:

- Providing access to their space to the EFP response as a localized distribution point, free of charge, as needed during the response;
- Providing a representative from the organization to assist the EFP with access to the space;
- Inform the TBAFS Coordinator if there are any changes to representative contact information or the ability of the organization to be a designated food response facility.

<i>FACILITY TYPE</i>	<i>PRIMARY LOCATION</i>	<i>ALTERNATE LOCATION</i>
Food Warehouse	RFDA 570 Syndicate Ave. S	TBD
Base & Staging Area	Roots Community Food Centre 450 Fort William Road	TBD
North Distribution	Dew Drop Inn 294 Red River Road	TBD
South-East Distribution	Grace Place 235 Simpson St	TBD
Central Distribution	Roots Community Food Centre 450 Fort William Road	TBD
Current River Distribution	TBD	TBD
South-West Distribution	TBD	TBD
Westfort Distribution	The Gathering Place 239 Amelia St. W.	TBD

Just In Time Agreement

Between

The Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy
[TBAFS]

-and-

ENTER PARTNER’S NAME

This Just In Time (JIT) agreement sets the terms and understanding between the TBAFS, as the steward of the Emergency Food Plan (EFP), and [partner name] to support additional needs of the EFP during an activation of the plan.

Background & Purpose

This partnership supports a key component of the response structure for Thunder Bay’s Emergency Food Plan. While the EFP collaborates with a group of primary partners with key food access infrastructure in maintaining and stewarding the plan, not all needs during an emergency can be anticipated or agreed to in advance. This JIT allows for partners, whether primary, support, or external to the EFP, to put agreements into place quickly during an emergency event. This JIT outlines the responsibilities of the TBAFS/EFP Food Branch Command, those of the partner, any financial expectations, duration and termination stipulations.

Responsibilities of Partners

During an emergency event response of the EFP, the following responsibilities are being employed:

- TBAFS
 - Activates the EFP through convening the initial assembly of primary partners.
 - Coordinates and provides connection between the Food Access Coalition and the EFP
 - Contributes TBAFS staff towards Command or Incident Command staff roles as requested by the initial assembly of primary partners.
- EFP Food Branch Supervisor
 - Communicates directly with the City of Thunder Bay’s liaison

- Communicates directly with all command and response staff
- Calls and leads meetings of all staff/leads when needed
- Takes minutes, and shares directives and outcomes with partners
- Holds a birds eye view of the response and connects requests for support amongst sections
- Coordinates the needs/requests of staff for human resources with Food Liaison Officer
- Directs activation of Food Access Coalition (FAC) members as needed
- Activates response and distribution locations (See *Appendix E – Designated Food Response Facilities*)
- Collects and organizes data about the response from Command and Response Staff (e.g., funds, amount of food, # of ppl accessing)
- Could be designated as incident command of the City’s overall emergency response if it was a food related emergency.
- [Partner Name]
 - Elaborate on the specific responsibilities being asked of the partner who is signing this JIT

Financial Expectations

As per the agreed to request/responsibilities of the partner, this JIT establishes the following financial expectations:

- List any/all financial expectations of the partner, including in-kind contributions and whether or not there will be any reimbursement and from whom

Duration of MOU

This agreement is effective as of [date] and shall continue until [date].

This agreement is at-will and may be modified or altered as needed with the written consent of all parties. Any party may at any time terminate this agreement by giving the other parties 30 days notice by written means of communication to the listed contact information of parties.

Contact Information

List name, address, phone/email of each signatory to the JIT

Signatures

Space for each partner’s organization, name, title, date and signature

Appendix G— Debrief Survey

This debrief tool is to be used with all active participants of an emergency food response in Thunder Bay as soon as possible once the emergency has been declared over. This includes the Food Branch Coordinator, all Command and Response staff, the City Liaison, any activated Food Access Coalition members and designated food response facilities, and anyone else who may have played a significant role in the execution of an emergency food response. Additional debrief meetings may be held, at the discretion of the Food Branch Supervisor.

1. What went well about the response?
2. What were the gaps in the response?
3. Who was missing from the response?
4. What was difficult or challenging about the response from your perspective?
5. What adjustment would address that challenge for future responses?
6. Please share any other thoughts, comments, or feedback.

Appendix H — Recovery Strategy

Objective: *Ensure that an emergency food response is sustainable from the perspective of human and infrastructural resources to ensure contributing partners can pivot back to their regular mandates in a coordinated and supported manner.*

Purpose:

- Establish considerations throughout a response that support the returning to regular services of all partners involved in the response, with a particular focus on organizations involved in chronic food insecurity programs.
- Account for the recovery of personnel and resources whose regular responsibilities must immediately continue when the emergency is over (i.e. staff burnout, mental health).
- Re-establish, or redefine, regular services based on the impacts of the emergency on partners and the public.

Parties Involved

- EFP Food Branch Response Structure, especially Food Branch Supervisor, Food Liaison Officer, Public Health Officer, and Base & Staging Area Lead,
- Regional + local support partners

Sustainable Response Considerations

- Define the boundaries of an emergency food response during initial assembly and inform the City and other key partners of the group's capacity, determining how this can work alongside the City's response.
- Consider additional pressures relating to their regular responsibilities being put on partners who are taking on key roles in the response structure and account for this within the response structure (Ex. RFDA, Dew Drop Inn, etc.)
- The first 72 hours of any response tend to have all parties involved; after that the rule of thumb is usually 5 days on/per person and then two days off.
 - This cycle will be dictated by how many people trained in various roles are available to take on these positions.
 - Rotations logistics depend on the nature of the emergency and its overall length.
- Assign specific Command and General Staff roles with the responsibility of managing and supporting human and infrastructural resources for sustainability, burn-out, and capacity:
 - Food Liaison Officer – connects with organizational partners about their needs
 - Base & Staging Area Lead – connects with individual staff and volunteers about their needs
 - Public Health Liaison – ensures health and safety of everyone in the response
 - Food Branch Supervisor – keeping an eye towards recovery throughout response directives
- Rely on the Public Health Liaison to provide health and safety recommendations for volunteers and response staff, especially in relation to mental health and trauma.

Recovery Considerations

- Ensure that a deactivation process accounts for how the emergency may have impacted what regular services or programs look like.
- During deactivation, pay attention to the capacity of individual organizations and if there is a need for certain partners to deactivate earlier than the response as a whole.
- Ensure a clear communication plan is a part of deactivation that shares how emergency food response measures will be reduced and how regular services will be brought back.
- Continue to check-in with partners who were heavily involved with the response during the transition from emergency response to regular services.
- Make sure that as the emergency food response winds down, clean-up of spaces and resources is not being left to the organizations who provided the resources.
- Recognize partner contributions to the response by sharing that back with the community after the emergency has passed.
- Support partners with any reporting they have to their funders about changes to services or use of funds during a response.

Follow-up Steps

- Ensure multiple people are trained in various IMS roles for a response (i.e. Supervisor, Information Officer, Scribe).
- Ensure organizations who hold a specific role have built in redundancy with who could take on this role from within their organization (i.e. Public Health Officer, Procurement Lead, Base & Staging Are Lead, Meal Service Lead, Food Liaison Officer, City Liaison)
- Develop a basic form for volunteer check-in
- Re-word agreements of cooperation and JIT template to cover the issue of liability
- In the revised EFP one-pager, ensure there is a clear list of what the EFP can provide during an emergency response (i.e. provide food hampers or prepared meals at a set location; deliver food to those who cannot make it to a set location; support recovery of chronic food insecurity services coming out of the emergency; etc.)

Outstanding Questions

- What is the liability framework being assumed for the work of an emergency food response?
 - o Likely that liability would fall under the jurisdiction of the organization where the incident happened.
 - o If an organization is deployed and they agree to take on that role, then they are taking on the liability from an insurance perspective for that portion of the response.
 - o Need to re-word agreements of cooperation that states assuming liability for whatever you have contributed or are offering to the response

Appendix I — Communication Strategy

Objective: *Non-partisan gathering and dissemination of information about emergency food response to share with the public.*

Purpose:

- Ensure one point of up-to-date and accurate information about where and how to access emergency food support.
- In the event of an activation of the City's Municipal Emergency Control Group (MECG), ensure that emergency food response objectives are complimenting, not clashing with, the City's emergency response objectives.

Parties Involved

- Information Officer, Food Branch Command
- EFP Food Branch Response Structure
- 211 North/Lakehead Social Planning Council
- Community Liaison
- Regional + local support partners

Process of Information Gathering + Dissemination

- Command and General Staff utilize a standard form to share relevant information about public food access with the Information Officer and Food Branch Supervisor.
- Information Officer channels all information about accessing emergency food response into one time-stamped document.
- The Food Liaison Officer and partner organizations help to limit confusion about emergency food access by communicating credible information with the public and sharing any misunderstandings they learn of with the Information Officer.
- When there is updated information to share with the public, the Information Officer puts together a media release of information.
 - If the emergency response is in tandem with a declaration of an emergency at a city level, then the Information Officer gets it approved by the City Liaison to the MECG before disseminating.
- Information Officer develops an unbranded social media post and mass email with approved information (and printed flyer if necessary).
- Information Officer disseminates information to contact list, which includes:
 - News media – media release to newspaper, radio, TV
 - 211 North – media release, social media post for public dissemination
 - Partner organizations – emergency broadcast email, social media post, and flyers for direct drop-off if needed for them to send out to their clients
 - City – media release, social media post for public dissemination
 - Emergency responders – media release, social media post
- Information Officer directs the updating of determined organizational websites: 211 North, TBAFS, City of Thunder Bay.

Key Partnerships to support communications during a response

(i.e. contact info/communicating with their information officers)

- HAMM radio
- News media
 - o LU Radio
 - o Shaw/Rogers TV
 - o TBaynewswatch
 - o Chronicle
 - o CBC
 - o Dougall Media
 - o TVO (local reporter during an emergency)
 - o Globe & Mail (local reporter during an emergency)
 - o Wawatay
- School Boards (confirm if information officers work over the summer; reach out re: facility use)
 - o Public = start with Don Porter
 - o Catholic = Erin B. will find out Catholic
 - o French = Erin B.
 - o NNEC
- Tribal Council emergency officers (David for contacts)
 - o Matawa
 - o Nokiiwin
 - o KO
 - o KOA
 - o Anishnabek Nation
 - o Shibogama
 - o ... and more!
- Neighbouring municipalities (get their Information Officer contacts; David)
- Unincorporated townships (David doesn't know as much about these folks)
- Emergency responders
 - o Police
 - o EMS
 - o Rural/volunteer fire
 - o OPP
 - o NAPS
- Hospital
- Outreach Workers Table
- NAN
- FWFN
- Rebecca Johnson

Follow-up Steps

- Create an information dissemination contact sheet (make sure this is updated bi-annually)
- Develop a form template for Command and General Staff to share information with the Information Officer
- Education and awareness campaign
 - Share information about emergency food response and access (i.e. magnets)
 - 12-month social media loop; every month has a different theme (i.e. specific hazards to be prepared for, information for people to know, etc.)
 - Created by TBAFS but unbranded; send out through FAC partners as a way to practice disseminating information more widely
- Train a few representatives in the Information Officer role (IMS-250)

Outstanding Questions

- How does information and support from EMO get shared with the EFP if David was not in his role? (i.e. not available, or leaves position)

Appendix J – Financing Strategy

Objective: *Use of a participatory funding model, through a collective Emergency Food Fund, to ensure that the financing of an emergency food response is streamlined and centered on collective impact.*

Purpose:

- Streamline fundraising efforts to one collective fund, thus avoiding the burden of organizations needing to apply for funds individually;
- Support a coordinated response effort by treating acquired financial resources for an emergency food response as those of the collective group, not held or directed by any one organization;
- Communicate with donors and the public that there is one common fund for donations for an emergency food response.

Parties Involved

- Finance & Administration Lead
- EFP Food Branch Response Structure
- Thunder Bay Community Foundation
- United Way Thunder Bay
- Regional + local support partners

Process of a Participatory Impact Funding Model

- The Thunder Bay Community Foundation creates and manages an emergency food fund, where any collectively sourced emergency food response money could be held.
- Funds could be collectively sourced through:
 - Thunder Bay Community Foundation and United Way Thunder Bay reaching out to their donor base during an emergency (with recognition that a larger scale emergency will stretch their targeted outreach abilities)
 - Government sources (federal, provincial, and municipal)
 - Ex. DRAO, EMO, ISC, etc.
 - Local branches of national organizations requesting support funds be directed to the collective emergency food fund
 - Corporate entities with a local presence (i.e. Resolute, Impala, pulp & paper, Newmont, etc.)
 - The Finance & Administration Lead conducting fundraising activities directly with identified donors or through a community level campaign (i.e. Canada Helps, established through the TBCF)
 - Outside of an emergency, funds could be collected through donor or fundraising drives, or by organizations making a contribution through surplus funds at the end of their fiscal year

- The EFP Food Branch would determine how these funds are spent in an emergency
 - o The Finance & Administration Lead would be in charge of determining what expenses are needed, how much would be required, and which organization could execute the purchase
 - o JITs would be created with recipient organizations at that time
 - o The required amount would then be released to that organization through the TBCF's emergency food fund
 - o The organization making the expenditure would be responsible for providing proof of purchase to the Finance & Administration Lead of the EFP Food Branch.
- Record keeping would include:
 - o TBCF maintaining the overall record of money received to the emergency food fund, as well as the debit amounts going out to directed organizations for expenditure spending.
 - o The EFP's Finance & Administration Lead would keep track of the amounts being sent to which organizations, and how those funds are being spent.
 - o Recipient organizations would be responsible for providing proof of purchase to the Finance & Administration Lead.
- Partner organizations cannot be expected to be reimbursed for any costs unless they have been directed by the response table and signed a JIT/MOU in regards to receiving funds. Otherwise, any contribution is considered in kind.

Follow-Up Steps

- Establish an Emergency Food Fund through the Thunder Bay Community Foundation.
- Establish templates for financial record keeping during an activation.

Outstanding Questions

- Would organizations be willing to waive administration fees in receiving money from the emergency food fund?
- Which PP organizations are equipped to receive funds and get it out in expenses quickly?
- Would national level organizations be willing to contribute to a local response through a collective fund, and not through their local branch?
- For the City specifically:
 - o What is the process for getting funds from the City (both during and after an activated response)?
 - o Would funds flow during an emergency or afterwards?
 - o Can the City put money into the common emergency food fund, or would they have to give to organizations directly?
 - o How does the City source funds to pay for an emergency response? How is the cost of a food fund factored into this?