

Strategic Plan

Year 1

July 2023 - June 2024

**FEED
NIAGARA**

Together We Are Stronger.



MISSION

Working together to reduce hunger across Niagara.

VISION

End hunger and poverty in Niagara.

VALUES

1. We work collaboratively to maximize our impact.
2. We treat our clients with dignity and respect.
3. We are responsive to the needs of the community.
4. We pursue our mission with integrity and responsibility.
5. We help all who need it, regardless of gender, age, race, religion or anything else.



Who Is FEED Niagara

FEED Niagara is an association of 10 local food banks who share guiding principles, direct membership with Feed Ontario, and affiliate membership with Food Banks Canada. Together, they are finding new and innovative ways to work more efficiently by leaning into collaboration to strengthen local and collective capacity to procure food, deliver services, share expertise and advocate for food security in Niagara.



History

The history of FEED Niagara is rooted in the challenges and resilience brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this global crisis, the ten food security agencies in Niagara operated in an informal capacity, offering mutual support to each other. However, the pandemic intensified the need for collaboration as the agencies grappled with changing health regulations, food shortages, and a loss of donated revenue. As a result, these agencies came together to form a more formal partnership, known as FEED Niagara.

The collective faced a surge in demand, with client numbers increasing by up to 40%, coupled with rising food costs and a chronic shortage of staff and volunteers. Despite these hurdles, the shared experience of navigating the pandemic strengthened the bonds between the agencies. They realized that rebuilding post-pandemic would be more effective and efficient through unified efforts.

FEED Niagara recognizes that addressing food insecurity in the Niagara region's communities demands collaborative solutions, shared expertise, and resources. By shifting from competitive to collaborative fundraising and working together, FEED Niagara aims to enhance its reach and make a greater impact in improving food security across Niagara neighborhoods.

Some of the first steps in creating the formal structure of FEED Niagara were the creation of strategic plan, from which priorities were identified , and an administrative staff hired to carry out said priorities. This report will outline the strategic direction and goals and what has been accomplished in FEED Niagara's first formalized year.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS

1. Strengthen Feed Niagara's organizational capacity.

- a. Develop an infrastructure for how Feed Niagara will organize and direct its activities.
- b. Develop necessary bylaws and procedures for Feed Niagara.
- c. Determine if Feed Niagara will become a formal organization or entity.
- d. Explore personnel options to help manage administrative needs.

2. Collaboratively optimize opportunities for Niagara's food security programs.

- a. Build an inventory of programs offered by Feed Niagara's members.
- b. Establish a resource sharing system among Feed Niagara members.
- c. Identify opportunities to collaborate and provide services jointly.
- d. Find ways to maximize community resources while avoiding duplication.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND GOALS CONTINUED

3. Advocate and raise awareness of food insecurity issues throughout Niagara.

- a. Develop a brand identity for Feed Niagara.
- b. Develop a marketing and communications strategy.
- c. Advocate and influence with key decision-makers, acting as the collective voice of poverty in Niagara.

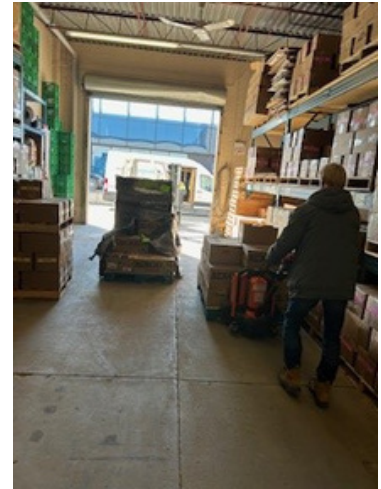
4. Strengthen partnerships with other organizations to connect clients with services they need, where they need them.

- a. Identify key partners in the social services sector to build partnerships with.
- b. Strengthen relationships with Niagara's food producers.



Achievements

The opportunity to collaborate has been optimized through bulk buying, shared resources, the creation of a service inventory list, and coordination of communication. This has simplified the process for bulk buying, and sharing excess food, and communication with community partners.



The capacity of FEED Niagara has progressed with the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines the structure of the FEED Niagara, and how the members of group will organize and direct the activities of the organization. Further to this accomplishment has been the approval of the ongoing structure of FEED Niagara, operational budget (2024/2025) and consensus on FEED Niagara initiatives such as participation in the expansion of the Feed Collaboration Project with Feed Ontario and projects to strengthen the collective capacity of the network.

FEED Niagara has strengthened its voice through the development of a marketing and communication strategy, brand guide development, brand asset development, representation at the regional community tables on poverty reduction and food insecurity, and through various speaking opportunities.

FEED Niagara has established its voice through its website and social media platforms. Through these platforms FEED Niagara has reached more followers and shared the message of collaboration over competition and advocacy.





FEED Niagara has strengthened existing community relationships. The ongoing partnership with CAA Niagara remains pivotal to the sustainability of FEED Niagara. The 10-year pledge has created a stable base on which new initiatives and partnerships can form. Continued support from community partners such as Bell Media, Niagara Community Foundation, and the Niagara Regional Police Service, have resulted in great support from the community with food drives and funds.

NIAGARA REGIONAL
POLICE
 SERVICE

Niagara Regional Police Service
4th Annual Spring Forward Food Drive
May 13th - 16th

FEED
 NIAGARA



The collaborative nature of FEED Niagara has also attracted new community partnerships that have contributed to a successful year. These partnerships include Niagara College, Dr. Fritz, Sport Niagara - World Rowing, and Mike Ecker. These community partners are passionate about Niagara and the regional lens FEED Niagara brings to food security.



What is Next for FEED Niagara?

The future of FEED Niagara must acknowledge that the member food banks and FEED Niagara work towards a Niagara where everyone is food secure and no one has the need for a food bank while still anticipating and developing the capacity needed currently and in the future.

The next few years will be years of growth for FEED Niagara. With a strengthening of the commitment to collaboration and equity of access from the member food banks, increased public interest in addressing food insecurity, and a widening base of community support, FEED Niagara has a strong foundation that will assist in its continued sustainability and evolution.

Sustainability will require ongoing support from donors, community partners, and members of FEED Niagara, the sourcing of new grant and fundraising opportunities, and a widening donor base. While evolution will be shaped by the shared vision of the food banking members of a hunger free Niagara.

