

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

FMNS is a non-profit cooperative of over 35 farmers' markets. Our Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program is a province-wide initiative that gives people experiencing food insecurity access to local food through an anonymous currency ("food bucks") that can be redeemed at participating farmers' market vendors. In 2020, the program ran for 8 months at 13 farmers' markets across Nova Scotia. Markets partner with local organizations such as food banks or women's shelters who identify food insecure people in their community to participate in the program. Participants are given weekly or monthly allotments of food bucks based on the size -of their household. Over 250 low-income households participated in 2020, With FMNS issuing over \$73,000 in food bucks.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This proposed research project aims to explore what impact the Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program has on the health, resilience and wellbeing of people experiencing food insecurity and their communities- In particular, the study will explore this impact as it relates to people's sense of social connectedness and socio-emotional wellbeing when they attend farmers' markets. This research will be conducted over the course of the 2021 Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program, primarily through interviews with program participants and partner organizations. Following data analysis, a participatory sense-making process will be conducted alongside study participants and findings and lessons learned will be shared with partner organizations.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

This research will help to inform the design and growth of this province-wide program for years to come, Studying the variety of ways a food coupon program impacts food insecure individuals has the potential to bring forward a more comprehensive way of viewing healthy security, and equity, specifically in farmers' markets. Additionally, the perspective through which the Food Bucks program is viewed can offer new possibilities for how it might be designed, administered, funded, evaluated, and expanded, It may also have 'impacts on the participants themselves, as well as the partner organizations who wish to participate, by providing opportunities for reflection sense-making, and learning.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2021.