



News Release

For immediate release

Squamish Food Bank Society, Cheakamus Foundation for Environmental Learning, Squamish Helping Hands Society, and the Lil'wat Nation receive federal funding to make food more accessible in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor

ONLINE – June 24, 2020 – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Today, Patrick Weiler, the Member of Parliament for West Vancouver - Sunshine Coast - Sea to Sky Country, announced an investment of up to \$61,531 in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund's first application period. The MP participated in a video call with Emma Cox of Squamish Food Bank Society, Cathy Jenkins of Cheakamus Foundation for Environmental Learning, Carol Coffey of Squamish Helping Hands Society, and Shannon Didier of the Lil'wat Nation where they highlighted the respective projects.

The Local Food Infrastructure Fund is a five-year, \$50-million program under the Food Policy for Canada aimed at supporting community-based, not-for-profit organizations. The mission of the program is to reduce food insecurity by establishing and/or strengthening local food systems in the medium to longer-term. The first phase of the program was launched in the summer of 2019 and the application period closed in November 2019. Altogether, 362 projects across Canada received funding valued at up to \$25,000 per project, for a total of \$6.6 million.

COVID-19 has highlighted the challenges of the most vulnerable people in our society in accessing food. It is also causing added stress on the operation of organizations serving our community and working to improve food security. In April, the Government also launched a separate, \$100 million emergency fund under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund to support national, regional, and local organizations across Canada that are able to reach people and communities experiencing food insecurity and who have been impacted by COVID-19. This fund supports the purchase and distribution of food on an emergency basis across the country.

Today's announcement supports these four organizations in their proposed projects to address food insecurity and support vulnerable groups in the Sea to Sky Corridor:

Squamish Food Bank Society

Establish a dignified shopping experience for our clients by providing a clean and welcoming atmosphere in a more accessible location. Through coordinated food rescue with other organizations we can offer Squamish community improved and centralized access to food. We will also be able to offer grocery stores and other donors a centralized and coordinated food redistribution system. With the onsite kitchen and shelter we will be able to ensure that all food is used to its highest and best purpose.



Cheakamus Foundation for Environmental Learning

This project will provide for vital upgrades to a teaching kitchen to enable us to provide community food systems programs. Originally a student dining hall, this older kitchen is in relatively good working order, but requires critical upgrades to adhere to BC Food Premises regulations. Upgrades will allow for a permit for public programming for immigrants, First Nations, low income families and others to increase food security through multicultural cooking and community garden activities.

Squamish Helping Hands Society

Currently under construction, Under One Roof is a new facility that offers housing, support services, and vibrant food experiences that connect people and lead to improved health for people at-risk. With a commercial kitchen, food storage capacity and a grocery store type market, a partnership with the Squamish Food Bank, all custom-designed for food rescue and repurposing, the hub will help people access healthy food with dignity. This project includes the development, implementation and evaluation of a data-driven food tracking system.

Lil'wat Nation

The Nlep'calten project is an initiative designed to directly impact food security within the Lil'wat Nation. The community garden is being built up to produce a substantial amount of food through a market garden design, looking to develop a social enterprise aimed at supplying the local school with vegetables for their hot breakfast and lunch programs, support Elders in need with weekly food deliveries, and members of the community with access to organic vegetables at reasonable cost.

Quotes

“I congratulate these four extraordinary organizations for the important work they are doing to improve food security in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor. As we grapple with the long-term social impacts of the pandemic, these projects are more important now than ever. Our Government is proud to work with you to deliver these sustainable, community-based initiatives to support vulnerable groups and all those who need a helping hand.”

- *Patrick Weiler, Member of Parliament for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country*

“The Squamish Food Bank provides nutritious food to those in need in Squamish through our distribution days and hamper delivery program. A partnership with Squamish Helping Hands will lead us to the new 'Under One Roof' facility in the fall of 2020 where as a team we can centralise food rescue, reduce food waste and better serve those who need our help in the community. The LFIF funding has allowed us to purchase the appropriate shelving units required in the new facility so we can store and display food items to create a dignified grocery store experience for our participants.

- *Emma Cox, Program Manager, Squamish Food Bank*



"Food brings people together. We're delighted to use this enhanced learning space, adjacent to our farm and gardens, to share local food knowledge and skills that both promote social and environmental responsibility and respond to and support the diverse needs of our community."

- *Cathy Jenkins, Director, Cheakamus Foundation*

"At Helping Hands we have been working on food insecurity in the Sea to Sky Squamish for about 10 years. We have been convincing local food vendors to put less in the landfill by donating surplus. This has always been a win, win, win situation. Donors win by getting rid of extra, near dated food. Community wins because people have food to feed their families and money for rent. Helping Hands wins because it supports us to realize our vision of ending hunger throughout our community."

- *Maureen Mackell, Executive Director, Squamish Helping Hands Society*

"We really appreciate the assistance in expanding our food storage infrastructure, enabling better access to locally grown produce and working towards increasing food security within Lil'wat Nation."

- *Shannon Didier, Agriculture Manager, Lil'wat Nation*

Quick Facts

- 362 projects across Canada, totaling \$6.6M are being funded through the first round of the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, which took place from August to November 2019.
- In British Columbia, a total of 49 projects are being supported, for a total of up to \$824,613.
- Applications under the second call for proposals are currently being accepted. Please visit the [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada website](#) to submit an application.
- The Local Food Infrastructure Fund is part of the Food Policy for Canada, supporting our country in meeting its commitments under the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, including to end hunger, promote good health, cut food waste, and encourage sustainable food systems.

Additional Links

[Local Food Infrastructure Fund](#)

[Food Policy for Canada](#)

[Squamish Food Bank Society](#)

[Cheakamus Foundation for Environmental Learning](#)

[Squamish Helping Hands Society](#)

[Lil'wat Nation](#)