



Request for  
York Region Food Security Research Proposal  
for York Region Food Network

July 2021

*Kate Greavette*



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

In York Region, we work on the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee and the Anishinaabe peoples and are part of the Williams Treaties and Treaty 13. We acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest Indigenous community. We also acknowledge that many of our practices including our organizational structure, the seeds we plant, the foods that we prepare, the ways we educate and our methods of growing, harvesting, preparing and sharing food came to these lands through the ongoing process of colonialism. We seek to hold this understanding in our interactions and engagements with this land and its people as we are all treaty people and play a role in reconciliation.

## Request For Proposals

The York Region Food Network is releasing a request for proposals (RFP) for a qualified consultant (or team of consultants) with expertise in food security research, food systems assessments and community engagement to work with YRFN to gain a better understanding what data is currently available, what indicators and measures are missing from existing tools and what organizations need to better collect data on food security initiatives in York Region.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

[York Region Food Network \(YRFN\)](#) was started by area food banks in 1986 to coordinate food drives and liaise between organizations that provide emergency food access in York Region. Over time, YRFN's scope of activities evolved to include advocating for fresh, nutritious, affordable food for all residents. YRFN's primary aim is to advance education and understanding of food insecurity and advocate for income-based responses.

## Reimagining Our Communities in a Just Recovery

The COVID-19 Pandemic had a disproportionate impact on marginalized and vulnerable people. As we plan a recovery, York Region organizations have been imagining new models that address these vulnerabilities to make us more resilient in the face of the next wave or the next pandemic. In the Spring of 2020, Yvonne Kelly (Social Planning Council of York Region) and Kate Greavette (York Region Food Network) hosted a wide-ranging discussion on the issues that could shape that reimagined approach.

[Food Security was 1 of the 5 key issues](#) identified in the community meetings. During the pandemic we witnessed the immediate impact on individuals and families experiencing a loss of income and/or the inability to access groceries that they needed – the result was increasing rates of food insecurity among already vulnerable populations in addition to many who had not experienced it before. The charitable food sector is working overtime to provide food access to community members, yet this is an unsustainable response. Even when increased attempts are made, the charitable food sector remains unable to adequately meet the nutritional and cultural food needs and preferences of all community members. Food security

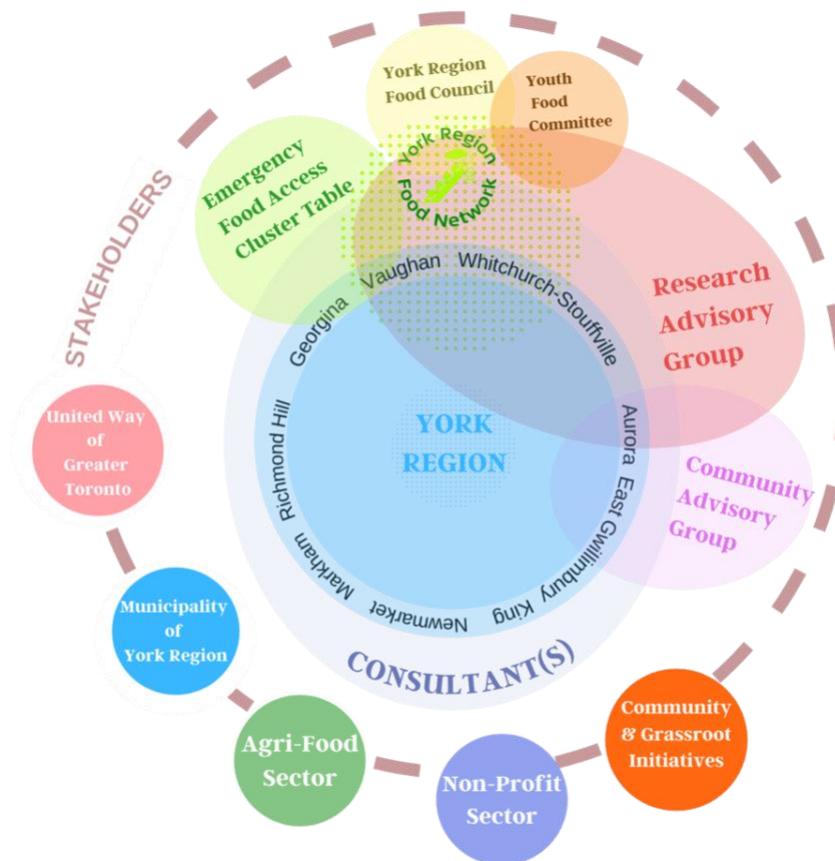


should provide for choice, agency and accessibility therefore individuals require the income necessary to purchase their own food. Therefore, a policy recommendation was derived; as food security is directly linked to income security, all levels of government should act to ensure stable full time jobs with livable incomes and adequate income supports of \$2,000/month for those who are not employed.

## SCOPE OF PROJECT

The goal of this project is to develop recommendations for potential evidence-based solutions, on what qualitative and quantitative methodologies can be used by organizations to better understand food access and food insecurity in York Region. This data research project aims to lay the groundwork needed for the development of a systems-focused framework for addressing food security needs across York Region.

The selected consultant(s) demonstrate experience working with various relevant stakeholders such as non-profits, community organizations, community food and agri-food sector, and/or residents. YRFN is an equal opportunity employer and strongly committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. The consultant(s) will work collaboratively with YRFN and be expected to consult with the advisory groups and key stakeholders in the community food and agri-food sector (See **Figure 1**) to inform the final report.



**FIGURE 1:**

York Region Food Security Collaboration Circle



## RESPONSIBILITIES

- Work directly with the project-liaison at YRFN to develop and conduct the research project (Ex. conduct food asset mapping updates, building on current tools such as [YorkMaps](#) and/or others) during the period of **August 16<sup>th</sup>** through **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**
- Main lead on facilitating research process and ensuring that the project stays within the available budget (including applicable taxes and expenses) for completing the project
- Ensure the project is aligned with local priorities such as the [Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), [York Region Food Council Food Charter](#), [PROOF Research](#) and [York Region's Vision 2051](#)
- Provide a final report that provides an overview on the current state of emergency food access system and food insecurity in York Region and provide recommendations to inform future work (Ex. SWOT, Environmental Scan, Best Practices, etc.) by **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**
- Consult with key stakeholders and advisory groups to scope the data research and analysis project phases, confirming common goals and interests. The successful candidate will chart out a detailed timeline with YRFN staff coordinator
- Create a methodology or framework for the research informed by the local York Region food system. This includes examining existing food research projects or efforts in York Region to inform the research methodology and identifying ongoing collaboration and data sharing opportunities with existing initiatives
- Leverage data from a shared community partners data base and update with under-represented data from community/grassroot initiatives supporting food security in York Region
- Engage with at least 30 residents and community food advocates from across the 9 municipalities via email or 30-minute phone or video calls as well as potential focus groups. Honorariums allocated in the budget with potential addition through YRFN. Seeking out under-represented narratives from residents who have lived experience of food insecurity, leaders of community groups/local food programs and folks who are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.
- [YRFN values equity and social justice, applying a poverty reduction lens and anti-oppressive practices](#) when collaborating with the advisory groups, community food and agri-food sector, the Municipality of York Region and people impacted by food insecurity. We strive to build collaborative processes, so all perspectives are part of decision-making processes.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

Invitation for RFP	Tuesday, July 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Deadline for RFP	Monday, August 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Projected Consultant Start Date	Monday, August 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Municipal Food Assessment & Consultation Research	August - November 2021
Final Report and Presentation	December 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2021



## PROJECT PHASES

### PHASE #1

August - September 2021

- Signed agreement and logistics arrangement with YRFN Team
- Preliminary analysis of York Region Food System
- **Baseline Research:** Collect and analyze existing data that may include indicators related to socio-demographic data, community food production, food access and distribution networks, systemic barriers to food access and other factors impacting food security in York Region. Use this data to contextualize and support community voices with resident consultations.

### PHASE #2

September - October 2021

- Involve discussion with research and community advisory groups
- Consult community partners and conduct outreach to non-profits, community food and agri-food sectors
- Conduct community consultation with at least 30 residents and community food advocates from across the 9 municipalities
- **Design Research Frameworks/Methodologies:** Outline best practices for quantitative and qualitative research methodologies applicable to the non-profit, community food and agri-food sector in York Region to implement for regional data collection facilitated through the Municipality of York Region
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### PHASE #3

October - December 2021

- Showcase findings with advisory groups for final input
- Complete analysis with liaison at YRFN
- **Knowledge Translation:** Develop a food system framework and summarize key findings that documents the process, feedback from residents and advisory groups. Identify key opportunities for YRFN and other stakeholders to advance food security data in future funding projects and to inform municipal and regional level food action. Additional consideration for making findings accessible to residents, advocates and food security initiatives in ongoing or potential food projects as well as opportunities for advocacy in York Region; A visual element to this reporting is encouraged
- Present findings to stakeholders and final deadline for report is **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021**



## PROJECT BUDGET & PROPOSAL EXPECTATIONS

The total available budget for the consultant(s) is **\$20,000** inclusive of taxes and expenses. A community consultation budget of **\$2,750** is available to be used as honorariums to at least 30 residents, with a potential to be increased by YRFN for further resident involvement. Therefore, expenses should not exceed **\$22,750** (inclusive of HST) in the RFP budget. See **APPENDIX 2-3** for more details on outlining and meeting RFP requirements.

### CONDITIONS

#### Ownership of Materials and Intellectual Property

All intellectual property and related materials (the “Intellectual Property”) including any related work in progress that is developed or produced under this Agreement will be the property of the York Region Food Network. The use of the Intellectual Property by YRFN will not be restricted in any manner.

#### Organizational Conflict of Interest

If the candidate creates or represents an actual or potential organizational conflict of interest, the candidate shall immediately disclose this actual or potential conflict of interest.

The successful consultant(s) will be required to complete and sign an Organizational Conflict of Interest Statement in which the consultant(s) agree to disclose information concerning the actual or potential conflict with any proposal for any task orders relating to any work in the RFP.

#### Consulting Agreement

All terms regarding data storage, privacy and confidentiality of data and logistics will be finalized in the consulting agreement between the ‘Contractor’ and the ‘Client’ prior to starting the research project.

#### Location of Work

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted and increased remote work opportunities. Applicants are welcome to work remotely from across Canada as conditions continue to make in-person events challenging to conduct and organize with ongoing safety at the forefront.

YRFN is an equal opportunity employer and strongly committed to equity, diversity and inclusion. We welcome applications from members of racialized groups, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, person of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and others with the skills and knowledge to productively engage with diverse communities.

### QUESTIONS & INQUIRIES

Please contact Gurneet Dhami,  
Food Policy & Research Analyst,  
York Region Food Network  
EMAIL: [Gurneetd@yrfn.ca](mailto:Gurneetd@yrfn.ca)  
SUBJECT: RFP Inquiry/Question  
**Until Thursday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
by 4:00 pm EST**

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

Please submit an RFP by **Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup> by  
11:59 pm EST**  
Gurneet Dhami, Food Policy & Research Analyst, York  
Region Food Network  
EMAIL: [Gurneetd@yrfn.ca](mailto:Gurneetd@yrfn.ca)  
CC: [Kateg@yrfn.ca](mailto:Kateg@yrfn.ca)  
SUBJECT: York Region Food Security Research  
Proposal



## APPENDIX 1- ADVISORY GROUPS

Expanding on **Figure 1: York Region Food Security Collaboration Circle**, there will be 2 key advisory groups steering the project. The consultant(s) will liaison with the YRFN staff lead which will take place during phase 2 of the project phase.

The following is the recruitment criteria to ensure representation from sectors, experience levels and advocacy. The **RESEARCH ADVISORY GROUP** will of 6-8 core members includes various sectors/experiences which includes:

1. Non-profit organizations
2. Agri-food sector
3. Anti-racism advocacy groups
4. Indigenous community member
5. Youth Food Committee member
6. York Region Food Council member
7. Emergency Food Access Cluster Table representative

The **COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP** will be an opportunity to engage with community members from across the 9 municipalities to have their voice represented in the form of surveys, 30-minute conversations or potential focus groups. Individuals will be provided honorariums for their time from the budget. The following criteria is to help gather at least 30 members:

- Lived experience with food insecurity
- Members from equity-seeking groups
- Residents of York Region
- Individuals that work in the food sector in York Region
- Community/grassroots groups leading initiatives



## APPENDIX 2- RFP EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Score
Demonstrated a clear understanding of the research project including a description of work tasks, data storage methods, fulfilling responsibilities and deliverables	15
Experience working with non-profits, community food and/or agri-food sector	10
Experience working with municipal government and similar 2-tiered government systems	5
Research Frameworks/Methodologies, including civic engagement and stakeholder collaboration plan.  Research/data analysis for management and decision making which includes a clear plan for data collection plan, suggestions for impact indicators, and suggestion on data collection, analysis, and usefulness of the data	20
Qualification of project lead(s) with collaboration experience	15
Knowledge of food policy, food system assessment and anti- poverty lens	15
Proposals meet format requirements	5
Budget outline	5
Overview plan on knowledge translation and approach to showcase final project findings with stakeholders and residents of York Region	10
Thoroughness of proposal and ability to meet specifications	Met/unmet
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>



## APPENDIX 3- RFP PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

### Proposal Format

Submission will be accepted in Word (.doc, .docx) or PDF format using Calibri/Arial font styles and 12pt font size, headers based on sections. The page limit is 8 - 10, excluding a Title page, Cover Letter, Table of Contents and Appendices. The structure and format below must be followed:

<b>Title Page</b>	
<b>Cover Letter</b>	
<b>Table of Contents</b>	
<b>Section 1: Executive Summary</b>	Outline of your understanding of the project and requirements and how your proposal meets the requirements. Identification of concerns or potential problems with the project overview of methodology and approach to the project.
<b>Section 2: Consultant Profile &amp; Experience</b>	Brief profile of the company/consultant (company name if applicable, name of project leads, website) and outline of consultant's experience, specifically highlighting relevant experience, how you meet the requirements of the project and the value you would bring to completing this project in the timelines provided.
<b>Section 3: Methodology/Approach</b>	Given the information provided in this RFP, outline your approach to the requested scope of work and any anticipated issues/concerns about the nature and/or scope of work and/or timelines. Please include a draft work plan informed by the project timeline and a draft critical path to complete this project. Please include anticipated resources required to complete each section of the critical path.
<b>Section 4: Engagement of Residents and Stakeholders</b>	Clearly outline the process of engaging resident and stakeholders including adherence to anti-oppression principles in recruitment and compensation from proposed budget for the minimum 30 residents. Outline potential to conduct a virtual focus group and outline for 30 minute
<b>Section 5: Budget</b>	A high level breakdown of the budget and fee structure indicating fixed and variable cost items, and any additional items/fees that fit within the budget.
<b>Section 6: Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 - CV of project leads and, if applicable, CV of other members assigned to work on this project. (Mandatory)  Appendix 2 - List of 3 References (Mandatory)