

Saskatoon Food Charter

Adopted in Principle by Saskatoon City Council, 2002

Canada stands committed to the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights specifying the right of everyone to adequate food, and endorses a food security action plan stating “the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger” and “food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Canada’s Action Plan for Food Security, 1998)

To meet this national commitment, and to make food security work in our community, the City of Saskatoon and other local organizations support the following elements as the basis for a Saskatoon Food Charter.

Food Security and Production

- Food is an integral part of the economy of Saskatoon and the surrounding area. A commitment to building bridges between urban and rural communities on food security will strengthen the food sector’s self reliance, growth and development.
- Local agriculture is important to producers and consumers alike. Urban and rural food security initiatives will preserve local agricultural production, and build on the mutual interdependence of producers and consumers. The Farmers’ Market and the Good Food Box serve as viable models of this interaction with local farmers being able to market their products directly, and consumers being able to access nutritious, wholesome food.
- Urban agriculture can be advanced through the establishment of community gardens that contribute directly to the economic, environment and social life of city residents.
- Food must be produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, safe for consumption and socially just.

Food Security and Justice

- Food is more than a commodity. It is a basic right. Every Saskatoon resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and safe food without social and economic barriers. In Saskatoon, we must work with those communities most affected by lack of access to nutritious, affordable and safe food.

Food Security and Health

- Food security contributes to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of residents.
- Nutrition education and consumption of wholesome, healthy foods are important factors in determining the overall positive health of the city’s population, and this begins with the promotion of healthy eating practices — as early as birth — with breast feeding.

Food Security and Culture

- Food brings people together in the celebration of family and community, strengthening links between diverse cultures and urban and rural communities. The preparing, eating and sharing of food engages individuals and families in a social and community fellowship that balances physical and spiritual needs.
- Food is a social good that sustains and supports us and our communities.

Food Security and Globalization

- Any international agreements entered into by our governments must respect the full realization of people’s right to adequate, nutritious, accessible, affordable, safe food at home and internationally. National, provincial and local governments must guarantee the right of communities and individuals to food security through supporting viable, sustainable, agricultural production and an equitable income distribution,

The fulfillment of a Saskatoon Food Charter relies on citizens participating directly in and promoting food security measures in their homes, their work places, their community, and in this process strengthening citizen involvement and concern.

Therefore, to develop and promote food security on our city, Saskatoon City Council will:

- Champion the right of all residents to adequate amounts of nutritious, safe, accessible, culturally acceptable food.
- Advocate for income, employment, housing, and transportation policies that support secure and dignified access to food.
- Ensure the safety of food and drinking water.
- Ensure convenient access to an affordable range of nutritious foods in city facilities.
- Adopt and promote food-purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility and that support the local rural economy
- Promote partnerships and programs that support rural-urban food links and the availability of locally grown, healthy foods through the Farmers' Market, Good Food Box and other rural-urban initiatives.
- Protect local agricultural lands.
- Encourage community gardens, urban agriculture and the recycling of organic materials that nurture soil fertility.
- Support training and income generating programs that promote food security within a community economic development model.
- Support nutrition education through promotion of skills-based programs for the community and in schools
- Promote a yearly civic report card on how Saskatoon is achieving food security.
- Foster a civic culture that inspires support for healthy food for all.

These objectives will be achieved by working in partnership with community based organizations, community associations, Aboriginal peoples, resident groups, business organizations, trade unions, educational and health institutions and other levels of government.

This proposal for a Saskatoon Food Charter was developed through the Saskatoon Food Coalition with the involvement of the following groups: Saskatoon Farmers' Market, Oxfam, CHEP, Good Food Box, Community First, Saskatoon Friendship Inn, United Way, Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op, National Farmers Union, Quint Development Corporation, Saskatchewan Child Nutrition Network, Saskatchewan Food Security Network, Saskatoon Food Bank, Inner City Ministry, Organic Farmers Network and Saskatoon District Health.