



# *Food Insecurity in Saskatoon*

Challenges, Trends, and Solutions

A Team Learning Project by **The Collaborative Crusaders**

Winter 2025 Cohort, Leadership and Community Engagement (LACE)

Saskatoon Open Door Society



# *Land Acknowledgment*

*Tansi! Welcome!*

*We are honoured to share this space and time with you today to learn and discuss our findings on **Food Insecurity in Saskatoon**.*

*We would like to begin by acknowledging that we are living and learning on the Treaty Six territory, the homeland of the Metis and their ancestors. We wish to reaffirm our relationships with one another and with the land.*

# *Agenda*



*Introduction*



*Learning Process*



*Key Findings*



*Community Efforts & Interventions*



*Challenges & Gaps*

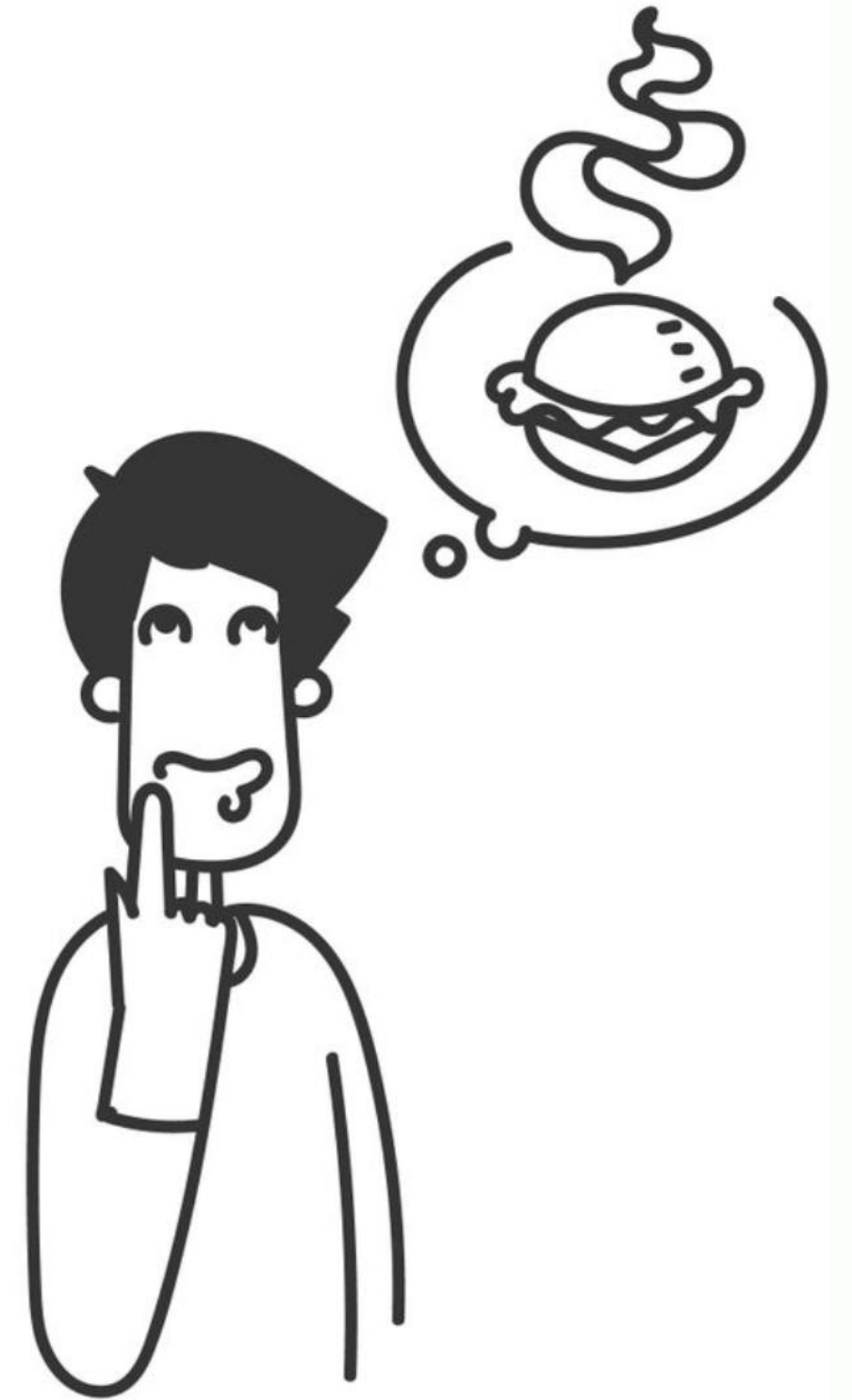


*Recommendations*



*Team Learning Experience*

*Think...*



*Have you experienced not knowing where your next meal would come from?*

*Have you ever had to choose between paying for groceries and other necessities like rent, utilities etc?*

*Do you often skip nutritious meals due to cost?*

*Would you be in crisis if your usual food sources suddenly became unavailable or too expensive?*

*Do you personally know someone who struggles to afford enough food?*

# *Project Objectives*

## **1** *Barriers to Healthy Food*

What barriers exist to accessing healthy food?

## **3** *Organizations Tackling Food Insecurity*

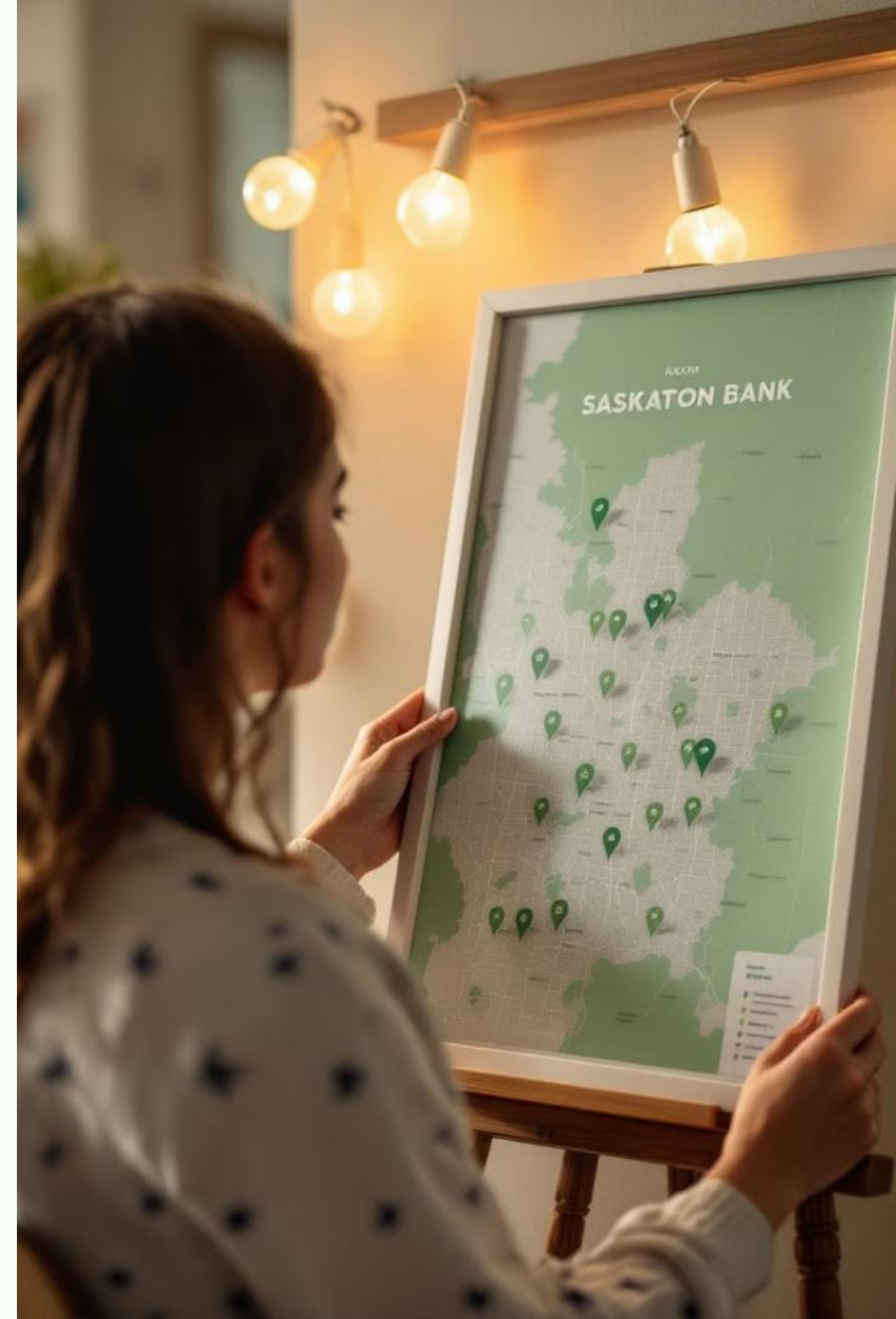
Which groups are addressing food insecurity in Saskatoon?

## **2** *Demographics*

Who is impacted by food insecurity in Saskatoon?

## **4** *Solution Finding*

What existing or potential solutions can help?



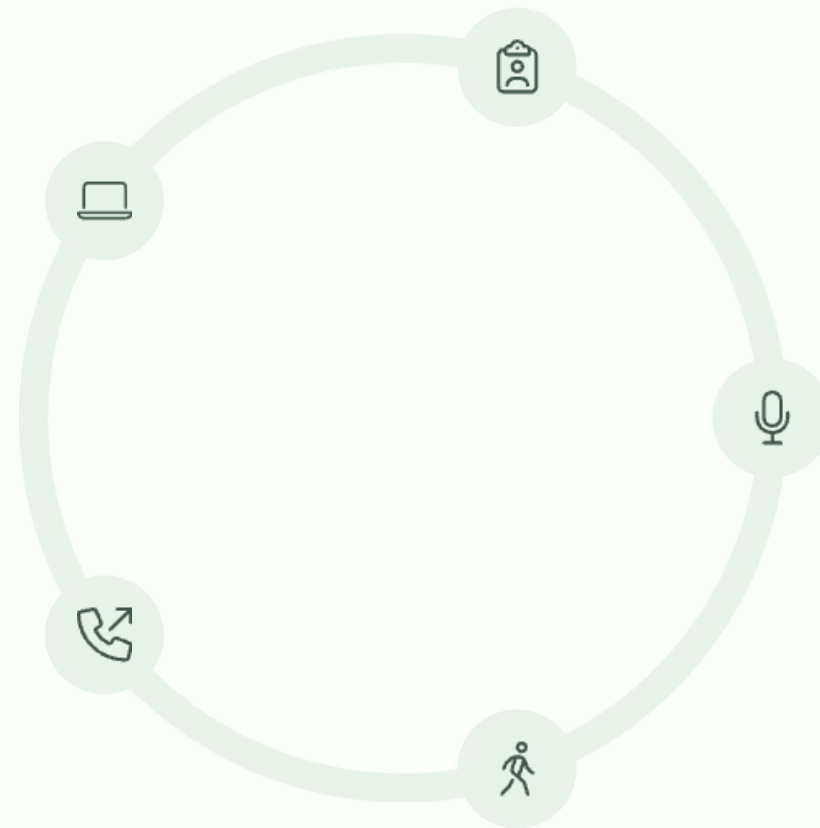
# *Learning Process*

## *Desktop Research*

Online articles, reports, government data from almost 40 websites

## *Phone calls & visits*

Saskatoon Food Bank, Station 20 West



## *Surveys*

45 Responses, public perception, lived experiences

## *Interviews*

Friendship Inn, The Bridge on 20th, President GSA (USask), Food Bank Volunteer

## *Street Outreach*

Direct engagement with affected individuals



# *Defining Food Insecurity*

## *What Is It?*

Lack of consistent access to nutritious, affordable food

- Hunger and uncertainty
- Poverty and inequality
- Vulnerability and exclusion

## *Why It Matters*

Impacts health, education, economic well-being

- Affects dignity and opportunity
- Harms children's development
- Weakens community resilience

# *Key Findings*



# *Saskatchewan's Growing Crisis*

**28%**

*Population Affected*

315,000 people faced food insecurity in 2023

**35.3%**

*Child Food Insecurity*

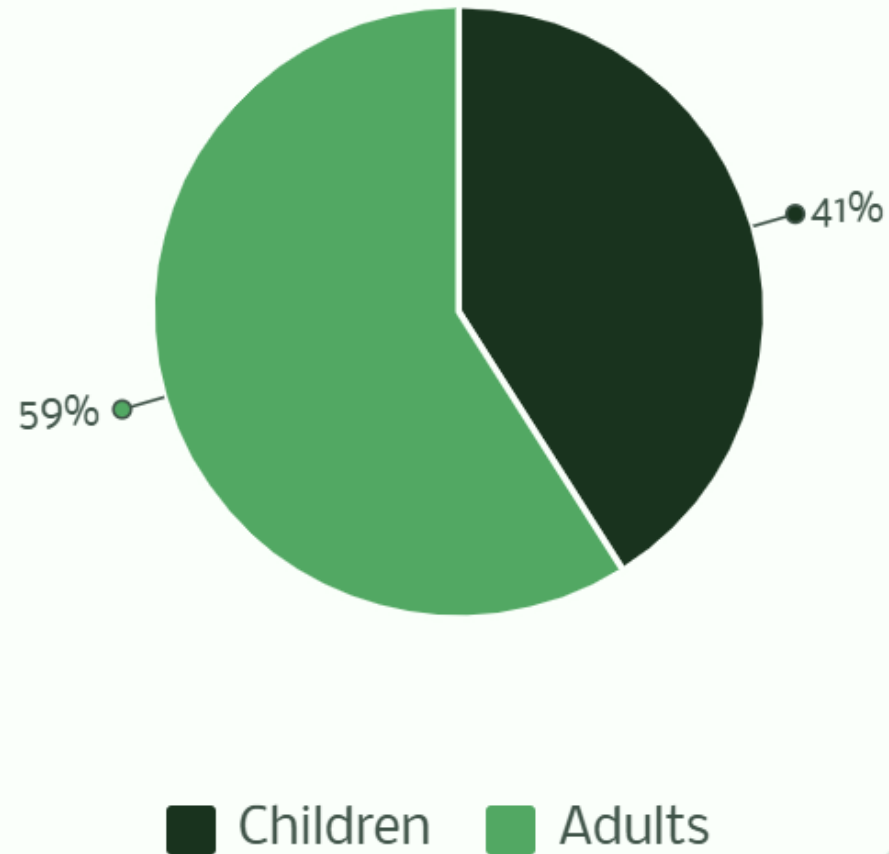
Above national average of 28.4%

**24.5%**

*Year-Over-Year*

Increase from 2022 to 2023.  
Highest in Canada

## Food insecure persons



# *Saskatoon's Local Reality*

- 2 out of every 5 food bank users are children
- 23,000+ people rely on Saskatoon Food Bank monthly
- 30,000+ meals served monthly at Friendship Inn
- 40% surge in demand over five years

# *Voices from the Frontlines of Food Insecurity*



*Laura Herman - Friendship Inn*



*Carla Seib - The Bridge on 20th*



*Ali Mokhtari - Volunteer in Saskatoon Food Bank*



*David Ohiene - USask GSA President*

These voices highlight:

- The challenges faced by individuals and organizations in the food security sector.
- Increasing demand for food assistance programs is a critical issue.
- Stories and experiences shed light on the depth of the problem.
- Strategies and collaborations needed to combat food insecurity effectively.

# *Rising Need, Growing Crisis: The Changing Face of Food Insecurity in the City*



*Laura Herman*

Development & Engagement Manager  
Friendship Inn

"We've seen a significant increase in the number of people accessing our services who are struggling with **homelessness and addiction**.

Looking back **four and a half years ago**, poverty was the main factor uniting most of our guests. While poverty is still a major issue, we've noticed a shift – **the severity of need has increased**.

Today, we are seeing more individuals who are **unhoused, insecurely housed, or facing mental health and addiction challenges**. The number of guests in **crisis situations** has grown, making food insecurity an even more urgent and complex issue."

## *Connecting with Those Affected: Voices from the Streets*



*"...It is a constant battle"*



*"Don't talk to me..."*

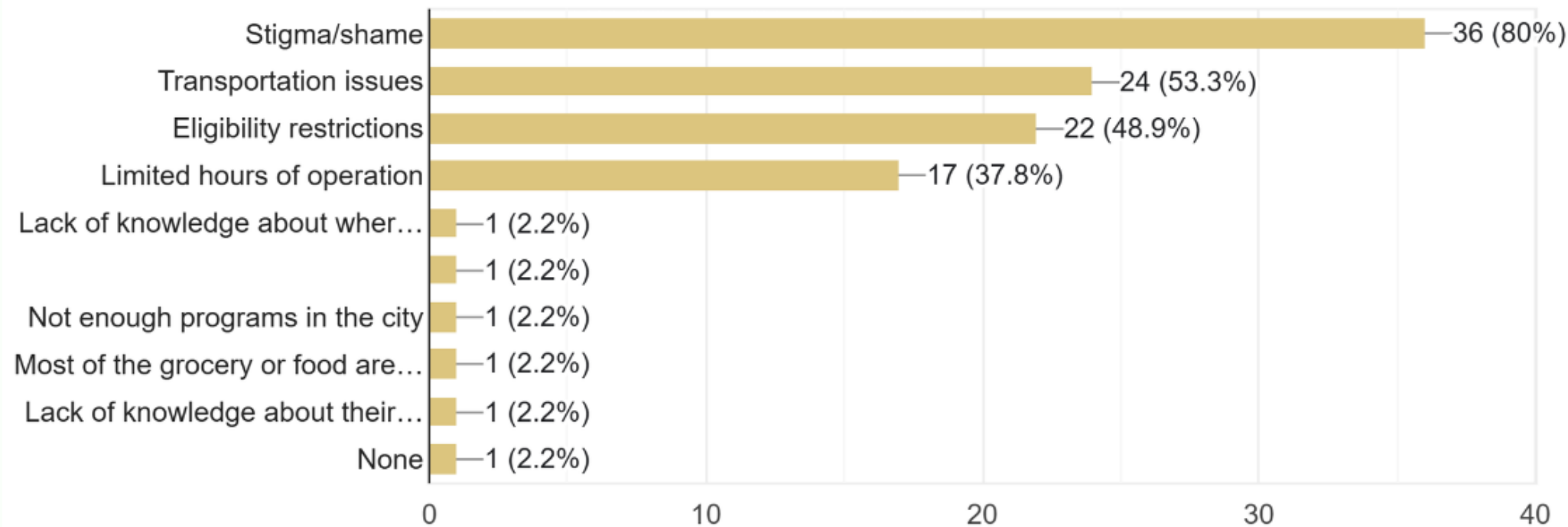


*"...I don't have a phone, so I don't know where to call"*

# Survey Findings (45 respondents)

What barriers prevent people from using food assistance programs? (Select all that apply)

45 responses



- 80% of respondents cited stigma/shame as a barrier to accessing food assistance programs.
- Transportation issues were also a significant barrier.
- Empathy, humility, and being non-judgmental are crucial for the social wellbeing of those facing food insecurity.

# *Key At-Risk Groups*

*Indigenous & racialized communities*

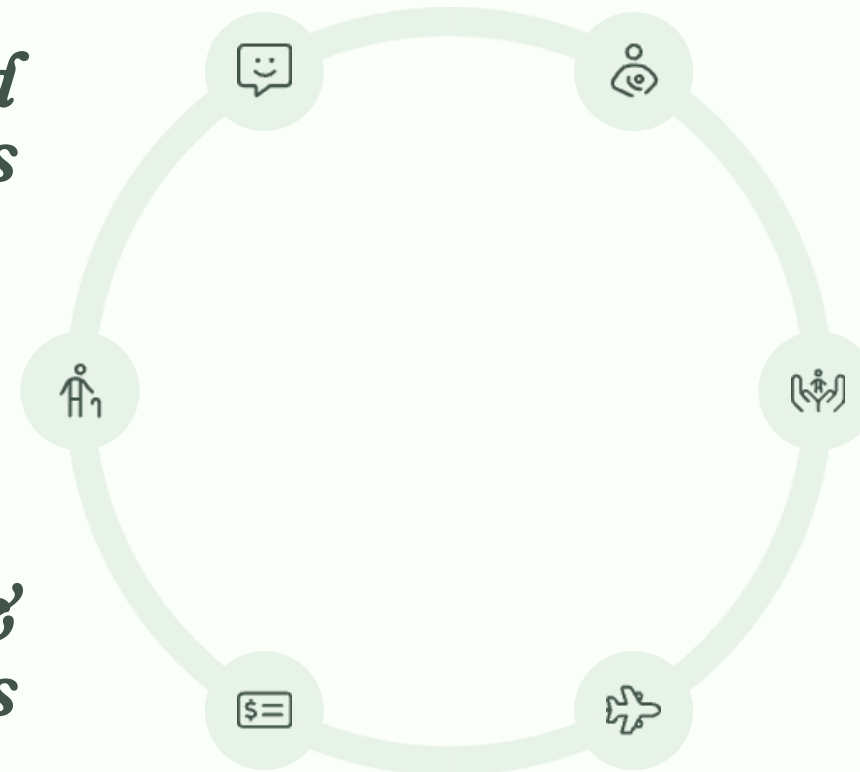
*Single-Parent Families*

*The Elderly*

*Women & Children*

*Low-income families & individuals*

*Recent Immigrants*



# *Barriers to Food Access*

## *Limited Awareness*

Lack of knowledge about available programs

## *Systemic & Policy Gaps*

Limited government intervention, insufficient funding, outdated policies

## *Environmental & Supply Chains*

Climate impact, food waste



## *Cultural Barriers*

Lack of culturally appropriate foods

## *Geographic Challenges*

Food deserts, transportation issues

## *Economic Barriers*

Low wages, rising costs

## *Social Stigma*

Fear or embarrassment in accessing food support

# Community Efforts & Interventions

## QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – FREE FOOD RESOURCES IN SASKATOON, SK



#	Organization	Services Provided	Target Group	Hours of Operation	Location/ Access Info	Contact Information
1	Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre	Emergency food hampers, infant nutrition support, milk for children	Individuals and families in need	Mon–Thu: 8:30 AM–11:45 AM, 12:30 PM–3:00 PM; Fri: 8:30 AM–11:45 AM	202 Avenue C South, Saskatoon, SK	Phone: (306) 664-6565
2	Friendship Inn	Free daily meals, community programs, support services	Open to all	Breakfast: 8:00 AM–9:30 AM; Lunch: 11:30 AM–1:30 PM	619 20th Street West, Saskatoon, SK	Phone: (306) 242-5122
3	CHEP Good Food	Good Food Box program, community markets, school nutrition programs	Children, families, and communities	Varies by program; contact for details	204 - 1120 20th Street West, Saskatoon, SK	Phone: (306) 655-4575
4	Salvation Army Crossroads	Emergency food hampers, free meals, Weekly food bags and free breakfasts for students	Open to all	Coffeehouse Meals: Fri & Sun 7:00 PM–8:30 PM; Tue–Thu 1:30 PM–3:00 PM	339 Avenue C South, Saskatoon, SK	Phone: (306) 242-6833
5	Saskatoon Native Circle Ministry	Snacks, coffee, hot meals	Open to all	Snacks & Coffee: Mon–Fri, 12:00 PM–3:30 PM; Hot Meal: Fri, 2:45 PM	450 20th Street West, Saskatoon, SK	Phone: (306) 244-5231
6	Prairie Harm	Free lunch,	Families,	Lunch: Mon–Fri,	1516 20th Street	Phone: (306) 382-



## Saskatoon Food Bank

- Emergency food hampers supporting families
- Infant nutrition and milk programs
- Educational support services



## Friendship Inn

- Free daily meals with no questions asked
- Community support programs
- Welcoming environment for all

# Community Efforts & Interventions (Contd.)

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## Salvation Army Crossroads

- Emergency food supplies for urgent needs
- Regular meal services open to everyone
- Additional community support resources

These and many other organizations form the frontline response to Saskatoon's food insecurity crisis. Each provides unique services while sharing a common mission: *ensuring no one goes hungry.*

# *Challenges & Gaps - What's Not Working?*



## *Overwhelmed Food Banks*

Demand consistently outpaces available resources, leaving organizations unable to meet growing needs.



## *Inadequate Social Assistance*

Welfare and disability benefits fall significantly short of covering basic nutritional needs.



## *Weekend Service Gaps*

Many organizations close on weekends, creating dangerous periods with very limited support options.



## *Limited Awareness*

Many food-insecure individuals lack knowledge about available resources and how to access them.



# *Recommendations & Call to Action*

## *Policy & Government Actions (System-Level)*

Food waste laws, mobile food distribution, Infrastructure (better transport, urban farming, business incentives), Public awareness & sensitivity (government campaigns, culturally inclusive policies, stigma reduction)

## *Community & Organizational Efforts (Institution-Level)*

School & community meals (Free/reduced meals, nutrition education), Collaboration (Partnerships, food policy councils, food rescue programs), Local food production (Expand community fridges), advocate

## *Individual Action (Individual Level)*

Donate, Volunteer, Reduce waste, Support local food systems

*Team Learning Experience*

# *The Collaborative Crusaders!*



## Team Learning Goal

Growing Together - Ensuring Every Team Member Leaves Stronger Than They Started

## Meet the team

- Zaid
- Mahsa
- Akintunde
- Abigail

## Our Core Values

- Empathy
- Respect
- Accountability and Transparency
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

## Meeting Times

- Every Sunday 5pm
- Ad-hoc, as required

## Ground Rules

- Mutual respect
- Support for one another
- Open communication
- Collaborative decision-making

# *Team Learning Experience*



## *Privilege & Community Connection*

We recognized our biases and learned to listen with humility and empathy.



## *Comfort Zone Expansion*

Initially hesitant, we engaged with people experiencing food insecurity directly.



## *Diversity as Strength*

Different perspectives helped us develop more innovative solutions.



## *Adaptive Leadership*

Our leadership styles evolved from democratic to structured as needs changed.

## *Final Thoughts...*

☐ “The first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all mankind. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world.”

- *Norman Borlaug, biologist and humanitarian*

☐ “When you share your last crust of bread with a beggar, you mustn’t behave as if you were throwing a bone to a dog. You must give humbly, and thank him for allowing you to have a part in his hunger.”

- *Giovanni Guareschi, Italian journalist*



## *Now...a fun game*



*Our access link, that should be open on a different web page as needed.*



*Grab your phones, Scan to join!*