



Dan's Warehouse/ Food Hub

A community food hub and work-skills training program
for at-risk youth with barriers to employment.

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Executive Summary

Dan's Legacy, in partnership with Sources BC, the Industry Training Authority and Vancouver Community College envisions an integrated food hub collective and job-skills training program for youth aging out of foster care, Indigenous youth, women re-entering the workforce, and new Canadians. The project builds upon both organizations' established recovered food collection programs and introduces a sustainable work-skills and social enterprise model.

Recovered food will be collected from approximately 30 grocery stores, warehouses and farms in Metro Vancouver, and students will receive certified training in Professional Driving, Warehouse Management and Culinary Skills. As the majority of the youth participants are at-risk and may be affected by mental health issues, the training program will operate under the clinical supervision of Dan's Legacy's trauma-informed therapists, increasing the likelihood of graduation and the ability to secure and maintain jobs.

The proposed Food Hub will partner with 50 other agencies to distribute approximately 100,000 lbs. of recovered and gleaned food valued at \$3,000,000 a month to thousands of people in the Surrey, Burnaby, White Rock and Langley communities. The training program will see a continuous intake of 45 students every four months, followed by apprenticeships, employment or the opportunity to move on to higher levels of skills training such as Professional Chef 1 and 2 at Vancouver Community College or the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. Also proposed is the creation of 20 small scale food processing operations supported by the culinary training program. These social enterprise establishments will help the sustain the project into the future, as well as offer another employment avenue for program participants.



Project Need

Second Harvest in Toronto recently released its “*Avoidable Crisis of Food Waste*” report which indicates that 58% of food produced in Canada is lost to waste. Of that amount, 32% is edible and could have been redirected to support food insecurity in our communities. A 2017 report published by the BC Provincial Health Services Authority identifies 1 in 10 BC households are unable to afford nutritious and safe food. Malnutrition is directly attributable to poor outcomes in education and employment, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and the destructive social impacts that creates. There is a critical and immediate need to mitigate food insecurity in our communities, and Dan’s Legacy, in collaboration with its partners, is actively working to meet that need.



Related Experience of Organizations

Dan’s Legacy is a non-profit organization providing trauma-informed and culturally-sensitive counselling and life-skills programs for youth battling mental health and addictions issues. The organization’s team of therapists have over 100 years combined counselling expertise, and the Program Director also has 18 years’ experience operating a successful job-skills training program that provided first jobs for youth in bicycle mechanics, computer technology, and the ski lift and marine industries.

Sources BC is a provincial organization with more than 40 years’ experience increasing social wellness in the community, serving approximately 40,000 people through their 20 locations in the Lower Mainland and Northern BC. The Sources Food Hub in Surrey supports the redistribution of recovered food, offers a fully licensed Commissary Kitchen, and provides community engagement and education opportunities focusing on reducing food waste.

Both Dan’s Legacy and Sources currently collaborate with a number of community partners that would be involved in this project. The proposed Food Hub is supported by the City of Surrey, Fraser Health Authority, DiverseCity, Options, Surrey School District and Seeds of Change among others. The Industry Training Authority and Vancouver Community College have agreed to collaborate with Dan’s Legacy to integrate its counselling programs into established VCC culinary training programs with ITA approved instructors and facilities.



Food Hub & Culinary Program

There is an abundance of surplus food available for collection at Lower Mainland grocery store chains, as is evidenced by the 25 years of surplus food reclamation managed by Dan's Legacy's staff and associates. While the surplus food is unspoiled and completely safe for consumption, it has little shelf-life left and must be used immediately. With the supervision of trained industry professionals, students in the Commercial Food Production model will prepare, cook and package the foods to be delivered to various organizations including schools, missions, churches and other not-for-profit groups providing food security in the community. This "teaching kitchen" will be professionally outfitted with industry-standard equipment to manage large volumes of product and ensure commercial quality is maintained. Students will receive FoodSafe Certification, food preparation and industry equipment training, as well as assistance in finding industry employment upon graduation from the program.

Warehousing

We propose a warehouse facility that will support the "teaching kitchen" in the management of product receipt and delivery, as well as serve as a distribution hub for food banks and other organizations mitigating food insecurity in Metro Vancouver. The Sources Food Hub in Surrey has grown beyond capacity, and co-locating warehouse space with Dan's Legacy will allow for the expansion of all of our programs. The commercial warehouse will contain receiving and delivery bays, a sorting area and long-term storage area. Recovered surplus food will be sorted and then: sent out immediately to our community partners in food security for their food banks and meal programs; be directed to the teaching kitchen for preparation before future distribution; or stored if shelf-life permits for future distribution to program partners. Students will receive training in Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Working at Heights and Forklift Operator Training.

Vehicle Operation

The program will obtain, maintain and operate a fleet of vans and trucks to be used in the collection and distribution of recovered surplus food. Students of the program will receive training in: commercial vehicle operation; basic maintenance; and safe driving practices. In many cases, having a driver's license is critical to gainful employment. The program will assist students in either obtaining a Class 5 N license (if they start without a license), or graduating to obtain a Class 4 (if they start with a license). Graduates from the program could find employment as professional taxi and truck drivers, couriers and bus drivers.

Program Format

The four-month training schedule proved effective as an education delivery model with the Sanctuary Foundation for over twenty years. The process is as follows:

- Clients begin with a workshop within the category they choose
- Instructors are soon able to determine which students will thrive in the four-month module
- Initial intakes are usually double the number of students to account for attrition in the first few weeks

After the four-month work-skills training module we then place the client into a two-week work practicum with a potential employer. Most will stay on as a new hire with that company. If they do not find work right away, we keep them working within the project until another work practicum, or immediate employment, can be arranged.

Clients diagnosed with spectrum disorders such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or high functioning Autism/Asperger's, will audit the course, with the clinical supervision and support of our therapists, for as long as necessary to master the work-skills they will need to gain employment. We plan to take on two such clients within each work-skills Training Module and will cover the costs for their tuition and counselling support through our fundraising efforts.

Evaluation Plan

We plan to conduct a summative and developmental evaluation to measure the community impact using shared measures from community partners and project learning. The summative aspect of the evaluation will track community impacts, food redistributed, business results, and youth employed. The developmental evaluation will track and adaptively integrate project learning through ongoing learning and reflection sessions with the leadership team, partners, business, Vancouver Community College, the Industry Training Authority, youth participants, and small-scale food businesses.



Contact us

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