WINNIPEG FOOD COUNCIL

2025 Annual Report





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Photo Credits

Courtesy UACG grantees and the Winnipeg Food Council

Salvation Army Canada
Cover, Pages 2/3, 4, 15

Trinity United Church
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Jennifer MacRae
Page 11

Seven Oaks Community Gardens
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William Whyte Neighbourhood Association
Pages 17(a,b,c,d), 18/19

City of Winnipeg staff
Pages 12, 13 , 16(b,c)



Land and Water Acknowledgement

I wish to Thank and Acknowledge the Great Creator, who gave us Mother Earth, with the Heavens above and the Land and Seas below, which represents a gift to all Living Creatures through its bounty of Healthy Food and Clean Water, if only we humans, the stewards of this planet, could learn to share in the physical world so as to honour and respect Creator and to maintain the spiritual and natural balance required to sustain all life on Earth, now and for the future.

Winnipeg is located in Treaty One Territory, the home and traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), and Dakota peoples, and in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our drinking water comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, in Treaty Three Territory.

The City of Winnipeg recognizes the importance of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples connected to Winnipeg's history, and the vibrant, diverse people who make up Indigenous communities today.



In Memory of **Councillor Jason Schreyer**

Councillor Jason Schreyer served the people of Elmwood–East Kildonan with heartfelt dedication, bringing passion and independence to every discussion. As Chair of the Winnipeg Food Council, he championed food security and worked tirelessly to ensure residents had access to basic necessities. Rooted in a proud family legacy of public service, he carried his purpose with humility and deep connection to his community. Beyond his political work, Jason's love of music and joyful spirit touched many—whether singing at karaoke, sharing songs at Folklorama, or opening Council meetings with a prayerful melody. His voice, compassion, and commitment will be warmly remembered.

Message from the Chairperson

City Councillor Russ Wyatt

As the Winnipeg City Council elected Chairperson of the Winnipeg Food Council, and the City Councillor for the Transcona Ward, I am happy to sign off on the 2025 Annual Report for the Winnipeg Food Council.

The Winnipeg Food Council operates on a very limited budget. Our budget, as of the publication of this report (and excluding the minimal admin support), was and is $16,800, and has been that number since and including 2022. To put that into perspective, the cost to feed a family of four in Canada, in 2026, is projected to be $17,570.00.

Notwithstanding such budget limitations, the volunteer members of the Winnipeg Food Council deserve all the credit for their ongoing diligence and dedication to this worthy and needed cause.

At a time of rising food prices, and with many citizens finding it difficult to obtain fresh, affordable and healthy food (coined as 'Food Security'), there is a demanding need for new policies from every level of government.

The citizen members of the Winnipeg Food Council, professional and passionate, remain committed to developing programs and policies for a Healthy and Happy City that is consistent with Council's Strategic Policy Action Plan (SPAP).

Cities across Canada are now facing Food Security issues and have made this a higher priority in their respective Municipal Plans. If Winnipeg wishes to stay relevant and not fall further behind other major Canadian cities, the Winnipeg Food Council must conduct a new strategic plan.

The new strategic plan will provide a 5-year guide to the WFC, by identifying the key areas of a new Winnipeg Food and Urban Agricultural Policy. Local government must be relevant in the lives of thousands of Winnipeg citizens facing Food Security challenges. The WFC may have a shoe-string operating budget, but we will work hard and hopefully find ways to rise to this challenge.

Food Security, namely dignified access to healthy and affordable food, must be addressed in Winnipeg if our city wishes to rank itself amongst the top choice cities in which one would like to live and raise a family. Food and Food Security is now a top factor in that consideration.

Be Well, Eat Right, and Never Give Up.

Sincerely,



Russ Wyatt
City Councillor – Transcona Ward
Chair of the Winnipeg Food Council

If Winnipeg wishes to stay relevant and not fall further behind other major Canadian cities, the Winnipeg Food Council must conduct a new strategic plan

Mission, Vision, and Function

Vision

All Winnipeggers have what they need to eat well all the time.

Mission

Work with the Mayor, Councillors, and City staff to fix food systems issues by advising on policy, relaying research, and sharing learned through continual consultation.

Strategic Directions

1. Continue seeking resources for policy and program development and expansion.
2. Ensure that current City of Winnipeg bylaws and programs are being used to their full advantage of food equity, and the city prioritizes food in its planning/ initiatives.

The function of the Winnipeg Food Council is to:

1. Advise the Mayor and Council on food systems related issues;
2. Support the work of the community on food issues, enhance public health and local food security, and increase food literacy and access to food by encouraging multi-sector and strategic approaches, fostering coordination, and networking, and supporting ongoing consultation; and
3. Initiate the development of and support the implementation, maintenance and evaluation of a City of Winnipeg Agriculture and Food Strategy to address municipal food security and food system issues.

The Winnipeg Food Council operates through the work and guidance of its two subcommittees:

1. The Research and Policy Subcommittee undertakes projects and research activities on food systems related issues and policy.
2. The Development and Communication Subcommittee advises and supports committee longevity, communications, and public engagement.

Winnipeg Food Council 2025 Membership

Committee Members (City Council)



Jason Schreyer
Past Chairperson



Russ Wyatt
Chairperson



Shawn Dobson
Mayor's Designate
(Nov 2024 – Oct 2025)



Emma Durand-Wood
Mayor's Designate and Vice Chairperson
(Nov 2025 – To Present Day)

Committee Members (non-City Council)

Julie Kentner	Provincial Representative
Martina Gornik-Marion	Shared Health Representative and Vice Chairperson (to Nov 2025)
Manas Banerjee	Citizen Member – Food Production
Hannah Baxter	Citizen Member - Food Business
Jill Beauchamp	Citizen Member - Community Group
Mike Chin	Citizen Member
Hanif Hassan Ali	Citizen Member
Dustin Hoft	Citizen Member - Research
Carly Minish	Citizen Member - Food Production
Ramon F. Sales	Citizen Member

Urban Agriculture Community Gardens Program

The Winnipeg Food Council offered its fourth round of small grants through the Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens grant program (UACG). This fund has supported small scale urban food security projects since 2021 providing $47,000 to various community organizations helping folks in Winnipeg communities.

Like previous years, applications were accepted for requests of up to $2,000 for these projects. Priority was given to projects that:

- Were led by and/or served equity seeking populations,
- Were in an area of higher need, food desert, or other area lacking community-based food assets,
- Increased the amount of food grown in Winnipeg,
- Demonstrated projects need via support of residents, participants, or agencies.

The 2025 grant program was well received, drawing 29 applying organizations , and grant requests that totalled just over $50,000. The successful organizations were:

- Accommodations Winnipeg
- Bison on the Red
- Exchange Met School
- Fireweed Food Co-op
- Growing Together @ River East Collegiate
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
- Marlene Street Community Resource Centre
- Naomi House
- Seeds of Life Alliance Community Service Corporation Inc.
- Seven Oaks Community Gardens
- Sinclair Park Community Centre
- Spence Neighbourhood Association
- The Salvation Army/Weetamah
- Trinity United Church
- William Whyte Neighborhood Association
- Winakwa Community Garden

These organizations each received between $500 and $2,000 for their projects. They reported reaching nearly 1,800 people via programming, volunteering, and food production.

Organizations were asked for suggestions on how to improve the funding process. Generally, they were happy with the process. However, 42% of these grassroots organizations indicated the need for more grant dollars for long-term sustainability initiatives for the garden projects, such as permaculture projects, tree plantings, and other perennials.



Pro-Bono Students Canada (PBSC)

In 2025, the WFC continued its partnership with the Pro-Bono Students of Canada, Manitoba Chapter (PBSC), to produce a Legal Research Report on the Food Rescue Pilot Project.

In January 2025 the non-profit organization Climate Change Connection (CCC) reached out to request WFC support for their Food Rescue Project. This project involves rescuing food which is safe for human consumption but slated for disposal, thus diverting good, nutritious food from the landfill to community organizations for local distribution. This project addresses environmental concerns relating to food waste and community well-being, namely food insecurity and healthy eating. The CCC has drafted a pilot plan with proposed sites to house three 40' long, climate controlled, electricity powered food storage containers to distribute this saved food.

PBSC developed a Legal research report to address the following questions;

- What municipal by-laws are engaged by placing said storage containers on City of Winnipeg property?
- What zoning considerations must be addressed when selecting an appropriate site?
- Are there potential liabilities under Tort law that should be considered for the involved parties once the sites are operational?

Student volunteers conducted research on the legal questions found above. The information was then aggregated into a plain-language legal memo for WFC and CCC use in the project development process. The final copy of the produced Legal Research document is available on request.

Request to Executive Policy Committee

(See Appendix A, pages 14 & 15)

In 2025, the WFC sent a budget amendment request to the Executive Policy Committee (EPC) for the 2026 City of Winnipeg Operating Budget, namely:

- A recommendation that the 2026 Winnipeg Food Council Operating Budget, in accordance with Appendix A, be increased from the current amount of $16,800 to $42,000.

The motion was received as information by EPC and Council, effectively denying the budget increase for the 2026 operating Budget.

Supporting the Work of the Community

In October 2025, the Winnipeg Food Council attended a Food Rescue and Food Security Stakeholder meeting to strengthen collaboration and advance shared goals in local food security initiatives.



Winnipeg Citizen Committee Event

In September 2025, the Climate Action Resilience Committee invited the Winnipeg Food Council to a relationship building and peer learning event with other committees of council such as;

- Human Rights Committee
- Community Emergency Advisory Committee
- Winnipeg Committee for Safety



Feedback from the Event

Citizen members asked for clearer pathways to engage Council and understand how input is used. They recommended co-delivered education and training to build literacy in City systems and align policy and plan commitments across the Climate Action Plan, Poverty Reduction Strategy, and emergency preparedness. They also called for stronger accountability tools—equity assessments, public dashboards to track progress, and clear explanations for report extensions made by Council and/or Committees of Council.



Financial Statement (Unaudited)

Winnipeg Food Council Expenses 2025

Item	Expense	Amount
1	Urban Agriculture Small grants program	$13,250.00
2	Graphic Design and Printing for 2024 Annual Report	$136.57
	Total	**$13,386.57**

Appendix A

The 2026 Winnipeg Food Council Request for a Budget Increase (Detailed)

WFC Budget	Current amount	Requested Increase	New Total	Basis
Total Budget				
Total Budget	$16,800	+$25,200	$42,000	• WFC underfunded to deliver mandated Urban Agriculture Strategy • WFC grants requested at 4.5 times amount available • Need to hire a consultant to develop the Urban Agriculture Strategic Plan • Need to have a strategic plan for the WFC
Itemized Budget Break Down				
Urban Agriculture Small Grants	$15,000	+$15,000	$30,000	• Consistent application levels of >4 times the available funds • Each grant dollar leverages >$3 in community investment (funding and in-kind)
New items - Food & Agriculture Strategy, Strategic Plan	$0	+$10,000	$10,000	• WFC Terms of Reference mandates development of Food & Agriculture Strategy within the framework of a new WFC Strategic Plan
Education, outreach, and meeting expenses	$1,500	$0	$1,500	No change
Memberships, subscriptions, and printing	$300	+$200	$500	No change

Why Funding for the Three Major Programs is a Good Budget Request In a Time of Food Insecurity

1. Urban Agriculture and Community Gardens Grant Program

The Winnipeg Food Council offers small grants to support community gardens and urban agriculture initiatives for projects delivered from 2022 to date. Applications are now being accepted for up to $2,000 per project, garden renovations and/or small operating costs. Different organizations depend on these small grants in order to do their planting projects for the year. The cost goes towards different items such as seedlings, water, manure, fertilizers, soil, planting structures, etc.

Budget Ask: In 2023, 39 applications were received with a total request of $57,000. The grant could only provide funds of $10,000. In 2024, 38 applications were received with a total request of $67,500. In 2025, 29 applications were received with a total request of over $48,014. On average, the WFC has had over 4.5 times more money requested than it is able to distribute. This program has received many wonderful reports and has helped many community organizations, especially equity-seeking groups, to increase local food production.

2. Food and Agriculture Strategy

Developing this strategy is in the Terms of Reference of the Winnipeg Food Council. To kickstart the process, a Food System Snapshot report was done in 2022, but the strategy has not been able to move forward due to budgetary constraints. The purpose of this strategy is to provide policy direction on food security issues such as access to healthy food, availability of healthy foods, and affordability of healthy foods. This document would serve as a guide in addressing the many food-related issues.

3. Strategic Planning

The City of Winnipeg has a food crisis, and this is evidenced by the increase in the number of people visiting food banks. According to FoodBanksCanada's* Hunger Count 2025 report, in Manitoba, food bank visits have increased by 97 per cent since 2021 and are up just over 17 per cent since last year. Numbers for this year show nearly 65,000 people visit Manitoba food banks each month. It is therefore important for Winnipeg to be at the forefront of solving Food insecurity issues especially since it is the largest city in terms of population in Manitoba.

Council Budget for previous years

2018	No budget allocated
2019	$25,000 (Coordinator's fees, No operating budget)
2020	$66,880 (inclusive of Coordinator's fees)
2021	$50,000 (Coordinator's fees only)
2022	$16,880
2023	$16,880
2024	$16,800
2025	$16,800



* *FoodBanksCanada's Hunger Count 2025 report, downloaded January 2nd, 2025 from https://content.foodbankscanada.ca/wordpress/2025/10/FBC_HungerCount_EN_2025.pdf*

Garden Visit Pictures











Garden Visit Pictures












TIDY CATS





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