

## Toolkit: Frozen Soup Distribution Project

### Concept:

A project that provides access to free food in a dignified way. The prepared soups are distributed through community freezers and people can pick them up anonymously.

### Potential benefits:

- ✓ Provides low-barrier and anonymous food access support
- ✓ Supports local food providers
- ✓ Can strengthen community partnerships

### What's required to run the frozen soup distribution project?

- Access to a certified commercial kitchen to prepare the meals
- Public access to community facilities where freezers are located (*or capacity in the project budget to purchase freezers in the location(s)*)
- A chef (*or someone who has a food-handler certificate and can make food at scale*), and access to volunteers
- A means to deliver the soup to the pick-up locations
- Food storage for ingredients and frozen soup prior to distribution

### Who could run the frozen soup distribution project?

Any social service provider working with communities who experience food insecurity, with access to volunteers/staff with food handlers' certificates who can make the soup. However, we'd recommend the project leads have some experience working in a commercial kitchen and making large batches of food.

If you're interested in applying, this toolkit will provide information on what implementing the project would look like, along with advice on how to prepare your application in your own community.

### Key steps to implement the frozen soup distribution project:

If your application is successful for funding, below is an example process of how you can implement your proposal. This toolkit is a guide, not a rule. You know your own community best, so this process will be adjusted as needed to fit your own context.

1. Make a project plan for implementing the proposal you put together. Reach back out to partners and formalize the project details with them. Determine if you'll need volunteer support to bring your project to life (e.g. to support soup preparation or delivery), and if so, build a schedule and begin to recruit volunteers.
2. Secure a commercial kitchen to make the soup, and community freezer pick-up location.
3. Purchase containers for the soup, and any other equipment required (e.g. kitchen supplies, labels for the containers, or equipment like a freezer).

**Case Study:** Cobequid Food Network received \$27,000 for their Sackville Soup Program. They offered dignified food access through strong partnerships in the Sackville community that enabled the preparation and distribution of frozen soups through publicly accessible freezers. The frozen soup was free and anonymous to access, which was designed to be more human-centered compared to traditional forms of emergency food support. In total over 5000 servings of healthy, made-from-scratch soup were distributed.

4. Build a budget and a menu for your weekly soup production and source the ingredients required to make the recipes in the scale that you are planning for.
5. Assess public health guidelines for distributing the soup for public consumption. Consider how your labels may require ingredient lists, common allergens, storage instructions, and a seal on the lid. Can we provide those public health guidelines?
6. Determine a delivery schedule to pick up locations: where will the community be able to pick up the soup, and how will you get the soup there? How will you ensure that the location is accessible, anonymous, and welcoming?
7. Develop communications materials to promote the project to your community. This could be through posters at frequented community locations (libraries, churches, etc), social media posts, and through partners helping to spread the word to their networks.
8. Begin making and distributing the food! Throughout this distribution period, you'll need to consider regular & ongoing tasks, such as volunteer coordination, supply ordering as needed, and data tracking aligned with your proposal. Be prepared to adjust as needed.
9. Gather feedback on what works and what doesn't from both community and partners, adjusting as needed, and reflecting on how it could be done better next time.

### **Key steps to prepare your application:**

If you're interested in moving forward with an application, below is a list of considerations for planning the preliminary details of your project.

1. Write out the project details. Think about how you could get the food to people in a way that doesn't feel like a hand-out or emphasize power imbalances.
2. Identify the community you'll work in. Try to gather data on the number of people experiencing food insecurity in the community, and what other service providers exist. Engage with community members and other local organizations to understand what they need, and how you can serve them best.
3. Determine your reach/scope. How long will you be distributing soup, and at what frequency?
4. Reach out to potential partners! Make a list of who needs to be involved for the project to be a success. Where will you source the food from? Do you need a volunteer base or additional staff capacity? Community centre spaces? Beyond the direct needs, reaching out to organizations doing similar work can help you learn from each other, reach more people, and deliver stronger services, together.
5. Coordinate the details: think about what the budget needs to be, how you'll prepare the food, how you'll promote it to the community, and how you'll get the food into participant's hands. These steps may vary in different contexts, but taking the time to write out a step-by-step project plan can help you ensure nothing is missed along the way.

6. Take the time to consider what success would look like. How will you know if the project worked well? If you need to collect data to measure impact and learnings, that work needs to start early to ensure nothing is missed. By starting at the project planning stage, you can have the time needed to ensure you'll track the data you need throughout the project, such as recording the number of people accessing the meals, volunteer hours contributed, or kgs of food provided.

**Want to learn more about the case study?**

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