



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# Mind the Gap: Food Security in Our Community

Community Food Security Summit | Session 1 | March 16, 2026 | Memorial Hall, Selkirk, MB

On March 16, 2026, the Selkirk and District Community Foundation convened frontline food security practitioners at Memorial Hall for Session 1 of the community food security summit. Using a World Cafe format, participants explored the client experience, named the tensions that make collaboration difficult, and committed to concrete experiments. The findings below represent the shared picture that emerged across all four tables.

**29%**

worry food will run out before they have money to buy more

**33%**

struggle to afford to eat balanced meals

**~250**

food bank visits every two weeks, one-third of them children

## 1. The Client Experience

### Where People Go First

- Family, friends, and church communities before any formal service
- Schools are a critical early contact point for families with children
- Most-accessed formal services: Soup Kitchen, Food Bank, RAAM Clinic, and YFC
- Seniors rely on resource centres; rural residents face added distance barriers

### What Confuses People Most

- No single place to learn what programs exist, who they serve, or how to access them
- Many assume the food bank is open more than twice a month
- Inconsistent outreach means information reaches some and misses others entirely

### Where People Get Stuck

- Shame and stigma are the invisible barrier before any form is filled out
- Transportation cuts off rural residents, seniors, and people with disabilities from services
- ID requirements, income statements, and documentation overwhelm people already in crisis
- Hours of operation do not match when need is highest: evenings, weekends, and school breaks
- Children and youth face the sharpest gaps when school-based supports disappear

## 2. Tensions That Make Collaboration Hard

### Funding and Resources

- Limited, time-bound funding makes long-term partnerships difficult to sustain

### Organizational Autonomy and Trust

- Administrative requirements consume capacity that could go to programming
- Organizations worry that resource-sharing will redirect donors away from their work

### Rules Worth Revisiting

- Eligibility criteria now exclude people with genuine need
- Clients must re-prove circumstances at every organization they visit
- People do not select their own food, removing agency from a difficult experience

- Organizations fear losing identity, donor relationships, and decision-making independence
- Not knowing what others offer creates duplication and gaps simultaneously
- Territorial tensions exist as real concern about limited resources, not pettiness

### What the Room Also Said

*Selkirk is great for grassroots. People communicate. There are lots of connections. We need each other, and most of us know it.*

## 3. Committed Actions: 60-Day Experiments

### Connect

- Cross-organizational site visits to understand each other's operations first-hand
- Inter-agency email exchange for sharing excess resources and unmet client needs
- Shared bulletin boards at YFC and other sites listing available services
- Tom to activate a church coordination network beginning next Sunday
- Work toward a standing Food Security Advisory Committee

### Communicate

- Build a shared service directory using 211 MB and the BlueBook framework
- Each organization documents what it does uniquely to enable real referrals
- Support a Round Table on Lived Experience, modelled on the START Program

### Try

- Community food box at accessible locations with no registration required
- Mobile soup kitchen to bring food to people where they are
- Online anonymous registration to reduce shame as a structural barrier

### What Comes Next

Session 1 was the beginning. The SDCF will collect organizational information from all attendees to build the shared directory, distribute this report so the room's work is collectively owned, support the inter-agency email exchange as an immediate first experiment. Session 2 will extend to service participants and community champions, with SDCF in a convening role.

***This is not a community that lacks compassion or effort. What March 16 showed is a community of capable, committed organizations ready to work together.***