

Food Security in Quesnel




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Food security: *Having reliable access to enough safe, nutritious and culturally diverse food.*

(Food and Agricultural Organization, 1996)



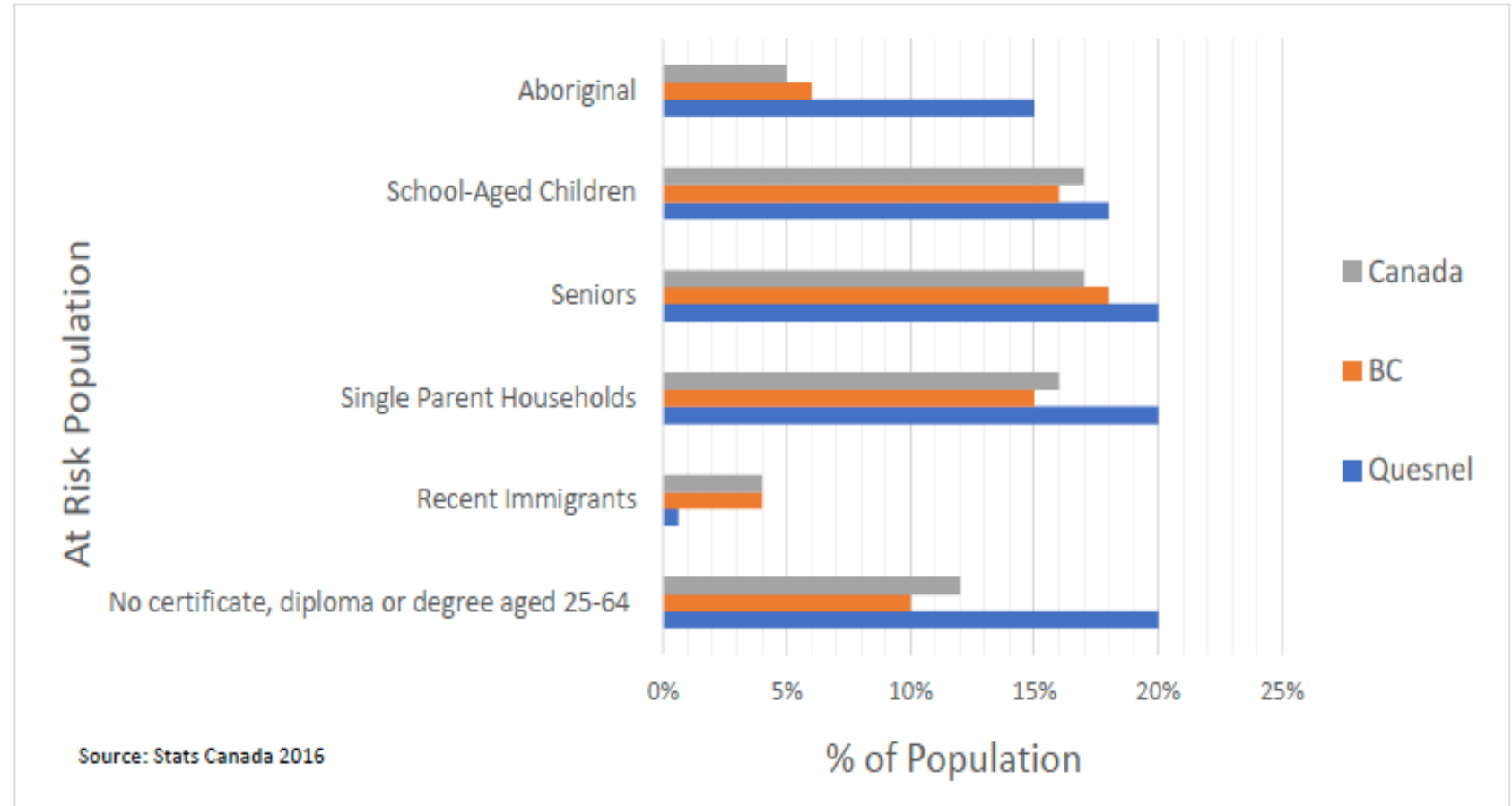
Food Insecurity in the North



1 IN 5
households
in
Northern
B.C. are
food
insecure

Li et al. 2016

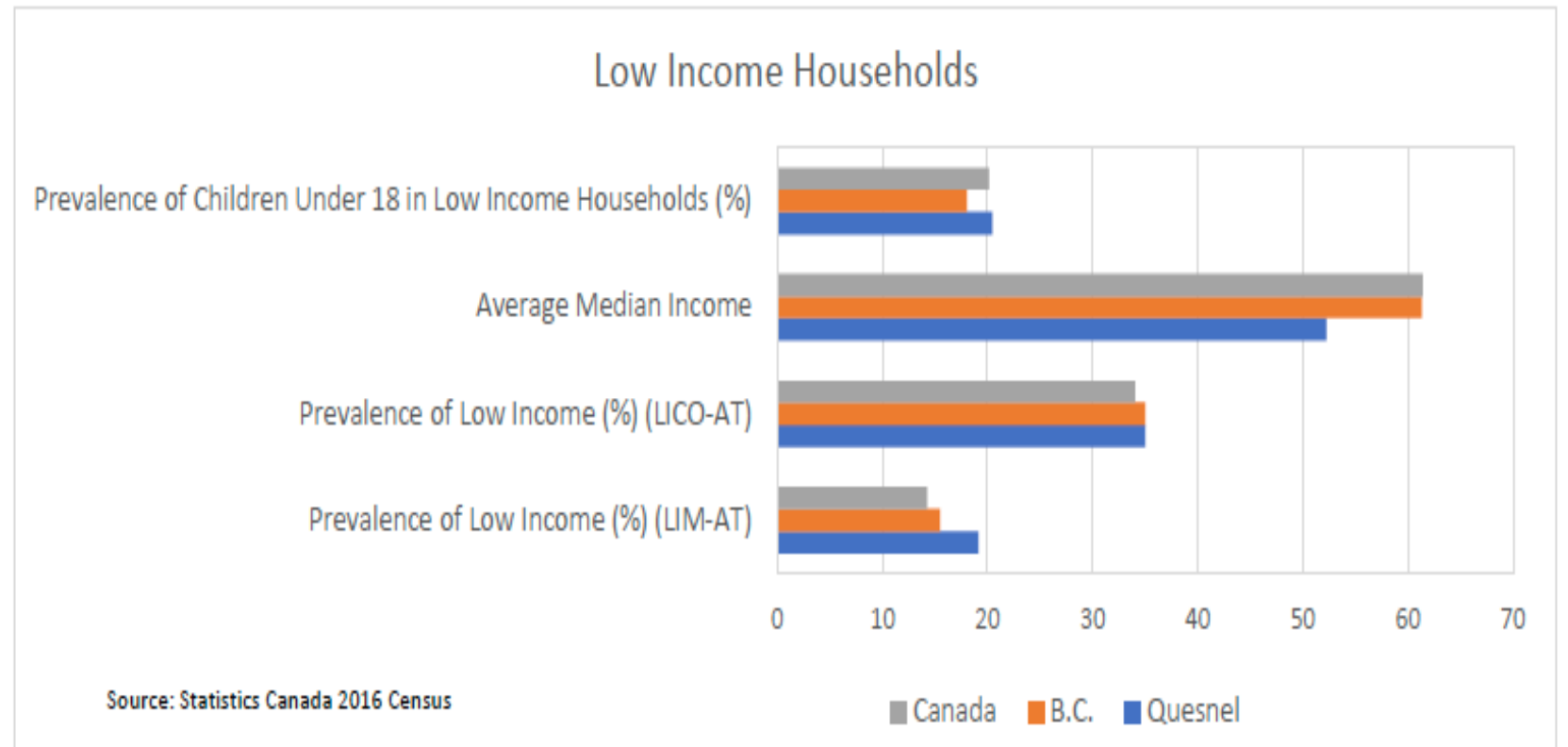
Quesnel Populations at Risk



What puts Quesnel
at risk?



Low Income is the Greatest Predictor of Food Insecurity



Food Costs

- The average monthly cost of nutritious food for a family of four in the Northern Health region was **\$1038** in 2017
- A family of four on income assistance in B.C. may receive up to **\$1,301** per month.
- This leaves **\$263** to cover shelter, transportation, clothing, school supplies etc. With the average shelter costs in Quesnel being **\$700+**
- And food costs are projected to continue to rise

Current Food Supports in Quesnel

Bi-monthly Hampers

Food programming offered as an adjunct to other programming

Grassroots programming focused on supporting specific populations

Drop-in hot meals provided 6 days per week across four organizations



Barriers Identified By People Experiencing Food Insecurity

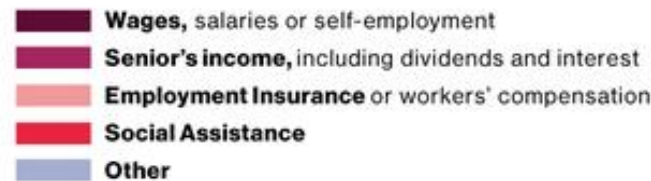
- **Transportation:** Grocery stores that are more affordable are located in South Quesnel, while the majority of lower income individuals/families reside in West Quesnel
- **Psychological State:** Anxiety, lowered motivation, mental health struggles prevent people from accessing or interfere with the process
- **Dietary Restrictions:** Charitable food supports rely largely on donated easily preserved foods, which can be difficult for those with diabetes, high blood pressure and other special dietary concerns
- **Stigma:** Many individuals who are food insecure do not access food supports.



Barriers Identified by Community Providers

- Accessibility:
 - Lack of food skills
 - Complicated/limiting referral processes
 - Lack of knowledge of services
 - Those who are employed but food insecure often do not access services

**Food-insecure households'
MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME**



<https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

- Limitations of Current Services:
 - Lack of low-cost/affordable food options
 - Programming reliant on donations or grants
 - Large scale food waste donations available but programming doesn't have capacity to process these
 - Parameters of existing food rescue programs (ex. food mesh) pose challenges

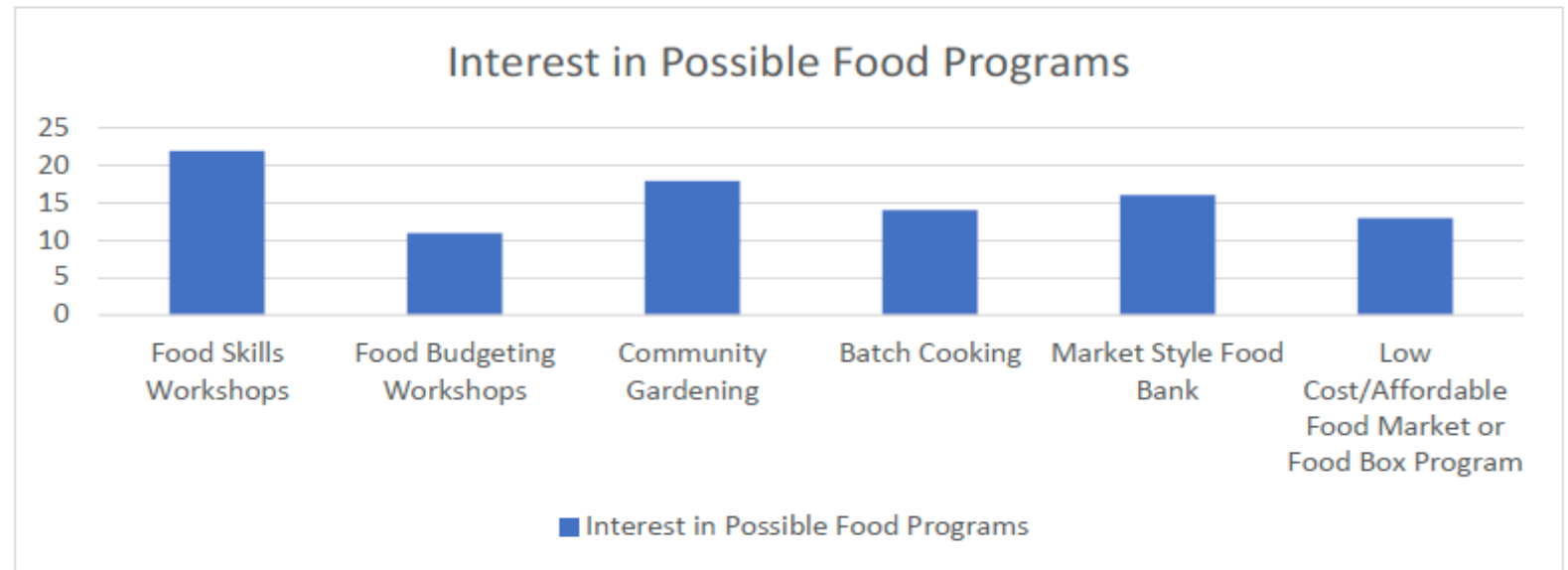
What Community Partner's Need

- Stable funding
- Increased collaboration between programs
- Access to an appropriate vehicle to pickup and distribute food donations
- Refrigeration/Freezer storage space for large scale fresh food donations
- More people power to organize, sort and distribute food donations



What People Would Like

- Access to affordable fresh foods, particularly produce and meat
- Food skills
- Charitable food options that meet dietary needs (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, etc.)
- Community programming around shared cooking, skill building and gardening



Ideas for the future...

- A community food center that allows for drop-in services, peer-led programming, food skills workshops and community gardening
- A centralized food rescue distribution system to support current resources
- Customized food options, such as a market-style food bank where individuals may choose items themselves and/or more frequent hampers of fewer items for those without kitchen facilities
- A low-cost/affordable food market or good food box program



Ideas for How the City of Quesnel may Support Food Security Initiatives

- Advocate for universal basic income and poverty reduction of citizens
- Share knowledge related to food insecurity, dispelling myths and broadening perspectives
- Create letters of support for food security projects and initiatives
- In kind commitment to projects, such as:
 - Renewed lease of office space to CMHA for support of food coordination project
 - Collaboration between Regional Food Hub and food support programming (Ex. use of truck rental or food processing services; possible space sharing for food storage etc)
 - Coordination and facilitation of the ongoing Food Security meetings in Quesnel, possibility of transforming this into a Food Policy Council