

Community Facilitator Engagement – Executive Summary

Food Skills for Families

In the fall of 2023, the Food Skills for Families (FSF) team set out to gather FSF Community Facilitator (CF) input to help inform how an updated FSF program could look to better support food literacy across BC communities. In addition to these considerations, program updates will also be guided by other ongoing projects, such as the pre-and post-program feedback from program participants, host evaluation forms, and findings from a food literature review on experiential food skills programming and population health outcomes.

For the purposes of this report, the FSF team focuses on CF input that was brought forth in the Engagement Sessions. With the aim to document diverse experiences and perspectives on facilitating the FSF program, a total of 39 CFs were invited to participate in a series of three Engagement Sessions across each of the five health regions.

What We learned

Six high-level themes from the engagement were identified. Central ideas within each of these themes are briefly touched on in the next page.



Community Facilitators cooking up something delicious

What We learned

1. Program Reach and Participants

The program reaches participants beyond the current priority populations the program serves, for example youth and children. Future program updates need to reflect the diverse ethnocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of participants attending.

2. Program Structure and Curriculum Adaptions

While a curriculum-based model supports easier program delivery, it's important to reconsider the limitations of a fixed, one-size-fits-all programming. Local context and place-based adaptations may better support the unique characteristics and dynamics of communities.

3. Food Values and Preferences

Personal values around food and regional food systems shaped the content that CFs wanted to see in the FSF program. CFs conveyed a desire for program adaptations to account for the wider environmental and social contexts in which the FSF program is delivered, including culturally diverse recipes, Indigenous food practices, and food seasonality.

4. Connection

CFs emphasised the value in coming together with others in their communities. CFs highlighted the need to think more explicitly about approaching adaptations to the program with an element of connection and belonging in mind. This would include connection amongst community participants; connection to local and regional programs and food assets, including land and waterways; and connection amongst CFs and to FSF facilitator network.

5. Training Needs

CFs already have a wealth of knowledge and skills they bring and share with community participants. Some additional skill building opportunities identified were ways to include and engage children and youth; food preservation, growing and foraging food, and learning about Indigenous-specific foods; and adapting recipes for allergies, sensitivities and dietary preferences.

6. Program Principles

The new principles created to guide the work of FSF reflect the value of welcoming diverse ways, sharing, bridging and building knowledge, and promoting connection and a sense of belonging. These principles were not currently being realized with the current program structure though updates better manifesting the principles mark the way forward for the program.



Community Facilitators having fun in the kitchen

Main Takeaways

- Account for the diversity of participants taking part in the program,
- Adapt program structure and content to consider community, environmental and socioeconomic contexts,
- Provide additional training and supports for Community Facilitators and participants,
- Create more space for intentional connection, and
- Work to embed program principles to guide ongoing and future work.

Next Steps

- Creation of an ongoing reciprocal communication strategy with community.
- Continue collaborating with Indigenous-led food sovereignty initiatives to help inform and weave learnings into program updates.
- Adapt the program in a gradual and deliberate manner to ensure updates meet unique community needs and build capacity and connection to support food literacy.