



## Food banks lacking resources: report

LAURA BOOTH  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Food banks in the province are struggling to provide healthy food to their clients, enough space to store donations and a lack of cold storage for fresh food, according to a study released Tuesday by l'Université de Moncton.

The report said the network of 170 food banks, soup kitchens and other organizations that help feed the less fortunate in the province suffer from a uncoordinated approach.

At a news conference at the university, researchers presented a three-year study on food security and insecurity in New Brunswick that listed the challenges encountered by the food aid organizations and recommendations to improve the situation.

The study, funded by the Wellness Research Fund under the province's Department of Social Development. Cathy Rogers, the department's minister, was at the news conference.

"We want to make evidence-based decisions and this will help us in putting together a provincial strategy for food security," she said. "We've already started with our vision, which has been informed by a lot of the same partners so we're very much already moving towards this."

One of the report's authors, Dominique Pépin-Filion, with the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Studies, said of many of the food aid organizations

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## Downtown Moncton g \$250K a year into eve

ALAN COCHRANE  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

Moncton's downtown business organization is stepping forward to support the city's new \$100 million sports and entertainment centre by making an annual donation of \$250,000 for 15 years, starting in 2019.

"I think (the centre) breathes a sense of hope and excitement ... it's actually something tangible that's happening in our city," Derek Martin, president of the Downtown Moncton Centre-ville Inc.

(DMCI), said on Tuesday.

"It's exciting to everyone in our downtown and in our city to see something physically taking shape ... Now it is happening, not only on paper."

The official sod-turning for the 10,000-seat stadium was held Monday, although construction started a month ago on the lot at the corner of Main and Highfield Streets. The centre is expected to open in 2018.

During Tuesday's annual general meeting, Martin said the \$250,000 yearly contribution represents 30 per cent of

the group's annual budget. As the contribution is included in the overall budget, the group will not have to pay for levies for property taxes. The centre is seen as a way to boost the downtown economy by creating new business jobs, as well as by

The group will have already set a contribution in 2016. The contribution is complete. The group will assist the City of Moncton with a 30 per cent share of project

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# Food banks struggling: report

## STUDY → A1

cannot meet the demand from clients.

"And they also need more facilities, they don't always have the space ... or the speciality equipment; we're talking about fridges and freezers," he said.

The study compiled the results of on-line surveys conducted with about 100 of 170 food donation organizations, focus groups held with 21 managers and members of the organizations, 13 visits to actual food donation centres and measuring the nutrition of items received by one food bank.

Moncton Executive Director of Food Depot Alimentaire Inc. Chantal Senecal said these exact problems are what encouraged food banks in Moncton to consolidate at the new Peter McKee Community Food Centre. It will open at the former Garrison building in May.

The new food centre brings the Open Hands Food Bank, the West End Food Bank and Moncton clients from Second Mile Food Bank, into one centre, eliminating the separate operating costs such as heating, lights and staffing, said Senecal.

"Bringing that all together and being able to share those resources is going to be able to make that dollar stretch and we can do so much more all under one building," she said, adding that fundraising will also be easier as the organizations will no longer compete for donations.

Pépin-Filion said researchers also found food banks are struggling to get healthy food donations.

"That's a big problem, they already

know that what they're offering to the population is not up to what is needed to have a healthy food [and] they're telling us they cannot afford with the little resources that [they have, they] cannot afford the good food," he said, adding that more collaboration with grocery stores and pooling financial resources are needed.

Senecal said her Moncton organization has been working to build relationships with fresh food suppliers to address that problem.

"I think over the last year and a half, our fresh food donations have tripled because we were able to give [grocery store suppliers] a tour of our facilities," she said, adding that when suppliers saw that food was safely handled they were more encouraged to donate.

Now, many grocery store suppliers in the community donate one or two times a week, she said.

Another recommendation from the UdeM report calls for a provincial food security strategy that encourages collaboration and co-operation between the government and various food bank organizations.

Senecal said an initiative like this is crucial.

"Sometimes we have so much produce come in at one time, and it's got such a time limitation. It's maybe good for a week to two weeks; we don't have enough agencies to send all the food to," she said, adding access to more financial support and a system to identify communities in need would help.

## ENING TRAVAGANZAS

LETE SCHEDULE  
VENTS AT

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**THURSDAY, APRIL 28 | 7:30 p.m. AN EVENING WITH GG WINNERS (ST)**

With Fanny Britt, Élise Turcotte and Cybèle Young  
Aberdeen Cultural Centre | \$10

**FRIDAY, APRIL 29 | 7 p.m. SOIRÉE FRYE**

With Elizabeth Hay, Lisa Moore, Georgette LeBlanc and Rodney Saint-Éloi  
Music: Michael Feuerstack & Tire le coyote  
Capitol Theatre | \$20

**SATURDAY, APRIL 30 | 8 p.m. FRYE JAM**

With Phillip Crymble, Charles Demers, Sylvie Drapeau,  
Rodney Saint-Éloi, Anakana Schofield and Ghislain Taschereau  
Music: Maggie Savoie & Les Patiens  
Aberdeen Cultural Centre | \$15

