



Context

The Canberra Food Relief Community was established to connect individuals and families experiencing hardship with a local source of food and necessity items to meet these needs. In recent years, the ongoing ramifications of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the detrimental effects of the cost-of-living crisis, has caused an increase in the greater Canberra communities' reliance upon the food relief sector.

The Canberra food Relief Community is made up of multiple organisations, which have been categorised into four groups:

- Facilitation Independent and Government organisations and community foundations that support and facilitate engagement within the Canberra Food Relief sector.
- **Enabling Organisations** Registered charities that enable and assist food distribution throughout the community.
- Formal Food Banks Formal distribution centres, run by a charitable organisations, where stocks of food and necessity items are supplied to the community, usually on particular days, either free of charge or for a small fee.
- Community Pantries Volunteer-run community pantries that rely solely on donations of money and food as well as volunteer time to supply the community. They are typically open 24/7 and directly serve people in need of food within a local area.

In November 2023, the Food Relief Community came together in a collaborative session across two days to focus on enhancing efficiency in the Canberra region's food relief efforts. This gathering recognised the diversity and strength within the food relief community and aimed to devise a cohesive action plan.

Together, we:

- Aligned on the key issues related to food relief in our region
- Explored how we can work together to optimise food relief efforts in the region
- Created a plan to address challenges and make the most of opportunities in the Food Relief Community
- Recognised diversity of how we operate and the strength of that diversity

Within our cohorts and amongst our Food Relief Community, we identified our key focus areas and the challenges we're facing



Access to **Quality Food**



Access to Quality Food - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Ensure consistent and regular access to high-quality food

Objectives:

1.1. Understand and promote the meaning behind 'quality food' and support the community to maximise the nutritional benefits of available food

1.2. Understand and research the options for improved access and storage of high-quality food

What has been working well?

- Service providers working together and collaborating to help people and make a difference
- Building relationships within the community, leveraging resources that are available and connecting with other services for broader, or longer-term support
- Acknowledging the strengths of the diversity within the community

Areas for improvement

- Build awareness of the need amongst pantries, in the community and with donors, corporate businesses and government
- Create a collective voice to be able to lobby for change and funding (Government, Food Providers)
- Develop a shared understanding between service provides and food providers on what 'quality' means

Stakeholders Impacted

- **Enabling Organisations**
- Formal Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

- Reduces the burden on individuals for seeking out food
- Volunteers feel better about how they're helping
- Easier pantry operations
- Reduced food waste

What will this enable for the broader community?

- Better nutrition
- Fasier choices
- Improved mental health/self-esteem and belonging

Access to Quality Food - Action Plan (1 of 2)

Objective 1.1.		Understand and promote the meaning behind 'quality food' and support the community to maximise the nutritional benefits of available food				
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
Short Term	1.1.1	Consult a professional nutritionist (volunteer/student) to reinforce standards for 'quality food'	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite	 Local businesses SLABS FOR HEROES Corporate Food Drives Embassy Involvement Food Relief Network Community (donations/ fundraisers) 	
	1.1.2	Engage and consult CALD / Dietary Diverse food expert				
Medium	1.1.3	Food services co-design a recipe book or resource to share and help people use long-life ingredients	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite		
Term	1.1.4	Sharing quality standards with food suppliers				
Long Term	1.1.5	Promote recipe book/resource with storytelling and strong sector voice through the ABC	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite		
	1.1.6	Annually release a new recipe collaboration				

Access to Quality Food - Action Plan (2 of 2)

Objective 1.2.		Understand and research the options for improved access and storage of hig	h-quality food			
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
Short Term	1.2.1	Set the agenda for a food relief network meeting topic to address WHO is in need of WHAT and who has resources they are able to share.	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra Vinnies	 Local businesses (YWAM collaboration) SLABS FOR HEROES Corporate Food Drives Embassy Involvement (donations/fundraisers) Shared facilities Trucks and transport GIVIT 	
Short lerm	1.2.2	Connect with Government departments and corporate volunteers to investigate extra workforce	Stuart Davis- Meehan			
Medium	1.2.3	Set the agenda for a food relief network meeting topic to discuss the 'shared access and storage facility' concept as a way to share and distribute excess food and resources, and seek buy-in from participants to develop a plan forward	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Volunteering ACT Oz Harvest Second Bite		
Term	1.2.4	Integrate data from all food relief community sources to inform a narrative on the community need				
	1.2.5	Use collected data and collaboration history to develop a plan for lobbying for funding and support in the set-up of a 'shared resources' warehouse / location	Amy Blain Pam Zielke Luciel Eggins	Volunteering ACT Hands Across		
Long Term	1.2.6	Utilise funding and collaboration to establish shared access and storage facility or solution	Luciei Lygiiis	Canberra		
	1.2.7	Annual review of progress and collaboration				

2.

Capacity in Distribution



Capacity in Distribution - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Improve delivery efficiency across the community

Objectives:

2.1. Develop a systematic approach for distribution of food amongst the community

What has been working well?

- Service providers working together, building solidarity and collaborating to help people and make a difference throughout the community
- Building relationships within the community and leveraging resources that are available and connecting with other services to provide broader and longerterm support
- Acknowledging the strengths of the diversity within the community

Areas for improvement

- Increased food, spread evenly across the community to meet demand
- Created equal distribution of services across Canberra, resulting in limited access to food on the South Side and in specific suburbs (e.g. Molonglo)
- Fully utilised all volunteers across the community rather than there being pockets of excess volunteers with no meaningful work

Stakeholders Impacted

- Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries
- Enabling Organisations

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

- Meet demand and distribution to the community and allow for long term strategic planning
- Efficient and fair distribution, reduced duplication of efforts
- Reduced food waste

What will this enable for the broader community

- Improved access to food with a high nutritional value
- Predictability and consistency in access to food

Capacity in Distribution - Action Plan

Objective 2.1		Understand and promote the meaning behind 'quality food' a	nd support the	e community to better us	se ingredients
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?
	2.1.1	Create a collaborative and engaging stakeholder environment and commence discussions with delivery driver companies to understand their capacity.	Robyn Wall Kirsty Baker	Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite	Transport and delivery agenciesTrucks / large vehicles
Chart Tarm	2.1.2	Develop a thorough understanding of the pool of resources relating to delivery and distribution.		Volunteering ACT	 Mechanics Refrigerated vehicles
Short Term	2.1.3	Define the volunteer driver position description for both paid and unpaid driver volunteers.			
	2.1.4	Investigate all avenues of volunteer driver insurance and present findings to all stakeholders			
Medium Term	2.1.5	Create a plan to obtain a secure, regular source of funding for distribution related activities.	Robyn Wall Kirsty Baker	Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite Volunteering ACT	
Long Term	2.1.6	Build strong and collaborative relationship with food distribution agencies, including inviting them to regular food relief network meetings.	Robyn Wall Oz Harvest Helping ACT Second Bite		
	2.1./	Create an action plan to actively recruit and retain volunteer drivers and instill an active volunteer driver register and roster.		Volunteering ACT	

3.

Flexibility of Data Collection



Business illustrations by Storyset

Flexibility of Data Collection - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Enable data collection for the entire Food Relief Sector

Objectives:

3.1. Collection, interpretation and promotion of consistent data that accurately reflects the whole food relief sector.

What has been working well?

- Building relationships within the community, leveraging resources that are available and connecting with other services to provide broader and longerterm support.
- The commitment to collection of data from select service providers, but there is a need to create a whole of sector approach.

Areas for improvement

- Development varying approaches that can be applied to collect and represent data of the whole sector
- Development of concrete 'whole-of-sector' data as evidence for ACT Government support and funding
- Ensured that the benefits from the food relief network are measured to establish greater value and support for the sector

Stakeholders Impacted

- Facilitation Organisations
- Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries
- Enabling Organisations

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

- Tell the whole community story more effectively
- Raise awareness to Government and food providers to be able to access funding and to influence change

What will this enable for the broader community

- Improved nutritional support
- Increased trust and engagement with service providers
- Prevention and preparedness with additional resources to support

Flexibility of Data Collection - Action Plan

Objective 3.1		Collection, interpretation and promotion of consistent data the	at accurately re	eflects the whole food re	elief sector	
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
	3.1.1	Identify data points available to be collected across the sector	Luciel Eggins Stuart Davis- Meehan	Volunteering ACT	Food relief network & meetingsPre-existing data	
Short Term	3.1.2	Agree on consistent approaches to collecting data for each cohort that are not burdensome on volunteer time (e.g. Food pantries: photo records).	Weenan		 Food relief database Volunteers (including skilled data specialists/individuals with experience in interpreting data) Media Food relief network subcommittee focused on data 	
	3.1.3	Collect and utilise existing data and create a central repository for this data.				
	3.1.4	Work collaboratively across cohorts within the food relief sector and utilise existing forums to share captured data.				
	3.1.5	Create an action plan to actively recruit and retain volunteers who are data specialists.	Luciel Eggins Stuart Davis-	Volunteering ACT		
Medium	3.1.6	Develop whole-of-sector data analysis and create an Annual Report for the Canberra food relief sector.	Meehan			
Term	3.1.7	Establish annual briefings on captured data for food relief sector. Share the findings of this data with the greater Canberra community.				
	3.1.8	Inform and present the obtained data and Annual Report to the ACT and Federal Government to leverage their support.				
Long Term	3.1.9	Establish regular sessions to reflect on what worked, what did not work, areas for improvement and ensuring that everyone who should be involved in the process is involved.	Luciel Eggins Stuart Davis- Meehan	Volunteering ACT		

Sector Collaboration



Sector Collaboration - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Improve collaboration and resource coordination within the community

Objectives:

4.1. Develop a collaboration framework to create a structure that drives clear communication, shared expectations and a foundation for sharing resources

4.2. Leverage existing relationships to develop and strengthen new relationships and collaboration opportunities

What has been working well?

- Building relationships within the community resulting in better collaboration and coordination of resources
- Having the opportunity to learn about what different parts of the community do, how they work and how everyone can learn from each other
- Utilising the corporate sector for bringing the community together in an impactful way, focusing on how we can make progress in our challenge areas

Areas for improvement

- Fully utilised existing forums including the Food Relief Network and the Food and Emergency Relief Advisory Committee to address shared challenges
- Participation in existing forums and an identified approach to make progress on some of the key issues
- Consistent Government and corporate support including recognition and funding for all service providers

Stakeholders Impacted

- Facilitation Organisations
- Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries
- **Enabling Service Providers**

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

- Clear vision of the future to aim for
- Improved access to resources and better financial planning
- Ability to discover and act on the right opportunities

What will this enable for the broader community

• Effective structure to address the systematic under-resourcing, increasing access to food and other services to the community

Sector Collaboration - Action Plan (1 of 2)

Objective 4.1.		Develop a collaboration framework to create a structure that drives cl for sharing resources	ear communicatio	n, shared expectation	s and a foundation
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?
	4.1.1	Establish a working group of stakeholders committed to progressing the Collaboration Framework	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht	Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra	 Volunteers I.T knowledge Participation of Food Relief Network members Participation of Food Relief Advisory Committee Other Community Organisations
Short	4.1.2	Seek exemplar Collaboration Frameworks from other community organisations/systems to learn from	Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines		
Term	4.1.3	Review Terms of Reference for the Food Relief Network forum			
	4.1.4	Capture and create definitions of 'visitors/clients/customers' to develop a shared language			
	4.1.5	Review Food Relief Advisory Committee membership to ensure representation of the whole community	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht	Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra	
Medium Term	4.1.6	Create a strategic plan for the community as a whole 2a. Resource allocation 2b. Funding 2c. Advocacy	Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines		
	4.1.7	Develop policies and procedures that outline how the community will operate and collaborate			
Long	4.1.8	Establish a system for ongoing monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Collaboration Framework and make improvements where necessary	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines	Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra	
Term	4.1.9	Develop an annual report and performance metrics to measure success	Jason Haines		
	4.1.10	Develop a business case to increase funding to support the Collaboration Framework and the integration of the community			

Sector Collaboration - Action Plan (1 of 2)

Objective 4.2	•	Leverage existing relationships to develop and strengthen new relationship	ps and collaboration opportunities			
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
	4.2.1	Create a clear directory of all service provides and contact details, to identify all relevant organisations and/or individuals	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines	Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra	 Volunteers I.T knowledge Participation of Food Relief Network members Participation of Food Relief Advisory Committee Other Community Organisations 	
Short Term	4.2.2	Create a group or distribution list for ease of access for communication around when meetings are being held				
	4.2.3	Utilise existing communication channels including Facebook, Volunteering ACT and other community options for spreading awareness of what is occurring at meetings				
	4.2.4	Develop a brochure, or information guide outlining the purpose of the Food Relief Network Meetings to be shared with all service providers	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines	Volunteering ACT Hands Across		
Medium Term	4.2.5	Develop a year ahead calendar of events to maximise collaboration and coordination of resources		Canberra	David Pocock	
	4.2.6	Develop a plan to give recognition to all service provides				
Long Term	4.2.7	Create a toolkit to educate new/ongoing food relief providers on the systems and support available to them	Becc Spradau Randy Albrecht Trevor Gilbertson Jason Haines Volunteering ACT Hands Across Canberra	Hands Across		
	4.2.8	Review the participations of the Food Relief Network meetings and consider other ways to target new members				

5.

Service Providers



Job illustrations by Storyset

Service Providers - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Standardise the experience for volunteers and service providers

Objectives:

5.1. Build a pool of resources to support & equip those working in the food relief sector to provide the best experience for visitors/clients/customers/end users

What has been working well?

- Treating all staff the same regarding collaboration and opportunities
- Recognising volunteers as individual people and understanding their skills, goals and ambitions
- Dedicated, committed and amazing volunteers and services providers with an abundance of energy

Areas for improvement

- Increased recognition, appreciation and value for the sector.
- Standards set for volunteer training.
- Types of training available recognised and promoted to service providers
- Reduction in individuals trying to do everything themselves and burning out, or having expectations of volunteers that they can't meet
- Skills of volunteers recognised and utilised, and redirected where possible to ensure all volunteers are doing meaningful work

Stakeholders Impacted

- Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries
- Enabling Organisations

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

• Happy, healthy service providers and volunteers who are able to look after themselves while maintaining the care they provide for the community

What will this enable for the broader community

• Access to service providers and volunteers who provide care and commitment to providing food relief

Service Providers - Action Plan (1 of 2)

Objective 5.1.		Build a pool of resources to support & equip working in the food re	elief sector in	order to provide the be	st experience for end users	
Timeframe	ID	Actions	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
	5.1.1	Investigate training opportunities, venues and organisations / training providers	Robyn Wall Greg	Volunteering ACT - courses/ workshops/ resources Hands Across Canberra	ACT Govt Online Training e.g. food handling	
Short Term	5.1.2	Determine training needs across the network	Marshall Peter Harper Kirsty Baker		 Information hosting website to provide resources and information 	
	5.1.3	Identify training priorities within the needs across the network				
Medium	5.1.4	Deliver training	Robyn Wall Greg Marshall	Volunteering ACT - courses/ workshops/ resources Hands Across Canberra		
Term	5.1.5	Investigate resilience and wellbeing supports for Pantry Managers e.g. mentors/coaches/de-escalation and Management 101 training, especially for volunteers	Peter Harper Kirsty Baker			
Long Term	5.1.6	Develop self-nomination portal, where administrative burden is reduced and everyone in the community has the opportunity to register for training and other resources	Robyn Wall Greg Marshall Peter Harper Kirsty Baker	Volunteering ACT - courses/ workshops/ resources Hands Across Canberra		

6.

Reliable Funding



Reliable Funding - Summary of the challenge

Challenge:

Secure consistent and regular funding across the community to meet the increased need for food

Objectives:

6.1. Source enough funding to maximise the impact for the community and to build resilience and capacity for organisations and service providers

What has been working well?

- Solidarity among food providers, coming together to identify common challenges and goals
- Building relationships within the community and leveraging resources that are available and connecting with other services for provide holistic support
- Acknowledging the strengths of the diversity within the community

Areas for improvement

- Increased demand for food, resulting in an increased demand for funding and donations are not increasing at the same rate
- State and Federal Government support, knowledge and understanding of the need for food relief in the Canberra region
- Canberra community support and awareness of the need for food relief in the Canberra region

Stakeholders Impacted

- Facilitation Organisations
- Formal Food Banks
- Community Street Pantries
- Enabling Organisations

Benefits to the Food Relief Community

- Maximise the impact that the community has the ability to make
- Reduce the pressure on service providers and volunteers to lobby for funding individually

What will this enable for the broader community

• A community is nourished and the service provider model is sustainable and adaptable to needs

Reliable Funding - Action Plan

Objective 6.1.		Source enough funding to maximise the impact for the community and to build resilience and capacity for organisations and service providers				
Timeframe	ID	Action	Who will drive this?	Who is needed to support this?	What resources are needed?	
	6.1.1	Conduct an assessment of current funding needs for the sector.	Belinda Barnier Jess Fordyce	Canberra Food Relief Community	 Volunteers Community Leaders and Influencers Networking Groups and Associations Educational Institutions Tech and communication tools 	
	6.1.2	Collate data from the sector and place a dollar value on the current services provided.				
Short	6.1.3	Identify gaps in current funding for the sector (e.g. cost of fuel, running costs, storage)				
Term	6.1.4	Identify all potential funding opportunities, including grants, private foundations, GofundMe individual donors and corporate sponsorships to understand the landscape of opportunity				
	6.1.5	Understand all the grant opportunities available to the sector and develop a calendar outlining opening dates and response due dates, as well as assigning key stakeholders to drive these				
Medium Term	6.1.7	Build relationships with private sector stakeholders (e.g. industry bodies, retailers, petrol companies, universities) through networking at events and arranging meetings	Belinda Barnier Jess Fordyce			
Long Term	6.1.8	Develop a business case or proposal, with a clear mission statement, evidence of need in the community and a detailed plan of action to ACT Government for Funding	Belinda Barnier Jess Fordyce			



Next Steps

There are opportunities to optimise the Food Relief Community and enable effective implementation of this action plan

Coordination

Facilitation

Community Driver

Role

A coordination role for the sector focuses on supporting activities including research, information gathering, reporting, and other administrative activities instrumental in implementing the outcomes of the action plan. A facilitation role for the sector focuses on providing the mechanism for food relief providers to engage, collaborate and drive implementation of the action plan. The facilitation role also provides training and support for service providers to enhance their capabilities.

A community driver role for the sector comprises a cross-section of service provides and focuses on strategic planning, equitable allocation of resources and advocacy and representation of the Food Relief Community.

Current State

- Currently coordination to address challenges occurs amongst some service providers, but not all
- Capacity constraints results in ideas and identified actions remaining in a planning stage

- Food Relief Network facilitates discussion and connection across the sector
- Initial relationships have been built by focusing on the service that each organisation/volunteer provides

- Food and Emergency Relief Advisory Committee is positioned to fulfill an advocacy role to ACT Government
- · Collaboration and co-ordination of food relief community efforts is currently ad-hoc in nature

Opportunity

Establish a Central Coordination Role

Seek funding for the role of a Food Relief Community coordinator to support implementation of the action plan on an ongoing basis.

Enhance ways of working

Implement a process to enhance ways of working for the existing Governance Structure including guidelines around communication, teamwork and expectations for participation.

Form a community driver/leadership council Identify and invite a cross-section of key leaders within the Food Relief Community to join a group driving action, focusing on a collaborative approach to address sector challenges.

Our journey ahead, guided by this plan, is marked by shared commitment and a unified vision for enhanced food relief efforts.



The Food Relief Community Action Plan is just the beginning of a transformative journey. With the plan as a guide, continued collaboration, open communication and adaptability will be the guiding principles to continue making a significant and lasting impact in the lives of those we serve.

Let us move forward with determination and hope, committed to a future where food relief is effective, equitable and sustainable.

Thank you !!!

Participating Organisations

Ainslie Community Pantry, Pam's Pantry, Rosebush Panty, Lyons Food Corner, Communities @ Work, Canberra City Care, St. Johns Care, St. Paul's Spence, Uniting Care Kippax, Tuckerbox Holy Sprit, Helping ACT, St. Vincent de Paul, Oz Harvest, Hands Across Canberra, Volunteering ACT, Scyne Advisory

