

Food System Program



RIVER SPIRIT

ISPARC

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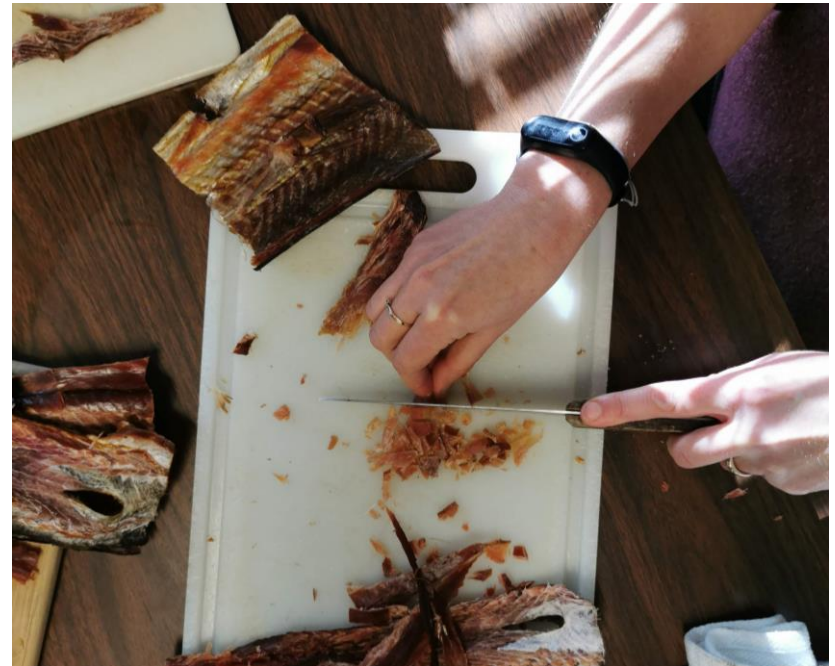


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Introduction to FSP

- Program inception began with BC's Access to Produce in Rural and Remote Communities initiative.
- FNFS was previously funded by the Ministry of Health and supported by the Ministry of Agriculture. From 2009-2002 the Heart & Stroke Foundation implemented the program.
- In 2014 , funding transitioned to FNHA, and the program continued to be implemented by H&S.





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A New Path Forward

Elders, families, and young people connect with gardens, water, and forests to activate and sustain the holistic healing of individuals, communities, and the earth, and to embody our inherent right to self-determination, food sovereignty, and intergenerational sustainability.

~ Food Systems Program Vision statement, developed by participating communities, 2022





Transition to ISPARC

- In 2021, I-SPARC was identified by FNHA as an Indigenous-led organization well aligned to meet the changing needs of community.
- 2022-23 FNFS transitioned to I-SPARC, within Healthy Living programming and services.
- Core aspects of the program were delivered, supporting 65 diverse community-led projects.



Core Services Offered

- \$5000 grants for food related activities
- Technical and educational supports
- Regional and provincial gatherings for networking and knowledge exchange

“We are pleased to continue building on our valued relationship with the First Nations Health Authority, now to include the Food Systems Program. This is an exciting new area of programming for I-SPARC, which aligns with the broad range of innovative community-based activities being carried out through our Healthy Living programs. During this transition year, we have had the opportunity to learn more about what is important for communities in relation to food security and food sovereignty.”

- Rick Brant, I-SPARC CEO, April 2022.



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Listening to Community

“Indigenous Peoples have lived the reality of Indigenous food sovereignty for thousands of years and have made major contributions to the food security of all Peoples.”

- The Working Group on
Indigenous Food Sovereignty





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Positive impacts to health and wellbeing

- Increased access to nutritious, affordable foods and more awareness of how chronic diseases relate to the foods we eat;
- Reduced barriers to food security and the ability to widely distribute fresh and preserved foods to community members through luncheons, feasts and food baskets;
- Social and therapeutic benefits with access to safe neutral spaces to gather; and
- Cultivation and reclaiming of Indigenous food relations.



A diversity of community led approaches

“Originally we submitted the grant for a community green house, it was decided that a root cellar would serve better for the nation.”

And future goals: *“With the cost of living going up constantly, our goal is to give our members all the tools they need to have food security in uncertain times.”* - Rochelle Gagnon, Witset Nation



Successes and lessons learned

Common themes for successful community initiatives:

- Align with other programs
- Engage youth, Elders and Knowledge Holders
- Get buy-in and support from Chief & Council
- Diversify funding sources
- Provide neutral safe space for gathering and sharing



Opportunities for Growth

Common challenges at community and organization level:

- Attracting and retaining labour
- Grant timing vs season
- Not enough funding
- Historical interference
- Loss of Knowledge
- Remoteness/access
- Pest Control
- Climate and disasters



Opportunities for Growth

Challenges faced at program level:

- Technical support model inherited from FNFS was insufficient and excluded an Indigenous-led perspective.
- Fiscal year funding does not align with timing of food production or harvest.
- Gaps in serving all Indigenous populations (misalignment with I-SPARC's *Renewed Strategic Plan*).
- Lack of multi-year opportunities to support more sustainable projects.



A Glance Ahead

Building on lessons learned:

- Move towards tiered granting, to better serve participating communities.
- Address gaps in technical support model to include Indigenous perspective.
- Diversify funding sources to fulfil funding gaps, including serving First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban and away from home Indigenous populations.
 - Operate with multi-year funding to address challenges linked to fiscal year funds.
 - Develop networks for strengthened food relations and food system work.



Healthy Living Programs

1. Leader Training
2. Indigenous RunWalkWheel
3. Honour Your Health Challenge
4. FitNation
5. HealthBeat
6. Warriors of Wellness
7. Schools Physical Activity, and Physical Literacy Initiative
8. Food Systems Program
9. Indigenous Cultural Safety
10. Aboriginal Youth FIRST

