

## Join the Kawartha Region Local Food Wholesale Project

You are invited to participate in an exciting new project that seeks to support expanded production, wholesale marketing, and purchasing of local food within Kawartha Lakes, the City of Peterborough, and Peterborough County.

The Kawartha Region Local Food Wholesale Project aims to build the capacity of the local economy in providing local food to consumers through expanded local food utilization by food service, restaurants, retail, and institutional businesses.

During this two-year project, as a **Local Food Buyer** participant, you will receive at no cost:

1. **In-person group training** to understand local food production in the region and wholesale purchasing possibilities. (February 2024 to April 2024)
2. **One-on-one coaching** at your own convenience to adapt training materials to your own business. (April 2024 to December 2025)
3. Facilitated coordination of access to locally produced foods from local food producers participating in the Local Food Producer side of this project through an **aggregation and distribution model for buyers in restaurant, retail, food service, and institutional businesses** within the region. (July 2024 to December 2025)

### Food Buyer Benefits

Individual food buyers participating in this project will be better able to provide locally produced products that consumers increasingly desire. These local ingredients will be fresher, have a longer shelf-life, and have more predictable prices. While some products will be seasonal, buyers will learn how to build an appreciation of this, leading to more dedicated customers.

Participating local food producers and food buyers will build mutual understanding and lasting relationships while identifying a wholesale model that works for both sides of the wholesale relationship. By doing this together, with the assistance of a team of expert advisors, the group can expand access, networks of collaboration and support, and create greater availability of locally produced foods through local wholesale channels.

### Food Buyer Training

We are excited that buyer training and coaching will be provided by Gary Hoyer of Sustainable Good Food Consulting. As a restaurateur, chef, and general manager in the food service industry, and now as a consultant, professor, and researcher, he specializes in retail and institutional local food systems, purchasing, and preparation.

Training sessions for buyers from food and food service operations of all types (restaurants, retail shops, processors, and institutions) will be customized with the information obtained from our interviewers with you, the project participants.

Training will include:

- Several group workshops using the Guidelines and Toolkit in a modular format.
- Written materials and handouts will be provided to participants and will be recorded for future reference.
- The opportunity to meet with other buyers to build a collaborative network of support in developing local food wholesale capacity.

### **Guidelines and Toolkit**

The Guidelines and Toolkit purpose is to improve the market readiness of buyers to use significant quantities of locally produced foods.

The Guidelines and Toolkit will include:

- A booklet and templates with the content developed to address needs identified by the participants.
- A thorough review of the many practices that buyers could incorporate into the business to succeed in the local food wholesale marketplace.

### **Training topics:**

Buyer Training topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The similarities and differences between local and global agri-foods.
- The benefits of supporting local food in our community.
- How to connect with local food producers and suppliers.
- Making buying and using local products easy (ordering and delivery, storage, and production).
- Strategies for selling local products profitably - how to effectively incorporate, market, promote, cost, and price local products for your operation.
- Educating and exciting your staff and customers about local foods.
- Identifying the local food benefits of increased shelf-life, flavor, freshness, and provenance.
- Understanding the challenges local producers have for consistent crop production.
- How to navigate and benefit from any challenges with local product variety, seasonality, quantity, quality, format, size, or packaging.
- Ensuring food safety concerns have been addressed by producers.
- How to plan for customized seasonal local produce with farmers.
- Negotiating contracts with producers.
- Collaborating with producers to create and benefit from the aggregation and distribution of local food from a food hub.

## **One-on-One Producer Coaching**

The training and one-on-one coaching phase is meant to be advisory in nature, and any costs for amendments by buyers would be borne by them and not the consultant. The Coaching aspect of this mandate will extend through the final phase of the project on an as-needed basis, even after the initial individual business recommendations are provided.

## **Facilitated Aggregation and Distribution Pilot Activity**

The final portion of the project will see a Pilot Aggregation/Distribution System be undertaken to assist the group of producers and buyers engaged in the education and coaching phases of this project to enter wholesale buying relationships as a collective group with centralized activities. This will address challenges of product delivery costs, potential struggles meeting volume demands from an individual producer on a weekly basis, risk of product availability given potential crop losses by one producer, less variety, and more.

The Local Food Hub demonstration pilot project will facilitate collaboration among participants to test and choose the appropriate aggregation and distribution systems (be it a central place or a network of smaller function-based facilities, or other arrangements), which will ultimately increase the volume of local food transactions and improve efficiency for local food distribution and buyer procurement in the region.

## **Next Steps for Food Buyers**

### **Step 1: Expression of Interest**

**To register for this project**, complete this short **Expression of Interest Form**. Tell us why you are interested in this project and what you hope to achieve by participating. Please note spaces are limited. **The deadline to apply is December 22, 2023.**

### **Step 2: Follow-up Questions**

After completing this Expression of Interest, you will be contacted within 7 days to collect additional information for our team of advisors to determine the most appropriate training and coaching.

All information collected about your business will be kept confidential. Contact information will be used only for communications within this project. Other information provided in your responses will be used to guide the development of training and coaching within this project.

Please indicate your interest in participating by completing this short **Expression of Interest Form**. **The deadline to apply is December 22, 2023.**

**For additional information, contact:**

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