

# Food and Nutrition Programs for People Living with HIV: Findings from a community-informed needs assessment



## What do we know?

For people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), medications and healthy foods are needed.<sup>(1-3)</sup> Not having access to enough food can reduce medication effectiveness and increase viral load (2 out of 3 global HIV targets).<sup>(3-6)</sup> For more information on global HIV targets, click here to visit [unaids.org](https://unaids.org)

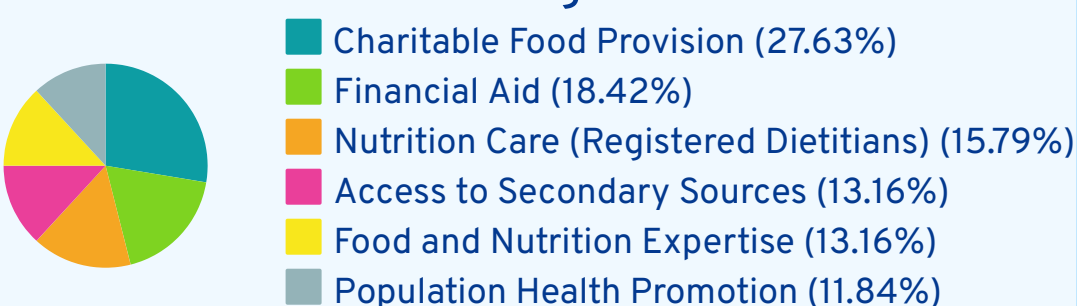


## What did we learn from our research?

### Study 1: Scoping Review<sup>(7)</sup>

In this study, we summarized published and unpublished information on food and nutrition programs for people living with HIV in Canada. We found:

#### 76 Resources and Programs



Most programs were **emergency resources**, such as food banks, meal programs and financial aid.

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### Study 2: Virtual Food Costing<sup>(8)</sup>

In this study, we used simulated Nova Scotian households to learn more about the affordability of a nutritious diet compared to basic costs of living for people living with HIV.



**4 of 6** households were at-risk of being in debt after one month



Household of 4 + Income Assistance: **-\$1,058.70**  
 Household of 3 + Income Assistance: **-\$973.65**  
 Household of 1 + Income Assistance: **-\$677.40**  
 Household of 1+ Minimum Wage: **-\$383.45**

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### Study 3: Interviews and Study 4: Questionnaire

In studies three and four, we talked to Nova Scotians to learn about their experiences with food and nutrition programs, and things to think about when creating programs.

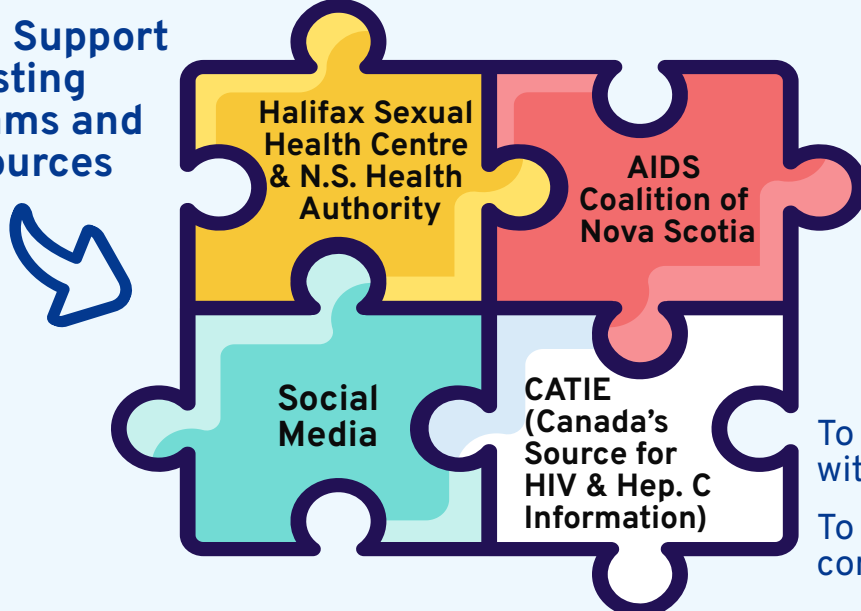
**12 People Living with HIV and 9 Service Providers** were interviewed<sup>(9,10)</sup>  
**3 People Living with HIV** completed a questionnaire

#### Key Take-Home Messages:

- Consider the social determinants of health that impact program participants (ex: housing, income, education, access to healthcare, social support)
- Use and support existing resources
- Challenge stigma and bias
- Address food and nutrition misinformation
- Create ways to eat together
- Ensure programs target different stages of living with HIV
- Prioritize accessible and easy-to-find programs



#### Use and Support Existing Programs and Resources



To read the free journal article with service providers, click here.

To read the free journal article with community members, click here.

## Food to eNhance Our Wellness (FoodNOW) Project

The FoodNOW Project included four research studies aimed at collecting information on food and nutrition programs for people living with HIV in Nova Scotia.

### FoodNOW Prioritized Community Input and Collaboration Throughout the Project



World AIDS Day Event and Workshop for Community



Building Relationships with others Studying Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections



Feedback from Community Partners and Service Providers

## People Living with HIV Who Use Food and Nutrition Programs in Nova Scotia Want...

Accessible HIV care and support, including online and in-person programs for different stages of living with HIV

Inclusive programs that disrupt stigma

Access to affordable foods and livable wages

Nutrition and food knowledge and skills from Registered Dietitians



Long-term solutions through collaboration with communities and existing programs

Emergency Services Are Not Enough!



#### References

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