

# COMMUNITY KITCHENS – SPEAKER’S NOTES

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## SLIDE 1: COMMUNITY KITCHENS

### Introduction

This presentation is based on the *Community Kitchen Best Practices Toolkit: A Guide for Community Organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador*. It is one in a series of best practices toolkits, which also cover community gardens, farmers' markets, and bulk buying clubs, available through the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador.



Your audience should come away from this presentation with a basic understanding of what a community kitchen is and how it works. Those who plan on actually starting a community kitchen should consult the toolkit for more in depth information and resources.

This presentation should take between 30 and 40 minutes, depending on how much interaction there is between the audience and the presenter.

### Materials Needed:

- Projector & screen
- Flipchart or whiteboard & marker
- FSN E-News sign-up forms (available at [www.foodsecuritynews.com](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com))
- A copy of *Community Kitchen Best Practices Toolkit: A Guide for Community Organizations* (optional)

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## SLIDE 2: AGENDA

Introduce the topic and list the information that is going to be covered during the presentation. This slide can be on the screen while welcoming the group and doing introductions and icebreakers.

Let the audience know how long you expect the presentation to take, and whether they should ask questions as they arise or wait until the presentation is over.



The slide features a yellow header with the title 'Community Kitchens' and a dark red sub-header with the title 'Agenda'. Below the sub-header is a numbered list of 12 items.

1. What is a Community Kitchen
2. Why Start a Community Kitchen
3. Identifying a Group
4. Kitchen Coordinator
5. Partnerships
6. Location
7. Funding
8. Kitchen Orientation
9. Supplies
10. Leading a Community Kitchen
11. Healthy Eating
12. Recipes

## Ice-Breakers

Consider introducing your audience to each other and the concept of food security by holding an ice-breaker. Ice-breakers are short games that get people talking, introducing themselves, and sharing information. Icebreakers can range from simply asking the group to introduce themselves and share their favourite vegetable, to more interactive activities or games.

FoodShare Toronto has a great list of food security related icebreakers at [http://www.foodshare.net/toolbox\\_roots-rooftops-Support.htm](http://www.foodshare.net/toolbox_roots-rooftops-Support.htm)

## SLIDE 3: WHAT IS A COMMUNITY KITCHEN?

- Community kitchens (also called 'collective kitchens') are community-based cooking programs where small groups of people come together to **prepare healthy meals to take home to their families.**
- In a community kitchen **every member contributes** by planning, preparing, and



The slide features a yellow header with the title 'What is a Community Kitchen?'. Below the header is a photograph of hands chopping purple vegetables on a cutting board, with various kitchen supplies like flour, oil, and jars in the foreground. To the right of the photo is a bulleted list.

- Small groups of people preparing meals together
- Participants bring meals home to their families
- Everyone contributes to planning, preparing, and cooking

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cooking food.

- Community kitchens are great opportunities for learning about the importance of **healthy eating** and developing the skills to prepare healthy and affordable meals.

### SLIDE 4: WHY START A COMMUNITY KITCHEN?

- A community kitchen can help improve the **food security** of participants by increasing physical and economic access to adequate amounts of healthy food.
- Community kitchen participants can learn how to prepare **tasty and nutritious meals on a budget**.
- By cooking in a group, participants **build confidence** in their cooking and feel more comfortable in the kitchen.
- Community kitchens also **build community** and bring people together, forming strong social support networks.

#### Why Start a Community Kitchen?

- Develop food knowledge and cooking skills
- Learn about nutrition, food labels, using Canada's Food Guide
- Learn about budgeting and cost-effective shopping
- Social benefits



### SLIDE 5: IDENTIFYING A GROUP

The first step in starting a community kitchen is to identify a group of people that your community kitchen will serve.

- Many community organizations already have a group of participants who can join a kitchen, such as single parents, a youth group, the elderly at a senior's complex, or members of a church.

#### Identifying a Group

- Four to eight participants
- Can draw from an existing group (seniors, youth, single parents, tenants association, etc.)
- Or hold a community meeting to recruit participants



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- Keep in mind that the ideal size for a community kitchen is usually between **four to eight participants**.
- If you do not already have a group, you can recruit participants from the general community by holding a meeting or information session.
- Think about how you will design and structure your kitchen to meet your participants’ needs. For example, if your community kitchen is for single parents, you will want to design a **cooking schedule** that takes into account their work and child-care schedules and prepare meals that are appropriate for their children.

**Ask the group if there are any groups within their community to start a community kitchen with.**

### SLIDE 6: KITCHEN COORDINATOR

It is important to have a coordinator to oversee the community kitchen program. A kitchen coordinator should have some experience in cooking, food, and nutrition, as well as the ability to manage and guide a group of people.

- Coordinators may be **volunteers** from the community, or they may work with the community kitchen as a **paid employee**.
- If the group has **participants with special needs** it can be helpful to have a coordinator with professional experience or training.
- The coordinator will need appropriate support and training. The *Community Kitchen Best Practices Toolkit* is a great resource for a community kitchen coordinator, and it references many more resources.
- There are many sources of **employment grants** that might be used to hire a coordinator. See Appendix R in the *Community Kitchen Best Practices Toolkit* for links to funding sources.

### Kitchen Coordinator

- Can be volunteer or staff of a community organization
- Tasks:
  - Finding kitchen partners
  - Promoting the kitchen
  - Managing group
  - Shopping for food & managing budget
  - Keeping an inventory of supplies, organizing storage areas, etc.
  - Planning and facilitating kitchen sessions
  - Ensuring health and safety practices are followed in the kitchen



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## SLIDE 7: PARTNERSHIPS

It will be important to bring together a group of partners who can support your community kitchen. These are people or organizations that can act as resources by providing information, support and guidance.

- A **Regional Nutritionist** with your Regional Health Authority (RHA) can assist you in starting and leading a community kitchen and provide information on food and nutrition. Registered dietitians in your community may be found in hospitals, private clinics, and seniors' residences.
- An **Environmental Health Officer** can advise on safe food practices and can be found at your Regional Health Authority.
- An **adult educator or professional facilitator** may provide support on group facilitation and/or education techniques.

### Partnerships

- Regional Nutritionists
- Registered Dietitians
- Environmental Health Officer
- Adult educators
- Partner organization
  - Clubs
  - Charities
  - Community Centres



Working with a **partner organization** can offer the benefits of accessing space, staff, storage, participants, experience, and resources that already exist within the organization.

**Ask the audience what potential partners they can think of in their own community.**

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## SLIDE 8: LOCATION

Finding a location is critical to starting a community kitchen. You do not need a licensed industrial kitchen so long as the kitchen you choose has everything in it you need. You may want to partner with a local agency or community organization so that rental costs can be waived or reduced.

- Make sure there will be **enough room** in the kitchen for all group members to work comfortably.
- The kitchen should have all the **tools** you will need to operate, such as:
  - basic kitchen appliances (stove, fridge, microwave oven, two-compartment sink);
  - cooking equipment (pots, pans, baking trays, utensils, etc.); and
  - furniture (table and chairs).

**Ask the audience if they know of any potential locations for a community kitchen.**

### Location

- Community centres
- Community halls
- Churches
- Grocery stores with cooking facilities
- Seniors' residences
- Schools
- University residences
- Neighbourhood houses
- Family Resource Centres



Must Have:

- Hot and cold water supply
- Kitchen Equipment (pots & pans)

## SLIDE 9: FUNDING

Many community kitchens prepare meals costing a total of **\$4 - \$6 per family member per session**.

Community kitchens use a number of different ways to access the financial resources they need to run their program. Two commonly used approaches are sponsorships and grants:

- **Sponsors** can provide both monetary and in-kind support.

### Funding

Needed for food, equipment, kitchen space, and staff

**Sponsorships/donations**

- Local businesses
- Town councils
- Community groups

**Grants**

- Governments
- Foundations
- Corporations



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For example, an organization or business may donate the kitchen space, or give a discount on food.

- There are a number of **grants** available from municipal, provincial, and federal governments, large corporations, foundations and non-profits. Consult the appendices of the Best Practices Toolkit for links and resources on accessing grants.

### SLIDE 10: KITCHEN ORIENTATION

The purpose of an orientation meeting is to facilitate introductions, talk about the purpose of the community kitchen, and make collective decisions about some aspects of kitchen organization (such as developing a planning and cooking schedule, a kitchen policy, etc.).



- The group should also choose a **cooking and meeting schedule**. Most kitchens meet twice a month—first for a planning session followed by a cooking session a few days later.
- The group should decide what fee, if any, the participants should pay, based on how much outside **funding and sponsorship** there is.
- The group should also decide how **shopping** will take place and whether any transportation needs to be arranged for shopping or to get to the kitchen.
- The group will need to develop a **policy to guide behaviour and conduct in the kitchen**.

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### SLIDE 11: SUPPLIES

In addition to main food ingredients required for each kitchen session, community kitchen organizers will need to obtain **basic staples** that are used often.

- Many community kitchens have success getting support for staples from local grocery stores.
- Some kitchen utensils and equipment may also be needed.



### SLIDE 12: LEADING A COMMUNITY KITCHEN: PLANNING

For your first planning session your group won't have the benefit of hindsight. Plan your first **budget** carefully and try to choose easier recipes. Some groups may choose to have their first planning session immediately following the orientation session, when they already have all the members gathered together.

- As a group, the participants will need to choose **3-5 recipes** they would like to prepare. The coordinator can work with a dietitian to develop a list of recipes that are healthy and low-cost. Participants may also bring in their own healthy recipes. Gathering store flyers in advance will help in planning the shopping list.
- It is a good practice to **designate cooking tasks** ahead of the actual cooking session. This will save you time on the cooking day and let everyone arrive prepared and ready to get started. Often it works well to



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have one or two participants responsible for planning and preparing each of the chosen recipes. For example: if there are 8 kitchen participants and 4 recipes to prepare, 2 participants can work on each recipe. This will give participants an opportunity to take part in all of the tasks involved in preparing the recipe.

### SLIDE 13: LEADING A COMMUNITY KITCHEN: SHOPPING

Sometimes the coordinator will do the shopping on behalf of the group. In other cases, one or more of the community kitchen participants will do the shopping. It's a good practice, especially early on in the program, to have the coordinator assist the participants with shopping. Shopping trips can be important opportunities for participants to learn about making healthy, economical food choices and how to read food labels.



Leading a Community Kitchen

Shopping

- Take advantage of store specials and sales
- Buy generic and in-store brands, when cheaper
- Buy in bulk to save money
- Choose frozen vegetables instead of tinned; they are less expensive, lower in sodium, and it reduces waste



Shopping is usually completed the day before or the day of the cooking session to help make sure the food is as fresh as possible. Think about featuring **fresh, in-season foods** in your kitchen, such as local berries and vegetables that can be obtained from farmers' markets, roadside stands, community gardens, or bulk buying clubs in your local area.

**Ask the audience to list places to get healthy and local food in their community.**

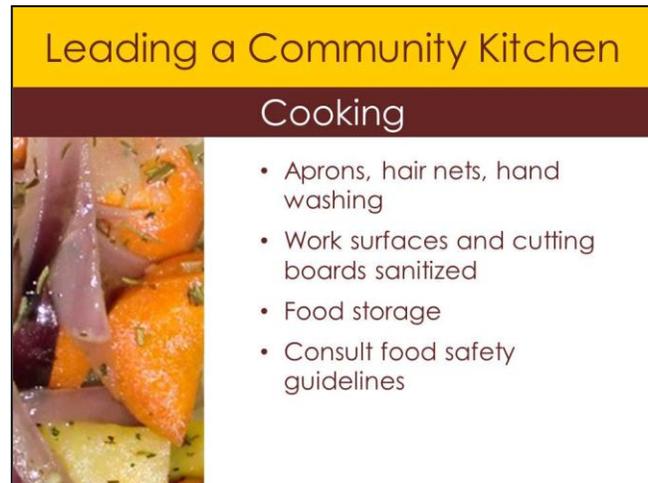
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### SLIDE 14: LEADING A COMMUNITY KITCHEN: COOKING

Adopting safe cooking practices is very important for a successful community kitchen. Food-borne illness is a widespread and potentially dangerous threat.

**Awareness and education** are key factors in reducing the possibility of food-borne illness.

- All members must put on an apron and a hair net and wash their hands.
- Work surfaces and cutting boards should be sanitized.
- At each cooking session, the coordinator should review important food safety practices with kitchen participants.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, community kitchens need to meet the *Standard Health Guidelines for Not-For-Profit Organizations* established by the Department of Health and Community Services.  
([www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/envhealth/notforprof.pdf](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/envhealth/notforprof.pdf))
- To keep food safe, participants should put food in the fridge when they arrive home, and know the length of time the food can be stored safely and how to properly re-heat it.



**Leading a Community Kitchen**

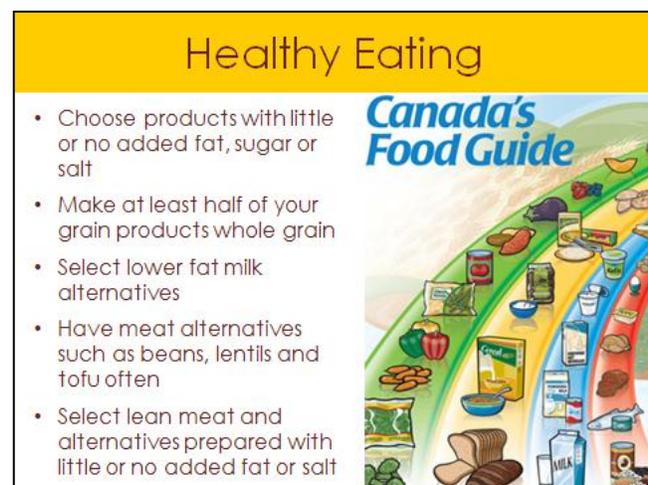
**Cooking**

- Aprons, hair nets, hand washing
- Work surfaces and cutting boards sanitized
- Food storage
- Consult food safety guidelines

### SLIDE 15: HEALTHY EATING

Learning about affordable, healthy eating is one of the main benefits of community kitchens.

- All meals prepared in community kitchens should follow **Canada’s Food Guide**.
- The skills and knowledge that participants learn in a



**Healthy Eating**

- Choose products with little or no added fat, sugar or salt
- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain
- Select lower fat milk alternatives
- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often
- Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt

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community kitchen can be used in everyday life to make healthy, tasty and affordable meals.

- Health Canada also produces a food guide tailored to reflect the food traditions and choices of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. It is a complement to the 2007 *Canada's Food Guide* and both can be found at the Health Canada website.
- To help build participants' knowledge about nutrition and healthy eating, some community kitchens offer one short food-related lesson or “message” at each cooking session.

### SLIDE 16: RECIPES

There are many great recipe books created for community kitchens. Participants may also be invited to bring in and share recipes.

- Some recipes may need to be adapted to follow *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* so that you know the meals you are preparing in your kitchen are as **healthy and nutritious as possible**.
- The Dietitians of Canada have a **recipe analyzer tool** on their website **eaTracker** ([www.eatracker.ca](http://www.eatracker.ca)). You can use the *Recipe Analyzer* to find out the nutrients in your recipes and how many Canada's Food Guide Servings your recipe provides. The tool also provides ingredient substitution tips that can be used to make recipes healthier.
- When selecting recipes, try to think about what foods you may be able to get locally. **Farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community gardens are all potential sources of fresh, local food.** To locate some local food outlets and projects in your area, consult the Food Security Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (FSN)'s Food Security Initiative Inventory or other resources on FSN's Website ([www.foodsecuritynews.com](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com)).



**Ask the audience what kinds of healthy recipes they would like to learn.**

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### SLIDE 17: THANK YOU

Thank the audience for participating and take this opportunity to encourage discussions and questions about community kitchens in your community.

It is a good idea to know about any existing community kitchen programs in the area before starting your presentation. You can use FSN's Food Security Initiative Inventory to help you find community kitchens in your area (see [www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources)).

If members of the audience are interested in starting a community kitchen, direct them to FSN's Best Practices Toolkits ([www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources](http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/resources)).

Try to continue the momentum from the presentation by starting an email list or a working group to work on improving your community's food security.

Collect any FSN E-News sign-up sheets and return them to FSN, along with any feedback about the presentation.

