



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island

NEWS RELEASE

March 6, 2023

Local volunteer drivers needed to tackle food insecurity *United Way BC launches Food Link mobile app*

A graphic with a red border and a white background. On the left, the text "DRIVERS NEEDED" is written in large, bold, red capital letters. Below it, "Be the link." is written in a smaller, dark grey font. To the right of the text is a dark grey silhouette of a person standing next to a car. Below the white background, there is a red horizontal band. On the left side of this band, the text "Your neighbours are in need!" is written in white, bold font. Below that, in a smaller white font, it says "Volunteer to deliver food now with Food Link by United Way BC!". On the right side of the red band is the United Way British Columbia logo, which consists of the stylized hand-and-figure icon and the text "United Way British Columbia" below it.

Central Office, Burnaby, BC – United Way British Columbia - working with communities in BC's Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island (United Way BC) is excited to announce the **launching of an innovative mobile app designed to tackle food insecurity in the province.**

Food Link connects the specific needs of non-profit partners and their clients to the healthy, nutritious and culturally appropriate food they need by linking them to local, regional, and small-scale food organizations and suppliers. Food Link then allows United Way BC to organize volunteers who efficiently and cost-effectively transport food between locations.

With the rising cost of goods due to inflation, more British Columbians are experiencing food insecurity, which is defined by the Government of Canada as the "inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so." In British Columbia today, 15% of people are considered food insecure, which means that over 726,000 people struggle to put enough quality food on the table. The goal of Food Link is to reduce the barriers to accessing quality food for British Columbians.

"The issue is not that there is not enough food to distribute to community members in need, but rather it is an issue of access, both in terms of cost and people's ability to get to the food they need. Food Link addresses these challenges directly by acting as an easy-to-use and reliable connector between food organizations and businesses and non-profits and their program participants. Volunteers are critical to these connections." – Kim Winchell, Provincial Director, Community Impact and Investment, United Way BC.

Food Link is live in three BC areas starting today through May: the Upper Fraser Valley, Surrey, and North Okanagan. Food Link will roll out in select areas across the province later this year and in 2024, and the goal is for the app to be available BC-wide in 2024/25.

In order to support Food Link's commitment to providing food to those in need, residents of the first three pilot locations, the Upper Fraser Valley, Surrey, and North Okanagan, who are interested in volunteering as food delivery drivers can visit United Way BC's iVolunteer online portal to apply: <https://www.ivolunteer.ca/foodlink>. (Volunteers must have access to a safe and reliable vehicle, and a valid BC driver's license).

To learn more about Food Link, please visit <https://uwbc.ca/program/foodlink/>.

-30-

About United Way British Columbia – working with communities in BC's Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island

United Way supports healthy, caring and inclusive communities by strengthening vital connections that support people in need. Representing the six regions of Central and Northern Vancouver Island, East Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Southern Interior, Thompson Nicola Cariboo, and Trail and District, our organization serves a population of more than 4 million people, with a focus on kids and youth, seniors, poverty, mental health and food security.

www.uwbc.ca

Interviews are available with Kim Winchell, Provincial Director, Community Impact & Investment.

Media contact:

Pinder Rehal

Public Relations, Marketing & Communications

United Way British Columbia – working with communities in BC's Interior, Lower Mainland and Central & Northern Vancouver Island

PinderR@uwbc.ca

Cell: 647.542.8545