



United Way
British Columbia

MEDIA RELEASE
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New Indigenous-Led Food Hub and Training Centre Tackles Food Insecurity in Northern BC

Tea Creek to receive \$1 million to support a transformative food sovereignty initiative in the Skeena Valley



Central Office, Burnaby, B.C. - Northern Indigenous communities in British Columbia will soon benefit from expanded food skills training and infrastructure to combat food insecurity, thanks to a \$1 million investment through United Way British Columbia (United Way BC)'s Large Food Infrastructure Grant, in partnership with the Government of British Columbia through the Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction.

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Association (Tea Creek) will develop a Food Hub and Training Centre in the Skeena Valley, aimed at revitalizing food production and economic interdependence. This initiative will address key challenges such as:

- Limited access to culturally preferred and nutritious food
- Insufficient infrastructure for food production, storage, and distribution
- High poverty and unemployment rates in rural areas
- Erosion of traditional food systems due to climate change, industrial development, and lasting impacts of colonialism

The 4,000-square-foot Longhouse facility will focus on food skills training, cultural food preservation, and supporting Indigenous food businesses. It will strengthen local food systems by providing essential resources and infrastructure, such as food storage and training for communities to develop economic opportunities in food production and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the project will offer workshops on food sovereignty, preservation, and economic empowerment. It will serve as a regional hub for food coordination and emergency preparedness, with a focus on long-term sustainability through partnerships and Indigenous-led development.

The Large Food Infrastructure Grant (LFIG) totals \$6 million, with \$1 million allocated to each of six communities to support the development of regional food hubs, commercial kitchens, and expanded meal production services in high-need areas.

This project is supported by the \$14 million Critical Food Infrastructure Fund (CFIF), announced by the Government of BC in September 2023, spanning three years and administered by United Way British Columbia. The CFIF supports community food infrastructure projects by providing grants to increase capacity to offer nutritious and culturally appropriate food to people who need it.

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> QUOTES

"The Longhouse hub has been a dream since our first program when elders and hereditary chiefs told us that we need to build a longhouse. Tea Creek is an ancestral gathering place - a place where grease trails to four different communities meet and we have over 1,000 Indigenous guests who come here every year to share, learn, and benefit from our programs. This longhouse will strengthen the revitalization of this traditional food production and gathering space. Thank you, United Way BC and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction."

- Jacob Beaton, Executive Director, Indigenous Food Sovereignty Association

"This investment is a testament to the importance of Indigenous-led initiatives in addressing food insecurity. United Way BC is proud to support Tea Creek in their efforts to create sustainable, community-driven solutions to the unique food access challenges our northern communities face on a daily basis."

- Alžběta Sabová, Director, Food Security, United Way British Columbia

"We all want people to have access to nutritious food, so we're taking more action to help people withstand the impacts of the trade war and global inflation. That's why on top of hundreds of other projects, we've funded new critical infrastructure that helps people access fresh food in Northern B.C. and throughout the province."

- Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

> **PHOTOS:** [Access photos of Tea Creek here](#)

About Tea Creek

Tea Creek Farm is an Indigenous-led, culturally safe, land-based training and employment initiative located in Kitwanga, British Columbia, on the unceded and ancestral lands of the Gitksan First Nation. Established in 2020, the farm focuses on Indigenous food sovereignty and trades training, aiming to revitalize traditional food systems and empower Indigenous communities.

teacreek.ca

About United Way British Columbia

United Way BC helps build healthy, caring, and inclusive communities across our province. We strengthen vital connections that support people in need with a focus on emergency response, kids and youth, seniors, mental health, and food security.

uwbc.ca

Interviews are available with Alžběta Sabová, Director, Food Security, United Way British Columbia

Media contact:

Dara Hill, Marketing & Communications, United Way British Columbia

darah@uwbc.ca

Office: 236-427-1265 | Cell: 604-314-7844

