

Proposal Report  
*Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House*  
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February 9, 2018

Introduction

The Downtown Eastside is an ethnically diverse neighbourhood that has a large population of individuals and families living with low incomes. It is also an area that has a large group of at risk individuals. Many of the residents of the Downtown Eastside experience material poverty. Unfortunately, individuals living in material poverty, often lack access to adequate housing, kitchen facilities, and nutritious food (Miewald & Ostry, 2014). When living in material poverty, individuals often lose control over what food they are consuming, as they often acquire their food from shelters and institutions. Most food shelters rely on donations from grocery stores and bakeries. Quite often, the donations that they receive are comprised of wheat based food products such as buns, scones and doughnuts all of which are usually high in refined sugar and fat. Subsequently, many individuals living with chronic diseases are faced with the choice of either 1. Not eating or 2. Eating food that is detrimental to their health condition. The goals of this project are to survey 25 food programs in the DTES and determine which ones offer whole foods, fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, organic and other nutrient dense food and to then create a document that will inform individuals living with chronic diseases where they can get food that does not impact their health.

Significance

The connections between housing, food security and health is a relationship that continues to be an area of study that is trying to be better understood (Miewald & Ostry, 2014). This project is important because in the past, studies that have been conducted in the downtown eastside have not been made readily available to residents as they are often posted on private University databases (Linden et al., 2012). There is currently no document available for residents of this neighbourhood that highlights where they can find healthy food options that accommodate dietary restrictions. Therefore, we will create an information sheet that highlights our findings. We will then distribute copies of it to all the venues that we survey and hope that they can then provide them to residents who use their facility.

Objectives

Goal: Gain a deeper understanding about the 25 food programs we are researching within the Downtown Eastside to find what healthy foods they offer.

Objective 1: Gather information about these 25 organizations such as: who they are, who they serve and what they serve to their community members in order to use this data to do a quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Objective 2: If the sample size of 25 organizations is not big enough to relate to the entire DTES population, we will gather qualitative data through our 11 question survey/interview with these 25 organizations that will give us a understanding of what they do, who they serve, and what they serve to the community members.

Goal 2: Create a community resource paper that explains which food programs offer choice to individuals with dietary restrictions.

Objective 2: Create a document that identifies food programs within the DTES that offer certain types of foods such as: gluten-free, dairy free, alternatives to refined sugars, fresh fruits & vegetables, whole grains, etc.

Objective 3: Communicate our results back to the DTES Neighbourhood House so that Joanne is able to release it to the DTES community as she sees fit.

Objective 4: Allow people within the DTES community who have certain dietary restrictions to gain a sense of choice that will allow them the freedom to eat without feeling sick or uncomfortable.

### Methods

In order to complete our objectives and gain knowledge about access to dietary-restricted foods, a multi-step approach will be conducted.

First, to obtain data about locations within the DTES that provide food options to those who have restricted diets, we will conduct an open-ended interview in various locations in the months of February and March. These locations will include shelters, drop-in programs, and community food service programs . Furthermore, students will be split into two groups and go to 25 locations and interview kitchen managers to learn about their food programs they offer to the residents of the downtown eastside neighborhood. A descriptive letter that explains this project and the DTES Neighbourhood House, in lay language, will be distributed to all organizations involved. Eleven questions will be asked, these will inquire about what their program offers, how often their programs run, how many people they serve, and what kind of foods are available to the users. To avoid offending these organizations, the questions asked during the interviews will also aim to celebrate the work done by the organizations while still acquiring the necessary information. We will also be considerate and respectful of the organization, the kitchen staff schedules, and their workplaces. Ultimately, both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected.

The second part of our approach will consist of compilation and data analysis using SPSS software. Additionally, qualitative data analysis will be conducted. Using our findings and feedback we will create a written resource report that will be submitted to the DTES Neighbourhood House.

Lastly, we will create a information fact and resource sheet that we will distribute to the organizations that participated in our survey. This will allow the organizations to have a copy our findings and the services offered at other organizations within the DTES.

### Outcome

There are two goals we wish to achieve in this project. Our first goal is to provide Joanne (and the rest of the staff at the downtown eastside neighbourhood house) with all the data we collect from the various food centers and shelters that we survey. Our second goal is to create a information sheet that can be distributed to all the places that we surveyed. The information sheet will be a one page document that clearly states which food venues offer meals that are ( Gluten Free, Dairy Free, Vegan, Vegetarian, Low Sodium, and Refined Sugar-Free). On April 8th we will present staff at the DTES neighbourhood house with a copy of our final project report. This paper will be beneficial for food service providers as well as DTES residents. It will allow individuals with dietary restrictions to discover food venues that offer food that will meet their dietary needs.

### Budget

We have no budget for this project as we were provided all the documents needed to complete our close ended survey and no other resources are needed.

### References

- Miewald, C., & Ostry, A. (2014) A Warm Meal and a Bed: Intersections of Housing and Food Security in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, *Housing Studies*, 29:6, 709-729. 10.1080/02673037.2014.920769
- Linden, I. A., Mar, M. Y., Werker, G. R., Jang, K., & Krausz, M. (2013). Research on a Vulnerable Neighborhood—The Vancouver Downtown Eastside from 2001 to 2011. *Journal of Urban Health : Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 90(3), 559–573. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-012-9771-x>