

# Pop-Up Markets Information Guide

Spring 2025

A how-to  
guide  
to host  
your own

- ☒ Barrier-free
- ☒ Reducing stigma
- ☒ Supporting communities



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<https://agefriendlylondon.ca>

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# About Pop-Up Markets





## Purpose of the Guide

Thank you for your interest in hosting a pop-up market in your community! This guide has been created to help you get started with your market. We've gathered valuable insights, best practices, and strategies from community partners and residents in London to provide you with the essential tips and resources you need to help make your market a success.

Pop-up markets are intended to be a non-restrictive and barrier-free program that focuses on the dignity of choice, which is rooted in the belief that everyone is deserving of high-quality, nutritious food and the freedom to choose it for themselves. Pop-up markets foster community by pairing fresh produce with food literacy education and opportunities for neighborhood connection.

This Information Guide has been created through the combined efforts of the Age Friendly London Network (AFLN) and the Child and Youth Network (CYN). Take what you need from this booklet but please feel free to make the market your own. Tailor your market to your space, organizational goals and most importantly, your community. We hope this is helpful in getting you started and we welcome your feedback and insight. Questions and feedback can be sent to [cyn@london.ca](mailto:cyn@london.ca) or [agefriendlylondon@london.ca](mailto:agefriendlylondon@london.ca)

## History of Pop-Up Markets

-  **2021** A pilot project was launched in partnership with Urban Roots London (URL) and Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre, offering weekly produce pick-ups.
-  **2022** The initiative was such a success that the markets were expanded to three more community resource centres — LUSO, Glen Cairn, and Northwest London — thanks to funding from United Way.
-  **2023-24** In 2023, URL partnered with the [Harvest Bucks Sponsorship Program](#) to further grow the project, engaging 8 community partners in the pop-up markets, and in 2024 this grew to 12 community partners.
-  **2025** This year, the program partnership between Urban Roots London and the Harvest Bucks Sponsorship Program supported 12 community partners in London. Five of these community partners were new to the program.

## About Urban Roots London

Urban Roots London envisioned bringing fresh, locally grown produce to underserved communities in London, particularly those most vulnerable to food insecurity. The goal was to provide an accessible option for individuals unable to travel to Urban Roots' affordable farmgate market or afford fresh produce. The community pop-up market model provides low-income residents with access to fresh and locally grown produce, enabling them to select items that are aligned with their unique dietary and cultural preferences. Urban Roots London sought to reduce barriers to accessing nutritious food and mitigate the stigma often associated with emergency food programs by presenting the service as a "market." The integration of the pop-up markets with the Harvest Bucks Sponsorship Program was a natural alignment of shared goals — providing fresh, nutritious produce to low-income families while working to alleviate the impacts of poverty and enhance food security for the most vulnerable and equity-denied individuals in our community. To learn more about Urban Roots London visit their website: <https://urbanrootslondon.ca>



### 2025 Community Pop-Up Markets

- Chelsea Green Community Church
- Childreach
- Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre
- Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre
- Hutton House
- London & Middlesex Community Housing
- LUSO Community Services
- Northwest London Resource Centre
- South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre
- Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre
- The Salvation Army London Community Services
- W.E.A.N Community Centre





## 1.0 Costs of Hosting a Market

The cost of hosting your pop-up market will vary based on the growing season, produce availability, and size of your market. While naturally it's fair to expect more produce with a higher budget, it's important to consider the seasons and harvesting schedule (*check out page 19-20 of this guide for more information*). In the winter, there is a smaller variety of produce that can grow in Ontario so your produce distributor may have to purchase imported produce, costing you more.

Other costs that could be associated with your market are operational. Consider the potential costs of renting a space, purchasing or renting tables, grocery bags, food service gloves, garbage/recycling bags, printing flyers, transportation costs to pick-up the produce, and staffing costs if you are part of a business or non-profit.

In London, there are several potential sources of funding available to help cover the costs of running a pop-up market. This includes the Harvest Bucks Sponsorship Program (<https://healthunit.com/harvest-bucks>), grants, community donations, and corporate sponsorship. In addition to the costs of paying for produce, there are a couple places that may be able to supplement your market with rescued produce including Harvest Hands and London Food Coalition (*membership required*).

While it's difficult to predict the overall cost of your market, to cover the costs of food based on your size, you can expect to spend the following:

- **Small:** \$300-600/ \$20 food hamper= approximately 15 households
- **Medium:** \$600-1000/ \$20 food hamper= approximately 30 households
- **Large:** \$1000+/ \$20 food hamper= approximately 50 households

## 2.0 Set-Up and Layout

While there's no right or wrong way to set-up a market, the amount of produce you plan to distribute or added resources will determine how many tables you will need. The average market uses anywhere from 3-5 rectangle tables. Larger markets can use 12 tables or more, so it's important to plan out your space appropriately to ensure your market runs smoothly.

The layouts on page 8 show three options: Line, "L" shape, and a "U" shape. We recommend implementing a one-way flow for market participants to receive their food and all 3 layouts allow for this to happen effectively.

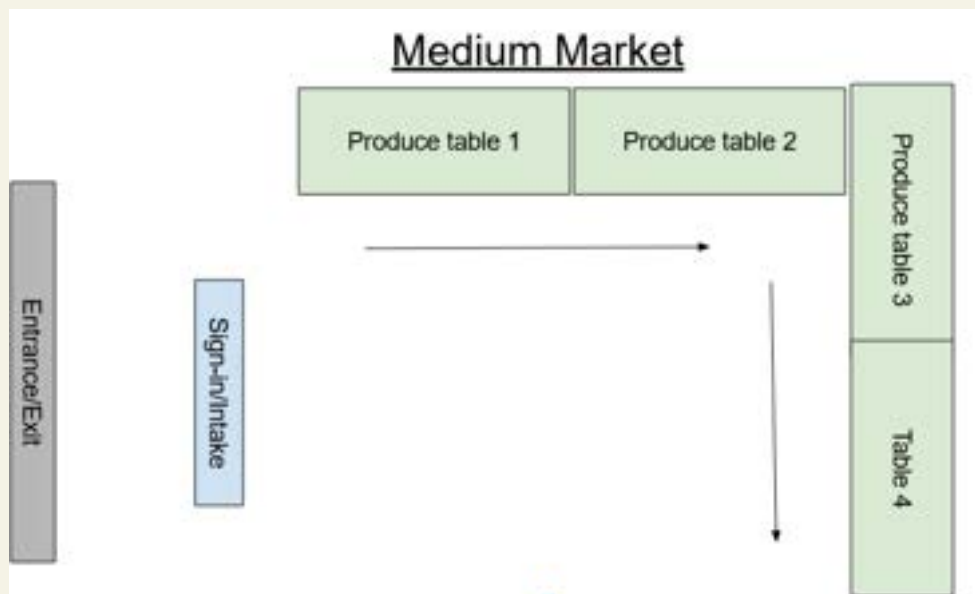


## 2.1 Layout Templates

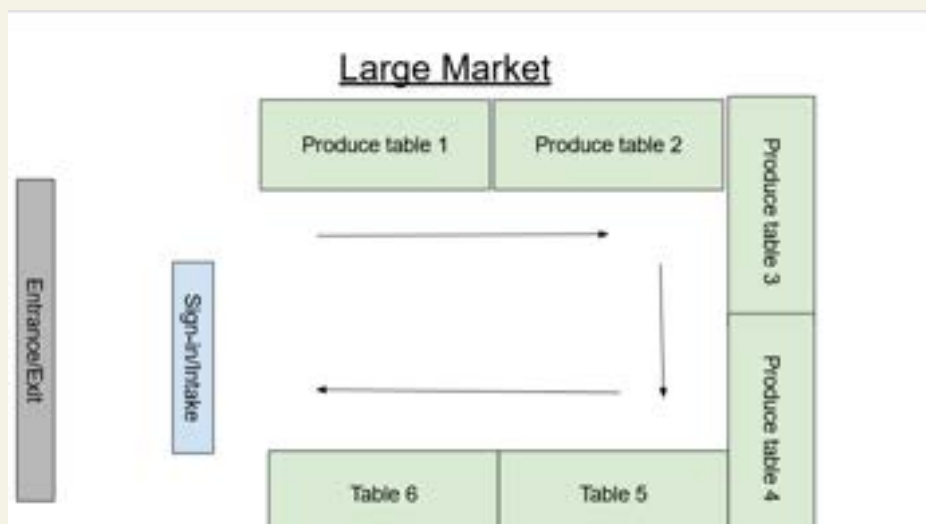
Option 1: Line (best for small markets)



Option 2: "L" shape (best for medium markets)



Option 3: "U" shape (best for large markets)





## 2.2 Food Layout

Aside from the layout of your tables, it's important to consider how you want your food set-up. We recommend placing heavier foods such as potatoes, squash, carrots, and apples on the first food tables and the lighter or more fragile foods such as tomatoes and lettuce on the last tables. This will ensure that your participants will go home with the best quality produce and avoid crushing soft items.

Each distributor will provide your produce to you in a different manner. Some provide the food in cardboard boxes while others may use plastic bins. Regardless of how the food comes to you, you should display your food in an accessible and transparent manner.

Bins should have their lids removed and boxes should be opened up for easy access to the produce so participants can pack their bags independently or with the support of volunteers. Making the produce clearly visible also helps the community see how much is available.



Some organizers display food into wooden crates to make the market more visually appealing. The main objectives are to ensure that the food is easy to access for both participants and the volunteers/staff, as well as maintaining all health and safety guidelines. Food should always be kept at least 6 inches off the ground. Refer to your local health unit guidelines for current food service health regulations.



## 2.3 Supplies Required

Creating a “Market Supplies Bin” can be a helpful tool to bring to each market, especially if it’s being held off-site or at a community location.

We recommend including the following in your market supplies bin:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food service gloves</li> <li>• Pencil case: pens, scissors, safety knife, sharpie</li> <li>• Painter's tape/masking tape</li> <li>• Recycling &amp; garbage bags</li> <li>• Recipes and/or food literacy resources</li> <li>• General organizational pamphlets &amp; program flyers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper or plastic bags</li> <li>• Extra grocery bags</li> <li>• Laminated signs (entrance, exit, sign-in here, produce labels)</li> <li>• Clipboard with sign-in sheet</li> <li>• Sunscreen</li> <li>• Disinfectant wipes &amp; spray</li> <li>• Hand sanitizer</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

## 2.4 Outdoor Markets

In the warmer months it can be fun and exciting to host your market outdoors. Generally speaking, your layout shouldn't need to change as long as there is a clear entrance for your participants. This can be established using welcome signs, arrows, and volunteers/staff. When setting-up outdoors, including tents can be helpful to ensure you have shade. It will also help maintain the quality of your produce. Past participants have noted that waiting in line in the hot sun during an outdoor market can be unpleasant so consider places to wait in the shade or options for an indoor/outdoor market.



Lastly, if you plan to provide resources such as recipes, food literacy sheets, pamphlets or flyers, it's important to include this in your layout from the beginning by setting aside 1-2 tables for this. Papers can be displayed at the end of your market, so as not to get crushed under the produce, or at the very beginning where participants may be waiting in line. It gives them something to look at and can encourage great conversations and engagement with participants during distribution. Clipboards are helpful to keep papers from flying in the wind if you are outdoors.



### 3.0 Staffing and Volunteers

The number of people required to run your market will vary based on the quantity of food/activities and your organizational capacity. Generally, the larger your market is, the more people will be needed. On average, markets need 2-6 people to operate smoothly. Markets can also be great opportunities to engage volunteers with the set-up, operations, and clean-up.

To encourage the greatest amount of engagement with participants as well as maintaining a tidy space, it's best to have a volunteer or staff stationed at each table. Additionally, pop-up markets can be great opportunities for internal and external collaboration, but it's important to have 1-2 people as the designated leader on the day of the market who can help direct the set-up and delegate stations based on changing needs and team strengths.

The following chart is a general guideline for the number of people required based on the size of your market:

Market Size	Staff Support	Volunteer Support
Small Market	1-2	1-2
Medium Market	1-2	2-3
Large Market	2-3	2-5





You may chose to include additional activities in your market such as games, face-painting, craft stations etc. Each additional activity should have a designated volunteer/staff to oversee the station. Activities are a great way to utilize volunteer strengths and highlight local talent.

Lastly, pop-up markets offer great environments for conversations around food literacy and introducing participants to new foods and recipes. Having staff and volunteers who are knowledgeable about the produce being distributed is helpful. This can include how to cut, cook, or season the produce given out.

We recommend, when possible, having a knowledgeable person stationed at your recipe or food literacy table who is comfortable talking with participants about the produce so that they can learn about the various ways to prepare the produce. Some produce may be less familiar to participants, so information can help ensure they know how to use and enjoy the produce.





## 4.0 Promotion & Advertising

Promoting your market can often feel like an afterthought, but it is crucial to the success of a good market. We'd recommend 1-2 weeks advance notice prior to the market date. The most common methods for advertising your market are flyers, digital marketing, word of mouth, and personal invites.

### 4.1 Flyers

When creating flyers for your market, you should ensure they are eye-catching, clear and concise. Using bright colours and visuals helps to make the flyer more noticeable and attract attention. It's also important to consider your wording and phrases used. You don't want to overcrowd the flyer with too much information but consider the following information when designing your flyer: date, time, location with address, eligibility (geographical or financial), nearby bus stops, what to bring (e.g. IDs, bags etc), contact information for questions and logos (agency, faith group, funders etc.).



Also consider where you are sharing this flyer so that you will get the attention of your target audience. Flyers can be posted on community bulletin boards, libraries, community centres, social media platforms, and used as paper/digital invites to community members. Having a flyer for your market can be helpful when sharing with other community partners as well since all of the event information is in one spot.

### 4.2 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is a popular method of advertising. Utilizing social media platforms is often a great way to share your message with the community. Consider making posts on Facebook and Instagram to reach more people about 1 week before your event. This allows time for individuals and families to make plans to attend as well as for the post to circulate online via likes, comments, and shares.

## 4.3 Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is by far the strongest form of advertising market organizers reported being successful. Encouraging past participants to share with their neighbours, friends, and family can be an effective way to meet new people. When past participants make invites to others, it's as if they were putting their 'stamp of approval' on the program and providing a trusted recommendation. Don't be afraid to ask core program participants to invite new people.

## 4.4 Personal Invites

Another effective form of advertisement is through personal invites. This can include in-person invitations, text messages and emails to clients, and distributing flyers in mailboxes. Based on feedback from past participants, they often heard about upcoming markets through personal invitations from staff during other agency programs.

## 4.5 Other Considerations

Before you start promoting your market, it's important to think about the following:

- **Who is eligible to attend?**
  - Are there specific postal codes that you are serving?
  - Are there socio-economic requirements for eligibility (e.g. income)?
- **What do participants need to bring with them?**
  - Grocery bags, ID, proof of income etc.
- Is your market located on a **bus route**?
- **How widespread do you need to advertise?**
  - Is extra promotion required to meet new individuals?
  - Where are the best places to promote that your target population would be accessing? (e.g. grocery stores, laundromats, community centres, libraries etc.)
- Be mindful of how much you advertise so you can manage expectations of the public appropriately. How many individuals or families can you realistically serve with the amount of produce you plan to receive? Don't advertise more than you can provide.
- Have a **contingency plan** if more participants arrive than you can serve.

## 5.0 Intake & Tracking

It is helpful to maintain a sign-in sheet for your program participants to track impact. The data collected can be used for future grants, program planning, tracking trends, and making program improvements for the future. Keeping track of your data shouldn't be a laborious task and can be made simple if done at the beginning of each market as participants arrive. As noted in the layouts, an intake or sign-in station can be placed at the front of the produce tables and provides an opportunity to meet your participants face-to-face and get to know them on a first-name basis.

To provide privacy for program participants, personal information should be kept confidential. Computers should have privacy screens, and personal information should not be left for others to see. Participants should be informed about and consent to the usage and storage of personal information and be able to request that information, if needed.

An Excel worksheet is a great option for statistical information gathering. Information to be considered is the size of family, postal code to identify city location, amount of produce provided, contact information of participants, date of contact with participant, and any notes regarding preferences, comments, or concerns regarding services.

# 5.1 Example Tracking

## Example 1:

Date of Service	Name of Recipient	Address	Postal Code	Size of Family	Amount of Produce Provided	Notes

## Example 2:

Pop-Up Market:

Location:

Name of Recipient	Postal Code	Size of Family	Market #1	Market #2	Market #3	Market #4
Example: John Doe	N5V 1X5	5	✓	✓		✓



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## 6.0 Seasonal Eating

Seasonal eating in London, Ontario involves aligning your produce expectations and distribution with the locally available produce throughout the season. Urban Root's harvesting season is shaped by the region's temperate climate.

### Benefits of Seasonal Eating

- **Taste and Nutrition:** Seasonal produce is fresher and often more flavorful and nutrient-dense.
- **Sustainability:** Eating seasonally reduces reliance on imported goods, cutting down on transportation emissions.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Local and in-season produce is often less expensive due to abundant supply.
- **Community Support:** Buying directly from farmers or local markets strengthens the regional food economy.





## 6.1 Urban Roots London: Harvest Seasons

<b>Spring Harvest</b> Late April - June	Vegetables	Asparagus Leafy greens like Spinach, Arugula, and Lettuce Radishes Green Onions
	Fruits	<i>Limited-</i> early fruits like Rhubarb
<b>Summer Harvest</b> June - August	Vegetables	Zucchini, Cucumbers, and Summer Squash Peas and Beans Garlic Tomatoes, Peppers, and Eggplant
	Fruits	Melons ( <i>weather dependent</i> )
<b>Fall Harvest</b> September - November	Vegetables	Winter Squash Carrots, Beets, and Parsnips Onions Potatoes Kale, Cabbage, and Brussels Sprouts
	Vegetables	Storage crops like Potatoes, Squash, Carrots, Onions, and Beets. Cold-hardy greens like Kale and Spinach
<b>Winter Harvest</b> December - March	Vegetables	



## 6.2 Southwest Ontario Seasonal Harvest Guide

<b>Spring Harvest</b> March - May	Vegetables	Asparagus Spinach and Lettuce Radishes Green Onions Fiddleheads Herbs
	Fruits	Rhubarb
	Features	This is a transitional period when fresh greens and early shoots dominate. It's a great time for salads, light soups, and sautéed greens.
<b>Summer Harvest</b> June - August	Vegetables	Zucchini and Cucumbers Sweet Corn Beans Leafy Greens Tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant
	Fruits	Strawberries, Cherries, Raspberries, Blueberries Peaches and Plums Melons
	Features	Summer is abundant with fruits and vegetables. You'll find sweet, juicy flavors and vibrant colors perfect for raw salads, grilled dishes, and refreshing desserts.
<b>Fall Harvest</b> September - November	Vegetables	Squash- Butternut, Acorn, and Spaghetti Pumpkins Carrots Beets Potatoes Onions and Garlic Cabbage Kale
	Fruits	Apples Pears Grapes
	Features	Root vegetables and hardy greens thrive in the cooler weather. This season is ideal for warm, comforting meals like soups, stews, and roasted vegetables.
<b>Winter Harvest</b> December - March	Vegetables	Potatoes Squash Carrots Onions Beets Parsnips Locally grown Sprouts and Microgreens
	Features	With limited fresh produce, winter eating often involves hearty dishes featuring root vegetables and preserved goods like jams, frozen fruits, and pickled vegetables.

## 7.0 Distribution of Produce

One of the biggest challenges to running a produce market can be determining how much food to provide to each household. If your market is based on registration, it should be an even distribution of the number of items vs. the number of households. It becomes trickier when the market is drop-in and you have an unknown amount of households attending. At the end of the day it will depend on your produce supply and number of participants. Each market will be unique.



If you are not offering pre-packed hampers, then you can begin to set up your market for a “build your own bag” model. If you need participants to bring their own bags, make sure that it’s clearly communicated on all promotional material and messaging. Consider the average number of households that typically attend your program as a framework to get started. When you receive your produce, take a moment to walk through the items and identify which items you have lots of and which ones you might have a smaller amount of. If possible, create signage that indicates the maximum amount each family can take of each item. For example, if you have a lot of tomatoes, you might write 'Max 6 tomatoes' on painter’s tape in front of the tomatoes. If you don’t have much of a couple different items, you can pair them together on a table and say “choose 1 item from this table”. This allows for participants to prioritize what they want for their family. There’s going to be items that are more popular than others, so consider which produce items might be in higher demand than others (e.g. tomatoes, onions, potatoes, cucumbers, and fruit are often high priority for participants).



## 7.0 Distribution of Produce

Another model you can choose is counting the total number of unique items available that day and offering participants the choice to select their items up to a predetermined maximum number. The goal is to always leave the power in the hands of the participant to select what is important for them. If you have 15 different produce items, you might tell participants that they can choose 10 different ones. Larger households might need more food while small households or singles may choose to only take a few items. This is where it's important to have open dialogue and communication between your staff/volunteers and program participants. If you know a couple people have taken less than their share, you can offer more of an item to a larger family. It's about give and take, ensuring that there's honesty and open communication between everyone involved. This helps to manage expectations and maintain a positive atmosphere.



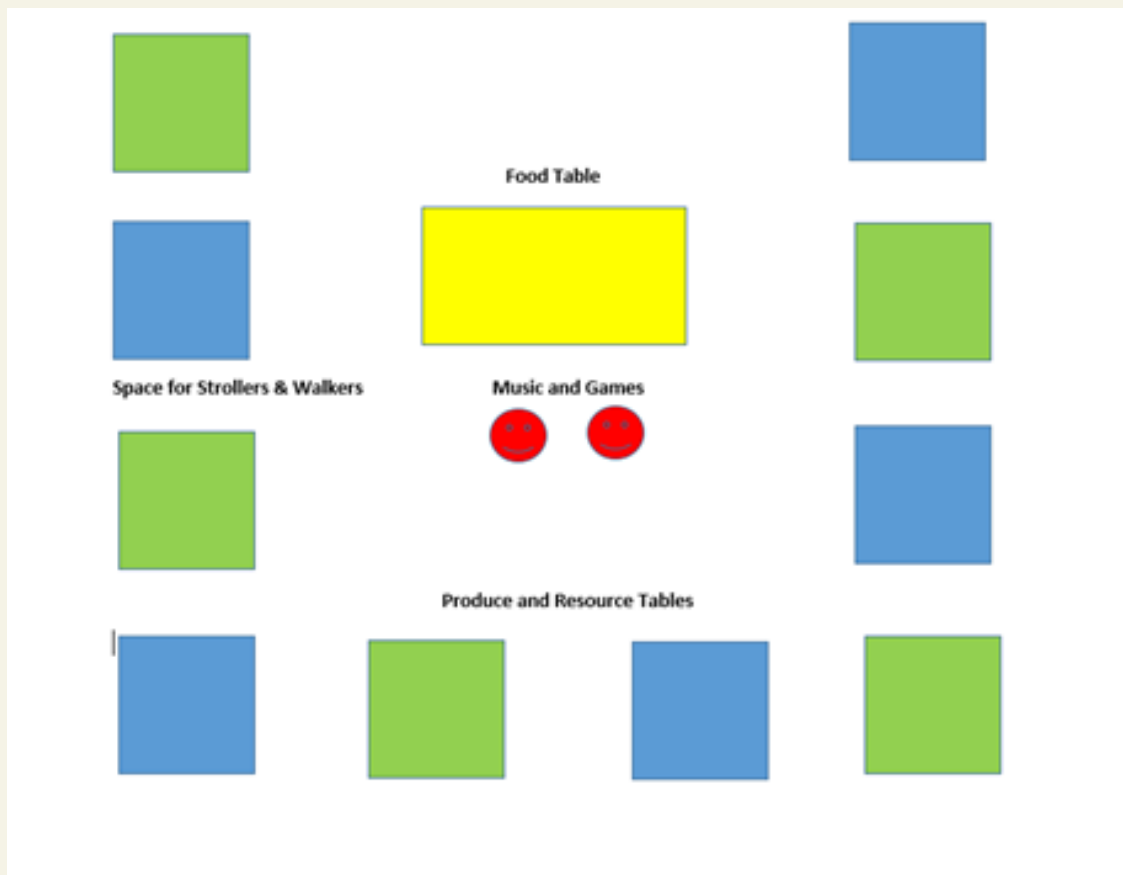
Some items that you receive may need to be packaged for easier distribution prior to your market starting. It's recommended to keep paper and/or plastic bags in your market bin to be prepared for this. Some items that you may want to bag prior to distribution can include hot peppers, green beans, garlic, and field greens. Generally, you want to consider which items are smaller and have the potential to be crushed or messy if not packaged together.

Some markets will be busier than others and in some cases, you may run out of produce before everyone is served. While this is never ideal, having a back-up plan can ensure that no one walks away without some sort of support. This could include distributing Harvest Bucks, grocery gift cards, Good Food Boxes or offering an extra visit to a food cupboard. Planning ahead for the worst case scenario helps alleviate stresses for staff and exemplifies to the community your priority of serving those in need.



## 8.0 Community Building and Engagement

There are many ways to enhance your pop-up market and increase engagement opportunities with participants. Many market organizers have included additional resources, activities, and events in their markets to engage more with participants and to make their trip worthwhile. Examples are hosting a BBQ, games, and activities for children, etc. The example below is with the large market design to account for community engagement stations.





## 8.0 Community Building & Engagement

### 8.1 Food Literacy and Recipes

Markets are a fantastic opportunity to hand out food literacy resources. This can include recipes, instructions on how to prepare ingredients that they may be unfamiliar with and meal planning. Consider offering a variety of culturally appropriate recipes and languages. It is recommended to have paper flyers available as not everyone is comfortable using digital resources or QR codes. If you are outdoors, using clipboards to hold your recipes can help make sure they don't fly away. Below are some trusted links and resources to reliable websites for recipes and food literacy resources.

- <https://londoncyn.ca/london-good-food-box>
- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>
- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-resources/>
- <https://accessalliance.ca/programs-services/food-programs/food-literacy/nutrition-resources/>
- <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/recipes/>
- <https://oldwayspt.org/for-professionals/resources/>
- <https://www.diabetes.ca/resources/tools-resources?Categories=DINU&ResourceToolType=&SearchText=&Sort=alwaysontop&Page=1>



### 8.2 Program Flyers and Pamphlets

Pop-up markets are great opportunities to promote internal and external resources. Consider keeping an agency overview pamphlet on hand and paper flyers that you feel may be relevant to your audience. Some examples include youth programs, children's programs, employment resources, settlement services, older adult programs, meal calendars and basic needs resources.

If you expect your population to be diverse, offering paper resources in other languages such as French, Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin can be a great way to help bridge community programs with families and individuals whose first language is not English. To help save on printing costs, consider printing 2-4 flyers per page.

## 8.3 Community Partner Information Fairs

Another way to engage participants is through hosting an information fair. This requires advanced planning, communication, and a large space. Inviting community partners to host a table at your market can encourage participants to increase their community engagement and learn more about programs that they are eligible for. Consider inviting groups who represent employment services, libraries, children and youth services, mental health services, newcomer services, 2SLGBTQIA+ supports, and seniors' programs. By bringing resources in, you can help facilitate in-person connections and increase the likelihood of participants engaging with services. To ensure that participants take the time to walk past the tables, consider setting up the information booths first, and food at the end. Another idea that's been successful in the past is creating a 'passport' that participants fill out at each table to be entered into a draw to win a prize. Each booth will have a sticker or stamp once the participant has visited their table.

## 8.4 Entertainment

A fun way to foster more community building is through live music, art, games and activity stations. Creating family friendly opportunities will benefit community pride, and build relationships and trust within the community. It's a great way to support local artists and youth to showcase their talents and create volunteer opportunities for community members to oversee activity or craft stations.



## 8.5 Community Meals & BBQs

Pairing a market with a community meal and BBQ creates a great opportunity to bring people together while providing access to a healthy, free meal. If your event is drop-in, ensure that you provide culturally appropriate options to meet various dietary needs such as vegetarian, halal, and gluten intolerances. Meals are a great way to provide volunteer opportunities to local youth or look to partner with another group or organization to increase your people-power.

## 9.0 What to Do With Leftover Produce

Produce may be leftover from pop-up markets due to poor attendance. If a market takes place at the end of the week and produce is left over, it may spoil over the weekend and need to be redistributed to the community ASAP. The following London community location examples provide meals over the weekend and may accept donations of leftover pop-up market produce:

<b>My Sister's Place</b> 566 Dundas St. 519-679-9570	<b>London Coffee House</b> 371 Hamilton Rd 519-204-4719
<b>Mission Services - Men's Mission</b> 459 York St 519-672-8500	<b>St. Joseph's Hospitality</b> 602 Queens Ave. 519-432-0660
<b>Unity Project</b> 717 Dundas St 519-433-8700	<b>Centre of Hope</b> 281 Wellington St. 519-661-0343
<b>Ark Aid Mission</b> 696 Dundas St 519-667-0322	<b>Atlohsa Family Healing</b> 343 Richmond St 519-432-2270
<b>London Food Coalition</b> 244 Adelaide St S Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre 519-668-2745	

# 10.0 Produce Shelf Life

Vegetable	How Long?
<b>Cupboard/Cool Room Temperature</b>	
Potatoes	1-2 weeks 2-3 months in a cool, dark place
Tomatoes	1-5 days
Onions	1-2 months
<b>In the fridge</b>	
Asparagus	3-4 days
Beans (Green, wax)	3-5 days
Beets	2 weeks
Broccoli	3-5 days
Brussel Sprouts	3-5 days
Cabbage	1 week
Carrots	3-4 weeks
Cauliflower	1 week
Celery	1-2 weeks
Corn	1-2 days

Vegetable	How Long?
<b>In the fridge</b>	
Cucumbers	1 week
Green Onions	7-10 days
Lettuce	1 week
Mushrooms	4-7 days
Parsnips	3-4 weeks
Peas in the pod	3-5 days
Peppers (green, red)	1-2 weeks
Potatoes (new)	1 week
Rutabaga	2-3 weeks
Spinach	3-5 days
Sprouts	3-5 days
Squash eg. zucchini, patty pan	4-5 days
Herbs should be stored in the fridge except basil	3-4 days



## 11.0 Produce Distributors & Contacts

The list below are community partners that the AFLN/CYN partners have worked with before and endorse working with or ordering food from. They are community-minded businesses who have supported basic needs programs in our community.

<p><b>Urban Roots London</b>  21 Norlan Ave  <a href="mailto:admin@urbanrootslondon.ca">admin@urbanrootslondon.ca</a>  Affordable Farmgate Market Wednesday evenings from 4pm -8pm and Sunday mornings 10am -1pm. Wholesale ordering availability from April to December  <a href="https://urbanrootslondon.ca">https://urbanrootslondon.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Turner's Farm Market</b>  683651 Road 68, Ingersoll  519-425-0513  <a href="mailto:turnersfarmmarket@gmail.com">turnersfarmmarket@gmail.com</a>  Open Tuesday-Sunday 10am-5pm (April to mid-December) OR Booth at The Market (Western Fair District) every Saturday (8am-3pm) and Sunday (10am-2pm)  <a href="https://www.turnersfarmmarket.com">https://www.turnersfarmmarket.com</a></p>
<p><b>Harvest Hands</b>  2 Currah Rd, St. Thomas  800-439-1898  A non-profit food distribution bank dedicated to rescuing food from bakers, growers and retailers for re-distribution to agencies and families throughout SW Ontario  <a href="https://harvesthands.ca">https://harvesthands.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Heeman's</b>  20422 Nissouri Rd.  519-461-1416  Monday-Saturday 9am-8pm, Sunday 9am-5pm  <a href="https://www.heeman.ca">https://www.heeman.ca</a></p>
<p><b>Common Grounds Farm</b>  6986 Middle River Rd, St Thomas  226-317-4007  The Market (Western Fair District, Dundas St. E. at Ontario St.) open Saturdays 8am-3pm and Sundays 10am-3pm all year. You can place orders via website or phone  <a href="https://commongroundfarm.ca">https://commongroundfarm.ca</a></p>	<p><b>Millar Berry Farms</b>  7375 Longwoods Rd.  519-652-2065  Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday 9am-4pm. West 5 Produce pop-ups are Thursdays 4pm-7pm (hours are weather and supply dependent, subject to early close)  <a href="https://millarberryfarms.com">https://millarberryfarms.com</a></p>



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# Appendix

## A. Participant Focus Group Summary

On April 17, 2025, a one-hour lived experience focus group was held at Central Library. Participants from the 2024 market season were invited to participate and were provided a complimentary lunch, bus tickets, and honorarium for their time and feedback. Eleven participants attended representing four different pop-up markets from the previous year. The group was facilitated by three AFLN/CYN Network Members who asked questions and took notes. Participants were asked targeted questions and given a chance to share freely in an open group discussion.

### **1. How did you hear about the market in your neighbourhood?**

While there were a variety of answers for this question, the most prevalent answer was through connection with staff/volunteers at the centres who made personal invites or shared information at other programs offered at that centre. Other methods included text messages from staff, mail drops, and Facebook posts.

### **2. Can you tell us about your experience with timing and availability of produce at the market?**

Answers varied as some felt locations were too far, requiring the need to account for time to travel, while others felt that the site was near their house. Participants shared that they arrived early to line-up for markets but generally did not get upset about the waiting time.

### **3. What was it like moving around the market? Did you get to choose your own items, or were things already packed for you?**

The “take what you want and leave what you don’t want” model was a highlight for participants. It was noted that families don’t always eat everything so they valued taking only what they know they will use. There was communication of needs between the staff/volunteers and the participants in the distribution of food. Participants appreciated having options such as fruits and vegetables and seeing what was available for the day.

### **4. Was the produce you received useful for you and your family?**

The participants stated that the produce received is generally useful, though some families preferred specific items such as small cucumbers, lemons, tomatoes, and more culturally relevant ingredients, while avoiding canned goods. Some noted issues with pre-packaged boxes where they received unwanted items or produce that spoiled quickly during the summer months. A highlight from one participant was receiving a seedling cucumber plant. They were able to grow their own vegetables with their kids.

## **A. Participant Focus Group Summary cont.**

### **5. Was anything about the market experience confusing or difficult?**

Some participants found markets difficult to follow due to varying times and locations. Additionally, participants noted needing to constantly check social media for last-minute updates. It was also mentioned that time conflicts (e.g. school pick-up near market time), unexpected weather, and commuting to market locations can cause issues as well. Participants suggested maintaining a fixed schedule and program time as well as putting all of the market information in one location. Additionally, it was suggested to provide 1-2 week's notice before hosting a market to allow for participants to plan their schedule around the program.

### **6. What aspects of the market did you enjoy the most?**

Many participants mentioned they are grateful for the free items that they have received through the markets, with some revealing that markets help them get through the month. It was noted that fresh foods (e.g. tomatoes, garlic, onion, zucchini, potatoes) are great additions to markets, but some participants are also interested in extras such as more program information and music.

### **7. Any other general comments or improvement recommendations you would like to make about the markets?**

There were a variety of answers for this question with participants initially suggesting holding more indoor markets and offering consistent times and locations to make planning easier on their end. Some also mentioned that having the option to access multiple sites throughout the month will help to manage their grocery needs and expenses. Other suggestions included providing Harvest Bucks or gift cards when produce runs out, offering more seasonal fruits (e.g. peaches and blueberries), and holding markets from 10am-2pm during the school year and in the afternoons during the summer. Families also appreciated the idea of having kid-friendly activities to keep children entertained during summer or while parents are shopping. Additionally, they enjoyed the markets where free BBQ was offered, giving participants a meal and a chance to socialize. Overall, the participants expressed gratitude for the markets and offered valuable suggestions to improve accessibility, variety, and the overall experience.

# Intake Form

**Date:**

**Location:**

**Name of Participant**

**Postal Code**

**Size of Family  
(total # people  
in household)**

**Notes**

[illegible]



## C. Market Checklist

- ☐ Food Service Gloves
- ☐ Pencil Case: pens, scissors, safety knife, sharpie
- ☐ Painter's tape/masking tape
- ☐ Recycling & Garbage bags
- ☐ Recipes and/or food literacy resources
- ☐ Organization Pamphlet & Program Flyers
- ☐ Paper or plastic bags
- ☐ Extra grocery bags
- ☐ Laminated signs (entrance, exit, produce labels etc.)
- ☐ Clipboard with sign-in sheet
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Disinfectant wipes & spray
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer