

The Social Determinants of Health as Barriers to Food Access: Informing the Design of a Socioeconomically Inclusive Food Hub in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

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This thesis aims to provide detailed and context-specific information on how a food hub at the Wolfville Farmers' Market (WFM) can help address the exclusion of low-income Nova Scotians from healthy food access. This was done by conducting a literature review to identify widespread barriers to food access, as well as the food hub design features that can help address these barriers. A Social Determinants of Health framework was used to analyze both participant observation field notes and secondary data analysis of qualitative focus group interviews. The barriers to food access at the WFM were identified as health risks and challenges, the perception of the WFM being a "White" space, time constraints, insufficient income, the cost of food, and, specific to university students, the acceptance and normalization of food insecurity. The facilitators of food access at the WFM were identified as the online shopping and food delivery program (WFM2Go), the wide range of food products, the "food bucks" program, and the physical and social accessibility of the WFM. Three of these facilitators of food access, food delivery, "food bucks", and social accessibility, were also identified in the literature as food hub design features that help address food insecurity. Other design features which were identified, and that the WFM food hub is planning to implement, are partnering with a farm-to-school program, holding food skilling workshops, having a community kitchen, and involving those who experience food insecurity in the planning and management of the food hub. Recommendations for the design of a socioeconomically inclusive food hub were based on these identified design features and the facilitators of food access already in place.