

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

# The Local Community Food Centre

## Responses

### 1. Economic Recovery and Growth

*Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?*

In a time of global fiscal restraint, it is important that the government focus on maintaining the health and well being of Canadians who will enhance economic recovery and reinvigorate growth. Priorities for our organization are safe and nutritional food, sustainable food systems, a strong local economy, and reducing the risk of dietary illness. Investing in the labour force through employment training and supports will strengthen the economy. Statistics Canada information must be detailed and relevant in order to accurately reflect current social and economic conditions and to give people the necessary tools to support growth.

### 2. Job Creation

*As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?*

Maintaining the health and well-being of Canadians will ensure long-term stability in the work force and economy. National autonomy, particularly in terms of food security, is important as the global economy fluctuates. Investing in job creation strategies and the development of employment supports will, in the long run, strengthen the Canadian economy. Investing in youth employment services and development programs will lower the youth unemployment rate and create a stronger work force.

### 3. Demographic Change

*What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?*

Invest in employment services and skills development, particularly for youth. Ensure that nutritious, healthy food is available to all, including the elderly and those living on fixed incomes and in poverty. Invest in preventative measures and harm reduction which are much more fiscally responsible than treating full-blown mental and physical health conditions. Invest in transportation infrastructure and increased health supports as the population ages.

### 4. Productivity

*With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?*

Creating a job-opportunities for diverse skill levels as well as job-training programs and employment supports. Fair wages and health benefits to keep people in the workforce and off of social supports. Access to healthy food for those who are living in poverty. All of these measures will increase productivity in Canada.

## **5. Other Challenges**

*With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?*

Those facing the greatest challenges are people living in poverty, whether it's because they've been laid off from manufacturing jobs, whether they are working multiple part-time, minimum wage jobs, perhaps they are on a fixed income or pension. People are finding it necessary to choose between paying rent and buying food and are forced to access food hand-outs that are often cast-offs that are not wanted by others. These people are facing the greatest challenges and their numbers are increasing. It's time that the federal government provided greater support to the provinces as they attempt to support the people who need it most.