

2026 Vital Impact Fund

The County Foundation's Vital Impact Fund aims to direct funding toward initiatives that address the most pressing challenges and opportunities identified through Vital Signs data and our community knowledge.

Now in its third year, Vital Impact Fund will concentrate its efforts on a defined focus area to deepen impact and respond to community needs.

For 2026, the Vital Impact Fund will be accepting applications focused on **Food Security**, with the aim of supporting the **processes, efficiencies, and infrastructure** of our local organizations to better serve the community's needs.

Food Security

Food Security is one of the 9 Vital Signs priorities. Currently, **one in four households in Hastings-Prince Edward is experiencing food insecurity**. Food insecurity is highly correlated with financial challenges but may also be caused by physical or logistical challenges in accessing or cooking nutritious food.

This is the highest food insecurity has tracked since we began tracking through Vital Signs in 2013. Food support programs are feeling the strain of increased demand and rising cost of food.

What does this mean for our other grants?

While the Vital Impact Fund focuses on one priority area for this year, **our other grants will continue to support a wide range of sectors** so we can keep meeting the diverse needs of our community. Vital Impact Fund is approximately **8.4%** of our total granting based on 2025.

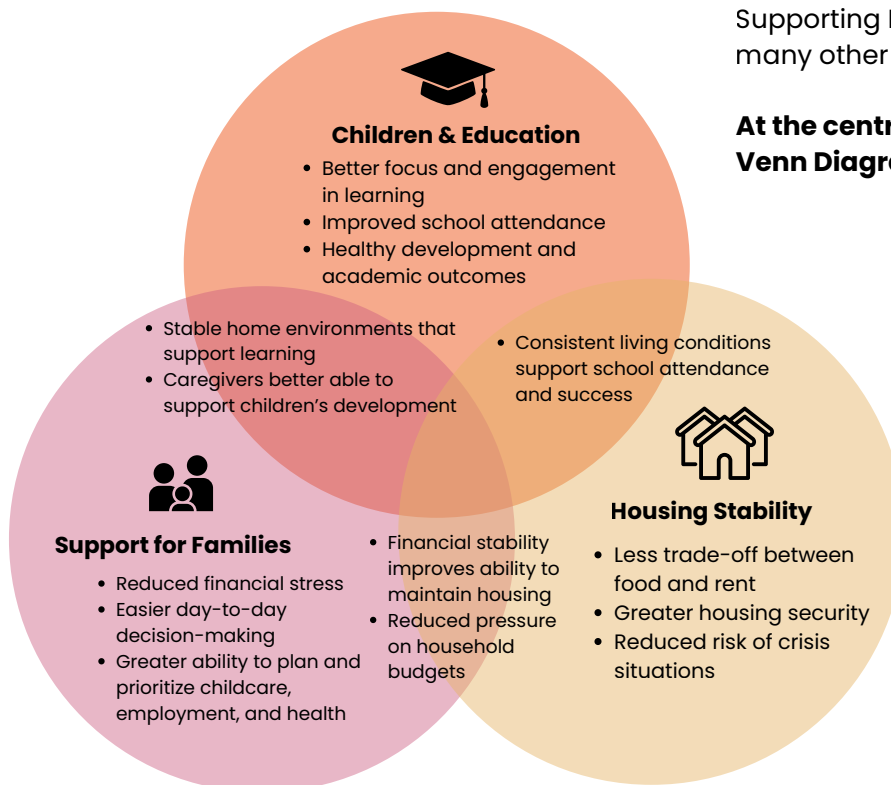
Vital Signs Alignment
Food Security, Health



Supporting Food Security also supports many other existing community needs.

At the centre of the Venn Diagram:

Food security is a foundation for overall well-being, stability, and opportunity



Total Funding Available:
\$180,000

Together we can create strong food systems in Prince Edward County to help people access food with dignity.

We look forward to sharing more information on the 2026 Vital Impact Fund soon.



Food Security

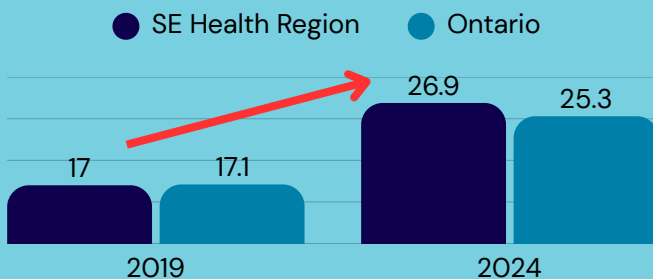
Food insecurity isn't caused by a lack of food. It results from not having enough financial resources to afford sufficient healthy, nutritious food. (Food Banks Canada)



More than **one in four households** in Hastings Prince Edward has inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.

Food Insecurity is Increasing

Locally, food insecurity has increased 10% since the pandemic. (Public Health Ontario)



More Households Are Struggling to Afford Food

The Picton United Church Food Bank reports a 40% increase in demand from 2024 to 2025. One in three people receiving food assistance is a child. The increase is being driven by a growing number of first-time users, especially families struggling with rising housing and grocery costs.

Food Insecurity is a major Public Health Issue

- Poor diet quality and emotional strain negatively impact physical, mental and social health. (Community Food Centres Canada)
- Annual health care costs are 23-121% higher in food insecure households in Ontario.

In primary care, 1 dollar spent on nutrition interventions can save up to 99 dollars by reducing medication use, hospitalizations and freeing up physician time. (Canadian Malnutrition Task Force)

Some Groups are at Greater Risk of Food Insecurity

- Persons living with disabilities
- Single parents (especially mothers)
- Families with children
- People living on low incomes
- Single adults
- Renters

