



# Planning for Sustainable Food Systems

Findings from a Survey of Canadian Planners and Practitioners  
2021

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## Authors

**Emily Hansen**, Research Associate, Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS)

**Kristi Tatebe**, Research Associate, ISFS

**Kent Mullinix**, Director, ISFS

**Wallapak Polasub**, Senior Research Associate, ISFS

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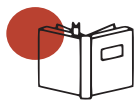
# Executive Summary

Food systems are integral to community health and well-being. However, critical considerations about food systems have been overlooked in contemporary planning. Over the last two decades, new food policy innovations have emerged, accompanied by research that has raised the profile of food systems in the planning field, yet this research has been limited in scope, and few studies have focused on Canadian planning contexts.



## Survey & Demographics

To address this research gap, Kwantlen Polytechnic University's Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) partnered with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) to administer a survey of Canadian planners and practitioners. The survey collected responses from 435 respondents from across Canada representing a range of planning sectors including; independent consulting, private sector, academia, nonprofit and government. The largest respondent group were planners working in the local government sector. Respondents were also from different career stages including current planning students, early and mid-career professionals, as well as senior level planners, and department leads.



## Education & Professional Development

Sixty-seven percent of respondents did not take food related courses as part of their formal education. For respondents who did take food related courses, these primarily provided respondents with information about food systems and increased awareness of food issues in global and local contexts. Agriculture related courses were also common, as well as courses addressing rural and agricultural planning. A smaller number of respondents indicated they took courses in emerging topics such as; food systems policy, food security, urban agriculture and food justice.

Many respondents relied on professional development offerings from outside the planning field to learn about food systems. This included attending conferences and webinars hosted by non-planning organizations and volunteering with food focused community groups. These opportunities primarily introduced participants to food system topics and increased awareness about current trends and issues in food system planning.

Respondents indicated a high level of interest in new professional development opportunities offered by planning organizations. New opportunities could benefit planners by providing specific information about how to integrate food systems considerations into their work and address pressing issues such as food security, urban food policy and Indigenous food sovereignty.

Knowledge about food systems amongst respondents was high in some topic areas such as urban agriculture, health/nutrition and agriculture. However, knowledge about a broad range of food system topics was limited. Notably, respondents lack functional knowledge in key topic areas such as Indigenous food sovereignty, fisheries and marine food systems, food systems workers/labour and legal/regulatory frameworks impacting food systems.



## Food Systems Planning in Practice

Forty-five percent of respondents were involved in food systems planning, with 10% of respondents indicating that food systems planning was a primary focus of their work. About half of local government planners were involved in food systems planning. However, only 3% of respondents indicated it was a primary focus of their work. A greater percentage of senior level and mid-level planners indicated that food systems planning was a primary part of their job, when compared to managers and department leads.

While a majority of respondents were white, a greater percentage of respondents identifying as a racial/ethnic minority group indicated that food systems planning was a primary focus of their work. Twelve percent of respondents identified as a racial/ethnic minority, including those who identified as Indigenous or Metis and mixed race. The small percentage of non-white respondents suggests a lack of diversity in the planning field generally.

Respondents primarily gained knowledge about food systems planning through the course of their work. Many also gained knowledge and skills by actively seeking out new information and research. Thirty-five percent of respondents had lived experience including personal experience farming, growing up on a farm or living in an agricultural community. A much smaller number of respondents indicated they had lived experience related

to experiencing food insecurity or challenges accessing culturally appropriate food.



## Barriers and Knowledge Gaps

Limited knowledge about food systems amongst planners was a top barrier impacting the advancement of food systems planning. Competing planning goals and priorities was also a top barrier, with respondents citing priorities in the development sector as a point of conflict. Lack of political support and guidance, and limited budgets and capacity for food systems planning were also top barriers. Planners also recognized their limited influence over the food system citing a lack of clarity around who is responsible for food systems planning.

How food systems relate to other planning domains emerged as the most significant knowledge gap amongst planners. There is also a recognized knowledge gap related to how land use planning impacts the food system. This was followed by a gap in knowledge about food system function and relationships. Indigenous food sovereignty was also identified as a top knowledge gap by respondents. While respondents assessed their knowledge about agriculture to be relatively high, agriculture and food production were still identified as a knowledge gap amongst planners.

## Conclusions & Next Steps

The survey revealed interest from planners in the emerging field of food systems planning and identified key challenges to be addressed:

**Knowledge about the food system is limited amongst planners:** Few planners have a broad range of expertise about food systems topics. Planners also recognized a lack of knowledge about how to integrate food systems into their other planning work and available policy and regulatory tools for food systems planning.

**Education and professional development opportunities in food systems planning are limited and inadequate:**

Some respondents engaged in education and professional development opportunities to build skills and knowledge about food systems. However, these opportunities are narrowly focused and often not widely available. Planners expressed interest in learning more about emerging issues such as food security, food justice, urban food policy and Indigenous food sovereignty and participating in new professional development offerings within the planning field.

**There is a lack of clarity around who is responsible for food systems planning:** It is recognized that there is often no clear “home” for food systems within planning departments and agencies. The lack of clarity when it comes to jurisdictional responsibility for food systems planning was also noted. Respondents cite the important role of community organizations in food systems planning and that information and resources are needed to help planners better support established community-based initiatives.

**Food systems planning is perceived as a rural issue, not an urban one:** There is evidence that food systems planning is perceived more as a rural issue with rural land use and agricultural planning as top areas of food systems planning focus. Survey results suggest that urban food planning remains narrowly focused on urban agriculture and food access. There is also a recognized lack of educational and professional development opportunities in the area of urban food policy and planning.

**A recognized lack of racial diversity and lived experience in the planning field could impact how food systems are understood and limit how they are addressed in planning:** The lack of diversity in the planning field could impact how issues are perceived and addressed. Emerging equity-based planning approaches and work to address anti-Black racism, decolonization and Indigenous reconciliation present new opportunities to mitigate systemic inequities and improve food system outcomes for all.

Planners are increasingly aware of the complex nature of food systems planning. Embedding food systems planning education in planning schools could create new opportunities for aspiring planners to build foundational knowledge in the field. Improving knowledge sharing and creating new professional development opportunities could help planners better understand their roles and responsibilities. Further research should assess the involvement of equity seeking groups in food systems planning and seek to better understand how equity based approaches can be supported. New collaborative food system planning approaches that bridge urban and rural contexts should be explored and advanced in practice. Such planning approaches also must address the tensions and challenges that exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

With collaborative efforts in these areas, more just and sustainable food systems can be advanced in Canada through collaborative, comprehensive and community-based planning initiatives.

# Introduction

The role of professional planners in society is to safeguard the health and well-being of communities by addressing the use of land, resources, facilities, and services with consideration to physical, economic, and social efficiency<sup>1</sup>. While food systems are integral in sustaining health and community wellbeing, contemporary planning practice has not sufficiently addressed food in the same way as other societal needs<sup>2,3,4</sup>. The American Planning Association [APA] described this deficiency well, suggesting that:

“*...of life’s basic necessities - air, food, water, and shelter - only food has been neglected from contemporary planning and community development*”.

- *American Planning Association [APA], 2007<sup>5</sup>*

## Food Systems Planning: An emerging field

The past two decades have marked an era of food planning that has seen planning agencies take active roles in food system development<sup>6,7,8</sup>. In cities, new urban food policies and planning processes have been developed in response to specific challenges such as food insecurity, waste, and climate change. The recent COVID-19 pandemic exposed many glaring food system issues and increased awareness of the need to advance more resilient and equitable food systems and communities<sup>9</sup>.

Governments have engaged in food planning by leveraging existing policy responsibilities related to sustainability, economic development and land use planning<sup>10,11</sup>. Regional planning initiatives have also been leveraged to address food issues and develop new policy frameworks to protect farmland, manage and recycle waste, contribute to rural economic development, and create greater linkages between urban and rural planning domains<sup>12,13,14</sup>. Food policy councils have also emerged, with varying degrees of connection to governments and planning agencies, and have helped better understand local issues and inform policy<sup>15,16</sup>.

Globally, networks have emerged to support food policy development and planning, including the Milan Urban

Food Pact, C40 Good Food Cities, the CITYFOOD Network and the City Region Food Systems (CRFS) Initiative<sup>17</sup>. Networking groups also exist that connect planners and practitioners working in the emerging field of food systems planning. In Canada, a grassroots Community of Practice for municipal food practitioners and community activists known as the Food Communities Network has over 500 members and associate members across Canada<sup>18</sup>.

In 2019, the federal government announced the Food Policy for Canada, the first ever coordinated policy effort addressing food systems at the national level<sup>19,20</sup>. This policy initiative follows a decade of grassroots policy advocacy and development across Canada<sup>21</sup>. Initial policy directives focus on increased food security in Northern and isolated communities, development of infrastructure for food processing and waste management, and support for climate change mitigation in agriculture. In 2021, a new Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council was formed to support further development and implementation of federal food policies. In addition to members representing national agri-food interests and supply chains, the advisory council also includes members with expertise in health and nutrition, food justice and equity, and Indigenous food sovereignty<sup>22</sup>.

## The Role of Food Systems Planners

The role of planners in addressing food issues is changing. Recent research in the field has recognized that there is significant opportunity for planners to contribute to the development of sustainable food systems<sup>23,24</sup>. Planners possess many of the necessary “soft skills” in areas such as community engagement, facilitation and conflict resolution necessary for bringing together a broad range of food systems stakeholders<sup>25</sup>. Leveraging these skills, planners may be able to assist communities in identifying food system objectives, planning and implementing food systems projects and assessing the economic, environmental, and cultural impacts of local food systems<sup>26</sup>. Planners can also actively work to connect the dots between the different areas of planning and advance important food system outcomes<sup>27</sup>.

## Methods

Despite the acknowledged role for planners in addressing food issues, food systems planning remains a “blind-spot” for many planners<sup>28,29</sup>. Research exploring the emerging field of food systems planning and the functional role of planners has been conducted. This growing field of research has supported the practice of food systems planning, however much of this research has been limited in scope, and focused on the United States where food policy and planning work is further advanced. Few studies have focused on the unique contemporary planning contexts in Canada.

To address existing research gaps, Kwantlen Polytechnic University’s Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) partnered with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) to administer a survey of Canadian planners and practitioners. This critical partnership allowed the ISFS to engage directly with the planning community and help disseminate results to those involved in the planning profession.

Findings from this study will support ongoing research and will contribute to the planning profession by providing information to support the development of new education and training resources to advance food systems planning in Canada.

### Questionnaire Development

A project Advisory Committee was convened to help develop the questionnaire. Advisory Committee members were selected to represent different geographical jurisdictions across Canada, as well as different areas of planning practice. The questionnaire was developed over several months. Virtual meetings were convened and feedback from advisors was also collected via email. See Appendix A for the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was translated into French and responses in both English and French were aggregated, using Survey Monkey®’s translation tools, and analyzed together. The questionnaire, recruitment methods, and data management were approved by the Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) Research Ethics Board.

### Data Collection

The questionnaire began with a screening question to determine eligibility ([Figure 1](#)). Based on responses 435 respondents were eligible to participate.

The survey was distributed online between October 14th 2020 and January 31st 2021 through professional planning networks. Additionally, the survey was sent to other related organizations across Canada and promoted on social media using paid advertisement. Additional unpaid promotion was also done on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The questionnaire could only be completed online through the Survey Monkey® platform. It was determined that this was the best method for distribution of the survey to reach the broadest range of participants.

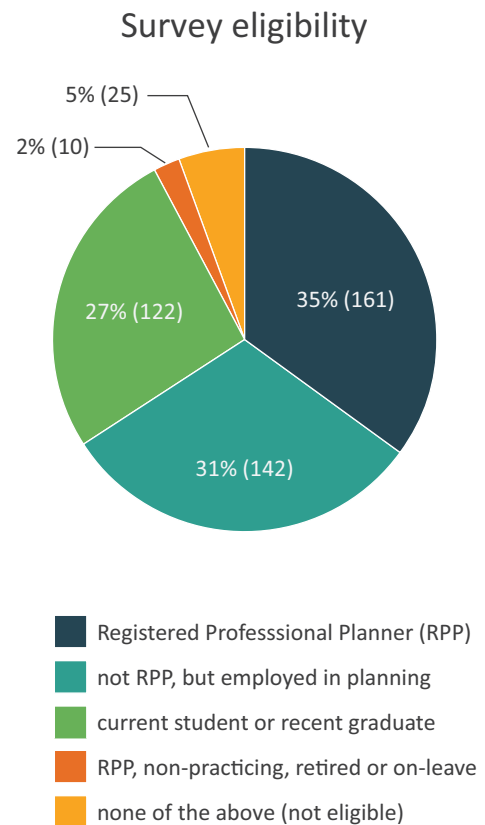


Figure 1: Survey Eligibility (n=460).



# Results & Discussion



## Survey & Demographics

The survey gathered responses from all provinces and territories, with the exception of Nunavut (Table 1). Of the respondents who indicated they did not currently live in Canada, one was a student, one indicated they were a RPP non-practicing, retired or on leave and two were not RPPs but employed in the planning profession. These four responses were included in the analysis.

A summary of respondent demographic information is presented in Table 2. Respondents to this survey likely represent a younger demographic than the broader planning population. By comparison, within the respondent sample for the National Compensation and Benefits Survey completed in 2019, only 37% of respondents were under the age of 35 and the median age of planners was calculated at 41.3 years of age<sup>30</sup>.

Table 1: Number of survey respondents by province.

	# of respondents	% of respondents
Alberta	51	12%
British Columbia	127	29%
Manitoba	12	3%
New Brunswick	3	1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	4	1%
Nova Scotia	12	3%
Ontario	124	29%
Prince Edward Island	1	0%
Quebec	9	2%
Saskatchewan	9	2%
Northwest Territories	2	0%
Nunavut	0	0%
Yukon	4	1%
Outside Canada	4	1%
Skipped Question	64	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Summary of respondent demographic information.

	# of respondents	% of respondents
<b>Age (n=435)</b>		
less than 22 yrs	24	6%
23 - 28 yrs	112	26%
29 - 35 yrs	104	24%
36 - 45 yrs	92	21%
46 - 55 yrs	47	11%
56 - 65 yrs	29	7%
over 65 yrs	19	4%
Prefer not to respond	2	0.5%
Skipped question	6	1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity (n=435)</b>		
White (European, Caucasian)	268	62%
Racial/ethnic minority	51	12%
Black, Afro-Canadian, Caribbean	8	2%
Indigenous, Métis or First Nation	1	0%
East and Southeast Asian	21	5%
South Asian	17	4%
Latino, Hispanic	1	0%
North African/Middle Eastern	3	1%
Mixed race/ethnicity	28	6%
Prefer not to respond	73	17%
Skipped question	15	3%
<b>Gender Identity (n=435)</b>		
Male	140	32%
Female	269	62%
Non-binary	7	2%
Prefer not to respond	10	2%
Skipped question	9	2%

The majority of respondents were white (e.g. European descent, Caucasian etc.). Twelve percent of respondents identified as a racial/ethnic minority. The largest respondent groups were of East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese) or South Asian (Indian, Punjabi). Six percent of respondents identified as mixed race.

A greater percentage of women than men completed the survey (Table 2). In the sample group for the National Compensation and Benefits Survey, 51% of respondents identified as male, and 48% identified as female<sup>31</sup>. This suggests that a greater percentage of female respondents completed this survey when compared to the broader population of planners.

## Professional Characteristics

A summary of respondents' professional characteristics can be found in Table 3. Seventy-eight percent of respondents indicated that they were members of the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP). Some respondents who were not members of CIP held professional memberships with a provincial planning organization, such as Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI), or Ordre des Urbanistes du Québec (OUQ).

Respondents represented a diversity of planning sectors with the largest group of respondents from local government. There is also a range of planning experience represented. The respondent group includes students, early career professionals, senior level planners and managers/department leads.

The largest number of respondents worked in the area of land use planning and development planning (Figure 2).

Table 3: Summary of respondent professional characteristics.

	# of respondents	% of respondents
<b>CIP Membership Status (n=435)</b>		
Not CIP	86	20%
Full/Professional	154	35%
Pre/Candidate	79	18%
Student	95	22%
Non-practicing	12	3%
Skipped question	9	2%
<b>Planning Sector (n=335)</b>		
Independent Consultant	45	13%
Private sector	44	13%
Gov. - Local	179	53%
Gov. - Prov./Territorial	22	7%
Gov. - Federal	2	1%
Indigenous Gov./community	8	2%
Academia	19	6%
NGO	16	5%
<b>Job title or Position (n=392)</b>		
Student	82	21%
Manager/dept. lead	55	14%
Senior-level planner	65	17%
Mid-level planner	89	23%
Entry-level planner	71	18%
Academic	12	3%
Non-Practicing	18	5%
<b>Years in the planning field (n=393)</b>		
not worked in planning	52	13%
Less than one year	43	11%
1-5 years	110	28%
6-10 years	50	13%
11 - 15 years	48	12%
16 - 20 years	30	8%
21 - 25 years	13	3%
More than 25 years	47	12%

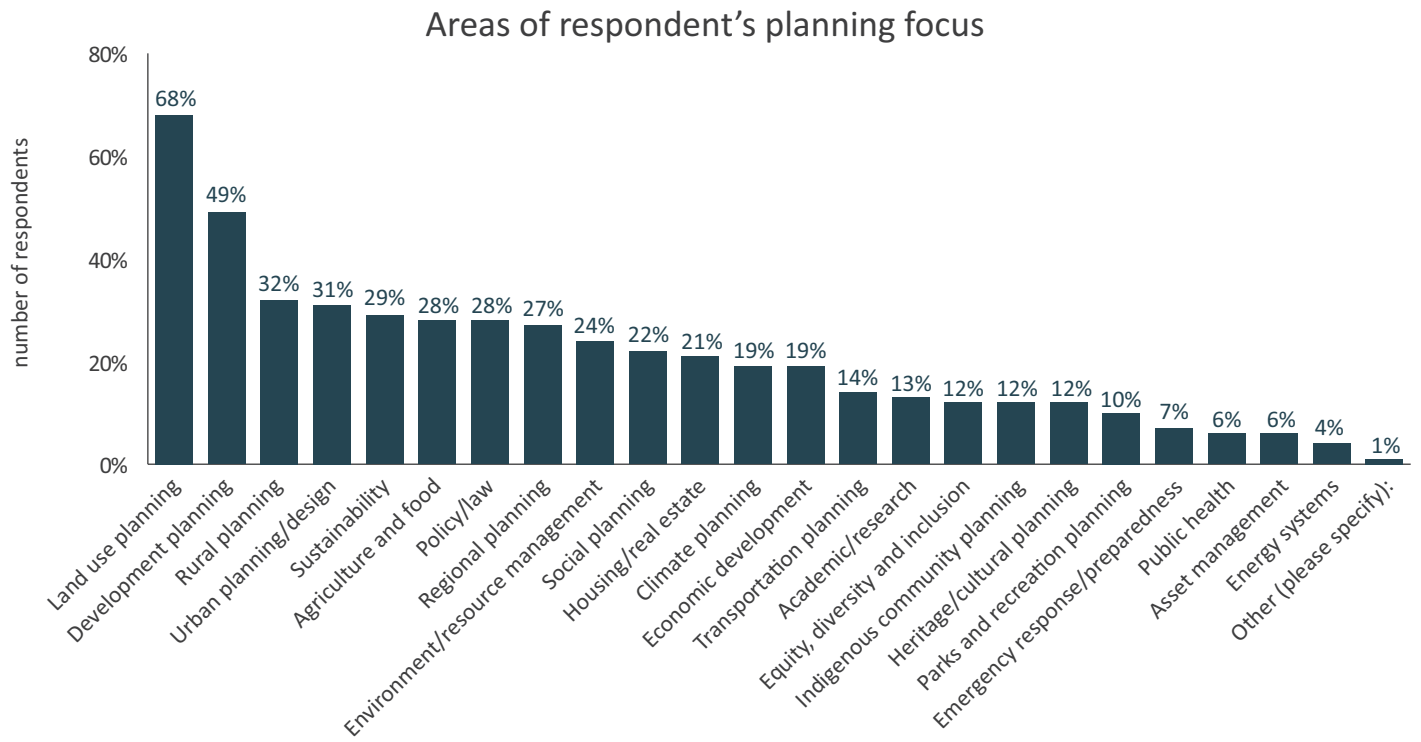


Figure 2: Areas of respondent's planning focus (n=340). Note respondents could select more than one area of focus if applicable.



## Education & Professional Development

### Formal Education

The majority of respondents (63%) had received a planning degree (Figure 3). Forty-two percent of these respondents received their degree within the last five years, 17% percent received their degree between five and ten years ago, 23% received their degree between ten and twenty years ago, and 23% received their degree between ten and twenty years ago (Table 4).

Table 4: When respondents received their planning degree (n=270).

	# of respondents	% of respondents
within the last 5 years	115	42%
5-10 years ago	46	17%
10-20 years ago	63	23%
20-30 years ago	25	10%
over 30 years ago	21	8%

Percentage of respondents with a planning degree

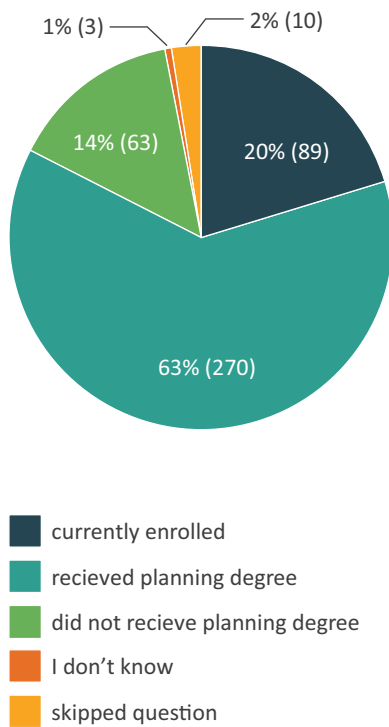


Figure 3: Percentage of respondents with a planning degree (n=435).

Percentage of respondents who took food related courses during their formal education

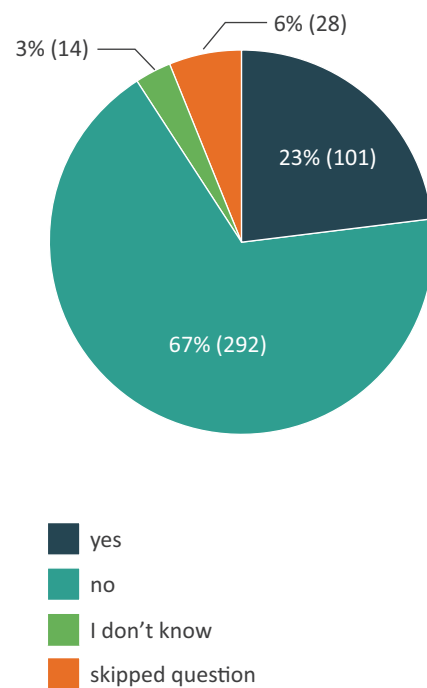


Figure 4: Percentage of respondents who took food related courses during their formal education (n=435).

Overall, 23% of respondents indicated they took courses related to food systems or agriculture during their post-secondary education, and 67% did not (Figure 4). A summary of this data can be found in Table 5. This table shows data from three respondent groups; respondents currently enrolled in planning school, respondents with a planning degree and respondents with a degree(s) in a non-planning discipline. For respondents with a planning degree, 13% indicated they took food related courses as part of their planning degree program. While the number of respondents who did not have planning degrees was smaller, a greater percentage of these respondents took food related courses when compared to respondents with a planning degree (Table 5).

Respondents who took courses related to food during their formal education shared details about the courses they took (Figure 5). Courses that addressed food systems broadly were common. Production agriculture courses were also common, and included topics such as soil science, animal husbandry, agroforestry, and agroecology. Courses about rural and agricultural planning were also common and primarily taken by

respondents with a planning degree. This included respondents who indicated that their planning degree focused on rural planning and who took a number of courses within this domain.

Food policy and planning courses were taken by respondents who had received a planning degree or were currently enrolled. Topics mentioned included food governance and food policy development in different contexts.

Respondents also took courses where food systems were not a central focus, but discussed as part of a course focused on environmental planning, sustainability, healthy community planning or economic development. Fewer respondents took courses that addressed emerging themes, such as urban agriculture and urban food systems (6 respondents), and Indigenous food sovereignty and planning (2 respondents). Food justice was primarily mentioned by current students who developed their own directed study course to address this gap in their planning school course offerings.

Table 5: Percentage of respondents who took food related courses as part of their post-secondary education by respondent group; respondents currently enrolled, with a planning degree(s), and with a degree(s) in a non-planning discipline.

	# of respondents	% of respondents (n=435)	% of respondents per group
<b>Respondents currently enrolled in a planning degree program (n=89)</b>			
Took food related courses in planning program	10	2%	11%
Took food related courses outside planning program	9	2%	10%
Did not take food related courses	58	13%	65%
I don't know	4	1%	4%
Skipped Question	8	2%	9%
<b>Respondents with a planning degree (n=270)</b>			
Took food related courses in planning program	46	10%	17%
Took food related courses outside planning program	26	6%	10%
Did not take food related courses	195	45%	72%
I don't know	7	2%	3%
Skipped Question	6	1%	2%
<b>Respondents with a degree in a non-planning field (n=63)</b>			
Took food related courses	20	5%	31%
Did not take food related courses	39	9%	62%
I don't know	3	1%	1%
Skipped Question	1	0%	0%

### Common themes of food related courses taken by respondents

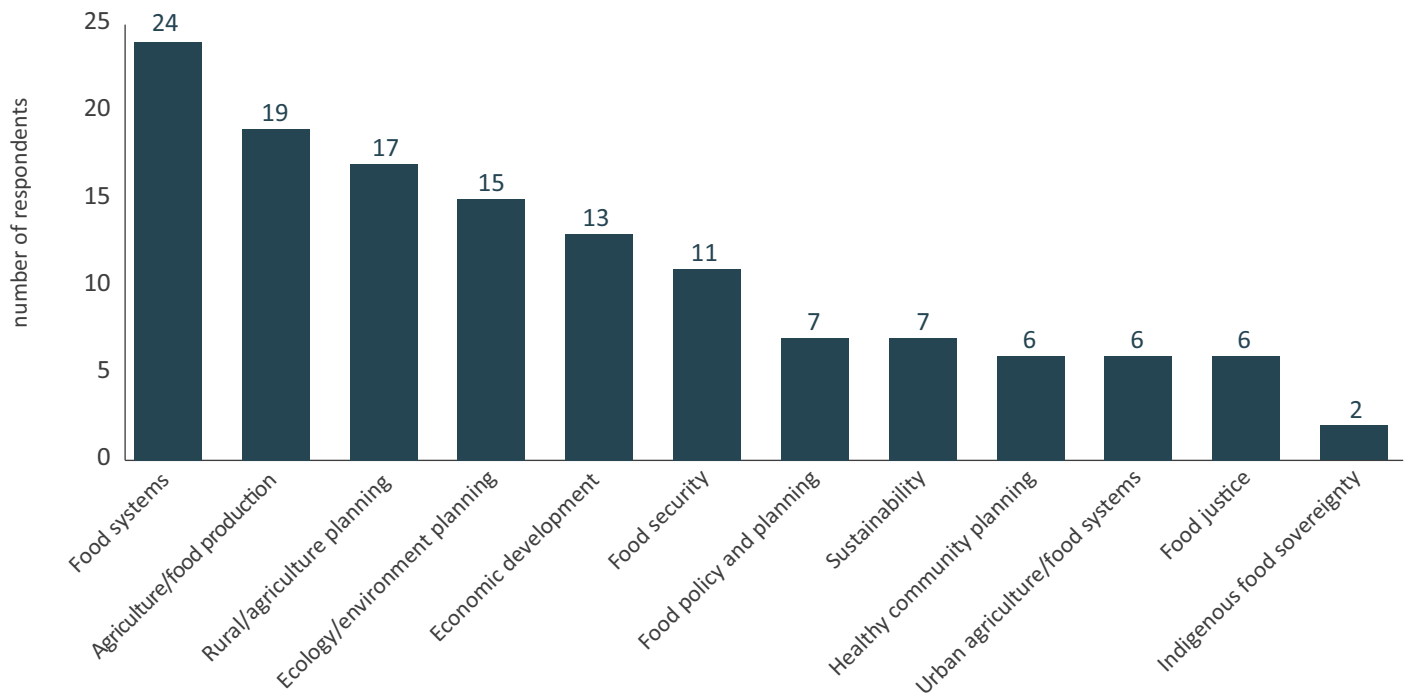


Figure 5: Themes of food related courses taken by respondents. Coded from 89 open-ended responses. Note: The total number of responses is greater than the number of responses because responses were coded with multiple themes if necessary.



***“A food course wasn’t offered so I, along with 2 other students interested in food planning, planned our own course on the topic, creating our own reading list and activities. The goal is to learn more about the intersections of food systems, social justice and planning.”***

***– Survey Respondent***

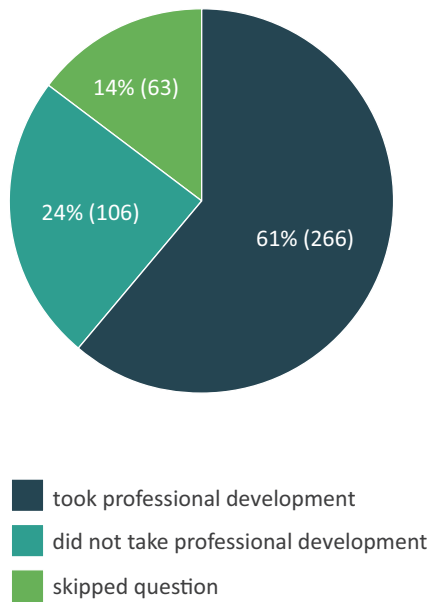
### Professional Development

Sixty-one percent of respondents indicated that they had participated in food related professional development (Figure 6). Figure 8 conveys the type of professional development opportunities respondents participated in. This data suggests that respondents largely relied on non-planning organizations for professional development opportunities to gain knowledge and gather new information about food systems. This included sessions at non-planning conferences, and webinars offered by non-planning organizations. Non-planning organizations include farming organizations, food advocacy groups, community gardens etc.

Volunteering with non-planning organizations was also identified as a professional development opportunity for respondents. For many, volunteering exposed them to food system challenges locally, introduced them to advocacy work, and helped them better understand how to support community initiatives through their planning work.

Professional development opportunities in the planning sector were less commonly cited by respondents with the exception of planning conferences. Respondents

Percentage of respondents who participated in food related professional development



Level of interest in food related professional development opportunities offered by planning organizations

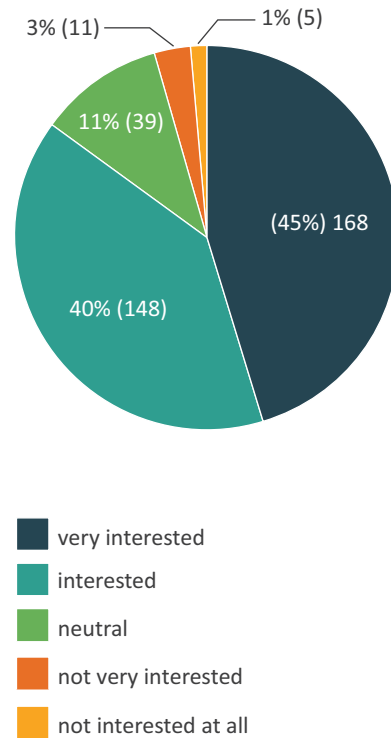


Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who participated in food related professional development (n=435)

Figure 7: Level of interest in food related professional development offered by planning organizations (n=376).

mentioned how it can be difficult to justify engaging in professional development opportunities that were outside their area of work. In some cases, respondents noted how planning conferences provide valuable opportunities to learn about new topics including those related to food systems planning, when workshops were offered on the topic.

Figure 9 shows how the professional development opportunities previously described, helped improve knowledge and skills related to food systems planning. The majority of respondents indicated that food related professional development opportunities provided information and exposure to new topics.

Twenty-two respondents indicated that the professional development opportunities they engaged in had no benefit or did not provide valuable learning opportunities. These respondents indicated a discrepancy between the content and their professional development goals or that offerings were too narrowly focused and not relevant to their work. A few respondents also suggested that offerings did not provide new knowledge.

The majority of respondents indicated they were Very Interested or Interested in participating if opportunities were made available by CIP or Provincial and Territorial organizations (Figure 7). The most common format for professional development described were online training courses and webinars (Figure 10). Keywords used to describe these opportunities included free, accessible and practical. Respondents also mentioned that the development of written policy guides and toolkits would support their learning, and support ongoing planning activities such as comprehensive planning, climate change planning or social policy development. Best practices and case studies from other jurisdictions were also highlighted by respondents as useful. Respondents also requested resources and support that could help them “make the case” for investment in food planning and policy development to supervisors and elected officials.

### Types of food related professional development opportunities respondents participated in

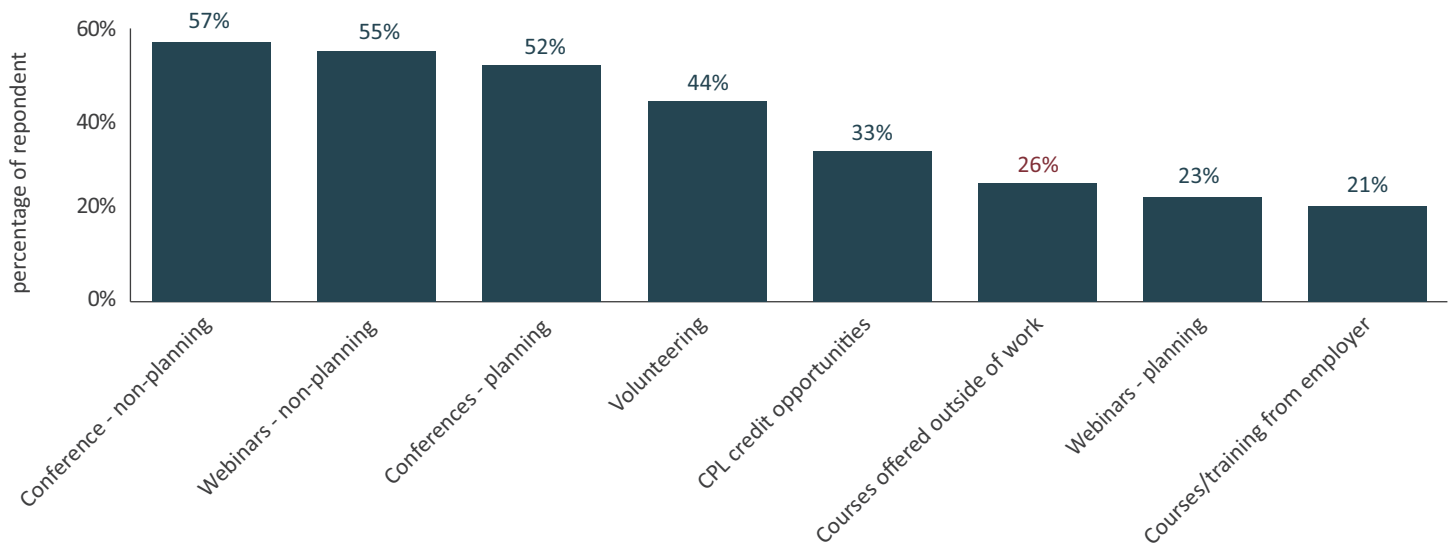


Figure 8: Types of food related professional development opportunities respondents participated in (n=397).

### How professional development helped improve knowledge and skills

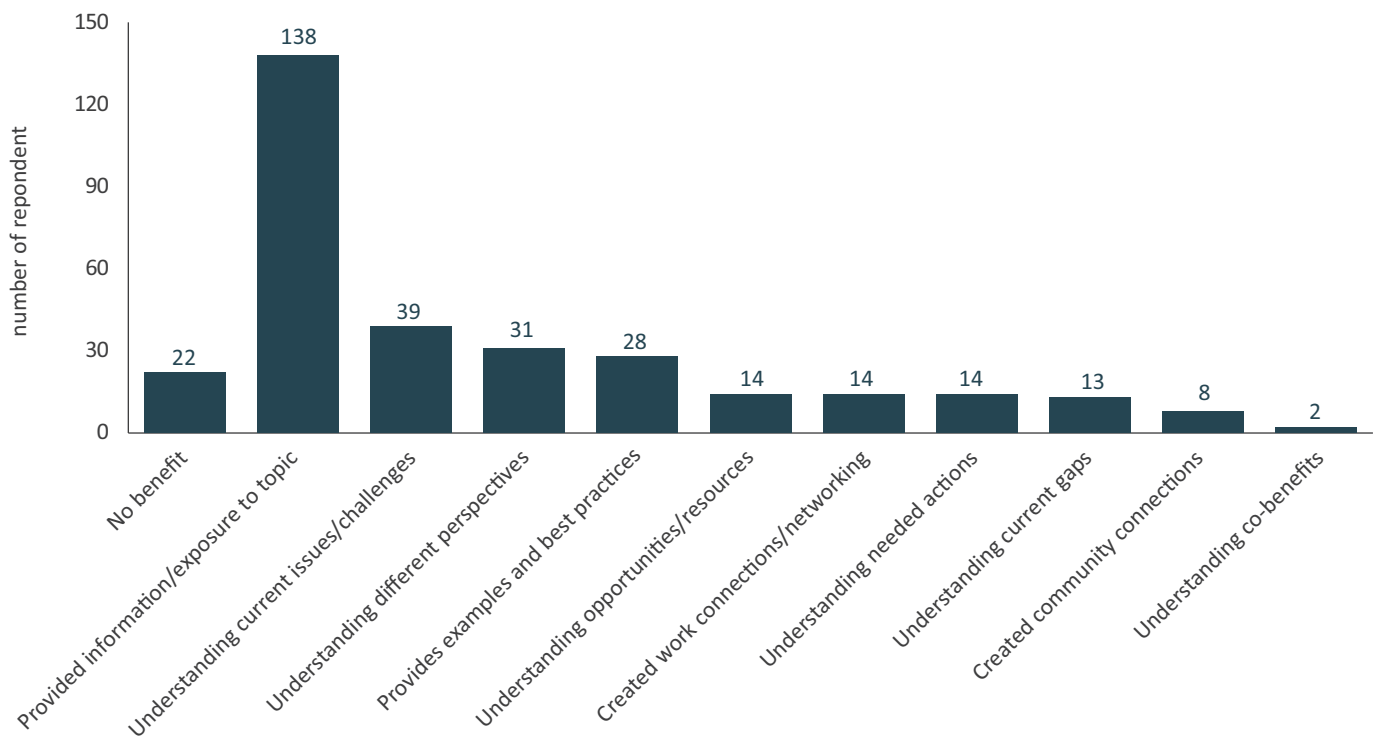


Figure 9: How professional development helped improve respondent's knowledge and skills to engage in food systems planning. Coded from 231 open-ended responses.



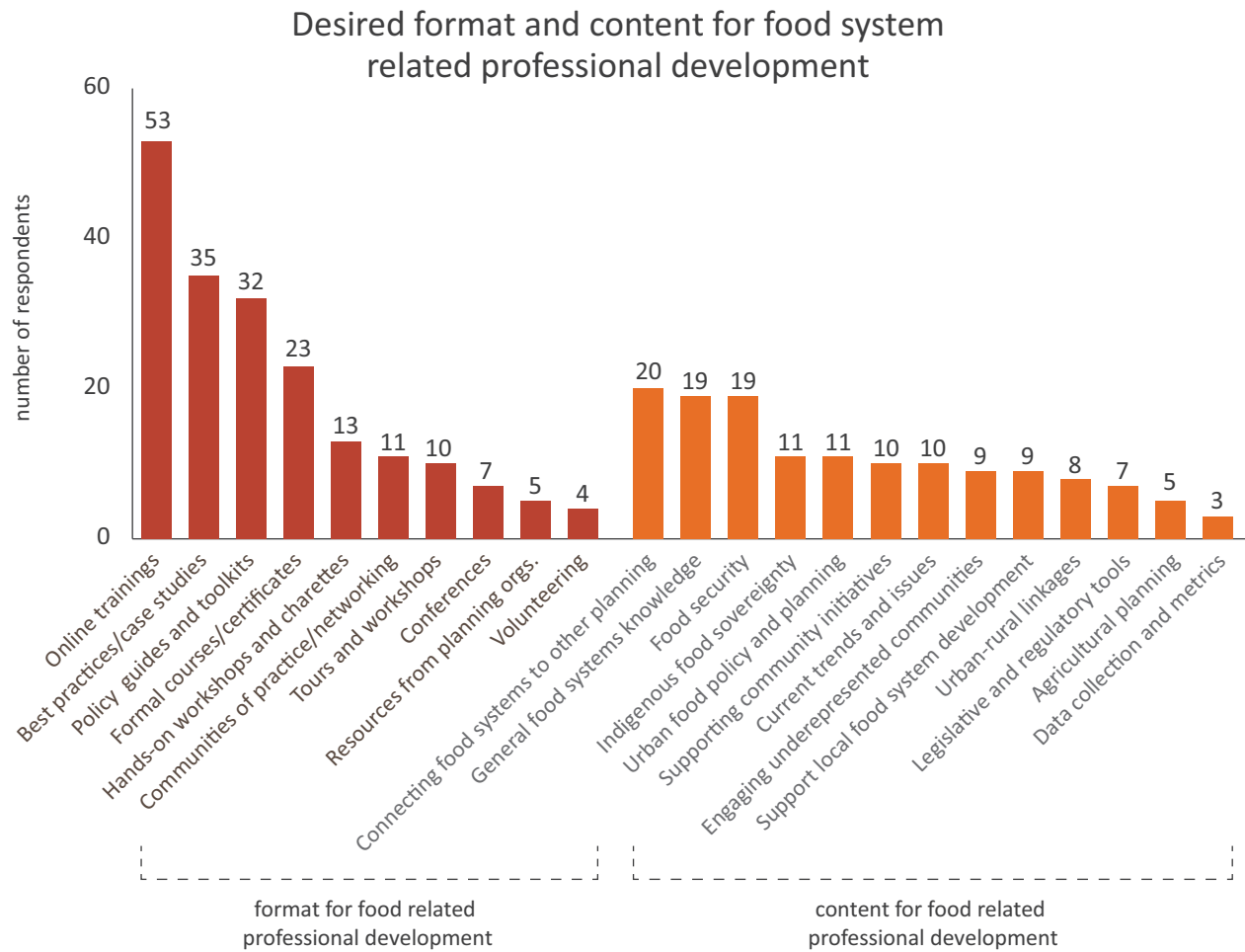


Figure 10: Summary of desired format and content for new food systems planning professional development from planning organizations. Coded from 204 open-ended responses.

The most common content theme for professional development offerings was information about how food systems planning intersects with, and can be advanced through different areas of planning (Figure 10). General knowledge about food systems was also identified as an important concept to address in professional development. Food security, and Indigenous food sovereignty emerged as specific areas of focus for new professional development opportunities. With respect to food security, respondents specifically mentioned interest in understanding what it is, how it is measured, and links to health and community well-being. Respondents also mentioned interest in learning about food systems planning in urban environments, beyond a focus on urban agriculture and community gardens. This included approaches to urban land access for food production, as well as links to health and urban land use planning.



***“I really believe, as planners, that we need to listen to our Indigenous communities and use a decolonized and anti-capitalism approach to food systems.”***

***-Survey Respondent***

## Knowledge of Food System Topics

To assess understanding about food systems topics, respondents were asked to rate their level of knowledge of different food system topics. For each topic respondents ranked their knowledge level based on a scale provided from “Very Good” to “Very Poor”. [Table 6](#) shows the ranking scale and definitions provided to respondents for this exercise. For analysis, responses were grouped into three categories: Very Good/Good, Adequate, and Poor/Very Poor levels of knowledge. [Figure 11](#) shows the percentage of respondents ranking their knowledge in each category. Respondents had the highest level of knowledge in urban agriculture/community gardens, health/nutrition and agriculture. Topics where respondents reported the lowest level of knowledge included fisheries and marine food systems, Indigenous food sovereignty, food workers and labour, and legal frameworks.

## Overall Knowledge of Food Systems Amongst Planners

Overall level of knowledge was assessed by conducting analysis of responses across all food systems topics listed. If a respondent indicated their level of knowledge was *Very Good* their response was assigned a 5, *Good* was assigned a 4, *Adequate* was assigned a 3, *Poor* assigned a 2 and *Very Poor* assigned a 1. Respondents with a higher overall score had a higher level of knowledge across all topic areas than those who scored lower. Based on this index, 11% of respondents have a high level of food system knowledge, 68% have a medium level of knowledge and 21% have a low level of knowledge ([Figure 12](#)).

Self-assessment of respondent’s food system knowledge

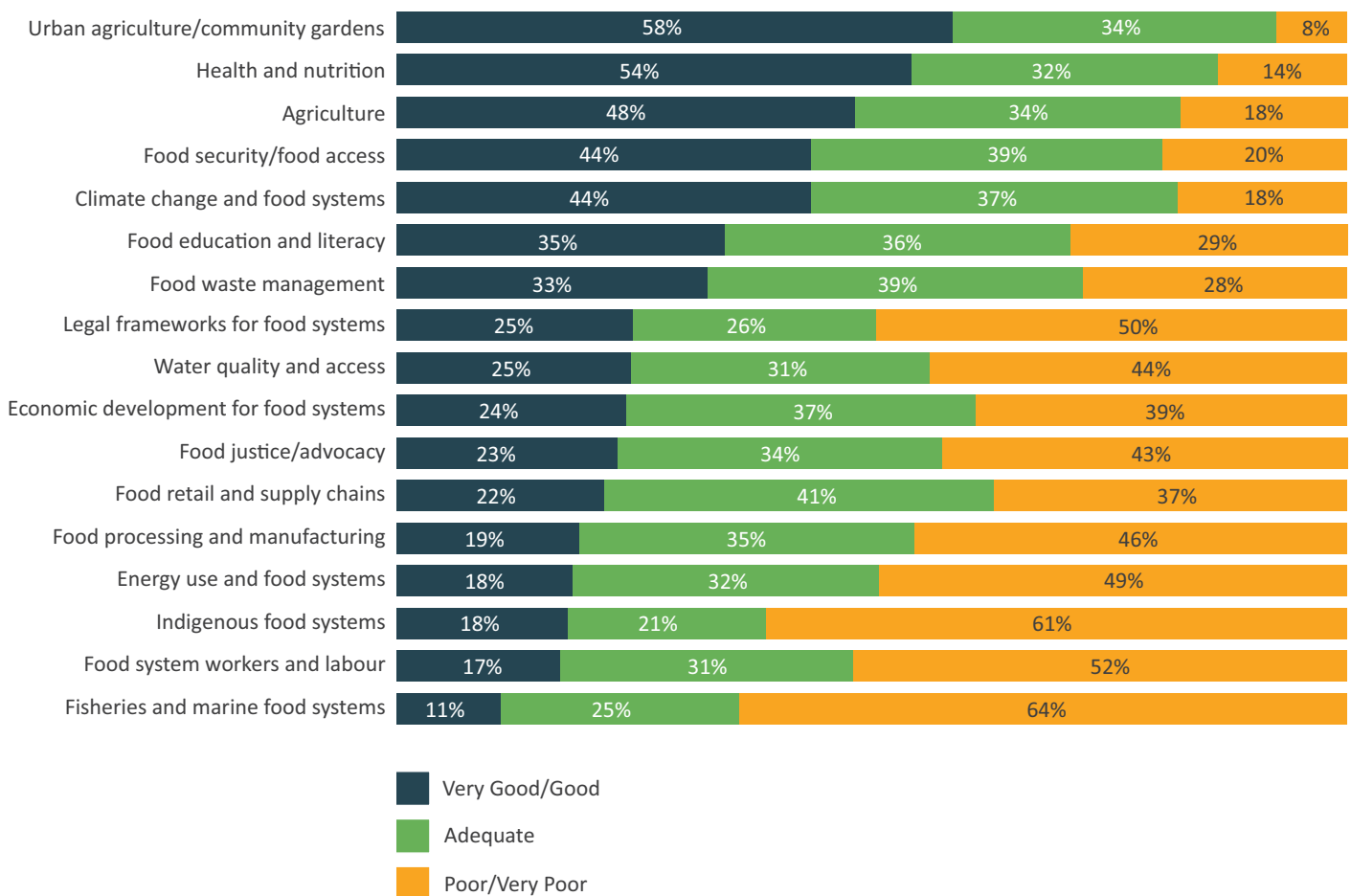
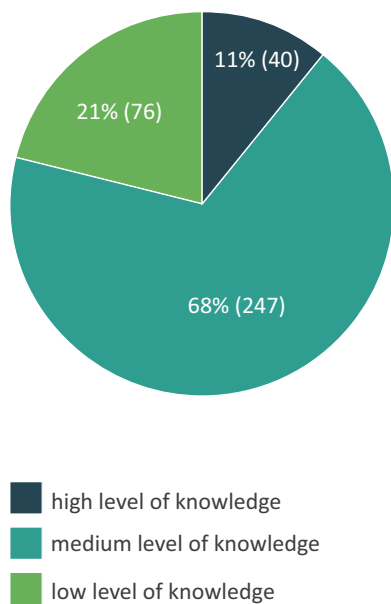


Figure 11: Respondent’s knowledge self-assessment for food system topic areas. For analysis, these responses were grouped into three categories: Very Good/Good, Adequate, and Poor/Very Poor levels of knowledge.

Table 6: Food system knowledge and competency ranking scale provided to respondents.

Ranking	Definition
Very Good	I have a good working knowledge of the area and regularly keep up to date with advancements in the field. I feel fully prepared and very confident addressing these issues in my planning work.
Good	I have some knowledge of the area and understand the major challenges, drivers and trends. I feel generally confident addressing these issues in my planning work and would benefit from additional information, and data to support my work.
Adequate	I have basic knowledge of the area and have some idea of where to access further information. I feel reservedly confident addressing these issues in my planning work, and would require additional information and data to support my work.
Poor	I have little knowledge of the area, and have some idea of where/how to access further information. I do not feel very confident addressing these issues in my planning work.
Very Poor	I know little about the area, and am unsure of where/how to access further information and support. I do not feel confident addressing these issues in my planning work.

Overall level of food systems knowledge, based on self-assessment



**“Planners are mostly white and often from privileged backgrounds and it is the marginalized people who experience food insecurity at the highest rates in this country. Perhaps due to this, I think many planners lack an understanding of the social/environmental impacts of our current food system, as it may serve them well. Some may also question the “need” for food systems planning.”**

**-Survey Respondent**

Figure 12: Overall knowledge of food systems areas based on participant self-assessment. Respondents with a high level of knowledge scored above 64 on the numerical index, medium level of knowledge scored between 41 and 63 and low level of knowledge scored below 40.



## Food Systems Planning in Practice

### Defining Food Systems Planning

Moving towards a coherent and shared understanding of food systems planning is a critical step towards enhancing education and professional development opportunities in Canada. As part of the survey, respondents were given an existing, standard definition of food systems planning and asked to provide feedback on how it could be improved to reflect current priorities and planning contexts in Canada.

Respondents found that existing definitions fell short in consideration of how food systems planning occurs across different scales. The importance of bottom-up processes and the leadership of grassroots organizations, non-profits and communities in the development of food system policies and programs was emphasized.

Justice and equity were also recognized as critical outcomes of food systems planning. The need to meaningfully engage in processes of decolonization and actively support Indigenous food sovereignty as a central part of food systems planning was recognized.

In addition to the development of new policies, respondents recognized the development of implementation strategies, pilot projects, and support services as important outcome of food systems planning. Some respondents highlighted the importance of local food infrastructure development as a critical outcome. Respondents also highlighted how food systems planning can be linked to ongoing work to increase sustainability and community resiliency.

### Involvement in food systems planning

Based on a definition of food systems planning provided, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they were engaged in food systems planning. Ten percent of respondents indicated that food systems planning was a primary focus of their planning work, and 35% indicated it was part of their work, but not a primary focus. Therefore, 45% of respondents indicated they were involved in food systems planning and 53% indicated that they were not (Figure 13). The 10% that indicated food systems planning as their primary focus may be greater in this sample than for the general population of planners and practitioners due to the potential for a higher number of people involved in or interested in the field of food systems planning responding to the survey.

Respondents who had a high level of knowledge about food system topics generally had more involvement in food systems planning when compared to those with lower levels of knowledge (Figure 14). The majority of respondents with a low level of food systems knowledge indicated they were not involved in food systems planning.

About half of respondents working in the local government sector indicated that they were involved in food systems planning (Figure 15). Of these respondents, 3% (6 respondents) identified food systems planning as their primary role. This result may reflect the diverse responsibility of local government planners and the limited number of food-specific positions within local planning contexts. The private sector had the smallest number of respondents who indicated they were involved in food systems planning, with respondents working in Indigenous community contexts and as independent consultants having the highest percentage.

Percentage of respondents involved in food systems planning

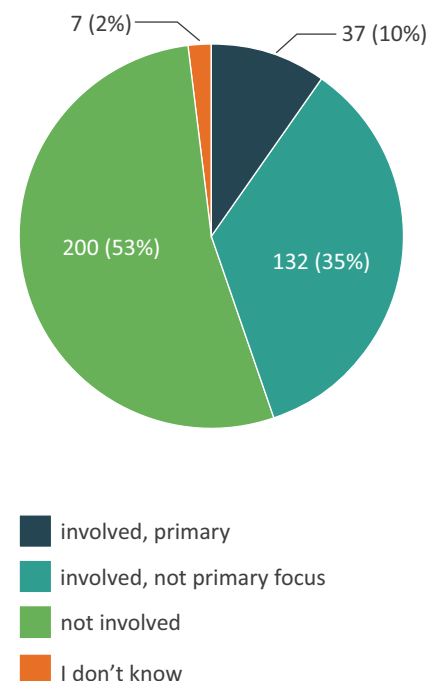
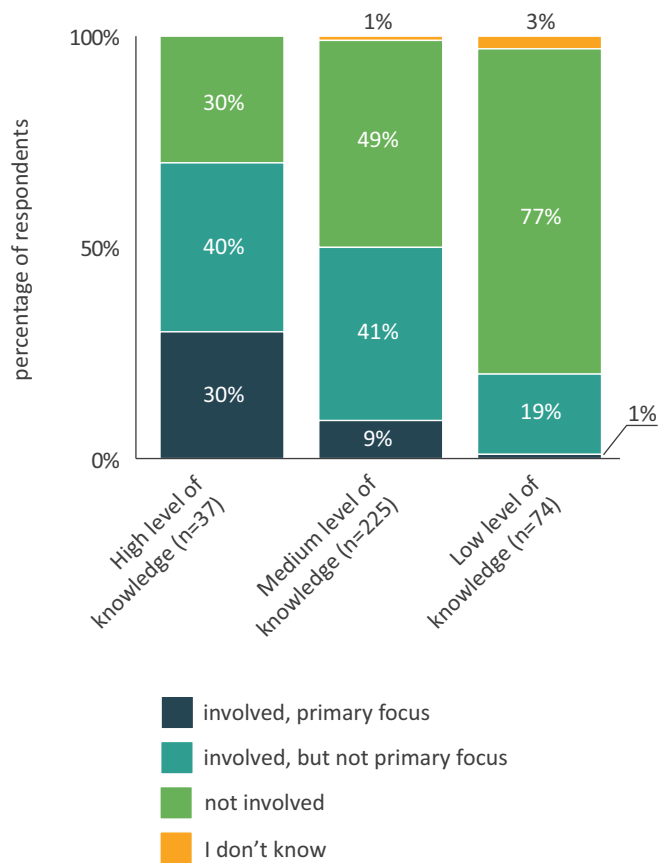


Figure 13: Percentage of respondents involved in food systems planning (n=376).

### Involvement in food systems planning by level of food systems knowledge



### Involvement in food systems planning by sector

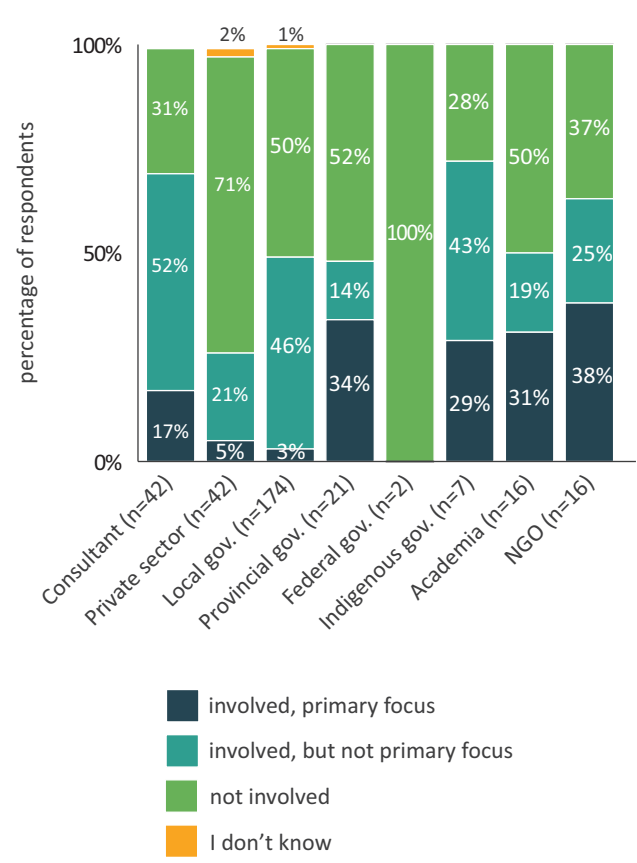


Figure 14: Involvement in food systems planning by level of overall food systems knowledge. Level of knowledge determined by respondent self-assessment.

Figure 15: Involvement in food systems planning by planning sector.

Provincial government, NGO’s and academia had the highest percentage of respondents involved in food systems planning as a primary part of their work.

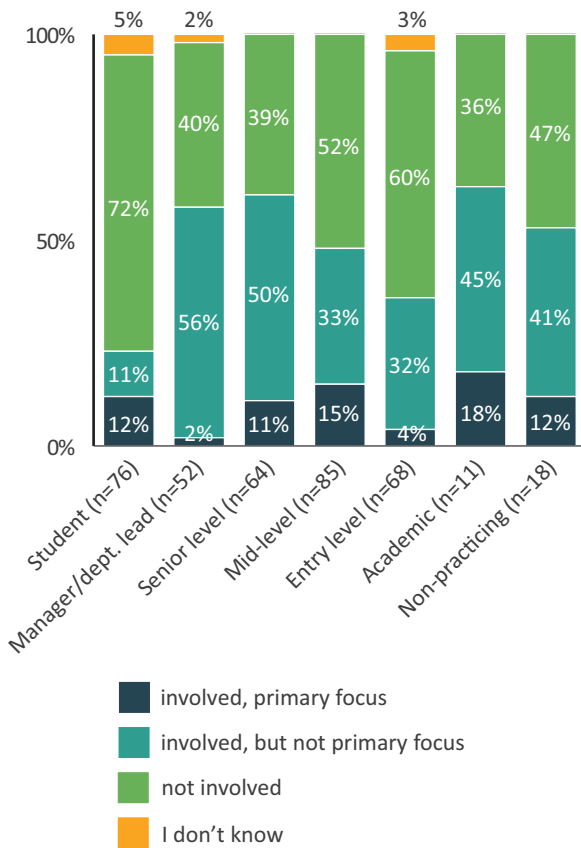
While over half of respondents in management or departmental lead roles indicated were involved in food systems planning, only one of these respondents indicated that food systems planning was a primary part of their job (Figure 16). This result may reflect the fact that few planning agencies have dedicated food planning teams or departments. As a result, department leads may be more likely to be involved in food planning as one part of their job, rather than a primary focus. A greater percentage of senior and mid-level planners indicated that food systems planning was a primary part of their job, when compared to those in management and departmental lead roles. Those working in senior and mid-level roles, as well as in academia had the largest percentage of respondents involved in food systems planning.

A greater percentage of white respondents were involved in food systems planning. However, a greater percentage of respondents from the racial minority group indicated that food systems planning was a primary focus of their work (Figure 17). Based on the data collected, there was no practical difference in involvement in food systems planning by gender.

### Areas of food systems planning focus

Figure 18 shows the areas of food systems planning respondents are involved in. Only those respondents who indicated they were involved in food systems planning (either as a primary focus or part of their work) responded to this question. The most commonly identified issues and activities were rural land use planning (53% of respondents), urban agriculture and community gardens (53% of respondents), agricultural planning (48% of respondents), and community food security (47% of respondents).

### Involvement in food systems planning by job title or position



### Involvement in food systems planning by race/ethnicity and gender

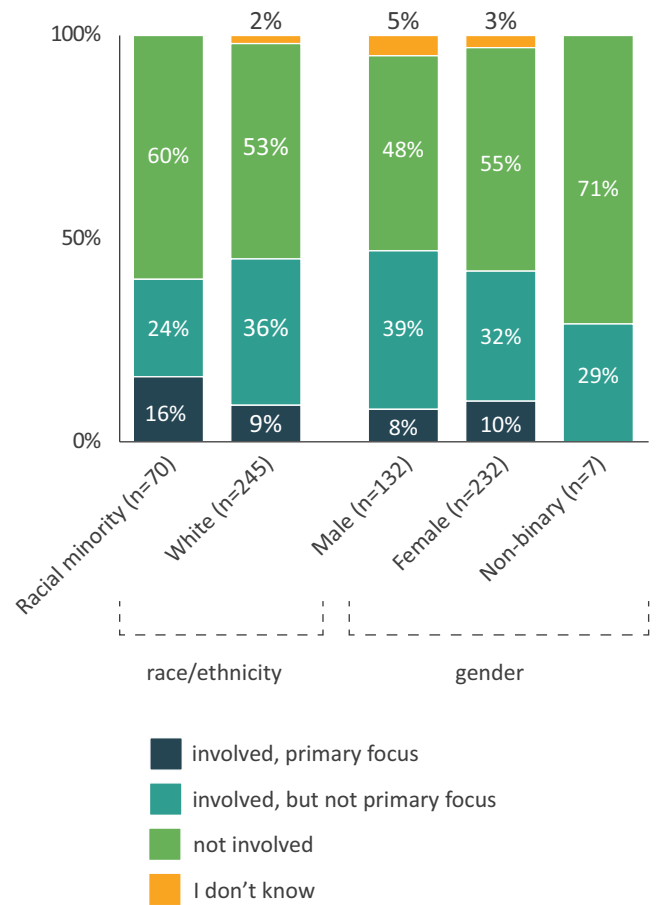


Figure 16: Involvement in food systems planning by job title or position.

Figure 17: Involvement in food systems planning by respondent's race/ethnicity and gender identity.

Figure 19 compares areas of food system planning focus for respondents involved in food systems planning as a primary focus and those involved in food systems planning as part of their work. For respondents who indicated that food systems planning was a primary focus, community food security/access, urban agriculture/community gardens, and agricultural planning were top areas of focus. With a focus on food security and urban agriculture, these respondents may work in more urban contexts.

For respondents who are involved with food systems planning as a part of their work, rural land use planning emerged as a primary focus, along with urban agriculture and community gardens, and agricultural planning. These respondents have more of a focus on rural and agricultural planning activities compared to respondents who are primarily focused on food systems planning.

For respondents who indicated food system planning was not a primary focus of their work, food policy development, food policy advocacy and food infrastructure development were less of a focus when compared to planners working primarily on food systems planning. There is also a notable difference in focus between those primarily involved in food systems planning and those only engaged with it as part of their work when it comes to the issue of Indigenous food sovereignty (Figure 19).

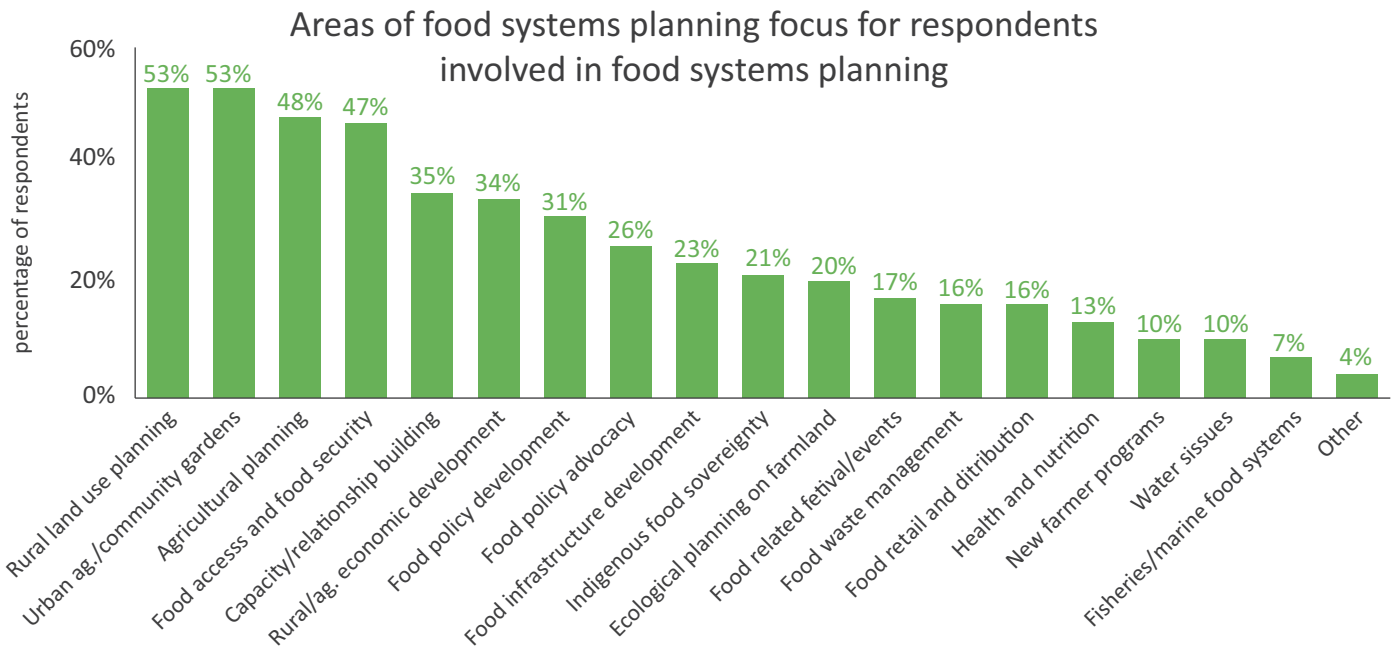


Figure 18: Areas of food systems planning focus for respondents involved in food systems planning (n=169).

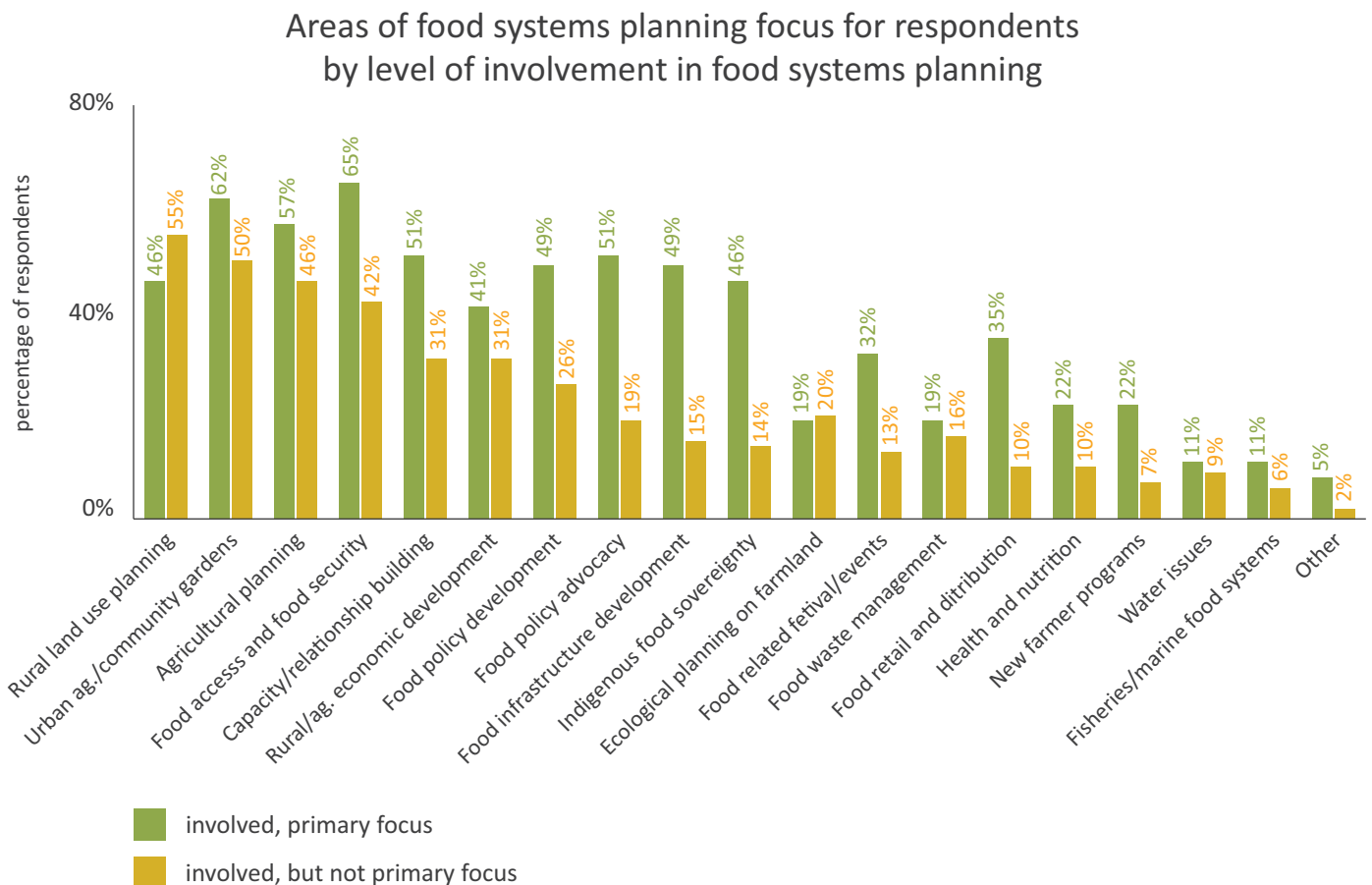


Figure 19: Areas of food systems planning focus for respondents by level of involvement in food systems planning: involved, primary focus (n=36), involved but not primary focus (n=132).

## Tools and sources of knowledge

Respondents identified local level plans and policies as the tools most often used in food systems planning work (Figure 20). Other tools mentioned by respondents, but not listed, included climate change assessments/projections and Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

The most common sources of information and knowledge were local government agencies and provincial government agencies followed by NGO's and journals/ public case studies (Figure 21). The significance of local tools and information sources reflects the high number of local government sector respondents.

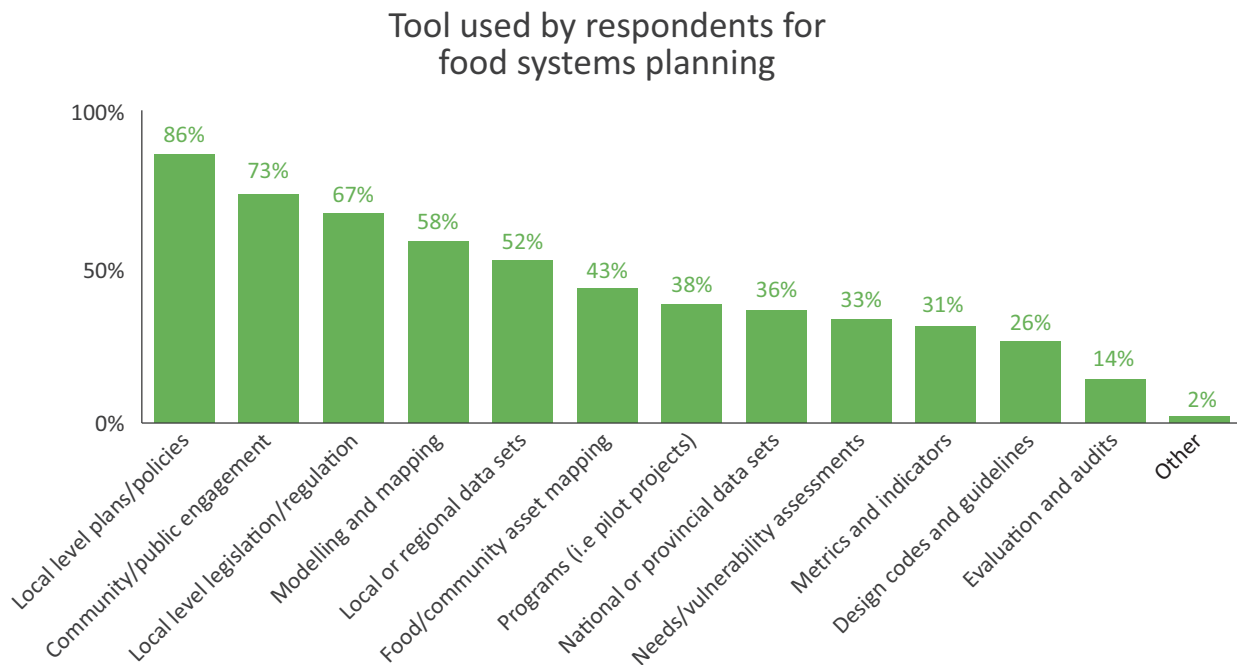


Figure 20: Tools used by respondents involved in food systems planning (n=160).

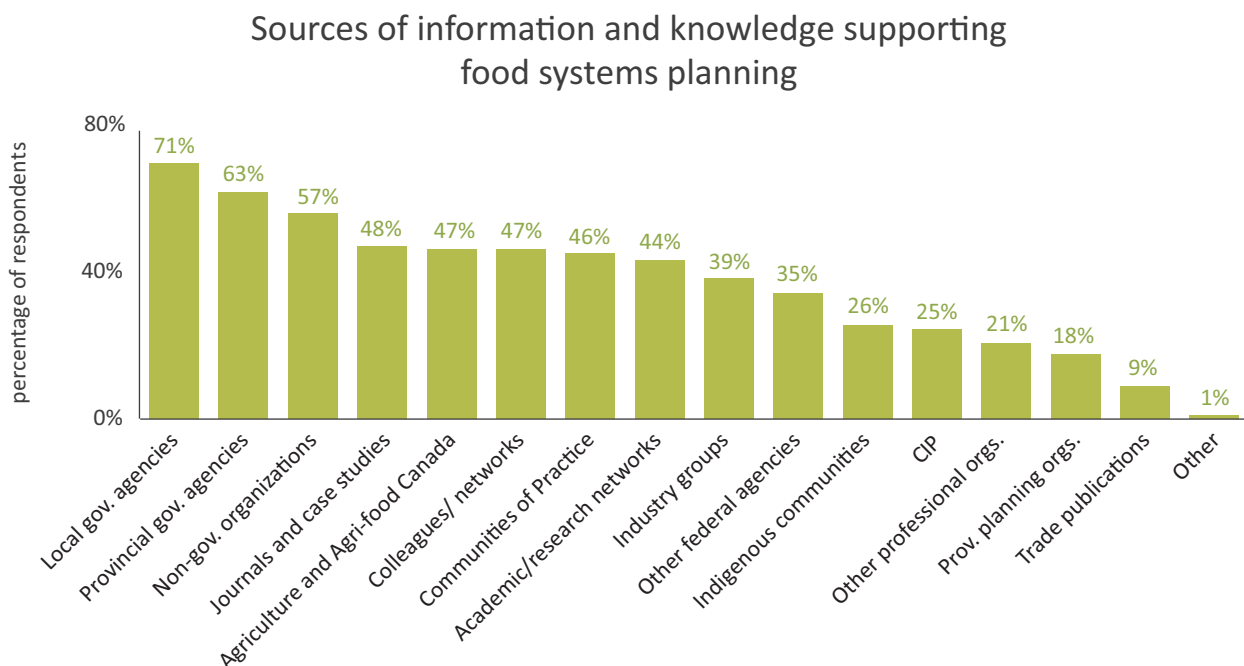


Figure 21: Sources of information and knowledge for respondents involved in food systems planning (n=160).



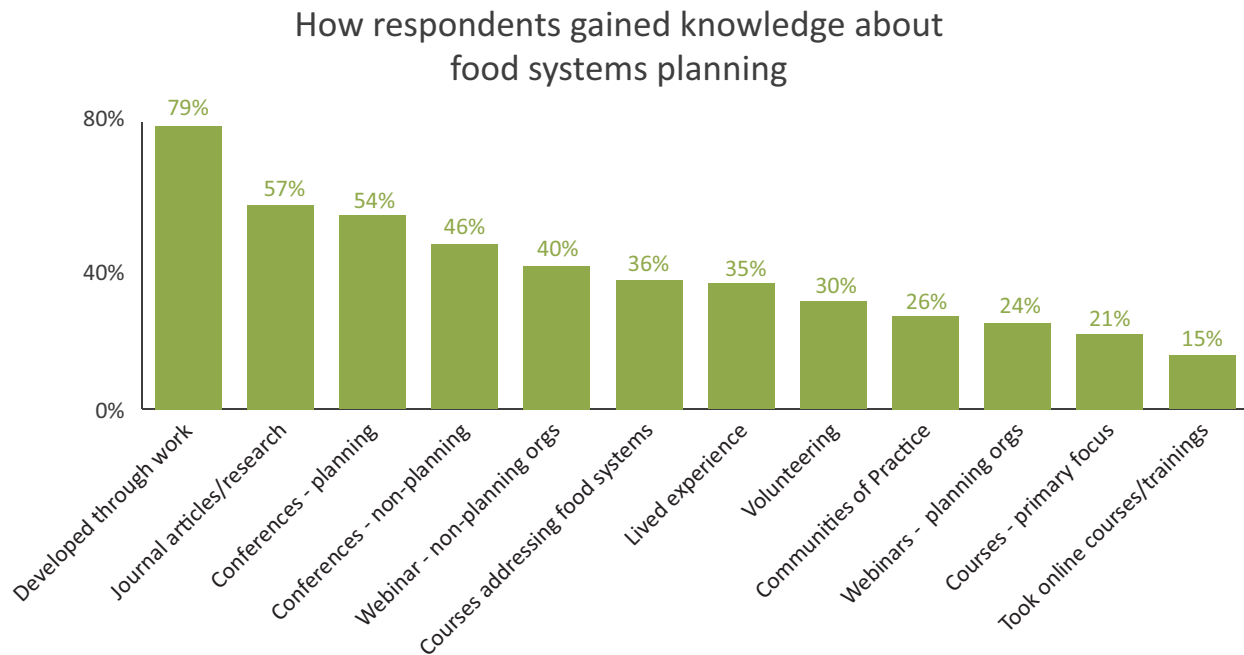


Figure 22: How respondents gained knowledge about food systems planning (n=160).

NGO’s also emerged as important sources of information. This reliance on community based initiatives when it comes to food system development and planning was reflected throughout the survey.

Developing skills and knowledge through the course of work was the most common way respondents gained knowledge about food systems planning (Figure 22). Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they engaged in independent research actively seeking out books, journals and research in the field. Attending workshops at planning and non-planning conferences also helped respondents gain skills and knowledge.

Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated that they had gained knowledge to support their work in food systems planning through lived experience. The most common type of lived experiences that allowed respondents to gain knowledge were personal experiences as a farmer, farm worker or fisher and growing up on a farm (Figure 23). Nine respondents indicated that their experience of food insecurity or challenges accessing culturally appropriate food had informed their work. Growing their own food, working in non-agricultural food sectors (i.e. food retail or processing), involvement in food related advocacy and living or working in rural or agricultural communities were also mentioned by respondents. One respondent indicated that working closely with Indigenous communities where food and land are central to culture and traditions had informed their food system work.

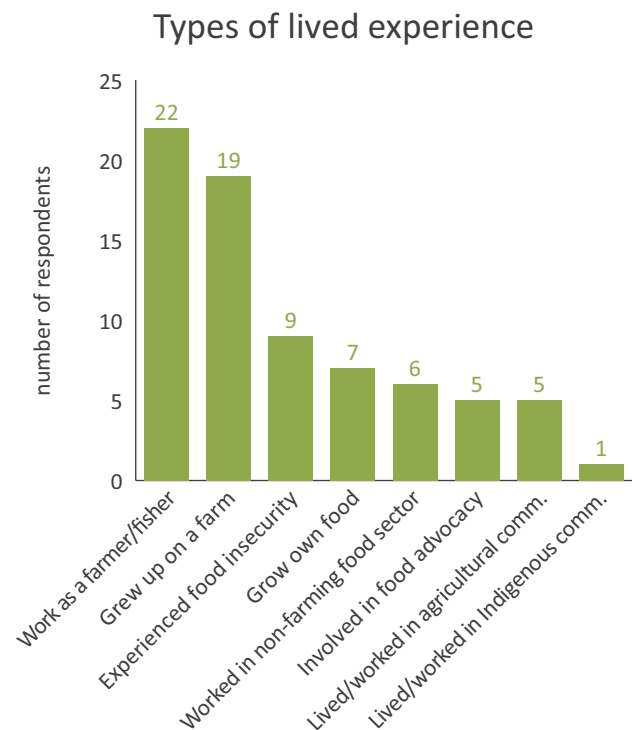


Figure 23: Types of lived experience that helped respondents gain knowledge and skill to engage in food systems planning. Coded from 47 open-ended responses.



## Barriers and Knowledge Gaps Impacting Food Systems Planning

### Barriers

Survey respondents were presented with a predetermined list and asked to select the five most significant barriers they perceived (Figure 24). A number of respondents indicated that they perceived many of the listed barriers to be significant and that they would have selected more than five if they were able.

Limited knowledge of food systems amongst planners was the most significant barrier, selected by 65% of participants. Poor understanding of Indigenous food sovereignty and the impacts of planning activities on Indigenous food and health were noted by respondents.

Competing planning goals and priorities was another significant barrier, selected by 51% of respondents. Respondents highlighted the influence of development planning priorities and the private sector as points of

conflict with local food system priorities.

Lack of political support and guidance, and limited budgets and capacity were each selected by 45% of respondents. Respondents identified that their scope of work may be too narrow and that they could be constrained by the specific mandate of their role or department and lack capacity to address other issues. Limited budget was mentioned by a number of respondents in the context of local government planning when there are many competing priorities and needs.

Forty-five percent of respondents selected limited influence over the food system as a barrier. Some respondents highlighted how food system work is often the domain of community organizations, rather than a central role of government. As a result, the role for planners in advancing food system work and supporting community initiatives is

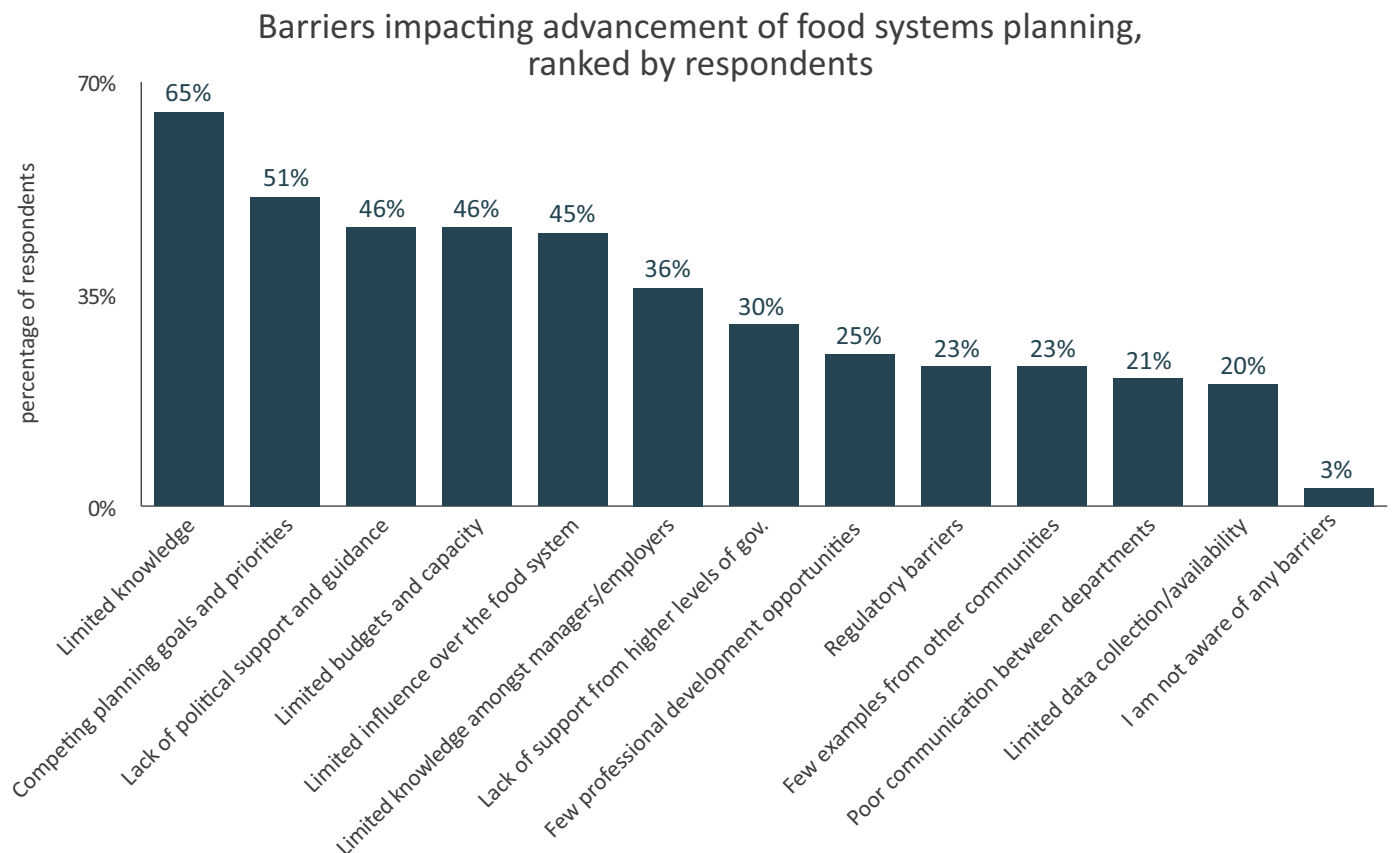


Figure 24: Barriers impacting advancement of food systems planning, ranked by respondents (n=367).

less clear. Other respondents highlighted that with siloed planning approaches, food systems planning often fell outside the scope of their work.

“*In my experience as a planner, I can only operate within a very narrow mandate which almost always excludes food systems planning.*”

*-Survey Respondent*

## Additional Barriers

Respondents also communicated additional barriers noting that food systems planning is not yet widely understood or acknowledged within the planning field. As a result, positions specifically focused on food systems planning are rare within municipalities and planning departments, and there are few experts to turn to with specific technical expertise in food system topics and planning approaches.

“*It is rare to find food planning positions. Meaning, there’s few people who are the “go-to”.*”

*-Survey Respondent*

Respondents also mentioned the divide between urban and rural planning contexts and the urban-centric approach in planning practice as a barrier to advancing food systems planning.

For some respondents, a lack of diverse representation in the planning field can have an impact on how food systems problems are perceived. As noted by respondents, the lack of diversity can mean that those in decision making roles are less likely to be impacted by food systems inequities (i.e. food insecurity), and these issues can receive less attention and policy focus.

Lack of knowledge and awareness about food systems amongst the public was also identified as a barrier.

## Knowledge Gaps

Respondents identified limited knowledge about food systems amongst planners as the most significant barrier to advancing food systems planning. In this section, respondents were asked to select the top five knowledge gaps they perceived amongst planners related to food systems planning ([Figure 25](#)).

How food systems relate to other planning domains emerged as the most significant knowledge gap, selected by 62% of respondents. This was followed by knowledge of food system function and relationships, and how land use planning impacts food systems.

Indigenous food sovereignty, food systems and traditional foods was identified as a knowledge gap by 48% of respondents. Respondents also suggested that planners lack knowledge about how planning activities and decisions have and continue to have an impact on Indigenous food sovereignty and access. One respondent highlighted that building knowledge and awareness requires planners to engage with Indigenous communities more meaningfully through the practice of food systems planning.

“*Indigenous food sovereignty is a HUGE gap!! This will hopefully change with UNDRIP and more awareness of the importance of Indigenous rights and self-determination.*”

*- Survey Respondent*

Agriculture and food production was identified as a knowledge gap by 40% of respondents. Specific knowledge gaps were identified related to how food production can be integrated into urban contexts and understanding the impact of industrial farming on environment, human health and local economies.

The relationship between equity, justice and diversity and the food system was recognized as a knowledge gap by 39% of respondents. One respondent highlighted how the lived experience and background of planners could have an impact on their knowledge and perspectives to engage with food systems and advance food justice and equity based approaches.

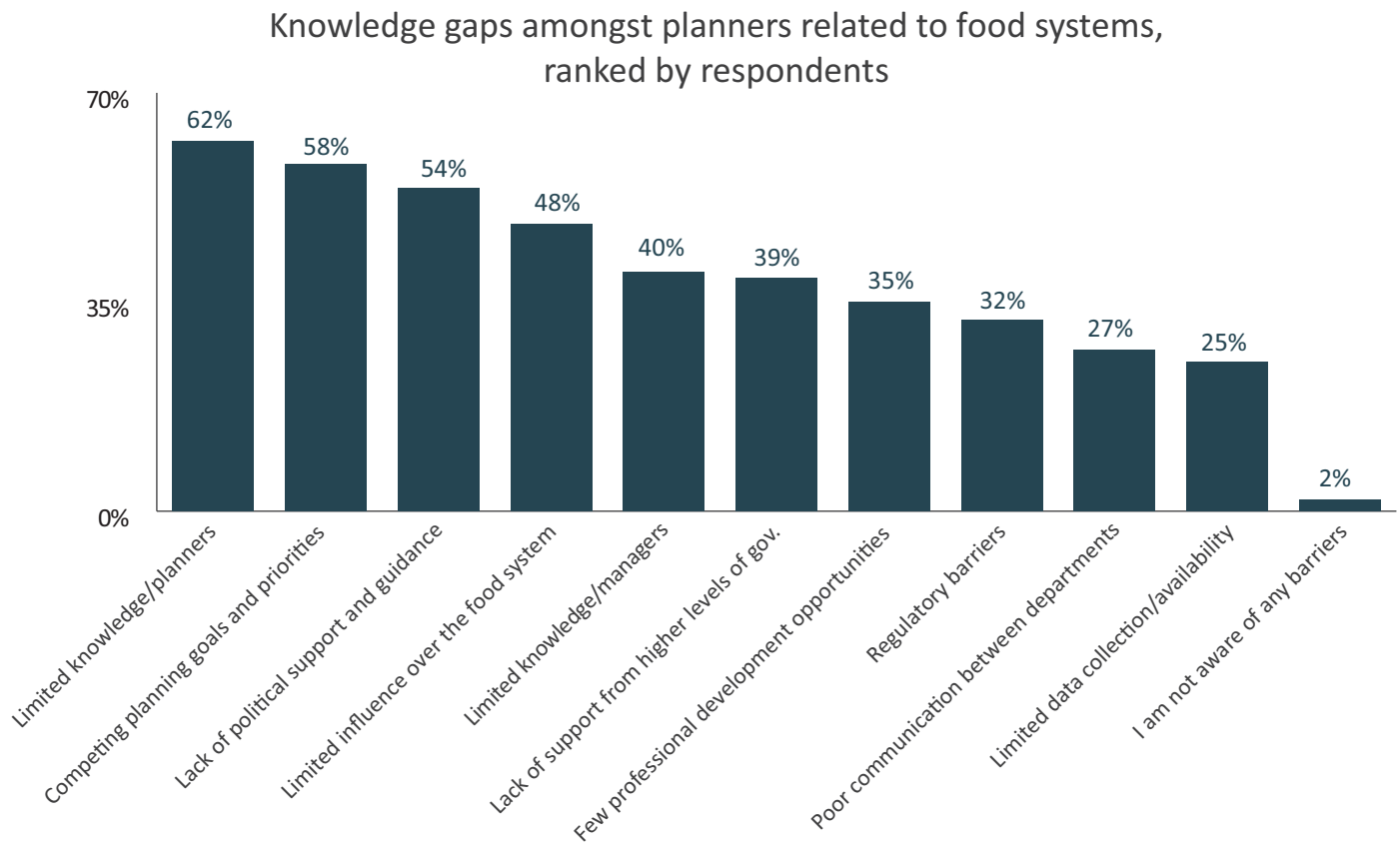


Figure 25: Knowledge gaps amongst planners related to food systems, ranked by respondents (n=369).

## Additional Knowledge Gaps

In addition to selecting the most significant knowledge gaps perceived, respondents were asked to identify additional knowledge gaps. Open-ended responses were analyzed and key themes emerged. While planners’ knowledge of food systems was a top knowledge gap, respondents also highlighted that knowledge gaps at higher levels of government can have an impact on food systems planning.



***“I want to add that these all appear to be knowledge gaps (or blind spots) of policymakers at higher levels of government. There is only so much local levels of government can do without strong provincial direction, particularly in high-growth areas.”***

***-Survey Respondent***

This reflected the barrier “lack of support from higher levels of government” selected by respondents in the previous section. Particularly for planners working in local government or community contexts, limited knowledge or investment in food system work from provincial and federal governments can limit their ability to take action.

Respondents also mentioned limited knowledge related to the legislative and regulatory tools used to make change and influence the food system. Knowledge about how policy and regulatory tools can be leveraged to address key issues such as food security, farmland protection, and infrastructure development was notably limited.

Respondents also cited a knowledge gap related to how planners can support community-based initiatives and public food infrastructure development as an alternative to corporate controlled models.

The siloed nature of urban and rural planning has created knowledge gaps for those working in urban environments about the impacts of their planning decisions on food systems, and how food policy and infrastructure should be integrated into their work.

## Conclusion & Next Steps



***“Food is everywhere and nowhere when it comes to planning, and often falls through the cracks.”***

***- Survey Respondent***

This survey was conducted to better understand the state of food systems planning in Canada from the perspective of planners and practitioners. Insights from those working on the ground are valuable in identifying the barriers that may limit engagement in food systems planning as well as emerging opportunities to advance the field of food systems planning in Canada. This survey highlighted some key challenges in moving forward:

***Knowledge about food systems is limited amongst planners:*** Limited knowledge of food systems amongst planners was ranked as the highest barrier to advancing food systems planning. While respondents were knowledgeable about some topics, a range of expertise about food systems is limited. The survey also demonstrated that knowledge about some critical food systems topics were notably low, such as food infrastructure (e.g. processing, distribution and storage), Indigenous food sovereignty, and food systems labour. There are also recognized knowledge gaps amongst planners when it comes to the connection between food systems and other areas of planning, strategies for communication with decision makers about food system issues, and the understanding of both new and existing planning and regulatory tools for food systems planning.



***“Those making decisions have limited knowledge of how food systems and food security is a critical piece of planning and government policy making.”***

***- Survey Respondent***

***Education and professional development opportunities available to planners are inadequate:***

The majority of survey respondents did not take courses that addressed food systems as part of their formal education. For those who did engage in food systems education, courses were primarily introductory; introducing participants to food system concepts and issues. Courses addressing food planning and policy development were not commonly available to aspiring planners.

The survey demonstrated that planners primarily relied on professional development opportunities outside the planning field to gain skills and knowledge about food systems. This included more formalized professional development such as workshops, webinars and other online trainings as well as volunteering with related organizations, participation in advocacy, and independent research. Existing professional development offerings related to food systems were primarily introductory and helped build awareness about issues amongst planners.



***“There is very little opportunity for introductory education to basic food systems planning in the majority of planning degrees. If planners are never introduced to it, it barely seems to register beyond the concept of community garden, grassroots farmers market...”***

***- Survey Respondent***

***There is a lack of clarity around who is responsible for food systems planning:*** Generally, there is a recognized lack of clarity around where the responsibility for food systems planning lies across jurisdictions (e.g. local, provincial, or federal) and within planning departments. The “cross cutting” nature of food systems can lead to confusion and cause food systems issues to go unaddressed in planning contexts. At the same time, there is a perception that food systems are shaped by market-based forces and the potential for governments and communities to influence food system outcomes is limited.

Respondents also recognized the important role of community organizations in the process of food systems planning. It was noted that such groups are often better positioned, and funded to address food system issues, and planners, especially those working in government, may lack tools and capacity to support and amplify these efforts.

***Food systems planning is perceived as a rural issue, not an urban one:*** Survey results suggest that food systems planning is perceived as a rural issue with agricultural and land use planning as important foci. Respondents also focused on activities such as urban agriculture, community gardens and food security, however critical urban food system issues such as food waste management, and food infrastructure development were less of a focus for planners. While there is an increasing focus on urban food issues, results suggest that the work of planners remains narrowly focused on facilitating urban food growing and community gardening. Some respondents also noted a limited focus on other emerging urban food issues such as urban land access, food sovereignty and food distribution. Notable education and training resource gaps related to urban food policy were also noted.

***A recognized lack of racial diversity and lived experience in the planning field could impact how food systems are understood and limit how they are addressed in planning:*** Food system insecurity and other inequities are structured by systems of oppression, including racism and colonialism. A recognized lack of racial and ethnic diversity and lived experience with food insecurity in the planning field could impact how food systems are understood and limit how they are addressed in planning. Respondents suggested that a lack of diversity, especially in leadership and decision-making roles, can impact how food issues are understood and addressed in planning contexts.

## Next steps: Advancing food systems planning in Canada

Research conducted two decades ago by Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999;2000) brought widespread attention to the omission of food systems from urban planning agendas. Our survey demonstrated that many of the challenges identified by these researchers still persist today. Addressing challenges, and advancing the field of food systems planning will require collective action from planning institutions, academics, governments and planners themselves. Based on findings from the survey some next steps to pursue include:

### ***Supporting the development of new education and professional development opportunities for planners:***

The survey demonstrated that both foundational education in food systems planning and professional development opportunities for planners on the topic are limited. Embedding food systems planning education in planning schools across the country could create new opportunities for aspiring planners to build foundational knowledge in the field. Providing new opportunities for students could also create new opportunities. This study did not examine the content or pedagogical approaches of the food systems courses beyond the title or topic area of focus offered by respondents. Further research could assess how food systems planning has been integrated into planning education and curricula and assess changes over time.

The majority of respondents expressed interest in participating in the new professional development opportunities offered by planning organizations. Such opportunities could address training gaps related to communication with decision makers about food system issues, and understanding of both new and existing planning and regulatory tools for food systems planning. These opportunities can also build relationships and networks, supporting peer-to-peer learning and increased development of practical, evidence-based resources for food systems planning in Canada. Respondents also expressed interest in learning about emerging food systems issues such as food security, food justice and Indigenous food sovereignty.

### ***Clarifying roles and responsibilities for food systems planning:***

With the majority of respondents working in the local government sector, there is a resounding lack of clarity around the responsibility of local government planners in the process of food systems planning. Many respondents identified the need for higher levels of government to provide direction and funding for local governments to engage in food systems planning. Recently announced comprehensive food policy at the federal level, as well as various provincial policy development initiatives are promising. Respondents also described how food systems often do not have a clear home within governments and planning agencies. Pothukuchi and Kaufman suggested the development of dedicated departments for food planning within local government contexts. While few such departments have been developed, many communities have built support for food system planning by creating space for food planning within existing departments (i.e. social planning, sustainability, parks etc.), dedicating staff time and resources to

food planning and engaging in food systems policy development initiatives.

Many respondents identified the important role of community organizations in food systems planning and policy development. Community groups also played a critical role in providing information and training opportunities for planners. While the ongoing involvement of community groups is recognized as critical for effective food systems planning, training and support for planners to help understand how they can better support community-based initiatives is also needed.

**“I honestly never thought about food systems as even part of the planning realm. I would have assumed that as a federal agriculture jurisdiction. As urban farming becomes more of interest I think that’s when some of these topics might be introduced but never really thought about it at all.”**

**- Survey Respondent**

**Create space for underrepresented voices and perspectives in food systems planning:** Communities that suffer these inequities, such as Black, Indigenous and immigrant communities also often have limited political influence and may not be effectively engaged in planning and policy development. Meaningful representation and engagement with these communities in food systems planning activities is necessary in working towards achieving equity outcomes.

A lack of diversity in planning roles and within the sector can also limit how issues are perceived and addressed. Further research should assess the involvement of equity seeking groups (i.e. racial minorities, Indigenous Peoples, members of the LGBTQ community, persons with disabilities) in food systems planning and seek to better understand how equity based approaches to food systems planning can be supported through inclusion of individuals with relevant lived experience. The ongoing work of the Mentorship Initiative for Indigenous and Planners of Colour (MIPOC) identifies and unpacks the systemic barriers (i.e. paid accreditation, hiring and recruitment practices and access to planning education) which have and continue to exclude marginalized groups

from work in the planning field (MIPOC, n.d.). Further research should more closely look at these barriers with respect to food systems planning.

**Continue to explore approaches for collaborative, multi-scale food systems planning:** Throughout the survey, respondents recognized the complex, and “cross-cutting” nature of food systems planning. There is a recognized disconnect between urban and rural planning domains which ultimately impacts how food systems issues are addressed and limits attention paid to a broad range of food systems that cross urban and rural boundaries.

The disconnect between urban and rural planning activities presents a challenge for advancing food systems planning. Conceptually, food systems bridge rural and urban boundaries and require new collaborative planning approaches between jurisdictions. Increasingly, conversations about new approaches for multi-scale food system governance are emerging. A recent conference hosted by the Canadian Centre for Food Law and Policy focused on the theme of “territorial food system governance” with speakers touching on themes relevant in both urban and rural context including food sovereignty, workers’ rights, equity, and land access. Further research and exploration of regional and territorial food systems planning approaches could be made available to planners. Such planning approaches also must address the tensions and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Planners and practitioners are increasingly aware of the complex nature of food systems planning, food system inequities, and the connections between food system outcomes, climate change, equity and community well-being. Advancing the field of food systems planning requires collective action from planning institutions, academics, governments and planners themselves. Raising the profile of food systems planning within the field could help create new opportunities for education, training and networking and ultimately help build more just and sustainable food systems in Canada.

# Appendix A: Planning for Sustainable Food Systems Questionnaire

## Informed Consent Form

**Project Title: Planning for Sustainable Food Systems in Canada**

**Principal Investigator: Dr. Kent Mullinix, Director, Institute for Sustainable Food Systems**

You have been invited to participate in this survey to assess the current state of food systems planning in Canada from the perspective of planning practitioners working across the country. This project is led by the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), in collaboration with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP). The survey can be completed online in approximately 15 minutes. Please review the informed consent information below prior to completing the survey and contact the principal investigator if you have any questions.

### Purpose of the Study

The goal of this survey is to advance understanding of the current state of food systems planning from the perspective of planning practitioners across Canada. The survey aims to assess the skill and preparedness of practitioners to engage with food systems in planning and understand what tools and resources are available to support them in this work.

### Voluntary Participation and Confidentiality

Your participation is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study by clicking the exit link on the top right hand corner or closing your web browser at any time and your responses will not be recorded. You may skip any of the questions you do not wish to answer. There will be no negative consequences for an incomplete survey response or withdrawal. Due to the anonymous nature of the data collected, you will not be able to withdraw from the study once you submit your responses by clicking the "Done" button at the end of the survey. If you are unable to complete the survey at one time you may return to the survey and complete it at a later date. *To save your previous responses, you must use the same device, and internet browser used to initiate the survey.*

Your answers are completely anonymous. Survey responses will be summarized and reported in an aggregated form within study reports, and academic publications. Project reports will be published on the ISFS website at <https://www.kpu.ca/isfs/publications>.

Please note that when doing online research, there is always the chance of hacking from outside sources. To protect you, we will not ask you to provide personally identifiable information, and disable IP address tracking by our online survey.

### Risks of Harm/Discomforts/Inconvenience

We expect a minimal amount of possible discomfort from questions targeting your professional role, and planning work. If you become distressed during the online survey process, you can stop the survey at any time. You can contact ISFS Director Kent Mullinix to express your concerns.



### Benefits

Your participation in the survey will help to improve a shared understanding of how food systems are being addressed in the planning field across Canada. The information collected will inform further research and support the creation of professional development resources for planning practitioners.

Such resources and knowledge will indirectly help improve the research and practice within the emerging field of food systems planning in Canada, and planning practice more broadly.

### Contact Information

By consenting to participate, you have not waived your rights to legal recourse in the event of research related harm. If you wish to contact someone regarding this research, contact the principal investigator, Dr. Kent Mullinix (Tel: 604-599-2540 or email: kent.mullinix@kpu.ca) or the KPU Research Ethics Board (Tel: 604-599-3163 or email: reb@kpu.ca).

This project is funded by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) as part of the College and Community Social Innovation Fund.

## Eligibility and Informed Consent

1. Please select the statement that best describes you.

- I am a Registered Professional Planner (RPP)
- I am a RPP currently non-practicing, retired or on leave
- I am *not* a RPP, but I am employed in the field of planning (incl. planner who has not obtained their RPP, independent consultant, academic/researcher etc.)
- I am a current student or recent graduate of a planning school or program
- None of the above

If you are unsure of your eligibility to participate in this survey, please contact Emily Hansen, emily.hansen@kpu.ca

## Eligibility and Informed Consent

2. I agree to participate in this study.

- I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or consequences by closing the web browser.
- I understand that I can skip questions that I do not feel comfortable with or wish to not answer.

- Yes
- No

## Demographics

3. What is your age?

- Less than 22 years of age
- 23 - 28 years of age
- 29 - 35 years of age
- 36 - 45 years of age
- 46 - 55 years of age
- 56 - 65 years of age
- More than 65 years
- I prefer not to respond

4. Where do you live?

## Demographics

**Collecting data on gender and racial identity is reflective of an equity-based research approach which aims to understand how intersectional dynamics impact planning practice. Collecting information about who is actively engaged in food systems planning will yield valuable insights into how food system development could impact diverse communities across Canada.**

5. What is your gender identity?

- I prefer not to respond
- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- My gender is:

6. How would you describe your race, ethnicity or ancestry?

- I prefer not to respond
- My race, ethnicity, or ancestry is:

## Demographics

7. What is your current membership status with the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)?

- I am not a CIP member
- Professional (Full)
- Candidate/Provisional Member
- Pre-Candidate
- Student
- Retired/Non-Practicing/On-Leave
- Other (please specify):

8. Are you a member of any other professional associations? If so, please list them below.

## Education and Training

9. What is the highest level of education you have received? If currently enrolled please select the highest degree received to date.

- High school diploma or equivalent
- College diploma or certificate
- Bachelor degree
- Master degree
- Doctoral degree (PhD)
- Other (please specify):

## Education and Training

10. Have you received a degree from a planning school/program (accredited or non-accredited)?

- I am currently enrolled in a planning school/program
- Yes
- No
- I don't know

11. When did you receive your planning degree?

- Within the last 5 years
- 5-10 years ago
- 10-20 years ago
- 20 - 30 year ago
- Over 30 years ago

12. What is the name of the Institution(s) where you received your planning education or are currently enrolled?

13. During your formal planning education, did you take any course(s) with food, food systems or agriculture as a primary focus?

- Yes, I took a course(s) offered within my planning program/faculty
- Yes, I took course(s) offered outside of my planning program/faculty (e.g. in another faculty or department)
- No, I did not take any food or agriculture related courses
- I don't know

14. If yes, please provide the course title(s) and/or a short description(s).

15. In addition to planning, have you received any other degrees? If so, please list them below.

## Education and Training

16. What discipline(s) have you received a post-secondary degree(s) in? *Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                         |                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have not received a post-secondary degree(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Forestry/ Natural Resource Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting/ Finance                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Studies                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Studies                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biology/ Ecology                               | <input type="checkbox"/> International Development             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Science/ Public Policy      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Studies                          |                                                                |

Other (please specify):

17. During your post-secondary education did you take any courses related to food, food systems or agriculture? This includes courses taken at any post-secondary education level (e.g. bachelor, master etc).

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

18. If yes, please provide the course title(s) and/or a short description(s).

## Education and Training

19. What kind of professional development opportunities have you participated in related to food, food systems, or agriculture? *Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have not participated in professional development related to food, food systems or agriculture                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops/ sessions at non-planning conferences              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) credit opportunities offered by CIP or a Provincial or Territorial Institute and/or Association (PTIA) | <input type="checkbox"/> Courses/ training offered by my employer (during work hours) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars offered by CIP or a PTIA                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Courses/ training offered outside of work hours              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Webinars offered by other organizations                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering with related organizations                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops/ sessions at planning conferences (e.g. CIP conference)                                                                             |                                                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                                                                                                                       |                                                                                       |

20. Could you elaborate on how these opportunities improved your knowledge, skill and/or competency to address food systems, and food issues in your planning work?

## Planning Experience

21. Which statement best describes your current job/position in the planning field?

- Student
- Management or Departmental lead
- Senior-level planner
- Mid-level planner
- Entry-level planner
- Academic
- Non-Practicing/Retired/On-Leave
- Other:

22. How many years have you been working in the planning field?

- I have not worked in the planning field
- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11 - 15 years
- 16 - 20 years
- 21 - 25 years
- More than 25 years

## Planning Experience

23. What sector do you primarily work in as a planner? If retired or on-leave, please indicate the professional environment where you primarily worked.

- Independent Consultant
- Private sector/ Industry
- Government - Municipal or Regional
- Government - Provincial/ Territorial
- Government - Federal (incl. Crown Corporation or Crown Agency)
- Indigenous Nation/ Band/ Community
- Academia
- Non-Governmental Organization
- Other (please specify):

24. What is your primary area(s) of planning focus? *Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                      |                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic/ Research                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Community Planning          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Food                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asset/ Infrastructure Management            | <input type="checkbox"/> Parks and Recreation                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Adaptation and Mitigation           | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy/ Law                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Development Planning                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Regional Planning                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Response or Disaster Preparedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Planning                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Systems                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Planning/ Community Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment/ Resource Management            | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equity, Diversity and Inclusion             | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage/ Cultural Planning                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning/ Design                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/ Real Estate                        |                                                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                     |                                                                 |



## Planning Experience

25. If you work in or with a community(ies), what size is it? *Please check all that apply.*

- Major city (over 1,000,000)
- Large urban centre (300,000 - 1,000,000)
- Medium urban centre (50,000 - 299,999)
- Small urban centre (25,000 - 49,999)
- Very small/rural (under 25,000)
- Not applicable

## Food System Knowledge and Expertise

26. How would you rate your level of understanding of the following? *Please read the following competency definitions and rate your experience accordingly.*

**Very Good** - I have a good working knowledge of the area and regularly keep up to date with advancements in the field. I feel fully prepared and very confident addressing these issues in my planning work.

**Good** - I have some knowledge of the area and understand the major challenges, drivers and trends. I feel generally confident addressing these issues in my planning work and would benefit from additional information, and data to support my work.

**Adequate** - I have basic knowledge of the area and have some idea of where to access further information. I feel reservedly confident addressing these issues in my planning work, and would require additional information and data to support my work.

**Poor** - I have little knowledge of the area, and have some idea of where/how to access further information. I do not feel very confident addressing these issues in my planning work.

**Very Poor** - I know little about the area, and am unsure of where/how to access further information and support. I do not feel confident addressing these issues in my planning work.

	Level of Understanding
Agriculture and food production	<input type="text"/>
Fisheries and marine food systems	<input type="text"/>
Food processing and manufacturing	<input type="text"/>
Food retail and supply chains	<input type="text"/>
Economic development for food systems	<input type="text"/>
Food and organic waste management (i.e. composting, nutrient management)	<input type="text"/>
Indigenous food sovereignty and traditional foods	<input type="text"/>
Food security and food access	<input type="text"/>
Food education and literacy	<input type="text"/>
Health and nutrition	<input type="text"/>
Urban agriculture and community gardens	<input type="text"/>
Legal frameworks for agriculture and food systems	<input type="text"/>
Food justice and advocacy	<input type="text"/>

	Level of Understanding
Water quality and access related to agriculture and food systems	<input type="text"/>
Energy use and conservation in food systems	<input type="text"/>
Climate change impacts on food systems	<input type="text"/>
Food system workers and labour movements	<input type="text"/>

## Food System Planning Involvement

### Definition of food systems planning

**Food systems planning can be defined as a set of interconnected, forward-thinking activities that strengthen a community’s food system through the creation and implementation of plans and policies. Food systems planning processes involve development and implementation of policies to influence and shape how food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of. These policies provide direction and guidance on how to address the opportunities and challenges faced by the community’s food system. (Definition developed by [Growing Food Connections](#) )**

27. Based on the above definition how would you describe your level of involvement in food systems planning?

- Food systems planning is a primary focus of my work
- Food systems planning is part of my work, but not a primary focus
- I am not involved in food systems planning
- I don't know

28. Would you add anything to the definition offered above?

## Food System Planning Involvement

29. What type of food systems planning issues and/or activities do you work on as a practitioner? *Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural planning                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Food policy advocacy                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries and marine food systems                                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and organic waste management                                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rural land use planning                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Food system infrastructure development (e.g. processing facilities, agriculture services etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous food sovereignty/ preservation of traditional foods and foodlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Food retail and distribution                                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture economic development/ rural economic development                 | <input type="checkbox"/> New farmer programs/ land access                                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban agriculture/ community gardens                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Ecological assessment and planning on farmland                                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and nutrition                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Water demand/ supply for food systems and agriculture                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community food access/ food security                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Food related festival and special events                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food policy development                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Capacity/ relationship building                                                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                                                      |                                                                                                                         |

30. What tools do you/have you used to conduct food systems planning or bring a food systems lens to your work. *Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                                                                           |                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National or Provincial/ Territorial datasets                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Metrics and indicators                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local or Regional datasets                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Community/ public engagement                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local level plans and policies (e.g. Official Community Plans, Municipal Development Plans etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs/ vulnerability assessments               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Modelling/ mapping (e.g. GIS)                                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs (e.g. pilot projects, program design) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation/ regulation (e.g. bylaws, zoning etc.)                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluations and audits                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design codes and guidelines                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Food/ community asset mapping                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                                                                                           |                                                                         |

## Food Systems Planning Involvement

31. Where do you access information and new knowledge to support your food systems planning work?

*Please check all that apply.*

- |                                                                                               |                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Agri-food Canada                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial and Territorial Planning Institutes and Associations (PTIA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other federal agencies (e.g. Health, Environment and Climate Change) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other professional organizations                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial/ Territorial Government Agencies (non-Indigenous)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry groups or associations                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local/ regional government agencies                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Colleagues and professional networks                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Governments and traditional knowledge sources             | <input type="checkbox"/> Journals and published case studies                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-governmental organizations                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Academic institutions/ research institutes                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communities of Practice (e.g. Food Communities Network)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines and trade publications (e.g. Plan Canada)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)                                 |                                                                                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):                                              |                                                                                                 |

32. How have you primarily gained knowledge and/or skills to engage in food systems planning? *Please check all that apply.*

- Took a course(s) as part of my formal education that addressed food systems as a primary focus
- Took a course(s) as part of my formal education, but food systems was not the primary focus
- Took a course(s) offered online or outside work hours
- Attended workshops/sessions addressing food systems at planning conferences
- Attended workshops/session addressing food systems at non-planning conferences
- Participated in webinars offered through CIP, or a PTIA
- Participated in webinars offered by food system organizations
- Developed knowledge and skills during the execution of my work
- Participated in a Community of Practice with other practitioners
- Actively seek out books, journals, research etc. related to food systems
- I volunteer with a food related organization(s)
- I have lived experience (i.e. grew up/worked on a farm, experienced food insecurity)
- Other (please specify):

## Food System Planning Involvement

33. You selected "I have lived experience" as a response in the last question. Could you please further describe the experiences that allowed you to gain knowledge and/or skill to engage in food systems planning?

34. Does the jurisdiction where you primarily work have an active Food Policy Council or Group?

A Food Policy Council or Group is considered to be a formal or informal group or network of residents, non-profit organizations, businesses, government staff, etc. working together to address issues across the food system, primarily through policy or programs, at the local (city/municipality/county), provincial, or Indigenous community level. This could include food policy councils, food systems alliance, or food justice initiative, food/agriculture advisory council etc.

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

35. Could you provide the name of the Food Policy Council or Group in your jurisdiction?

36. If professional development opportunities were offered through CIP, or a Provincial/Territorial Planning Institute or Association (PTIA) related to food systems planning how would you describe your interest in participating? (*Professional development opportunities offered through CIP and PTIA's are open to members and non-members, and are offered free of charge or for a fee*)

- Very interested
- Interested
- Neutral
- Not very interested
- Not interested at all

## Support for Food Systems Planning

37. What kind of professional development resources and opportunities do you feel could support planners to engage in food systems planning or expand their skills and knowledge about food and food systems?

## Barriers

38. In your opinion, what are the **top 5** barriers that prevent food systems from being a more prevalent part of planning practice?

*Please select up to 5 barriers from this list. In the next question you will be able to add additional barriers you may perceive in your work. If you are not aware of any barriers, please select "I am not aware of any barriers" and proceed to the next page.*

- |                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited knowledge about food systems amongst planning practitioners                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Competing planning goals and priorities                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited knowledge and interest about food systems from supervisors, managers, and/or employers                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited budgets and capacity to engage in food systems planning                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of political support and guidance                                                                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited data collection and availability about food systems                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of support/guidance from higher levels of government (national, provincial/territorial)                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of examples and knowledge of how other communities are addressing food systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited influence over the food system (i.e. food systems are outside of planning jurisdiction or scope of work)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Regulatory barriers/unsupportive regulatory environments                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Limited professional development opportunities related to food system planning (incl. Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) opportunities) | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not aware of any barriers                                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor communication between departments and across planning domains                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question                                                  |

## Barriers

39. Are there any additional barriers that come to mind not listed in the pervious question?

40. Would you like to elaborate on any of the barriers you selected or listed above?

## Knowledge Gaps

41. In your opinion, what are the **top 5** knowledge gaps amongst planners with respect to food systems planning?

*Please select up to 5 knowledge gaps from this list. In the next question you will be able to add additional knowledge gaps you may perceive in your work. If you are not aware of any knowledge gaps, please select "I am not aware of any knowledge gaps" and proceed to the next page.*

- |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic knowledge of food system function and relationships                                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Equity, justice and diversity and how they relate to food systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and food production (incl. land suitability, arability etc.)                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> How food systems relate to other planning domains                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental impacts of agriculture and food systems                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> How land use impacts food production and food systems             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food security, food access and health                                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Strategies for food systems data collection and measurement       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate change and connections to food systems and food security                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not aware of any knowledge gaps                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous food sovereignty (incl. land/treaty rights and as they relate to hunting, fishing and harvesting) | <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question                                |

42. Are there any additional knowledge gaps not listed in the previous question?

43. Would you like to elaborate on any of the knowledge gaps you selected or listed above?



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