

FOOD SECURITY & HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES



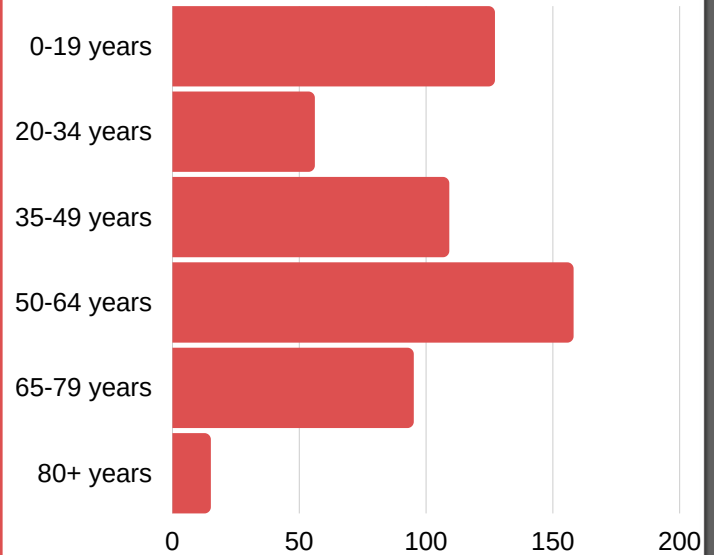
The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted many aspects of our lives that we might take for granted, including food security and household activities, presenting us with new challenges to the way we go about our daily routines. In the early days of uncertainty, nowhere was this more apparent than in the ways we access food. Activities surrounding food security were at the forefront of nearly everyone's minds as we navigated how to safely and efficiently conduct grocery trips, how to plan meals and make use of what's on hand, learning new skills such as baking and preserving, and even growing, raising or producing our own food supply.

How we spent our time in isolation is illuminating as well, as we find new ways to occupy ourselves, and coexist with the people we share living space with when other outlets may no longer be available.

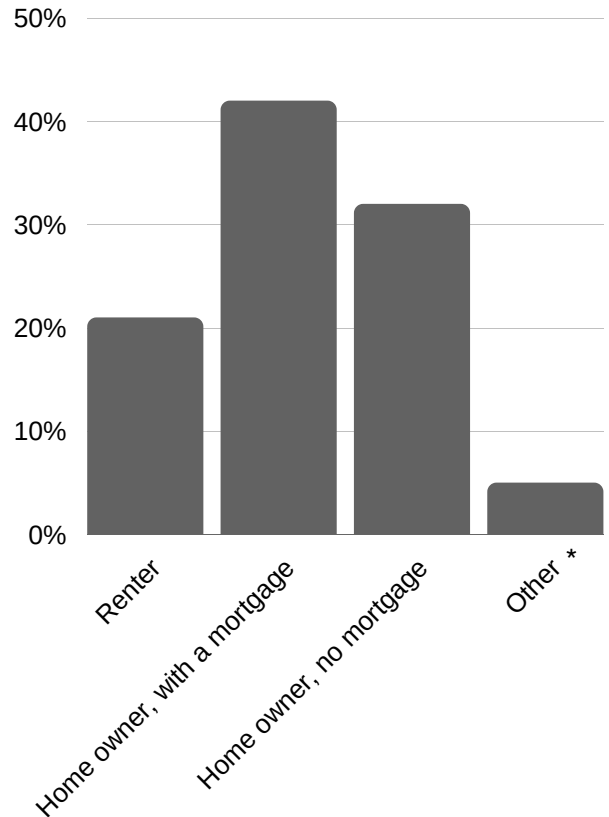
Through these surveys, we asked people and the community to reflect on the lessons that we should carry forward and how we can implement them as we continue to navigate the unique challenges brought by the pandemic.

262 ...total number of respondents to Survey #1

Ages Represented in the Households of Survey Respondants

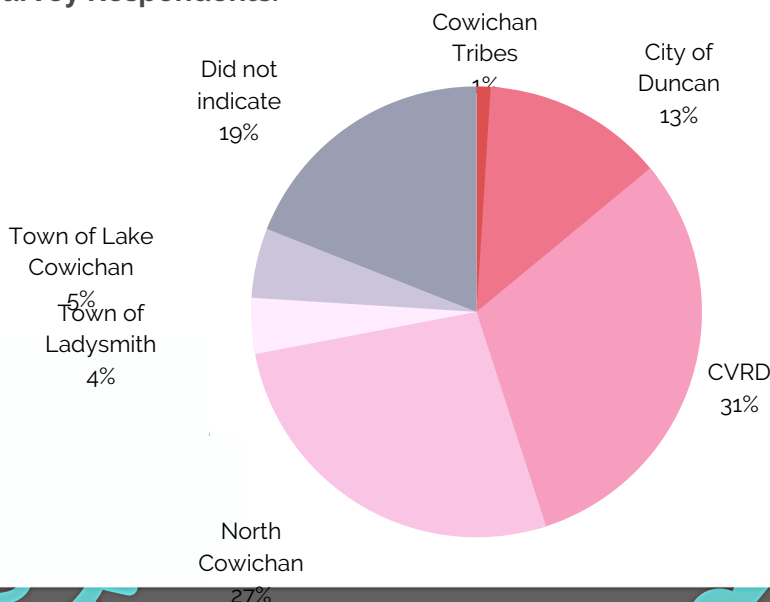


Housing Situation:



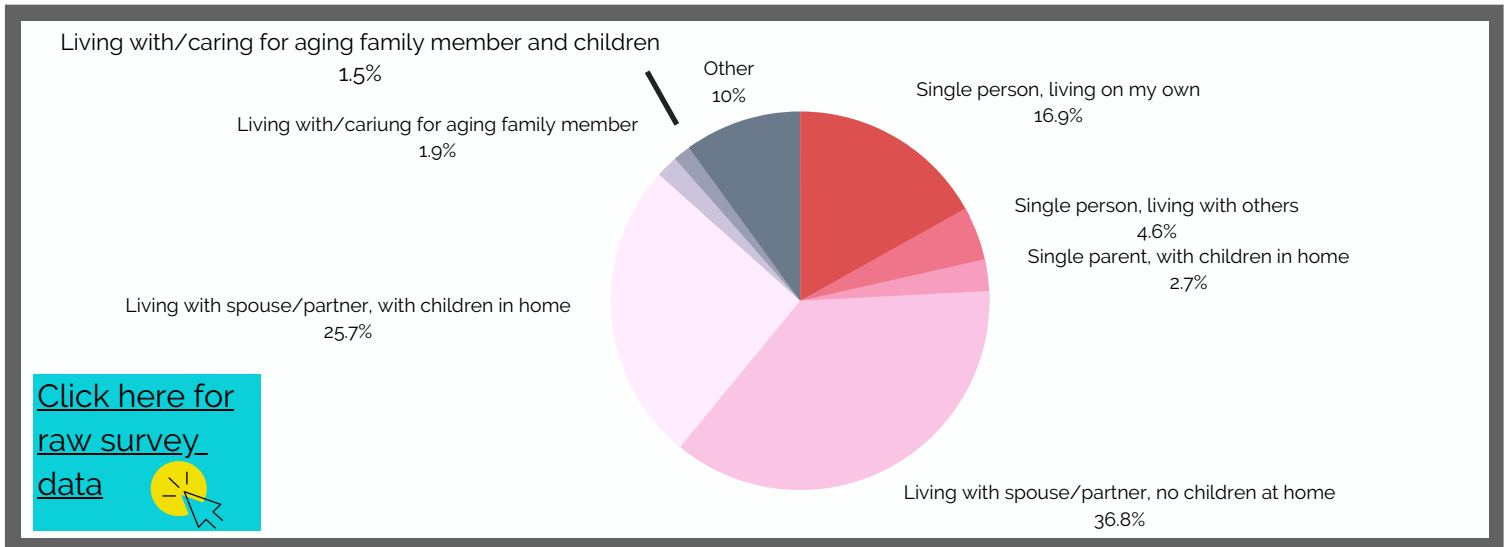
*Other: work for board, living in a car/rent free/ subsidized/temporary housing, small cabin/off grid

Household Locations of Survey Respondents:





Household Makeup of Survey Respondents:



COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD ACCESS TASK FORCE

The Cowichan Green Community (CGC) has been leading an Emergency Food Access Task Force in response to the impact that COVID-19 is having on our emergency food system. Many of the emergency service providers listed on this [COVID-19 Food Resource List](#) are represented on this 'virtual' task force. These organizations are working tirelessly, with less staff and volunteers, to continue to feed those in need in the Cowichan Region. They are working together to ensure each organization has the support and specifically the food that they need each week. You'll find the latest copy of the COVID-19 Food Resource List [here](#).

FOOD INSECURITY

Defined as as the disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources.

In their report on food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic, StatCan observed the following:

- **Almost one in seven Canadians report food insecurity**
- **Canadians living in households with children are more likely to be food insecure**
- **Canadians who were absent from work due to COVID-19 were almost three times more likely to be food insecure than those who worked**

Source: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00039-eng.htm>



COVID-19 led to increases in the following household activities:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| House Cleaning by 34% | Games/puzzles by 41% |
| Watch shows/movies by 53% | Crafting by 39% |
| Internet/gaming/screen time by 59% | Art projects by 29% |
| Renovation projects by 35% | Playing music by 33% |

FOOD SECURITY & HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES



The need for transportation shifted in the following ways:

- Traveling long distances (>50km trips) ↓ 63%
- Commuting to work ↓ 33%
- Vehicle costs (fuel, maintenance) ↓ 73%

45%

of survey respondents indicated an increase in producing their own food with **9%** also raising chickens/livestock

15%

of survey respondents indicated an increase in producing more food to feed the community.

Changes in how households access food:

- Wild/traditional food harvesting ↑ 11%
- Canning/preserving food ↑ 22%
- Making bread, cheese, beer, wine, etc. ↑ 39%

Other ways: shopping local, Cow-op, farm stands, trading, sharing, reduced grocery trips, online ordering & delivery, less take-out/more take-out, bulk buying, using food in freezer, pre-made meal delivery, food bank, free meal service

Tools and learning opportunities people want, to enable growing more food:

- Free access to seedlings/seeds and soil (50%)
- Access to advice from a resident gardener/other expertise (34%)
- Webinars on growing food and other topics (30%)
- Tool loaning program (22%)
- Community gardening plot (14%)

How has the COVID-19 Crisis impacted your household when it comes to the following activities?

	INCREASED	DECREASED	NO CHANGE	N/A
Eating fast food:	4.56%	47.3%	29.05%	19.09%
Eating take-out:	17.01%	48.55%	21.58%	12.86%
Cooking at home:	60.74%	2.48%	34.3%	2.48%
Baking:	52.7%	1.66%	39.0%	6.64%
Eating meat:	6.28%	12.13%	76.99%	4.6%
Purchasing locally grown food at farm stands:	21.4%	9.47%	57.2%	11.93%
Purchasing locally grown food online:	19.09%	2.07%	36.1%	42.74%
Purchasing locally grown food at farm markets:	12.92%	22.08%	49.17%	15.83%
Consuming Alcohol:	20.08%	8.79%	51.05%	20.08%
Our weekly food budget has:	40.42%	22.08%	35.42%	2.08%

68%

of survey respondents indicated a decrease in connecting with friends/family

34%

of survey respondents indicated that their household has become more self-sufficient through the COVID-19 crisis.

What are some ways people increased their in self-sufficiency?

Cooking / baking from scratch · Growing vegetables and fruit · Raising livestock · Canning / Preserving food · Bartering · Collecting rainwater · Using what we have on hand to avoid trips out · Creating more garden space · Making soap and other cleaning products · Reusing items



"Not travelling to visit my kids and grandkids on the mainland. Some food shortages (ie. salt), canned goods, flour... Long lines. There is no running in to pick up a store bought item quickly. Giving up a whole morning or afternoon to run the simplest errand or doing without. Less time with friends engaging in social activities and gatherings."

"Accessing hand soap and other similar products at a reasonable price is nearly if not impossible. This means we are trying to clean in different ways and almost at the point of using bleach mixed with water. But with dogs, this is our last resort. Buying food is now different as we would normally buy the non-perishable and frozen stuff less often but this is considered bulk buying and not allowed. Thus, we now have to buy foods like that more often. Stress is becoming unbearable as we don't get to see friends in person or visit them. Rarely seeing family as we try to ensure their health."

"Food - much of what we do seems to revolve around how to use what we have better and decrease waste. The sight of empty or depleted shelves was frightening, the current improvement - I'm concerned is only temporary and worry there will be food shortages."

"Changes to grocery shopping habits, having to be more organized with lists and limiting frequency of shopping. Challenges of short supply of food on shelves when you do get to grocery store."

"Our physical health and food security have been my biggest concerns. Not working has been a challenge and since my work is feeding my community I have been trying to find other ways to help people build more food security for themselves."

"Difficult when I share rental unit with others. My food is being stolen."

Regarding food and household activities, what have been your biggest concerns during this time of the COVID-19 crisis?

"Washing everything as soon as it comes in the door. Not using cloth bags."

"I find it very stressful washing every thing before coming into the house. It's a half day event practically. Some people don't do this but I feel I should."

"We are rarely leaving the house. We normally would be hiking, playing sports or going to beaches but now we only walk in our neighborhood. Rarely use our vehicles."

"Worried about farmers adapting and selling as the farmers market is much smaller and restaurants closed. Wondering how we can support them better so we can increase local food security. Also worried about lower-income folks who may suffer more if global food prices start to increase substantially."

"Grocery bill has increased significantly because I cannot shop the way I usually shopped. Before, I picked up sale items when I knew I would eventually use them. Now, I buy what I need at non-sale price and when I try to buy sale items from the store flyer, they are often not included in my order. I cannot look at the products myself and am often disappointed in what the store sends to me."

Questions for the future...

- How can we increase our neighbourhood resilience, including food security, as a Region?
- How can we make sure the lessons learned during this time are not forgotten once things get back to some semblance of normal?