

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Good Food Box is a non-profit fresh fruit and vegetable distribution system operated by FoodShare Toronto. It runs like a large buying club, with centralized purchasing and co-ordination. Individuals place orders for boxes with volunteer drop-off coordinators in their neighbourhood and pay between \$12 and \$32 for their box, depending on the version they choose.

FoodShare's customers purchase top-quality fruit and vegetables from local farmers and the Ontario Food Terminal, which volunteers pack into boxes at FoodShare's warehouse. Each box contains the same mixture of produce, though the contents change with each delivery, depending on what is in season and reasonably-priced at the time. FoodShare's truck drivers deliver the boxes to the neighbourhood drop-off locations, where the local volunteer coordinators ensure that customers pick up their boxes. Established in 1994 with just 40 boxes, the Toronto Good Food Box program now distributes just under 4,000 Good Food Boxes each month.

The Good Food Box Guide is designed to provide direction to individuals and organizations who are interested in using this type of system to improve food access for themselves and people in their communities, particularly those living on a low-income. It also encourages community development, promotes healthy eating and supports the local agricultural economy.

Over the last 14 years, Good Food Box organizers have learned many lessons about the philosophy and logistics of running a large-scale distribution system, with both centralized coordination and community-based input and support.

The guide begins with a look at the history, philosophy and principles of the Good Food Box program. This is followed by information on how to market the Good Food Box, how to find funding, how to promote the program and what equipment and resources are needed.

Also in the manual are sections on produce buying, volunteer management and creating a newsletter. Examples are provided of newsletters, promotional pamphlets, profiles of other Good Food Box programs, sample box contents, work rhythms and growth mechanics. Since 1994, dozens of other Canadian communities have developed their own versions of the Good Food Box, responding to local needs and circumstances, all working towards increasing access to good, healthy food.

