

## Health & Wellness

**Niagara Falls, NY is a food desert, meaning residents in the poorest areas of the city do not have easy access to healthy, affordable meals. Without healthy food options within walking distance, residents often turn to less healthy food options. A 2014 study done by Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center determined that obesity, heart disease and diabetes are major health concerns for Niagara Falls residents.**

**The Levesque Institute has developed several programs focused on food and food access to promote healthy, affordable food options to all Niagara Falls residents, especially those who have experienced barriers to receiving healthy foods.**

**Identified areas being addressed to combat the health & wellness issues in Niagara Falls and its surrounding areas are; food and nutrition, public health programs, environmental, and transportation.**

### Food & Nutrition: Local Food Action Plan

During the 2017-18 year, the Create a Healthier Niagara Falls Collaborative & The Healthy Food Healthy People Work Group completed the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan (LFAP). The purpose of the plan is to address the concerns over the quality and variety of food available to the residents of Niagara Falls in the 14301 zip code. Several neighborhoods of Niagara Falls are considered food deserts, meaning that residents in the city have poor accessibility to affordable, nutritious and fresh food.

In order to address these and other concerns surrounding food access in Niagara Falls, the HFHP work group develop the Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan. The Niagara Falls Local Food Action Plan is a roadmap for improving the entire food system, from production to consumption. Recommendations may be taken up by organizations or individuals. The framework of the plan is organized into four priority areas, each with several subthemes:

Priority Area	Agriculture	Healthy Neighborhoods	Education	Economic Development
Subtheme	<b>Urban Agriculture:</b> Urban agriculture in Niagara Falls is a source of food access, employment, and viable markets.	<b>Access:</b> Residents have the ability to procure, cook, and store food in a safe and healthy way.	<b>Consumer Education:</b> Residents are aware and take advantage of: local agriculture, healthy cooking techniques, and educational opportunities about healthy eating.	<b>Economic Development:</b> Companies take steps that positively impact the Niagara Falls food system.
	<b>Community Gardens:</b> Community gardens serve as spaces for social, physical and environmental transformation.	<b>Civic Engagement:</b> Niagara Falls is a place where citizens are engaged in environmental health and economic issues.	<b>Schools:</b> Niagara Falls City School District's Farm to School planning effort is supported by the community.	<b>Infrastructure:</b> Improve urban agriculture prospects in Niagara Falls.
	<b>Farmers Markets:</b> Farmers markets thrive as a viable part of the community food system.		<b>Workforce Development:</b> Urban farming as new job sector for City of Niagara Falls, particularly attracting youth.	

Learn more about our Health & Wellness Initiatives:  
[levesqueinstitute.niagara.edu/programs/health-and-wellness/](http://levesqueinstitute.niagara.edu/programs/health-and-wellness/)