

# LAUNCHING A HARVEST MARKET

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES

HARVEST  
MARKETS 

GOOD FOOD.  
GROWING COMMUNITIES.

## WELCOME!

Hi! Welcome to the Harvest Markets' Guide for Communities, designed to make it simple for you to start your own Harvest Market in your community. If you haven't already guessed, starting a Harvest Market is an exciting opportunity to grow your community through produce!

You might be asking yourself "what does produce have to do with growing my community?" Well, food inspires change by bringing people together. New relationships form, new ideas are sparked, and growth is inevitable.

Let's start with getting your community access to fresh, local produce by launching a Harvest Market. This guide walks you through everything you need to do to prepare for launch day.

Reach out when you are ready to start, and we will get you set up with everything you need.

*"We love trying new veggies, and it truly helps offset a grocery budget and gives us opportunity to have fruits and vegetables we normally wouldn't get."*

**-Andrea**

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# WHY START A HARVEST MARKET

## WHAT ARE HARVEST MARKETS?

Harvest Markets are a community-led alternative to farmers markets, focused on connecting people & communities with each other and to affordable fresh produce from local growers.

### SUPPORT LOCAL

58% of food is wasted in Canada. In most cases, food doesn't even make it off the farm. Even if growers want to sell produce at farmer markets, it is not always financially viable for them. Harvest Markets support local growers by purchasing and distributing excess produce to communities, reducing on-farm food waste while increasing growers income.

### LOCAL GROWTH

Farmers markets are a great way to grow a community. Unfortunately, they can be expensive to start and logistically a hassle in smaller communities. Designed to be inexpensive and easy to run, Harvest Markets support local growth by investing in communities that could benefit most, increasing access to produce while reducing a sense of disconnection.

*"We love trying new veggies, and it truly helps offset a grocery budget and gives us opportunity to have fruits and vegetables we normally wouldn't get."*

**-Andrea**

## A LITTLE HISTORY

The Mobile Market was started in September 2020 by the Prosperity Roundtable as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal was to connect people to produce to keep communities healthy. At its height, the Mobile Market operated in 14 communities, delivering over 450 produce boxes per week.

Many community groups and volunteers were involved in the Mobile Market from the beginning. Recognizing how this project truly grew into a community movement, the Mobile Market has transitioned to become Harvest Markets. As of the beginning of 2022, the Prosperity Roundtable directly funds and supports community groups to act ambitiously by launching a Harvest Market in their community!

## WHY START A HARVEST MARKET?

Many communities are interested in having a farmers market, but finding funding and figuring out logistics can be a hassle, especially if starting from scratch.

We take the guess work out of hosting a produce market by bridging the gap between local farmers and your community. Open to all, Harvest Markets are a place to build a sense of community and fill fridges, ensuring every community has the right ingredients to grow.

*"Thanks so much to everyone involved with getting this project going and keeping it going this long - I really appreciate it!"*

**-Kristina**

## WHO CAN START A HARVEST MARKET?

We work with community groups, volunteer groups, and non-profits that are located in Chatham-Kent, ON. We primarily focus on communities where food is hard to access (i.e. no grocery stores). However, if you believe that your community has barriers to accessing local produce and wish to start a Harvest Market, please give us a call.

## THE GOALS OF ALL HARVEST MARKETS

**Health:** making healthy foods more accessible to communities.

**Affordability:** buying in bulk from farmers to reduce costs.

**Accessibility:** placing markets where accessing food is difficult.

**Community:** creating a space for connection and celebration.

**Supporting farmers:** buying directly from farmers at a fair price.

## THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND IT ALL

*A community should be a place where every person has access to affordable, healthy foods; is welcomed and supported; and has opportunities to showcase their skills and talents. When this isn't possible, communities can't grow.*

*We believe food inspires lasting change. We invest in growing communities by connecting them to fresh, local produce, creating opportunities to come together and find new ways to foster relationships and celebrate with each other. When this is possible, communities grow.*

## CELEBRATING TOGETHER

*Every opportunity to celebrate should be taken. Celebrating even the smallest wins can build a sense of community. Someone's first time trying rutabaga? Celebrate! Two people become friends after meeting for a few weeks at your Harvest Market? Celebrate!*

### OPEN TO ALL

Harvest Markets **do not** income test or turn people away if they are unable/unwilling to donate.

While some communities might not be comfortable with this philosophy, it has proven time and again to be successful not only in creating a stronger sense of community but also in terms of supporting long-term sustainability. This is especially important in communities where food stores do not exist.

### PLACEMAKING

Food is just the beginning of growing a healthy and vibrant community.

Harvest Markets are a place to pick up affordable produce. But, they are also be a place where your community fosters relationships and grows in new ways. Hosting a cooking class, a community event, or having an open mic for local artists are some ways to start growing a lasting sense of togetherness in your community.

## FUNDING YOUR HARVEST MARKET

Harvest Markets only require **ambition** to get started! All costs of purchasing produce and any associated delivery fees are covered by the Prosperity Roundtable.

Harvest Markets operate on a "by donation" basis, meaning customers donate the amount they are able to when picking up their produce at a Harvest Market. Because anyone is welcome at Harvest Markets, this approach supports sustainability while ensuring unlimited access.

### THE BUDGET

Each community starts with a budget of \$200 worth of produce per Harvest Market. We recognize that community needs change, so we will work with you to determine the most appropriate budget for your community after your first few Harvest Markets.

### A COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

Harvest Markets are considered a community enterprise. This means each community chooses how their Harvest Market is operated, including if they want to do any activities that support sustainability.

Harvest Markets have hosted fundraisers, sold products (e.g. bread, soup), and invited other local businesses to set up a booth during a market day for a nominal fee. This not only helps with sustainability, but reinforces that a Harvest Market is open to everyone.

**Note:** any funds raised by a community separate from donations received for produce can be kept by your group OR provided to Prosperity Roundtable. Any extra funds provided to the Prosperity Roundtable will be used to support sustainability of Harvest Markets.

## FROM FARM TO TABLE

The Prosperity Roundtable purchases, and receives donations of, produce directly from local growers across Chatham-Kent, ON. This means the freshest produce is always available for your community.

We also work closely with Prodenchuk Produce Inc., a local wholesaler in Chatham, to increase produce variety & deliver produce to Harvest Market locations.

**Note:** produce is delivered in bulk boxes or bags, which can be heavy to move. While Prodenchuk will help bring produce inside, we recommend having a volunteer present who is comfortable carry produce boxes/bags.

## OTHER FOOD PRODUCTS

Communities have the flexibility to expand their Harvest Market to include other food products to support sustainability. If you are selling other food products (e.g. bread, soup), you are expected to abide by all Public Health regulations (**for more information**). If you are interested in having other food products at your Harvest Market, please contact us to discuss details.

### PRODUCE QUALITY

We ensure that all produce donated from local farmers or purchased from our wholesale partner is of the best quality before they reach your Harvest Market.

If there are any issues with quality, please let us know so we can replace the produce for your next Harvest Market.

### HEALTH REGULATIONS

In general, produce is considered a low-risk food item.

However, as produce may come directly from the fields, we recommend customers wash produce before consuming, wash any reusable bags used to transport produce, and carefully inspect all produce before leaving.

### UNUSED PRODUCE

We recommend developing a strategy to store and utilize unused produce after your Harvest Market.

Proper storage can include placing produce in fridges or having shelving in a dry, cool place.

If you are unable to store produce, please share with other community groups!



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# HOW TO START A HARVEST MARKET

## WHERE TO BEGIN

Harvest Markets are designed to be as flexible as possible for each community to choose how they want to operate. There are three main questions you need to answer before hosting your first Harvest Market:

### THE DAY

Choosing a day of the week will depend on your best judgement on your community's availability to attend, and the delivery schedule of Prodenchuk Produce Inc. for your community.

### THE TIME

Choosing a time of day can be a challenge, sometimes there is no "best time". Think about potential customers' schedules (e.g. school hours, work hours) and the availability of you & your volunteers.

### THE LOCATION

Choosing a location should be based on availability of the space, accessibility of the space, storage facilities & capacity, access to tables and chairs, ability to be indoors, and how close the location is to customers.

## MARKET RESEARCH

One of the most important aspects of the Harvest Market is listening to your community. Before starting your Harvest Market, take time to talk with your community about preferred locations, times, and types of produce. You can also use our education materials to start a conversation and promote trying new types of fruits and vegetables!

### ULTIMATE FLEXIBILITY

You choose whether to host your Harvest Market every week, every two weeks, or once a month. Remember, the goal is to increase access. Even hosting a Harvest Market once a month can be beneficial to your community.

Remember to take into consideration times of the month for all customers, recognizing that some customer might only be paid at the beginning of the month.

### TIME COMMITMENT

The minimum time commitment for a typical Harvest Market, regardless if its once a week or once a month, is approximately 3 hours. This includes preparation, hosting, and clean-up.

This time commitment would increase if you choose to work with additional partners, host events, train volunteers, develop your own educational materials, or engage the community on social media

## A TYPICAL HARVEST MARKET

Growing your community doesn't have to be a full time job. Harvest Markets are designed to be easy to run, ensuring that your time is spent on building relationships and creating engaging experiences instead of logistics.

### PREPARE

Preparing to host includes setting up tables, placing signage outside, and setting up space for partners or activities.

Be sure to rinse the provided produce bins in preparation for produce delivery to keep produce as clean as possible.

### HOST

Hosting a Harvest Market includes propping open the door, placing the produce bins on the table, and welcoming people in!

Be sure to collect any donations in the provided envelopes, and use the provided pouch to keep all donations secure.

### CLEAN UP

Cleaning up after a Harvest Market includes placing any unused produce into storage or giving it to another group.

Be sure to count all donations received, fill in the info on the envelope, and secure the envelope before leaving.

## ORDERING PRODUCE

Produce orders are completed by the Prosperity Roundtable on behalf of all Harvest Markets. If you are interested in requesting specific produce items, please contact us **prior to the Friday** before your next Harvest Market.

## BAGGING PRODUCE

Harvest Markets will receive brown paper bags for customers to pack their produce in. We also recommend asking customers to bring reusable shopping bags to reduce on waste and cost.

## DONATIONS

Any donations received for produce are to be collected during the Harvest Market, as well as counted and sealed with the provided envelopes prior to leaving. Envelopes will be picked up once per month by Prosperity Roundtable staff.

## ADVERTISING

*We believe that celebrating your community is one of the best parts about the Harvest Markets! We help with all your marketing needs to ensure your Harvest Market is seen, and your community's stories are heard.*

### MATERIALS

*We will provide 10 full-colour posters, educational flyers, and a sandwich board to aid in visibility when your Harvest Market is in operation.*

*We also have advertising materials on our website to download and share, including the educational materials and flyers.*

### MARKETING

*We will use our high-traffic social media channels to share updates, stories, and celebrations from your Harvest Market. We will also provide social media templates to help you spread the word online.*

*When you launch, we will work with our community partners and local media to spread the word!*

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

*Inclement weather and other unforeseen circumstances are a natural part of any community project. Sometime, your Harvest Market will have to be postponed or cancelled - and that's okay! If this happens, let us know, and we will post a note on social media to let your community know.*



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### BUSINESS MARKETING LEAD

*Jessica is the Business Marketing Lead for the Prosperity Roundtable, and is the person to reach out to for any of your Harvest Market advertising needs.*

*She is always welcoming of new advertising ideas, and loves to share stories of communities coming together! Reach out anytime to let us know how we can support sharing your story.*

A BIG THANK YOU



## TO PRODENCHUK

We want to thank you for being such an amazing partner in the Harvest Markets project. They not only help us purchase, store, and deliver produce to all Harvest Markets, they also help with connections to local growers and new ideas. Their passion for supporting community is unmatched!

*"[Harvest Markets] help my family have the fresh fruits and vegetables weekly to stay healthy."*

**-Michelle**

## TO OUR LOCAL GROWERS

We want to thank you for your continued support and investment in our community, from growing delicious and fresh produce to providing food donations when possible. Each week, we make sure to include the freshest produce from local growers, including squash, lettuce, onions, potatoes, corn, peppers, tomatoes, and so much more. By buying local, we hope to support you as much as you support our community.



## CONTACT INFORMATION



### PHILLIP MOCK

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*Looking to start a Harvest Market or any other inquiries.*



### JESSICA TURNER

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*Any Harvest Marketing advertising needs.*



### PRODENCHUK PRODUCE INC.

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*To confirm delivery time.*

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**EXCITED TO GET STARTED?  
CONTACT US TODAY!**