



# **Diversity Food Services Local Impact Analysis**

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## 1. Executive Summary

Diversity Food Services (Diversity) expressed interest in quantifying the socio-economic and local impact of their organization resulting from their focus on environmental and social sustainability. Diversity procures 54% of their overall purchases within a 250-mile radius of the city from small-scale producers, often directly from the farm. These purchases help to grow the local economy while simultaneously increasing nutritional value to consumers and reducing environmental impacts associated with the transportation of this food. Diversity also focuses on hiring people that are traditionally marginalized from employment; 78% of their staff have self-reported themselves as belonging to at least one marginalized group. Hiring and training these individuals has multiple positive impacts on the individuals hired and the local community, including increased local spending and a reduction in the utilization of particular public services and social organizations. To quantify the hiring practice impacts, this analysis utilizes a Social Return on Investment tool. Within the 2016/17 fiscal year, Diversity's positive local impact through their hiring and procurement practices amounted to close to 2.2 million dollars. This analysis dissects the qualitative and quantitative aspects of this impact.

## 2. Company Background

Diversity Food Services is a joint venture created in 2009 by the University of Winnipeg's Community Renewal Corporation, a not-for-profit charitable corporation that works to improve sustainability at the University of Winnipeg, and SEED Winnipeg, a non-profit that aims to fight poverty within Winnipeg and enhance the local community. Diversity's purpose is to provide excellent, ethically and locally sourced food to the

University of Winnipeg while offering employment and training opportunities for immigrants, refugees, Indigenous people, and other marginalized residents in the community with diverse backgrounds and skill sets (University of Winnipeg, 2017). They are a social enterprise that encapsulates sustainability.

Diversity procures local, organic food wherever possible, purchasing directly from the farmer when it is most convenient for these partners. They create strong relationships with suppliers who have likeminded values and ethics. Who their suppliers are, where their ingredients come from, who they support, and the sustainable practices they employ are paramount considerations when choosing their partners (Food Matters Manitoba, 2015). Their packaging is 100% compostable, and they have composting bins set around their facilities to encourage consumers to discard sustainably. They aim to reduce waste as much as possible and are continually looking for new methods to reduce their environmental footprint.

Diversity seeks to hire employees that come from varying backgrounds and may have had trouble finding work otherwise. They strongly believe that hiring from within their local area helps to strengthen the community and enhance the lives of everyone within it (University of Winnipeg, 2017).

Diversity serves between 15,000 and 18,000 meals daily at the University of Winnipeg. They operate four restaurants on campus; Pangea's Kitchen, The Malecón, Café Bodhi, and Elements (University of Winnipeg, 2017). Due to the slower pace of business during the summer months on campus, Diversity opted to find other opportunities to be able to avoid having to lay off employees. They now operate food services for the Buffalo Stone Café at the Fort White Alive recreation center and Eagle's Roost Café & Grill at

Player's Golf Course. They also provide readymade meals sold at select local grocery stores, and they operate Diversity Catering, which provides meals for business meetings, banquets, events, and festivals.

### **3. Procurement**

#### **3.1 Qualitative Impact**

Diversity has 130 vendors, most of which are small-scale producers. Diversity works to plan ahead so they can purchase products that are in season and preserve them appropriately for use during the off season, so as to maximize local purchases. They are considered an anchor buyer within the community; their purchases help farmers expand their operations, and aid in providing third party distributors, like World Wise, access products they would otherwise not be able to based on quantities purchased. This helps other small-scale restaurants, supermarkets, and stores within the city. While there are staple products available on their menu to ensure consistency with supplier purchase quantities, they change their menu quarterly and work to include dishes that maximize product use based on seasonality and availability (Food Matters Manitoba, 2015).

Buying local reduces negative externalities associated with the transportation of foods. "Food miles" is used to describe the distance a product travels from its production location to the place it is consumed. Greater travel distances produce larger negative externalities (Xeureb, 2005). Greenhouse gas emissions cause the most substantial environmental destruction during food transportation. Carbon dioxide is the main chemical emitted; however nitrous oxide and methane are also released. These greenhouse gases contribute to global warming and other negative environmental effects such as smog, acid

rain, and other toxic air contamination (Xeureb, 2005). Additional food miles can also lead to soil pollution, decreased biodiversity, noise pollution, and increased likelihood of road accidents. The largest issue with food miles is the lack of internalization of these negative impacts; prices of the imported products do not capture all costs, which can lead to increased demand for such products and further environmental degradation (Van Passel, 2013).

Emissions released during transportation vary with different products; beef, for example, emits five times its weight in greenhouse gas emissions. However, the transportation costs of all imported products can have a substantial negative impact on greenhouse gas emissions. A study in Toronto found that local items travel an average of 101km from production to consumption, whereas imports averaged 5364km; over fifty times further in travel distance. Likewise, a study in Waterloo looked into 58 products that were currently imported that could be produced locally. An imported product generated 1.3 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions on average, whereas the same product produced locally created only .008 kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, the imported product created 162 times the emissions of the local product during its transportation (Xuereb, 2005).

There are significant positive economic impacts associated with buying local as well. Local food procurement generates more money in the local economy, which in turn increases the dollars spent within the community. The multiplier effect with local procurement is 1.4-2.6, which can have a significant impact on a community's economy (Avalon, 2012). Quicker circulation of these finances within the community leads to more income and greater job creation (Sustain Ontario, 2015).

It is also important to note that the nutritional value of certain produce remains high when a product is purchased locally. Fruits and vegetables have the highest nutritional value directly following harvest, with levels decreasing as time goes on. Imported fruits and vegetables are also typically picked prematurely in order to prolong shelf life, which further reduces a product's nutritional value. Thus, buying local is also healthier (Sustain Ontario, 2015).

### **3.2 Quantitative Impact**

Diversity's passion for environmentally conscious and local purchasing is evident in their procurement. In the 2016/17 fiscal year, Diversity purchased \$455,715 of locally generated products for their campus-based operations, which was approximately 54% of their total purchases of \$851,414. Of the campus-based local procurement, \$115,509, or 23%, was third-party verified sustainable. An additional \$20,455 not included in within the local procurement figures was spent on products with other sustainability features, such as Oceanwise certification or cola produced in a cooperative.

Accordingly, based on Diversity revenues from campus-based operations of \$1,850,024, \$0.25 of every dollar spent at Diversity contributed to local purchases and directly benefited the local community. If we scale this across all of Diversity's concepts and \$3,013,794 in total revenue, it is evident that Diversity procured \$742,386 of products from local or community based producers during the 2016/17 fiscal year. This estimate is conservative as Diversity utilizes produce from Fort Whyte Alive's garden within the meals they create at the recreation center's Buffalo Stone Café.

## 4. Social Return On Investment

This analysis will determine the social return on investment (SROI), a framework that aims to quantify the impacts of a given investment on all stakeholders. This method was developed in the 1990s by Roberts Enterprise Development Foundation in order to appropriately measure the value creation of non-profit organizations. It was created with the belief that many of the long-term socio-economic impacts resulting from the work of non-profit organizations are not properly accounted for and can positively benefit a community in both direct and indirect ways (Emerson & Cabaj, 2000). This assessment aims to quantify these impacts in relation to investment.

### 4.1 Determining the Marginalized Employee Group

In order to meet their vision of creating a diverse and cooperative work environment while offering meaningful employment opportunities, Diversity opted to target employees that are at a disadvantage and may have had trouble finding work otherwise. These individuals comprise 78% of Diversity's total work force. All individuals within this category have self-identified as meeting at least one of the following criteria, as defined by Diversity:

- Recent immigrant
- Refugee
- Indigenous or Metis
- Cognitively, socially, or physically disabled
- Involved with the criminal justice system
- Addiction Issues
- Received Employment and Income Assistance Program prior to employment with Diversity
- English as an Additional Language (EAL) insufficiencies
- Non-heteronormative lifestyle



Diversity has partnered with organizations such as Seed Winnipeg, The Salvation Army, New Directions, and Epic Opportunities to seek out potential employees. By hiring marginalized employees, Diversity's objective is to reduce community reliance on government funding and social programs while enhancing the community and the lives of these individuals and their families. Once hired, these employees are placed in Diversity's excellent training and development program that enhances their employees' job-related skills, such as those relating directly to tasks and duties, and employability skills, such as conflict resolution, problem solving, and decision-making skills (University of Winnipeg, 2017).

#### **4.2 SROI Approach**

Diversity recognizes their importance in local community improvement through hiring marginalized employees and ensuring excellent training and development of these employees. The SROI analysis entails a cost-benefit analysis comparing the resources invested with the benefits the investment generates. It will outline the social and economic costs and benefits of Diversity's hiring principles to determine whether the overall benefits outweigh the costs.

#### **4.3 Scope**

The purpose of this SROI is to understand and quantify how the costs of hiring marginalized employees at Diversity are outweighed by the benefits. The scope of this SROI analysis is as follows:

- Cover all marginalized employees working at Diversity within one fiscal year (April 2016-March 2017)
- Perform a retrospective SROI analysis to evaluate the outcomes that have already occurred

- Focus on the following benefits:
  - Increased financial input to employment benefit programs
  - Reduced reliance on social assistance programs
  - Increased local spending
  - Reduced crime rate
  - Reduced reliance on food programs
  - Reduced healthcare costs

All Diversity data required for this analysis was provided by the organization or accessed through publicly available external sources.

## 5. Calculating SROI for the 2016/17 Marginalized Employee Group

### 5.1 Calculating the Marginalized Employee Group

The data utilized for this analysis was provided by Diversity for the 2016/17 fiscal year. In order to calculate the overall costs and benefits of the marginalized employee group, the organization took their employment data and filtered it according to individuals who met the criteria indicating increased barriers to finding employment. Of the 81 staff members employed during the 2016/17 fiscal year, 63 (78%) self-identified as belonging to at least one of the marginalized employee criteria. The breakdown is as follows:

Criteria	Number	Percentage
Recent Immigrants	29	46%
Refugees	6	10%
Indigenous	10	16%
Cognitively, Socially, or Physically Disabled	4	6%
Involvement in Criminal Justice System	4	6%
Addiction Issues	6	10%
Involved with EIA Program	11	17%
EAL Insufficiencies	23	37%
Non-Heteronormative Lifestyle	3	5%

Please note that the list represents employees identifying under all relevant criteria, and therefore exceeds the number of marginalized employees.

## 5.2 Calculating Costs of Hiring the Marginalized Employees

According to payroll data provided by Diversity, this analysis determined the cost per employee as comprising of the following elements:

**Payroll cost per Diversity Employee**= Wages + Federal and Provincial tax + Employee contributions toward CPP/EI + Employer Contributions toward CPP/EI + Employer Group Benefit Expenses + Manitoba Health & Education Levy

This analysis then summed the total cost of marginalized employees to be \$858,922.

## 5.3 Quantifiable Benefits

### 5.3.1 Employee/Employer Contributions

Using Diversity's payroll data, this analysis calculated the sum of total dollars spent on marginalized employee tax payments and contributions toward benefits programs as follows:

**Payroll Social Benefit per Diversity Employee**= Federal and provincial tax + Employee contributions toward CPP/EI + Employer Contributions toward CPP/EI + Employer Group Benefit Expenses + Manitoba Health & Education Levy

This analysis then summed the total employer/employee contribution benefit of marginalized employees to be \$260,317.

### 5.3.2 Increased Local Spend

Employment at Diversity means these marginalized individuals now have a salary to spend that they did not previously have access to. This can have a large impact on the local economy, as research suggests that low-wage earners spend every dollar they make (Klein & Pulkingham, 2008). This analysis utilized the combined net income (the sum of total pay minus payroll deductions for every marginalized employee) generated in the 2016/17 fiscal year: \$598,605. Low-income wage earners spend 52% of their income on clothing, food, and shelter (Innovation, Science, & Economic Development Canada, 2011). Since this figure just covers basic necessities, this report assumes an additional 23% is spent locally on non-essential items. Thus, \$448,953 of total wages is assumed to be spent locally. This figure is likely conservative, as the majority of low-income spends are within the local economy (Yalnizyan, 2013).

### 5.3.3 Reduced Crime Rates

Individuals living in poverty represent a large proportion of Canada's prison system. Offenders lose their occupations upon incarceration and therefore have no means of income to provide for themselves or their families. Offenders also typically lose custody of their children during the criminal justice process, which adds additional pressure on social assistance programs. Further, these individuals have a reduced self-confidence and ability to obtain employment following their incarceration due to their criminal record and the stigmas attached (Ivanova, 2011). These difficulties can also have indirect effects on

cyclical behavior within families, as lack of parental support can be a catalyst for children to be involved in criminal activity in the future (Klein & Pulkingham, 2008).

Poverty-stricken individuals can often undergo financial stress that leads to criminal activity out of desperation, such as prostitution and drug use. They are also likely to experience social exclusion and material deprivation, which may enhance the likelihood of involvement within these activities. However, researchers focusing on welfare recipients found that those who were able to find employment and climb out of poverty did not involve themselves in these criminal activities (Klein & Pulkingham, 2008). While there is no direct correlation to causation due to the complexities and variables unique to individual circumstances, it is clear that a reduction in poverty would aid in the reduction of criminal activity within Canada (Ivanova, 2011). As such, the overall community would benefit from this reduction through increased safety and security.

Diversity employs 4 individuals who have had recent undertakings within the criminal justice system. Utilizing a Manitoba recidivism rate of 75% (The Canadian Press, 2010), this analysis assumes 3 of the 4 employed individuals would have reoffended had they not gained employment with Diversity. This report also assumes the individuals employed at Diversity were provincial offenders, as opposed to federal since federal incarceration carries a larger cost than provincial incarceration. In 2015/2016 the average cost per day of a provincial offender was \$203, which takes both custodial and community services into account (Reitano, 2017). This report assumes these individuals would not have gained employment otherwise and therefore assumes all 3 individuals at 365-day involvement in some capacity within the correctional system.

#### **5.3.4 Reduced Reliance on Food Banks and Meal Programs**

Food is a basic necessity and should be readily accessible to all humans. Food security involves accessibility, both economically and physically, to a sufficient amount of nutritious food and is integral to a reduction in social exclusion and poverty (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2015). It is vital for proper health, and plays a large role in productivity. Hunger can lead to severe mental and physical health issues. In Manitoba, 12.4% of households are living with food insecurity. This is a growing concern; since 2008 the number of individuals using food banks has increased 53% (Food Banks Canada, 2016). Many low-income individuals face further barriers as they lack the knowledge and storage space necessary to make healthy food choices (Government of Manitoba, 2013). Two key aspects contributing to this issue are employment levels and low income. Employment at Diversity reduces pressure on food banks by increasing funds available for others in need.

Canadians spend \$200 per month on average for groceries purchased within stores (Alini, 2017). This analysis assumes every marginalized employee at Diversity would use a food bank for one meal a day during the 2016/17 fiscal year. This is a conservative estimate, as it does not take into account employees purchasing food for their families, as average family sizes are 2-4 people.

#### **5.3.5 Reduced Reliance on Social Programs**

By employing individuals who would otherwise have difficulty finding work, Diversity is reducing some of the stress on Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program. This program covers the costs of basic necessities; food, shelter, and clothing, and costs the Manitoba Government \$847 per person per month on average (B. Malkowich, personal communication, July 13, 2017). Based on an estimate from Manitoba

Families' Area Director/Director of Emergency Social Services, this analysis assumes 49% of the marginalized employee group would utilize the EIA program for the full year had they not been employed by Diversity (B. Malkowich, personal communication, July 13, 2017). This estimate is conservative, as it does not factor in social assistance costs for individuals with children.

### **5.3.6 Reduced Healthcare Costs**

Research has proven that there is a strong relationship between poverty and poor health. Individuals living in poverty experience reduced life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, greater prevalence of mental health issues, and increased time spent in hospitals due to chronic conditions. A study comparing income with health status found that 73% of Canadians categorized as having higher income levels reported their health as excellent, whereas only 47% of individuals categorized as having lower income levels reported excellent health. In Ontario, annual healthcare costs induced by poverty amount to \$2.9 billion (Ontario Association of Food Banks, 2008). A study completed in Manitoba found that individuals with the highest use of hospitals also had the lowest socioeconomic status. Residents living in Winnipeg's poorest neighborhoods were 40% more likely than those in the most affluent neighborhoods to be admitted to the hospital for conditions that leave little clinical ambiguity about the necessity of hospitalization, such as heart attack or colon cancer surgery. These residents were also hospitalized at higher rates, had a higher rate of discharges, and were admitted for more days at a time than those in higher income brackets (Roos & Mustard, 1997).

Due to the amount of variables that factor into healthcare costs, there is difficulty determining the healthcare savings associated with employment at Diversity. To

accomplish this, this analysis assumes a homeless rate of 49%, or 31, of the marginalized employee group had they not gained employment at Diversity based on an educated assumption by the Manitoba Families Area Director of the Downtown-Point Douglas region. Research suggests that annual healthcare costs of homeless individuals is between \$2559 and \$3993 more than housed individuals (Wang, 2017). This analysis multiplied the lesser of these figures by the 31 individuals assumed to be homeless during the 2016/17 fiscal year, representing an approximate annual healthcare savings of \$79,329.



5.4 Quantitative Impact

Timing	Activity	Output (Benefits)	Outcomes	Indicator	Annual Value
April 1, 2016- March 31, 2017	Hiring at DFS		78% of employees identified as belonging to one of the groups listed in the report	Sum of all employee Wages + Federal and Provincial tax + Employee contributions toward CPP+EI + Employer Contributions toward CPP/EI + Employer Group Benefit Expenses + Manitoba Health & Education Levy	\$(858,922.00)
		Reduced reliance on social programs. Increased happiness and opportunity for families of employees.	Increase in job skills and employability	Number of individuals currently employed within the marginalized employee group	Qualitative
			Increased quality of life	Increased levels of happiness and confidence. Decreased reliance on social programs.	Qualitative
		Reduced costs associated with social assistance programs, etc.	Diversity employee/employer contributions toward EI, CPP, Health & Dental Plans	Sum of employee benefits paid by employer/employees throughout fiscal year	\$260,317.00
			Reduced social assistance costs (food, shelter, clothing only)	Average monthly cost to the government to keep a single employee on social assistance for one month multiplied by 12 months (\$847*12= \$10,164). Total assuming 65% of marginalized employees were to receive social assistance (31 people).	\$315,084.00
		Increased dollars circulating within the local economy to promote healthier communities.	Increased local spend	75% of the sum of net wages for marginalized employees (\$598.605) assumed to be spent locally	\$448,953.00

		Reduced health expenses and local crime rates, increased safety and sense of pride in community. Reduced reliance on social services.	Increased community safety and security through reduction of crime rates	Reduced criminal justice cost, measured by an assumed recidivism rate of 100% and all four offenders provincial, at \$203 per day*365 days	\$296,380.00
			Reduced reliance on food banks and meal programs	Average grocery cost of \$200/month per person, divided by 3 meals over 30 days. One meal per day *365 days* 54 marginalized employees	\$43,800.00
			Reduced healthcare costs	\$2559 higher annual healthcare cost for homeless vs. housed individual* 31 people	\$79,329.00
<b>Total Cost:</b>					<b>\$858,922.00</b>
<b>Benefit:</b>					<b>\$1,443,863.00</b>
<b>Ratio:</b>					<b>1 : 1.68</b>

## 5.5 Qualitative Benefits

### 5.5.1 Increase in Employability and Job Skills

There are many difficulties marginalized employees face while seeking employment, such as negative public perceptions and misconceptions, which inhibit their opportunities and can reduce one’s self-confidence. This stigma hinders their opportunities to showcase their abilities as it brings challenges to finding employment (Holland et. al., 2011). Paid work allows individuals to enhance their skills and employability while positively impacting their self-esteem (Gidron, 2017).

While working with Diversity, the marginalized employee group has the opportunity to undergo personal development and training that will guide them to increase their knowledge and develop and grow their competencies. Training within the organization occurs in an equitable and timely fashion to ensure employees are able to take

ownership of the tasks they are completing while continually facing new challenges. There are also mentorship relationships within Diversity that provide employees with shared knowledge, personal feedback, and recognition as they enhance their skills. Overall, these opportunities enrich both the employee and the community.

### 5.5.2 Increase in Quality of Life

Meaningful employment that provides opportunities for bonding and self-growth can increase one's quality of life. Work can play a role in social inclusion, especially since working is the norm in society today. Important bonds can be made in the workplace with colleagues, which allow employees to develop social relations and social skills. Similarly, the financial aspect of a job helps an employee gain and feel independence. All of these aspects are critical to one's identity and social status (Gidron, 2017).

This can be particularly meaningful for marginalized individuals who are moving from societal dependence to becoming contributing members, as work is a key aspect of mental health. For those suffering from poor mental health, work can provide a positive distraction (Van Dongen, 1996). By gaining employment at Diversity, the marginalized employee group has the ability to create strong relationships with others in the community. It allows them to find ways to face challenges and grow from their experiences, which can lead to increased self-confidence and more refined skills. These individuals can advance their quality of life as a result.

## 6. Conclusion

Diversity is at the forefront of sustainability with their social and environmental initiatives. Diversity procured almost three quarters of a million dollars of local product that competitive organizations would likely have ordered from major suppliers, whose purchases focus on price and quantity available, and would therefore likely be imported. These local purchases also have a substantially smaller carbon footprint than imported purchases due to the fraction of greenhouse gas emissions created that are resultant of the transportation process. Likewise, for every dollar spent on employment with their organization, the community benefit is at least 1.68 times that amount. Due to their strong community values and local focus, Diversity has created almost 2.2 million dollars in local benefit in one fiscal year (local purchases + SROI benefit), which will have long lasting positive impacts on the local economy.

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