



Edmonton Youth Council, Food Waste and Insecurity Report

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INTRODUCTION

Today's conversation will discuss the Food Waste and Insecurity Report: A Youth Perspective, which was produced by the City of Edmonton Youth Council (CEYC). I spoke with Tina Kim, a Policy Subcommittee Member of CEYC, to learn more about the Youth Council and their report.

MEET TINA KIM

Tina Kim (she/her) is entering the third year of her Political Science degree at the University of Alberta. She joined the Council when she was in grade 11 and has thoroughly enjoyed the past three years with the CEYC. She has been a member of the Policy Subcommittee for two years, which includes providing policy recommendations and analyzing existing policies. She stated that they use youth engagement to provide feedback to City Council and city administrators in an effort to influence policy. She mentioned that she is currently working on a co-op term with the City of Edmonton and that it is interesting applying what she has learned from her volunteer work with the CEYC to her City work term.



CITY OF EDMONTON YOUTH COUNCIL (CEYC)

The CEYC “provides policy input to city council and produce[s] initiatives and events to benefit youth.” (2) Since 1995, they have “been representing the views, perspectives, and aspirations” of young Edmontonians aged 13-23. (2) Kim defined the CEYC as a governance body that the City of Edmonton reports to. There are two positions within the Youth Council: Youth at Large Members and Voting Committee Members. Kim, who is a Youth at Large Member, stated that the positions are similar, however, Voting Committee Members have more commitment and are required to attend monthly meetings as a general assembly. Currently, Councilor Janz and Councilor Salvador are responsible for overseeing the Youth Council.



These leaders, along with the Voting Committee Members, attend a monthly 3-hour meeting to discuss any City updates and initiatives occurring within the three CEYC subcommittees: policy, projects, and internal. Youth at large members comprise everyone else volunteering with the CEYC; they don't have to attend the general assembly, nor can they vote on specific motions. When asked to report the number of members in each category, Kim estimated roughly 30-40 voting committee members and roughly 70+ youth at large members. Currently, the Youth Council is trying to increase equity and representation within the council and within the application process; they strive to represent youth from different geographical areas, ages, genders, socio-economic backgrounds, races, and ethnicities. They hope to amplify the voices and include youth with unique life experiences in Council so that all youth in Edmonton are represented.



FOOD WASTE AND INSECURITY REPORT

The CEYC [Food Waste and Insecurity Report](#) “sheds a distinct youth take on food issues in Edmonton” by focusing on two major food issues: [food waste](#) and [food insecurity](#). (1) Kim stated that the Report took over 6 months to create and required extensive research on food justice, waste, and insecurity, as well as youth surveys and interviews with community organizations. She stated that this report is unique because it represents perspectives from both Edmonton youth and the Edmonton community, and also identifies why this topic is relevant and must be a priority of the City of Edmonton. Prior to creating the Report, the CEYC brainstormed Report ideas and food was something that resonated with many youths; it had impacted a lot of committee members and continues to largely impact people in general. Moreover, the youth were passionate about environmental issues and environmental equity and believed that creating a report on food waste and insecurity was an important means to address the issue.

After the Youth Council decided on a Report topic, they conducted an extensive literature review to learn about the foundation of the issue itself. This was also reported as an important issue because this topic isn't taught much in school; Kim mentioned that she just happened to have taken a class on food justice at University, so she had prior knowledge of the area, but many committee members did not. After that was completed, they conducted a survey to represent all youth in Edmonton. These perspectives are valuable to ensure that their findings were representative of all Edmonton youth. They also divided the work based on who could attend interviews with community stakeholder organizations and their personal interests. For example, Kim was interested in researching European policies to learn about what other countries were doing to combat food injustice. Since members of the CEYC are as young as 13, Kim stated that many members, herself included, “learn as they go” and enhance their research skills through engaging in these sorts of initiatives.

Their Report consisted of 8 recommendations for the City which all promote positive impacts in areas such as increasing climate resilience and reducing the cost of food waste. (1) Kim emphasized that if there is only one key



takeaway from the report, it is the importance of food justice. Food justice “means building a food system that respects food and people’s right to access nutritious, affordable, and accessible food. It addresses structural inequities within our food system and focuses on topics such as food security, community relations, and sustainability.”(1) This means that everyone should have access to culturally relevant, nutritious food that they actually want to eat. This report exemplifies food justice.



PRESENTING TO THE CITY COUNCIL

The Report was presented to the City of Edmonton in August of 2021. Kim stated that following their presentation, a Councilor initiated a motion to the City Administration to complete an analysis of the report to see if any of the CEYC recommendations are feasible and to see what the city is already doing regarding food waste and insecurity.

On August 8, 2022, the City Administration will present their findings in collaboration with the CEYC. Kim valued presenting their Report and the current work being done by the Administration but hopes to continue pushing action towards this issue. Kim will be present at the City Council meeting on August 8th and will be taking questions from City Council members. A recording of the meeting can be found on the [City of Edmonton website](#).

JOIN THE CEYC

If you are interested in volunteering with the CEYC, or know someone who might be, you can apply [here](#). You can also email youthcouncil@edmonton.ca

for more information. Tina Kim strongly encourages any folks aged 13-23 who are interested in the CEYC to apply. She said that although the application process can be intimidating and scary, it is worthwhile. She continues to learn a lot from conversations with other team members and participating with the CEYC.





REFERENCES

1. City of Edmonton Youth Council. (2021). Food Waste and Insecurity Report: A Youth Perspective.
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2. City of Edmonton Youth Council. (2021). Home.
<https://www.ceyc.ca/>.



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