



NOTICE OF POLICY REGARDING the SSMU GROCERY PROGRAM POLICY 2023-01-19

Submitted for: 2023-01-19

Submitted to: SSMU Legislative Council **Document no.:** LEG-PUB-MOT-2023-01-19-002

Moved by: Risann Wright **Current Status:** FOR APPROVAL
SSMU President APPROVED
 POSTPONED
 COMMITTED
Seconded by: Amelia Whitcomb NOT APPROVED
Science Representative

Issue

The SSMU grocery program is created to help the SSMU students in financial need. The program wishes to help students subject to (1) the 2022 rising inflation, cost of living and food costs (2) calls for support for students facing food insecurity and increased access to food .

As such, the grocery program aims to find a sustainable and long-term solution to food insecurity on campus.

Background and Rationale

The first pilot program took place in December 2022 and took the form of grocery vouchers given to students. The pilot program reached full capacity: 200 students signed up to receive the benefits of the SSMU grocery program. These vouchers were sourced from different grocery stores around Montreal, promoting sustainable and local items. In the long term, the program will run once a semester and deliver grocery vouchers. The program's aim is to prioritize sustainable partners^[2] with whom we can provide grocery vouchers to students once per semester. The vouchers will be accessible for pick up both online and in person. The SSMU grocery



program is designed to benefit SSMU members who are in financial need and are facing food insecurity.

SSMU members that will be capable of demonstrating financial need will be eligible to receive the help of the grocery program:

1. Proof of federal or provincial bursary attributed to the student
2. Proof of enrolment within the McGill work and study program
3. Proof of bursary or grant attributed by McGill

If students do not fall under one of the three categories outlined to demonstrate financial need, SSMU members may reach out to the accessibility coordinator to organize a special circumstance.

The SSMU grocery program will work to help students reduce the current rising food costs in Montreal. In a more global understanding, the SSMU grocery program will tackle food insecurity amongst SSMU members and McGill students.

Alignment with Mission

The SSMU grocery program policy aligns with the SSMU values and missions.

First, The SSMU recognizes the holistic nature of sustainability and the importance of addressing environmental, social, and economic viability. According to the SSMU Sustainability Policy, sustainability does not refer exclusively to environmental considerations but also encompasses sustainability in regards to justice and equity. These latter aspects of sustainability are addressed by the SSMU Equity Committee, which is tasked to work and collaborate on sustainability-related issues.

Second, The SSMU commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice, and environmental protection and to groups, programs, and activities that are devoted to the well-being of disadvantaged groups. We strive to ensure that all of our endeavours are undertaken with full respect for human dignity and bodily sovereignty and without discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, language, sexual orientation or social class.



Consultations Completed

Have been consulted regarding the grocery program policy: the SSMU President, The SSMU VP University Affairs, the SSMU VP-Finance, the SSMU accessibility commissioner, the SSMU sustainability commissioners, the SSMU Equity Policy Specialist, the SSMU governance manager, the SSMU governance coordinator, The Presidents' Roundtable, student Faculty Association Presidents, SSMU Legislative Councillors, and SSMU members.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

If this policy is not adopted, it will be detrimental to the long-term existence of the SSMU Grocery Program. SSMU Members would not receive the sustainable support from the SSMU to purchase groceries and mitigate food insecurity as they have requested.

Sustainability Considerations

As food and nutrition play a central role in our diets and lives, the grocery program will also promote food sustainability to support students to lead a healthy life, and achieve food and nutrition security.

The voucher model and priority given to stores that offer grocery items that students can prepare will increase the autonomy and sovereignty of the student recipients and will help them achieve nutrition sustainability in their daily lives outside of the SSMU grocery program's scope.

The SSMU grocery program coordinator¹ will be responsible for (1) consulting with the SSMU sustainability commissioners regarding the choice of partners distributing the grocery vouchers for the SSMU grocery program and (2) choosing and prioritizing the most sustainable partner and products options within the SSMU grocery program budget².

The adoption of the SSMU Grocery Program Policy, will lead to the sustainability of the SSMU grocery program over time.

¹ See appendix B of the grocery program policy

² See appendix C of the grocery program policy



Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If the policy is adopted, it will create the permanent SSMU Grocery Program at the SSMU. Directly supporting students facing food insecurity. It will have a significant impact on the future of food accessibility and sustainability for SSMU members. Voting in favor of the SSMU grocery program policy will allow the SSMU to address food insecurity facing students on campus.

Regarding the next steps:

- The SSMU pilot grocery program will pursue approval for the winter 2023 semester, by delivering vouchers to students facing financial need.
- The recruitment of a grocery program coordinator starting in September 2023 will be required.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved that the Legislative Council approve the Policy in Appendix A.

Results of the Vote

In favour	()
Opposed	()
Abstain	()



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Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories

Appendix A : Grocery program policy

The SSMU grocery program policy



Grocery program policy

Adoption Date xxx

Expiry Date January 1st, 2025

1. DESCRIPTION

The Students' Society of McGill University ("the Society") is committed to providing outstanding services to its students. Further, SSMU recognizes the holistic nature of sustainability and the importance of addressing environmental, social, and economic viability. Following these values, the SSMU is creating the "*SSMU grocery program*."

The grocery program aims to find a sustainable and long-term solution to food insecurity on campus.

The first pilot program took place in December 2022 and took the form of grocery vouchers given to students. The pilot program reached full capacity: 200 students signed up to receive the benefits of the SSMU grocery program. These vouchers were sourced from different grocery stores around Montreal, promoting sustainable and local items. In the long term, the program will run once a semester and deliver grocery vouchers. The program's aim is to prioritize sustainable partners³ with whom we can provide grocery vouchers to students once per semester. The vouchers will be accessible for pick up both online and in-person. The SSMU grocery program is designed to benefit SSMU members who are in financial need and are facing food insecurity.

The SSMU grocery program will work to help students to face rising food costs in Montreal and will tackle food insecurity amongst SSMU members and McGill students.

2. Scope

This policy aligns with SSMU values.

First, the SSMU recognizes the holistic nature of sustainability and the importance of addressing environmental, social, and economic viability. According to the SSMU Sustainability Policy, sustainability does not refer exclusively to environmental considerations, but also encompasses sustainability in regards to justice and equity. These latter aspects of sustainability

³ See appendix C of the grocery program policy



are addressed by the SSMU Equity Committee, which is tasked to work and collaborate on sustainability-related issues.

Second, The SSMU commits to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights, social justice and environmental protection, and to groups, programs, and activities that are devoted to the well-being of disadvantaged groups. We strive to ensure that all of our endeavours are undertaken with full respect for human dignity and bodily sovereignty and without discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics that include but are not limited to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identification, age, mental or physical disability, language, sexual orientation or social class.

The Grocery Program Policy applies to SSMU members who are in financial need and are facing food insecurity.

This policy is intended to serve SSMU members in need. To prioritize these members and ensure that they can participate and benefit from the SSMU grocery program, SSMU members with demonstrated financial need will be eligible to receive the help of the grocery program:

1. Proof of federal or provincial bursary attributed to the student
2. Proof of enrolment within the McGill work and study program
3. Proof of bursary or grant attributed by McGill

If SSMU members do not fall under one of the three categories outlined to demonstrate financial need, but believe they should benefit from the program, they may reach out to the accessibility coordinator to organize an exception due to special circumstance.

The SSMU grocery program policy will be valid for a duration of 5 years. The SSMU grocery program policy can be renewed after 5 years.

3. Definitions

Demonstrated Financial need: A SSMU member that is: (1) receiving federal or provincial aid, (2) enrolled within the McGill work and study program, (3) receiving McGill bursary or grant.

The SSMU grocery program: A SSMU program that provides students with groceries to help reduce food insecurity on campus.

Grocery vouchers: This term refers to the online or physical gift cards –virtual or physical versions– that will be delivered to the grocery program recipients.

All other terms used in this Policy include definitions from SSMU's governing documents.



4. Context

4.1 At SSMU

The SSMU grocery program is created at SSMU specifically to support SSMU members facing food insecurity. The program wishes to help students in the context of (1) the 2022 rising inflation, cost of living, and food costs, and (2) food insecurity facing students across Canada and on campus.

4.2 At McGill University

McGill University is a higher education academic institution. Therefore, the majority of the McGill University community is composed of students. Many students have to get bursaries, grants, or loans in order to finance their studies. We would like to alleviate the cost of their grocery shopping by creating the SSMU grocery program. Further, SSMU members and students facing financial needs are meeting incredible stress and tension due to rising inflation. This is the first factor that makes the SSMU grocery program policy a perfect fit for the student body of the McGill community.

Further, McGill university is located in Montreal, Canada. Canada is known for having severe winters. This harsh weather decreases fresh food availability during the winter season⁴. The fresh food availability decrease makes it harder for SSMU members in financial need to find sustainable, ethical, and local fresh products around Montreal during the winter season. The SSMU grocery program aims to create a program that will provide access to fresh nutritious products to SSMU members in need.

5. Framework

1. The SSMU grocery program aims to decrease food insecurity in the McGill community. The expectation of this policy is for the program to run at least once a semester and deliver vouchers to students.
2. One of the guidelines of this policy is to make sure a portion of the vouchers are reserved for students that can prove their financial need (self-identification, and proof of financial need on the sign-up form)⁵.
3. With the objective of making sustainability a priority and a centerpiece of the program (to accentuate healthy food habits and sustainable consumption), the SSMU grocery program will prioritize affordable and sustainable farms and partners.

⁴ As outlined by “Le petit panier étudiant” and other partner stores.

⁵ See appendix A for the sign-up form.



The SSMU grocery program is a program funded by the SSMU grocery program fee. The total budget allocated to the grocery program will be the total amount of money received through the SSMU grocery program fee. That is, if many students opt out of the fee, the grocery program will have to operate with a smaller budget. The SSMU grocery program baskets are delivered to students in need that signed up for the program at no cost. The SSMU grocery program delivers vouchers to students at least once a semester. The grocery program coordinator will be in charge of making sure every student can access the program: that is, vouchers will have both in-person and online pickup options⁶.

In the event that more than 50% of the student drop out of the SSMU grocery program fee, the SSMU grocery program coordinator will not be hired. The SSMU accessibility commissioner and the SSMU sustainability commissioners will be assigned the task of coordinating the SSMU grocery program, which should increase the available budget to be spent on grocery goods.

6. Advocacy / Promotion / Communication

6.1 University Advocacy

The SSMU grocery program will advocate for McGill funding and university resources for students facing food insecurity on campus. It will work, where possible, with the McGill financial aid office to reach students facing financial need and to increase their access to the program.

6.2 Campus Advocacy

The advocacy efforts on campus will focus on raising awareness among SSMU members and McGill students about the SSMU grocery program. That is, SSMU should deploy advocacy efforts for every undergraduate McGill student to know about the SSMU grocery program and their right to benefit. With widespread awareness, more students will apply to and access the program. Leading to more effective support for students in need each semester.

6.3 External Advocacy

The SSMU grocery program will advocate for community support and partners for the SSMU grocery program.

7. Mandates

⁶ See appendix B to know more about the SSMU grocery program coordinator job description.



The SSMU president will ensure that this program is running each semester and that their office and staff provide the necessary support and resources to sustain this program. The SSMU President will bring the SSMU Grocery Program Fee and SSMU Grocery Program Policy forward at each point of renewal.

A grocery program coordinator will be hired by SSMU⁷.

8. Reporting and Accountability

Reports of the SSMU Grocery Program should be brought by the SSMU President to Legislative Council at the end of each Fall and Winter Semester of the program's duration.

The reports and progress notifications should be addressed to the SSMU president's office. That is, the SSMU grocery program coordinator should directly report to the SSMU president's office.

9. Appendices

Appendix A

Appendix A presents the online signup form associated with the grocery program policy. The paper version of this form will also be available at the SSMU office inside the University Center for in-person sign-up to the program.

⁷ See appendix B to know more about the SSMU grocery program coordinator job description.



The SSMU Grocery Program is here! Stop by the University Center and pick up, with your SSMU grocery program tote bag, several food items. Please register below. Pick-up will take place on *MM/DD* between *time slots*.

Registration will close on *MM/DD*

The SSMU Grocery Program is an initiative made in an effort to address food insecurity. It is a free program that the SSMU is offering to our members who are facing financial constraints and rising food costs due to inflation. The program will be facilitated by the SSMU from our University Centre on rue McTavish, directly on campus, and will be open to any of our members who need to purchase groceries whether last-minute items or cooking basics. We hope to implement a permanent program based on this year's pilot, so we appreciate your feedback!

Student Information

1) Name *

- First
- Last

2) McGill Email *

- xxxxxxxx

3) Are you in financial need?

- Yes, I'm in financial need
- No, I'm not in financial need

4) Proof of financial need: *(federal or provincial bursary, McGill work and study program, McGill bursary or grant)*

5) Food Voucher Option *(only for events that propose voucher options)*



- Xxx

6) Food allergies (*only for events that propose physical food*)

- Please specify your food allergies or intolerance in order to prepare your groceries. If not mentioned below, please type in “other” your specific allergy

7) Dietary Restrictions (*only for events that propose physical food*)

- Lactose Intolerance
- Gluten intolerance
- Vegetarianism
- Veganism
- Kosher
- Halal

Picking up bag

8) Please choose which date you would like to pick up your bag *

- *MM/DD options*
- *Time options*

9) Notifications preference * (Please let us know if you want a notification to be alerted that bag is ready for pickup via text or email.)

- Text message
- Email

Contact us

Please contact us at groceriesprogram@ssmu.ca if you want to cancel your registration or reschedule your pickup.



Appendix B

APPENDIX B. SSMU grocery program coordinator job description.

The coordinator will be responsible for:

1. The coordinator will be responsible for the program logistics.
2. The coordinator will be responsible for communicating and coordinating the payment and delivery of physical food items on campus by the SSMU grocery program's partner.
3. The coordinator will be responsible for finding volunteers to help during the different physical food pick-up sessions or other tasks needed for the implementation of the program.
4. The SSMU grocery program coordinator will be responsible for offering and monitoring both in-person and online voucher collection or physical food collection.
5. The SSMU grocery program coordinator shall be paid for their work. For each SSMU grocery program event (twice a year), the SSMU grocery program coordinator shall be allocated \$750, or \$1500 a year.
6. The SSMU grocery program coordinator is responsible for selecting the grocery program partner
7. The SSMU grocery program coordinator will be responsible for:
 - a. (1) consulting with the SSMU sustainability commissioners regarding the choice of partners distributing the grocery vouchers for the SSMU grocery program
 - b. (2) choosing and prioritizing the most sustainable partner and product options within the SSMU grocery program budget.

Appendix C

APPENDIX C. List of sustainable and affordable grocery partners that can be contacted for the SSMU grocery program.

The grocery program policy requires a partnership between SSMU and grocery voucher provider. The grocery program policy wishes to prioritize affordable and sustainable partners in order to increase the positive effect of this policy on both, voucher recipients – SSMU members– and the environment.

Such sustainable partners can be (but are not limited to):

1. Les fermes du marché (farm)
2. Lufa farms (farm)
3. Yogi belly



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4. Epicerie Basta
5. Tulsi farms
6. Be your own bulk