Transcript of Plain Language Podcast:
When Governments are Community-First

[Sound up positive, funky electric guitar riff]

Sometimes it's hard to trace the direct impact that government programs have on our communities. This is partly because on-the-ground projects leading to community change often receive funding from many sources, including private donors, industry partners, foundations, and various levels of government. In the end, the question remains: Who gets the (most) credit for project outcomes and impacts?

In Food Secure Canada's case, a partnership through the government-funded Mitacs Accelerate program had a direct impact on their ability to contribute to consultations on building a Food Policy for Canada.

[Sound up cheering crowd]

The goal of the Mitacs Accelerate program is to pair academic talent with community needs. They do this by providing funding to match community partner funding for hiring graduate researchers. With this added financial support, community organizations are able to hire graduate students for important research work to advance the community organization's cause.

In Food Secure Canada's case, their research project titled, *Within Our Reach: Building Community Academic Partnerships in support of a National Food Policy*, allowed them to hire a post-doctoral research student for two years. With this funding support, not only has Food Secure Canada been able to complete deep and broad policy analyses in support of their National Food Policy advocacy efforts, but they've also had the time to maximize the student's contributions to their organization.

[Sound up cash register ring]

The success of community first partnerships like the Mitacs Accelerate program mirrors the research data CFICE has uncovered after four years of studying community-campus partnerships. Based on this research, CFICE has developed some important recommendations that governments can consider to enhance community resilience, innovation and capacity for developing evidence-based policy.

[Sound up bell chime]

First, governments can provide greater institutional and funding support for community-campus partnerships. As with Food Secure Canada's experience, longer-term funding like the Mitacs funding allows community organizations to complete in-depth policy and research work, which is beneficial to governmental policy creation.

[Sound up bell chime]

Second, governments can recognize the value of community-based brokers. A community-based broker is an organization, person, tool or platform that is run by the community to help connect and support relationship development between community groups and academics. By recognizing the value of these brokers, governments can help increase the number and quality of community-campus partnerships.

[Sound up bell chime]

Third, governments can and should join collaborative networks that include partners such as provincial higher education authorities and local governments to see and support work integrated learning efforts. The more connected we all are with our efforts, the more community impacts we can achieve.

[Sound up bell chime]

And finally, governments can recognise and support Indigenous and community-based institutions like Food Secure Canada, as leaders of community-campus engagement partnerships.

By following these recommendations and investing in programs like Mitacs, governments have the ability to directly impact community outcomes.

As Food Secure Canada notes, the Mitacs funding has increased their ability to meet their core goal of supporting the food movement to engage in meaningful policy change. With another year of funding remaining, they are excited to continue generating important policy insight that contributes to a stronger food movement in Canada.

[Sound up punchy electric guitar riff]

For more information about CFICE's community engagement recommendations for governments, please visit carleton.ca/communityfirst/.

This plain language podcast is brought to you by the Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement project, a 7 year action-research project that investigates how to improve community-campus partnerships.

[End of Podcast]