

Overview

UBC Okanagan is attracting [significant positive news coverage](#) for its longstanding Food for Fines program, in the context of rising food bank demand. For specific periods, this program allows half of outstanding parking fines to be paid off with food bank donations. [UBC's main campus](#) has done similarly, and 'food for fines' arrangements are relatively common at university libraries (e.g. UBC, Dalhousie, UVic). A Food for Fines program for parking fees could be replicable at UAlberta.

Partnerships

Food for Fines is a longstanding partnership between UBC Okanagan Parking Services (an ancillary service in the UBC system) and the SUO Pantry. The Pantry is the campus food bank. It is a service of the UBCSUO, the Students' Union Okanagan of UBC. Arranging a Food for Fines program at UAlberta would require an agreement between Ancillary Services and the independent Campus Food Bank.

Current Form

The UBCO Food for Fines program goes back to at least [2012](#). In the [current iteration](#), students bring food donations to Parking Services during specific times of year:

This February, when you pay the first half of any parking fine, you may pay the remaining balance in food donations with Food for Fines—a food drive brought to you by Parking Services and SUO Pantry. Each non-expired, non-perishable food item can be used to pay your parking fine amount, with most items valued at \$3. All non-perishable food items are welcome and will be donated to the SUO Pantry. The items most requested are rice, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruit, canned vegetables, beans, macaroni and cheese, soup and oatmeal. Visit Parking Services at 261AA Nechako Residence with your donations and pay the remaining fine.

For clarity, if a student has \$50 in fines, and provides five items that are considered equivalent to \$3 each, \$30 would be subtracted from the student's fines; Parking Services would receive \$15 and still be owed \$20.



Potential Obstacles

1. UAlberta's ancillary services are required to be self-funding and self-sustaining, and parking is a significant source of revenue toward ancillary services' financial sustainability. However, ancillary services in the UBC system are also [required](#) to be self-funding and self-sustaining, and Food for Fines has still been practical for at least twelve years.
2. The volume of donations could pose a logistical problem at UAlberta, which has four times as many students as UBC Okanagan. Following the UBCO model, limiting this program to specific, appropriate times of year could mitigate that challenge.
 - a. Alternatively, there might be an opportunity for the Campus Food Bank to provide donation vouchers to students who know their outstanding fine balance, or some kind of simple record or notice that the student has provided a certain number of items. However, minimizing administrative burden on the CFB would be paramount. (It is likely that Food for Fines is run through Parking Services' space to reduce burden on the Pantry and make the program accessible to students in only one trip.)
3. Due to the large scale of UAlberta's parking fines, the level of uptake would be difficult to predict. *"February [2024] contributions totalled more than 1,925 items. That translates to about \$5,680 in parking citation forgiveness," [said](#) Jeff Joyce, manager of parking services at UBC Okanagan....'Donations received this February greatly exceeded our expectations, providing a significant boost to the SUO Pantry. We thank our entire campus community for its support and look forward to growing this initiative even further,' said Joyce."* Solely extrapolating by enrolment, a Food for Fines program at UAlberta could cost less than 7% of the additional revenue from implementing dynamic pricing in [last year's budget](#).