



Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

2nd Edition



Native Agriculture &
Food Systems Initiative

35th
ANNIVERSARY
1980-2015



*“I asked the Earthmaker Itoi to
see our need and give us a good crop
and plentiful blessing that we might
share with others when harvest came.
Now it was time and I picked up my
gourd and sang the songs of planting
with my granddaughters at my side.
We lifted our voices to the heavens
for rains to come and let us relive
our Tohono ways.”*

~ Tohono O’odham basket weaver



W.K.
KELLOGG
FOUNDATION

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally in Mexico and Haiti.

Visit www.wkkf.org.



For 35 years, using a three-pronged strategy of educating grassroots practitioners, advocating for systemic change, and capitalizing Indian communities, First Nations has been working to restore Native American control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage, or natural resources – and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native American communities. We believe that when armed with the appropriate resources, Native peoples hold the capacity and ingenuity to ensure the sustainable, economic, spiritual and cultural well-being of their communities. First Nations serves Native American communities throughout the United States. Visit www.firstnations.org.

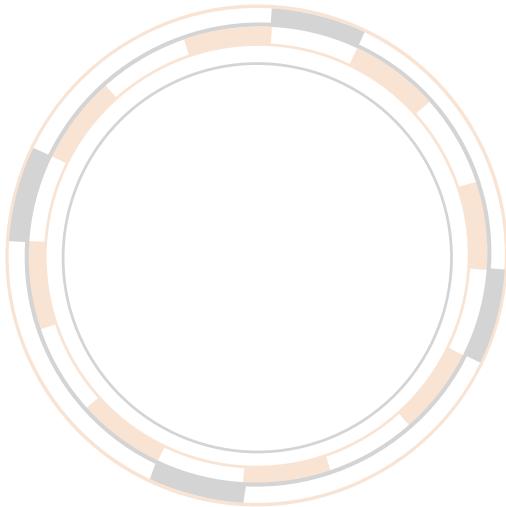
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This document was developed and written by Alicia Bell-Sheeter, Vena A-dae Romero and Valerie Segrest. Contributions were also made by Vicky Karhu, and John Hendrix, who is director of economic development for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. We thank them for their expertise, knowledge and contributions to the development of this document. Their hard work informs the content of this report.

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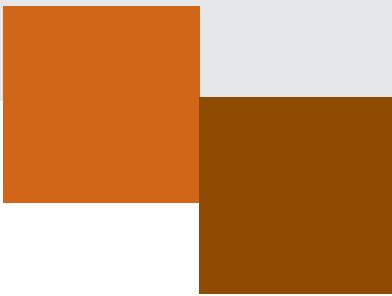


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Executive Summary

Food plays an important role in the formation of identity, in the development of community, economic and social institutions, and in the everyday lives of Native people and communities. Not only are certain foods central to the ceremonial and epistemological belief systems of many Native nations, but Native communities also face unique issues as they try to feed their people. Issues of hunger, food insecurity, maintenance and access to traditional food sources, and geographic isolation make accessing fresh and healthy foods a challenge for many Native American communities, families and children.

Prior to colonization, Native peoples had self-sufficient and sustainable food systems. Over time, removal from traditional homelands, limited access to traditional food sources, and transitions to cash economies, among other things, weakened tribal food systems. Today, many Native communities and households are food insecure, dependent on outside food sources, and maintain a diet of Western food stuffs that are often linked to negative and deteriorating health, community and economics. Recognizing that the loss of self-sufficient food systems is a contributing factor to the myriad issues Native communities face today, First Nations Development Institute (First Nations) works with and supports Native communities in reclaiming local food systems. Local food-system control is foundational to reversing years of colonization aimed at the disintegration of cultural and traditional belief systems and dismantling of Native social and economic systems. If Native communities can control local food systems, food can become a driver for cultural revitalization, improving community health, and economic development.

To assist Native communities in reclaiming local food systems, First Nations developed the *Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool* (FSAT) in 2004. Supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the FSAT was developed to demystify the process of data collection on local food systems and to provide tools and a framework for Native communities to measure and assess food access, land use and food policy in their communities. Since its development, First Nations has provided hundreds of trainings on the FSAT and it has been used around the world in other Indigenous communities.

First Nations is pleased to offer the second edition of the FSAT. This second edition is informed by the experiences of experts who have conducted food assessments in their own communities. We believe that the FSAT is an important first step toward reclaiming Native food-system control and hope this updated tool will increase these efforts.

Introduction

Since time immemorial food has played a central role in the development of communities in all parts of the world. For many Indigenous communities, food is still a cultural mainstay that reflects environmental, economic, social and political values. For some Indigenous communities today, the relationship to food is much less visible than it was at other times in history.

The diet history, gathering and consumption practices, value of food products, and source of foods tell the story of a community and its people and can help define their future. For example, there are very complex cause-and-effect relationships between food choices (or lack thereof) that have consequences for health, economy, and even social implications at the individual, community, regional and national levels. This *Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool* (FSAT) is meant to begin the process of telling the food story of a community through a community driven and participative process of data collection. The information yielded from the FSAT can be used to understand community food supply chains, agricultural and food profiles, as well as community economic and health considerations, among an array of other uses. The FSAT can be adjusted to meet the information needs of a community and has been created to assist communities in creating dialogue about the role of food within their community.

Local food systems are often one of the most overlooked assets of a community and, often, remain unprotected. However, food systems are an important asset that has a substantial impact on the health and well-being of a community, and may very well be the central cultural tie that connects individuals with community. For example, many studies suggest that increased consumption of healthy and traditional foods leads to better health among community members, preserving one of the most important assets in any community, its people.¹ Moreover, local food systems are inextricably connected to other community assets including land, water and culture. Ideally, the FSAT will help uncover some of these complex and intertwined relationships, examine who is in control of all these multifaceted community assets, and reveal necessary steps to be taken to strengthen Native control of these assets.

Naturally, healthy and productive people are a cornerstone of a healthy community, but the last 200 years of federal policy toward Native Americans has reduced their control of land, disrupted traditional agricultural practices and dramatically changed diets. Despite challenges created by historical practices and current environments in Native communities, there are many examples of successful projects where people are reclaiming local food systems, educating community members about diet-related diseases, revitalizing traditions associated with agriculture and developing new agricultural enterprises. To begin the process of telling these dynamic successful food-system stories, baseline information is invaluable to articulating the impacts of these projects. The FSAT should be able to direct an organization or community in identifying barriers and opportunities in the areas of health, economic development and cultural revitalization as they relate to food and agriculture.

¹ "Traditional wisdom and foods are the largest single factors in protecting traditional hunter-gather-fishing societies from dental decay and chronic disease." Schmid, Ronald F. *Traditional Foods Are Your Best Medicine*. Healing Arts Press, 1997.



What is food sovereignty?

Food sovereignty is that state of being where “all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

~ Dr. Michael W. Hamm and Dr. Anne C. Bellows

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and societies.

~ Food Sovereignty: A Right for All. Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty. 13 June 2002, Rome

Most existing definitions of food sovereignty have emerged internationally as a response to broader economic, political and social platforms. Moreover, most definitions have emerged as a response to issues of hunger and food insecurity. But the term is equally applicable to Native communities within the United States. A definition of food sovereignty for Native communities in the United States may look different for each community depending on land, geography and belief systems. Moreover, food sovereignty may take a broader form than just issues of hunger and food access. For Native communities in the United States, food sovereignty also acknowledges the ceremonial connection to food, land, community and economies.





For many tribal communities, the term sovereignty is used as a term that recognizes the right of Native peoples to retain their cultural identity and to acknowledge and reserve fundamental rights granted in treaties or other legal documents. Connected to this is the notion that Native people have the right to choose what they eat as individuals and as a cultural community. For many centuries, this right has not been honored and the foods we now dominantly consume were introduced through imposing a diet on our people. Food sovereignty is about unraveling that diet and decolonizing our food system from production to consumption. In many ways food sovereignty is a method that supports the revitalization of traditional land-management practices and upholds cultural continuity.

But in order to create strategies to reclaim local food-system control, we must first understand the decline of local food-system control. This will uncover the opportunities to reclaim local food systems and rebuild communities.

Exercise 1: My Community

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

- E**xercise
1. List the kinds of food that are available in your community?
 2. Who decides what food are available in your community (at the grocery store, delivered by the commodities program, etc.)?
 3. Who decides what you eat?
 4. Who decides what is grown in your community?
 5. Are there local gardens in your community?
 6. Are there local produce producers? What do they produce?
 7. Where is local food processed?

What is a food sovereignty assessment?

Also referred to as a “community food assessment” in other communities, a food sovereignty assessment (FSA) is a collaborative and participative process that systematically examines a range of community food assets in order to inform social and economic change and begin the process of strengthening a food system. The FSA takes a solutions-oriented approach that looks at assets and resources as well as problems. This process has the potential to truly promote local food-system control by increasing knowledge about food-related needs and resources, and by building collaboration and capacity. Using a participatory approach that advocates for community control of the food system, FSAs can (and should) be conducted by communities and their members.²

Exercise 2: Thinking About Food Sovereignty

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

exercise

1. What does the term food sovereignty mean to you personally, to your family, to your community?
2. Identify some elements of food sovereignty and local food-system control?
3. Is food sovereignty a term used in your community? Why or why not?

² Pothukuchi, K., Joseph, H., Burton, H. and Fisher A. (2002). What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide to Community Food Assessment. Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition.



A Success Story: Diné Policy Institute

In 2014, the Diné Policy Institute (DPI) published the “Diné Food Sovereignty Report: A Report on the Navajo Nation Food System and the Case to Rebuild a Self-Sufficient Food System for the Diné People.” DPI used summer interns to conduct surveys and community interviews at grocery stores and other local high-traffic shopping areas (like the local flea market) in five communities (chapters) surrounding Diné College. Their findings revealed:

- Nearly 65 percent of the individuals receive some form of nutrition assistance.
- Nearly 65 percent note that individuals do have difficulty accessing foods.
- Over 50 percent of individuals travel off the reservation for food purchases.
- A large majority of respondents cited a desire to learn more about traditional foods and have increased access to traditional foods.

This report is a successful example of a community driven and involved process to begin to map out local food systems. In addition to the survey and interview data, researchers also reviewed historical and treaty documents to uncover the historical evolution of their local food system. You can access this report in the First Nations Knowledge Center or by visiting the Diné Policy Institute website.

An overview of past and current food systems

There are several common terms that are often used to describe goals or efforts to change or control a food system. Some of the more common terms are: 1) Food Sovereignty (discussed above), 2) Food Security, which refers to equitable access to food and, 3) Food Justice, which refers to the body of laws that affect behavior and access of food producers, retailers and consumers. Each of these common terms is accompanied with broad social movements that seek to change either local, regional or national food systems and often comingle terminology. However, it is important to understand the differences between the terms and their implications.



The USDA's 1999 Action Plan on Food Security states that food security exists "when all people at all times have access to enough food for an active and healthy life."³ Hunger may accompany food insecurity but not necessarily and not consistently; food insecurity may be either temporary or chronic. For example, the Tohono O'odham distinguish between having enough to eat, on a strictly caloric basis, and having enough nutritional and culturally-appropriate food which is addressed more within the definition and movement of "food sovereignty."

Food insecurity has played a pivotal role historically in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers. Food played a key role in the establishment of European settlement in the Americas that later resulted in the forced relocation of a large majority of Native populations that has separated entire communities from vital land and food sources that had sustained them environmentally, physically and culturally for generations.

Exercise 3: Your Current Food System

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

- Exercise**
1. Do you know what people in your community eat?
 2. Are there differences in what different segments of your community populations eats (elders, single families, etc.)? What do you think they eat most?
 3. Do you know where people in your community get their food?
 4. Is the food supply in your community reliable? Is it subject to federal budgetary limitations?
 5. What does nutritious mean to members in your community?
 6. Is food nutritious? Is it safe?
 7. Do people in your community pay a fair price for healthy foods?
 8. Is the food provided by the government healthy, nutritious, and suited to the people in your community?
 9. Are there people in your community interested in revitalizing traditional agricultural and food systems?

³ Interagency Working Group on Food Security and Food Security Advisory Committee. (1999, March). *U.S. Action Plan on Food Security: Solutions to Hunger*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Issues surrounding food security in Native communities today have their history in the establishment of the current federal reservation system. Until the 1950s, malnutrition and hunger were the primary food issues facing tribes. On many other reservations, malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies were endemic. Despite recommendations to improve the Native diet, food aid provided to the tribes was usually insufficient and of low quality, and did not include traditional foods, leading to further deterioration in health.

After the 1950s, Native dietary patterns were increasingly dictated by “the arrival of [welfare] checks and the distribution of government commodities.”⁴ Yet, despite the increase in federal food aid, Native diets remained inadequate to their nutritional needs. A study of Kiowa nutrition published in 1953 found that out of 30 families, over 50 percent were nutritionally deficient. Among the elements lacking in their diet were milk, vegetables and fruits. The bulk of the Kiowa diet was comprised of bread, eggs, cereals and meat.⁵ Although insufficient caloric intake continued to exist on some reservations, by the 1960s most Native Americans had diets similar to that of the non-Indian population. Since then, increased external economic development and dependence on federal aid coupled with continued low incomes has meant that tribes increasingly rely on the unhealthy foodstuffs that have replaced nutritious traditional foods. Dr. Greg Cajete, who studied the changing diet of Pueblo people, states, “Economics has enormous influence, on not only lifestyle but food style. As Pueblo people increased their intake of processed foods, the incidence of degenerative diseases also increased in direct proportion. Beginning with tuberculosis and then evolving to include heart disease, stomach disorders, obesity, diabetes, and cancer, the portrait of Pueblo health since the early 1920s has been dismal.”⁶

Statistics show that even as recently as the late 1990s, almost one-fourth of Native American households were food insecure, meaning that they did not have access to enough food to meet their basic needs, and one out of 12 experienced food insecurity coupled with hunger. More recent statistics suggest that nearly 25 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native households are food insecure (compared to 15% of all U.S. households). Among households with children, 28% of American Indian and Alaska Native households are food insecure (compared to 16% of all U.S. households). According to the USDA's food desert locator, almost every American Indian reservation is classified as a “food desert,” meaning that in addition to high poverty rates, and minimal access to a vehicle, access to affordable and quality healthy food is extremely difficult.⁷

⁴ Bass, M.A. and Wakefield, L.M. (1974) Nutrient Intake and Food Patterns of Indians on Standing Rock Reservation. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 64, 36-41.

⁵ Bettis, F.P. and Burton, H.B. (1953) Nutritional Study of a Community of Kiowa Indians. *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science* 34, 110-114.

⁶ Cajete, Gregory (1999) “Indigenous Food, Indigenous Health: A Pueblo Perspective.” *The People’s Ecology*, 100. Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, NM.

⁷ Bauer, K.W., Widome, R., Himes, J. H., Smyth, M., Rock, B. H., Hannan, P. J. & Story, M. (2012) High Food Insecurity and its Correlates Among Families Living on a Rural American Indian Reservation. *American Journal of Public Health*, 102, 1346–1352. Also see: Finegold, K., Pindus, N., Wherry, L., Nelson, S., Triplett, T., & Capps, R. (2005). “Background Report on the Use and Impact of Food Assistance Programs on Indians.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In addition to difficulty accessing food generally, many Native Americans have difficulty accessing culturally appropriate and traditional foods for myriad reasons – from the loss of traditional homelands, to intensive cultural and social disruption, and to loss of food knowledge. It wasn't until the 2012 farm bill that federal programs began to codify the importance of traditional foods and their contributions to tribal communities. The 2012 Farm Bill included provisions that included traditional food considerations in programs like the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and other commodity program (specifically see Section 4033 of the 2012 Farm Bill). In other federal programs, like the farm-to-school programs, activities such as local gardening and farming are also supported. While there are more efforts to support local and cultural food behavior, past federal policies have discouraged local and cultural food behavior and replaced it with monoculture food assistance. In other words, despite the environmental and cultural diversity of tribes across the country, past commodity programs often offered the same foodstuffs with very little variation to tribal communities despite the very heterogeneous diets of Native communities around the United States.

In many present mainstream food social movements, food access mainly refers to the adequacy of retail establishments. In food movements in Indian Country, food access can refer to the availability of retail establishments and/or the availability of historically important land bases that contained food sources. Depending on the reservation, access to retail food can be complicated by the geographic isolation and inadequate transportation systems, which can result in limited access to sources of high-quality food. Because of logistical costs, often small, reservation-based stores frequently do not stock a full range of food (particularly fresh fruits and vegetables), providing instead snack and convenience foods. More importantly, access to traditional land bases that contain traditional food sources are vital to not only individual and community health and cultural maintenance, but ensure continued practice of ecological tenets that have sustained both man and environment over countless generations. Many traditional foods recommended for control of diabetes and weight may be unavailable due to land loss or non-tribal ownership or too expensive to purchase on a regular basis. Low-calorie, high-nutrition foods are frequently among the more expensive items in stores accessible to Native populations even in on-reservations stores.



Exercise

Exercise 4: Feeding People

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. How have historical or current governmental or other external feeding programs helped your community?
2. How have these same programs disrupted local foods and local food-system control?
3. Are there specific periods or points in history that began to disrupt or transform the local food system? What was it about this period or moment that impacted your community (positively or negatively)?



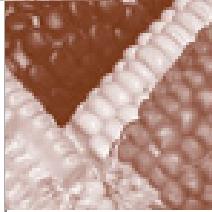
Why do a food sovereignty assessment in your community?

Native communities have a rich history of healthy food systems and prosperous agricultural economies.⁸ Explorers landing in the “new world” marveled at the abundance of agricultural crops and the advanced agricultural technology, and many explorers and settlers were aided by Indian farmers’ bounty.⁹ However, today, the traditional food systems of Native populations have been severely disrupted and agricultural enterprises are waning. Hunger, diet-related diseases, and poor economies are a problem for many tribal nations. Food systems and cultural traditions associated with food and agriculture are constantly in jeopardy as more and more of tribal nation food systems, sources and stuffs are replaced with mainstream, mass-marketed food products from a national food culture that is very much dependent on food science and the marketing sector.¹⁰

⁸ “Indigenous agriculture consists of a variety of cultural activities where man interacts with nature to cultivate harvests that benefit both man and nature. The practice of growing food for consumption or purpose is a cultural activity.” Romero, A-dae. (2010) “The Indigenous Farmer.” Southwest Marketing Network. Science is itself defined as a cultural norm of a society.

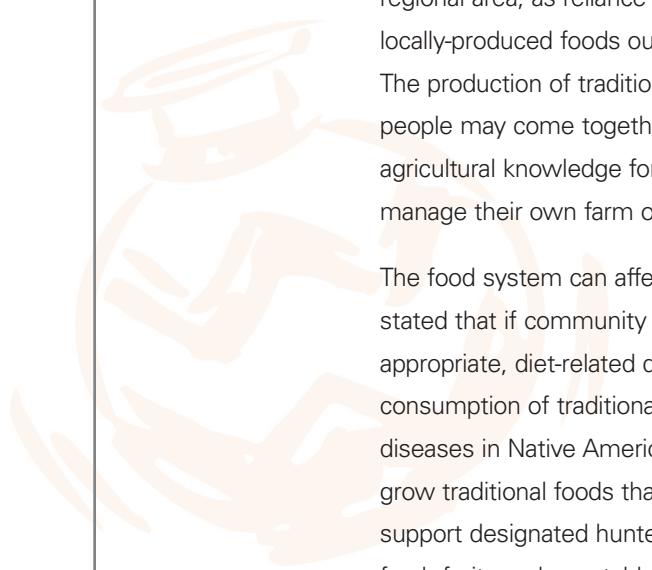
⁹ Keoke, E.D. & Porterfield, K.M. (Eds.). (2002). Encyclopedia of American Indian Contributions to the World: Fifteen Thousand Years of Inventions and Innovations. New York: Facts on File.

¹⁰ Bauer, M., (2001). The Availability and Variety of Healthful Foods at Convenience Stores and Trading Posts on the Navajo Reservation: Project Report. Shiprock, NM: Diné College.



Many national food-system problems can also be found in Native communities, in addition to completely unique food-system problems in Indian Country. A large portion of foods available in most Native communities is provided by non-Indian-owned businesses or the federal government. There are, however, a few successful agricultural enterprises that are locally supported. As is the case in many limited-resource communities, many reservations lack access to healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. A recent study of the Navajo reservation found that the amount of healthful foods found on the reservation is limited, and rural convenience stores and trading posts reported that "junk food" was the most common food sold.¹¹ Another study of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine peoples on the Fort Belknap Reservation found that primary food sources have changed dramatically over the past 100 years. Traditional food systems such as hunting, fishing and gathering have declined and there has been an increased reliance on store-bought food.¹² In Native communities, as elsewhere in the United States, the ways in which foods are produced, distributed and consumed have direct implications for the local economy and local community.

A focus on food systems in Native communities provides a way to understand the economic, social and cultural aspects of food production and consumption. If a community purchases foods locally, farmers in that community profit and economic assets remain in the local area, which may lead to support industries such as transportation systems and infrastructure investments to support food production that can eventually strengthen the local economy. Production and consumption of locally-grown foods can also increase economic independence of a local or regional area, as reliance on externally produced goods and commodity foods is reduced. Selling locally-produced foods outside the community can also attract other dollars to the local economy. The production of traditional food has always contributed to community development in that people may come together to achieve a common goal, and practice and transmute traditional agricultural knowledge for food production. As individuals learn to run their own businesses and manage their own farm operations, local leaders are born.

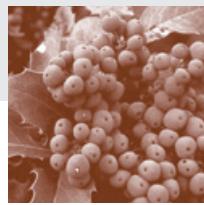


The food system can affect the health of Native people in both direct and indirect ways. It is often stated that if community members eat fresh, healthy foods, especially foods that are culturally appropriate, diet-related disease will be reduced. Research has shown that decreased consumption of traditional foods is related to increased rates of diabetes and other diet-related diseases in Native Americans.¹³ If foods are produced locally, producers can make an effort to grow traditional foods that are well-suited for the respective locality, and tribal governments can support designated hunters, harvesters and fishermen as they are also food producers, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables that contribute to a healthy diet.

¹¹ Bauer, M., (2001). The Availability and Variety of Healthful Foods at Convenience Stores and Trading Posts on the Navajo Reservation: Project Report. Shiprock, NM: Diné College.

¹² Grant, R.C. (2001). Federal Food Programs, Traditional Foods, and the Gros Ventre and Assinboine Nations of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation: Project Report. Harlem, MT.

¹³ Price, Weston A. *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*. Keats Publishing Inc. 1989.



While traditional foods may restore physical health, they are also central to cultural and spiritual traditions. Years of forced cultural assimilation and disrupted food systems have eroded many agricultural traditions and cultural practices. Traditional cultivation practices are often closely connected to traditional ceremonies, often developed in response to the local environment, and respond to and gauge the local ecosystem. Many agricultural traditions are far different than the Western farming practices that were adopted during periods of forced assimilation. Today, agriculture in some Native communities has a combination of both traditional and learned agricultural techniques.

Current circumstances as well as the potential for improvement in many Native communities provide a strong incentive to undertake the process of a food sovereignty assessment. In order for a community to become independent of the federal commodities and other food programs, communities must be proactive about regaining control of their health and agricultural economies. Food sovereignty assessments, like other tools, are a method of reaching for the goals of:

- Understanding linkages of the food-supply chain in a specific community.
- Access to food as a basic human right.
- Elimination of hunger and food insecurity.
- Building more local and regional food self-reliance and thriving local economies.
- Creating a more democratic food system that gives communities a greater role in deciding how their food is produced and distributed.
- To understand production, consumption and purchasing habits in the community and within households.
- To develop an economic profile to gather understanding of how much money leaves Native communities on food-related purchases.
- Making the food system more equitable and socially just.
- Developing environmentally sustainable food production and distribution systems.
- Teaching young people in food production and preparation, and to connect them to other community issues through food.
- Preserving and celebrating culture through food.





Strengthening your community's food system is a big task and it has the potential to create social change that produces a story. In that regard, it is important to capture that story and beginning with an assessment that will enable communities to collect a snapshot that documents a starting point. Then, by revisiting the FSAT in a few years, you will be able to gather measurable indicators that inform the growth of community efforts. In many ways, this is a central part to capturing the history of a very important time for Native people.

Exercise 5: Beginning a Food Assessment

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

Exercise

1. What aspect of our food system do we want to assess?
2. How will we assess our food system? What are the tools and methods we will use?
3. Who should be involved in the assessment? Who are our partners? Who do we need to collect information from?
4. Who in the community is doing positive work in advancing local food-system control? What makes their work inspiring and transformative?
5. Are there people in your community interested in revitalizing traditional agriculture and food systems?

Control of Native food systems means control of Native assets

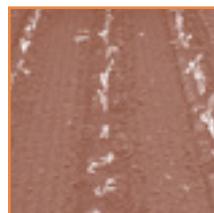
While a focus on Native food systems highlights the interconnections between health, community development, economic development and culture, it also helps frame the importance of Native asset control. Generally, Native food systems represent important institutional knowledge of asset management. In order to ensure a thriving food system exists or existed, a community must manage assets in order to ensure it produces sustainability over a long period of time. Skills used in management of a food system can also apply to other assets and other subjects areas. Control of Native food systems is intricately connected to control of Native assets, and increased Native control of agricultural assets is an important strategy for increasing control of Native food systems.

Native communities own many assets that are related to agriculture, with the most important being land. Native Americans own more than 54 million acres in the United States, making them collectively the single largest owner of agricultural land. Yet still today, many Native people and Native communities do not control this land, and lease it out to non-Native farmers for cultivation and management. Other Native people own land that is highly fractionated, and find it difficult to identify and use their individual share for agricultural purposes. Because the federal government and the BIA hold this land in trust for Native people, individuals and tribal governments often have little say in how their land is used or have little experience managing land for agricultural pursuits. Many activists working in the area of Indian agriculture state that Native control of Native land, and resolution of fractionated land, are the single most important issues facing Indian agriculture.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported that U.S. farm lands comprised more than 914 million acres. The same census estimates that American Indian agricultural land assets account for 57 million acres of these farms, which represent six percent of all farm and ranch land in the U.S. Further, the 2012 Census of Agriculture reported the market value of agricultural products sold by American Indian producers at more than \$3.3 billion. With 57 million acres in agricultural production, simple math would suggest that Indian lands are capable of producing at least \$50 per acre in agriculture products, irrespective of other economic benefits from production activities (employment, services, etc.).¹⁴

While the land holdings of American Indians have held relatively constant since the 1930s, diminishment of assets continues to occur in less overt but no less significant ways. As an example, within the Upper Great Plains and Pacific Northwest states today there are 15.7 million acres of tribal and individual Indian trust land (reduced from the original treaty acreage of 81.3 million acres). Of the nine million acres of Indian-owned agricultural lands included in this region, non-Indians farm or ranch 67 percent, or six million acres. The lack of managerial control, and likely less-than-optimal lease terms of these lands or inability to control lease at all, with an average economic return on agricultural products of \$14.09 per acre results in a potential economic loss to Indian land-owners in this region of \$84.5 million annually, less any lease income generated.

¹⁴ Using the average acres per American Indian farmer and rancher, which totals 1,020, and the average American Indian farm and ranch, which has total value production of \$59,000, which equals an average-acre production of approximately \$50



Exercise

Exercise 6: Asset Control

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Who controls the water in your community?
2. Are there land leases in your community? Who controls land leases in your community?
3. Who decides what to do with water in your community?
4. Who profits from land and water resources in your community?
5. Who decides what is grown or harvested in your community?
6. What percentage of agriculture and food businesses in your community are Native-owned and/or operated?
7. Take a map of your community and draw out ownership lines. Who owns what? Who controls what?

Food and culture

Food is often not simply something that provides energy and nutrients, but “is capable of symbolizing the manner in which people view themselves with respect to insiders and outsiders in society.”¹⁵ Foods often serve as a connection with the past and an expression of cultural identity. Among the Oglala, bison and wasa are important foods that should be served at ehanni Lakota (old-time Indian) occasions such as sacred dances, curing ceremonies or memorial feasts. Food functions and meaning become especially important for Native Americans who have struggled to maintain their identity in the face of decades of forced assimilation.

If you lose your foods, you lose part of your culture – and it has a devastating effect on the psyche.

~ Yakama tribal nurse¹⁶

¹⁵ Powers, W. and Powers, M. (n.d.). Metaphysical Aspects of Oglala Food System. In Douglas, M. (1984). Food in the Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivals in Three American Communities (p. 89).

¹⁶ Meuth, J. and Rollins, D. (2002, June). Tribal Worldviews: Kellogg Partnership 2020 Tribal Food Systems Initiative. Puyallup, WA: Center for Environmental Education, Washington State University.



Food production needs to be appreciated as a keystone of the new economy that taps into the world wide web of nature. All the factors of production and distribution depend on knowledge. Good local land comes by grace of nature, but the soil can only be sustained by growers who know how to sustain and enrich it. Seeds are a product of human as well as natural selection, and require the gentle touch of people with a long view of place, productivity, and diversity

~ Wayne Roberts¹⁷

More than with any other of our biological needs, the choices we make around food affect the shape, style, pulse, smell, look, feel, health and economy of the community and its members. Dr. Gregory Cajete states, “Indeed Indigenous peoples’ physiology and physical characteristics were largely a subset of the nutritional characteristics of their diets. The historic differences in physical appearance between Indigenous groups residing in different regions and subsisting on different diets were quite apparent.”¹⁸ Tribal community members and public health need to take on the job of re-establishing once-common skills, culture and habits around food production and preparation, common knowledge that was lost when convenience and fast food industries – and reliance on the U.S. commodities program – became dominant.

¹⁷ Roberts, W. (2001, June). The Way to a City’s Heart is Through its Stomach: Putting Food Security on the Urban Planning Menu. The Toronto Food Policy Council

¹⁸ Cajete, Gregory (1999) “Indigenous Food, Indigenous Health: A Pueblo Perspective.” *The People’s Ecology*, 100. Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, NM.

Exercise

Exercise 7: Culture and Food

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Does your community want to preserve its cultural food traditions?
2. Are there stories about food or agriculture in your community?
3. Do you know what agriculture food traditions are still practiced in your community?
4. Do you know why and how agriculture and food traditions have been lost in your community?
5. Who has knowledge of these traditions?
6. How will these traditions be passed on to other generations?
7. Is there someone in the community teaching courses on culture and food?

As we change our landscape and allow self-serving will of materialist economic systems to have sway over our view of the land, we also allow the natural landscape of mind and soul to be altered in the same measure.

~ Dr. Gregory Cajete¹⁹

¹⁹ Cajete, G. 1999. *A People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 18.

Traditional foods: a sense of belonging

For Native communities traditional foods are a gift. They are a living legacy and a direct connection with the lands we come from. Traditional foods are more than just commodities; they are our greatest teachers that help us to always remember who we are and where we come from. This is because our foods weave together the very social fabric that makes us a community. They contain the building blocks of our blood, our genetics and when we are actively on the land cultivating or pursuing wild game or fishing our sacred waters, we are gifted with new memories and those of a distant past. They settle us in a sense of belonging that promotes balance and generosity.

Each food has its place in the interconnected ancient food web that upheld our health and culture since time immemorial. Within that web a system of economics was held together – a system very different from the one many of us struggle to navigate in our modern world. Traditional food systems promote social, moral and spiritual economics. In this way, wealth is measured through not just the knowledge we carry but also the relationship we maintain with our traditional foods.

Just as each food has its place in the web, when we become devoted to that food – we too can find a place in a web of wisdom that gifts us with a sense of belonging. This gift is what prevents us from inheriting the epidemics among our community's today – addiction, suicide, historical trauma and the variety of disparities we navigate. Spiritually, feeling that we are a part of the whole feeds us, and even on a biochemical level we can feel satisfied by simply honoring the success of every living thing.

This is why we are constantly reminded that the “culture is the medicine.” Our wise ancestors knew this and wanted to ensure that we would have access to our foods until time ceased to exist. Their sacrifices and forward thinking prioritized our coveted foods for this exact purpose. Due to environmental degradation from colonization and a modern food system, we live in a time where our inheritance has become severely threatened. We also live in a time rich with opportunity.





Across the country a food revolution is happening. Many communities are taking control of their local food systems by growing their own gardens and prioritizing their purchases to support farmers. While these efforts are honorable and very uplifting, it is equally important to acknowledge the growing efforts of Native communities to regain control over their traditional food systems. It is also just as important to advocate for Native communities' traditional food systems to be integrated into the rebuilding of our nations' diets, including the integration of the traditional ecological knowledge and land-management practices that have upheld these Native food systems for thousands of years. It is important to share because the future success or failure of this newly defined food system absolutely depends on how well our old world knowledge is included and honored.

In order to promote the health of the land and, ultimately, ourselves, we must lead collaborative efforts in our communities. Tribes have great potential in shaping a food system that feeds the future in a way that strengthens our relationships with all living things and promotes cultural continuity. We can do this by becoming more than just consumers of foods, but taking on the advocacy of our ancient foods. This means promising to always practice good stewardship, experience reciprocity, promote collaboration, and celebrate the spirit of generosity through acknowledging the wealth of knowledge our traditional foods offer to us.



Exercise 8: Who Controls Our Traditional Foods?

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Traditional Foods Inventory

- List as many traditional foods as you can think of. Which ones do we have access to?
- What traditional foods does or has your family gathered?
- What are some of the foods that we need to gain better access to? How can we make that happen?

2. Traditional Foods Teachings & Cultural Memories

- How do you think our ancestors learned from our traditional foods?
- How are Native food traditions upheld in our community?
- Share one traditional food-gathering memory. What was your lesson learned?
- Are there origin stories for that food? If comfortable and appropriate, please share them. What are some of the key lessons from that food's creation story?
- How do our foods help shape the world we live in?

3. Traditional Foods in the Dominant Culture

- What are some ways we can protect our traditional foods?
- Who should have priority in accessing these foods?
- Whose responsibility is it to make sure we always have access to these foods and to protect them?
- How can we collaborate with non-Native communities in our efforts toward advocacy for traditional foods?
- What connections do we share between our traditional foods and environmental health?

Environment

Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught, will we realize that we cannot eat money

~ 19th century Cree saying

Traditional food systems among Native communities are part of the web of life that intertwines food, health and environmental health. Dr. Gregory Cajete states, "The environment was not separate or divorced from Native peoples' lives, but rather was the context or set of relationships that tied everything together. They understood ecology not as something apart from themselves outside their intellectual reality, but rather as the very center and generator of self-understanding."²⁰ For example, among tribes in the Pacific Northwest common themes exist. A Warm Springs/Skokomish/Taos educator noted that when a dam or stream is polluted, a salmon run is destroyed, then with it so is the lifestyle of a people, as traditional land-management practices are inextricably intertwined with cultural practices. The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission found that Umatilla, Warm Springs, Nez Perce, and Yakama Natives are more susceptible to contamination than other, non-Indian populations living in the same area because they consume a higher percentage of fish that are affected by changes in water quality. Land-management practices also impact the health of natural resources. A Blackfeet tribal member laments the loss of native plants to pesticides, radical farming techniques and overgrazing. What is needed, he says, is philosophy of preservation and restoration. Chemicals used in agriculture also negatively impact food safety and production in other areas, particularly in fish species. In turn, Native peoples are affected.

²⁰ Cajete, Gregory (1999) "Indigenous Food, Indigenous Health: A Pueblo Perspective." *A People's Ecology*, 6. Clear Light Publishers, Santa Fe, NM.

Exercise 9: Understanding the Environment

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. What environmental changes have affected the local food system? How?
2. What resources are required (land, water, gasoline, distribution costs, etc.) to produce food for your community?
3. Do you know what impacts on the environment result from the shipment of your community's food?
4. Does environmental regulation exist in your community? Who determines what these regulations look like? Who enforces them?

A “movable” feast

Throughout the world, food systems have been disrupted by an ever-increasing concentration in control of critical resources. No longer do communities provide adequate food for their people and more and more often what is produced locally is shipped hundreds of miles away and even overseas. Ironically, communities in some of the most productive farmlands in the world now import a majority of their fresh foods. The distances that food now travels to reach our plates represents more than just the concentration of our collective food supply into the hands of a few multinational companies. It also represents vast consumption of environmental resources and unnecessary expenditure on things that won't sustain us (fossil fuels, packaging, marketing, etc.).

A report by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University found that:

- The conventional food-distribution systems use four to 17 times more fuel and emitted five to 17 times more CO₂ (carbon dioxide) than the local and regional systems, depending on the system and type.
- Produce arriving by truck traveled an average distance of 1,518 miles to reach Chicago, one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's distribution terminals for fruits and vegetables.
- In a study which analyzed a Swedish breakfast, consisting of an apple, bread, butter, cheese, coffee, cream, and sugar, the summed distances each ingredient traveled from the producer to the consumer is equal to the circumference of the earth.²¹

²¹ Pirog, R., Van Pelt, T., Enshayan, K. and Cook, E. (2001, June). *Food, Fuel and Freeways: An Iowa Perspective on How Far Food Travels, Fuel Usage, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Ames, IA: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Exercise

This data and similar reports amply demonstrate the negative environmental effects of our national food system (i.e., excessive use of fossil fuels and contributions to greenhouse gases), as well as the risks posed when a food chain is stretched over astonishing distances. With more than 1,500 miles to cover before reaching our plates, the risks of breakdowns in the system are exponentially increased. In a distribution system stretched over such vast distances, any number of potential crises beyond your community's control could interrupt your food supply, including gas shortages, trucker strikes, increased prices, and the like beyond the fact that our food system is dependent on a limited supply of fossil fuel that will not last into the future. Not to mention, the distances that food travels requires an intricate food-safety system to ensure that food is not contaminated and reaches the consumer safely. While natural disasters like drought, pest infestation or flood can, of course, impact any community, if you're at the tail-end of the distribution network, the prospects for a healthy meal look a lot grimmer.

Exercise 10: Food Distance and Your Food

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Do you know where your community's food supply comes from? How does it get to your community?
2. Do you know how far your food travels to get to you?
3. Draw a diagram depicting where your community's food supply comes from. Using a map, can you determine how food gets to your community?
4. What other resources (and how much) are required to access food that you eat?
5. How would your community get food if a natural or other disaster (like a trucker strike) stopped shipments?
6. Think of the last few meals you have eaten? How much of those food items could have been produced locally?



Food dollars and cents

In terms of economics, there is some data about the market valuation of food produced in the United States, although it is limited. In 2009, the annual value of produce from all U.S. gardens was roughly equal to that of the annual U.S. corn crop, about \$21 billion a year. Moreover, agriculture, horticulture and food-related activities accounted for 25 percent of local economic activity. Researchers at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture estimated that Iowa farmers would gain \$54.3 million in sales²² if even a small portion (10 percent) of the fruits and vegetables Iowans eat were purchased from Iowa farmers.

For example, in Toronto, food choices account for about 20 percent of all retail sales, 20 percent of all service jobs, 10 percent of industrial jobs, 20 percent of all car trips and traffic, 20 percent of chronic diseases, 25 percent of fossil fuel energy and air pollution, 40 percent of all garbage, and 80 percent of sewage. While these numbers have obviously changed over time and are not representative of Native communities – that's still a lot of lettuce. Even if these statistics were to be downsized for better comparison with Indian Country, the amount of food resources produced and the extent of the waste generated would be astounding – and both represent opportunities for economic development and natural-resource management.²³

According to Wayne Roberts of the Toronto Food Policy Council, food is filled with opportunities to nurture the collaborative, win-win relationships and institutions essential to economic success today. All residents win when the community becomes more self-reliant in its food sourcing and reduces imports because the additional local purchases increase the multiplier effect – the same dollar goes further simply because it didn't go farther away. Likewise, no one in the community wins when some go hungry; the problem of under-nourishment just crops up in higher medical bills (and social costs) that everyone pays for. On top of that, food is particularly well-suited to community economic development. What economists call "barriers to entry" are relatively low in the food industry (i.e., it can be easier to get into the food business than other businesses), and many food products don't need a full-fledged marketing machine; good local networks and word-of-mouth advertising are often enough.

²² Pirog et al. (2001).

²³ Roberts (2001).



Exercise 11: Food and Local Economies

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

Exercise

1. Do you know the amount of money spent on food in your community?
2. How much money do you estimate is spent on food or food products produced in your community?
3. If all the cultivatable land in your community was utilized, how much do you think could be produced?
4. How much would you sell produced foods for? (multiply the amount you think could be produced times the price to get agricultural economic potential)
5. Do you know the economic value of what is produced in your community? Do you know who receives that value (through sale of products)?
6. How many agricultural jobs exist in your community? What is the economic contribution of those jobs? Who holds those jobs?
7. How many jobs could be created for community members if they had more control over agricultural and food resources?
8. Do you know the difference in costs between starting up a food-related business versus other business types?

The Power of the Tribal Dollar: Highlighting the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project's Food-Purchasing Program

Food is about investment in not just businesses, but also in the current and future health of the community. By supporting food-security projects and other innovations around food, tribes have the ability to spend a dollar that comes back tenfold.

One such innovation is the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project's Food-Purchasing Program. This program, funded in part by First Nations Development Institute, is an ongoing effort in the Muckleshoot tribal community focused on openly discussing the power of tribal dollars and its impact on the local food economy and local vendors. Moreover, this program gives voice to cooks and others who work in community kitchens across the reservation, empowering them to have a voice in food purchasing and demanding better access to quality foods that are served to tribal members.



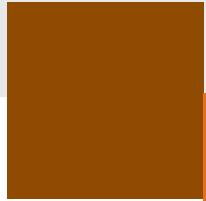
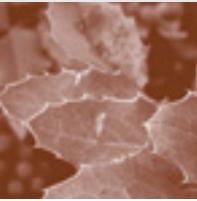
Native communities have numerous kitchens that span reservation lands. Senior centers, tribal schools, health and wellness programs, administration buildings, tribal colleges and other institutions may hold the capacity to offer meals to community members. In many instances, food that is prepared and consumed in these kitchens is purchased from large vendors located off reservation. In total, these institutional kitchens spend millions of dollars on food. In many, if not most, Native communities across the United States, these food purchases are done in isolation and not coordinated across institutions and programs.

In the Muckleshoot community, tribal cooks began to openly talk about their large economic impact on local food vendors and also talk about the quality of food delivered to their kitchens from these vendors. In many instances, these conversations documented the huge profits that off-reservation vendors made from kitchens in Native communities, but noted the frequent occurrence of poor quality of food that was delivered to kitchen staff.

This issue of food purchasing and food quality raised three questions for the community: 1) how can we improve coordination among tribal programs to save money on food purchases? 2) how can we improve the quality of foods served in our community kitchens?, and 3) how can our purchases inform what foods should be grown on the reservation as well as potential food-producing businesses?

In thinking about this purchasing power of tribal programs, and also the quality of foods in the community, the Muckleshoot Food-Purchasing Program drew on the concept of “buying clubs” that have been formed in many communities across the United States. A buying club is basically a group of individuals who band together to collectively leverage dollars and resources, increasing purchasing power, to get better access to prices, goods and services from vendors. The overall implication of buying clubs is that collaborative groups are better positioned to make market negotiations compared to one individual. Here are the findings:





The Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project's Food-Purchasing Program

Community Overview

There are approximately 2,500 enrolled members of the Muckleshoot Tribe and nearly 4,000 American Indians living on or near the reservation. Tribal community kitchens include the Seniors Program, Tribal School, Youth Facility, Early Childhood Education Center, Daycare Center and the Health and Wellness Center's Café.

Serving more than 1,200 meals per day, these tribally operated kitchens are a significant food source for many.

Analyzing Food Purchases of Community Kitchens

An analysis of food purchasing was conducted based on 2012 food-purchase reports provided by each kitchen's food vendors. From these reports, the top 10 foods served across all kitchens were identified. These were determined based on the highest amount of money spent and the highest quantity of that particular food ordered.

After analyzing food purchases, group discussions that included all of the kitchens' tribal cooks were held in order to identify food distributors currently contracted with the kitchens, as well as the quality of services each distributor provided. Tribal cooks discussed a variety of topics related to food distributors including troubleshooting methods, quality of customer service, challenges to ordering, and a description of each kitchen's purchasing and receiving processes.

Findings from Food-Purchase Analysis and Cook Conversations

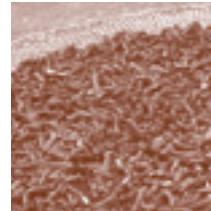
The analysis of the previous year's food purchasing provided a snapshot of exactly what foods were offered in all of the Muckleshoot kitchens. Out of the top 10 foods most frequently purchased, seven were identified as foods that can be procured from our own traditional and accustomed harvesting grounds and reservation lands. These include beef, buffalo, halibut, salmon, berries, apples and potatoes. Quantity and cost of these foods provided solid numbers for the food distributors to work with. This helped them to make a more comprehensive and realistic offer regarding the cost savings and benefits of moving to a cooperative purchasing system.

Eight different food distributors were identified as current suppliers of the Muckleshoot kitchens and each kitchen operated as a stand-alone customer account. The unique challenges of each kitchen were shared during discussions with tribal cooks and largely focused on purchasing and receiving deficiencies as poor customer service and troubleshooting. Nearly every kitchen shared the same challenge of food distributors making deliveries of food items they had not ordered and upon alerting their supplier of the mistake, they would refuse to correct the error or offer a refund to the kitchen for the incorrect delivery.

On several accounts food vendors would deliver product that was not consumable (i.e. mushy watermelons, fish with worms, rotten produce) and then refuse to refund or replace it. Most of the time those foods were the day's menu, making it hard for cooks to prepare a healthy, well-rounded meal for the day. These discussions clearly defined the need to integrate tribal cooks into the decision-making process of identifying a quality food distributor for all kitchens.

Tribal Cooks Ask the Questions

In August 2013, the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project, in collaboration with several tribal programs, hosted a "Food Distributors' Symposium." All staff involved in the daily operations of each kitchen was invited to attend. Every food distributor who held a current contract with the tribe was invited to make presentations on their services and price points. In total, a group of 32 tribal cooks and kitchen staff, program administrators and other interested community members were in attendance for the vendor presentations. Chefs from the Muckleshoot Casino also attended.





The invitation to food distributors specifically outlined expectations of their presentations. Each food vendor was allotted a 15-minute presentation slot with a 10-minute question-and-answer session led by the tribal cooks. During this time, they were asked to discuss benefits of cooperative buying and cost savings involved, their companies' customer service guarantees and methods of troubleshooting. Tribal cooks were encouraged to facilitate the 10-minute question-and-answer sessions with their own scenarios and inquiry.

As an outcome of the symposium, tribal cooks reported feeling empowered by just being able to have a voice and be a part of the decision-making process. Kitchen administrators reported a better understanding of the challenges their staffs face on a daily basis as well. The food distributors appreciated being able to speak to all kitchens in a genuine way and in a clearly defined format.

In addition to empowering cooks, the presentations yielded some important economic benefits for food purchases. On average, each vendor presented distribution plans that offered cost savings of nearly 10% across all kitchens as well as the opportunity to purchase better quality foods (i.e. organic, local, fresh). The troubleshooting and customer care questions led by the cooks at the end of each food distributor's presentation assisted cooks in understanding customer care and service priorities of each vendor.

Ultimately, staff and administrators from seven of our community's kitchens were able to vote via ballot on their top two preferences, and one food distributor came out as an overwhelming favorite. This vendor currently services four of the seven operating kitchens across the reservation.

Discussion

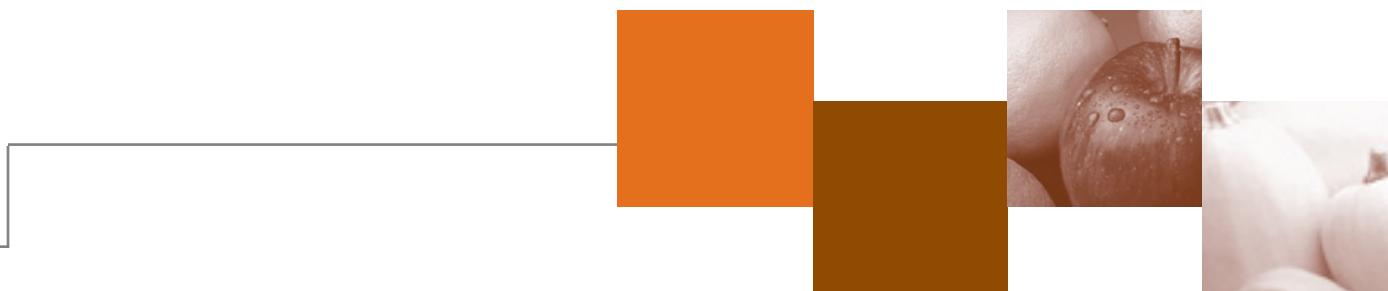
By examining the diverse system of each kitchen and listening to our tribal cooks' unique challenges, many opportunities were identified to strengthen our community food programs and build a sustainable economy. The initial objective was to review the kitchens' budgets and identify the cost-saving benefits of cooperative purchasing across all of our kitchens. However, greater insight of challenges were made by taking the opportunity to inspect how quality of service from

food suppliers affects access to healthy meals. By setting every cook up for success with an organized purchasing and receiving system, increasing customer service awareness and cultivating confidence in kitchen staff, we uphold the ability to offer better-quality meals to community members.

On that note, the cost savings are undeniably tremendous. Without giving away sensitive information regarding the tribe's food budget, here is a practical and hypothetical financial breakdown of a 10% savings. Say the average food budget for a tribe to sustain six community kitchen programs were at \$1.4 million and they were to receive a 10% cost savings by simply purchasing from one food distributor. That is a savings of \$140,000 in one year. That savings allows dollars to be used for other community needs and services.

Looking at the possibility of procuring seven of the top 10 foods purchased across all kitchens begins to show us cost savings that will happen in as few as three years. For example, with more than \$40,000 being spent on blueberries, strawberries and blackberries, a unique opportunity for tribal members to become berry growers and make a decent living selling to the community kitchens is identified. While that money may not be direct savings from the bottom-line budget, it is money that stays in the community and supports a tribally-operated business. This same model can be identified for a buffalo and cattle rancher, or an apple orchard, or a tribal fisherman.

This study helped identify the potential for saving the tribe a good amount of money by just consolidating our purchasing. It also recognized the points of intervention within the currently operating food system that have potential for community building to take place. Basically, the collective purchasing power of the kitchens means ordering in larger quantities, creating an economy of scale that both reduces expenses and gives them more buying power to influence vendors to provide healthier and more culturally appropriate foods. Locally-grown foods, which may have been financially out of reach of individual kitchens, will become more accessible.



Exercise 12: Some Basic Steps and Questions Meant to Help Guide a Conversation Around Collaborative Purchasing in Your Tribal Community

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

Exercise

1. **Find Your Stakeholders.** Identify all of the entities that serve food in your community. You might want to ask some of the following questions in order to find a baseline of data.
 - Does the kitchen have restrictions by funding or grants?
 - Are they required to meet certain nutrition standards?
 - How many meals do they serve?
 - Who is their target audience?
 - What food vendors do they currently use?
 - What vendors have they used in the past?
2. **Involve Stakeholders in the Process.** Hold interviews with each kitchen's staff and their administrators. Find out what their challenges are. Equally, ask them what their vision is for healthy and tasty menus in their kitchens. You may want to ask some basic questions like:
 - Who is your food vendor?
 - What are some things you like about your food vendor?
 - What are some of the challenges to working with this vendor? Can you give a specific example of a time when you felt they did not meet your needs?
 - What do you hope your customers experience when they consume the meals you prepare?
 - What nutritional concerns do you have regarding your customers?
 - Do you feel your food vendor understands these concerns? What are some ways they might be able to understand?



3. **Design Your Culminating Event.** Now that you have some baseline data to work with and some insights as to the unique challenges each kitchen faces, it is time to share these difficulties in a way that will present solutions. Some ways you may do that could be:
 - Hold a community discussion that shares your findings. Ask the community how they feel this work should proceed. Involve your leadership in these discussions so that they can also be a part of the process and gain useful insights into concerns of the community regarding nutrition justice.
 - Organize an event that helps all stakeholders see all of their potential options. In the Muckleshoot case study a symposium was held for the food distributors to share their business models and agenda with all cooks simultaneously.
4. **Present Your Findings to Tribal Leadership, but Don't Come Empty-Handed.** Be prepared with solutions to these challenges. Ask for their input and guidance as well. In our case we looked at the food purchases from an entire year so that solid numbers on cost savings were presented to the council. This showed a clear impact to the bottom line of budgets and paralleled the opportunity to invest in tribal members as food producers.

As cultures assimilate into Western standards of living, several health indicators decline. It is no mystery that traditional foods and physically active lifestyles can be key to good health. But in order for the traditional foods and lifestyles to be accepted, people must feel they are important to their lives.

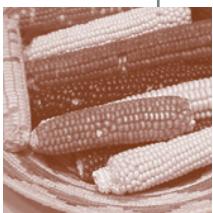
~ Dr. Gregory Cajete²⁴

²⁴ Cajete, 1999, 124.

Diet and health

Did you know:

- American Indians have the highest rate of diabetes compared to other racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States.
- The prevalence of overweight and obesity in American Indian and Alaska Native preschoolers, school-aged children, and adults is higher than that for any other population group.
- In general, American Indian and Alaska Native adults are 60 percent more likely to have a stroke than their white adult counterparts, and American Indian and Alaska Native women have twice the rate of stroke than white women.
- American Indians/Alaska Natives die from heart disease much earlier when compared to all other racial and ethnic minority groups.²⁵



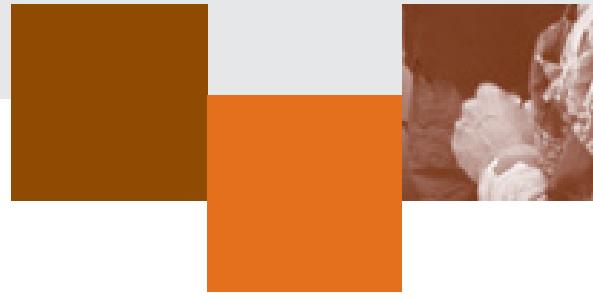
Today, roughly one-third of all U.S. adults are considered obese and the healthcare costs for illnesses resulting from obesity exceed smoking and problem drinking. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was \$147 billion in 2008 U.S. dollars; and the medical costs for people who are obese were \$1,429 higher than those of normal weight.²⁶ American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) adults are 1.6 times more likely to be obese than whites, according to the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health. Almost 33 percent of all American Indians and Alaskan Natives, including both children and adults, are obese, and over half of American Indian and Alaskan Native women are overweight. This suggests that the actual health care costs to treat and prevent obesity and issues associated with obesity are even greater in Native communities.

The leading cause of death in America – for all people, including American Indians and Alaska Natives – is cardiovascular disease. A relatively new phenomenon among American Indians and Alaska Natives, cardiovascular disease can be attributed in part to the adoption of Western lifestyles in many Native communities, which are characterized by high-fat, high-calorie diets and low levels of physical activity. While other factors that contribute to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease such as age, gender, and family history cannot be controlled, others can be prevented and managed by altering one's lifestyle. Risk factors that can be modified by lifestyle changes include high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, physical inactivity, diabetes, obesity, and heavy alcohol consumption.²⁷

²⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). *National Diabetes Statistics Report: Estimates of Diabetes and Its Burden in the United States, 2014*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. American Heart Association. 2012. Bridging the Gap: CVD Health Disparities. Washington, D.C. Finally see, Lesley Russell. Fact Sheet: Health Disparities by Race and Ethnicity. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

²⁶ Eric A. Finkelstein, Justin G. Trodson, Joel W. Cohen and William Dietz. (2009). Annual Medical Spending Attributable to Obesity: Payer-And Service-Specific Estimates. *Health Affairs*, 28, no.5 (2009):w822-w831.

²⁷ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health. (1998). Building Healthy Hearts for American Indians and Alaska Natives: A Background Report. Washington, DC.



I was born at a time when people were still farming and everybody had large gardens and we ate directly from the gardens and life in general was fairly happy. If you were looking from the outside into our communities, you would maybe see that our communities were impoverished — meaning that we didn't have a lot of material things. But we had a lot of other things. And one of the things we had have was good healthy food, good healthy water and so forth, which is very different from what we see today.

~ Clayton Brascoupe, Traditional Native American Farmers' Association

Diabetes in particular

Diabetes Mellitus is a group of disorders characterized by high blood glucose levels. The most common type of diabetes found among American Indians and Alaska Natives is non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, commonly known as Type II diabetes. This type of diabetes occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin and doesn't process glucose, or blood sugar, properly. This type of diabetes is more common among people who are overweight, older than the age of 40, and are of African American, Latino, or American Indian descent. While complications from diabetes account for a number of health burdens, including kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, eye disease, and amputations, cardiovascular disease is two to four times more common in people with diabetes (present in 75 percent of diabetes-related deaths) and end-stage kidney disease occurs among American Indians and Alaska Natives at six times the rate seen among whites in the United States.

Fortunately, many people with Type II diabetes are able to control their blood sugar through weight control, regular exercise, and a healthful diet. The staggering rates of Type II diabetes in Native communities and the subsequent burdens on health and resources that result are sufficient reasons all on their own for Native communities to take a long, hard look at what they are eating.

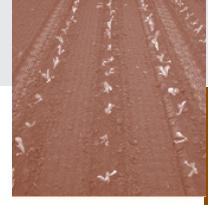
In general, there is a growing realization among the medical profession that traditional Native American foods are an important component in preventing and controlling nutritionally related diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Programs among the Pima, Tohono O'odham, Winnebago and Zuni have integrated traditional culture and healing into the Western health care system with positive results. While the emphasis of these programs is on the alleviation of illnesses after they have been diagnosed, prevention measures such as nutrition counseling and health education are also used.

Exercise 13: The Health of Our Community

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

Exercise

1. How do people in your community learn about how diet choices affect health?
2. Do you know the costs to your community in medical bills, lost time at work, and spiritual well-being for unhealthy community members?
3. Do you know or think people in your community are hungry?
4. Are there healthy eating classes or other nutrition and health education classes in your community?
5. Who in your community currently collects health data on your community? Who controls access to that data?
6. Who collects data on health? Is this data available to others?



There was a time when a lot of foods weren't being grown and people were not participating in cultural activities. The ties were weakened and broken. The people suffered from cultural detachment because everything is tied to land use, ceremonies and food. There is realization that moving back to these activities will strengthen the culture. There is resurgence of cultural and agricultural processes.

~ Mike Rios, San Javier Cooperative and member of the Indian Land Working Group

A holistic view of food sovereignty

Over the past 10 years there has been much talk of and research about food-systems issues, and advocacy for a more integrated, or holistic, approach to how communities nourish themselves and survive generally. While common ideas emerge in community projects throughout America, such as the sustainable use of resources, support for local farmers and ranchers, and health benefits of eating local foods, most of the work to date has focused on limited-resource communities in cities. Fortunately, there are a few examples to be found in these projects and in the research that appear very relevant to Native American communities seeking improved food systems and food sovereignty.

What makes food unique among human needs is that it is connected at its heart to the land and to health, and to community. It is often forgotten that Indigenous people have developed highly



unique, well-planned communities that have transcended generations. Through cultural practices and social norms, Indigenous communities have codified behaviors that ensure the lasting continuation of environment, people, and the continued symbiotic relationship between both.

In modern community planning, Indigenous practices are often replaced with tenets of modern-day professions. In a survey of community planners, however, Kameshwari Pothukuchi and Jerome Kaufman found that food access has yet to be defined as an “essential service” – like roads, schools, water and sewage plants – by planners. While everyone acknowledges that air, food, water, and shelter are among the essentials of life, food is a necessity that is chronically ignored by planners.²⁸ What they also found was that even though most planners don’t currently include food in their community models, they do understand that to improve human settlements, food issues must be taken into consideration, and that:

- There is a need to recognize that food is an important aspect of our local economy.
- Food is a critical part of community revitalization.
- There is a need for greater involvement in nutrition issues – it’s important for healthy residents in healthy communities.

In thinking about ways in which food systems could be improved by the planning process and decision makers, some of the areas for further consideration immediately mentioned by the planners surveyed were:

- Agricultural land preservation.
- Land-use rules and zoning related to food access (especially the location of grocery stores or gardens in low-income and/or remote neighborhoods).
- Including food issues in economic development plans and economic plans. (such as creating jobs and income through food-processing facilities, development of specialty products unique to the community, etc.).
- Documenting and addressing the environmental impacts of the food system (for example, the use of pesticides and fertilizers).

Without food sovereignty that takes into consideration all of the ecological, social, economic and cultural variables that respond to the unique circumstances of a community, other efforts to provide an improved standard of living will be more difficult to achieve. As stated further by National Congress of American Indians:

²⁸ Pothukuchi, K. and Kaufman, J. (2000, Spring). The Food System: A Stranger to the Planning Field. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 2, 66.



A critical aspect of long-term economic capacity building for tribes is ensuring a healthy, well-educated and well-supported work force ... Development will be impossible if our people are preoccupied with financial crises, health dilemmas or poor living conditions ... The most vital component of any stimulus plan is to provide for the well-being of our people. No economy can thrive when its people are not healthy.

~ Weaving Our Future: A Proposal for Economic Stimulus in Indian Country,
National Congress of American Indians (February 2003).

Exercise 14: How Holistic is Our Current System?

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

- exercise
1. Currently, how holistic or integrated is your community's approach to its local food system?
 2. Historically, how holistic or integrated was your community's food system?
 3. Who in the food industry works together to improve food, diet, health and the economy?
 4. How can programs work better together and take a more integrated approach to local food-system control?

Education interventions fall short if the factors revitalizing traditional diets and understanding of physiological adaption are not given serious consideration.

~ Dr. Gregory Cajete²⁹

²⁹ Cajete, 1999, 100



“Whole” foods

In the past, many tribal nations developed symbiotically with the world around them. Food sources were a critical consideration, and even represent the initial relationship with the surrounding environment, in the establishment of a community and behaviors that ensured continued food sources were codified institutionally in culture, tradition and even law. Continued disconnection from food sources because of food habits, federal policies, land ownership and an array of other social changes have severed the interdependent relationship between most tribal nations and food. In many tribal communities, food is now considered a purchasable item, a commodity that affects the current and future growth of a community.

Wayne Roberts, current project co-coordinator for the Toronto Food Policy Council, states that many community planners assume that food exists only as a commodity that can be bought. By contrast, we don't make the same assumption with regard to medical care, or schools, or water. Roads, schools and water are considered basic needs – basic rights – and aren't delivered through market mechanisms, because too much harm could be done if they weren't affordable. Food is more essential to survival than schools and roads, but, for some reason, we assume food is only available on payment of cash or, as is the case on many reservations, via charitable or government distributions.

However, like many others, Roberts believes that systems of food security are as amenable to design, planning and management as any other systems governing community life, and that planners also need to engage in a dialogue with food-security experts about the best ways to foster healthful food choices – not just healthful in terms of the physical nutrients everybody needs, but healthful in terms of the social nutrients every community needs. The community has the means to help recover the skills and culture of self-reliance and mutual support that are central to an “informal economy” that can help reduce hunger. That such resources remain untapped when hunger and under-nourishment (and diet-related diseases) are commonplace speaks to the fact that governments as well as citizens have lost their bearings and capacities when it comes to self-reliance and mutual support.

Ultimately, Roberts states that “quality of life” has become a priority that must be planned and developed by communities. He believes that it's no longer good enough for community planners to turn themselves inside-out for economic development, then cross their fingers that it will still be a nice place to live. Like most Native Americans, Roberts agrees that it's almost impossible to imagine a rationale for leaving the environment out of any discussion about food, since how our communities eat and how our food is grown are intimately connected to the environmental problems we face.

Exercise

Exercise 15: Community Planning

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Does community planning preserve agricultural lands as agricultural lands. That is, instead of changing them to commercial or other development land?
2. Does community planning preserve lands that contain wild food resources?
3. Is agriculture considered on an even basis with other options for community development, such as retail space and casinos?
4. What are the considerations in decision-making about how to use community resources?
5. In your community, is healthy, nutritious and/or traditional food considered a “right,” like clean air, water and an education?
6. Are the environmental impacts of agricultural production considered by decision-makers in your community?

Food policy

More and more tribal communities are exploring how food policy can be developed to control local food systems. Food policy can be defined as any policy that facilitates or hinders food production, consumption, access and distribution. Some existing success of food policy include the following:

- The Lummi Nation in Washington passed a policy to restrict tribal government dollars from being spent on soda.
- In 2014, the Navajo Nation passed the Healthy Diné Nation Act that 1) removed a tribal tax on fresh fruits, vegetables and water sold on the reservation and 2) added a tribal tax on junk foods and sugary beverages sold on the reservation, with proceeds to go back into community wellness programs.
- In 2014, the Muckleshoot Tribe in Washington passed a policy prohibiting the introduction of genetically-modified salmon into its treaty-protected waters.

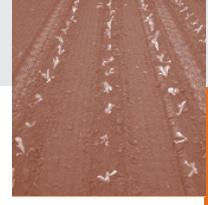
All these examples are looking at how tribal sovereignty and jurisdictional powers can be leveraged to improve community health and well-being, preserve traditions and sacred food practices, and develop economic incentives to improve and empower communities when it comes to food.

Another successful example of a group trying to influence food policy is the Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance (NAFSA). NAFSA was created by First Nations Development Institute with the assistance of the Taos County Economic Development Corporation, and the aim of NAFSA is to create an organized advocacy and policy movement in Indian Country to look at policy barriers and needs to improve food-system control in Native communities.

Exercise 16: Food Policy

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

- Exercise**
1. Does my community have a food policy?
 2. How do current policies affect control of the local food system?
 3. What policies can be developed to increase local food-system control?
 4. How can this policy be passed?



“Wellness is never just a physical condition. Wellness is the healthy interconnectedness of the environmental, spiritual, social and cultural. Our people have been disconnected from the source of their food. Today food is an industry. Even nutrition programs, like some of those offered at schools, are run like assembly lines, getting people in and out as fast as possible.”

~ Eric Enos, Ka’ala Farm, Inc., Wai’anae, Hawaii

Why “localize?”

Did you know:

- Native Americans discovered and cultivated food crops that currently account for more than 52 percent of all foods now consumed by people worldwide?³⁰
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimated that, as of 1986 (the last year for which data are available), more than 65 percent of Indian-owned farmland was leased to non-Indians?³¹
- Approximately one-third of all grazing permits are also awarded to non-Indians?³²

Given that Native Americans are not only first peoples but first farmers, that they possess vast resources that are providing wealth to others outside their communities, and based on the ideas and projects discussed above, it only makes good sense to take a much broader view when considering your community’s food sovereignty.

Beyond the economic benefits derived from Native agricultural assets, long-term food security provides better health for all, creates a cushion of self-reliance against distant (and often less healthful) supplies, and provides new and continuing jobs for local farmers, horticulturists and food workers. This increases self-reliance, achieved by making more land and employment available throughout the food system, strengthens local economies and food systems and can reduce dependence on emergency hunger and feeding programs.³³

³⁰ Smitman, Gregory E., “Intertribal Agriculture Council Perspectives on the History and Current State of American Indian Agriculture” *American Indian and Culture Research Journal*, vol. 22, no. 3 (University of California Los Angeles: 1998) p. 173.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dahlberg, 1994

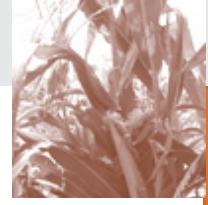
Exercise

Assuming power to localize your food supply affords opportunities to regain control of the most significant assets possessed by Native communities. Conscious management of food supplies affords opportunities for tribal use of land, deliberate control of health, sustainability of the environment, and maintenance or revitalization of cultural integrity.

Exercise 17: Thinking Locally

(See Appendix G for worksheets for each set of questions.)

1. Think about different segments of your local population (single mothers, elders and/or children).
 - Are certain segments more likely to suffer from hunger or food insecurity?
 - Are there existing programs to assist these specific and more vulnerable populations?
 - Do these programs provide sufficient help to these populations? Has anyone asked these different populations if current program assistance is sufficient?
2. Are health problems in your community caused, or exacerbated, by a lack of healthy, nutritious foods?
3. Do people in your community receive adequate food on a daily basis?
4. How many people in your community are chronically hungry?
5. What are the agricultural or food models in your community? Describe them.
6. Have other models of agricultural development succeeded in your community? What made them successful?
7. Are their tribal policies that help support or may hinder local food-system control?



Assessments

Taking back control of the food system is, of course, no small undertaking and it requires a rediscovered knowledge of what it means to be food sovereign. In order to get where we want to be, we need to know where we are – and even where we've been. Not only do assessments draw a picture of a community and its potential, they also offer opportunities to build capacity within the community. By taking the lead in design and implementation of assessments, community members set out on the venture on an equal footing with their partners, not as "samples" in an outsider's research. Tribal members themselves learn to design their own research projects, do their own field studies and research their own histories. They ensure that a project takes into account tribal perspectives, goals and needs. They become the experts on their community's food and health, and not an anonymous federal agency. Community members already know their physical environment better than anyone else and can often provide the best information about how to practice sustainable management of their resources. By taking the lead in developing and conducting assessments, communities already begin the process of regaining control of their destiny.

appendices

The following appendices are provided as examples of different processes to implement a food sovereignty assessment in your community.

Appendix A, the “Circle of Life” exercise, looks at the various ways in which Native communities have traditionally planned for their food security.

Appendix B, “How to Facilitate a Vision Workshop,” is an exercise that allows participants to envision the healthy future of their community.

Appendix C provides “Key questions to get you thinking about the assessment.”

Appendix D, “Community Member Profile,” provides a sample survey to gather information from the members of your community about their actual circumstances, and what they would like to see changed in their food system.

Appendix E, “Asset Mapping,” is a more concrete depiction of your community’s assets and will require more in-depth collection of “hard” facts from specific people. For example, to find the answers to questions in this section you may need to ask school administrators or the WIC coordinator about how many people participate in a federal program or what federal programs are available. You may have to go to the tribal economic development office to find out how many community members are full-time farmers, or how many food-related businesses are owned by community members.

Appendix F addresses “Process” and provides examples of how to start to think about assessments, the structure of mapping and analysis of your community’s assets, and existing or potential food sovereignty.

Finally, Appendix G contains individual worksheets for Exercises 1 through 17 that were included in the narrative of this booklet.

Appendix A: *The circle of life exercise*



Native people have always managed resources wisely. This exercise is intended for you to share your community's resource management stories. It is to help remind us of our communities' traditional harvest schedules and that the quantities of goods produced, preserved, saved and traded reflect insight into managing a sustainable economy. Native people were self-reliant and embraced the concepts of producing and preserving, processing and distributing, in order to provide for their community's needs throughout the year. Native people have a rich and long history of practicing these skills.

Our communities have traditionally demonstrated tremendous skill in managing resources to support the community on an ongoing basis.

For years, our people have understood and practiced the present-day concepts of resource management by planning so that food resources lasted throughout the year. We put aside food resources for future use.

Consider the planning done by the Canadian Bands, Nit Nat and Sooke, when they prepared for one of their women to marry. They saved for a year to provide a feast and gifts for all of the guests at the ceremony. Traditionally, gifts included blankets, canoes, dried fish, and many kinds of animal skins. If the woman's family was high status, the man's family or community provided them with a number of canoes to demonstrate that they could take care of her. The wedding ceremony required a lot of preparation and planning.

Our people saved for the purpose of acquiring goods that we could not produce ourselves. By producing more than the community needed, we had goods to trade. For instance, the Northwest Coastal Indians traded a wide variety of products, including smoked or dried fish and venison, as well as tools made from elk, deer, fish, or other indigenous animals.

Planning is a core skill that enables individuals and families to contribute to the economy. In the modern economy, having these skills allows you to make informed decisions about food security.

Our people have successfully practiced planning and resource management skills for generations. Now we call upon their example to strengthen our own abilities.

Take a look at this diagram and think about what your ancestors would harvest throughout the year:



Example: (Tlingit Indian Tribe – Southeast Alaska)

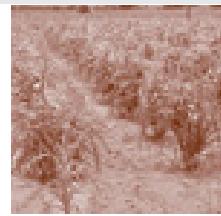
The changing seasons were/are the most common source of variation in food resource abundance and availability.

Autumn – time to harvest and shorter days were spent in preparation of the winter's food supply. September, October, November, Tlingit people are content and happy – it is harvest time! Deer, goat, sheep, bear, king salmon, herring. The salmon are fat and plentiful. Streams are full of fish and gardens ready for filling the storehouses. Men bring the bright salmon to the women to cut up and prepare for smoking and drying.

Winter – people draw stores from their caches.

Spring – winter stores are running low, the dry fish nearly gone, weather is bad, food supplies are low. Time to go and gather fern roots, seaweed.

Summer – Gathering of foods in season – fish, berries, etc.



Appendix B: *How to facilitate a vision workshop*

Dr. Trevor Hancock, HEALTHCARE FORUM JOURNAL (May/June 1993)

Next time you have a 15-minute break, try this exercise: Find a quiet place, take a moment to relax, close your eyes, and take a journey into the future:

It is the year 2024 and you are hovering in a balloon above your own community. During the past 20 years, it has transformed itself into an ideally healthy community.

Imagine yourself floating down to the center of this place, where you climb out of the balloon and move around the community. Take your time as you go into and out of stores ... workplaces ... streets ... parks ... neighborhoods ... houses ... healthcare and educational settings.

In what way are the places you visit and the people you see healthy? What makes them healthy?

Notice the colors and shapes and textures around you. What sounds do you hear? What smells do you notice?

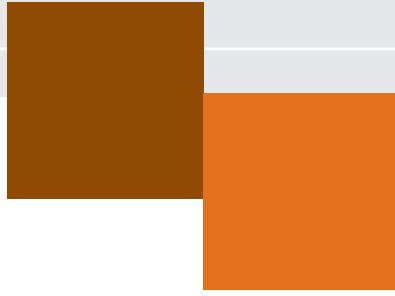
Pay attention to how people move from place to place.

Observe the settings where ill people receive care and the places where people learn.

Take the time to experience this community at different times of day and night. At different seasons.

Try to imagine yourself as an elderly person living in this environment ... as a child ... as a woman ... as a man ... as a disabled person.

Now spend a few minutes revisiting places you have seen that struck you most forcibly or that you liked the best, then re-enter the balloon, ascend back into the sky, and return to the present.



This is the core exercise in vision workshops conducted in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Organizing such a workshop provides one of the most powerful ways to answer the question, “What is a healthy community?” The workshop is a “futuring” exercise specifically adapted for use with participants drawn from the general public.

It requires only the simplest of equipment—pencil and paper, flipchart or other large sheets to draw on, colored markers or crayon—and one trained facilitator (additional facilitators can be trained on the spot).

A vision workshop is best organized by a steering group presenting many sectors of the community, including hospitals. It can involve anywhere from 20 to more than 100 people. Participants should represent a diverse cross-section of the community. The vision workshop itself takes a half-day, but it is useful to have another half-day to begin to develop priority action plans.

Here are the steps you might take if you were facilitating such a workshop:

- ***Begin the workshop with a minimum of introduction about your concept of a healthy community.***

The idea is to demonstrate to participants that they already know what a healthy community is – not to give them your ideas and have them feed those ideas back to you.

- ***Ask participants to reflect back on the past few months and recall something they have personally experienced that strikes them as an example of a healthy community.***

Don’t allow people to give you examples they’ve heard from someone else or examples of what makes an unhealthy community: Insist on personal and positive experiences. In large groups, ask for volunteers and take 15 or 20 examples. In small groups, use this exercise as an “ice breaker” by asking people to introduce themselves and give their example.

- ***Write the answers on a flipchart.***

Unless you have a high proportion of healthcare professionals in the group (which you shouldn’t), you will find that people seldom talk about or give examples of the healthcare system. Rather, they will talk about parks and green spaces, street fairs, neighbors helping neighbors, bicycle paths, recycling campaigns, school and community events, good transit, and anti-litter initiatives.



After filling a couple of flipcharts with experiences, point out, first, that the participants already know what a healthy community is and, second, that they know that it is not primarily the result of the activities of the healthcare system. (This second point may surprise them once they realize what they've said.)

- **Facilitate a guided imagery exercise like the one above.**

Have people take a "trip" through their own community at some point in the future, say 15 or 20 years hence, when it is an ideally healthy place. It may be useful to explain that guided imagery is not some strange "way out" experience but is used frequently, especially in sports psychology and increasingly in business, to help people improve their performance and achieve clarity about their goals and plans.

The exercise should take about 15 minutes. Remember to use value-free language that leaves it up to the participants to specify what they see. Don't, for example, talk about cars, buses, and bicycles; just ask them to notice how people move around. Don't use words like "school" or "hospital"; participants' images of an ideally healthy community may not include what we now call hospitals and schools.

- **Ask participants to write down a list of the images that they found most powerful, surprising or enjoyable.**

If you are dealing with a non-literate population, and we have done workshops for homeless men and for students in English-as-a-second-language classes, ask then to make a list in their head.

This is perhaps the most magical moment of the workshop. For five minutes or more, you can hear a pin drop! Once people have completed their lists, take a coffee break.

- **Divide people into groups of six or eight, keeping the groups as mixed as possible.**

Ask each group, together with a facilitator, to move to one of the blank flipcharts that are pinned or taped to the wall. They will use these sheets to draw their picture of the ideally healthy community.

- **Ask all members of the small group to briefly describe one item from their list.**

This could be their favorite, the one that surprised them most, or whatever. This allows for a quick exploration of the range of ideas among the group and gives some sense of what themes will have to be portrayed in the picture.

- **Take 30-40 minutes to do a group drawing.**

Encourage people to draw anything they like. Others can add to it or amend it if it doesn't fit with their vision, but they can't delete it. The aim is to arrive at something that reflects a shared vision within each small group.

Encourage all members of each group to participate in the drawing. Inform them that no adult can draw better than a seven-year-old child, so they shouldn't be embarrassed by the child-like nature of their collective enterprise. (A golden rule here is that architects, planners, engineers, and professional artists are not allowed to draw first, since they don't draw like seven-year-old children and will intimidate the others.)

Avoid the use of words as much as possible. Urge people to use symbols instead (dollar signs, for instance, instead of the word "money" or "wealth"). About 20 minutes into the exercise, encourage people to look at their lists and see if there are important themes or issues from their image that are missing. Participants usually find this a lively and often amusing exercise.

- **Have each group present their drawing.**

The presenter should be selected by the small group and should not be that group's facilitator. It is useful to videotape this section of the workshop for future reference, to be able to recall accurately what was said and to present the results to other interested groups in the community.

- **Ask participants to identify the common themes that recur in the pictures**

Write these on a flipchart at the front of the room. If there are a lot of themes, try and group them without getting too broad and vague. These themes become the basis for identifying priority actions and even for establishing work groups for follow-up, which can take place as another half-day session on the same day, or as a separate half- or full-day workshop.



Appendix C: Key questions to get you thinking about the assessment

1. What would you (and community members) like to see happen in the community (i.e., better food access, less farmland lost)?

2. What will it take to get there (projects, policies, public education)?

3. Based on those purposes, what information would be most important for you to include in your Food Sovereignty Assessment?



4. Think ahead about what might be key statistics or bits of information that might make good press, or help make your case. Make sure you include a process to find out that information.

5. What resources do you have or could you realistically procure for the assessment? Are there university or other institutional resources that can be tapped through a partnership with the community?

6. How long do you have or would you like to take to complete an assessment?

7. Based on the purposes of the assessment, how “quick and dirty” versus scientific will it need to be?

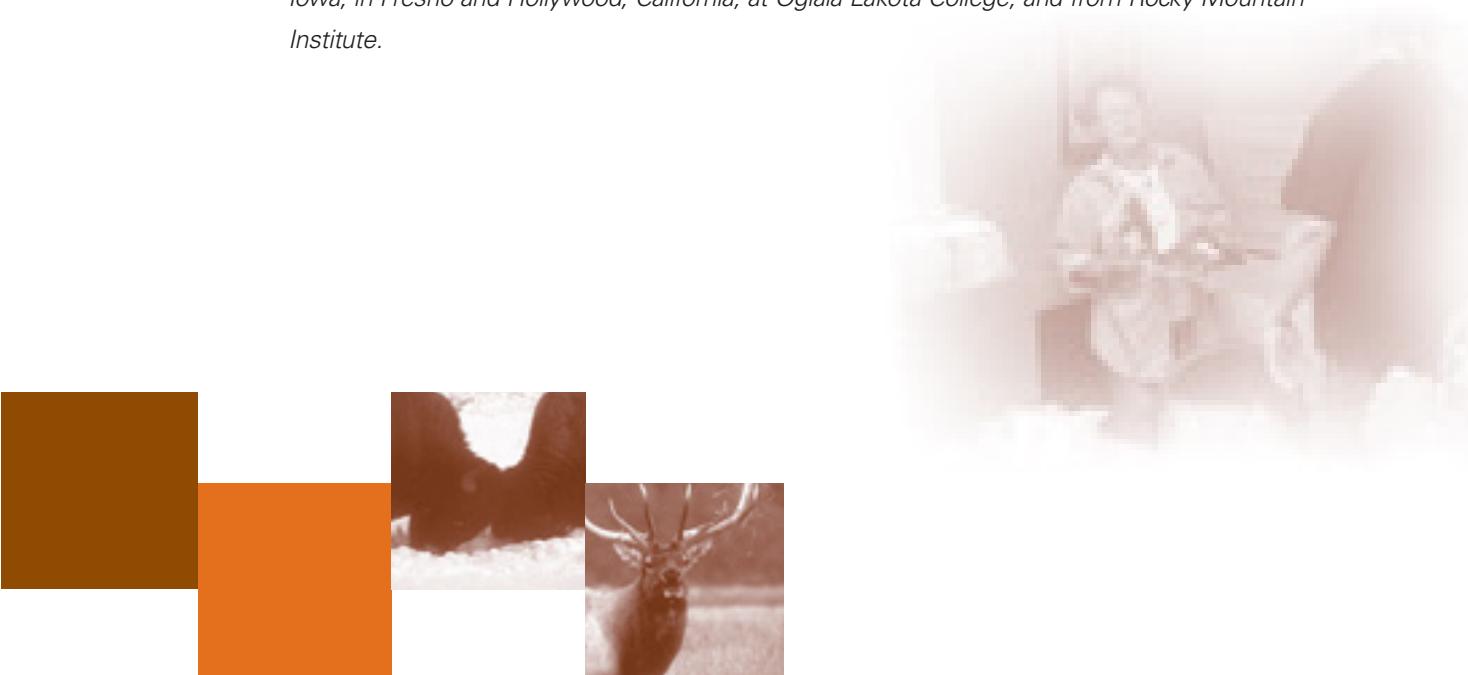
8. Who might you need to involve in moving the process forward from concept to action?

Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

Appendices C and D are intended to be used to create a profile of your community and available resources. Responding to some or all of these questions should provide your community with a better picture of what your current food system looks like in terms of the foods you eat and where they come from, individual and tribal economies, and how your resources are managed. Once you have undergone the process of using this tool and thinking critically about your food system, you can begin to work toward regaining control of your food system assets and improving the physical and economic health of your community.

This survey can be used in a variety of ways and is offered as guidance in creating your own survey, methods, and projects to achieve food sovereignty. It can be used "as is" or questions can be added or eliminated to suit the unique circumstances of your community.

Questions in this survey were derived in part from assessments conducted by communities at the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana, in Calaveras County and Trinity County, California, in Iowa, in Fresno and Hollywood, California, at Oglala Lakota College, and from Rocky Mountain Institute.





Appendix D: *Community member profile*

I. Community food resources

A. How important are the following sources of food for people in your community?

That is, how much does your community rely on them as a main source of food?

Please use a check mark to indicate whether it is “very important,” “somewhat important,” “not very important,” or “not at all important.” If a source does not exist in your community, please check that column.

Source	very important	somewhat important	not very important	not at all important	does not exist in my community
1. Grocery store	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Convenience store	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Trading post	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. Family garden/farm	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. Farmers' market	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Food co-op	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. Community garden or farm	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. School garden or farm	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. Tribal farm	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. Hunting/gathering	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. Trade/barter	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. Sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. FDPIR/Commodities Program	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. Food Stamps	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. Food bank(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. Others: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	<input type="checkbox"/>				
	<input type="checkbox"/>				

B. Who do you consider to be the leaders in solving food problems in your community?

Check all that apply.

- Tribal government
 - Community or nonprofit group(s)
 - Volunteers
 - Religious groups
 - Federal or state health agency staff
 - Federal or state cooperative extension staff
 - Schools/Universities
 - None
 - Others/Comments:
-
-
-

C. Are there certain foods that you need or would like to eat that are difficult to get, or are not available, in your community?

- No
- Yes

If yes, what are those foods – and why are they difficult to get or not available:



D. Which of the following equipment or methods for food storage and preparation do you use in your home (check all that apply)?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> gas/electric stove | <input type="checkbox"/> hotplate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wood stove | <input type="checkbox"/> gas/electric oven |
| <input type="checkbox"/> microwave | <input type="checkbox"/> open fire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> refrigerator | <input type="checkbox"/> freezer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> food drying/dehydrator | <input type="checkbox"/> food canning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> root cellar | <input type="checkbox"/> ice house |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

II. Food assistance

A. Which of these programs do you take part in (check all that apply):

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women, Infants, and Children Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National School Lunch Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Breakfast Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Food Service Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commodities programs (FDPIR) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals on Wheels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others/Comments:

_____ |

B. How many days in the past month did you use one of these food assistance programs?

- 0 days (If you did not use any program in the past month skip to question II. C.)
- 1–2 days
- 3–5 days
- 6–8 days
- 9–12 days
- 12 or more days

1. What were the reasons that you used food assistance in the past month?

Check all that apply.

- Unusual expenses this month
 - Ran out of food stamps
 - Recent job loss
 - Continued unemployment
 - Separation from spouse
 - Aid temporarily discontinued
 - Delay in receiving aid/supply shortage
 - Money/food stamps stolen
 - Traditional sources of food (fish, game, etc.) not available
 - Other/Comments:
-
-
-

2. How many days in the past month did you need food assistance but didn't receive it?

- 0 times
- 1–2 times
- 3–5 times
- 6–8 times
- 9–12 times
- 12 or more times

a. What were the reasons that you did not receive food assistance
(check all that apply)?

- Don't think I'm qualified
 - I applied but was turned down
 - It's too much trouble/red tape to apply
 - I'm afraid to apply
 - I don't have any transportation to apply
 - The distance was too far
 - I didn't have gas money
 - I don't know about Food Stamps or other programs
 - Health problems prevent me from applying
 - I don't have child care to go and apply
 - A family member did not want me to come
 - Embarrassment
 - Other/Comments:
-
-
-

b. What other barriers exist, if any, that prevent you from using these programs?



- C. Which of the following do you think are useful, or would be useful, in improving your food resources?

Please use a check mark to indicate whether it is "very useful," "somewhat useful," "not very useful," or "not at all useful."

Resource	very useful	somewhat useful	not very useful	not at all useful
Tips on getting the most for my money at the grocery store	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on nutrition and healthful eating and cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about government programs for which I might qualify	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with reading, filling out or understanding forms and applications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A "one-stop" application process for all food assistance programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Access to child care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help with budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on how to grow a garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on how to grow traditional foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recipes and information for using commodities foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recipes and information for preparing traditional foods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information in my native language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



III. Diet and health

A. How would you rate the nutritional quality of your diet?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

B. Would you say your health, in general, is:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

C. Is information about diet and nutrition available in your community? If yes, please list your three primary sources of information (school, family member, nutritionist, etc.).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. How many times a week do you participate in physical exercise or recreation?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 more times per week

E. Have you been told by a health care provider that you are overweight?

- No
- Yes

IV. Culture

A. How many people do you know in your community who are skilled in traditional farming, hunting, and/or the collection and uses of traditional foods? _____

B. Do you think that young people in your community are interested in food traditions?
If not, why do you think this is so?

1. If yes, please explain why you think young people are interested.

2. Do you have suggestions about how to get young people interested?

If yes, what are they?

C. What traditional agriculture or food-related practices, if any, continue to be used in your community today? Please describe:

1. How many members of your community participate in these activities? _____

2. How are these skills being passed on to others?

D. Where did you learn how to get and prepare food?

- From a relative
- In school
- In 4-H
- From an extension agent
- From a dietitian/nutritionist
- Other



E. Does your community continue to celebrate traditional ceremonies?

No Yes

1. If yes, are foods that are required for those ceremonies still available in your community?

No Yes

2. If not, please explain why.

F. If you could tell your tribal leaders anything about food and hunger issues in your community, what would you tell them?

G. If you could tell the federal government anything about food and hunger issues in your community, what would you tell them?



Appendix E: *Asset mapping*

V. Organizations and governance

- A. Does your community have active groups, including tribal government, working to solve food problems for community members?

No Yes

1. If yes, who are these groups and what are they doing:

2. Do these groups effectively coordinate efforts with each other in your community?

No Yes

- a. If no, how could they be more effective? Please explain.



3. Have any of these groups applied for a state, federal, or other grant?

No Yes

a. If yes, please specify which program(s):

4. Have any of them received a federal or other grant?

No Yes

a. If yes, please specify which program(s):

B. Do any of the following institutions or programs in your community or region buy food locally – that is, from local community farmers/ranchers, gardeners, food processors, or the tribal farm? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery stores | <input type="checkbox"/> Elder services/homes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience stores | <input type="checkbox"/> Hotels |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools | <input type="checkbox"/> Casinos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government food programs (please list which ones): | |

Other:

VI. Food and agriculture-related business enterprise

A. Approximately how many people (percentage) in your community earn their income from food and agriculture businesses (including grocers, farmers, implement dealers, etc.)?

Full time: _____ %

Part time: _____ %

B. How many farms and ranches operate in your community? _____

What number of these are owned/operated by:

Tribal members (or other Natives): _____

The tribe: _____

Non-Natives: _____

C. How many food and farm businesses (such as groceries, farmers' markets, roadside stands, restaurants, co-ops, implement dealers, and others) operate in your community?

1. What number of these are owned/operated by:

Tribal members (or other Natives): _____

The tribe: _____

Non-Natives: _____

D. Do local farmers and ranchers have easy access to production inputs, i.e., seeds, tractors, implements, fertilizers (manure, compost), fuel, etc.?

No Yes

1. What inputs do local producers import from outside your community?



E. Are there any local enterprises that are producing food in your community? If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

F. What happens to locally-produced food? Check all that apply.

- Given to community members
- Bartered within the community
- Sold to community members
- Sold to local businesses
- Sold off-reservation
- Other:

G. Do you have the ability and/or facilities to store food in your community?

- No
- Yes

H. Does anyone in your community have experience in:

- Marketing
- Traditional foods (growing and/or preparation)
- Gardening
- Organic farming
- Composting
- Holistic management

appendices

1. If yes, who are these people?

2. If these skills exist in your community, how are they being passed on to others?

I. What are the three primary food crops (based on volume and including livestock and fish) grown or harvested in your community?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

J. Do any growers in your community focus on traditional foods?

No Yes

1. If yes, please list what those are:

K. Do any growers in your community focus on specialty crops?

No Yes

1. If yes, please list what those are:

L. In your community, are there any food processing facilities or other ways for community farmers and ranchers to “add value” to their products? Examples include meat-processing plants and incubator kitchens where you can make jam or salsa.

No Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

2. If not, how far away are the nearest facilities? _____

M. What support is provided by tribal/government policies and/or services for local food producers in your community (check all that apply)?

- None
- Financial support (grants, loans, etc.)
- Technical assistance (agricultural planning, weed management, etc.)
- Donations of land, or the use of land
- Donations of water rights, or the use of water
- Purchasing or permit preferences
- Policies encouraging schools and/or other institutions buy local food if possible

- In-kind contributions, such as the use of tribal staff time, use of tribal equipment, seed, etc. (please describe)

- Codes or ordinances that favor community farmers/ranchers (please describe)

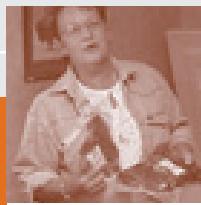
- Other (please describe)

N. What services are available in your community to help new businesses learn effective business practices (examples might be special loan rates, mentoring programs, etc.)?

O. Are there school programs that encourage potential food and agricultural entrepreneurs?

- No Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.



P. Do local schools or other institutions offer their facilities for economic uses, such as canning, farmers' markets, labeling, etc.?

No Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

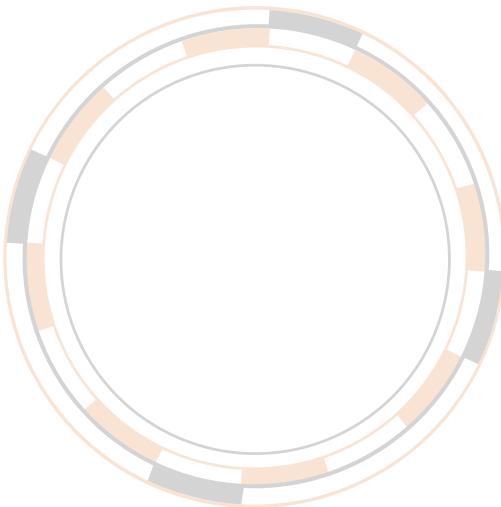
Q. Do you have a Cooperative Extension or Extension Indian Reservation Program (EIRP) office or agent in your community?

No Yes

1. If yes, have you ever used the services of Extension or EIRP?

No Yes

2. If yes, please describe the services received.



VII. Natural resources and environment

A. What is the geographic size of your community?

Square miles: _____ or

Total acreage: _____

B. How many total acres are under cultivation (i.e., producing crops or livestock)? _____

1. Who owns these acres?

The tribe _____ (number of acres)

Individual tribal members _____ (number of acres)

Non-Natives _____ (number of acres)

Federal, state, or local government _____ (number of acres)

2. How many acres owned by the tribe are leased to others? _____

3. How many acres owned by individual tribal members are leased to others? _____

C. Please list the top three crops produced on lands in your community. You can list them by number of acres (for example, 150 acres in alfalfa or cotton) or the amount produced (for example, 200 bushels of beans).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. What do farmers and ranchers in your community produce for themselves that might be mass-produced and marketed?

E. Are there good agricultural lands on your reservation that are being used for other things?

No Yes

1. If yes, what are those lands being used for:

2. What is preventing these lands from being used for agriculture? (For example, they're leased out, they're earmarked for commercial development, etc.)

F. Do farmers and ranchers in your community irrigate?

No Yes

1. If yes, what is their water source?

2. Who has the rights to this water?

G. Do farmers and ranchers in your community practice "sustainable" agriculture? That is, do they use best management practices for pest control, water conservation, buffers, etc.?

No Yes

1. If yes, please describe:



appendices

H. Does your tribe/community have a land use plan?

No Yes

1. If yes, is there a section that plans for agricultural activities and enterprises?

No Yes

a. If yes, please describe:

2. Is there a section that plans for the community's food supply?

No Yes

a. If yes, please describe:

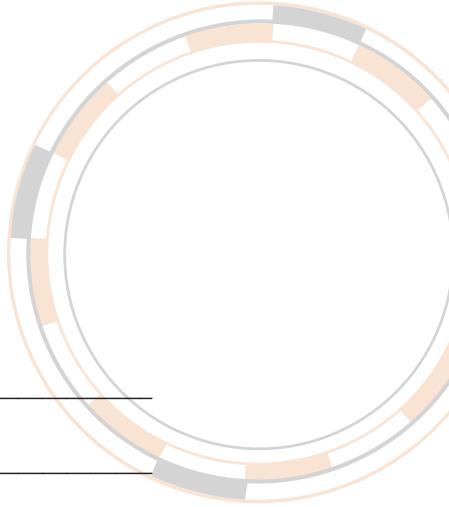
I. Do you have access to a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office or employee in your community?

No Yes

1. If yes, have you ever used the services of NRCS?

No Yes

a. If yes, please describe the assistance received:



- J. What do people in your community believe to be the three main barriers to full tribal/member control and use of agricultural lands in your community? Please describe them.

IX. Community demographics and employment

A. What is the approximate population of your community? _____

B. What is the average household income per year in your community? Please circle one line in the chart below.

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States & D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1.....	\$9,310.....	\$11,630.....	\$10,700....
2.....	\$12,490.....	\$15,610.....	\$14,360....
3.....	\$15,670.....	\$19,590.....	\$18,020....
4.....	\$18,850.....	\$23,570.....	\$21,680....
5.....	\$22,030.....	\$27,550.....	\$25,340....
6.....	\$25,210.....	\$31,530.....	\$29,000....
7.....	\$28,390.....	\$35,510.....	\$32,660....
8.....	\$31,570.....	\$39,490.....	\$36,320....
Each add'l person add	\$3,180	\$3,980	\$3,660

2004 HHS Poverty Guidelines

C. What is the unemployment rate in your community? _____ %

D. Please list the three largest employers in your community, including an estimate of the percentage of the community members who work there:

1. Employer: _____

Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

2. Employer: _____

Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

3. Employer: _____

Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

E. Approximately what percentage of people in your community move away to find work elsewhere? _____ %

F. Approximately what percentage of people in your community move away to go to school?
_____ %

G. Approximately what percentage of those living in your community:

Graduated from high school: _____ %

Attended some college: _____ %

Graduated from college: _____ %

Completed an advanced degree: _____ % (Master's, law school, Ph.D.)



Appendix F: Process – Developing and implementing your own local plans

(Ken Dahlberg and Tom Hemingway, 1995)

This section was developed by Ken Dahlberg, with the help of Thomas Hemingway, a graduate student at Western Michigan University at the time. The attached detailed outline gives an overview of how to develop an overall planning process. Obviously, it needs to be adapted to your local conditions, something that the above materials on doing a preliminary assessment of your local food system should help you with. Clearly, this is only one of a number of different ways to develop your own local plans and is meant to help you make sure that you have included most of the relevant factors and developed a planning strategy.

A. Phase I: The creation phase

In this phase a small group develops the background and strategy needed to create a new organization or to transform and broaden an existing organization.

1. *Develop an initial vision and set of goals based on a broad concept of local food systems.*
 - a. Identify and bring together a small core group to help identify resources, challenges, and opportunities.
 - b. Discuss your long-term goals and objectives.
 - c. Consider doing a vision exercise. (See Appendices A and B.)
2. *Do a preliminary assessment of your food system.* This involves the identification of resources, challenges, and opportunities by doing an initial inventory of resources related to your local food system. Briefly consider the following to identify the main issues, actors, challenges, and opportunities.
3. *Begin organizing.*
 - a. Identify key stakeholders – existing and potential. Establish which are politically and economically important now. Establish which are needed in the longer term to build a healthier system.



- b. Arrange a meeting of these key stakeholders to see if they are willing to participate in an effort to create a food policy organization.

B. Phase II: Implementing your organizing strategy

In this phase your larger group goes through the same process as above, but in greater depth and with more specific focus on policy needs and opportunities.

1. *For this larger group, develop an initial vision and set of goals based on a broad concept of local food systems.*
 - a. Discuss long-term goals and objectives.
 - b. Consider doing a vision exercise.
2. *Develop a deeper understanding of the resources, challenges, and opportunities of your particular food system by going beyond your preliminary inventory to a more in-depth assessment.* Again, consider the main issues, actors, challenges, and opportunities. In addition, have each participating group prepare a brief history of food policy issues of importance to them and then jointly discuss the longer-term policy needs of your community.
3. *Determine what type of organization or network you are going to be.*
 - a. Discuss your organizational strategy: what will work best for you? A network, a forum, a coalition, a clearing-house type organization, or an action organization or network?
4. *Build your organization/network.* This includes getting your organization formally established (by-laws, tax-exempt status, officers, etc.) and launching it – hopefully with lots of attendant publicity. During this process also start organizing for the longer-term as well, by planning how to:
 - a. Obtain funding and staff support.
 - b. Structure your committees and/or taskforces.
 - c. Structure an annual cycle—meetings, workloads, retreats, etc..
 - d. Develop procedures for running meetings that include both mechanics (location, minutes, etc.) and group dynamics.

- e. Develop a resource base - data, research, reports, a history of your efforts, etc.
 - f. Create and distribute publicity.
5. *Develop policy goals, policy targets, and specific policy campaigns.* This includes:
- a. Examining the interactions between long- medium- and short-term policy goals and objectives to come up with realistic policy targets by (1) assessing bureaucratic feasibility, and (2) assessing political feasibility.
 - b. Developing specific policy campaigns.
6. *Establish an ongoing set of procedures for operation and evaluation.* The above cycles of goal-setting, research and analysis, and policy action can be repeated as the organization and/or conditions change. It is important to build into your annual cycle a formal time to assess successes and failures in order to guide planning for the future. An annual report and retreat is useful here. Also, some sort of outside evaluation can be very helpful.

Appendix G: *Exercises*

exercise

Exercise 1: My Community

1. List the kinds of food that are available in your community?

2. Who decides what food are available in your community (at the grocery store, delivered by the commodities program, etc.)?

3. Who decides what you eat?

4. Who decides what is grown in your community?

5. Are there local gardens in your community?

6. Are there local produce producers? What do they produce?

7. Where is local food processed?

exercises

exercise

Exercise 2: Thinking About Food Sovereignty

1. What does the term food sovereignty mean to you personally, to your family, to your community?

2. Identify some elements of food sovereignty and local food-system control?

3. Is food sovereignty a term used in your community? Why or why not?

Exercise 3: Your Current Food System

1. Do you know what people in your community eat?

2. Are there differences in what different segments of your community populations eats (elders, single families, etc.)? What do you think they eat most?

3. Do you know where people in your community get their food?

exercises

4. Is the food supply in your community reliable? Is it subject to federal budgetary limitations?

5. What does nutritious mean to members in your community?

6. Is food nutritious? Is it safe?

7. Do people in your community pay a fair price for healthy foods?

8. Is the food provided by the government healthy, nutritious, and suited to the people in your community?

9. Are there people in your community interested in revitalizing traditional agricultural and food systems?

exercise

Exercise 4: Feeding People

1. How have historical or current governmental or other external feeding programs helped your community?

2. How have these same programs disrupted local foods and local food-system control?

3. Are there specific periods or points in history that began to disrupt or transform the local food system? What was it about this period or moment that impacted your community (positively or negatively)?

exercise

Exercise 5: Beginning a Food Assessment

1. What aspect of our food system do we want to assess?

2. How will we assess our food system? What are the tools and methods we will use?

3. Who should be involved in the assessment? Who are our partners? Who do we need to collect information from?

4. Who in the community is doing positive work in advancing local food-system control? What makes their work inspiring and transformative?

5. Are there people in your community interested in revitalizing traditional agriculture and food systems?

exercises

exercise

Exercise 6: Asset Control

1. Who controls the water in your community?

2. Are there land leases in your community? Who controls land leases in your community?

3. Who decides what to do with water in your community?

4. Who profits from land and water resources in your community?

5. Who decides what is grown or harvested in your community?

6. What percentage of agriculture and food businesses in your community are Native-owned and/or operated?

7. Take a map of your community and draw out ownership lines. Who owns what? Who controls what?

exercise

Exercise 7: Culture and Food

1. Does your community want to preserve its cultural food traditions?

2. Are there stories about food or agriculture in your community?

3. Do you know what agriculture food traditions are still practiced in your community?

4. Do you know why and how agriculture and food traditions have been lost in your community?

5. Who has knowledge of these traditions?

6. How will these traditions be passed on to other generations?

7. Is there someone in the community teaching courses on culture and food?

Exercise 8: Who Controls Our Traditional Foods?

1. Traditional Foods Inventory

- List as many traditional foods as you can think of. Which ones do we have access to?

- What traditional foods does or has your family gathered?

- What are some of the foods that we need to gain better access to? How can we make that happen?

2. Traditional Foods Teachings & Cultural Memories

- How do you think our ancestors learned from our traditional foods?

- How are Native food traditions upheld in our community?

- Share one traditional food-gathering memory. What was your lesson learned?

exercises

Exercise 8 Continued

- Are there origin stories for that food? If comfortable and appropriate, please share them. What are some of the key lessons from that food's creation story?

- How do our foods help shape the world we live in?

3. Traditional Foods in the Dominant Culture

- What are some ways we can protect our traditional foods?

- Who should have priority in accessing these foods?

- Whose responsibility is it to make sure we always have access to these foods and to protect them?

- How can we collaborate with non-Native communities in our efforts toward advocacy for traditional foods?

- What connections do we share between our traditional foods and environmental health?

Exercise 9: Understanding the Environment

1. What environmental changes have affected the local food system? How?

2. What resources are required (land, water, gasoline, distribution costs, etc.) to produce food for your community?

3. Do you know what impacts on the environment result from the shipment of your community's food?

4. Does environmental regulation exist in your community? Who determines what these regulations look like? Who enforces them?

exercise

Exercise 10: Food Distance and Your Food

1. Do you know where your community's food supply comes from? How does it get to your community?

2. Do you know how far your food travels to get to you?

3. Draw a diagram depicting where your community's food supply comes from. Using a map, can you determine how food gets to your community?

4. What other resources (and how much) are required to access food that you eat?

5. How would your community get food if a natural or other disaster (like a trucker strike) stopped shipments?

6. Think of the last few meals you have eaten? How much of those food items could have been produced locally?

Exercise 11: Food and Local Economies

1. Do you know the amount of money spent on food in your community?

2. How much money do you estimate is spent on food or food products produced in your community?

3. If all the cultivatable land in your community was utilized, how much do you think could be produced?

4. How much would you sell produced foods for? (multiply the amount you think could be produced times the price to get agricultural economic potential)

5. Do you know the economic value of what is produced in your community? Do you know who receives that value (through sale of products)?

Exercise 11 Continued

6. How many agricultural jobs exist in your community? What is the economic contribution of those jobs? Who holds those jobs?

7. How many jobs could be created for community members if they had more control over agricultural and food resources?

8. Do you know the difference in costs between starting up a food-related business versus other business types?

exercise

Exercise 12: Some Basic Steps and Questions Meant to Help Guide a Conversation Around Collaborative Purchasing in Your Tribal Community

1. **Find Your Stakeholders.** Identify all of the entities that serve food in your community. You might want to ask some of the following questions in order to find a baseline of data.

- Does the kitchen have restrictions by funding or grants?

- Are they required to meet certain nutrition standards?

- How many meals do they serve?

- Who is their target audience?

- What food vendors do they currently use?

- What vendors have they used in the past?

Exercise 12 Continued

- 2. Involve Stakeholders in the Process.** Hold interviews with each kitchen's staff and their administrators. Find out what their challenges are. Equally, ask them what their vision is for healthy and tasty menus in their kitchens. You may want to ask some basic questions like:

- Who is your food vendor?

- What are some things you like about your food vendor?

- What are some of the challenges to working with this vendor? Can you give a specific example of a time when you felt they did not meet your needs?

- What do you hope your customers experience when they consume the meals you prepare?

- What nutritional concerns do you have regarding your customers?

- Do you feel your food vendor understands these concerns? What are some ways they might be able to understand?

Exercise 12 Continued

- 3. Design Your Culminating Event.** Now that you have some baseline data to work with and some insights as to the unique challenges each kitchen faces, it is time to share these difficulties in a way that will present solutions. Some ways you may do that could be:

- Hold a community discussion that shares your findings. Ask the community how they feel this work should proceed. Involve your leadership in these discussions so that they can also be a part of the process and gain useful insights into concerns of the community regarding nutrition justice.

- Organize an event that helps all stakeholders see all of their potential options. In the Muckleshoot case study a symposium was held for the food distributors to share their business models and agenda with all cooks simultaneously.

- 4. Present Your Findings to Tribal Leadership, but Don't Come Empty-Handed.** Be prepared with solutions to these challenges. Ask for their input and guidance as well. In our case we looked at the food purchases from an entire year so that solid numbers on cost savings were presented to the council. This showed a clear impact to the bottom line of budgets and paralleled the opportunity to invest in tribal members as food producers.
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exercise

Exercise 13: The Health of Our Community

1. How do people in your community learn about how diet choices affect health?

2. Do you know the costs to your community in medical bills, lost time at work, and spiritual well-being for unhealthy community members?

3. Do you know or think people in your community are hungry?

4. Are there healthy eating classes or other nutrition and health education classes in your community?

5. Who in your community currently collects health data on your community? Who controls access to that data?

6. Who collects data on health? Is this data available to others?

exercise

Exercise 14: How Holistic is Our Current System?

1. Currently, how holistic or integrated is your community's approach to its local food system?

2. Historically, how holistic or integrated was your community's food system?

3. Who in the food industry works together to improve food, diet, health and the economy?

4. How can programs work better together and take a more integrated approach to local food-system control?

Exercise 15: Community Planning

1. Does community planning preserve agricultural lands as agricultural lands. That is, instead of changing them to commercial or other development land?

2. Does community planning preserve lands that contain wild food resources?

3. Is agriculture considered on an even basis with other options for community development, such as retail space and casinos?

4. What are the considerations in decision-making about how to use community resources?

5. In your community, is healthy, nutritious and/or traditional food considered a “right,” like clean air, water and an education?

6. Are the environmental impacts of agricultural production considered by decision-makers in your community?

exercise

Exercise 16: Food Policy

1. Does my community have a food policy?

2. How do current policies affect control of the local food system?

3. What policies can be developed to increase local food-system control?

4. How can this policy be passed?

exercise

Exercise 17: Thinking Locally

1. Think about different segments of your local population (single mothers, elders and/or children).

- Are certain segments more likely to suffer from hunger or food insecurity?

- Are there existing programs to assist these specific and more vulnerable populations?

- Do these programs provide sufficient help to these populations? Has anyone asked these different populations if current program assistance is sufficient?

2. Are health problems in your community caused, or exacerbated, by a lack of healthy, nutritious foods?

3. Do people in your community receive adequate food on a daily basis?

4. How many people in your community are chronically hungry?

exercise

Exercise 17 Continued

5. What are the agricultural or food models in your community? Describe them.

6. Have other models of agricultural development succeeded in your community? What made them successful?

7. Are their tribal policies that help support or may hinder local food-system control?

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