Go!

Conducting Your Community Food Sovereignty Assessment

Hosted by First Nations Development Institute

Introduction by Marsha Whiting

Presentation by Vicky Karhu and Susan Kelley
Announcements

• All attendees are on mute
• Questions:
  • Listen: Type in Question box and we will read
  • Q/A also at end of presentation
• Evaluation: survey will pop up when webinar ends and sent in an email. Please complete.
• Recording and attachments can be downloaded from www.firstnations.org/fnk next week.
Upcoming Webinar

• January 17, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m. MST
  “Moving Forward! Community-Based Policy and Action Plans”
Go!
Conducting Your Food Sovereignty Assessment
You’ve been talking about Food Sovereignty, designed an assessment appropriate for your community and are ready to actually conduct the assessment.

Now you are ready to work directly with your tribal/community members to explore your food system and food sovereignty. Your goal in working with your community/tribe is to gather honest information that will help you understand food issues, diet-related health problems, obstacles to food sovereignty, possible solutions to improve the situation, etc. You are reaching out to the people that you serve to help shape the best programs and/or policies to recover and promote your tribe’s/community’s food sovereignty!
By now your Food Sovereignty Team has been meeting regularly and everyone has a good idea what food sovereignty means to your tribe/community.

You have defined your community and designed appropriate survey techniques and questions to measure your community’s food sovereignty situation.

You’ve been talking with tribal/community members about food sovereignty and your upcoming assessment and have realized that many people are interested in exploring food sovereignty and sharing their ideas, concerns and hopes for the future.

After several months of planning, staff and community meetings you have:

- Chosen priority issues to address in the assessment.
- Designed questions to find out useful information from your tribe/community regarding these priority issues.
- Chosen assessment tools that are most appropriate for your tribe/community and trained staff/volunteers in interview and group discussion techniques.
- Held a “practice session” with a group that will not be part of the final assessment.
- Chosen the most appropriate approach for conducting the assessment.
- Publicized the assessment activities.
Now you are ready to go into your community/tribe to explore food sovereignty!

Now is when you apply the concept of “Backward Planning Takes Thinking Ahead” as discussed in the December 5th webinar. The basic steps to this are:

1. Identify desired results
2. Determine acceptable evidence
3. Plan learning experiences (projects, programs, policies, etc)

*Through community/tribe outreach activities, your Team has identified some food sovereignty issues and obstacles...*

Obstacles to food sovereignty - These can come in many forms, but the common denominator is anything that is preventing your community from having control of what foods are available, how the foods are produced and processed and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.

*Today, we will use this obstacle as an example…*

Loss of farming, hunting, fishing, gathering and other traditional food knowledge and skills. - Do you find that your community/tribe is dependent on the dominant society for food production and your food production and procurement skills are fast disappearing?
Loss of farming, hunting, fishing, gathering and other traditional food knowledge and skills.

Your team has designed and agreed upon several questions that will be helpful in gathering information about this obstacle/issue.

Questions may be something like:
- Do any of your family members hunt for food?
- Does your family grow a garden?
- Would your family grow a garden if someone tilled it for you?
- Do you know where to get seeds for traditional food crops?
- Would you like to learn how to save seeds?
- Do you know how to identify wild foods?
- Would you gather wild foods if you knew how to identify them?
- Do you know how to safely store garden and wild foods?
- Are you concerned about loss of traditional food knowledge?
- What could your tribal/local government do to make it easier for you to maintain traditional food access? (open-ended question)
- What traditional food-related skill would you like to learn? (open-ended question)
- What food skills would you be interested in learning more about? (provide a list and ask them to circle their choices)
You have your questions addressing priority issues ready. You have formatted them in a culturally appropriate way using assessment tools (surveys, guided discussions, dot surveys, etc.) that are easily understood and can be completed in a reasonable amount of time. You are ready to go into the community/tribe and conduct the actual assessment!

Purpose and Use of Assessment Information: In a group setting or individual interviews, you can discuss why you are gathering this information, how you plan to use it, where and how it will be stored and how you plan to provide feedback to the people who provide the information. If you are taking written or dot surveys at an event or public location and do not have the opportunity to discuss the purposes, create an information sheet or card describing the assessment purpose and planned use.

Confidentiality: It is generally better to ask people to NOT provide their names. This helps insure honesty in the responses and sets them at ease if they have a little “test anxiety.”

Written Survey Sensitivities: Be aware that some people may have reading/writing challenges or language barriers that affect their ability to complete written surveys and be ready with courteous ways to work with them.

In all settings, stress that there are no right and wrong answers and that you really need for people to be honest so that your organization/tribe can have reliable information to work with in program/policy planning and design.
This exercise can be used with any sized group and any age group as an introduction to the concept of food sovereignty. It can be done in as little as five minutes or can prompt hours of discussion. It’s up to you and your groups as to how you use it.

Ask your group to close their eyes and visualize the last meal of that they ate, clearly seeing all of the foods on the plate.

While they are visualizing ask this question, “Do you know where any of the food came from?” At this point you can either let them answer themselves silently or begin a discussion.

Next ask, “Was any of the food produced in your tribe/community?” Again, silent answers or discussion.

Now ask, “Could any of the food have been produced in your tribe/community?” This is where the concepts of food sovereignty will begin to become personal and real. The answers should be shared and discussed out loud.
Some Ways to Use the Information You Have Collected

Let’s use this set of questions as an example:

- Do you know where to get seeds for traditional food crops?
- Would you like to learn how to save seeds?

These are simple yes/no questions. You can easily compile the data into percentages.

Program Planning: If only 20% of people say they know where to get seeds for traditional crops, this reveals a need for seeds. This may lead to garden projects to grow traditional crops for seeds as well as consumption.

If 65% say they want to learn to save seeds, this provides you with a future program plan. You know that a seed saving class will be well-attended, if you are successful in letting the people you surveyed know that you are now providing this class/service to your community/tribe.

Grant Writing: Use the above percentages to justify the need for your proposed “Traditional Foods Growing and Seed Saving” project. State in your proposal that you conducted a food sovereignty assessment, when you did it and who, in general terms, you surveyed.

Policy Development: Use the same percentages to present ideas for legislative action to your local/tribal government to request policies and financial assistance to facilitate production of traditional foods and preservation of these essential seeds for future generations.
Using Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Let’s consider this question:
• What could your tribal/local government do to make it easier for you to maintain traditional food access?

While it may seem simple, this is a rather complex question. It requires that the respondents do some deep thinking to come up with ideas. Perhaps this topic has been a recurring theme in your initial community/tribal research while designing the assessment and now this question gives respondents an opportunity to give voice to their ideas. Be prepared to get many different answers to this type of question and for some of the respondents to leave this question blank.

Refer to “Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Data” in the December 5th webinar.

Program Planning: If there is strong response to this and other policy-related questions with many ideas generated, you should consider adding policy work to your programs, maybe even adding a staff position for policy development.

Grant Writing: Again, if the response is strong, add policy development with accompanying staff to as many grant proposals as possible. Search for policy funders. This is a good way to fund staff time (for the staff person(s) interested in policy) since there will be research, follow-up surveying and communications with your government officials involved and all these are time-consuming activities.

Policy Development: In addition to using the data to justify needs in policy grants, you can use these specific responses as conversation starters with elected officials, as suggestions for political platforms, to initiate discussions of forming a tribal/local food policy council and as evidence of a need for tribal/local government funding to support food sovereignty policy work.
Using Yes/No Responses

These are probably the easiest responses to analyze. You simply count the number of yes or no and figure out what percentage that is of the total number of responses received for that question.

Once you have calculated the percentages, results can be presented in many ways including charts and graphs.
Using Preference Lists

Your Food Team has created a list of something...example: future activities that your Food Team thinks may be well received or needed in your tribe/community.

Again, these results can be represented in bar or pie graphs, both types easily generated in excel.

Program Planning: Obviously, the responses to this list provide you with a clear picture of what your tribal/community members are interested in seeing your organization/tribal program doing for them. When you plan programs according to their wishes, participation will be positive and active.

Grant Writing: Provides proof of community/tribal members' involvement in program planning and interest in topics.

Policy Development: Show elected officials what their constituents are interested in and the directions that they would like to see the community/tribe take in addressing food sovereignty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native foods cookbooks</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditional cooking classes</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmer's Market</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetable growing classes</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly traditional meals</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community garden</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruit tree donations</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food preservation classes</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild food edibles classes</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden tilling services</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low cost/free seed</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food history and culture classes</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic gardening classes</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth and elder garden project</td>
<td>32%</td>
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Publicizing Your Food Sovereignty Assessment

Use all publicity channels and venues that are available to you!

Create a Publicity Checklist that has all public information avenues listed.

Each time you visit a community or attend an event to conduct assessments, go down the list and use all avenues available.

- Muscogee Nation News Schedule for that month. Deadline 15th of proceeding month
- Muscogee Nation radio program. Schedule for week of event
- Muscogee Nation TV Schedule for week of event.
- Local radio PSA
- Local newspaper
- Local TV (if applicable)
- File flier at local Creek Indian Community Center
- File flier at local public library
- File flier at local Agriculture Extension Service Office
- File flier at Elderly Nutrition Feeding location
- File flier at local non-Indian community center
- File flier at local non-Indian Sr. Citizen center
- File flier to local grocery store if possible
- Phone call to local community center to copy and distribute fliers in community.
- Phone call to local Indian community center to copy and distribute fliers in community.
That’s all for today!

Now your Food Team is ready to...

• Finalize your assessment plan and set dates for information gathering events.
• Publicize your assessment.
• Go out into your tribe/communities and engage with the people.
• You have trained staff or volunteers in interview and group discussion techniques.
• You are ready to explain the purpose(s) of your food sovereignty assessment and how you plan to use the results.
• You are prepared to provide feedback to the people who participate in your food sovereignty assessment.
• You have planned for safe, local storage of the results and have reassured everyone that all survey answers will be kept confidential and will be used within your tribal/community setting to improve the food sovereignty situation according to the concerns, suggestions, program ideas and other information generated by the assessment.

THANK YOU!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have as you continue your work.

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Questions?
Thank You!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have as you continue your work.

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Or

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Upcoming Webinar

• January 17, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m. MST
  “Moving Forward! Community-Based Policy and Action Plans”
Go! Conducting Your Community Food Sovereignty Assessment

T H A N K  Y O U  J O I N I N G  O U R  W E B I N A R  T O D A Y!
Recording and attachments can be downloaded from www.firstnations.org/fnk next week.

Any questions, please feel free to contact Marsha Whiting at (303)774-7836 or via email: mwhiting@firstnations.org