



FIRST NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

EDUCATING • ADVOCATING • CAPITALIZING



Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

2nd Edition

Exercises 1–17 Only



**Native Agriculture &
Food Systems Initiative**

35th
ANNIVERSARY
1980-2015

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?

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

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?

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 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?

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 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?

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 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 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.

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 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 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 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 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 there tribal policies that help support or may hinder local food-system control?
