CHAPTER 4:
Choosing Tools and Taking Action

Purpose: This "Choosing Tools & Taking Action" chapter is designed to help you identify the actions you want to undertake to improve the key issues facing your community.

Activities:
4. Learn how to create an **Action Plan** to develop actions to address your **Key Issues.**
5. Look to the **Sample Action Plan** for sample barriers and suggested actions to improve them.
6. Use the **Action Plan Tool** to list your community's **Key Issues** and identify the considerations, actions, resources, etc. that could improve the situation. Prioritize these based on the seriousness of the issue and ability to impact it.

4.0 Introduction

TOOLKIT STAGE

Learning about
Community Food Security

Gathering Information

Analyzing your
Community

**Choosing Tools & Taking
Action**

With a better understanding of the food resources and barriers in your community that you developed over the last three chapters, the next step is to clearly define your goals for working towards food security in your community. Your goals should be based on the barriers and issues you have identified in the previous chapter. It is important that these goals can be realistically achieved.

As you may come up with differing goals during this process, you may wish to focus on one or more of these goals depending on your community situation and interests. The following provides examples of different priorities for improvement you may wish to seek in your community; you can use these examples to help categorize and define your specific goals. For more information on goal setting, please refer to Chapter 5 (pg. 71). The following are some brief example goal statements that you may come up with during this step of your food assessment:

○ Improving food security

○ Increasing food access

○ Improving affordability of purchasing & accessing food

○ Promoting healthier diets

○ Increasing food awareness & food skills

○ Supporting local economies & local food

○ Supporting environmental sustainability

○ Networking and community capacity building

○ Increasing food variety (culturally and diet specific)

4.1 Creating an Action Plan

One useful way to begin to tackling barriers is to create an **Action Plan**. Action plans can be as simple as listing barriers, possible solutions, and outcomes, or they can go into greater depth by also including important considerations that must be made, as well as resources that could be drawn on to help with the specific actions or outcomes. At the end of this chapter is a blank **Action Plan** that you can personalize as needed. When creating your **Action Plan,** it may be useful to draw on the resources provided in the 'Toolkit Resources' section.

The **Sample Action Plan** provides examples of some common issues that prevent the community from meeting the Six A's of food security, and potential actions to address these issues. This sample worksheet is included to help build ideas and provide guidance for creating your own **Action Plan** to address the issues in your community identified in the **Strengths & Weaknesses Worksheet**. The following box is an example barrier scenario that demonstrates the workflow as you go through your action plan. The example provides a potential approach to an issue, considerations that should be made when taking this approach, champions and resources that could be drawn on, and the desired outcome of this process.

Using the Action Plan – An Example Scenario

1. Issue or Barrier: Community members with limited mobility are unable to access food.

2. Ideas for Action: Meal and grocery delivery programs are an important part of a strong food system to improve access.

3. Possible Approach: Set up a new meal and grocery delivery programs, or expand the range of already established programs

4. Considerations: These programs can be expensive to set up, and difficult to manage over large service areas

5. Champions or Resources: Consider engaging with third-party services to see what could be set up in your community.

Action Plan Worksheet

Purpose: **This worksheet is designed to help you create your action plan.**

Use the Action Plan worksheet to pull together the food security issues identified through your assessment and to generate ideas and actions to address them. Discuss the issues as a group and consult with others to select those that you feel are the most urgent, timely, and manageable for you to consider. Then brainstorm on possible initiatives before selecting one or two preferred actions best suited to the current situation and your capacity. Identify possible challenges and champions for your preferred actions. **Chapter 5** contains many resources to help you generate and research your ideas.

When creating your **Action Plan** it will be helpful to follow the steps below:

1. List all **Key Issues** that have been identified as you have worked through this toolkit.
2. Consider these **Key Issues** and choose those that your group and community partners feel are the most significant and that have the greatest potential to take action on. Be honest about the magnitude of possible challenges and available resources. When discussing priorities, keep in mind what is happening in your community that may increase the urgency and opportunities for action, such as the start of a planning review, municipal election, proposed facility, new business, etc.
3. Use your **Action Plan** as a starting point to develop detailed work plans for your highest ranked **Issues** and preferred actions.
4. Create a food action team or group to carry the food assessment forward and implement your **Action Plan**. This group will work out details like leaders and partners, timeframe and process, resource requirements, etc.

Planning Considerations

When tackling your key issues, remember that how your community is structured can impact the ability to access food. Some of the following planning actions may improve access to food in your community. Discuss the following with your planner, consider other ideas from the resources in Chapter 5 and research other food planning policies & initiatives:

1. Identify accessible and suitable sites in your community for food retail (farm markets/stands, grocery, etc.), agriculture, processing facilities and distribution centres and zone accordingly.
2. Develop plans that recognize community gardens, urban agriculture, farm stands and markets as desirable uses and ensure that there is space, infrastructure and access to support these uses.

3. Consider supports for larger scale food production and processing in rural communities and supports for smaller scale food enterprises in urban communities.
4. Plan for mixed-use neighbourhoods that include and encourage small and mid-scale food outlets, seasonal markets and open space for gardens and urban agriculture.
5. Design infrastructure (particularly active transportation and transit) to support safe and convenient access to food sources and services.
6. Maximize publically owned lands and buildings to support urban agriculture, food production and food skills/awareness.
7. Integrate local agriculture such as community gardens, urban agriculture and small farms into existing settlements and new areas of development.
8. Include zoning that promotes facilities such as community kitchens and spaces such as community gardens which support food entrepreneurship and awareness.
9. Update home based business provisions to enable small scale food enterprises.

EXAMPLE ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET

Rank of Importance	Issue	Six A's	Ideas & Possible Actions	Preferred Action(s)	Considerations & Challenged	Champions & Resources	Desired Outcomes
Rank of Issues based on critical need, interest and manageability	*Key Issues identified from the Analysis Worksheet*	*Six A(s) at the core of the issue*	*Possible approaches and tools that might improve the situation*	*Favoured option to improve the issue (could also look at other options in this section)*	*Important considerations that may present challenges to taking action on this issue*	*Resources that you can draw on to support the preferred action such as community organizations, Halifax Food Policy Alliance and others*	*Describe the goals and outcomes that you wish to achieve by addressing this issue in your community*
	Food outlets are not present, or are too far	*Accessibility*	1. *Develop a food delivery service;* 2. *Improve public transportation;* 3. *Reduce barriers and create opportunities for new outlets (Zoning)*	*Develop a food delivery service*	· Model- for profit vs not-for profit? · Cost of delivery and potential for subsidization · Form of delivery and services offered i.e. mobile markets vs meal delivery vs food box · Catchment area	*Not-for-profit organizations, Local food retailers, transit authority, etc.*	*Increased access to food in underserved areas and for immobile populations*
	Not enough fresh food in outlets	*Adequacy* *Appropriate*	1.*Increase access to local produce;* 2. *Highlight healthier outlets in food map* 3.*Campaign for healthier options in existing outlets*	*Increase access to local by establishing a farmer's market(s)*	· Availability and diversity of local food · Seasonality of produce · Cost · Central location and zoning regulations · Sufficient resources such as staff, tables, etc.	*Local Farmers/ Food producers, existing farmer's markets (satellite option?)*	*Increased variety of fresh foods, supported local economy, increased food infrastructure*
	Food is too expensive	*Affordability*	1. *Increase access to local food- like buying direct from producer* 2. *Explore charitable food options* 3. *Develop bulk purchasing group* 4. *Offer budgeting and meal planning training*	*Develop a community kitchen and food sharing program*	· Very costly plus time and labour intensive · Partnering with existing kitchens and/or community centres · Partner with other charitable organizations · Test idea with a smaller scale pilot	*Local community garden; local food retailers; The SPOT and other community kitchens (Dartmouth North).*	*Increased access to healthy food; Increased food knowledge and awareness; potential for building social cohesion.*
	High food insecurity and rates of youth obesity	*Accessibility* *Availability*	1. *Develop food awareness class or campaign* 2. *Set up school meal program* 3. *Create a school community garden*	*Liaison between schools and community food resources to establish a school meal program.*	· Interest and openness of the school · Cost of programs and potential for subsidization · School facilities and equipment · Staffing for program · Source and type of food- hot meal, local produce, etc. · Differing food requirements and tastes · Insurance, risk and liability	*Local Community Garden, Parent Teacher Association, School Board, Philanthropic organization*	*Increased access to healthy food*
	Ethnic/ traditional Food Not available	*Appropriate*	1. *Establish Food Map* 2. *Campaign local businesses* 3. *Develop a Food Coop*	*Campaign local businesses to expand food selection*	· Diversity of your community and demand for food · Business case for addition of specialty foods · Labour and cost involved in developing campaign	*Community Groups; Local restaurants and food purchasers;*	*Increased ethnic/ traditional food available in stores; Increased store variety*
	Lack of local food in outlets	*Availability*	1. *Establish farmer's market or food coop* 2. *Create opportunities for urban agriculture such as rooftop gardens, beekeeping, small scale farms* 3. *Create a community garden*	*Create a community garden*	· Committee to establish garden and stewards to keep it going · Access to land · Costs · Zoning if want to sell produce and other commercial activities · Allotments vs communal vs combo of these	*Not-for-profit organizations*	*Increased access to seasonal local food; increased knowledge and understanding of food; social connections and community meeting place.*
	Lack of cooking skills	*Awareness*	1. *Develop a cooking club* 2. *Offer cooking classes*	*Set up food learning programs and host cooking events*	· Location and accessibility · Cost and staffing of programs · Source of food and specialty equipment	*Local businesses/chefs; community college; senior's residences*	*Improve food skills and comfort with healthier food options; Improve health and social cohesion*

Action Plan

Rank of Importance	Issue	Six A's	Ideas & Possible Actions	Preferred Action(s)	Considerations & Challenges	Champions & Resources	Desired Outcomes