CHAPTER 2:
GATHERING INFORMATION

Purpose: This "Gathering Information" provides tools to collect information with community members and food service providers about how your community accesses food.

Activities:

4. Learn about mapping methods and techniques for food mapping
5. Use the **Mapping Tools** to inventory food services and travels to food
6. Collect information about the **Six A's** in your community using the **Questionnaires**

2.0 Introduction

An important step in planning for community food security is to perform a Community Food Assessment, where you gather information about the state of food in your community[8]. In Chapter 1, you and your community members started a conversation about food and food security in your community. Food security means different things to different people, but it often includes **Six A's**: Accessibility, Affordability, Availability, Adequacy, Awareness and Appropriateness (for more information on the Six A's see Chapter 1).

Thinking about a community's food security using the **Six A's** can help you discover what kind of food security issues your community might be facing and what types of solutions are most suitable. This chapter offers two types of tools to collect information about possible food security issues in your community through the lens of the Six A's:

1. Community Food Mapping
2. Questionnaires

Set 1: For community members
1. Community Food mapping 2.1A: Where are the food outlets?
2. Community Food mapping 2.1B: How far do we travel for food?
3. Questionnaire 1: Six A's of food security in your community

Set 2: For commercial and not-for-profit food services
4. Community Food mapping 2.2: Your service in the community (both commercial and not-for-profit services)
5. Questionnaire 2.2A: Your service as food assets in the community (commercial)
6. Questionnaire 2.2B: Your service as food assets in the community (not-for-profit)

2.1 Community Food Mapping

2.1.1 The Purpose of Community Food Mapping

Community food mapping is a technique that is used to identify the locations of food assets in your community[45]. Mapping is often used during the planning process because it is a visual, intuitive, and fun way of locating these assets in your community. It becomes even richer with robust community participation and engagement.

Community food mapping can take the form of an actual (geographic) map, a flow chart or diagram, or simply a list of food related services and programs. There are also a variety of ways that a food map can be created. For example, participants can sit around a large sheet of paper or a printed map and physically draw in the location of food outlets; or participants can provide their inputs on an online map. Examples of these food maps can be found for many communities around Canada, produced by municipalities, provincial governments, non-profit organizations, and communities[46,47,48]. Please refer to the Food Mapping section of Chapter 5 for examples of different food mapping approaches.

Community food maps can be used to find local food outlets and can also be vital advertising tools for outlets such as restaurants, grocers, community meal programs, and food banks. Food maps also work as informational tools for planners and community leaders to help identify locations in the community that exist as *food deserts* (areas facing food access related barriers[49,50,51]) or *food swamps* (areas dominated high-fat, high-calorie foods[52]) and consider issues they can address through community design and other programs to improve the food environment[53].

> **Tip: When mapping your community's food experience, keep in mind the Six A's of Food Security:**
>
> *Accessibility*
>
> *Affordability*
>
> *Availability*
>
> *Adequacy*
>
> *Appropriateness*
>
> *Awareness*
>
> Members in a community may face different food barriers, identifying these challenges is the first step in finding a solution.

2.1.2 Steps of Community Food Mapping

This section describes the basic steps involved in the **Community Food Mapping Tools 1A, 1B and 2A**. These tools are intended for a workshop type of venue using a physical map. The steps largely follow the method suggested by Wates (2000) *The Community Planning Handbook: How People Can Shape Their Cities, Towns & Villages in Any Part of the World*. These mapping tools can be used as is, or can be modified to suit your needs.

A number of different platforms are available for the creation and sharing of food maps. For example, if you decide to utilize an online medium, there are free online options that allow community members to directly pin food service locations on a map, or there is the option of taking already created maps and providing the details online. Halifax is also developing an interactive food map (Contact HRM Planning for more info at www.halifax.ca). Physical food map resources should also be considered as they may appeal to offline community members (those without internet access), and those who prefer a physical medium.

For more information on different approaches to food mapping and examples from other communities, please see **Chapter 5**.

Left - Example Community Food Map (Food Toolkit Workshop) / Right - example food map (Food Matters Manitoba)

Step 1: Determine the specific purpose

The first step is choosing what it is about food that you wish to map. Many different things can be present on a map—e.g., locations of food outlets and services, routes to travel to get food, rating and price range of services, hours of operation, barriers to get to food along the route like traffic, construction, and unsafe areas. For the community food assessment process, the tools

ask participants to map the locations of outlets and services they know about, those that they utilize or they provide, where they live (starting point of travel to food), and the types of food and hours of operation. The questions you ask are dependent on whether the participants are consumers, food outlets, or service providers.

Step 2: Invite participants

Invite 1. community members, or 2. commercial and not-for-profit food service providers who would like to share their knowledge. The number of participants for the activity may vary, depending on the geographical area, the levels of knowledge of the participants, and the information you would like to collect.

If you simply wish to know where various food outlets and services are, you may choose to set up a map table (or hang the map on the wall) at a public space with good people-traffic and then ask those passing by to identify the location of the outlets and services. If you intend to ask the participants for more information than just the location of a food outlet or service, you may find a workshop or forum to be more beneficial, where you are able to ask the participants to work through the maps and discuss the results afterwards. A typical number of people working on a paper map are 5 to 10 people, depending on the size of the map. You may like to conduct a workshop with one sheet map or multiple sheets of maps at a time to accommodate more participants.

Information can also be collected directly from food outlets and services themselves. As it is unlikely that they would participate in the food mapping exercise, you may wish approach the food outlets directly with surveys, or contact them via phone/email to gather their information. Information gathered in the mapping exercise can help you identify food services and outlets in your community that you may wish to approach.

Be aware that a workshop that employs mapping with discussion can take 1 to 2 hours. For service providers, ask them to indicate the other types of information you wish to collect (e.g., type of foods, work hours) for each of their services.

Step 3: Prepare a base map and secure a venue with large enough tables to work on the map

Ensure that you print out a large enough map so that a group of participants can work together. The venue you choose should have an ample space with tables that allow you to set up and work on the maps.

Step 4: Create a map or maps

Explain the purpose of the mapping exercise that you wish to conduct. Provide stickers, markers, pencils and other necessary stationery to complete the tasks. Then ask the participants to identify the location of the food outlets and services that they are familiar with.

Step 5: Discuss the results of the map or maps

The mapping work may be accompanied by presentations from the participants, especially if you have multiple groups with multiple sheets of maps. The multiple sheets of maps may be different sections of a larger geographic area, or the same area that can be compared between groups. Participants can discuss, for instance, their general observations on the resulting maps, whether they are surprised by the results, whether they learned something new, or they can check if the information participants added in the maps are current and accurate, or need updating.

Step 6: Record the results to be used for analysis (see Chapter 3. Analyzing Food Security in your Community)

The facilitator should record the discussion to collect the information on the maps created in the process. You should take pictures of the maps so that you have electronic records as well as paper copies. Optionally, the discussion may be recorded and transcribed for further analysis, or a note taker may take record of what opinions, questions, and suggestions came up in the discussion.

Considerations for First Nations Communities

When looking at the food landscape for First Nations communities it is important to consider the traditional relationship these communities have with food. This includes the process of obtaining food using traditional means (Fishing, hunting, etc.) as well as traditional food preparation and consumption needs.

Step 7: Hand out the result summary to participants

It is good practice to 'give back' to the participants by, for example, providing a summary of the results of the mapping workshop. This could take the form of a synthesis of the discussion that took place, the digital image of the maps, or both. The participants may also be interested in the results of the analysis and action plan (Chapters 3 and 4 in this toolkit) following this exercise. Ask if the participants are interested in participating in the further activities, and if they are interested in receiving a report involving this mapping work, the analysis, and creation of action plans
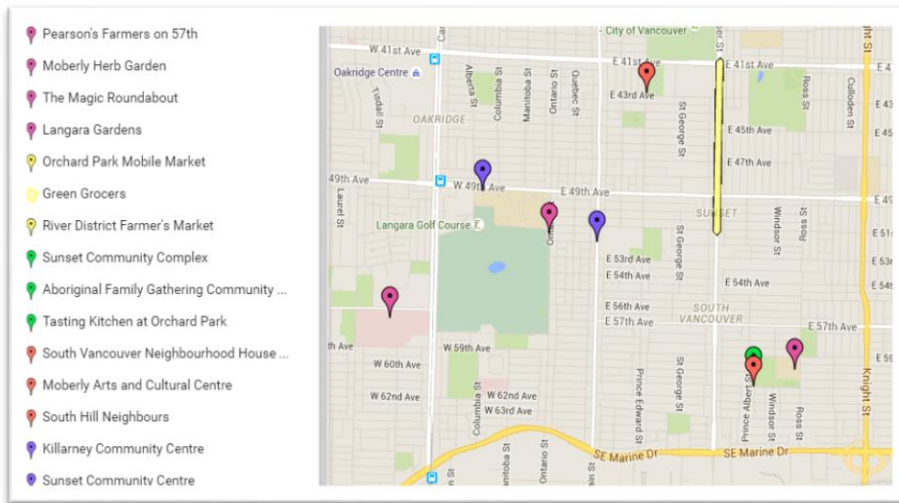
2.2 Sample Food Maps

The following image is an example of a community food mapping pilot exercise carried out for Halifax. The image demonstrates one community mapping method, where a base map was printed and a community area pre-defined then participants mapped out the location of food resources in and around that community. Food maps can be a powerful method for both identifying the location of food resources, but also assessing the food awareness in that subgroup.

Example Community Food Map (From Food Toolkit Workshop)

There are many ways you can take the information you have gathered and turn it into a food map product, from creating physical map brochures, to Google Map based platforms, to professionally made digital maps. The goal should be to choose a map medium that best suits your community's needs and the resources you have to undertake the mapping project.

The South Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network Map is an online food map for southern Vancouver that uses tagging in Google Maps to map food resources. Google Map tagging is useful as it has minimal or no cost, is relatively easy to perform, and is easy to present online in a familiar fashion. The limit of these types of maps is that it is limited to community members that have access to computers, and does not provide a physical medium such as an actual map.

South Vancouver Online Food Map

(www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1ZsJWRGwui1PvegbnIsSXQtCMOo4&hl=en)

University of Wisconsin-Madison Online Food Map is another example of an online map resource. This map differs from the Google based map options as it is created in a mapping software program, which allows more customization of visual and what data is presented. This method is more time consuming and requires specialists, but can produce great online resources. Below is an example taken from the map.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Online Food Map

(http://sustainability.wisc.edu/campusfoodmap)

29
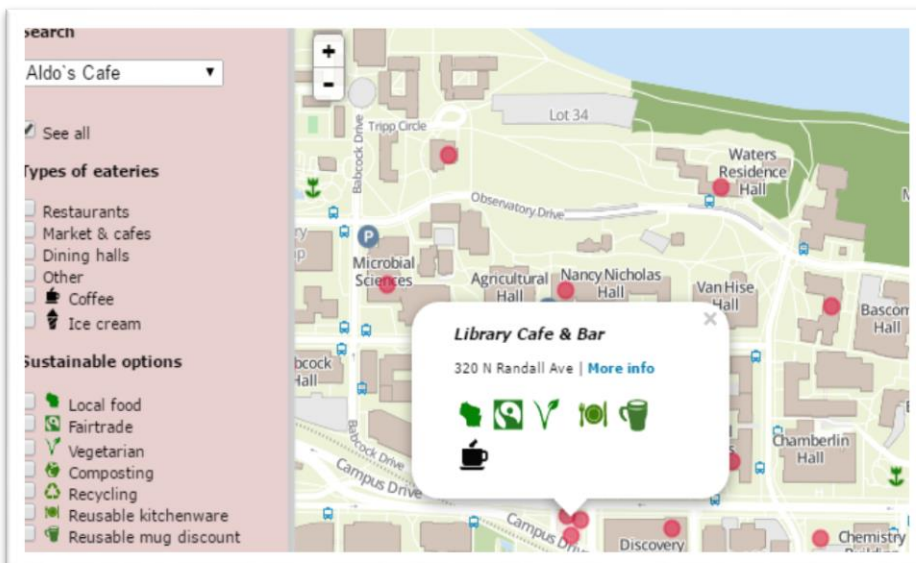
Food Mapping Tool 1A
Where are the food outlets?
(for community members)

Purpose: To map the location of food outlets and services within the participants' community.

Note: You can use Food Mapping Tool 1A and 1B together in one workshop.

Steps to Follow

○ Follow the food mapping steps described in this chapter (Chapter 2, pages 25-27)
○ Ask the participants to place a sticker (alternatively a mark in a coloured marker) on all the food outlets and services they know of or use.
○ Have each individual or group describe the stores and/or discuss what they found through the process of mapping together.

The resulting map will show the number of food outlets and services in the community and will demonstrate the knowledge community members have of these services. The information you get from this mapping exercise will mainly support the analysis of Accessibility and Availability of food security.

The following are example organizations and services typically included in food mapping:

Food Retail
• Restaurants •
• Grocery and convenience stores •
• Farmers Markets •
• Other food shops •

Food Programs & Services
• Meal at school programs •
• Food/grocery Delivery Services •
(also consider mapping their routes)
• Food education programs •

Emergency Food Programs
• Food Banks •
• Community Kitchens •
• Food Sharing Programs •

Alternative Food Programs
• Community Gardens •
• Urban/Rooftop agriculture •

Food Mapping Tool 1B
How far do we travel for food?
(community members)

Purpose: To map the food outlets and services participants use in relation to their residences as a starting point of travel to food.

Note: You can use Food Mapping Tool 1A and 1B together in one workshop.

Steps to Follow

○ Follow the food mapping steps described in this chapter (Chapter 2, pages 25-27)
○ Ask the participants to put a sticker (alternatively circle in a colour marker) on food outlets they usually go to, as well as their home as a starting point of their travel to the food outlets.
○ You may also ask the participants to trace the travel route to the food outlets, and measure the distance.
○ Have participants add details of other destinations and travel routes they use to access food such as routes to work, where they go for lunch, evening activities, etc.
○ Have each individual or group present and discuss their findings.

The resulting map will show the distances community members travel to food, and how much they rely on food outside their own community.   The information you get from this mapping exercise will mainly help the analysis of Accessibility and Availability of food security.

Questionnaire 1 (Template)*
Six A's of food security in your community
Community Members Questionnaire

Purpose: To gather information to assess the level of food security in your community. It will ask a series of questions related to **Six A's** of food security—accessibility, availability, affordability, adequacy, awareness and appropriateness.

Name: _____

Phone number or e-mail (optional): _____

1. What type of food outlets or services do you often use? Please choose all that apply:

☐ Supermarket (e.g., Save Easy, Sobeys, No Frills, Superstore)
☐ Farmer's market
☐ Convenience/Corner store
☐ Take-outs from fast food restaurants (e.g., McDonald's, KFC, Tim Horton's)
☐ Take-outs from regular sit-in restaurants
☐ Not-for-profit food services (e.g., Feed Nova Scotia, North End Dartmouth Food Centre, Halifax West Ecumenical Food Bank)
☐ Other (please specify) _____

2. What mode of transportation do you use to access food? Please rank 1 to 5, with 1 representing the mode of transportation you use the most often.

___ Walk   ___Bike   ___Transit   ___Drive   ___Other (*Please describe*): _____

3. How long does it usually take from home to the food outlet you use the most?

_____Minutes   _____ mode of transportation

4. In general, how affordable are foods in your community (excluding high end restaurants)?
☐ Very affordable
☐ Mostly affordable
☐ There are affordable foods and not very affordable foods in my community
☐ Often not affordable
☐ Very difficult to find foods at a reasonable price

Please name the food outlets in your community that are most affordable:

_____

5. Do you personally face problems obtaining enough food?

☐ Yes, often
☐ Yes, occasionally
☐ Rarely
☐ Never

6. In your opinion, is there a food security issue in your community?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ I do not know.

7. Do you regularly travel outside your community to get food? If yes, why do you do this? Choose all that apply.

☐ No. I usually get food within my community
☐ Yes. Food I eat is not available in my area
☐ Yes. Food is cheaper in another area
☐ Yes. Food options are better in other areas
☐ Yes. I get food on my way home from work, school, etc.
☐ Yes. Other reason (specify):_____

8. Please provide the name of not-for-profit food programs/services in or near your community?

☐ Meal delivery programs/services: _____
☐ Grocery delivery program/services: _____
☐ School/Work meal programs/services: _____
☐ Emergency food programs/services: _____
☐ Cooking classes/Food education:_____
☐ Any other? (please describe):_____

9. Do you have any special food requirements relating to health issues, choices or cultural practices?

☐ Diabetic/Low sugar
☐ Low Sodium
☐ Low Fat
☐ Allergy
(list):_____
☐ Food (list):_____

☐ Traditional
☐ Ethnic/Religious
☐ Vegan
☐ Vegetarian
☐ Other: _____

Do you face any barriers in meeting these requirements? If yes, please describe:

_____

_____

9. Do you get any of your food from community gardens?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please give the name and location of the community garden.

_____

10. Is there a service that you would like see in your community? Please describe.

_____

_____

_____

11. Are you interested in learning more about the results or being involved in the food assessment activity in your community?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, please check 'Yes' below as your consent for us to contact you using the contact information above.

☐ Yes

*This Questionnaire is a template for you to use.   Please feel free to add more questions or change the design to make it your own.

Food Mapping Tool 2A
Your service in the community
(For commercial and not-for-profit food service providers)

Purpose: To map information about commercial and not-for-profit food service providers.

Note: You can conduct this mapping exercise with commercial and not-for-profit service providers together or separately.

Steps to Follow

o   Follow the food mapping steps described in this chapter (Chapter 2, page 18-19)
o   Ask the participants to put a sticker (alternatively circle in coloured marker) on their service location
o   Use large sticky notes to have the participants indicate the types of food service they provide. You may like to colour code the types of services with different colour sticky notes or different colour markers/pencils.
o   Use other sticky notes to have the participants indicate the hours of operation (time, days of the week)

The resulting map will show the number of commercial and not-for-profit food services within the community, as well as some details of the services including types of food and hours of operation. The information you get from this mapping exercise will mainly be used for the analysis of Accessibility and Availability of food security.

Questionnaire 2A (Template*)
Your service as food assets in the community
(Commercial Food Providers [For Profit])

Purpose: This questionnaire is intended to inventory the types of food and services local commercial food providers are offering and how their customers are accessing these resources.

Name: _____   **Contact Info (optional):** _____

Address: _____

1) Please select the services you provide and rank them with 1 being the most important.

__Grocery – Primarily Packaged/Frozen   __Grocery – Primarily fresh/produce

__ Cooked food (from scratch) ingredients)   __Cooked food (from pre-prepared

__ Food Delivery (Meal/Grocery Delivery, etc.)   __Farmer/Farmers Market

__ Other (please describe) _____

2) What are your hours of operation?

__ Weekdays:_____   __ Weekends:_____   __ 24 hours:_____

__ Other:_____

3) How do the majority of your customers access your services? Please select all that apply and rank them, with 1 representing the most common means of access.

__ Walk   __Bike   __Transit   __Drive   __Other (describe)_____

4) Is there a service that you would like to start offering? If yes, please explain what it is, why you would like to offer it and why you are not currently offering it.

_____

_____

5) Are you interested in learning more about the results or being involved in the food assessment activity in your community? __Yes   __No

If yes, is it okay to contact you using the information you provided above? __Yes   __No

*This Questionnaire is a template for you to use.   Please feel free to add more questions or change the design to make it your own.

Questionnaire 2B (Template)
Your service as food assets in the community
(Community Food Providers [Not For Profit])

Purpose: This questionnaire is intended to inventory the types of services that local not-for-profit food providers are offering, how their customers are accessing these services and what barriers are faced in offering and accessing these services.

Name: _____   **Contact Info (optional):** _____

Address: _____

1) Please select the services you provide and rank them with 1 being the majority.

__ Grocery – Primarily Packaged/Frozen   __Grocery – Primarily fresh/produce

__ Cooked food (from scratch)   __Cooked food (from pre-prepared
                                                      ingredients)

__Food Delivery (Meal/Grocery Delivery, etc.)

__ Emergency food (food banks, meal program, etc.)   __Food in schools (breakfast, lunch, etc.)

__ Alternative Food Outlet (Community Garden, Food Box, etc.)

__ Other (please describe) _____

2) What are your hours of operation?

__ Weekdays:_____   __ Weekends:_____   __ 24 hours:_____

__ Other:_____

3) How do the majority of your customers access your services? Please select all that apply and rank them, with 1 representing the most common means of access.

__ Walk   __Bike   __Transit   __Drive   __Other (describe)_____

4) What barriers do you face in providing your services? Please select all that apply and rank them, with 1 representing the most significant barrier.

__ not enough resources to meet demand (e.g. funding, staff, storage, etc.)

        Please Describe:_____

__ cost of goods   __ location

__ accessing clients   __ sourcing food

__ meeting specific diets (e.g. culturally preferred or health related diets, etc.)

__ offering healthier options   __ providing local options

__ other (describe) _____

5) What do you believe are the most significant barriers for your clients in accessing food? Please select all that apply and rank with 1 representing the most significant barrier (See the Six A's in Chapter 1 of the toolkit)

- ☐ Accessibility (The ability to physically access food outlets)
- ☐ Affordability (Affordable Healthy food for all community members)
- ☐ Availability (Fresh and healthy food available in all seasons)
- ☐ Adequacy (Enough healthy food for all community members)
- ☐ Awareness (Access to educational materials on healthy eating and meal preparation)
- ☐ Appropriate (Food is appropriate for restrictive dietary needs)
- ☐ Other (describe)_____

6) Is there a service that you would like to start offering? If yes, please explain what it is, why you would like to offer it, and why you are not currently offering it.

_____

_____

_____

7) Are you interested in learning more about the results or being involved in the food assessment activity in your community? __Yes   __No

If yes, is it okay to contact you using the information you provided above? __Yes   __No