

Community Foods Systems Assessment Project Framework

Broad project goal: Community members will collaborate across food system sectors, to foster new relationships and partnerships, experience the benefits of diversity, and lead Montana communities to more equitable and resilient food systems.

Project Piece	Components	Responsible parties	Timeframe
<p>Project outline</p> <p>Benchmarks:</p> <p>A. Confirm project fit</p> <p>B. Build a diverse coalition</p> <p>C. Confirm mission, vision, core values</p> <p>D. Define Success / Plan Digital Story</p> <p>E. Outline Research for Snapshot/ Assessment</p> <p>F. Community Input &</p>	<p>Meetings</p> <p>1: Coalition Building & Collective Vision Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to coalition, MFEI, Snapshot - Partner brainstorm <p>2: Continue Coalition Building & Collective Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asset-based food system assessment <p>3: Define Success & Starting the Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue mission, vision, core values - Define Success - Outline research to inform the snapshot <p>4: Confirm mission, vision core values & Continue Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm mission, vision core values - Research manual progress - Next steps to create snapshot <p>5: Snapshot Presentation & Project Prioritization</p> <p>Present snapshot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present snapshot to coalition - Discussion: Prioritize projects 	<p>CFSA Community Meeting agendas - AB & AERO</p>	

<p>Evaluation G. Sharing</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Snapshot ● Project Priorities ● Digital Story presentation at network meeting ● Digital Story shared on MFEI online Library 	<p>6: Community Feedback & Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input on project priorities & snapshot - Interim: Complete digital story <p>7: Sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend MFEI Network Meeting and share digital story 		
<p>A. Project Fit</p>	<p>CFSA specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there a group of people who have the time and interest in this project? ● Access to web conferencing or physical space for meetings ● Tech savvy person if community wants to create a food systems map ● Team willing to manage data ● Build a diverse coalition. Leaders from at least two food system sectors - consumers, producers, processors, distributors, retail ● A local food leader/ project manager to engage the process 	<p>Created by AERO/AB</p>	<p>Interest Form - backend</p> <p>Public facing Interest Form</p> <p>Outreach Flier - for coalition building</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Decision making ability and a degree of influence 		
B. Build a diverse coalition	<p>Get started: Project introduction and Coalition building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elevator speech for AB or community members to use to recruit coalition members <p>Build the coalition: Ideally there would be about 8-12 people involved in the Coalition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start with existing coalitions, AERO contacts, or community members already working on community food system issues in the target community. ● Who's likely to have an interest in the food systems issue and efforts to deal with it? Why is it important to them? ● Who might be affected by anything you do? ● What agencies might have a legal responsibility or interest in the issue or place? What role might they take? ● Who has influence or standing in the community? ● Who is enthusiastic and likely to have time and energy for the project? ● How to encourage diversity of the coalition and why diversity is important? ● Diversity of food sectors represented - producer, consumer ● Age, gender, race, (i.e want a youth, retired member) <p>Coalition member recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Business owners in food systems ● Producers- farmers/ranchers ● Participants in other food systems sector: food transformation/processing, retail, restaurant, distribution ● School food services and farm to school ● Organizations like a food pantry/bank that focus on food systems, food security, food access etc..... 	<p>Intro meeting with local food leader(s) & AERO/AB</p> <p>Coalition building completed by AB and community</p>	<p>December</p> <p>Coalition built by January</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● State agencies ● Conservation organizations ● Health/wellness providers ● Extension/SNAP-Ed ● Eaters/consumers 		
C. Confirm Mission, Vision, Core Values	See Meetings 2 & 3 Agendas		
D. Define Success / Plan Digital Story	<p>How to define success: Project outcomes, Monitor and evaluate progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who will the project benefit? ● How does the project benefit the community? Does it change a system? ● How will the project serve future generations/continue without AERO support and be a model to other communities? ● What does success look like, and how will we measure? ● Create project objectives - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SMART objectives, Objectives with focus to drive quick project success ● System Evaluation- Measure changes in awareness, skills, knowledge & attitudes across spectrum (individ, orgs/groups, & systems (community, policy)) through reflective surveys or observation for folks directly 		

	<p>participating in the MFEI project and indirectly affected populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Success measures: Indicators of progress for short term (3-6 mths) and longer term (what is appropriate for this engagement?) ● What will the anticipated outcomes be? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ more and better cross-sector food system relationships, ○ build a statewide network of local food leaders / MFEI project participants ● Theory of change - what specific activities and outputs will help this project be sustainable. ● Sustainability - will this project continue to function once this time period end? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If so, what is needed to ensure that? <p>Stakeholder Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who will be impacted by the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Categories of stakeholders ● How will they be involved in the project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How will they be engaged to foster local ownership and sustainability ● How will they influence the project's success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Importance of influence <p>Digital Storytelling framing</p>		
E. Research	Research: Assess the current situation, Data Gathering, Action planning		

	<p>Data Gathering What does the coalition need to know about the community in order to implement the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the community already doing related to the project and is there a way to piggyback on current work? ● General asset-based assessment at first-ish meeting ● Community members /team /coalition as experts on what data is needed from each asset / sector area. Eg. pull existing reports, interview, talk with an organization ● Determine what other data is needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Primary data - interviews, community surveys, community town hall ○ Secondary data - city demographic information <p>Action Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create an action plan for how data will be gathered and who will do that. ● What resources are needed for action steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding, staff time, space needs, supplies, technology, equipment, key partner) 		
<p>F. Community Input & Evaluation</p>	<p>Examples of some evaluation metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # coalition members engaged ● # of organizations engaged ● # of public input/touchpoints ● Increase Coalition members and community's understanding of the local food system (sectors / asset areas) 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New relationships/connections between FS sectors (or working with one another in new ways) ● Project ideas and prioritization in preparation of Phase 2 work ● Reflections of change in knowledge about the food system infrastructure/sectors and assets in one's community ● Reflections on change in access to local food and community production ● # of people affected ● # of people who are planning to use - i.e biochar ● # of volunteers engaged ● # of volunteer hours ● # of people and organizations represented and the diversity of the group <p>Evaluation questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did you create a new relationship? ● Did you create a new way of working with a current relationship? 		
G. Sharing	<p>Wrapping up: Communication and celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who needs to know about the project success? ● How will this information be shared? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What resources are needed to share? ● Lessons learned - what do other communities need to know if they try to implement this type of project ● Next steps - will there be more work with the coalition? Will the coalition end or continue to meet? 		

	For CFSA - Will the coalition move forward to do an actual assessment and create a food systems map?		
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