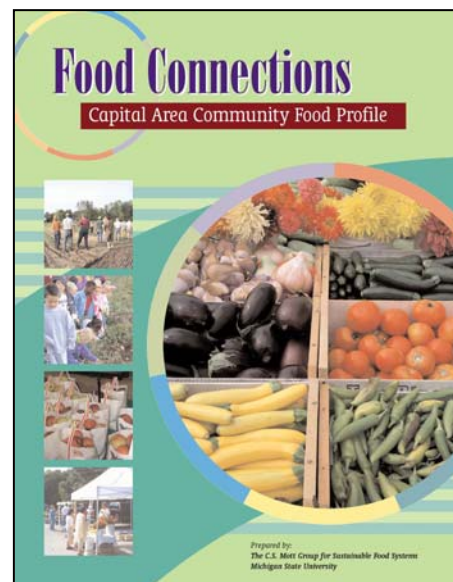


Guide to Developing a Community Food Profile

A Community Food Profile (CFP) provides a framework for communicating community food system ideas through vignettes of the people and enterprises involved in *your* community. The C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems at MSU has developed a CFP for the Lansing tri-county area that serves as an example (<http://www.mottgroup.msu.edu/downloads/CACfoodprofile.pdf>). We are also offering the layout from *Food Connections: Capital Area Community Food Profile* as a template for use in design and layout of your CFP. This guide details the steps and considerations in developing a CFP and using the layout template.



Reasons for developing a Community Food Profile

A CFP can be useful to:

- Highlight examples of community-based food activities in your area
- Share a community-based food system perspective with the broader public
- Identify common goals among diverse partners that lead to multiple outcomes (helping each other so that everyone gets what they need)
- Begin the work of building food system connections within your community

Valuing the Process

The process of pulling together a diverse group of community members to discuss their local food system has great value in itself. A systems-perspective offers new ways of looking at issues (see: http://media.cce.cornell.edu/hosts/agfoodcommunity/afs_temp3.cfm?topicID=262).

It can help a diverse group find common goals that accomplish several things at once. For example, consider a county Extension office where the Horticulture Educator is struggling to find new ways to keep small farms viable, the Nutrition Educator would like to reach an ethnic community with a message of eating more fruits and vegetables, and the Community Development Educator is working with the city to revitalize a downtown neighborhood. The office staff members decide to come together, along with their collective community partners, to discuss how the overall food system operates within their county and how it influences community well being. After identifying various parts of the local food system and sharing stories of successes and challenges, the group recognizes that they can address these seemingly unrelated problems in part by working together to enhance the struggling downtown farmers' market. One goal (make the farmers' market better), multiple outcomes (increased markets for small farms, improved access to fruits and vegetables, increased economic and social activity in a struggling neighborhood.)

Developing a CFP may provide the impetus to start this process of exploring your community's food system. But keep in mind

"It is good to have an end to journey towards; but it is the journey that matters in the end."

– author Ursula K. LeGuin

that the development process may be as valuable as the finished product. And it may take significantly more time than the estimates below suggest. You may need to change your goals along the way. Yet, each step of the process will likely provide its own valuable outcome, expose a new perspective, or offer a new partner. Value the journey.

The process of putting together a CFP will help you build connections within your community. By identifying local successes, visiting and interviewing people in the local food system, and asking about their opportunities and challenges, you can start to facilitate connections between different components of the food system that may not already be in contact. Entrepreneurial activities and opportunities may also surface through this process.

Organization of the Capital Area Community Food Profile

The Capital Area CFP is organized around the Circle of Connections diagram (right), which graphically presents the components of a community-based food system and some of the potential outcomes. The remainder of the profile supports these connections through vignettes of local examples.



Introduction

The first 2 pages (below) provide context by succinctly describing community-based food systems and why they are important. While there are some Capital-area-specific references in the template example, much of the narrative is generic and may be appropriate for other communities with little or now editing. Feel free to use the text, but think of it as a starting point – you will know best what language and perspective will engage your audience, and you certainly can improve upon our example!

Where does your food come from?

Everyone in our community has connections to food. Food is essential to our health and well-being. It plays a central role in the social networks and cultural traditions that help define community. Agriculture is an important industry in Michigan and in the Capital Area consisting of Citrus, Beans and Soybean Crops.

However, communities rarely see opportunities for development in the food and farming connections that make up their local food system. We see a globalized and industrialized food system, often leaving farmers and consumers separated by distance and misunderstanding. Produce enters in the Midwest through an average of more than 1,500 miles, and the typical consumer doesn't realize his meal is "imported." We don't appreciate the resources used in its production.

We see an address current pressing issues as diverse as obesity when spread and economic development as part by paying closer attention to our food – what we eat, where it comes from, how it is produced, processed and distributed. Reducing our collective food habits can open a host of new opportunities.

A Food System includes the who, what, when, where, why and how of our food – from farm to plate.

Outcomes

Here are some of the issues a community-based food system can influence. Which ones affect you?

Small and medium scale farm viability

If current trends continue, Michigan will lose 71 percent of farms that are between 50 and 500 acres by 2040, representing nearly half of all Michigan farms in the Capital Area. This loss would translate to 110 farms – 1/3 of the state's total. This loss is not just farms but also farmland, farmers, skills and infrastructure necessary for long-term food production capability. Many studies have demonstrated the importance of small- and medium-scale farms in maintaining the social, economic and environmental health of rural communities.

Economic Development

People in the Lansing 05 county area spend \$1.1 billion annually on food and beverages in stores, restaurants and other eating establishments. The vast majority of these food dollars are spent on products originating outside the area. Community based food systems capitalize on opportunities for entrepreneurial farmers and small businesses to add value to local agricultural products and keep a larger portion of each food dollar within the local economy.

Farmland Preservation

Community and state efforts are under way to preserve farmland from the growing threat of urban sprawl. Preserving farmland, however, must go hand in hand with ensuring farm viability. By building the food system – relying more on local and regional sources for our food needs – ensure valuable markets that help keep farmers farming on farmland and increase awareness of the importance of preserving local farmland.

Community and Social Vitality

At the heart of a community based food system are relationships that build social capital, strengthen social networks and form the basis of community identity. Food is a deep moral aspect of our social interaction. In fact, the Latin root of the words community and company means "with bread." Food is an inclusive food point for rebuilding community, as when we eat in retail settings, and especially between the two.

Environmental Stewardship

Food production is inextricably linked to the environment. However, the intensification and industrialization of agriculture over the past 50 years have resulted in many practices that are detrimental to environmental health. A community based food system highlights the connection between food and environment, creates opportunities for consumers to recognize and value the environmental services provided by local farms, such as water filtration and wildlife habitat.

Jobs

In a time when job outsourcing is a painful reality for many communities, local food production and processing can create significant numbers of middle jobs. Like "Buy American" campaigns, "Buy Local Food" campaigns can foster an understanding that purchasing choices affect the economic well-being of people in our community.

Healthy Individuals

Michigan is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. Sixty two percent of the state's adults and 11 percent of high school students are overweight. In 2003, obesity-related medical costs in the state totaled \$2.9 billion. Most people become overweight from inadequate physical activity and poor diet. Community based food systems encourage healthy lifestyles by making fresh, delicious fruits, vegetables and other foods more accessible. Healthier citizens mean reduced healthcare premiums, making Michigan communities more business friendly.

Modular components

The rest of the CFP is made up of modular components (example, right). Each consists of one page of background narrative, with supporting data and a “what you can do” box, followed by a one-page related story. These modules build on and support the introduction. They provide an opportunity to highlight the successes in your community while painting a picture of what is possible.

Farm-to-School

Learning Food
Food Security
Food Safety
Farm Viability
Environmental Sustainability
Healthy Individuals

Farm-to-school programs link local farms and schools to provide increased marketing opportunities for local farmers and to build a stronger connection among children, farmers, the community and the land. In addition to direct sales by farmers to school food service programs, farm-to-school programs can include hands-on education through school gardens and composting projects, nutrition education through kitchen classrooms and seasonal eating. Field trips to local farms and alternative fundraising using local farm products such as dried cheese.

Across the country, farm-to-school programs represent an important opportunity to help farmers remain profitable while addressing national concerns about childhood obesity. Increased globalization has forced many farmers to identify new markets for their products. With statewide farm-to-school food service expenditures of \$300 million per year, this is potentially a huge market for Michigan farmers.

Nationally over the past twenty years, the proportion of students who are overweight has almost tripled, with more than 25 percent of Michigan youth overweight as at risk for becoming overweight. These children are at higher risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. One way to promote health and reduce the risk for chronic disease is to eat more fruits and vegetables. However, less than 20 percent of Michigan youth meet the recommended daily minimum requirements for fruit and vegetables.

School gardens build a sense of wonderment and connection with nature.

What You Can Do
Start a school garden or composting project. Volunteer to chop-axe a classroom visit to a local farm. Prepare more fresh fruits and vegetables at home.

COMMUNITY: Develop a school fundraiser around locally produced fruits. Make the local school board about farm-to-food issues.

MUNICIPALITY: Partner with other governmental agencies to promote healthy eating.

A School That Grows Hope

Conoverville Elementary School lies on the rural northern edge of the Lansing School District. Conoverville students are proud to be from an inner-city neighborhood that had its school and from a nearby trailer park. Now students come and go on their parents' bikes and appreciate the bus ride from their homes. But however at the school a high. The school is now on its 18th year of operation in three years. Still, a sense of hope, commitment and community grows from a small back corner of the schoolyard. Conoverville has a garden.

It began on a way to beat time a personal loss. Dr. Louise Sharp, director of MSU's residential initiative of the Study of the Environment (ISE) Program, wanted to close her parents for gardening which she learned from her father, who had recently passed away. They helped develop the garden and has stayed around. "When this thing started, I thought it might be a way to raise the school's MAP scores," she said. "I quickly realized that the garden meant so much more to these kids."

The garden's magic began with a box of seedlings sent. A teacher's husband planted up a plot behind the school. The local seed vendor company donated a load of compost. Soon a 30 by 30 foot plot became a wealth of garden diversity: strawberries and peaches, sweeteners and potatoes, lettuce and carrots. Students now participate in garden planning and planting in the spring and return in the fall to enjoy a bountiful harvest.

The garden has taken root throughout the school, offering teachers more tangible "tools" that hold the students' attention. The diverse life science lessons are there, as are hands-on experiences with wildlife such as earthworms and insects. Students also learn water conservation by selling bottled goods made from the garden's produce. Working assignments focus on describing experiences in the garden. The garden offers students a means to see, feel and taste their lessons. Conoverville students are also learning that fresh vegetables aren't "gross," and that carrots aren't made in the supermarket. Connecting with the source of their food may be a first step toward lifelong healthy eating.

Field trips to the MSU Student Organic Farm give Conoverville students a chance to experience the changing seasons on a working farm. Through intercollegiate collaboration with MSU, a greenhouse opened at Conoverville in summer 2004, allowing the growing season to extend well into the winter and begin early in the spring.

The project has not been without its challenges. Frequent staff turnover means repeated justification that the garden is a special place where students can experience life and learning and still meet curriculum requirements.

"We're dealing with a generation that doesn't have an opportunity to connect to nature," says Therie. "And you're not going to take care of something you don't know. That little garden in their lives, their living classrooms."

Contact Information
For information on farm-to-school programs, contact Viki Lorraine at Michigan State University (517) 353-6791

For example, the topical modules in the Capital Area Community Food Profile include:

- Land Use and Farming
- Farmers' Markets
- Grocery Stores and Restaurants Focusing on Local
- Local Food Processing
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Farm-to-School
- Community-based food security programs

There is nothing unique or magical about this collection of topics. You will want to list topics that “profile” your community, represent the full extent of the food system, provide some insight about the current food system, and also suggest future directions and opportunities. Other topics that might be appropriate include:

- Food distribution (e.g., produce distributor)
- Agri-tourism
- Unique landscape qualities or unique agriculture
- Roadside farm stands and on-farm markets
- Food and ag. promotions and/or celebrations (e.g., community fairs, festivals)

Each community will probably develop its own unique list.

The modular structure makes it easy to add as many or as few topics/ stories to your CFP as desired. But be selective – a short, concise CFP will likely be more effective in engaging your audience.

The modular structure also makes it easy to update the CFP with new stories. With regular updates, your CFP can become a way to track and share developments within the community.

Here's a rough estimate of what it will take to develop a CFP

Estimated human resource commitment:

The time commitment necessary to develop a CFP as a team is difficult to estimate, and even harder to place a value on. As a starting point, however, a reasonable estimate might be 8-10 months at approximately ½ time (equivalent of roughly 4-5 months full time) for a individual comfortable/ competent in conducting interviews, taking engaging pictures, writing stories and accompanying text, researching place-based statistics/ information to support the stories, and developing basic layout. Of course, the tasks could be spread across many individuals in a development team, and may need to be spread out over a longer timeline to accommodate group process.

Additional resources: Computer with internet access, camera (hi-resolution digital preferred). If the intention is to use the Mott Group's layout template, a graphic designer working on a Macintosh platform (preferably using Quark software) will also be needed to insert text and graphics into the template (cost of graphic designer for this task estimated at \$500 – financial assistance may be available through the Mott Group).

Developing a Community Food Profile

The following flow chart and text suggest a process for developing a CFP that mimics the structure of the *Capital Area Community Food Profile*. While the chart suggests a linear task flow (do step 1, then do step 2, etc.), you may find that, depending on available resources and personnel, you can work on more than one task at once. The chart also offers a suggested timeline geared toward a focused effort, but ultimately you will need to establish your own timeline.

Some steps in this suggested process are things that we did as we developed the Capital Area CFP. They worked well for us so we are recommending them to you. Other steps represent our learning the hard way. Our failure to do them – or to give them due attention – slowed our progress. If you have questions or comments on this process, if something is unclear or you see a way that we can make this guide or the CFP process better, please contact the Mott Group at mottgroup@msu.edu or 517-432-1612.

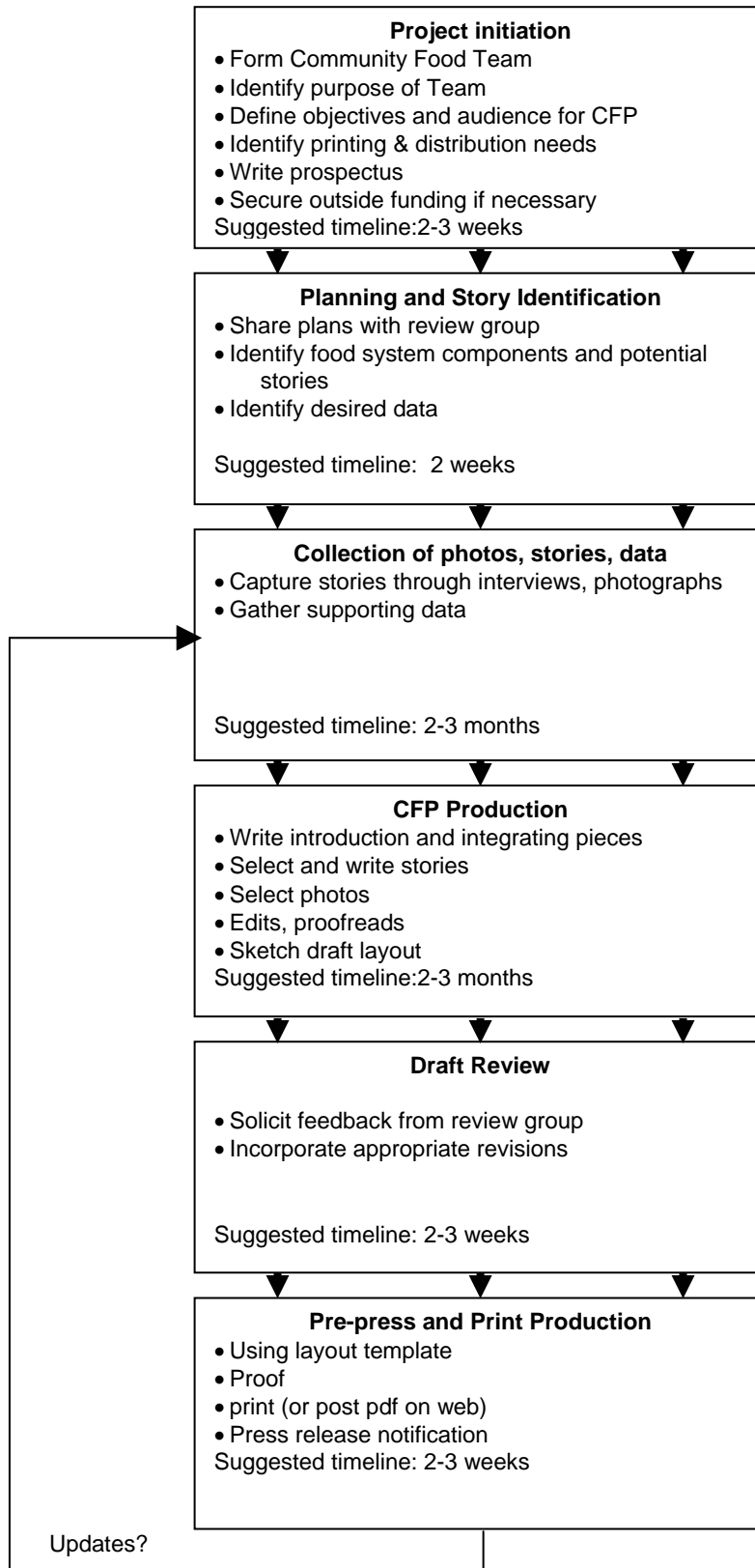
One way to tell the story, not *the* way

The *Capital Area Community Food Profile* presents one way to approach sharing a community-based food system perspective. There are certainly many others, and quite likely, more appropriate approaches for your community and the audience you hope to reach. **Please take liberty in modifying, adding to, subtracting from, or reinventing this example CFP.** While we hope that the *Capital Area CFP* provides inspiration and some guidance, we look forward to seeing the creative alternatives that emerge. You may choose to use the layout as-is, and simply add your own stories, photos and data. Or you may choose to completely alter the look and feel of your CFP. We ask only that you share your process and your final CFP with the Mott Group.

“The more we meet, the more I have learned about the Saginaw Area that I did not know before ... Any meeting I go to lately seems to be concerned in some way with our food systems and how it affects our day-to-day health and welfare. I think this is a good effort to come together across programming, businesses and interests to learn from each other and hopefully make a difference.”

– Holly Tiret, MSU Extension Nutrition Educator, on developing a Saginaw Area Community Food Profile

Community Food Profile Development Flow Chart



Form Community Food Team

The first step in developing a CFP may be establishing a committed team of diverse community members that sees the utility of a CFP as a community development tool, can create a common vision and develop a work plan to make it happen. Inviting team members who have a vested interest in the local food system helps to keep the team committed and moving. CF team membership should also be extensive enough to allow the group to take a broad look at their community's food system and to see the many connections and relationships that exist around food in every community.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

– Margaret Mead

A community food team could include key MSU Extension staff members and appropriate local partners from sectors such as:

- Agriculture, including farmers, farm organizations, grower cooperative, etc.
- Public health
- Anti-hunger organizations
- Economic development and business
- Food processing, food retailing, direct food marketing (e.g., farmers' markets) and restaurants
- Environmental groups
- Local government including planners and elected officials
- Schools
- Media

Identify purpose of Team

So you've gathered a group of community members who are concerned about the food system. What are your concerns? What do you hope to accomplish? If you are successful, how will your community be different than it is today? Identifying the broader motivations and goals of the group before taking on a project like developing a CFP will help to assure that the project is taking you toward those goals. This might take the form of developing a mission, vision and/or core values or principles. Perhaps your group has a history and much of this work is already done.

Define objectives and audience for CFP

Clearly defining what you hope to accomplish and whom you hope to reach will provide focus and direction to the project.

Possible objectives for your CFP:

- Spread an appreciation for a community-based food system perspective
- Engage a certain audience (elected officials, decision makers) in supporting community-food system work
- Create a “home pride” feel around your local food system
- Educate consumers and encourage them to seek out and buy local foods, engage in their local food system

- Help residents better “see” a community-based food system that may currently be mostly “invisible”
- What are *your* objectives?

Possible audiences:

- General public/ consumers
- Community leaders & decision makers
- Entrepreneurs and farmers
- Local residents vs. tourists/ visitors
- What groups are *you* trying to reach?

Another part of defining your audience is defining the geographic boundary to be covered in the CFP. Remember that this is intended to be place-based, and the stories and content should, as much as possible, refer to and represent your “community.” But where do you draw the geographic bounds for your community? This could be your county, a collection of counties, a metropolitan area or some other region. Keep in mind, however, that much of the available data (e.g., Census of Ag., Business Census) is aggregated at the county level.

The objectives and intended audience will influence the language used in the CFP, the types of stories selected, the final print form, and the distribution method. If you identify several goals or several audiences, decide which is your highest priority.

Identify printing & distribution needs

How do you intend to distribute the CFP? What print form will work best for that distribution? This will depend on your goals, primary audience and the financial resources available. If you see your CFP as primarily an engagement tool to be used by active community members to “open doors” and start a dialogue with community leaders, elected officials, etc., then a web-based file that can be printed as needed might be the best solution. If however, your goal is to reach a large number of consumers, you may have to consider a bulk printing. There are a number of printing options with varying costs and unique requirements. Contact the graphic designer/ printer that you plan to work with and discuss options **at the start of the project**.

Note: The Mott Group layout template (i.e., the *Capital Area Community Food Profile*) has been developed in Quark on a Macintosh platform. Using the template will require access and familiarity with this software. If you intend to make use of the layout template, ask the designers/ printers in your area if they can work in this format.

Write a prospectus

Develop a one page (maybe only one paragraph) description of the project that includes your motivation, goals, intended audience and geographic boundary. Describe the finished product, and if possible offer a sample (perhaps the *Capital Area CFP*?) Developing a budget for the project should also be part of the prospectus (see “Secure necessary funding”) Use this “prospectus” to communicate the project to the outside world (potential funders/sponsors?) and for a “compass bearing” reminder of where you’re headed.

Secure outside funding if necessary

It may be possible to fit the process of developing a CFP into existing programs and job descriptions. You may also be able to empower significant volunteer contributions from your community. Additional funding may be needed for travel to interviews, meetings, etc. and for graphical layout and printing of the final CFP. Local sources of funding and contributions should be the first option, but additional sources may be available. For assistance in identifying potential funding sources, contact the Mott Group.

Sharing plans with review group

Sharing your CFP plans with a review will help maintain a broader community perspective in the project. Ideally the group should be comprised of a cross-section of the intended audience for the CFP – perhaps it is a group that has already formed around your food system efforts or another already organized group in the community. Perhaps you will have to invite a group of individuals to come together. Decide ahead of time what you will ask of this group – how much of their time are you asking, what do you want them to help you with? Ideally, you will be able to find a group of 5-10 people willing to meet 2 or more times (once at the beginning of the project, and once for feedback on a draft.)

Some suggestions on how to work with the review group: invite them to come together for an evening meeting (maybe a potluck!), present to them a succinct description of the CFP project, your goals, some of the stories you're thinking about including, etc., ask for their input and suggestions for stories, and then listen. You can think of this as a focus group: paying attention to their language, ideas, and understanding of the food system may give you a clearer picture of effective ways to communicate to your target audience. What is important and meaningful to these people? How do they currently relate to food and their local food system? How does the proposed CFP impact both their personal and professional 'work?'

Identify food system components and potential stories

Look to represent as much of the food system as possible in your stories – farmers/producers, food distributors, retailers, processors, restaurateurs and chefs, ...and eaters! Six to eight stories seem to be a reasonable number for a profile, but identify as many stories as possible and pick the best ones to include.

Topics that might represent a community-based food system include:

- The connection between land use and farming
- Small scale farming, alternative or sustainable farms
- Farmers' Markets
- Grocery Stores that carry locally grown or processed foods
- Restaurants that use/ feature locally grown foods
- Local Food Processing
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Farm-to-School
- Community or neighborhood organizations working on food system issues
- Community gardens
- Urban agriculture
- Gleaning efforts
- Food distribution (e.g., produce distributor)
- Agri-tourism (corn mazes, pumpkin patches, educational tours/activities, etc.)

- Unique landscape qualities or unique agriculture
- Roadside farm stands and on-farm markets
- Food and ag. promotions and/or celebrations (e.g., community fairs, festivals)

Consider the geographic representation of the possible stories. Do they include rural and urban examples? Are they reasonably distributed across your chosen geographic “community”?

After you’ve picked likely components/ stories for the CFP, it might be helpful to sketch out 2-3 key messages or concepts to be communicated in each. For example, the key concepts to communicate for Farmers’ Markets might be:

- 1) alternative market for farmers to keep farm viable,
- 2) direct relationship between farmer and eater – “food with a face”,
- 3) community vitality and identity through weekly gathering activity.

While these certainly might change as you learn more about your local food system, clarifying these main messages at the onset can help direct information gathering, interviewing and choices for photographs (the most compelling photos will directly communicate main messages.)

Identify desired data

Attached at the end of this guide is a listing of places to start looking for relevant data. There are many supporting pieces of information that will be helpful in presenting a profile of your community’s food system. How many eaters are there (i.e., what’s the population)? How much do they spend on food? Where are the eaters concentrated? How many farmers? How are the type and number of farms changing? Where is the farmland located? Are there unique geological/climatic features of your area that are relevant to food production? Are there relevant historical facts that might help demonstrate the potential of a local food system? What food processing currently exists in the community?

Maps, graphs and tables of data can be effective ways to communicate ideas, but they should be used sparingly and need to be clear and simple. What would you like to communicate, and what data will you need to do it?

The Mott Group can provide technical assistance in identifying data. Contact the Mott Group at mottgroup@msu.edu or 517-432-1612.

Capture stories through interviews and photographs

Time to put on your journalist hat! The best way to develop good stories is to talk to the people who are a part of them and making them happen. Most people are happy to talk with you about what they do. When you schedule an interview, describe what it is that you are doing and give a clear indication of the amount of time you’ll need for the interview (probably 45 minutes to one hour). Remind people that you intend to identify them in the story (i.e., make sure they are okay with you using their name). **Remember to be cordial, respectful and open minded. You’re interested in hearing their perspective, not changing it.**

We suggest that you audio record the interview so that you can refer to it when you are writing the story. Ask your interviewee if this is okay.

The questions that you ask will depend strongly on who you’re interviewing and their activities, but here are a few basic questions to get you started:

- Tell me about your operation/ project/ organization. What are you doing? How are you doing it? Why? Give examples of successes and failures.
- What are the opportunities for more local food? What are the challenges?
- How is your work affecting your community?
- Who do you consider your partners/ collaborators?
- What does a community-based food system mean to you?

It will be helpful to sketch out some potential questions ahead of time, but the most revealing pieces come from follow-up questions – a question intended to clarify or go deeper into something that the interviewee mentions. There are lots of ways to tease out more of the story. Some examples include: “Can you tell me more?”, “Could you explain that to me?”, “That’s surprising! Can you help me understand?” Try to remain open to this opportunity – don’t force yourself to “stick to the script.”

Photographs Visiting farms, markets, stores, processors, etc. for interviews is the perfect opportunity to take pictures. Take lots! (digital cameras are good for this) Remember the key messages that you are trying to communicate in the story and look for photo opportunities that capture that message (e.g., if farmer/ consumer interaction is an important message at Farmers’ Markets, try to get photos that capture that interaction. If the key message in community gardens is people working together, make sure all of your pictures aren’t of individual gardeners - no matter how beautiful their garden is!)

The key is to take lots of photos – you can be choosy later when you’re putting things together.

Gather supporting data

Attached at the end of this guide is a listing of good starting points for finding data relevant to the food system. Please contact the Mott Group for additional assistance.

Write introduction and integrating pieces

The CFP layout is structured around a narrative containing general information, statistics and relevant examples for each topic, followed by a story. These pieces can actually be written before or during the interviewing process, and may help you come up with good questions to ask interviewees. **350 words is a reasonable guideline for the length of these topic narratives.**

Select and write stories

You’ve done the interviews, gathered some background information, now it’s time to write the stories. While the modular nature of CFP layout allows you to use as many stories as you like, 6-8 seem to be a good number in terms of length and readability. Keep in mind the audience you are trying to reach and write for them. Keep it simple!

Stories of about 500 words (give or take 80 words) will fit reasonably in the layout template and still allow adequate space for photos and graphics.

Keep in mind the key messages that you hope to communicate in the story. Use quotations from the people you interviewed, but make sure the quotes add to the story.

Select Photos

Your CFP will truly come to life with the beautiful photographs you've gathered. Select photos that best represent the key messages that you've identified for the particular topic and story.

Edits, proof reads

It will be very helpful to get as much feedback as possible on your writings from team members, colleagues, and other kindred spirits. Typically, the more eyes the better for catching typos, grammatical and spelling errors, and simply tightening the writing. You may consider using a professional copy editor.

Sketch Draft Layout

If you decide to use it, the Mott Group layout template will help you in getting to an attractive, finished CFP quickly and cost-effectively. The graphic designer/ printer that you are working with will need clear guidance on how you want to arrange "copy" (text) and photos. You can do this by creating a rough layout (in Word or other word processor) or simply sketching out the layout by hand, identifying the places for specific copy and photos. A draft layout will also be useful (but not necessary) for soliciting feedback from a review group.

Soliciting feedback from review group

We suggest that you "test" your draft profile on a selected review group before taking it to the next step of design and print/ launch. See [[Sharing plans with review group](#)] for tips on gathering this group.

Offer many options for your test audience to provide feedback: via email, snail mail, by phone, or at a facilitated meeting. Give them clear guidelines on the kind of feedback that you would like.

Using Layout template

A CD-ROM containing the graphic design files created for the *Capital Area Community Food Profile* is available from the Mott Group (contact the Mott Group at mottgroup@msu.edu or 517-432-1612). This graphic design was developed in the Macintosh software, Quark.

A couple of tips:

1. the story pages contain a Michigan map with the county where the story takes place highlighted. A complete county map of Michigan is included on the CD, but your graphic designer will need to modify this map to highlight the county/counties of interest.
2. Color bars on each of the topic background pages correspond with colors in the Circle of Connections. You will need to select which of the food system components and outcomes are exemplified in the topic, and modify the color bars appropriately.

Print or post on web

Press Release!

The release of your CFP is newsworthy event that can help bring public attention to your efforts. There are many “helpful hints” for writing and distributing effective press releases. Here’s one: <http://pressrelease.lifetips.com/>

Evaluation

What was the impact of both the process and the final CFP on your community? Your Teams’ outlook on the food system? Your ability to encourage change? For suggestions on ways to evaluate the impact of your CFP, please contact the Mott Group at mottgroup@msu.edu or 517-432-1612.

CONGRATULATIONS! Your Community Food Profile will certainly be a useful tool in promoting understanding and encouraging change in your local food system. Surely, you have also learned a great deal about your community and have identified many opportunities to build on the connections that make up a community-based food system.

Don’t forget to share your finished Profile with the Mott Group – we can’t wait to see your good work!



Appendix: Data Sources that may be useful in Developing a Community Food Profile

Community Profiles <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/countyprofiles/index.htm>

An MSU Extension resource. Offers quick profiles of county demographics, age distribution, employment, poverty rate, etc. Data is available in ready-to-use graphs.

Michigan Agricultural Statistics: <http://www.nass.usda.gov/mi/index.html>

Contains links to USDA census of ag. (parsed to county level every 5 years) as well as more frequent MI statistics for some crops. Older Census of Ag. data can be found by following the “Releases and Publications” link.

Ag Census data for 1987, 1992 & 1997 can also be found here in html tabulated format at:

[http://agcensus.mannlib.cornell.edu/county.php?st\[\]=26&imgmap=agri_state](http://agcensus.mannlib.cornell.edu/county.php?st[]=26&imgmap=agri_state)

Food Assistance dollars: public and non-public food assistance spending in Michigan is tabulated (at the county level) at:

http://www.michigan.gov/fia/0,1607,7-124-5458_7696_10775---,00.html or go to <http://www.michigan.gov/fia/> then follow the “News, Publications & Information” link, then “Statistics” then “Program Statistics”

NOTE: in these tables, “public food assistance” refers to people who receive needs-based cash assistance (such as Family Independence Program (FIP) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)) in addition to Food Stamps. “Non-public assistance” are people who get Food Stamps but are not on “welfare.” “Food Assistance” is the new name for Food Stamps in Michigan and does not include programs such as Women, Infants and Children (WIC), emergency food, etc.

Agriculture and Rural Life in Michigan: A Bibliography of State and Local Literature 1820-1945 <http://agbib.lib.msu.edu/index.cfm>

may help with finding a historical perspective to food and agriculture in your community.

Historical Census Browser <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/#source>

This is a potentially very useful site for looking at historical trends in agricultural, population, and economic census data. Note that 1960 is the most recent decade contained in this browser.

U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder

http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en

Starting point for population, demographic, and business census inquiries.

Bureau of Labor Statistics Data

<http://data.bls.gov/PDQ/outside.jsp?survey=en>

This customized data table generator allows the selection of individual (or groups of) county(ies) as well as by industry code. For example, you could find out how many people were employed in food manufacturing jobs in your county.

Sales & Marketing Management’s Survey of Buying Power and Media Markets

<http://www.cluster2.claritas.com/MySBP/Default.wjsp>

This magazine publishes an annual “survey of buying power” that, among other things, estimates retail sales in food and beverage stores, food service & drinking establishments, and a measure of disposable income. Requires purchase or magazine subscription, but may be available through a local library (e.g., MSU Libraries has electronic access to Sales & Marketing Management Magazine, and the Survey of Buying Power is included as an issue). Contact the Mott Group if you have trouble accessing.

Environmental Working Group’s Farm Subsidy Database

<http://www.ewg.org/farm/region.php?fips=26000>

This database summarizes federal farm subsidies awarded from 1995 to 2003. It is searchable at the county level.

MI Geographic Data Library <http://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mgdl/>

For GIS mapping, this site contains a great deal of GIS data for the state of Michigan.

InfoUSA database of food- and ag-related businesses

InfoUSA compiles proprietary databases of businesses and consumer households. In 2004, the Mott Group purchased from InfoUSA a collection of Michigan food- and ag-related businesses. This database, sortable and searchable by county, city, business type, etc., can be a useful starting point in identifying the food-related businesses in your area. For assistance in acquiring information from the InfoUSA database relevant to your work, contact the Mott Group at mottgroup@msu.edu or 517-432-1612.