Data Resources for Food Systems Assessments

Data exists in many different forms and can be used in various ways to assess and evaluate food systems. Due to the complex nature of food systems, there are numerous places to start regarding understanding existing conditions and needs within community food systems. The food system is comprised of five different sectors ranging from production to resource management, typically viewed as a cycle or process. Similarly, food systems are embedded in our communities and both impacts, and are impacted by, community assets such as our economies, natural and built environment, and equitable resource and decision-making abilities.

This resource is meant to support organizations that are looking for a starting place for developing assessments, maps, and other analysis of local and regional food systems related to food systems sectors and community assets.

The matrix below details links to secondary data sources at the national, state and county levels and suggests place-based organizations that may be able to support in understanding your community food system.

The resource first details quantitative data collection through both primary and secondary sources. It includes resources related to community asset areas of equity, economy, environment, education, wellness and policy and then goes into specific food sectors of production, processing, distribution, consumption and resource management. The last section describes additional primary data research that can be conducted through interviews, focus groups, etc.

The goal of this resource is to continue to highlight the breadth of data that is available as a starting point to understanding your community context. However, it is suggested that you also understand your community’s desires, vision and mission relating to your specific food system area of concern prior to starting. The amount of data available can be overwhelming, and the more this can be honed in, the more strategic data aggregation and analysis will be.

If you have suggestions to additional resources, or questions regarding the tools shared in this resource, please reach out.
Contact: Courtney Long, Food Systems Program Manager: court7@iastate.edu
Evaluation: Bre Miller, Food Systems Program Assistant: millerb@iastate.edu

The tables below identify national, regional and local areas to begin your research. In the resources and indicators column, you can find example reports as well as indicators that may be relevant to that area of research.

The first table indicates secondary data sources. Don’t forget to also consider previous reports that may have been completed in local and regional areas. These types of reports are helpful to review and indicate in assessments, as well as respecting and highlighting the previous work that has been completed with community resources.

Quantitative Data
Primary data collection options
- Surveys + Polls: develop specific questions related to the food system for particular populations- this might be useful for understanding consumer behaviors, priorities around food markets, changes or trends in habits, etc.

Secondary data collection:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Assets</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Resources + Indicators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
<td>Data.gov</td>
<td>USDA Food Access Research Atlas</td>
<td>Research Institutions</td>
<td>Farm to School Equity Assessment Tool</td>
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<td>American Fact Finder</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>State Department of Housing</td>
<td>MSW USC Diversity Toolkit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>USDA Food Access Research Atlas</td>
<td>HUD – Housing Market Analysis</td>
<td>State Department of Justice</td>
<td>Building Movement: Sources of Power</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>State Department of Labor</td>
<td>Racial Equity Tools</td>
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<td>State Department of Health and Human Services</td>
<td>Racial Equity Tools: Community Assessment</td>
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<td>Local Municipality Zoning</td>
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<td>Economy</td>
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</table>
| Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Feeding America  
Food and Nutritional Service  
Opportunity Zones | American Fact Finder  
Census  
Bureau of Economic Research (Department of Commerce)  
Data.gov  
World Bank  
Bureau of Labor Statistics  
USDA ERS: Food Environment Atlas  
Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations | Data.gov  
Farm Service Agency and Disaster Assistance  
USDA ERS: Food Environment Atlas  
U.S. Energy Information Administration  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
NOAA Fisheries  
Place (cities and towns)  
MapGeo  
Open Street Map  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Opportunity Zones  
Farmland Protection  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency | Data.gov  
WorldBank Education Statistics  
National Center for Educational Statistics  
U.S. Department of Education  
Education Data Portal  
Common Core of Data: American Public Schools | Health Data |
| State Department of Cultural Affairs | Research Institutions; County Extension  
State Economic Indicators  
State Rural Development Program  
Department of Commerce  
Economic Development Authority  
Small Business Administration  
Small Business Development Centers | Local Government Community and Economic Development  
County Extension  
Previous Economic Studies  
Community Foundations  
Research Institutions/ Land Grant Colleges  
Example, Iowa | County Extension  
Local Private and Public Schools (K-12) / community college/ university reports | Research Institutions; County Extension  
Community hospitals/ public | Office of Disease Prevention and Health |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
<td>State Department of Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
<td>Department of Public Health tracking programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choose My Plate</td>
<td>Example, Iowa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food and Nutritional Service</td>
<td>health needs assessments</td>
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<td>USDA Food and Nutrition</td>
<td>County Extension</td>
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<td>USDA Census of Agriculture</td>
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<td>Healthy Food Access Portal</td>
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<td>State of Childhood Obesity</td>
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<td>Congress.gov</td>
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<td>Central Intelligence Agency, World Factbook</td>
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<td>Local Government Food Policy Database</td>
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<td>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency</td>
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<td>Johns Hopkins- Coronavirus Resource Center</td>
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<td>World Health Organization: COVID-19</td>
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<td>Track the Recovery</td>
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<td>FEMA Disaster Information</td>
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<td>Disaster Resource Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEMA Disaster Declarations</td>
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<td>State Public Health</td>
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<td>State Department of Natural Resources</td>
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<td>Local Government</td>
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<td>Farmland Trust: Laws by local, state and federal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Systems Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Zoning for Local Foods (In Iowa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USDA Economic and Policy Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Economic Impact on Local Food Markets</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Food System Sectors:
- **Food Systems Dashboard**
- **Food Systems Indicators**
- **USDA AMS Local and Regional Foods**
  - **Maps**
  - **Community Commons Maps**
  - **ATTRA. NCAT Local Food Systems**
  - **Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute Indicator Maps**

### Production
- **Data.gov**
- **USDA Census of Agriculture**
- **AgMrc Food Searcher Tool**
- **Food Safety, gov**
- **Farm Service Agency**
- **USDA**
- **USDA Open Data Catalog**
- **USDA AMS Farmers and Ranchers Market Maker**
- **USDA Food Directories Cooperative Statistics**
- **USDA ERS**
- **USDA ERS: Food Environment Atlas**
- **Farmland Protection**
- **Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations**
- **NOAA Fisheries**

### Processing
- **USDA**
- **USDA Open Data Catalog**
- **Market Maker**
- **USDA ERS: Food Environment Atlas**

### Distribution
- **Market Maker**
- **Farm to School Census**
- **USDA AMS Aggregating and Distribution**
- **USDA ERS**
- **USDA AMS Directories**
- **USDA ERS: Food Environment Atlas**

### Consumption
- **Food and Nutritional Service**
- **USDA Community Tools**
- **Farm to School Census**
- **USDA ERS**

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### Consumption**
- **Food and Nutritional Service**
- **USDA Community Tools**
- **Farm to School Census**
- **USDA ERS**

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**Production**
- Research Institutions; County Extension
- State Department of Agriculture
- **State Food Safety guidelines**
- Department of Natural Resources
- State Market Maker
- Farm Service Agencies

**Processing**
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**Consumption**
- Research Institutions; County Extension
- State Department of Public Health
- State WIC/ SNAP/ and food assistance programs

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**Production**
- Local food directories
- Local city and county planning offices
- Master gardener programs

**Processing**
- Local processing businesses (specialty crops/ dairy/ meat)

**Distribution**
- Local food hub/ CSA/ and other directories
- Regional distributors

**Consumption**
- Local restaurant/ business directories

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**Production**
- Cooperatives Feasibility Study Guide
- Farmland Trust; Laws by local, state and federal
- Food Safety Modernization Act
- North Central Region Center for FSMA
- AgMrc Product Analysis
- ATTRA. NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Podcasts

**Processing**
- Food Safety Modernization Act
- North Central Region Center for FSMA
- Niche Meat Processing

**Distribution**
- Food Safety Modernization Act
- North Central Region Center for FSMA
- New England Farm to Institution Metrics Dashboard

**Consumption**
- USDA Community Food Systems
- Farm to School Network
Qualitative Data
Primary Data Collection
- Coalition notes/ feedback
- Network analysis
  - Department of Health: Force Field Analysis
- Focus groups
- Interviews (track various responses through a spreadsheet similar to below)
  - IF you are interested in social networks/ trust building- consider network analysis mapping and surveying coalitions on trust developed and various areas of connection.

Suggestion: Create a table and make a matrix of who to reach out to in communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Asset Areas</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
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<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Food System Sectors

### Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>

### Transformation + Processing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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### Distribution

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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### Consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</table>

### Resource Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
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<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
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