

# MENOMINEE FOOD SUMMIT

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# Mamaceqtawak



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menominee\\_County,\\_Wisconsin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menominee_County,_Wisconsin)

- Once lived on over 10,000,000 acres of land
- Origin Story
- Mamaceqtawak
- Hunters, gatherers, farmers
- Clan system based on animals, birds, and water beings
- Food was a gift from Mawaw Kohenehnoh
- Kesoq mesek mecem

# Mamaceqtawak



- Menominee Indian Reservation was created by multiple treaties
- County is approximately 234,355 acres or 360 square miles
- Contains roughly 223,500 acres of heavily forested lands, representing the largest single tract of virgin timberland in the State of Wisconsin.
- Comprised of 4 main villages
- Population: 4500...over 9,000 enrolled tribal members
- Major employers: Menominee County, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Menominee Indian School District, Menominee Casino Resort, and Menominee Tribal Enterprise
- The County shares coterminous boundaries with the one Township of Menominee

The College of Menominee Nation is located on the Menominee Indian Reservation in Northeast Wisconsin



# Health Ranking and Background Information

- Menominee County ranked the 72<sup>nd</sup> unhealthiest community in the State of Wisconsin out of 72 counties.
- The vast majority of the Menominee Reservation and much of its surrounding communities are designated as **food deserts**.
- The Menominee Reservation is 235,000 acres of heavily forested land with about 95% of it held in what is known as Sustained Yield Forest and cannot be utilized for anything but forestry practices.

# Menominee Food Summit - Lessons Learned

- Fertile Ground Grant Program - American Indian Cancer Foundation, Shakopee Tribe, American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- Fertile Ground Grant Program - “Promotes planning of health and nutrition policy work benefitting Native American communities.”
- Goal - To create the change that is necessary to give the community the opportunity to be able to live a much healthier lifestyle and build its food sovereignty.

# CMN Projects

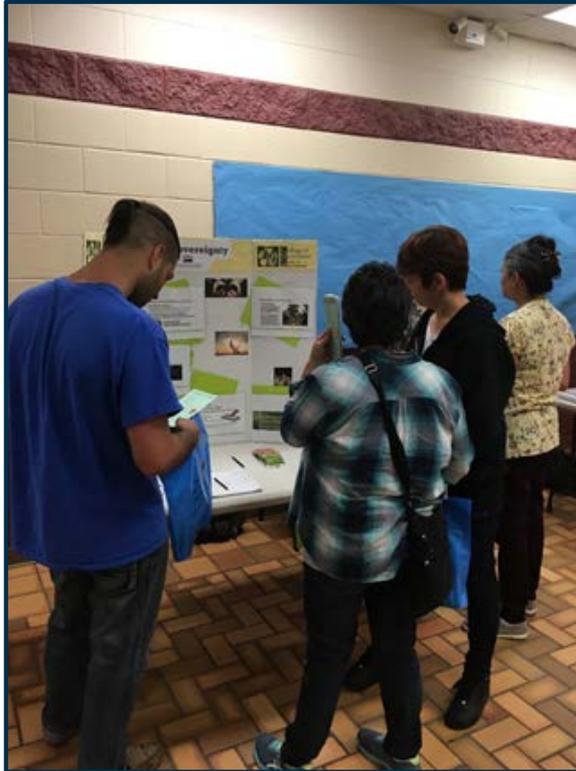
- Kehtekaewak Farmers Market and Community Garden
- Sustainable and traditional farming practices
- Engaging Native youth in local food production and education around agriculture-related career options



# Outreach & Recruitment

## Target Audience

1. Community members
  - Underrepresented
  - Youth
  - Elders
2. Community programs, leaders and health care provider convening.



## Recruitment Efforts

- Green Corn Dance/Seed Distribution
- Electronic flyers on kiosks
- Old school flyers
- Newspaper ads

# Green Corn Dance and Seed Distribution



- Seed Distribution was an annual event of the Menominee Wellness Initiative
- Revitalizing and reconnecting with language and culture
- Dances and songs
- Growing gardens and growing knowledge
- Opportunity for outreach and getting to know community
- Assess community needs
- Build interest in community convening

# Food Summit Questions

Adapted from  
resources from the  
First Nations  
Development Institute  
Food Sovereignty  
Assessment Tool

Building block in  
understanding both  
community and  
service providers

1. What does the term “food sovereignty mean to you personally, to your family, to your community?
2. Identify some elements of food sovereignty and local food-system control.
3. Is food sovereignty a term used in this community? Why or why not?
4. Is the food supply in our community reliable? Is it subject to federal budgetary limitations?
5. Are there people in the community interested in revitalizing traditional agricultural food systems?
6. Do you know what people in this community eat?
7. Are there differences in what different segments of the community populations eats (elders, single families, etc.)? What do you think they eat most?
8. Do you know where people in the community get their food?

# Food Convening Facilitation

- Adapted *Fostering Dialogue Across Divides*
- Structured conversation
- Provides opportunity for every participant to speak
- Goal is to hear others and gather ideas rather than responding

Herzig, M., & Chasin, L. (2006). *Fostering dialogue across divides*. A Nuts and Bolts Guide from the Public Conversations Project.



# Initial Findings

## Q1. What does the term “food sovereignty mean to you personally, to your family, to your community?”

Community	Service Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Availability of fresh, less pesticides, more organic</b></li><li>• Be in charge of what, how much, and when</li><li>• <b>Control quality and nutritional value</b></li><li>• Develop more respect for the food that we have raised. Grateful to not have diesel exhaust on my food.</li><li>• Surviving on what is around us and gathering</li><li>• <b>Culture camp, sovereignty is more than just food. “The past could be the present”</b></li><li>• Not needed approval to plan, hunt, or gather</li><li>• Experimentation with different growth patterns</li><li>• Elements</li><li>• <b>Medicinal purposes, exercising inherent rights</b></li><li>• Less commercialized foods</li><li>• To be able to feed your family, preservation, canning, dehydrating, community gardening</li><li>• <b>Using old ways and new ways</b></li><li>• Learning food preservation from one growing season to the next</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Independence</li><li>• Control of food supply</li><li>• Control food options</li><li>• Food budget</li><li>• Interlinking web of resources</li><li>• Distraction from technology</li><li>• Opportunity</li><li>• Family basic building block of society</li><li>• <b>Choice of what you want to eat</b></li><li>• Not relying on outside sources, solely</li><li>• Limiting outside needs</li><li>• Own choice of food</li><li>• <b>Being able to provide for your family</b></li><li>• Don't have to worry about where food is coming from</li><li>• Making food last throughout the week</li><li>• Independence – brings knowledge</li><li>• Governing self</li><li>• Timing – provisions</li><li>• <b>Preparation of food is a venue for values</b></li><li>• Caring for each other</li><li>• Stewardship and service</li><li>• <b>Power to create food systems and inter-tribal trade</b></li><li>• Learn from others</li><li>• <b>Healthy options for families</b></li><li>• Deciding what food you will consume</li><li>• Decision making</li></ul>

Availability

Quality

Traditional Value\*

Choice

Self Reliance

Traditional Value\*

# Initial Findings

## Q3. Is food sovereignty a term used in this community? Why or why not?

### Community

- I don't think that it is talked about enough in the community—not in the circles I'm in anyway. I never paid attention or was interested. We need more education in the community and an explanation to the community
- **This is a new term. The community is one generation away from being food sovereign. It skipped a generation. Many are learning about it as adults. There are still people around to teach these things**
- It is still practiced. If we don't know it, it is still a part of our lives. We need to be food sovereign and language sovereign.
- There are not sanawpan poles (traditional practice), instead of food sovereignty, what about self sufficiency? Food is sacred
- Food sovereignty is identified differently- the concept is there
- Young people have lost the ways. There are foods we don't see now.
- The young generation only knows how to cook from a box.

### Service Providers

- College of Menominee Nation campus
- Hard to understand term
- Unhealthy options are easier for people
- We are in beginning state – need to spread to reservation businesses
- A strategic plan is a promise
- Having our own grocery store – part of it was economically related, keeping economy local
- More pride in food sovereignty
- Different definitions of food sovereignty
- A high level term not used locally
- There is a desire for food sovereignty, just not being used as a term
- The term “sovereignty” can be intimidating

Community says it is not talked about. The concept is there but how it is talked about is different.

Service Providers believe the community is in the beginning stages of using and understanding. They recognize it is a high level and intimidating term.

# Initial Findings

## Q5. Are there people in the community interested in revitalizing traditional agricultural food systems?

Community	Service Providers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes, both individuals and groups (ex. Menikanekaem) are pushing towards traditional agricultural food systems. But we are lacking upper level management interest and drive. <b>The Tribe and legislature is also lacking interest and drive to support traditional agriculture.</b></li><li>• Yes there are people interested in the way of gardening and using less pesticides.</li><li>• Food Distribution</li><li>• Reaching out to other tribes</li><li>• School systems, teaching them young is important</li><li>• Community fesitval: we have them and it is good to see that for younger kids</li><li>• Menikanakaem is doing a lot as well as Dr. Overstreet and Jeff Grignon and their work with raised and ancient garden beds.</li><li>• Gardens and research plots at SDI as well as at the museum</li><li>• <b>Families on reservation will continue to have gardens and pass down that knowledge</b></li><li>• Neopit had the garden for the Boys and Girls club until recently</li><li>• Harvesting wild rice</li><li>• The seed library</li><li>• Traditional diet at culture camp</li><li>• Changes in community programs</li><li>• Sugar and flour to traditional foods</li><li>• "It's nice to have good choices and not so much food like cake and cookies available"</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• YES</li><li>• Working in garden at museum</li><li>• Young people interested</li><li>• Accomplishment and pride with young people</li><li>• Elders sharing</li><li>• Yes, but time and resources are needed</li><li>• <b>Increased interest – community members conscious of where seeds came from at seed giveaway</b></li><li>• How do we spread this through the schools</li><li>• WRDC – traditional food production</li><li>• Ancient forest and food management</li><li>• Interest in both ancient and modern practices</li><li>• <b>Traditional food at activities</b></li><li>• <b>More people getting back to traditional ways</b></li><li>• Seeing it more on CMN campus than in community</li><li>• Need to take the excitement on campus into the community</li><li>• "Ancient Movers" Pride in going back to roots</li><li>• Ancient – go more organic</li><li>• Inter-tribal coops</li><li>• 638 contract pilot site – Manage food distribution locally</li><li>• Learn to do for ourselves – what does that look like</li><li>• Created side impacts (an awakening)</li><li>• Treasuring food system and our role in the food system</li><li>• Need to involve community but not make decisions for them</li></ul>

**Community says yes and it's the grass roots groups, individuals, within the tribal structures doing the work. Tribal government and big systems are not recognized as having a strong interest...or at least the community is not seeing it.**

**Service Providers are seeing the community interest from youth to Elders, seeing it in food served at events, and traditional practices. Recognition that community needs to be involved in this.**

# Initial Findings

## Q6. Do you know what people in this community eat?

### Meats/ Cheap Meats

- Pork and beef roasts
- Pork hocks
- Side pork
- Hotdogs
- Beef
- Dark chicken meat
- Chicken skin and turkey skin
- Hamburger
- Hamburger and cheap cuts of meat

### Sugary Drinks

- Soda
- Soda
- Sugary soda
- Sundrop
- Bottled juice (Pediatric dentistry)
- Kool aid
- Kool aid
- Gatorade

### White Flour Products

- Frybread
- Frybread
- Frybread
- Frybread
- White bread
- White flour
- Breads
- Carbs
- Noodles
- Pasta
- Flour products

### Convenience Foods

- Pizza
- Cooking skills lacking – microwaveable meals
- Fast food
- Flaming Cheetos
- Fish fries
- Potlucks
- Potlucks
- Fundraisers

### Soups/Chilis

- Chili
- Chili
- Chili
- Fatty soups
- Soups

# Initial Findings

Q6. Do you know what people in this community eat?



***“Health issues tell us about what people in the community are eating. The schools and food distribution also tells us.”—Menominee community member***

***“If I had raised my older kids like I am raising my younger kids, we would not be eating like that.”—Menominee community member***

***“We are blessed we can still hunt, fish, and gather. People still eat these foods, but we are eating too many processed foods.”—Menominee community member***

# Initial Findings

Q8. Do you know where people in the community get their food? What do you think they eat most? (continued)

## Grocery Stores

- Aldis
- Box stores
- Save a lot
- Save a lot
- Walmart
- Walmart

## Programs/ Educational Institutions

- Boys and Girls Club
- Food Distribution
- Food Distribution
- Food Distribution
- Food pantries
- Food Pantries
- Head Start
- Head Start
- Meals on Wheels
- Programs
- Senior Meal Sites
- Schools
- Schools

## Restaurants & Related

- Casino
- Fast food places
- Food stands/fundraisers
- Food Trucks
- Local catering

## Community & Family

- Community events
- Community Events
- Community events
- Family

## Environment

- Farmers Markets
- Land-fishing, hunting
- Locally grown
- Woods/lakes/streams

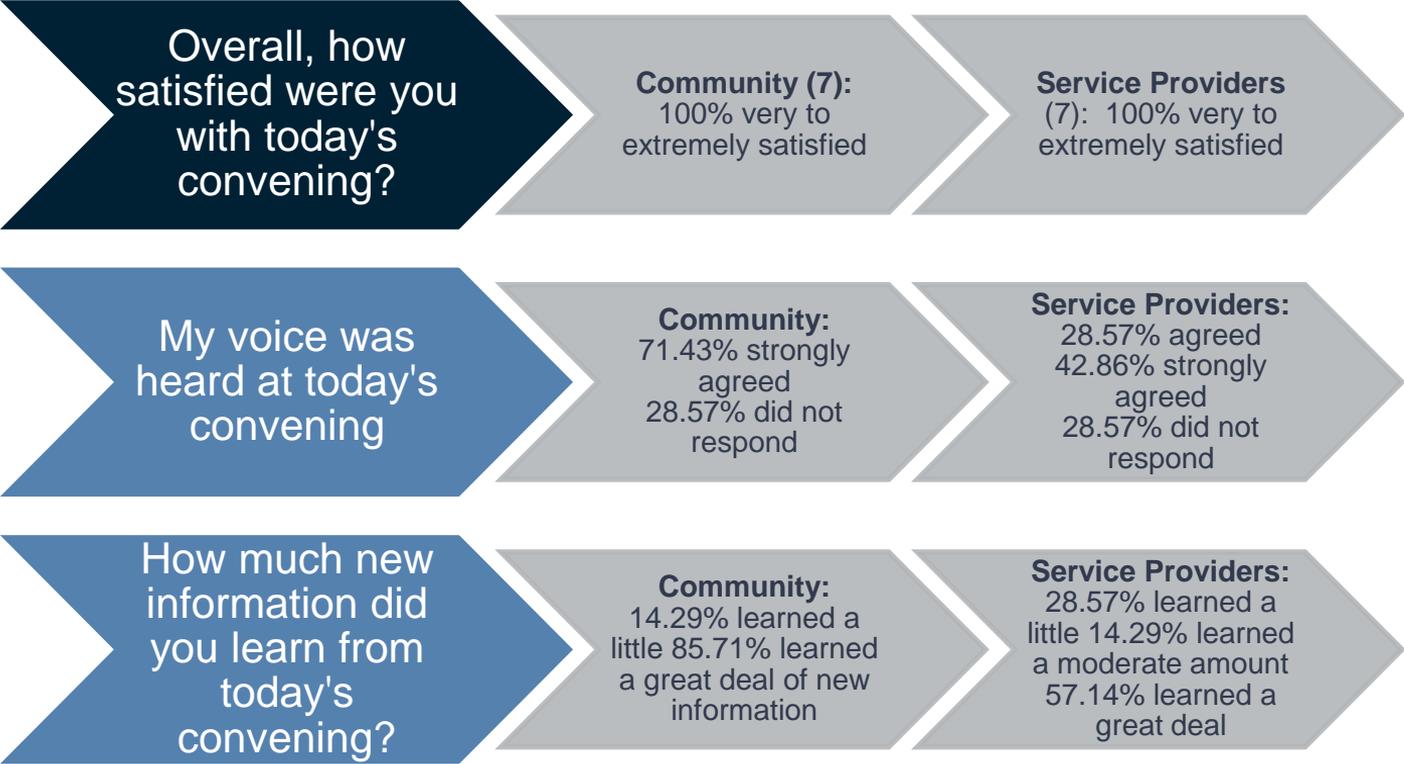
## C-Stores & Other

- C-stores
- C-stores
- Green Bay
- Processed food
- Shawano
- Shawano

***“If you want exposure from different types of foods, you need to travel”***

***—Menominee Community Member***

# Survey Response to Process



# Survey Response to Process

Today's  
convening  
identified specific  
policy strategies

**Community (7):**  
14.29% strongly disagreed  
14.29% agreed  
42.86% strongly agreed  
28.57% did not respond

**Service Providers (7):**  
28.57% were undecided  
42.86% agreed  
28.57% did not respond

I have a clear  
vision of the  
groups direction

**Community:**  
14.29% agreed  
57.14% strongly agreed  
28.57% did not respond

**Service Providers:**  
57.14% were undecided  
14.29% agreed  
28.57% did not respond

I have a clear role  
in the proposed  
work

**Community:**  
14.29% strongly disagreed  
14.29% were unsure  
14.29% agreed  
28.57% strongly agreed  
28.57% did not respond

**Service Providers:**  
42.86% were undecided  
28.57% agreed  
28.57% did not respond

# Survey Response to Process

What new information did you learn today? How do you plan on using that information?

- “The term "Food Sovereignty" is not even in my language or vocabulary. I learned a lot of it is information that I will take with me and think about”
- “Learning what is being worked on in community and knowing we can express our concerns and learn new ideas and be able to help others to become more interested in the process”
- “That food sovereignty is a new, yet, foreign concept, however sustainability is a concept that the community/tribe practices”
- “I learned a lot about the inside voices of people who've been a part of this community and the effects that they've seen throughout the years. I plan on using this information to inform and help change how youth sees our future”
- “Appreciate the round table style of many identities in community to learn about different views to gather a bigger snap shot of what is happening and directions of progress”
- “I'm surprised and pleased at the level of interest in ? improving the Menominee food system. There seems to be plenty of energy if it can be organized”

# Survey Response to Process

What were the strengths or highlights of this convening?

- “Moving forward with a project and learning how the program is happening and interests in it”
- “Everyone got to speak their mind, ideas in a respectable manner. Good variety of people--jobs, ages, etc”
- “Very comfortable to share ideas”
- “Moderator made everyone welcomed and at ease”
- “The wide array of departments that were represented”
- “I like the format so that all voices were heard”
- “As a community member we understand food is an issue that permeates/ripples into larger issues of healthcare traditional values, community engagement, etc...We want to be aware of and more control for food choices and availability”
- “equal voices”

# American Indian Cancer Foundation

## Facilitation: Definition of “Food Sovereignty”

### *Collective Statement Drafts: (preliminary AICAF drafted collective statements)*

1. The Menominee Nation defines food sovereignty as a continued assertion of our Menominee rights/identity, values and relationships through preservation of traditions. This includes the restoration of traditional Indigenous foods, language and culture.
2. The Menominee Nation defines food sovereignty as a celebration of reconnecting to self-sustaining Menominee traditions, culture and language through increasing access and availability to healthy Indigenous foods to positively impact the mind, body and spirits of future generations.

### *Collective Statement Input (ideas that were not captured in the final collective statement or drafts)*

1. Independence, wants and needs.
2. A tribally sustained community for future generations will be promoted through the restoration of healthy and traditional Indigenous foods, language and culture...
3. ...through education, community involvement and collaboration to support a tribally sustained environment for future generations.

# Collective Statement

“The Menominee Nation describes food sovereignty as living our traditional Menominee ways, identity, values and relationships to provide a tribally sustained community food system for future generations.”



# VISTA Perspective

- Less stress on economic profitability, more stress on culture, generational learning, and having local control
- *Instead of food sovereignty, what about self sufficiency?*
- Food sovereignty is part of a deeper political conversation
- Beyond the textbook definition

# Next Steps— Fall Community Covering

1. To introduce Indigenous and local foods to at least twenty community members through tasting experiences and recipe sharing.
2. To seek input from at least twenty more community members on the recently drafted food sovereignty definition.
3. To educate at least twenty community members to the importance of Indigenous seeds and seed saving by viewing a documentary movie

