

## Nature Everywhere Community Action Challenge Landscape Scans

The early phase of Nature Everywhere Communities involves a planning phase to "map the landscape" of the local systems both literally and figuratively. This planning process helps teams analyze assets, gaps, opportunities, and barriers. The aim is to identify, target and coordinate on strategies best suited to increase a community's ability to expand children's equitable access to nature.

Three key landscape areas include **1) stakeholders, 2) programs and experiences** and **3) policies and funding**. Related and often overlapping steps include review and layering of GIS data, and youth and resident engagement. The team can collect information via group brainstorms, surveys or interviews. *How a team collects the information is less important. What's most important is that the community engages in the assessment process itself.* In other words, if you prefer another format or already have a similar scan to update, consider additions and updates based on the key questions outlined below.

### SECTORS TO EXPLORE

<b>Education</b>	K12 schools/school districts, Early Childhood centers/ providers, school-based initiatives
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Parks & Recreation, Libraries, Transportation, Public Works
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>	Public Health Agencies, Hospitals and Clinics, Healthcare Providers
<b>Out-of-School Time</b>	Faith-based organizations, Community Centers, Youth-Serving Organizations, Zoos & Aquariums
<b>Food Access &amp; Security</b>	Food Centers, Social Welfare Organizations, Community Gardens
<b>Nonprofits &amp; Community-Based Orgs</b>	Conservation corps, nature centers, conservancies, neighborhood groups, groups led by or principally involving people of color

### KEY QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

**Engagement of Stakeholders & Local Conversations** builds understanding of who in the Sectors to Explore is already connecting children to nature in your community.

- Who are the local champions and/or influencers in the community for promoting or supporting access to nature for children?
- Who are the key players - individuals or organizations - providing services, funding or making decisions about children's access to nature and nature-based experiences?
- What coalitions or collaborations are currently in place that discuss children and nature connections? Who is involved in that collaboration?
- What is the current state and prominence of public discussions - in media, public meetings, etc. - about connecting children to nature?

**Programs and Experiences** include formal and planned programming, one-time events, as well as readily available nature experiences such as natural play areas and across the Sectors to Explore.

- What data or maps already exist regarding children’s connections to nature?
- What departments or organizations offer nature-based programs and/or experiences?
- What program or experience is available, and how often does it run?
- What population does it serve? Geography, race, neighborhood?
- Roughly how many children participate in these programs?
- Has the program tracked outcomes or impact?

**Public Policy and Funding** present opportunities to scale and sustain an initiative within existing systems.

Approach	Questions for Community Assessment	Related Agencies or Resources
<b>Local Public Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What local public agencies dedicate budget streams, grant funding, staff time, or facilities to support children’s connections to nature?</li> </ul>	Parks & Recreation; Office of Sustainability; agencies related to health; infrastructure-related agencies
<b>Public Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What local policies and plans are in development with the potential to include language or emphasize connecting children with nature?</li> <li>• What are the related timelines?</li> </ul>	Parks master plan; early childhood initiative; city and capital spending plan; stormwater management/green infrastructure plan; youth master plan; urban forestry plan; sustainability plan; and community health needs assessment.
<b>School District Funding and Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are school districts in your area primed for partnership?</li> </ul>	School district capital plans; bond plans; sustainability plans; school district outdoor or nature-based initiatives; levy plans.
<b>Federal Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What federal funding has your community applied for or received that may align with connecting children to nature?</li> <li>• What state or local lead agency administers the grant? Who leads the application development process?</li> <li>• What federal funding applications are getting prepared locally? What is the timeline for submission, who leads the application process?</li> </ul>	USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry funding, EPA Clean Water State Revolving Fund allocation, Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant, EPA Community Change grant.
<b>State Agencies and Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What state funding has a local application won recently / what applications are getting prepared locally, with potential relevance for connecting children to nature? Which local agency or coalition leads the local application process?</li> </ul>	No Child Left Inside; Outdoor Equity Funds; state capital funds; state sustainability plans; state-related health plans; state-related parks plans - see <a href="#">Youth Outdoor Policy Playbook</a> .