

Mapping networks you want to connect and support

This process is useful for a board or coordinating group that wants to support and connect small networks, such as farmers markets or community gardens.

First, on a large butcher paper or whiteboard, use PostIt notes to create maps of each small network. You might have one or two people who know a network draw the map for that network.

On each PostIt note, put the name of a person from that small network. Then arrange the PostIt notes so that the most central and active members are in the center. Draw lines between those who are well-connected. Then put the people who are less active around the edge of the core and draw lines to the others if they work together frequently. Use dotted lines if they are less connected. Then add names of people or organizations who support that small network.

Once all the small networks are completed, draw lines to show connections among the small networks, if any.

Also do the network among your board or coordinating group, and draw lines of connection to the small networks.

Then analyze the network:

1. Are some small networks very well connected? Why?
2. Are some networks poorly connected? Why? What could be done to help them become better connected?
3. How could the small networks be better connected? Do you know what issues are important to the networks that might be a reason to convene them?
4. Are we well connected to each network? What could help us improve our connections?