AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

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HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
WHAT IS IT?

• Asset-based planning
• Community-building
• Community capacity-building
FEATURES OF ASSET-MAPPING

• Asset-Based: Uncovers Services/talents/skills/resources found in the community right now – may expose gaps

• Internally Focused: Relies on the community’s assets, not on those found outside of it

• Relationship Driven: Seeks to build linkages among local people, institutions, and organizations
ABCD

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IN SHORT

“It is a way to assess and mobilize what a community has.”

It’s a PROCESS.
CORE THEORIES

• **Assets**: Gifts, talents, dreams, hopes, fears
• **Relationships**: Relationship-driven, constantly build connections
• **Inside-out**: Debunking that outside resources are need, self-sufficient, sustainable
BASIC STEPS

• Recognize delineate assets
• Map/record the assets
• Mobilize assets and relationships towards an end .....Efficient service delivery...in the case of HSC resource allocation
MAPPING: EXAMPLE MAP 1

Local History Assets

[Image of a hand-drawn map with various interconnected elements labeled as places, people, and ideas related to history and community engagement.]

IDEAS
- Local History Walking Tour
- Podcast
- Map + Guide
- Performance
- Reenactment
- Dance
- Art in the Early 1700s, 1830s, 1930s, 2030s

VIRTUAL TIME CAPSULE

ACTIVITIES
- Publishing (chronicles, quantifying, projecting/forecasting, critique, not accounting)
- Designing, Local & Terrace, Writer Development (development), mapping, advertising, measurement, cartography, past times, work & community events
EXAMPLE MAP 1

2-1-1 Service

- Health Care
- Churches
- Community Resources
- Food
- Education
- Government
- EPA Sites
OVERVIEW

• The concept of asset mapping
• The importance of asset mapping
• The benefits of asset mapping
• How asset mapping is done
• Relationship between asset mapping and needs assessment
MAKING A COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE:

Traditional “Needs” Approach

- Meeting of local leaders & citizens come together
- Discussion focused on problems & concerns in the community
- Maybe a survey of residents on issues and problems

**Final Product= laundry list of “the negatives!”**
MAKING A COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE:

Asset Mapping Approach

• Identify:
  1. Resources, Skills & talents of community
  2. Capabilities available (or possible) through local organizations & institutions
  3. Needs

Then tackle important issues impacting the community!
FEATURES OF ASSET MAPPING

• **Asset-Based**: Uncovers talents/skills found in the community right now
• **Internally Focused**: Relies on the community’s assets, not on those found outside of it
• **Relationship Driven**: Seeks to build linkages among local people, institutions, and organizations
IMPORTANCE OF ASSET MAPPING

- Create awareness of local resources
- Use resources to identify community connections, meet community needs, & other activities
- Recognize and value the resources within communities
INVENTORY OF LOCAL INFORMAL ORGANIZATIONS

• Examine printed materials
  • Newspapers/Community directories
• Contact local institutions
  • Schools/Churches/Parks & Recreation/Libraries
• Contact individuals who seem to know what is going on in their community or neighborhoods
• Find out the activities of these informal groups
HOW ASSETS FIT TOGETHER

Local Institutions

Citizens Associations

Civil Events

Youth Clubs

Gifts of Individuals

Youth

Artists

Local Treasure

Chest of Talents

Seniors

Community Volunteers

Elders

Charitable Groups

Cultural Groups

Businesses

Schools

Parks

Libraries

Hospitals

Community College
HOW TO . . .

• Define your community or “study area”
• Determine what you want to do with the information
• Select the assets you want to identify
• Identify any previous asset mapping activity
• Develop a plan to collect the information
• Map the assets of the community
• Identify community issues & needs
• Put it all together
DEFINE YOUR COMMUNITY

• Specific population: elderly, persons with disabilities, youth, senior, non English speakers etc.

• Geographic boundaries
DEFINE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO WITH THE INFORMATION COLLECTED

• Create a community resource guide
• Create a searchable database of community resources to tap for future initiatives
• Develop programs
• Allocate scarce resources for greatest impact
SELECT WHAT ASSETS YOU WANT TO IDENTIFY

What skills do you need to identify?

- Start with pre-existing asset inventory tool
- Add and delete skills
- Keep focused on what you will do with this information
  - Build on existing resources
  - Respond to existing needs
IDENTIFY ANY PREVIOUS ASSET MAPPING ACTIVITY

• How recent was it?
• Will it provide the information you are looking for?
• What did or did not work well?
• What is needed now?
DEVELOP A PLAN TO COLLECT INFORMATION

• When do you need the data?
• What methods will you use to collect the info?
• What resources (people, copying, database creation and entry, facilitators) do you need to collect the info?
• Who is going to do what and by when?
SAMPLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

• Interviews
• Focus groups
• Community resident surveys
• Community forum
• Dashboard surveys
• Inventory of skills, resources, or institutions
• Secondary Analysis: Pre-existing data sets (crime, census, housing)
FOCUS GROUP

Way to gather the opinions/ideas from a small, targeted group of citizens.

Advantages
• Easy to conduct
• Provides detailed info
• Allows for issue probing
• Stimulates thinking and discussion

Disadvantages
• Ideas generated not necessarily prevalent
• Small sample for effort
• Difficult to analyze
• Quiet folks suppressed
• Requires participation
COMMUNITY FORUM

Public meetings that involve residents to express their concerns about community issues, problems, and needs.

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SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Data that are collected about a particular audience without having direct contact with that audience. It can often provide insight about emerging trends or issues in a particular community.

**Advantages**
- Data already exists
- Fast & easy to access
- Data available for many geographic levels

**Disadvantages**
- Representative sample may not be accurate
- Gaps in data
- Requires inferences
- Lack of Data Richness
COMMUNITY SURVEY

Help one to gather info about local attitudes regarding precisely defined issues, problems or opportunities.

Advantages
• Wide distribution
• Good for data analysis
• Strong sample of the population

Disadvantages
• Expensive
• Requires skill/time
• Suffers low return rate
• Poor qualitative tool
INTERVIEWS

Conversation with a purpose, designed to help you gather information about peoples assumptions/perceptions of activities in your community. They are useful when looking for in-depth information on a particular topic.

Advantages
- Detailed information
- Allows for clarification/follow-up on questions
- Personal contact builds rapport

Disadvantages
- Time-consuming
- Requires skill/time
- Information is hard to summarize
- Little quantitative value
INFORMATION COLLECTION TIPS

Ask advice of target population

Think outside the box

- Web/Email Surveys
- Newspaper inserts
- PDA/Laptops

Think Ahead – strategic
MAP THE ASSETS OF YOUR COMMUNITY
IDENTIFY COMMUNITY ISSUES OR NEEDS

What is a Needs Assessment?

• A formal tool that involves the identification of gaps
• Placing gaps in some type of priority order
• Making decisions on which of the priority needs warrant the attention and resources of the community.
PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

• Build relationships among your local assets
• Explore how assets can be mobilized to improve the needs you identified (such as expanding job opportunities, improving education, better health care services, funding needs)
• Engage the community in visioning and planning