

Need is defined as a gap between current and desired conditions. Examples could include food or housing for families, or the concept of need could be more abstract, such as the need for higher self-esteem among the youth in the community or the need for greater respect for cultural diversity. A way to identify a community need is to conduct a community needs assessment, which is a systematic process for determining and addressing needs or *gaps* between current conditions or wants. Conducting a community needs assessment can help stakeholders identify the most prominent needs in the community.

**PREPARE**

The first step in the needs assessment process should be to engage those who represent the community and who are interested in community growth and development.

1. Please list the stakeholders who should be involved and their roles in the needs assessment process (e.g., law enforcement, local government leaders, social service workers):

Stakeholder Name	Role

2. Please define the goal(s) of the needs assessment; this will help establish mutual understanding and a common focus among all those involved in this process. For example, a common goal of a needs assessment may be to identify issues facing the adolescent population in the community. Please list goals below:

1)	
2)	
3)	

3. Please list the timeline for conducting the needs assessment:

Deliverables (i.e., tasks to be completed)	Projected Completion Date	Assignee (i.e., person or persons completing or overseeing the completion of the task)
<i>Example: Create and disseminate online survey to community members</i>	<i>January 15, 2017</i>	<i>John Smith</i>

4. Please list the budget for conducting the needs assessment:

Needs Assessment Total Budget	\$ _____
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5. Is there available funding for the needs assessment?

- Yes  No

6. If funding is not available, identify some potential funding sources. Please check some possible sources that could assist you in obtaining funding:

- Grant Funding     
  Community Funding     
  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Financial Donations     
  Corporations

**DATA COLLECTION**

There are several methods used to collect data for a needs assessment, such as accessing public records, hosting a community forum, conducting focus groups and/or interviews, and implementing surveys.

1. Please check the sources that you plan to or would like to use to collect data from and/or on for your needs assessment:

- Infant/Toddler     
  Older Adults (65+)     
  School Staff  
 Middle Childhood     
  Law Enforcement     
  Faith Community  
 Adolescents     
  Public Leaders     
  Medical Personnel  
 Young Adults     
  Community Service Organizations  
 Adults

2. What methods will you use to collect data (check all that apply)?

- Public Records     
  Focus Groups     
  Surveys  
 Community Forums     
  Interviews     
  Other \_\_\_\_\_



3. Please list any factors that influence the kind and focus of the assessment.

Demographics of respondents (e.g., age, sex, education)	
Community domain (e.g., school, workplace, community center)	
Size and scale of the population of interest (e.g., individuals, groups within the community, whole community, multiple communities)	
Total number of respondents from whom you would like to collect data (i.e., 45 youth in middle school, 5 law enforcement officers, 5 school staff)	

4. Please list the questions that will be used during data collection.

1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	

5. Please list the person or persons who will be in charge of asking the questions and/or collecting the data.

Name	Role in the Data Collection Process



## ANALYZE RESULTS

A thoughtful analysis will help generate an in-depth understanding of the issue or problem and, consequently, can help you develop an action plan for addressing the issue or problem.

1. Please list any potential resources you plan to use to assist you with analyzing the results (e.g., Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, U.S. Census Bureau):

1)	
2)	
3)	

2. Below are some questions to consider when reviewing the results of the needs assessment. Use the notes section to add information related to your data analyses:

Question	Notes
Are there patterns or themes?	
Are the results clear?	
Are the results clinically or statistically significant?	
Do the results make sense practically?	
Are there recommendations about strengthening community initiatives in the results?	
Do the results indicate that more data need to be collected?	
Do the results provide any further information about community needs?	



## SHARE RESULTS

Sharing the results from the needs assessment with stakeholders, community members, and funders can assist in strengthening support and confidence, providing justification for funding, and securing buy-in to address the issue.

1. Who will you share your results with (check all that apply)?

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Assessment Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Members | <input type="checkbox"/> Affected Population |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholders          | <input type="checkbox"/> Funding Sources   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____         |

2. How will you share your results with stakeholders (check all that apply)?

- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Newsletters | <input type="checkbox"/> Infographic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Page Summary    | <input type="checkbox"/> Email               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

## ADDRESSING THE NEED

Once a need has been identified, an action plan should be developed that addresses the most prominent problem or issue in the community. The first step in developing an action plan is to determine whether the community has the capacity and necessary resources to address the identified issue.

***Please Note:** This tool was developed based on the review of Literature and Tools related to Community Needs & Readiness. Please see our Community Needs & Readiness Reference List and Resource List.*

*Clearinghouse Technical Assistance (TA) Specialists are available to offer support and guidance through the program selection, implementation, and evaluation process and are available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT Monday through Friday. Use the information below to contact us!*

