

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

DISCOVERING MINISTRY EVANGELISM POSSIBILITIES IN YOUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

“Need is the trigger which activates God’s call to minister if we have the heart to hear and respond.” Albert L. Meiburg, *Called to Minister*

The involvement of church leaders in a two-day effort makes this community needs assessment unique and practical. By appointment and in teams of two, volunteers visit local agencies, organizations, and community leaders who provide services to needy people and families. The assessment focuses on unmet needs in the community.

Purpose of Assessment

1. To learn about community services
2. To assess community problems and unmet needs
3. To establish relationships with community
4. To determine how Christians and churches can become involved in ministry

Participants in Assessment

1. Church and/or Associational staff
2. Missions Development Council members – especially the survey director
3. Other volunteers

Target Agencies/Individuals for Interviews:

- Senior Adult Centers
- Heat Start Programs
- Senior Adult day-care centers
- Police precincts
- Sheriff departments
- Fire departments
- Salvation Army
- Habitat for Humanity
- Human services departments
- Public health departments
- Mental health departments
- Counseling services
- Alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs
- Food banks
- Community cooperative ministries
- Food pantries/soup kitchens
- Shelters
- Vocational rehabilitation services
- School counselors
- Civil/Criminal court administrators
- Chaplains
- Jail and prison administrators
- Housing project managers/resident council presidents
- Multihousing community managers
- City mayors/managers
- City council/county commission members
- Hospital administrators/chaplains
- Military base commanders/chaplains

Planning the Assessment

Establish a community needs assessment study group. This group will define the area to be surveyed. There are two ways to define the area. (For example, major city/community or select agencies/individuals.

Preparing Assignments:

1. Determine the agencies/individuals to be surveyed.
2. Select a date for the assessment.
3. Recruit church volunteers to conduct interviews. Enlist the same number of volunteers as the number of agencies to be visited.
4. Set appointments with agencies, organizations, and community leaders. Each team of two volunteers will visit two agencies. Schedule half the appointments for 10 o'clock and the other half for 11 o'clock.
5. Send a letter of confirmation one week before the appointment date. Include in the letter the seven questions to be discussed in the interview

Day of Assessment

1. Schedule for the community needs survey:

First Day

- 8:30 am Continental Breakfast
8:50 am Pairing of teams and distribution of assignment cards. (Avoid sending couples together.)
9:00 am Orientation/Interview assignments
9:30 am Departure for appointments
10:00 am First appointment
11:00 am Second appointment
Noon Lunch and sharing, time to complete written reports
1:30 pm Preparation and printing of a report of ministry possibilities. (Print enough copies for the evaluation session.)

Second Day

(This session could be scheduled for a later date if more convenient.)

- 10:00 am Presentation for the ministry possibilities report and implications for strategic planning.

2. Give each volunteer a card listing the agency name, contact person to be interviewed, address, phone number, directions, and time of interview. Each team will receive appointment cards for two agencies located near each other.
3. Distribute "calling cards" to all volunteers. Volunteers will print their names on the cards to leave with the people they visit. Cards may be from the church or the association.
4. Give field interview forms to all volunteers. The form lists the questions to be discussed and provides suggestions for beginning and concluding the interview. Review the form and the format of the interview.
5. Give interview report forms to volunteers when they return from their appointments so they can complete them.
6. Have a typist prepare the assessment report.

Implementation and Action for Community Ministries

The Missions Development Council can lead in developing plans for implementing community ministries.

- Prayerfully select a ministry project.
- Define the purpose of the ministry.
- Develop action plans to reach the desired goals
- Secure resources for the ministry
- Assign responsibility
- Receive progress reports and evaluate results
- Celebrate God's activity.

FIELD INTERVIEW FORM

1. Introduce yourselves and present calling cards with your names and phone numbers.
2. Explain that you are one of many teams doing a community needs assessment.
3. Say, "Thank you for your time. We represent churches that want to learn about the needs in the community and how to help meet them."

Our goals are to "**Build relationships** with community agencies and leaders, **Learn** about community services, **Assess** problems and community needs, and **Determine** how churches can be involved. (Ask questions...take careful notes...obtain quotes.)

1. What services do you provide?

2. What problems do you face as an agency?

3. What problems and need exist among those you serve? (Write quotes.)

4. What trends do you see that will affect your work over the next five years?

5. What can a church, a group of churches, or volunteers do to help? (List numerically by priority.)

6. If you had an opportunity to speak to challenge church people, what would you say?

7. May we pray for you and your work before we leave? (Pray for the person interviewed, the agency/organization, and the people/families served.)

FIELD REPORT FORM

Date _____ Name of person interviewed _____

Name of Agency _____

Address and Phone Number _____

Who conducted the interview?

1. What did you learn about the agency and its services?

2. What did you learn about the problems the agency faces? What are problems and needs in the community and among those served by the agency? (Write quotes.)

3. What trends did you learn about that affect future services?

4. List numerically, in priority order, the areas where volunteers are needed in existing services and programs. Also list the services and ministries that should be implemented by a church or group of churches. Specify clearly what should be done.

5. What final statement was made by the person you interviewed? (Write quote.)

6. State briefly your evaluation of your experience in this needs assessment.

