

Community Needs Assessment. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2013.

Field Guidelines for Conducting a Community Needs Assessment

In order to effectively identify, plan, and implement needed policy, systems and environmental changes to improve health of communities, it is essential that we work with these communities to assess their current situation and provide support and technical assistance for them to make the necessary changes for improvement.

After developing an action plan based on the community needs assessment, you will prepare a **report** and **presentation** on your findings and recommendations.

This document will walk you through the steps of conducting a community needs assessment and includes the following sections:

[CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST](#)

The checklist can be used to help you plan for the community needs assessment as well as develop a community action plan.

[COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT](#)

This section helps you prepare a report based on your findings. You should develop a report for your mentor as well as for stakeholders, partners, and/or other community leaders who need to understand the community assessment process and results.

[HOW YOUR FACILITATOR WILL ASSESS THE REPORT](#)

This section provides you with the criteria your mentor will use to assess your work (i.e., the report).

[POWERPOINT™ PRESENTATION](#)

This section contains guidelines for presenting your needs assessment report and includes a sample PowerPoint template.

Conducting a Community Needs Assessment Checklist

Evaluating a Program

- Step 1:** Plan for a community needs assessment
 - Identify and assemble a diverse team
 - Develop a team strategy
 - Define needs assessment goals
 - Define how data will be used
 - Determine timeline
 - Determine roles and responsibilities
 - Assign tasks
 - Identify how decisions will be made
 - Select method or tool for conducting needs assessment
 - Define community to assess (e.g., region, village)
 - Identify community sectors to assess (e.g., health care, work sites)
 - Identify community components to assess (e.g., nutrition, physical activity)
 - Develop questions to ask for each community component
 - Select sites and number of sites to visit within each sector
 - Determine existing data to use or methods for collecting new data
 - Identify key informants to contact
- Step 2.** Conduct the needs assessment
 - For guidance on *how* to conduct a needs assessment (for example, how to prepare for and conduct interviews and focus groups), access the North Carolina Department of *Health Community Assessment Guide Book* at <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/databook/2002/GuideBook2002.pdf>
- Step 3.** Review and rate the data
 - Develop a rating scale
 - Make a team decision on ratings
- Step 4.** Record and review consolidated data
 - Enter the data
 - Total the data
 - Summarize the data

Evaluating a Program

- Step 5.** Develop a community action plan
 - Identify community assets and needs
 - Prioritize needs
 - Develop and prioritize strategies for improvement
 - Create an action plan for top priority strategies

Community Needs Assessment Worksheets

You may use the following worksheets to support your community needs assessment efforts. Examples are found in the Participant Workbook on Pages 41-42.

ASSETS	NEEDS
Strategies:	

Prioritizing Strategies Worksheet
An example is found in the Participant Workbook on Page 45

Strategy	Time (1-5)	Resources (1-5)	Competing Priorities (1-5)	Total (T x R x C)	Rank

Community Action Plan
An example is found in the Participant Workbook on Pages 46-47

Policy/Environmental Change Strategy	
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Project Period Objective	Community Component(s)

Annual Objective(s):	Sector(s)	No. of People Reached

Activities	Person Responsible	Timeline

Community Needs Assessment Report

Keep the following tips in mind when writing your Community Needs Assessment report:

- Ensure that your report is well written, clear, and concise.
- Ensure your report highlights the main points and findings.
- Provide a description of acronyms before they are used.
- Use language (e.g., technical jargon) as appropriate for the audience(s).

Include the following sections in the Community Needs Assessment report:

Introduction

Describe the community that was assessed (e.g., city, district), the reason why a community needs assessment was conducted, the objectives of assessment, and the composition of your community team.

Methods

Describe the steps taken to gather data (e.g., focus groups, observations). Describe tools used for recording data (e.g., *CHANGE* tool). Describe methods for analyzing data.

Sectors and community components

Describe the sectors and community components that were assessed and why.

Results

Systematically report the results of the data collection efforts used in the community needs assessment, including assets, needs and strategies from the Policy, Systems and Change Strategies Worksheet.

Summary and Conclusion

Summarize findings and identify next steps, recommendations (from Community Action Plan), and any requests for data or support from other organizations.

How Your Mentor Will Assess the Report

You will write a report based on your findings and submit to your mentor for review. Your mentor will use the following points and criteria to assess your report. Based on the feedback you receive from your mentor, you will revise the report and then develop a PowerPoint presentation that contains similar content as the report. You will conduct the presentation in front of your mentor and peers and hand in your revised report to your mentor at that time.

Points	Description
5 = excellent	The element is present, consistent with the standard described in the instructions and provided in the classroom, and is of a remarkable/outstanding quality.
4 = good	The element is present and consistent with the standard described in the instructions and provided in the classroom.
3 = satisfactory	The element is present and may be used even though it may not completely follow the standard described in the instructions and provided in the classroom.
2 = poor	The element is present but flawed or of poor quality.
1 = absent	The element is absent from the report.
NA = not applicable	The element is not relevant to this report.

Category	Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Introduction 1a	Describe the community that was assessed, including geographic area (e.g., city, district).						
Introduction 1b	Describe the reason why the needs assessment was conducted.						
Introduction 1c	Describe the composition of your community team.						
Methods 1a	Describe the steps taken to gather data (existing data sources and new data collection methods).						

Category	Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Methods 1b	Describe tools used for recording data (e.g., <i>CHANGE</i> tool).						
Sectors & community components 1a	Describe the sectors that were assessed and why (e.g., health care, work sites, schools).						
Sectors & community components 1b	Describe the community components assessed and why (e.g., nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use).						
Results	Share results of community needs assessment, including assets, needs and strategies to address areas for improvement.						
Summary & Conclusion 1a	Describe next steps.						
Summary & Conclusion 1b	Describe overall recommendations (from Community Action Plan).						
Summary & Conclusion 1c	Describe any requests for data or support from other organizations.						

Program Evaluation PowerPoint™ Presentation

You may use the following PowerPoint presentation template to present your community needs assessment findings with your mentor, stakeholders and/or community leaders.

PowerPoint Template Slides	
<div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Community Needs Assessment</h3> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A template for communities to share data</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Add picture or graphic</p> <p style="text-align: center;">date</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">1</p>	<div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Overview of [insert organization name]</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide the audience with an introduction to your organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Name – Contact information for key individuals – Location ▪ List your organization's mission and goals </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">2</p>
<div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Overview of Community Needs Assessment</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a brief description or definition of the community needs assessment process ▪ List 1–3 benefits of conducting an effort such as this ▪ Provide examples of assessment efforts either in your community or your organization </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">3</p>	<div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Community Needs Assessment Process</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how the community needs assessment was conducted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Briefly discuss the sectors and community components assessed – Describe the data collection process (consider adding a snapshot/screen shot of the tool itself) – Share the overall time frame to conduct the assessment (Did it take 3-5 months or 10-12? Why or why not?) – List sources/ key informants (remember to keep participants anonymous) </div> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt; font-weight: bold;">4</p>

PowerPoint Template Slides

Community Team

- Explain the community team composition
- Explain why you chose those team members
- Discuss the roles of the team members
- List the organizations represented (if applicable)
- Discuss how you developed the team (e.g., size of the team, number of meetings)

5

Data Gathering

- Indicate what methods you used
 - focus groups
 - observations
 - surveys
- Add examples of the data collection tools
 - Sample of survey or focus group questions
 - Pictures from walk audit

6

Analysis Methods

- Describe how data were analyzed
- Include sample tables

7

Methods for Identifying Priorities

- Describe methods the team used to identify community assets and needs
- Describe methods used to prioritize needs

8

Presenting the Findings

- For each sector, highlight main community assets and needs
- Discuss some of the top priority strategies to address needs

9

Conclusions / Discussion

- Describe conclusions based on assessment findings
- Include what data gathering and analysis methods were useful and which were not very effective
- Include any comments for discussion

10

PowerPoint Template Slides

Next Steps

- Explain your next steps
- Talk about developing the Community Action Plan
- Depending on the audience, solicit support for your efforts (e.g., time, input, resources)