

RESOURCE TOOL

STEPS FOR CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT



THE PROCESS FOR CONDUCTING A COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- **Step 1:** Identify the Issue.
- **Step 2:** Define “community” with respect to the issue. This may be a geographical area, a group within that area, an organization or any other type of identifiable “community.”
- **Step 3:** To determine your community’s level of readiness to address the issue, conduct a Community Readiness Assessment using key respondent interviews.
- **Step 4:** Once the assessment is complete, you are ready to score your community’s stage of readiness for each of the six dimensions, as well as your overall score. Analyze the results of the assessment using both the numerical scores and the content of the interviews.
- **Step 5:** Develop strategies to pursue that are stage-appropriate. For example, at low levels of readiness, the intensity of the intervention must be more low key and personal.
- **Step 6:** After a period of time, evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts. You can conduct another assessment to see how your community has progressed.
- **Step 7:** As your community’s level of preparedness to address an issue increases, you may find it necessary to begin to address closely related issues. Utilize what you’ve learned to apply the model to another issue.

OBJECTIONS & CONCERNS TO CONDUCTING COMMUNITY READINESS ASSESSMENTS

We already know what the community needs.

Maybe you do. Maybe everyone knows what they are, and there’s no doubt about it.

If the building is burning, put out the fire. You don’t need a needs assessment to tell you that. If the crime rate has doubled, do something about crime. And hopefully soon. Leave your surveys at home.

But a lot of the time, the needs are not quite so clear. You (and everyone else) have opinions and biases, but does everyone feel the same way? Wouldn’t it be worth checking what other people think, just to clarify whether others share your point of view? You might or might not revise your opinions a little, but it’s worth it to find out.

We’re busy people and just want to get going!

Fine...but you wouldn’t usually want to get involved in something that most of the community doesn’t really care about. If you do a needs assessment, you will feel more comfortable knowing that what you want to do meets a real community need. Otherwise, you might be wasting your time.

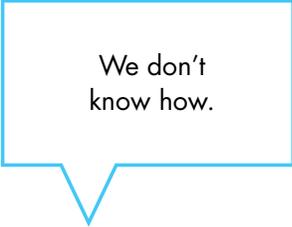
We don’t have time to do a survey.

You probably do have enough time. The actual amount of time you need can vary a great deal. If you really wanted to do a full-scale scientific survey, you could spend a year or more collecting, tabulating, and writing up the data. But we’re not normally talking about that kind of time investment.

You can collect useful data in hours, or even less. You can go to a meeting where your key audience is, and ask them a few questions, either verbally or with a printed questionnaire. All the forms come back to you in ten minutes. In about ten minutes more, you can get results that will be helpful.

If you have a choice, you may want to survey more people, with different questions, in different ways. There are many different degrees of comprehensiveness. But any surveying is almost always better than no surveying at all. It's likely that whatever time you can afford will be worth it.

Look at it this way: If you care about effective action, do you have the time not to find out about community needs?



We don't know how.

It's not that hard. Just about anybody can write useful survey questions, with a little bit of guidance. You don't have to be an expert. The survey doesn't have to be perfect. And there may already be an existing survey that you can borrow from, or simply repeat.

In any case, others can help you. You can get professional advice (from a local university, for example). And you can test out the survey on a sample group, to work out the kinks (which are almost always present, even in surveys designed by experts).

Detailed instructions and tools:

1. Community Readiness Assessment Methods & Questionnaire
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1014.aspx
2. Scoring Sheet and Anchored Rating Scales
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_tools_1014.aspx