



# Community Asset Mapping: A Critical Strategy for Service

## Part 2/3

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### The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

**BWBR Description:** *Bonner Curriculum workshop teaches participants how to view a community from its assets, not deficits. Students learn how to find assets within their partner communities and incorporate them into service work.*

**Overview:** Community asset mapping—the process of intentionally identifying the human, material, financial, entrepreneurial and other resources in a community—is an important process for community projects of all kinds. Whether you are tutoring a child in a neighborhood school, starting your own new initiative, or mobilizing a campaign for a policy change, knowing and using the many assets within a community (including those of the university or college) provide a foundation for effectiveness. This intensive training, designed over a series of activities most suitable for at least three days, provides guidance on how to uncover community assets and create a canvass or map of them. It relies on the framework of viewing a community from its assets, rather than deficits, in order to utilize and manifest existing resources of all kinds.

**Category** Community context and engagement; community asset mapping; impact; research

**Level:** Participants may be all levels; facilitator should be highly experienced

**Recommended**

**Bonner Sequence:** This three-session training is recommended for Bonner students during their first and second year in the program, perhaps broken into two or three parts. The concept of Asset Mapping (and the activities of day one of this guide) could be introduced during the first semester, perhaps beginning during Orientation. The activities of day two could be introduced a bit later (perhaps mid-way through the semester or mid-year). The activities of day three could follow right after that, or be introduced later, perhaps in preparation for sophomore year service.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Session Two activities focuses on giving participants the opportunity to assess their own knowledge and go deeper, by creating a Visual Canvass (drawing on Session One) and Individual Asset Bank, a network of individuals who represent community assets.

### **Materials**

- Flip Charts
- Markers
- Copies of Handouts
- Post-it Notes

### **How to Prepare:**

Review the entire guide and the extensive handouts. Determine days for the series of activities. Collect materials. Prepare logistics related for community immersions (mapping, interviewing, etc.) Make flip charts.

Review the facilitation workshops to get a sense of tools and techniques to use. Prepare your own notes about facilitating discussions, debriefs, in-community activities, etc.

### **Brief Outline:**

This is the second of a three part series. Review the entire guide and activities in order to determine your configuration of activities, but try to keep this order and progression.

### Session Two

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Debrief Community Mapping                | suggested time 20 minutes |
| 2) Visual Group Mapping: Creating a Canvass | suggested time 35 minutes |
| 3) Wrap Up                                  | suggested time 5 minutes  |

## Guide for Session Two

### **Part 1) Debrief Community Mapping**

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Convene participants. Break the debrief into several parts:

- 1) Reporting
- 2) Discussing
- 3) Questions and Going Deeper

#### **For example, for 1) Reporting:**

Have each small group report out what they learned during the community canvassing. They should present interesting highlights from the questions and the profile.

If you didn't use small groups, have individuals report on different pieces of the canvassing. Have different individuals share information from the profile.

Have a recorder help you capture the information on flip chart paper to refer back to.

#### **For example, for 2) Discussing:**

Have each small group comment on each others or ask questions. In particular, note missing or inconsistent information and places that will require more research.

If you didn't use small groups, have individuals play this role, engaging the group in dialogue.

Then, start to pull out highlights, trends, etc. Again, use the table of assets as a guide. Try to keep the group focused on identifying assets in each of the areas (6) but also noting differences among them.

#### **For example, for 3) Questions and Going Deeper:**

Here, you want to engage in both adding your own observations about the work of the group and its members so far. Be genuine in offering substantive praise and constructive criticism (e.g., to groups that seemed to not focus on the canvassing, evident by having very little information).

Also, facilitate a conversation to go deeper into the connections between the knowledge of the community that is being developed and the vision and ideas of the project/program.

## **Part 2) Visual Group Mapping**

Suggested time: 35 minutes

This activity is to spend two hours or so having the group create a huge, visual map of the community assets and features from profile.

Do the following:

1. Have 6 flip chart sheets taped together, making a large mural (you can use large rolls of paper if you have it).
2. Have lots of markers, chalk, etc. on hand.
3. If possible, have a completed outline of the area (e.g., a map of streets) drawn on the mural paper. You can do this by using a map on a transparency projected onto the wall using an overhead projector. Then trace the streets on the mural. Or, you can have a copier company create a large mural-sized map for you.
4. Have six colors of posts-its and markers/crayons to correspond to the types of assets:

<p><b>Individual Assets (Blue)</b></p> <p>Individuals and their</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Talents</li> <li>• Experiences</li> </ul> <p>Consider:</p> <p>Professional Personal Resources Leadership Networks</p>	<p><b>Institutional Assets (Purple)</b></p> <p>Churches Colleges and Universities Elderly Care Facilities Fire Department Hospitals and clinics Mental health facilities Libraries Police Department Schools Utilities Transportation</p>	<p><b>Organizational Assets (Yellow)</b></p> <p>Community Centers Radio/TV stations Small businesses Large businesses Home-based enterprises Religious organizations Nonprofit organizations Clubs Citizen groups Business associations Cable and phone companies</p>
<p><b>Governmental (State and Federal) Assets (Red)</b></p> <p>City Government State Capital Bureau of land management Economic Development Dept. Forest Service Military facilities School Service Center Small Business Administration State Education Agency Telecommunications agency</p>	<p><b>Physical and Land Assets (Green)</b></p> <p>Agriculture Energy resources Forest Industrial areas Lakes, ponds, streams Mining Natural resources/landmarks Parks/recreation areas Vacant land Waste resources</p>	<p><b>Cultural Assets (Orange)</b></p> <p>Historic/Arts groups Ethnic/Racial diversity Heritage Crafts, skills Cultural traditions</p>

5. Then, literally have the group use these post-its and markers to create a visual map of the community's assets.

You can go in turn or divide the group into smaller teams to work on specific types or assets or areas (corresponding with their canvassing).

6. End this with a time to step back and check out the map. Engage in reflection about what has been learned so far and what are unanswered questions.

### Part 3) Wrap Up

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Review the work covered in this session, then prepare to set up for the final session: another community immersion, this time focused on developing contacts and a better sense of how individuals in the community are its assets. Participants may have

encountered and interacted with community residents and members during the first canvassing, but now the focus is on that intentionally.

Review the next few pages of the Guide, describing the asset bank (from handout):

**An Individual Asset Bank is a compilation of information about individuals (of diverse means and backgrounds) who are potential assets to a project. Spend several hours (or days) just going out, introducing yourself to a diverse array of individuals you find in the community, and briefly collecting the beginnings of an Individual Asset Bank.**

**I. Instruct participants to carry this out for at least ten people, drawing on the list below of different roles.**

**Roles:**

- A religious leader
- A librarian
- A small business owner
- A small business employee
- A big business manager
- A big business employee
- A non-profit organization employee
- A high school student
- An elementary school student
- A college student (other than self, if applicable)
- A parent
- A taxi driver
- A homeless person
- Someone who is over 70 years old
- A war veteran
- A volunteer coordinator
- A teacher
- A public transportation driver (if permissible)
- A construction worker
- A waiter/waitress
- A reporter
- A lawyer
- A doctor
- A bartender
- An auto mechanic
- At least one person who doesn't fit into any of these categories

Keep this information organized in a notebook. Keep track of individuals who think would be interesting to conduct longer, deeper interviews with.

With each person, try to find out a few things:

1. Two personal talents the person has
2. Two learned skills the person has
3. Two hopes or aspirations the person has for their community
4. Two things the person believes everyone should know about the community

**Make sure that people note individuals with whom they would like to conduct a longer interview. Review the next page of the Guide and the sample interview questions, which will be carried out most likely on the third date of the training. However, if someone has time, participants can do it this day as well.**

Reiterate any guidelines on travel and logistics and let the group go to work.

# “Individual Asset Bank” Research

- An Individual Asset Bank is a compilation of information about individuals (of diverse means and backgrounds) who are potential assets to a project. Spend several hours (or days) just going out, introducing yourself to a diverse array of individuals you find in the community, and briefly collecting the beginnings of an Individual Asset Bank.**

**Do this for at least ten people**, drawing on the list below of different roles. Keep this information organized in a notebook. Keep track of individuals who think would be interesting to conduct longer, deeper interviews with.

With each person, try to find out a few things:

2. Two personal talents the person has
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## **Roles:**

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## Interviews: Uncovering Rich Assets

Based on what you have begun to learn and whom you have begun to meet, choose a few individuals with whom to engage in a deeper dialogue. The purpose of this dialogue is twofold:

- to create relationships with individuals who may continue to be involved with your program, project or efforts in a variety of ways including as partners, advisors, participants, funders, and networkers;
- to ensure that your work is informed by the knowledge and perspective of people involved in the community's informal and formal entities.

With this in mind, select a few individuals, representing diverse backgrounds, roles, positions, affiliations, and so on, to interview.

Then, springing off the questions used in the first "Individual Asset Bank" research, use these guidelines below:

7. Get a sense of what motivates the person to do the work he or she does (be it full-time or volunteer). Get a sense of how the person believes his/her work benefits or builds the health and welfare of that community.
8. Get the person's advice about anything truly important to consider, anyone essential to talk to, any facet of the community truly critical to know, etc.
9. Try to explain, concisely and without jargon, your main interests and vision for the type of work you and your group hopes to do. Engage the person in sharing what about that vision or idea resonates with him or her and his/her knowledge of the community.
10. Engage the person in a deeper conversation about the talents, experience, and skills he or she has and may be willing to share with those involved in your group. Also, if possible and appropriate, explore what talents, experience, and skills others in that person's organization or network could offer.

# Summary Questions

## 1. What, if any, work currently is going on involving members of the campus community and the community. Consider the following:

- Student-led community service projects
- Institutionalized community service projects
- Broad civic engagement projects that involve large segments of the campus population
- Political engagement projects, such as get out the vote initiatives
- Career-related projects, such as those linking community entities with internships, jobs, and career opportunities
- Faculty research projects
- Academic department research projects
- Service learning courses (courses with placements in community agencies, internships, or other connections)
- Community based research projects (projects agenda determined by community)
- Informal partnerships between campus entities and community entities
- Formal partnerships between campus entities and community entities
- Economic development projects, such as construction or rehabilitation of housing
- Financial projects, such as creation of lending institutions or funds
- Accreditation projects, such as graduate programs with teaching placements in schools that are connected to graduation completion

### Other:

## 2. What, if any, seem to be the major gaps or issues with existing relationships projects, or partnerships? Consider the following:

### Process

- Lack of accountability to agencies/partners
- Turnover of students/staff
- Overall low participation/low levels of involvement
- Perceived low quality of involvement/work by students/campus
- Lack of community voice in decision-making, goals, or structure
- Economic divides between campus and community (town-gown; rich campus-poor community)
- Too many programs; not enough coordination
- Too many programs; “we’re all leaders” syndrome; new programs every year

- Lack of sufficient resources
- Lack of leadership at all levels of campus

### **Program**

- Student-led community service projects
- Institutionalized community service projects
- Broad civic engagement projects that involve large segments of the campus population
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### **Other:**

**3. Considering all of this information, develop a few key guidelines or ideas to take forward into your own planning. For more guidance, now turn to the Utilizing Community Assets training.**