



Community Asset Mapping: A Critical Philosophy for Service

Theme 1.4 Part 4 of "Exploring Identity and Place"

Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum: The 8 Themes Series

BWBR Description: *Bonner Curriculum workshop teaches an "assets-based approach" and helps students to identify the human, material, financial, entrepreneurial and other resources in a community. Knowing and using the many assets within a community builds capacity for relationships, reciprocity, and a solutions orientation.*

Overview: Community asset mapping is a process of intentionally identifying the human, material, financial, entrepreneurial and other resources in a community. This approach draws on the initial framework of John Kretzman and John McKnight (1993) in *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Guide to Identifying and Mobilizing Community Assets* and is an important fundamental concept for community projects of all kinds. However, it updates and applies this concept developmentally for college students to understand how they might recognize community assets of various kinds. Whether you are tutoring a child in a neighborhood school, serving food in a soup kitchen, helping develop a new program, 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 workshop provides an introduction on how to uncover

community assets and create a canvass or map of them. It helps students to understand the framework of viewing a community from its assets, rather than deficits, in order to respect and integrate existing community resources in their engagement work.

Key Words:

Community context; community asset mapping; place-based learning; community impact; community research

8 Themes:

First Year - Semester 1



Bonner Developmental Connections:

This workshop is excellent for freshmen. It can be done during Orientation, a Class Meeting, or a Mid-Year Retreat. There are two additional workshops on this topic that may be used by campus programs if they want to go deeper and have students engaged in a longer asset-mapping process. This workshop is a basic introduction.

Bonner/VALUE Rubric

Outcomes:

This workshop will help students develop emerging levels of Place-Based Knowledge and Issue-Knowledge as they are guided to learn more about the communities in which they live and serve.

Learning Outcomes:

- This workshop introduces student participants to the concept of community assets and how to identify them.
- This workshop provides students with ideas for how to conduct community asset mapping, with structured guidance on what to learn and how to find assets involving a variety of approaches.
- This workshop will build student and volunteers knowledge of and appreciation for place and for the complex dynamics, people, and institutions that make up places.

Materials

- Ball of yarn
- Fabric doll or other soft toy
- Flip Chart Paper
- Markers

- Students should have pens or pencils to write with
- Copies of Handouts

How to Prepare:

Review the entire guide and handouts. It will be best to do this workshop at least several weeks into the first semester, after students have had opportunities to be immersed in service projects and actually spent time in the communities around the college/university in which they will be serving.

A more engaging alternative of delivering this session could be in the context of a walk within the neighborhood and community itself. Start at a location (like a meeting room in an organization or school or a park) where you can do the first few exercises.

Brief Outline:

Below is a suggested outline for a one-hour workshop on community assets. It culminates with introducing students to strategies that they can use for identifying and recognizing more clearly the array of community assets within the neighborhoods and places that they will work. You, as program staff, can then decide if you want to assign “homework” or additional expectations for students to actually carry out asset mapping through interviews, walks, research, and other methods. If so, you may want to schedule follow-up meetings to review what students learn.

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|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Recognizing the Pitfalls of Deficit Thinking | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 2) Web of Assets | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 3) Finding Our IOU’S | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 4) Mapping Our Community’s Assets | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 5) Strategies to Deepen Understanding of Assets | suggested time 10 minutes |

Part 1) Recognizing the Pitfalls of Deficit Thinking

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Introduce yourself as the facilitator for the session. Review the focus and goals of the workshop, using this suggested script:

- *Okay, as freshmen Bonners or other students who are actively engaged in your communities, it is important for you to understand the differences between assets and deficits.*
- *This workshop will focus on introducing you to an assets-based approach. Having an assets-based approach is fundamental to effective, sustained community service and engagement for a number of reasons.*

- For one, it allows you to recognize and build upon the strengths of all kinds within a place, neighborhood, or community. Such an approach is necessary for creating relationships that are reciprocal and beneficial for your community partner, residents, students, and others involved.
- In this session, we'll focus on discovering the many assets within a community or place. By the end, you'll also know how you can find, identify, and build upon other assets — which will be especially important to your own work and its effectiveness over time.

Then, engage students in an exercise, presenting the definition of “community deficit.”

“Deficit: shortage, shortfall, or deficiency.”

A deficit is often described as a shortage, shortfall or deficiency. If an organization has a financial deficit, it might mean that it cannot meet its financial obligations. If a person has a deficit, it might imply that she or he has some kind of problem or shortcoming.

When you think about how people sometimes talk about or describe communities, what are examples of “deficit” oriented thinking?

If you want to, consider giving people news articles or examples from the campus context where such thinking is prevalent. You're looking for students to say some of the following examples. If they don't, you can explain and point them out.

Deficit thinking is when people describe the place or community in terms of only its problems.

Deficit thinking may describe communities only in terms of their lacks or needs.

People might say, “it's a poor community.”

“It's a bad or scary place.”

Then pose the following question to students:

Okay, so as Bonners or student volunteers, you're going to be immersing yourself and working in these places and communities every week, over

multiple years. Many of you are even from these places and communities or ones that have similar challenges. What are some of the problems of this deficit-based approach?

The students are likely to point out and respond:

A deficits-based approach focuses solely on the negative.

A deficits-based approach doesn't recognize the many strengths and assets within a community or place.

A deficits-based approach might even be considered prejudiced or closed minded (i.e., racist, classist, xenophobic, etc.), or ignorant of the many positive assets and attributes within a community.

You can wrap this activity by passing out on the chart on the first handout, **Comparing Assets and Deficits Approaches (Source: University of Memphis):**

Comparing Assets and Deficits Approaches	
Asset Based	Deficit Based
Strengths Driven	Needs Driven
Opportunity focus	Problems focused
Internally focused	Externally focused
What is present that we can build upon?	What is missing that we must go find?
May lead to new, unexpected responses to community wishes and requests	May lead to downward spiral of burnout, depression, or dysfunction or to labeling people within the community as the problem

Part 2) Web of Assets

Suggested time: 20 minutes

Explain to the students:

In your time as Bonners and as students engaged civically in working within communities over multiple years, you will also learn how to identify needs, such as through needs assessments, and to listen carefully to community partners about what they want from volunteers. Nevertheless, it is important that students understand and begin to adopt an assets-based focus in their ongoing work. Such an approach can help students to uncover and leverage the many strengths within communities.

So, start the next exercise, which focuses on beginning to discuss strengths.

- *Okay, so let's people stand in a circle.*
- *We're going to create a web of assets and strengths as we begin to identify the many types of strengths within the places we work and the people in those places.*
- *I'm going to call out a type of asset or strength.*
- *As you receive and pass the yarn ball, say your name. Then, you can name an asset or strength that you have seen, met, visited, or experienced.*
- *For instance, if I say EDUCATION, then you can name things such as:*
 - *The Headstart Program*
 - *The Teachers at the Elementary School*
 - *The Family Involvement Program*
- *For instance, if I say HEALTH, then you can name things such as:*
 - *The Free Clinic*
 - *The Mobile Immunization Van*
 - *The Hospital*
 - *The nurse at the school*

If you are doing this in the context of a walk, you can also physically walk through the neighborhood first, asking students to observe and keep track of key assets they notice, then do the exercise.

Encourage the students to be as specific as possible and to draw on their many service experiences within the community and at different places (nonprofits, government offices, schools, businesses, etc.).

Use the following call outs (and you can add more specific to the locality) for the **Web of Assets**. The **examples** on the following page will help you (and give you a sequence), and at the end you will give these headings and specific examples to the students as a handout.

- **Education** (people might name schools of all types, home schools, teachers, principals, coaches, parents, etc.)
- **Health** (people might name clinics, hospitals, nurses, doctors, recreational facilities, gyms, parks, county programs, etc.)
- **Mental Health** (people might name counselors, social workers, county offices, therapists, pastors, etc.)
- **Economic Development** (people might name community development corporations, city projects, businesses, public-private partnerships, local officials, bills, policies, etc.)
- **Jobs and Training** (people might name youth programs, job programs, vocational education programs, community colleges, colleges, instructors, etc.)
- **Local Businesses** (people might name small businesses, companies, banks, credit unions, etc.)
- **Housing** (people might name housing complexes, affordable housing projects, etc.)
- **Hunger** (people might name food programs, soup kitchens, nutrition programs, community gardens, campus programs like Campus Kitchens, SNAP, city and county supports, policies, etc.)
- **Arts and Beautification** (people might name museums, cultural attractions, installations, historic sites, projects like murals or recycling projects, etc.)
- **Environment and Physical Assets** (people might name parks, trails, landmarks, protected areas, rivers, streams, lakes, waterways, mountains, sustainability programs, farms, etc.)
- **Security and Safety** (people might name police, community policing efforts, nonprofit organizations, moms groups, specific community leaders, military, etc.)
- **Religion and Faith** (people might name churches, synagogues, temples, places of worship, specific individuals, etc.)
- **Ethic and Cultural Organizations** (people might name centers on and off campus, grassroots organizations, nonprofits, informal groups, membership groups, etc.)
- **National and International Organizations** (people might name nonprofits, embassies, formal and information groups, etc.)

- Finally, ask people what about the individuals with whom they are working and serving, like youth, elderly, mothers, etc. **What are examples of “individual assets”?** (People might name qualities like: intelligence, resourcefulness, hard work, resilience, creativity, etc.)

By the end of the yarn toss, people should have a full web and they will have shared many specific and general examples of community assets at all levels. Then, if you want to illustrate why this is important to remember, you can also toss a fabric doll or similar toy onto the center of the web. Tell everyone to notice how the community supports the doll as it is falling. Call on several individuals—about one third of the group—to let go of their yarn, and have everyone else step back until the slack has been taken in. Toss the doll again, and note how it falls through the web.

Reflection:

- Ask the group to invite those who had let go of the yarn to rejoin the circle. Ask them to stand shoulder to shoulder.
- Ask the group to take a moment and reflect on what their fellow members in the circle community said about the assets in the community that they have witnessed, worked with, or recognized.
- Ask them to contemplate the following question: **“So far in your service involvement, which have you focused on—the threads and strengths of the community, or the gaps in between the strands and the fact that sometimes the doll falls through?”**
- Finally, **“If we, as a group, want to do a better job in recognizing and building upon the assets of our communities, what can we do?”**

This can be used as a transitional question between the Web of Assets activity and a discussion of approaching community building and project planning from an asset-based approach. Commend students for calling out and recognizing so many community assets. Then, pointing to bottom of hand out, explain that every community has assets. It can be helpful to understand and organize them in the following categories.

Note that this chart draws upon the literature on community assets, such as the book ***Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Guide to Identifying and Mobilizing***

Community Assets by John Kretzman and John McKnight. Invite people to further read about or investigate this idea by doing some online research. Some links are on the handout.

<p>Individual Assets</p> <p>Individuals and their</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Talents • Experiences • Knowledge <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Personal • Resources • Leadership • Networks (informal and formal) 	<p>Institutional Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Colleges and Universities • Elderly Care Facilities • Fire Departments • Hospitals and Clinics • Mental Health Facilities • Libraries • Police Department • Schools • Utilities • Transportation 	<p>Organizational Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Centers • Radio/TV stations • Small Businesses • Large Businesses • Home-based Enterprises • Religious Organizations and Places of Worship • Nonprofit Organizations • Clubs and Membership Organizations • Citizen Groups • Business Associations • Cable, Utility, Energy, and Phone Companies
<p>Governmental (State and Federal) Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Government • State Capital and Government Offices • County Offices • Bureau of Land Management • Economic Development Departments • Forest Service • Military Facilities • School Service Center • Small Business Administration • State Education Agency • Telecommunications agency 	<p>Physical and Land Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Energy resources • Forest • Industrial areas • Lakes, ponds, streams • Mining • Natural resources/landmarks • Parks/recreation areas • Vacant land • Waste resources 	<p>Cultural Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic/Arts Groups • Ethnic/Racial Diversity and Heritage • Cultural Organizations • Crafts and Skills (i.e., painting, murals, beekeeping, quilting, etc.) • Cultural Traditions

Part 3) Finding Our IOU'S

Suggested time: 10 minutes

In this next section, you will introduce the more complex understanding of asset-mapping, which recognizes that students and other activists and organizers need to understand both the assets and the needs within communities. Keep drawing on the visual and experience of the web, where there were many assets noted, but what happened when some of those assets were unrecognized or not part of it.

You might say something like this:

- As students, you all recognized in the earlier activities that it is also important to know the needs of the partner and the communities.
- Why is it important, as a student leader and volunteer, to know both the assets and the needs of the community or the organization where you work?
 - People will say things like:
 - *So we recognize that people know what they want and need*
 - *So that we can empower others*
 - *So that we recognize the power differences and our own privilege*
 - *So we can keep track of whether we are making a difference*
 - *So we can identify any contribution or positive impact*
- What are the dangers of focusing on the problems?
 - People will say things like:
 - *We fail to see how **we** as students or part-time volunteers are part of the problem (charity mindset)*
 - *We fail to integrate community perspectives*
 - *We fail to integrate community assets*
 - *We burn out and lose energy*
- What are the dangers of focusing only on the assets?
 - People will say things like:
 - *We don't really understand the issues and root causes of the problems*
 - *We don't address the problems and find solutions*
 - *We don't know if we are making an impact on real needs, like hunger, housing, education, etc.*

Then, introduce the next aspect of an asset-based approach:

- *Understanding the scope of an issue or problem is also important to the long-term effectiveness of your work. For instance, if you are working in a school, you might want to know how many of its students are graduating on time or attending enough to succeed. It is important to learn the indicators that matter or measure an issue (and you'll be doing that throughout your Bonner experience).*
- *In reality, though, recognition of a problem is only the first step of the long process of addressing and solving it. You might get clues about how to solve a problem by studying it, but you'll never actually solve it if the problem is all you focus on.*
- *Imagine: What would it be like if everyone was as familiar with the **solution** to a problem as they are with a problem?*
- *The purpose of these activities are to help you as students to approach your service and the issues you are addressing from a Community Web perspective that recognize and utilizes a "**Community Assets-Based Strategy**" rather than a "**Deficiency-laden approach.**"*

Then, present and lead the group in a discussion of the four tenants of this strategy (called IOU'S), in order to better understand the rationale behind it.

IOU's—is the acronym for our approach, a helpful mnemonic. But it also reminds us that we must always give back, like our IOUs, to the communities that engage, give back to, and nurture us.

I-IDENTIFY

Recognize both the assets and the scope of the problems. The deficiencies will provide fodder for a tenable goal. The assets will provide vision, a plan, energy to accomplish, empowerment and results. The assets will ensure that your approach is community-based, and "loves" the community in the way that it intentionally identifies its strengths in terms of resources, people, programs, and leadership.

O-ORGANIZE

Assets are property of the community. In order to utilize the assets and achieve goals, the community has to be willing to contribute their assets. The best way to ensure this is through organizing them. Organizing means reaching out, building relationships, establishing connections, developing systems and structures and so

on. Successful activities are organized in a way that makes everyone feel **Interested, Included and Invaluable.**

U-UTILIZE

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition:

Utilize—v. “To put to use”

Ask the group if anyone would like to share an example of a program that does not quite fit the needs of the people with whom it was designed to work.

Through discussion, flesh out the idea that strong communities focus on putting their assets to use. A community's assets are the basis for effective programs and plans—***you utilize assets in order to implement your work.*** The term “Utilize” is one of empowerment: use what you have for positive gain. As long as you focus on utilizing assets, you will not lose sight of the true Web of Community.

S-SUSTAIN

What is sustain? Sustain has several meanings including:

- Support (as in carry or hold up)
- Support (as in supply)
- Nourish
- Confirm
- Endure (as in last long)

Sustain focuses us on the idea of giving back or nourishing that community, providing resources, and creating long-lasting change. Sustain may mean that the project can live on, or that the impact of the project can continue (even after the project is no longer needed).

Discuss with the group: *How are you becoming a member of or part of the community where you serve?* How well do you understand and know the community? How well do you contribute to its long-term welfare? Why is the notion of sustaining important?

Summarize:

An Assets-Based Approach and the IOU'S strategy is community-based. The stronger your ties with the community, the better your service and your engagement will be. It has four major components: identifying and recognizing assets, building upon them or plugging them in, spreading and connecting assets, and being an asset.

Part 4) Mapping Our Community's Assets

Suggested time: 15 minutes

In this section, you will want to give students a map that represents the physical parameters or markers of the place, neighborhood, or community that they are working in and that they will learn about more throughout their engagement. Consider using Google Maps or another tool in advance to print those maps.

- Use a large map (or drawing) of the neighborhood and/or city. Using brightly colored markers, have students map out the area where they will focus their work.
- Then, create a verbal definition, based on streets and landmarks. Keep in mind that this is an area that you and your group will literally visit — walking and mapping what's there.
- **Example:**
 - *North to Washington Street*
 - *South to Bourbon Road*
 - *West to Capital Avenue*
 - *East to Smith Street*
 - *Approximately 14 square miles*
- Restate the community's boundaries for the purposes of the asset mapping exercise.
- Now, have people refer back to the list of assets that they called out and the list of the types of community assets. Have them work in small teams to map those assets physically on the map.
- You may also give this as a homework exercise and return to it in a later session. If you are doing this during a walk or community immersion, they can literally go on that walk to discover and map the community.
- At the end of the mapping exercise, ask people to share their insights or observations on what they notice or see about how the various community assets are physically present. Are they near each other? Are they visible? Are there certain categories or types of assets (like health care facilities or businesses) that are missing?

Part 5) Strategies to Deepen Understanding of Assets

Suggested time: 10 minutes

Transition now to the last part of this session. Explain that, in reality, community asset mapping is an approach that takes a long time to do justly. Here, you will lay out some other ways that Bonners and other students, over time, can continue to learn about their community and fully recognize its assets.

Walk through the following strategies, using this information below and the attached handouts. As Program Staff, you can define whether this is optional or whether you will ask students to share their work and learning with you later.

What / Result	How / Strategy	When
1) Develop a Community Profile and Canvass, which paints a broad picture about the many assets in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Canvassing • Community Profile 	By end of first semester
2) Develop an Individual Asset Bank, made up of people who may be assets to the project/initiative you are working on (See or refer students module #2 for a full set of instructions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Individual Interviews with Community Asset Members 	By end of second semester
3) Develop a campus profile, through which you identify college/ university or other assets that may be leveraged for the project(s) (See or refer students to module #3 for a full set of instructions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus Inventory • Meetings with key campus leaders 	Possibly in conjunction with planning for capacity-building capstone

Finally, end the workshop with some group reflection, using the following questions:

- What did you learn about yourself in this workshop?
- What did you learn about the community where you are working or serving in this workshop?
- What did you learn about an assets-based approach and community-asset mapping in this workshop?
- What more would you be interested in learning or doing as a result?

Comparing Assets & Deficits Approaches

Comparing Assets and Deficits Approaches	
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May lead to new, unexpected responses to community wishes and requests	May lead to downward spiral of burnout, depression, or dysfunction or to labeling people within the community as the problem

Where to learn more:

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Guide to Identifying and Mobilizing Community Assets (1993) by John Kretzman and John McKnight. Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Building-Communities-Inside-Out-Mobilizing/dp/087946108X>

Video: “From Needs to Assets: A New Approach to Community Building” from The Tamarack Institute. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTW2Uw3BtvE>

“Asset-Based Community Engagement” from the University of Memphis at <https://www.memphis.edu/ess/module4/page3.php>

What Are Community Assets

<p>Individual Assets Individuals and their</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Talents • Experiences • Knowledge <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional • Personal • Resources • Leadership • Networks (informal and formal) 	<p>Institutional Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Colleges and Universities • Elderly Care Facilities • Fire Departments • Hospitals and Clinics • Mental Health Facilities • Libraries • Police Department • Schools • Utilities • Transportation 	<p>Organizational Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Centers • Radio/TV stations • Small Businesses • Large Businesses • Home-based Enterprises • Religious Organizations and Places of Worship • Nonprofit Organizations • Clubs and Membership Organizations • Citizen Groups • Business Associations • Cable, Utility, Energy, and Phone Companies
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Community Canvassing

Your Assignment: Spend a day canvassing the community in order to develop a comprehensive asset map. Use this guide and its steps.

- **Locate the Community.** Define geographic boundaries for the purposes of your community canvassing.

Suggested guide:

Get a large map of the neighborhood and/or city. Using brightly colored markers, map out the area where you intend to focus. Then, create a verbal definition, based on streets and landmarks. Keep in mind that this is an area that you and your group will literally visit — walking and mapping what's there.

Your community's boundaries (and map, attached or below):

- **Before and during your community asset hunt, collect the written information and sources that you will need to truly complete a comprehensive canvas.**

You will need this information to make your profile rigorous. Sources include:

- *Maps*
- *Telephone Book and Yellow Pages. You can also use the Internet. <http://www.superpages.com> is a great online phone book.*
- *Chamber of Commerce Directory. Other business directories, such as the minority-owned business directory, women-owned business directory, and specific community/neighborhood directories can also be helpful.*
- *Statewide Business Council Publication*
- *State Economic Development Agency phone number or web address*
- *Census Data (available on the web at U.S. Department of Commerce – <http://www.census.gov/>). You can also try searching your school library's government documents section or public library's reference desk to help you find this kind of data.*
- *County-level economic analysis data (try on the web at <http://www.bea.doc.gov/>)*
- *Information from your city's website, if it has one, or from local newspaper's and publication's websites*
- *Location and hours of public or college libraries*
- *School system data*
- *County development authority data*
- *Data and info regarding public and private social service agencies*

Other sources you find:

☐ **Understand the assets you are looking for. Make sure to go back to the list of asset types. Mark them and map them physically.**

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Comprehensive Community Mapping Checklist

- Spend several hours (or even days) doing a comprehensive community map. You can start with a brief “windshield survey” – using a car or taking local buses to canvass the whole area. Then, get on foot and dig deeper.

Use the questions below to guide your search for visible and hidden community assets. You may also further tailor the questions or have additional ones related to the purpose and project you have in mind.

People in the neighborhoods and communities

1. What are the demographics of people that live in the community?
2. What occupations do they hold? What are some of the skills associated with the main occupations?
3. What are the patterns of residence based on income?
4. What are the patterns of residence based on race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality?
5. What are the most popular places to congregate or meet?
6. What are the most traveled routes?
7. What are the migration patterns, e.g., has the population changed much in the past few decades and in what ways? Has the population been there a long time or short time?

Housing

8. What is the type of housing?
9. What is the age of housing?
10. What is the condition of housing? Are there patterns evident in the type, age, condition by income, race, ethnicity, etc.?
11. What is the median cost for a home (e.g., 2-bedroom)? What is the median cost for an apartment?
12. Is there affordable housing? How is it subsidized? How is it allocated?

13. Is there new housing being constructed?

Institutional Assets

Education and schools

14. How many schools are there including preschool, elementary, high school, college, graduate programs, and vocational education? Map them.
15. Are there any unique or special attributes of the schools in the area (such as charter, magnet schools, privately funded, etc.)?
16. Are there known associations supporting or working on education, such as PTAs, parental associations, teacher associations, nonprofits?

Health and Human Services

17. Are there clinics and hospitals in the area?
18. What about physicians' or dentists' offices?
19. Are there mental health, drug rehabilitation, or other similar facilities?
20. Are there organizations that provide health education, AIDS/HIV education, or other similar services?
21. Are there shelters, meal services, or other residential care facilities for the homeless, victims of domestic violence or abuse?
22. What city, county or governmental agencies actively provide health and human services and where are they located?

Transportation

23. What is the condition of road and bridges?
24. What is the condition of public transportation (subways, buses, bus lines, bus stops)? Does it vary by area?
25. What are the patterns and types of traffic? Are there any hazards for children, students, or commuters?
26. What is the average commute time for work? How easy or hard is travel in the area?

Organizational Assets

Business, Economy and Employment

27. What kinds of businesses are there? Consider for for-profit and nonprofit businesses that provide jobs and employment opportunities.
28. What kinds of businesses are missing or absent, especially considering the basic needs of families?
29. What kinds of work, service, internship, and other opportunities are there for students and young people?
30. What is the balance of businesses owned/operated by people living in the community and people who don't live in the community?
31. What kinds of partnerships exist, if any, between small and large businesses and nonprofits, social service agencies, and other voluntary groups?
32. What types of training and education agencies or entrepreneurial programs related to business and employment exist (such as occupational training/employment centers)?
33. What are the major nonprofit organizations in the area? Are they locally focused or otherwise? What are their funding streams and/or funding focus areas?
34. What is the prevalence and role of tourism in the community?

Media

35. What newspapers and publications, including small, independently operated ones, are in the community? Or, where are these newspapers located?
36. What are the media sources most read by community members?
37. Where do radio and t.v. stations/service originate?
38. Are there public access points or channels? What kind of coverage do they do?

Technology

39. Where are the points of public (free) access to computers, the Internet, etc. (if any)?
40. Are there facilities where the public or community members can get training in technology?
41. How is the Internet or technology being used for small or large business?

42. How comfortable/knowledgeable do you find community residents to be in using computers/the Internet? How does this vary by age or other factors?

Government

1. What local government offices are located in the community?
2. What country government offices are located in the community?
3. What federal government offices are located in the community?
4. What law enforcement offices are located in the community? What are the relationships between law enforcement and citizen groups? Are there community policing efforts or neighborhood watch associations?
5. Are there service, campaign, or internship opportunities available for students with government agencies?
6. What coordinating governmental bodies or groups are there (e.g., to make accessing government services easier?)

Physical and Land Assets

43. What type of terrain is there?
44. Are there pieces of land owned by government agencies? Are there large pieces of land owned by private companies? Who owns the land?
45. Is there land that appears not to be in use?
46. Is there evidence of mining or taking natural resources from the land, now or in the past?
47. Are there vacant buildings? Who owns them? Do they appear safe or serviceable?
48. How would you describe the physical space (e.g., densely populated, open, sparsely populated, highly developed, undeveloped, etc.)?
49. Are there key physical landmarks, resources or attributes that could be assets in your program?

Historical and Cultural Features

50. What historical or cultural sites are there in the community?
Make sure to consider both commercial and non-commercial places.
51. Are there historical buildings or architectural features?
52. Are there resident artists, musicians, craftspeople, and others involved in historical or cultural preservation/ expression?
53. Are there museums?
54. Are there community festivals, celebrations, events, functions, and so on? Who sponsors them? Who attends them?
55. Are there nonprofit or community organizations noted for their work on historical or cultural issues?

My Community Profile

Using the information gathered in your collection of materials and community canvass, complete a Community Profile, which gives you a good snapshot of the community overall.

Who are the people that live in this neighborhood? What assets (cultural, economic, political, etc.) do they bring?	
Household Type/ Presence and Age of Children and Youth (see census.gov to find)	
Educational Attainment (see census.gov to find)	
Median Household Income (see census.gov to find)	
Unemployment Rate (see census.gov to find)	
Key Industries and Job Opportunities	

Biggest Employers	
Major Occupations	
Main Civic, Cultural, and Nonprofit Organizations	
Churches/Religious Organizations	
Social Service Agencies	
Technology Availability and Use in the Community	
Schools and Educational Resources	
Recreational and Leisure Time	
Cultural, Historical, and Unique Highlights	

Credits:

This workshop was developed by Ariane Hoy, Bonner Foundation staff, originally as part of the Civic Engagement Curriculum available to campuses throughout the country from Campus Outreach Opportunity League. This workshop is part of a three-part series that draws heavily on the book ***Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Guide to Identifying and Mobilizing Community Assets*** (1993) by John Kretzman and John McKnight. Available at: <https://www.amazon.com/Building-Communities-Inside-Out-Mobilizing/dp/087946108X>.

A shorter introduction to that approach, entitled Introduction to "Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets," by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight may be found online or on the Bonner Network Wiki.

Additionally, facilitators may wish to watch or incorporate videos such as:

"From Needs to Assets: A New Approach to Community Building" from The Tamarack Institute. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTW2Uw3BtvE>

One section in the workshop and handout also drew on an available module entitled "*Asset-Based Community Engagement*" from the University of Memphis at <https://www.memphis.edu/ess/module4/page3.php>.