



**Administration for Children and Families**

**Office of Community Services**  
Division of State Assistance

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**Office of Community Services (OCS)**  
**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**  
**Tribal Organizations T&TA**

# **Needs Assessment**

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# PURPOSE

- Introduce the Needs Assessment concept.
- Identify the importance of performing Needs Assessment.
- Provide a step-by-step process for conducting a Needs Assessment.
- Share tools and resources to use when conducting Needs Assessments.



# Agenda

- Welcome / Introductions
- What is Needs Assessment?
- Why is Needs Assessment Important?
- When to do Needs Assessment.
- Who Conducts the Needs Assessment?
- How to Conduct Needs Assessment.
- Questions & Answers.



# What is Needs Assessment?

- A process used to gather information about the needs of a community or group.
- An activity used to determine the corrective actions, training, and/or resources required to address those needs.
- A collaborative effort for providing a clear picture of the future.
- A wish list.



# What is Community, What is Need?

- Community – A body of persons having a common history, ethnicity, culture, geography, or interest.
- Need – Contributing factors that relate to an identified gap particular to a community or group, such as food, healthcare, and funding.



# Why is Needs Assessment Important?

- To increase knowledge and understanding of the target audience.
- To assess and enhance current service delivery priorities.
- To identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that may help or hinder successful outcomes.
- To understand community perceptions.
- To inventory currently available resources that can be leveraged to meet identified needs.
- To promote awareness, engage others, and plan for action.
- To ensure that planned actions align with expressed needs.



# When to Do Needs Assessment?

- Before an activity or program is designed.
- When there is a lack of participation/ engagement in current activities or programs.
- To solicit partners, resources, transportation, and/or additional funding.
- Annually, to ensure alignment with the community's or group's goals and objectives.



# Who Conducts the Needs Assessment?

- The CSBG Program Administrator
- Key Community Members
- Other Staff
- Volunteers
- Other Program Administrators
- Partners
- Consultants/Subject Matter Experts



# How to Conduct a Needs Assessment?

- A six-step process for planning and conducting a Needs Assessment.

STEP	ACTIVITY
Step One	Define the scope
Step Two	Decide on the methodology
Step Three	Collect data
Step Four	Determine key findings
Step Five	Set priorities and create an action plan
Step Six	Share findings



# Step One: Define the Scope

This step involves planning and organizing.

- Information needed prior to conducting the assessment:
  - What is the primary issue to address?
  - What is already known?
  - Who is the target audience?
  - What is the geographic area being assessed?
  - What key questions to ask that need answering?
  - How much detail should be included in the assessment?



# Step Two: Decide on the Methodology

This step also involves planning and organizing.

- There are various methods for gathering information for a Needs Assessment.
- Deciding who has the information often helps determine what method to use.
  - **Individual interviews:** Seniors or Tribal members needing housing assistance.
  - **Focus group/Talking circles:** Group of youth or leaders.
  - **Observations:** During community activities and meetings.



# Step Three: Collect Data

The assessment is conducted and information collected and documented.

- Important factors to consider when conducting the assessment:
  - Timeline for conducting the assessment, such as date and time convenient for those providing the information.
  - Amount of time and resources available.
  - How much data will be collected.
- Asset mapping is done during this exercise.



# Step Four: Determine Key Findings

Step Four is the result of the data collection done in Step Three. Key findings serve several purposes. They

- Highlight significant trends.
  - Validate the theories created during the planning stage.
  - Answer the key questions established during the planning stage.
- Key findings are categorized as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



# Step Five: Set Priorities and Create an Action Plan

Completing the Needs Assessment process allows for:

- Making informed decisions about next steps.
- Creating strategies to address the issues and meet needs.
- Setting priorities for planned activities and when to implement actions.



# Step Six: Share Findings

In the last step of the process, all findings and lessons learned are shared with the community or group, as well as the council. This can be done by:

- Conducting a forum.
- Publishing a newsletter.
- Sharing with other programs and partners so they can share with their constituents.



# Important Tips to Remember

- Take time to set a clearly defined scope.
- Develop a work plan to assign roles, responsibilities, and time frames to major activities involved in conducting an assessment.
- Prioritize the needs assessment objectives by collecting data that addresses key questions.
- Focus on what is essential.
- Understand what resources are available and do what is manageable.
- Key findings should point to an asset or need.
- Information received from the assessment guides the next steps.
- Continue to work with community members to identify plans of action.
- Give community members not involved in the assessment an opportunity to provide their input.



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# Questions and Answers

**Thank you for your Participation**



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