

Asset Based Community Development

By
Dan Duncan,
Senior Consultant - Clear Impact
*Faculty Member - Asset-Based Community
Development Institute*

Dan@Clearimpact.com



ASSET MAPPING TOOLKIT

A Toolkit for Asset Mapping to
Unlock the gifts in a
Neighborhood or Community –
Nine Steps for Greater Impact
and Results by Building on the
Gifts and Assets Already Present



Asset Mapping

To improve individual and family well-being requires communities, neighborhoods and their residents to be involved as coproducers of their own and their community's well-being. Everyone has something to contribute and we need their "gifts and assets". Using the principles of Asset-Based Community Development and asset mapping we can help create powerful community partnerships to build healthier, safer and stronger neighborhoods and communities.

What is Asset-Based Community Development?

ABCD is a place-based framework pioneered by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann founders of the ABCD Institute at Northwestern University. Its foundation rests on a few simple truths: 1) everyone has gifts, 2) everyone has something to contribute, and 3) everyone cares about something and that passion is his or her motivation to act.

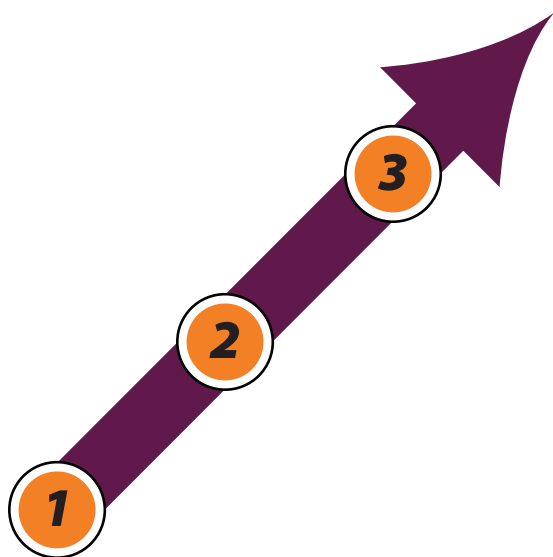
Strong, safe, and healthy neighborhoods and communities are built on the strengths and capacities of their residents and associations that call the community home. We cannot build strong caring neighborhoods without unlocking the potential of residents. The most powerful question we can ask is "What can we do with what we already have to get what we need?"

The traditional approach to delivering health and human services focuses on providing services from the outside to address the community's and its residents' needs and deficits. The ABCD approach starts with discovering the assets and gifts already present in the community. This is followed by asking residents to share their gifts and connecting people with the same passions to act collectively and provide care. The essence of ABCD and Asset Mapping is Discover, Ask and Connect.



It is the capacities of local people and their associations that build powerful communities. What can we do with what we already have... to get what we need.

Asset Mapping



The Path of Residents

1 **Client:** *People as recipients of service.*

2 **Advisor:** *People as advisors for institutional action.*

3 **Producer:** *Coproducers of their own and community well being*

The Role for Residents/Our Clients

Traditionally, individuals have been relegated to one role, that of a recipient of service--a client, customer, or patient. As clients, individuals are objects of service, dependent on the professionals and institutions for their overall well-being. To unlock the power of community, we need to rethink how to view individual residents. We must acknowledge residents' skills and identify their existing resources. We must expand their roles beyond that of a client to include serving as advisers, helping institutions provide more useful services. But their greatest value is that of producers of their own and their community's well-being. Rather than just asking people what do you need, we need to ask "What can you contribute?"

Residents in the most successful and effective systems participate in all three roles. If a person breaks his leg, for example, he is rightfully identified as a client or patient. If an individual has particular knowledge about her neighborhood and its residents, she may advise an agency on how to most effectively serve the neighborhood and to define what services the neighborhood actually wants/needs. As coproducers, residents become part of the solution. If we want to make sure that every household with young children has age-appropriate books to help them learn to read, neighborhood parents who have a passion for reading can organize a book drive. This activity does not require institutional or government resources.

True resident engagement requires institutions, funders, local governments and nonprofits to lead by stepping back to create space for residents to be involved as producers.

To help you create opportunities for your clients to be involved as coproducers, here are five questions for you to answer about your work and your clients:

- 1) What can residents do by themselves for themselves? (We do not really need to do it for them.)
- 2) What can residents do with a little help from institutions?
- 3) What do residents need done that they can't do? (Only we can do it.)
- 4) What can we stop doing to create space for resident action?
- 5) What can we offer to the community beyond the services we deliver to support resident action?

Asset Mapping

The effective framework to create healthy children must include resident action, neighborhood action and institutions doing only those things they can uniquely do and stepping back to create space for citizen and community action.



As coproducers, residents become part of the solution. If we want to make sure that every household with young children has age-appropriate books to help them learn to read, neighborhood parents who have a passion for reading can organize a book drive. This activity does not require institutional or government resources.



We must believe that everyone has gifts that can be shared to build a stronger neighborhood or community.



Relationships build a community; we need to take the time to build relationships as the first step in engaging residents.



Place-based citizen-centered organizations are the key to community engagement. To effectively engage residents they need to be involved from the beginning to provide input and direction to the effort; not merely to provide input after the plan has been developed.



Leaders involve others as active members of the community. Effective leaders are connectors encouraging people with the same passions to work collectively for the common good.



Everyone cares about something and what he or she cares about is his or her motivation to act. We must start by discovering what people care about and then ask them to get involved.



Listening conversations discover passions and gifts. The simple process of asking questions rather than giving answers invites stronger participation and engagement.



Institutional leaders must recognize that they have reached their limits in problem solving. To be effective in today's world they need the resources of the community and residents to achieve the results the community needs. The role of institutions becomes one of helping to remove barriers so that the people they serve can become producers of their own and their community's well-being.

Asset Mapping

Discover-Ask-Connect From Mapping to Mobilizing

The goal of this tool goes beyond identifying the needs of neighborhood families and children to drive agency service. The ultimate measurable goal is to increase the number of residents who are actively involved in the lives of the children and their families in their neighborhood.

Asset Mapping is not just another list of resources. It is a strategy to identify assets that are available from within the community, more importantly it's a process for connecting and engaging the community and to unlock the talents of people to help solve problems and build a better community.

The asset mapping process must be led and conducted by the residents that call the neighborhood home. Because it is about relationships and asking people to share their gifts with their neighbors, Asset Mapping will not be as effective if it is done by professionals from outside of the neighborhood.

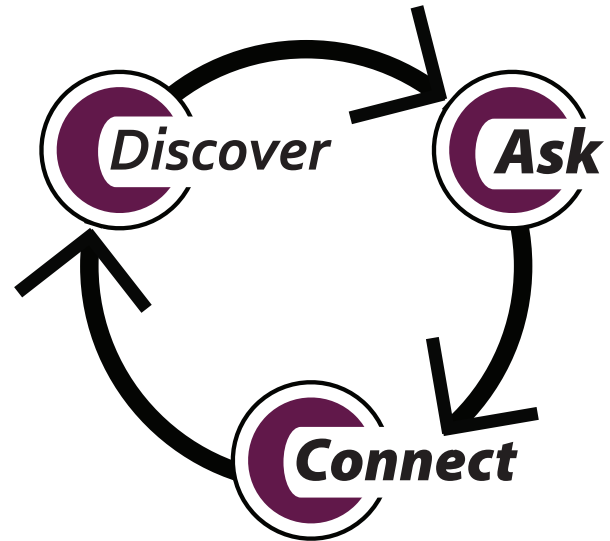
Therefore, the work of the project is to identify the neighborhood residents who have a passion for their neighborhood. They can lead the effort and create the Resident Leadership Team to conduct the AssetMapping process.

We have to be very purposeful in implementing the three steps of resident engagement.

Use learning conversations to **Discover** the gifts and passions of the residents

Ask people to get involved, and share their gifts around the issues they care about.

Connect people with the same passions to act collectively for the common good.



To Increase Community Engagement Organizations must:

1. Commit the staff resources for neighborhood organizing activities.
2. Identify a resident leadership team of connectors to guide the work in the identified neighborhood.
3. Support the resident leadership team to go through the Resident Engagement/Asset Mapping process and develop a plan for action.

Asset Mapping

Resident Engagement/ Asset Mapping Process

The following outlines the 9 Asset Mapping Steps to develop greater community engagement by the residents in an identified neighborhood.



Tip: Organizations do not work together - People Do

Working together should not be rushed - It takes time to build trust and relationships

Effective partnerships are based on:

A common purpose;

Relationships; and

Trust

When key people change, assume the partnership re-sets to zero - Therefore we must always be focused on building relationships and trust.

Step 1: Create a Resident Leadership Team of Connectors.

The most effective method to identify potential connectors/leaders is to ask the local associations (places of worship, neighborhood associations, service clubs, etc.) who are some of the most active connectors in their association.

Key Attributes of a Resident Team Member:

People who have a passion for their neighborhood and the health of its residents.

People who have a history of being "connectors" (A lot of relationships).

People who are respected in their neighborhood.

People who have gotten things done in their associations.

People who will to commit the time necessary.

Asset Mapping

Resident Engagement/ Asset Mapping Process



Tip:

Never interview anyone you do not know. This step will generate a significant number of completed surveys without anyone having to interview someone they do not know. If you interview someone you do not know, you will not get the information you need to ask them to get involved.

Tip:

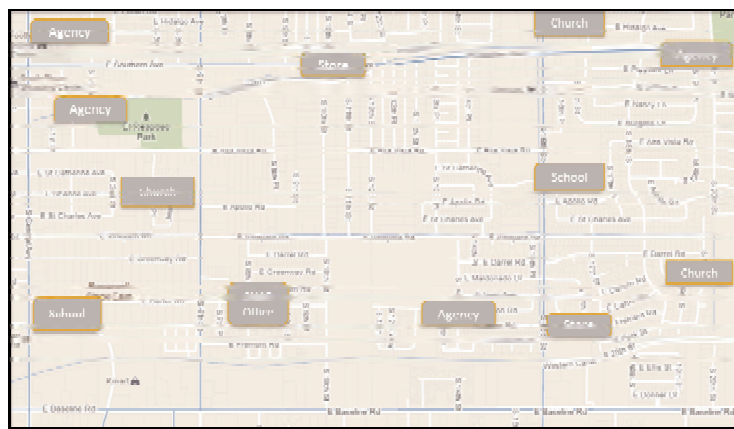
Do not just hand the questionnaires out or put them in the back of the church or ask people to fill it out on the internet. It is important to conduct face-to-face conversations so that you can build stronger relationships. Remember this is about relationships and action not just data in a database.

Step 2: Resident Leadership Team Identifies their initial neighborhood boundaries.

Ask the Resident Leadership Team to identify the boundaries of the neighborhood they call home and are willing to be responsible for.

Step 3: Resident Leadership Team draws an initial asset map of their neighborhood.

Tape a large piece of paper on the wall and have the team draw the boundaries, streets, and most importantly the assets of their neighborhood.



Sample Initial Asset Map

Step 4: Resident Leadership Team creates a gifts survey to identify the gifts and passions of the residents in the neighborhood

Create a short interview survey that can be used to identify residents, their address, and the gifts (skills, knowledge and abilities) they are willing to share and their passions (the issues they care about so much that they are willing to get involved if asked).

Step 5: Conduct in-person conversations with neighborhood residents to identify resident gifts and passions.

Use the Snowball interviewing technique to interview people in the neighborhood.

- Have the Resident Leadership Team interview each other.
- Ask the Team to interview 5-10 of their friends who live in the neighborhood.
- Ask the people they interview to interview 5-10 of their friends that live in the neighborhood. Etc.

Asset Mapping

Resident Engagement/ Asset Mapping Process

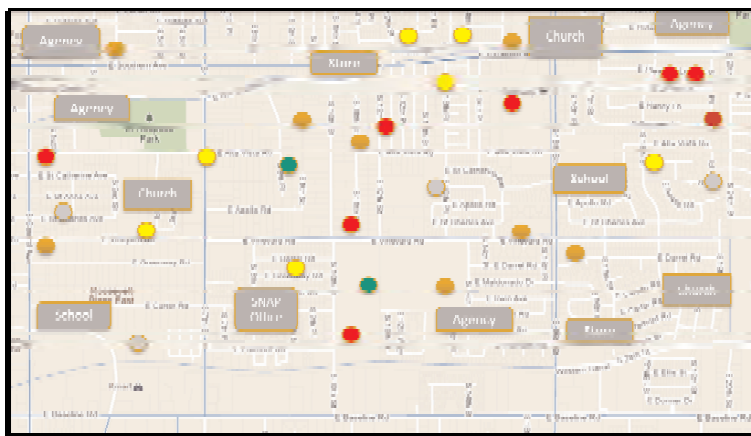


Tip: You might want to ask your local governmental planning body to provide the team a large map with streets and addresses so make it easier to map the residents' actual addresses. This is an example of an asset an institution could contribute to help increase community engagement.

Step 6: Resident Leadership Team adds the residents to the asset map.

Have the Resident Leadership team come together to map the residents using the following three step process:

1. Group the surveys by what people care about – that is their motivation for action.
2. Assign a different colored sticky dots to each passion (i.e. Kids/Red, Seniors/Blue, Safety/Yellow, Animals/Green, etc.)
3. Write the residents name on the sticky dot and place it on the map where they live.



Step 7: Resident Leadership Team connects residents that live close together with the same passions and ask them to come together to share their gifts to accomplish something related to their passion.

The goal is always to increase the number of people that are sharing their gifts to increase their neighborhood's well-being and the easiest way to do that is to create small groups of residents working together around something they all care about.

Starting with the people that live closest to each other, the Resident Leadership Team members should reach out to people with the same passion, bring them together and ask them to do something in support of their passion to improve their neighborhood. The Resident Leadership Team should also reach out to the organizations (agencies, governmental offices and businesses in the neighborhood) to connect them to the work of the residents.

Asset Mapping

Resident Engagement/ Asset Mapping Process

Tip: Asset Mapping Lessons from Broadway United Methodist Church – Indianapolis, IN

**Begin with what's already
there--and use it.**

**Involve yourself in what others
are doing (not the other way
around)**

Stop doing what's not working.

Act human.

**Go to the people seen as broken
and ask for their help.**

Know that change is slow.

**There will be drama. There
is also forgiveness.**

**Recognize that everyone
has the capacity to discover
gifts and build community.**

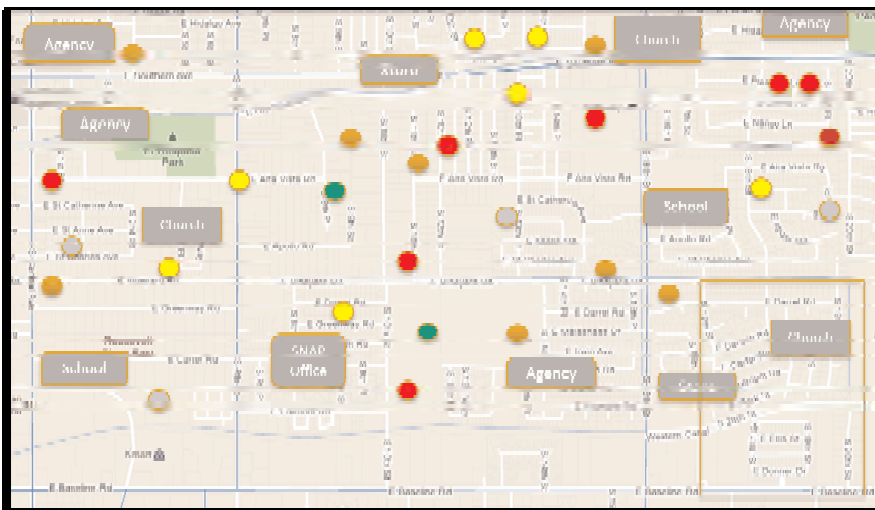
Celebrate constantly.

INVITE, INVITE, INVITE!

Step 8: Grow the Connections – People, Associations and Organizations.

Continually ask people to bring more residents, associations and organizations into the action. The Resident Leadership Team can also use the map to identify areas where you have not identified anyone. They can then go back to the people that are engaged and ask “Do you know anyone that lives on “X” Street or streets.

The Resident Leadership Team needs to be continually working to increase the number of engaged residents, associations and organizations. Everyone should always be on the look-out on how they can help identify the gifts and passions of other residents they know and ask them to get involved. The map should always be growing and evolving as more people, associations and organizations are brought into the process.



Step 9: Recognize and Celebrate successes.

To sustain and grow engagement and action we need to always take time to recognize and celebrate our successes. Keep it fun!



Tip: For long-term sustainability of the Resident Leadership Team and its work, the Resident Leadership Team should also always be on the lookout for residents that would like to become part of the Resident Leadership Team and nurture their development.

Asset Mapping

How your Project Can Unlock Gifts and Make a Greater Difference

Questions to help assess your organization's readiness to conduct asset mapping.

- What is your organization's relationship to community residents?
- How accountable is your organization to the people and community it serves?
- How does your service define and engage constituents? What power do they have?
- How does your service strengthen community relationships and social capital?
- What can you do to make your service more asset-based?
- Who do you hire from the neighborhood?
- What neighborhood groups do you belong to or meet with regularly?
- How do you relate to schools, churches, and CBOs in your neighborhood?
- What do you feel you contribute to the neighborhood and what else might you contribute?
- Are neighborhood people on your board of directors, advisory groups, or committees?



The role of agencies and programs should not be to just provide services to meet client needs. The most effective role you can play is to work to remove barriers so that the people you serve have the opportunity to share their gifts and be a producer of their own and their community's well-being.

To begin your asset mapping journey it is important to better understand how your organization currently interacts with your community and the people you serve and assess your readiness to begin the process. The questions found in the sidebar can help you develop an effective plan to build stronger relationships with your community and the individuals and families you serve.

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

Once you are ready to start you should begin by taking a deeper look at your own neighborhood/community and your own organization from an asset perspective by completing an asset profile of your neighborhood /community and your organization. It is important that you know your community and organization from an asset lens before you begin to connect with the community. See appendix A for Sample community profile and see appendix B for Sample agency asset profile. Blanks of these can be found in appendix C and D respectively.

From an asset perspective you will begin to see your organization as more than just the services you offer to your clients. You can discover all of the other things you can offer to your clients and their community to better engage them as coproducers of their own and their community's well-being. For example, your meeting rooms for Resident Leadership Team meetings, your computers that could be used by the residents for job searches and to create resumes, or your vacant lot that could be used for the neighborhoods community garden.

Once you complete your Agency Asset Profile you should share it with the Resident Leadership Team and talk about how they could use your agency's assets to help engage their neighborhood residents.



You can also use the Agency Asset Profile to map the assets of other organizations in your neighborhood / community that you would like to partner with. To complete the Asset Profile about other organizations it is important to take the time to build relationships with key staff members of the other organizations. Just like the neighborhood asset mapping you cannot get the information you need about what the other organizations have to offer without taking the time to build trusting relationships.

To help you identify the associations and organizations in your community that you would like to connect with you might want to complete the Association/Organization Partnership Identification Tool in Appendix E.

Once you have the information about the other organizations in your community you can also share that information with the Resident Team Leaders you are working with, to help them better connect the organizations in their neighborhood with their work.

Asset Mapping

Putting it All Together

It truly takes a village to raise a child and through asset mapping your organization can help create strong, safer and healthier neighborhoods that can come together to raise their healthy and productive children.

The process starts with your organization adopting an asset-based perspective and seeing your clients and their neighborhoods as filled with resources that you can use together to help achieve greater results. The key question becomes “What can you contribute?” not just “What do you need?”

Once you have taken a look at your community and your own organization from an asset lens and identified the resources and assets the next step is to help create Resident Leadership Teams in the neighborhoods you have targeted. With your training and support the Resident Leadership Teams can then begin the asset mapping process in their own neighborhood. As part this process you should share your agency’s assets and how you can help them engage their neighborhood residents as co-producers of their own and their community’s well-being. You should also share the asset information you have collected about other organizations in their community and help them connect with the organizations.

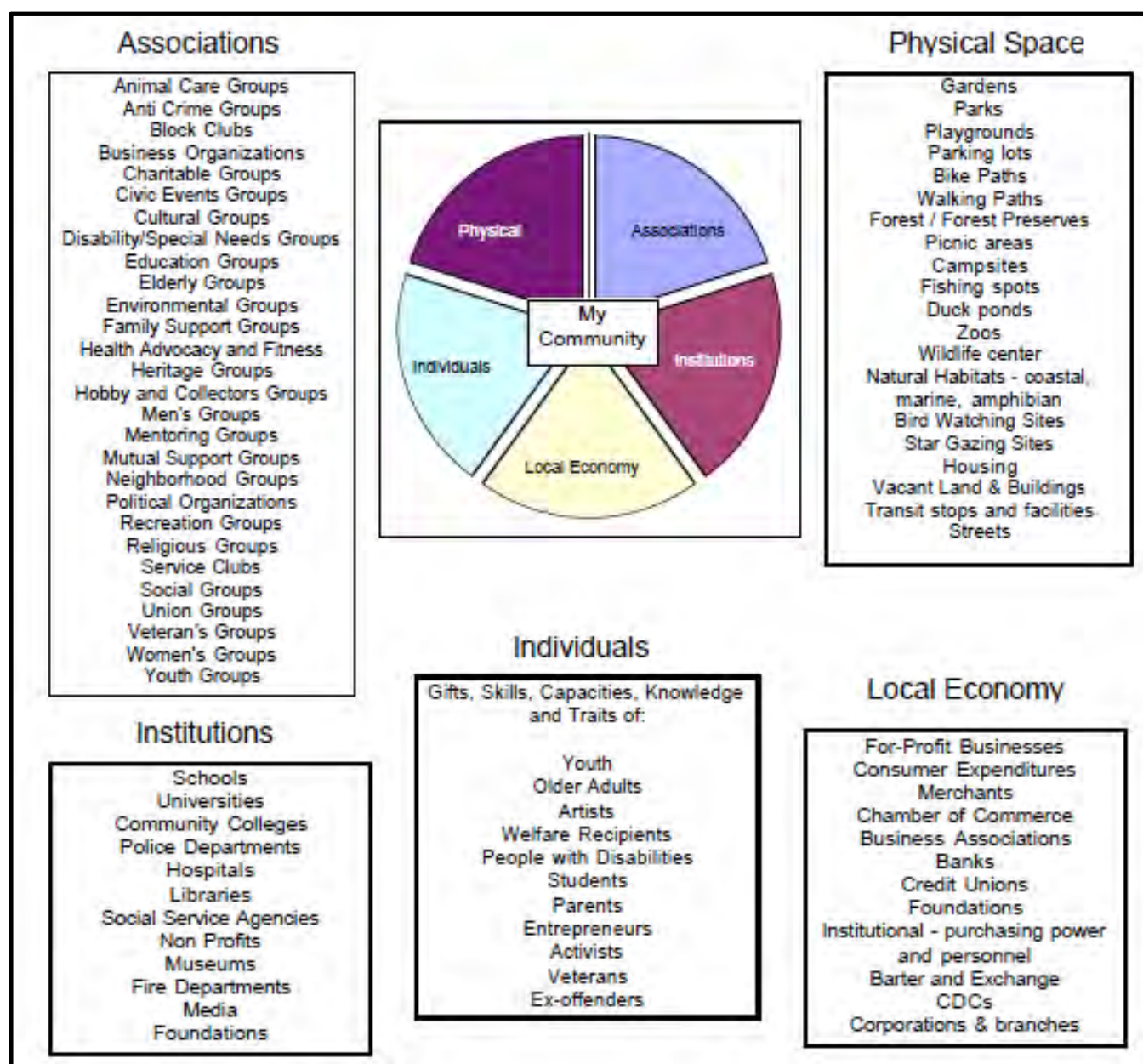
Together, organizations and residents can make a difference by focusing on what they have rather than what they are missing.

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

Appendix A - Sample Community Asset profile

Sample Community Profile



Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

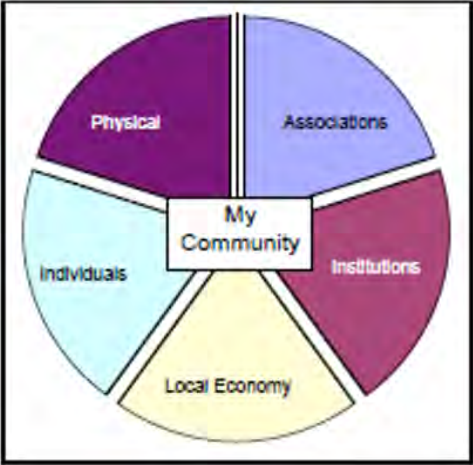
Appendix B – Sample Agency Asset Profile Tool

<p>Personnel</p> <p>Expertise in/outside of job: Ability to teach: Art Music Athletics</p> <p>Individual abilities: Finances Community History Writers Health Care</p> <p>Individual Traits: Ideas Energy Enthusiasm</p> <p>Technical Training: Computers Communications Vehicle Operations & Repair Investigation and Research Child Care</p> <p>Networks of Connections</p> <p>Knowledge of Community</p> <p>Leadership Development</p>	<p>Space and Facilities</p> <p>Meeting Rooms Break Rooms or Kitchen Glass Display Cases Computer Rooms Drinking Fountains Gardens Bulletin Boards Lobbies Parking Lots Bathrooms</p>	<p>Materials & Equipment</p> <p>Computers Expensive Software Desks, chairs, & other Furniture Scanner Printing Equipment Fax and Copier Digital Camera</p> <p>Books, magazines, & newspapers</p> <p>Telephones for hearing impaired</p> <p> Artworks</p> <p>Literacy and GED materials</p> <p>Community History Files</p> <p>Information on Community Organizations</p> <p>Social Service Resources</p> <p>Financial Information</p>
<p>Constituents</p> <p>Individual Abilities & Interests</p> <p>Individual Traits: Ideas, energy, idealism</p> <p>Linkages to Adults & Children</p> <p>Linkages to Community</p> <p>Collective Abilities & Interests</p>	<p>Expertise</p> <p>Classes: Arts, Athletics, Math, GED, Literacy, Language</p> <p>Educational Workshops: Crime Prevention Computer Literacy Healthy Eating Storytelling Leadership Skills</p> <p>Knowledge of Community</p> <p>Education & Training Courses</p>	<p>Economic Power</p> <p>Job Training</p> <p>Sponsor Fundraisers</p> <p>Hire Local People</p> <p>Assist in Writing and Submitting Grants for Community Projects</p> <p>Purchasing Power</p> <p>Power to generate & receive special funds through bond issues, government, and foundations</p>
<p>Networks of Connections</p> <p>Private Institutions</p> <p>Public Institutions</p> <p>Associations</p> <p>Individuals</p>		

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

Appendix C - Blank Community Asset Profile Tool

<p>Associations</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 250px; width: 100%;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: 150px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	<p>Physical Space</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 250px; width: 100%;"></div>
<p>Institutions</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>Individuals</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>Local Economy</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 150px; width: 100%;"></div>

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

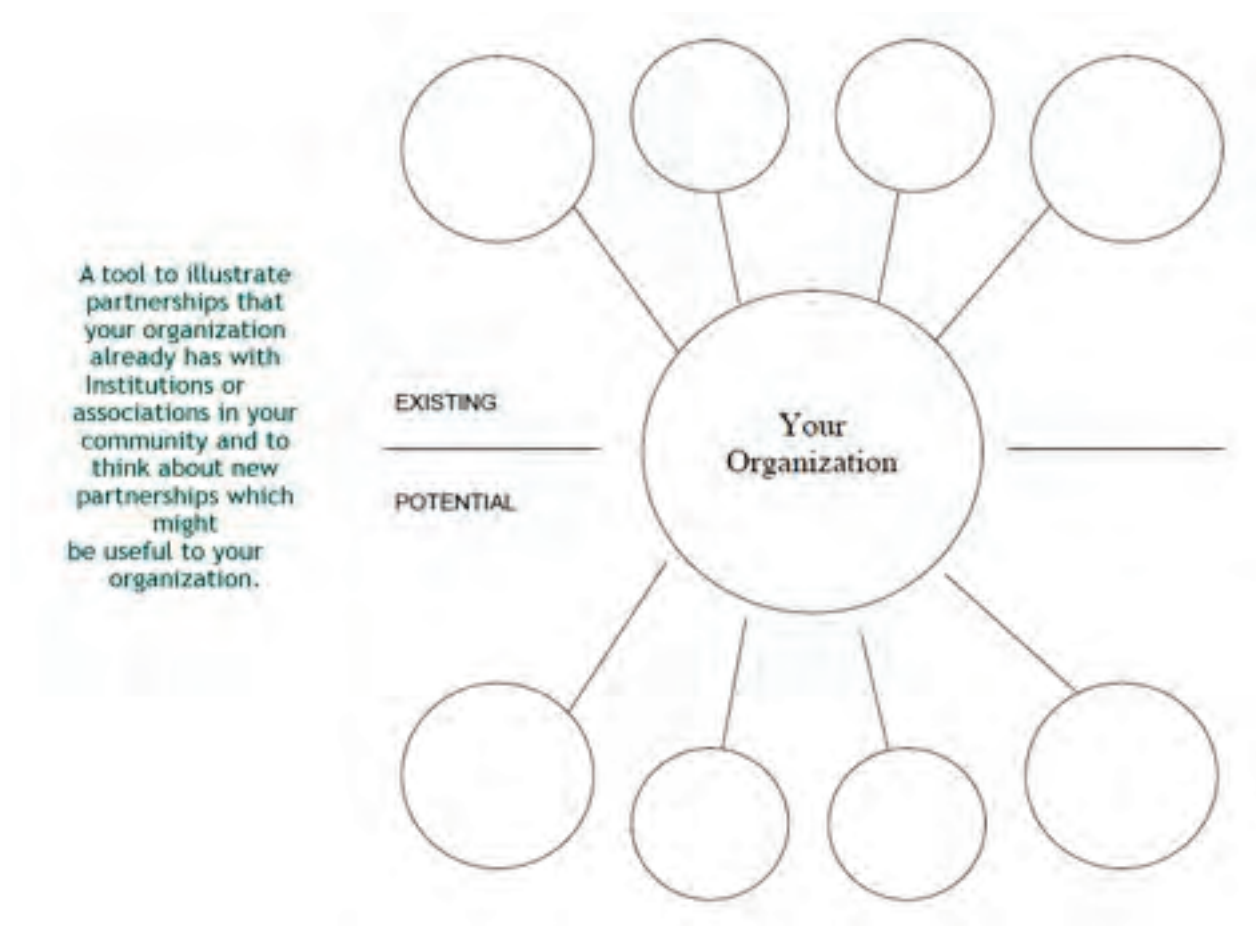
Appendix D - Blank Agency Asset Profile Tool

Personnel	Space and Facilities	Materials and Equipment
	Expertise	
Constituents	Networks of Connections	Economic Power

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

Appendix E - Association / Organization Partnership Identification tool



You can add as many circles as you need to expand your partnerships and opportunities

Asset Mapping

Community / Organizational Asset Identification Tools

Appendix F - ABCD Resources

ABCD Websites:

ABCD Institute - <http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>

ABCD in Action – Online ABCD Community -
<http://abcdinaction.org>

Abundant Community – Stories of ABCD -
<http://www.abundantcommunity.com>



Clear Impact provides performance management software, training and services to help government agencies, non-profits, communities, and foundations track the performance of their programs, measure the impact of their funding, and report on the progress of their missions to improve the lives of children, families and communities worldwide.

Our performance improvement experts work side-by-side with government leaders, executive directors and public sector professionals to establish measurable performance expectations, identify the right data indicators and continuously monitor the progress of programs and partners by implementing the proven Results-Based Accountability framework to deliver long-term, measurable impact.

Our easy-to-use, web-based Clear Impact Scorecard software helps program managers, grant managers and performance directors collaborate with stakeholders and community partners to simplify data collection, standardize reporting, measure progress and improve performance on a local, regional and national scale to move beyond quantities of people served and demonstrate that communities are actually better off.