

Description: Community Needs and Resources Assessment

A needs and resources assessment is a systematic process of gathering and critically interpreting information (data) about a given problem.

The needs identified will be the foundation for the rest of your planning process.

Your planning team will identify and prioritize needs in 3 categories for your primary prevention plan:

- 1) Needs related to your universal population;
- 2) Needs related to your selected population;
- 3) Needs related to the prevention system capacity in your community.

How do I conduct a Needs and Resources Assessment?

First, *establish a workgroup*.

For a needs and resources assessment to be most effective it should be a group effort. This will encourage community buy-in and accountability for the planning process, as well as ensure that the assessment is comprehensive and represents the voice of all community members.

Try to select members with one or more of the following characteristics:

- 1) Represents the perspectives of specific populations;
- 2) Skills and experiences that are relevant to needs and resources assessments;
- 3) Access to data through affiliation with local resources (universities, health departments, service providers, etc.)
- 4) Willingness and ability to contribute time.

Then, *define your community of interest*.

What is “community?” It may be a geographic area of interest, or it may be a group of people with a common interest. Remember that some communities do not correspond to official geographic boundaries, such as many Native American communities that span several geographic counties.

Develop a community profile.

A community profile is a comprehensive description of people, conditions, and resources within your community of interest.

A community profile may challenge assumptions that the planning team brings to the table about the community. It can also facilitate a common understanding of the concerns and priorities within the community.

A community profile is descriptive and includes information about:

- 1) Number of individuals and family households;
- 2) Age distribution;
- 3) Annual household income;
- 4) Marital status;
- 5) Unemployment status;
- 6) Educational attainment;
- 7) Racial/ethnic composition;
- 8) Distribution of urban, rural, and tribal populations;
- 9) Individual and community-level resources and assets;
- 10) Funding allocation to prevent IPV;
- 11) Individual and organizational prevention capacity.

Understanding IPV in your community.

After you have developed a community profile it is important to understand the magnitude of intimate partner violence in your community.

There are three questions to ask during this step:

- 1) What is the magnitude of IPV among universal and selected populations?
- 2) What can be changed or modified to reduce IPV?
- 3) What are the gaps in existing sources to understand and track IPV?

There are existing sources of data to help with both the community profile and understanding IPV in your community. You may look to the census bureau or public records such as police reports. There may be sources of information from health departments or hospitals.

There will likely be gaps in existing sources of data and the information you need to fully understand your community. You might gather information to fill these gaps through interviews, surveys, or observation. These methods will allow you to understand and describe the uniqueness of your community. Existing sources of data will give you numbers; collecting your own information will give you the context of those numbers.

Bringing it all together and prioritizing needs.

Once you have gained an understanding of your community and IPV within your community, it is time to put it all together and prioritize your needs. This should be done with the entire prevention planning team. You should select needs for each of the following: your universal population; a selected population; and a prevention system capacity in your community.