

Do Community Asset and Need Mapping

In this activity (featured in the *Service Toolkit*):

Members will learn how to do basic research online and through phone calls, helping the club identify which needs they find in the local community. They will use the information to create a community map that features local assets (organizations, government agencies, businesses and people) addressing the needs they are interested in exploring.

This activity allows members to:

- Identify community assets that can teach them about needs and/or that can serve as partners for club service initiatives.
- Share their ideas and observations with other members.
- Engage with fellow members.
- Increase their confidence and use of their voice.

Materials needed:

- Flipchart paper (if not available, a whiteboard and dry erase marker)
- Markers (a variety of darker colors)
- Computers or smart devices

How to lead this activity:

Now that the club has brainstormed needs that *can* be addressed through service, it's time to think about:

1. What specific places or programs in the school and community currently address needs?
2. Where are they?
3. What are the services or goods (things) they offer for those needs?

PRIOR TO THE MEETING:

1. Write the "Need Category" list in one column on a sheet of flipchart paper or a side of the whiteboard - you can find the list in the "Choosing a Community Need" activity.
2. Then turn the list into a map legend by pairing each need name with a symbols and/or color placed next to it. For example, a red circle after Education & literacy, a blue circle after Bullying prevention).
3. Hang two pieces of flipchart paper connected to each other on a wall or whiteboard where it will be visible to members. Hang the legend paper to the side.

AT THE MEETING:

1. Read the ACTIVITY GOAL for members: For the club to work together to create a community map based on their observations and some basic research.
2. Ask members to gather around and sit near the posted flipchart paper and to bring a computer or smart device.

3. Ask what boundaries should be used as the north, south, east and west borders of the map. Ask an officer to draw the agreed-upon boundaries, and label their direction.
4. Then ask the officer to locate and label the school building on the map (making it small so lots of other places across the community will fit).
5. Tell members to imagine that they are flying over the community. Ask them to name what important local places they would see that are *assets* in your community (nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and businesses). Also, don't forget key people (for instance, the mayor)! Members can use computers and smart devices to help identify where these places are located, with the officer adding them to the map. Potential assets to include:

- a. Schools
- b. Elected officials
- c. Civic groups and councils
- d. Police and fire stations
- e. Parks and playgrounds
- f. Waterways
- g. Animal habitats
- h. Animal shelters
- i. Hospitals
- j. Homeless shelters
- k. Youth organizations and youth centers
- l. Churches, synagogues, mosques and other places of faith
- m. Foundations
- n. United Way
- o. Assisted living facilities
- p. Grocery stores
- q. Small businesses that have programs that give back to the community
- r. Major companies and large businesses
- s. Places unique to your community

Ask members to volunteer to identify nonprofit organizations and groups that may serve causes you know exist in your community but are not on this list or on your map.

6. After the club members are satisfied that the map represents places serving the community in a variety of ways, turn to the map legend's list of Need Categories. Discuss and come to agreement on how each place would be categorized; meanwhile, the officer at the map will draw the corresponding color/symbol next to the place.
7. Refer to the map and ask the following questions. Make sure the club secretary or another member takes notes.

THREE SECTORS

Different kinds of institutions exist for different purposes.

Nonprofit organizations are driven by a mission to serve a social good (including, environmental and animal care, caring for the hungry and poor, advocating for equality, athletic associations, medical research, and more).

Government agencies provide public services and services that meet the needs of most citizens (like public schools, parks, streets, police, military, Social Security, and more).

Businesses exist to provide basic and luxury goods and services for consumers - and they must earn a profit.

- a. What makes our community great for most people?
 - b. What places seem to be the greatest assets to improving our community? Why?
 - c. What things could make the community a better place for all people? Why?
 - d. Do you see anything missing from the map that our community or the people in it need?
8. Thank the members for thoughtfully mapping the community!
 9. Ask the club secretary to take pictures of the map and legend to use for the “How to Conduct Interviews” activity and other meetings. Ask the advisor to save the flipcharts of the map and legend.