



Community Asset Mapping and Needs Assessment

Community Asset Mapping

What is an asset?

- Community organizations - churches, community centers, homeless shelters, libraries, schools
- Local businesses - provide services, jobs, donations to the community
- Buildings - historic, occupied, unoccupied
- Infrastructure - transportation, telecommunications, healthcare, other public services
- People - people have knowledge and skills that support their communities

How do you uncover assets?

- Review websites related to the area - city sites, chamber of commerce, local newspapers, community sites
- Create an inventory of these assets
- Identify contacts at relevant organizations
- Interview these people

Create a map

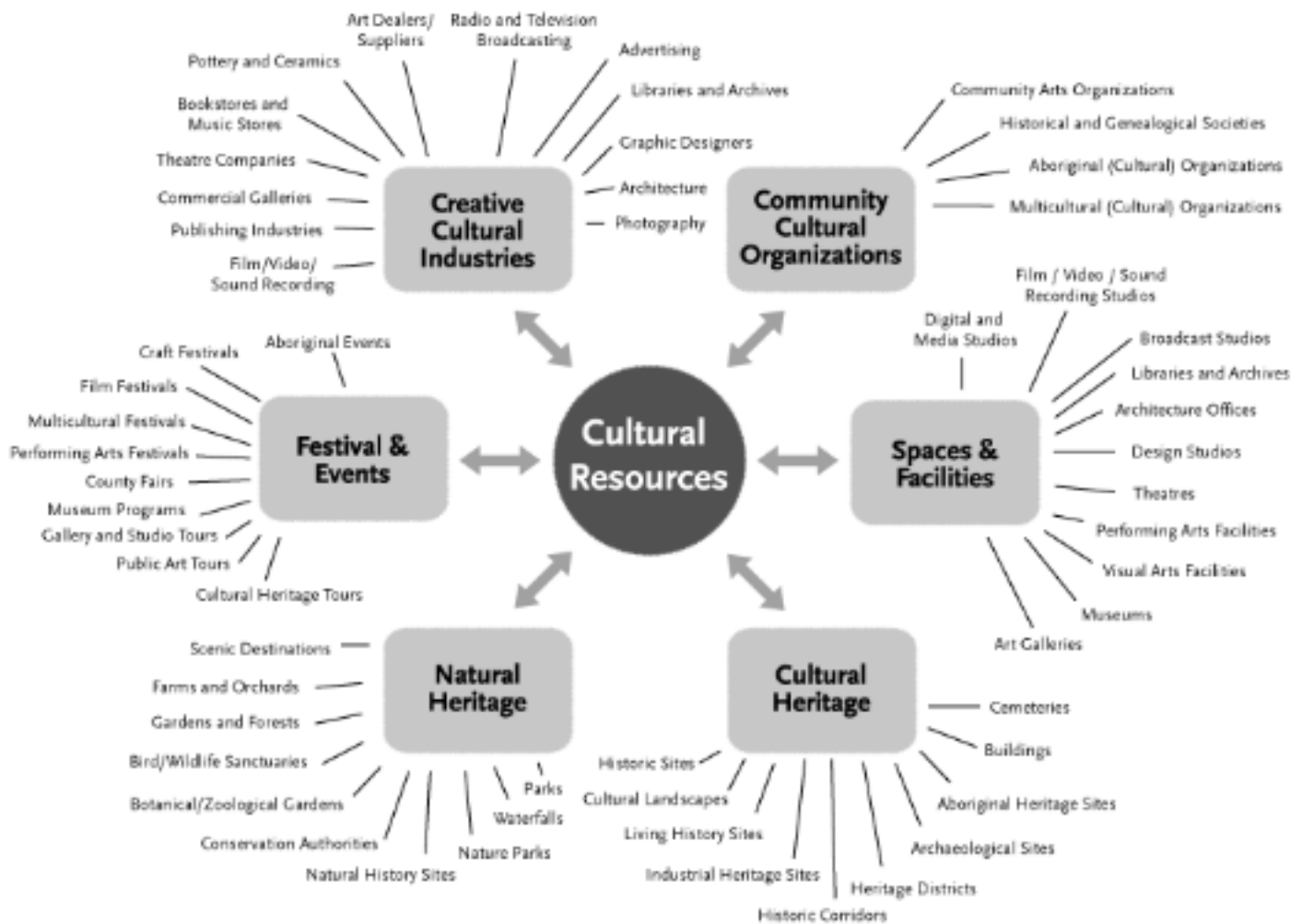
- You can use an actual map of the geographic area and mark assets with a pushpin (virtual or physical)

- You can create your own map

Interpret the assets

- How do these assets relate to the need you are considering?
- What opportunities for collaboration/partnership exist?
- Are there any gaps?
- How can these assets be strengthened?

Asset Map Example:



Community Needs Assessment

What is a need?

- Concern identified by a community or organization as a priority
 - Can be related to resources, inequities, perceptions, community health

How do you uncover needs?

- Identify sources of information
 - Public records, community/city websites, organization websites, school district website, census data, council meetings, community leaders
- Collect data from as many sources as possible
 - Consider surveys, interviews, focus groups
- Develop a clear idea of what the ideal state is (what will the situation look like once the need is met?)
- Identify the gap between what the current state is and what the ideal state is
- Identify and/or develop resources that will fill the gap

Applying a solution

- What assets can the community/organization contribute to the solution?
- What does the community/organization need that they can't do on their own?
- Identify external threats
 - Economy
 - Political landscape
 - Continuity of funding sources
 - Competing businesses/programs
 - Likelihood of a pandemic
- Develop an action plan considering all resources/threats
- Review the plan with key stakeholders

[More information available in the Community Tool Box](#)

Mitigate Uncertainty

- Does the proposed service, solution, product, already exist?
 - Will an additional solution enhance the current solution or create competition?
 - What can you learn from people already involved in the solution?
 - How can you combine resources or form partnerships?
 - Is there a better solution?
- Does the proposed solution require any special permissions, certifications, or licensing?
 - What are the financial costs of these requirements?
 - How long is the waiting period?
 - How often do they need to be renewed?
 - Is there a better solution?
- Are there any risks?
 - How likely are they to occur?
 - How can they be avoided?
 - If they can't be avoided, how can you minimize the impact?
 - Does the benefit outweigh the cost?
 - Is there a better solution?
- Create a logic model
 - Considerations
 - Goals
 - Inputs
 - Outputs
 - Outcomes
 - Assumptions
 - External factors

Be sure to record any surprises that occur after implementation so they can be addressed in future iterations of your action plan

Resources for further exploration:

[Asking “What Else?” to identify unintended negative consequences: Kathleen M. Wilburn *, H. Ralph Wilburn](#)

[A Field Guide to Ripple Effects Mapping: Scott Chazdon, Mary Emery, Debra Hansen, Lorie Higgins, and Rebecca Sero \(Eds.\)](#)