

Community Needs Assessment

July 25, 2023

Presented by:

NASCSP

Association of Nationally
Certified ROMA Professionals



Considering Community Needs Assessment data
– What do we want to know?
-- How will we use the data?



The Community Action Network

- Community Action Agencies (CAAs) exist in nearly every county across the United States. They are designated as the **anti-poverty agent** in their service area.
- They are all **different because of the local conditions in the communities they serve,**
- but they all receive funding from the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) which **unites them by the purposes and goals** identified in legislation.



Anti-Poverty Purpose of the Community Action Network Has Not Changed

In 1964, Community Action was created for three primary purposes:

- **the reduction of poverty,**
- **the revitalization of low-income communities, and**
- **the empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient**

The National Community Action Network Theory of Change

Community Action Goals

Goal 1: Individuals and families with low incomes are stable and achieve economic security.

Goal 2: Communities where people with low incomes live are healthy and offer economic opportunity.

Goal 3: People with low incomes are engaged and active in building opportunities in communities.



Services and Strategies

Employment



Education & Cognitive Development



Income, Infrastructure & Asset Building



Housing

Health/Social Behavioral Development



Civic Engagement & Community Involvement



Core Principles

- Recognize the complexity of the issues of poverty
- Build local solutions specific to local needs
- Support family stability as a foundation for economic security
- Advocate for systemic change
- Pursue positive individual, family, and community level change
- Maximize involvement of people with low incomes
- Engage local community partners and citizens in solutions
- Leverage state, federal, and community resources

Performance Management

How well does the network operate?

What difference does the network make?



- Local Organizational Standards
- State and Federal Accountability Measures
- Results Oriented Management and Accountability System

- Individual and Family National Performance Indicators
- Community National Performance Indicators

A national network of over 1,000 high performing Community Action Agencies, State Associations, State offices, and Federal partners supported by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) to mobilize communities to fight poverty.

PM page 17

If every community is different, how does the agency know what to do?



- How will lives be changed?
- In what ways will communities be improved?

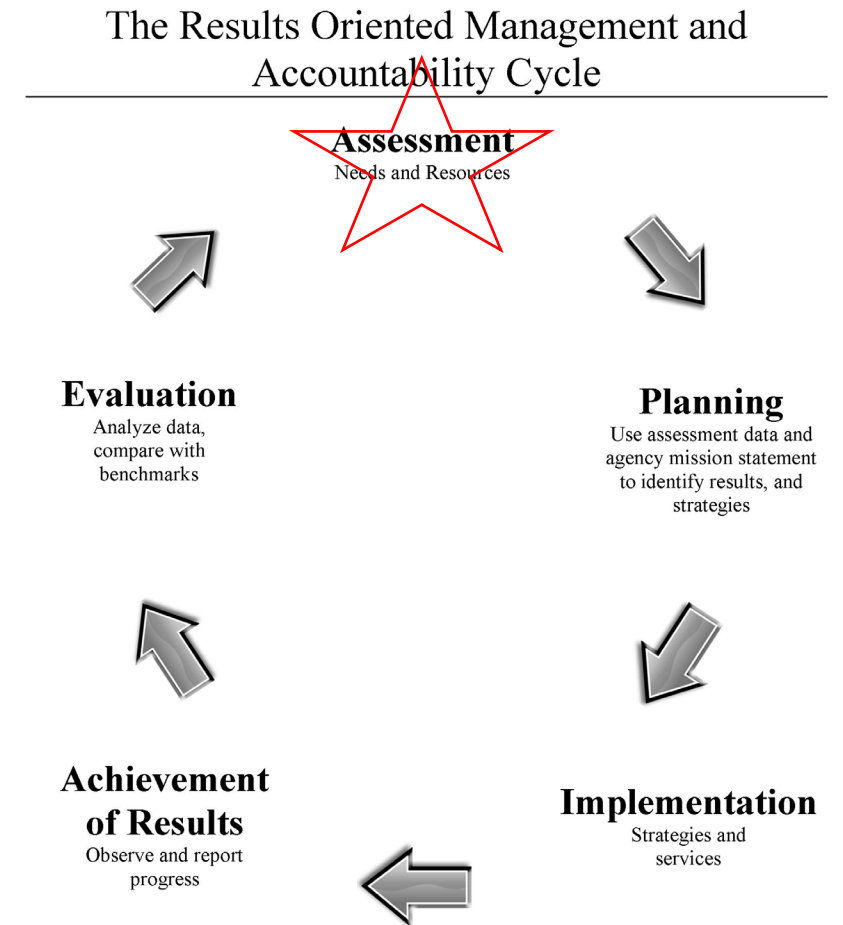
Assessing the Needs

Assessment is the first stage of the ROMA cycle and helps determine:

- Who are our customers?
- What do they value?
- What outcomes should we aim to achieve?

Assessment is the foundation of decision making in all subsequent phases.

Assessment is an ongoing process that produces continuous quality improvement.



Community Needs Assessment



The community needs assessment is a systematic process for creating a profile of the needs and resources of a given community or target population.



Key CNA Goals

- Identify and analyze the underlying causes of poverty that of a particular community.
- Support strategic planning and develop program priorities.
- Strengthen relationships with key partners and stakeholders.
- Build awareness of Community Action and support need for funding.

Key CNA Activities

- Assess the needs and assets within the whole community.
 - Collect data from a wide variety of sources
- Analyze the data
 - Identify overall service needs of populations, gaps in services, and barriers to services.
 - Identify levels of need: family, community and agency
 - Recommend priorities to be addressed by the agency
- Secure Board approval
- Share the findings



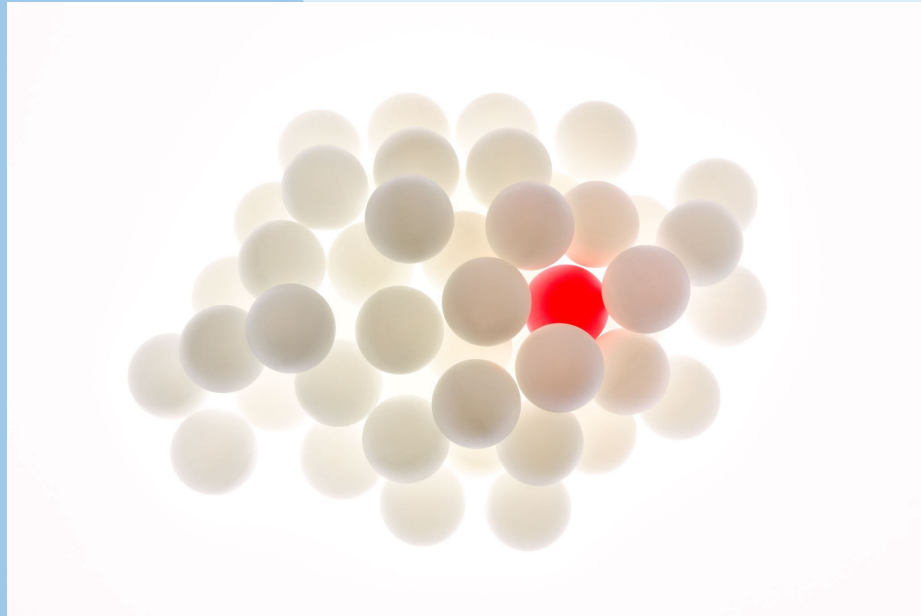
CSBG
Organizational
Standards

Standard 3.1 • The organization conducted a Community Assessment and issued a report **within the past 3 years.**

- ▶ The assessment is comprehensive and covers the whole community
- ▶ The report is shared with customers, partners, and the community

See handout with other Org. Standards related to Needs Assessment identified





How has the agency
identified the
Community?

The Target Community



- How does the agency identify the community they are assessing?
- CSBG service area
(impact of neighboring areas)
- Is there focus on parts of the service area that are considered to be low income?
 - zip code/census tract, neighborhood, city/county, region.



Population in Need

What are the characteristics of the population with low income in your community?





What is the Data Collection plan?

What is the Timeline?

- Does the agency have a clear plan for the activities in the data collection processes? Do they know what will take the longest time? Do they start those activities on the calendar in the earliest spot?
- Have they left enough time for analysis of the data and writing the report?





EMPLOYMENT



EDUCATION AND
COGNITIVE
DEVELOPMENT



INCOME,
INFRASTRUCTURE,
AND ASSET
BUILDING



HOUSING



HEALTH/SOCIAL
BEHAVIORAL
DEVELOPMENT



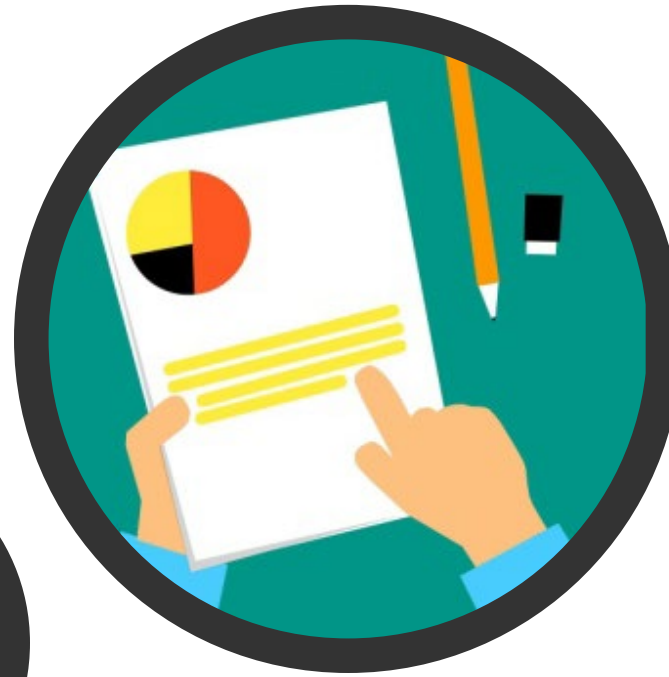
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
AND COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT

What kinds of needs do communities face?

Consider...

- Look at last CNA. What domains were included in that?
- Was the way the data was organized make it easy to understand the needs in different domain areas?
- Does the agency have any new ideas for collecting and organizing data for this CNA?





Different Kinds of Data for Assessments

Material from Intro to ROMA 5.1, 2020



CSBG Organizational Standards

Standard 3.2 • As part of the Community Assessment, the organization **collects and includes current data specific to poverty** and its prevalence related to gender, age, and race/ethnicity for their service area(s).

- ▶ Demographic data is included for all domains
- ▶ Demographic data informs decisions about selection of programs, services, and delivery strategies

Standard 3.3 • The organization collects and analyzes both **qualitative and quantitative data** on its **geographic service area(s)** in the Community Assessment.

- ▶ Qualitative and quantitative data is collected for all domains
- ▶ Qualitative data is used to explain quantitative data
- ▶ The data is analyzed to “tell the story” of poverty in the community

The background features a large, stylized 'X' shape formed by overlapping translucent bands of color. The top-left and bottom-right bands are light blue, while the top-right and bottom-left bands are light green. The center of the 'X' is filled with a dense, multi-colored splatter of paint dots in shades of blue, green, yellow, and orange. In the corners, there are overlapping geometric shapes: light blue diamonds in the top-right and light green diamonds in the bottom-right.

Types of data

Quantitative,
Qualitative,
Customer
Satisfaction,
Agency Report
Data,
Resources

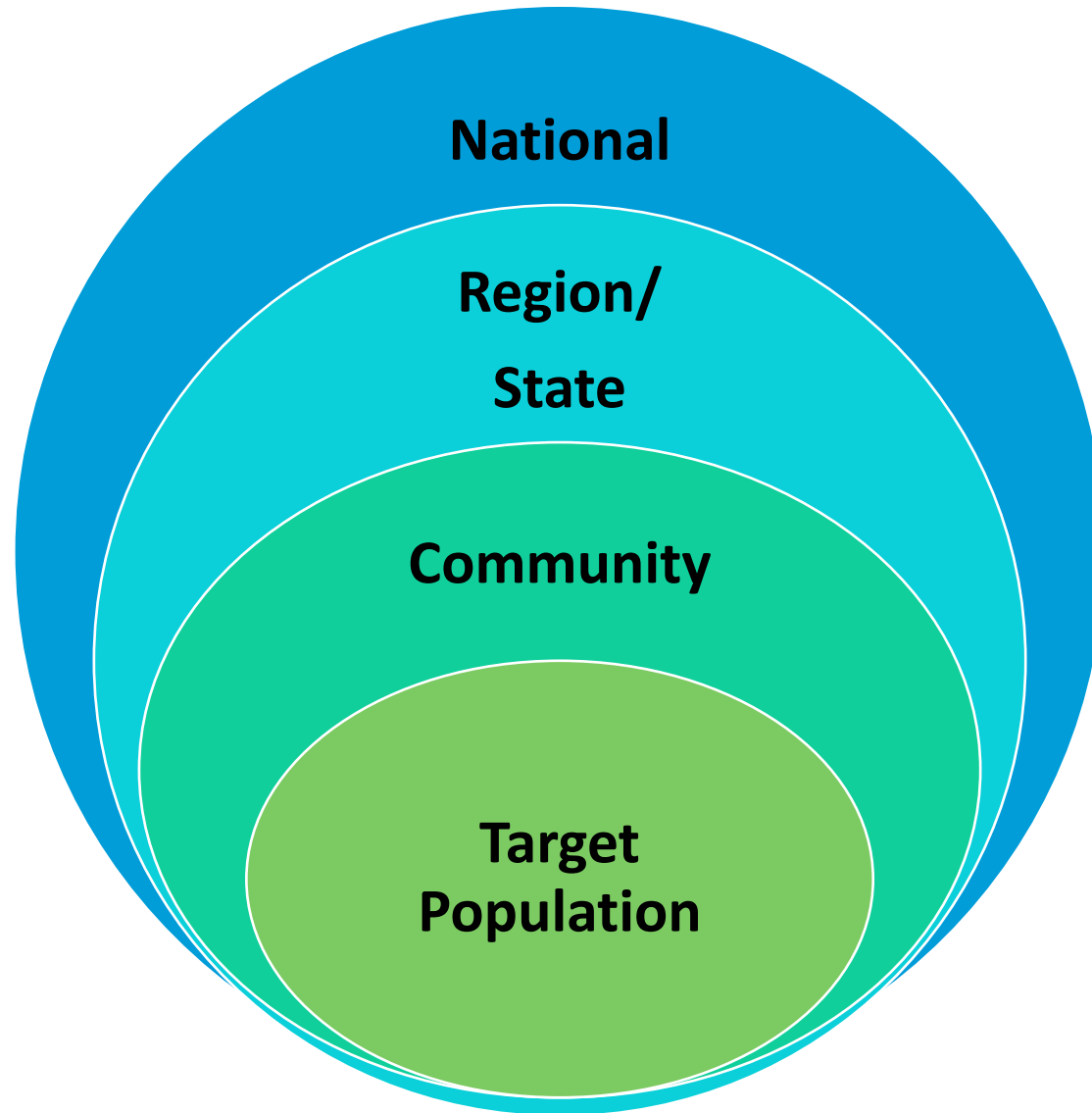
Quantitative Data

How many are impacted by an issue?
Who are they?

How much of something exists?
Provides the scope or amount of the issue.

Data that is presented as “numbers.”

Does the CNA Include Multi-Level Data?



Qualitative Data

Used to understand the depth and breadth of an issue.

Provides opinions and observations.

Data that is presented as “letters” or “words”.

Focus group qualitative data summary

EXAMPLE: Affordable Housing Summary of Comments

- All demographics reported struggling with housing costs here.
- Seniors on fixed income are often unable to afford rent and maintenance fee increases.
- Young people often earn less money at the beginning of their careers and are priced out of the rental market.
- Parents with children reported having to settle for smaller accommodations that do not fit their families due to high prices.

Qualitative Examples

“I have two kids and we are trying to get disability for my husband. I work, but I’m always behind on lot rent, my car needs new tires. I need to go to the dentist, but I don’t have insurance and I always need help paying my bills.”

Source: Head Start parent interview

“Paying for bills and being able to eat are a huge concern!”

Source: Saline County Respondent

USING SURVEYS:

BE SURE YOU ARE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

If the survey asks questions about services, you will get data about services, not about needs!!

Being Results Oriented means that you want to find out what can be changed/improved, so it is important to have questions that will provide data to create a clear profile of the community.

FOCUS ON SERVICE

ORIGINAL SURVEY ITEM

Thank you for your participation.

Your responses to this short survey are anonymous and will help us improve services to the community.

Which services are needed to help low-income people and families?

Education	Most Needed	Somewhat Needed	Not Needed	Don't Know
Adult Education				
Pre-School (Kindergarten readiness)				
Job Skills Training				
Financial Education				
Health and Nutrition Education				
Tutoring/Reading Assistance				

What is missing?

REVISED SURVEY ITEM

Thank you for your participation.

Your responses to this short survey are anonymous and will help us improve services to the community.

Which of the areas identified below describe something you need?

Education
Don't have a high school diploma
Lack of post secondary education
Skills needed for employment
Limited financial management skills
Lack of food preparation skills
Children may not be ready for Kindergarten
Children/youth struggling in school
Children/youth lack academic skills

Questions asking: what help do you need?

Category	I/My Family Needs Help	Need Right Now (1)	Need Met Without Help (2)	Need Met With Help (3)	Does Not Apply (4)
Employment	Getting a job	1	2	3	4
	Getting a job that pays my bills	1	2	3	4
	Learning how to find a job	1	2	3	4
	Gaining skills or education to get a job	1	2	3	4

What is available?

1. Is higher education or training beyond high school available in your community?

This is NOT available in my community

It's available, but limited

It's available, but too expensive

It's available, and affordable

I think it's available, but I don't know how to get it

2. Is nutritional food (fruit, vegetables, etc.) available in your community?

This is NOT available in my community

It's available, but limited

It's available, but too expensive

It's available, and affordable

I think it's available, but I don't know how to get it

3. Is affordable housing available in your community?

This is NOT available in my community

It's available, but limited

It's available, and affordable

I think it's available, but I don't know how to get it

Other questions:

I think the three most critical issues in my community are: *(Check your top three)*

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities To Give Back |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Prevention/Treatment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jobs | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safe Neighborhoods | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Participation | |

Please use this section to list any other critical community issues not listed above:

CUSTOMER INPUT AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer Input:



- Information about what the customer needs and values.
- Can be used to identify needs on both the individual and the community level.

Customer Satisfaction:

- Information about how satisfied customers are with the services they received from and the interaction they had with your agency.
- Can be used to identify agency level needs.



Customer Satisfaction
Survey Question:
What could we have done
to make your experience
better?

“For me, as my income goes up, my benefits go down. But there is no grace period where I could maybe learn to budget better or adjust in some way.

The agency didn't have help to prepare me for the benefit decreases. I think having classes to help learn those things before benefits decrease would be helpful.”

“I don't have a car so getting to appointments for services is a problem for me.

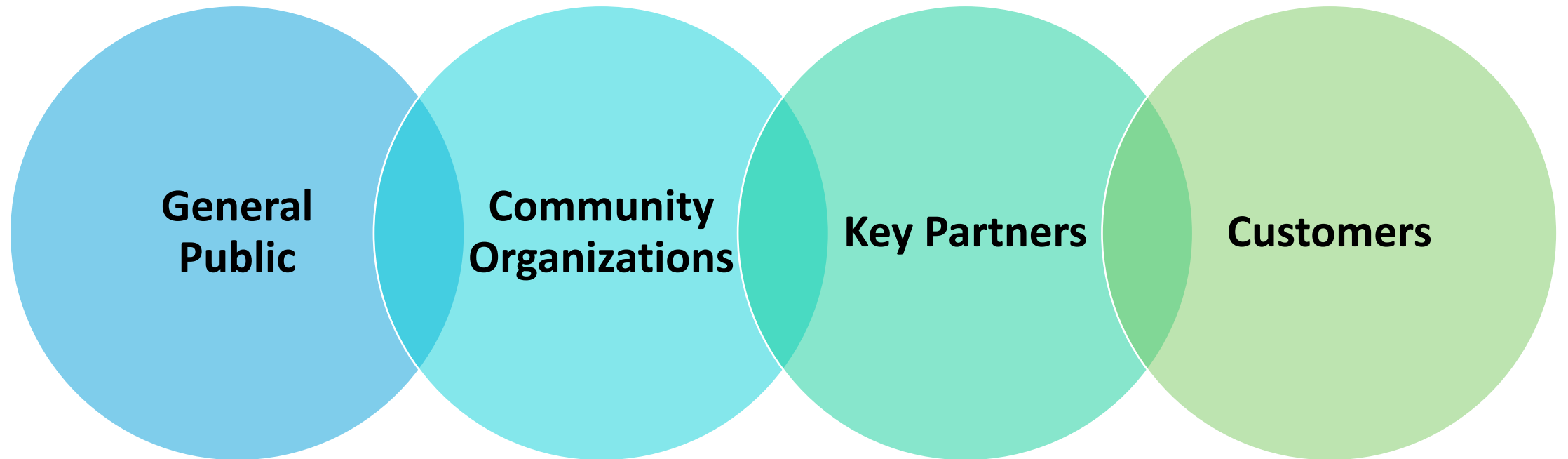
Your agency services are not located on a public bus route and are all in the center of the county, not out where we live. I have to get someone to take me to appointments.

Also, you don't have evening hours so anyone I get to bring me has to take time off work to get to your office.”

“I came into the food bank to get some help and not only did I get food that was very useful to our family, but I also got information about the head start program that my youngest child was eligible for.

The folks at the food bank made it easy for me to get in touch with the right people to get him enrolled. Thanks for having information available in this way. No need to change . ”

Input from Stakeholders



Qualitative survey responses by domain

Housing

3,000 unit short for housing needs (according to Roger per Housing Authority presentation)

Employment

In town, historic district, mostly retail jobs and those jobs pay less

Husband commutes 1 hour to find a living wage job

Transportation

The community does have transit but there is a fee and it does not go out very far

Greenway has established routes and you can call and schedule it but they may not be able to accommodate your needed schedule; mostly in town

Per Head Start staff : Largest issue is a lack of reliable, affordable, public transportation.

Health and Nutrition

Junk food is affordable but healthy food is not.

Aldi (grocery store) has some good prices but is a 30 minute drive to get there.

Education

Concern that Community College is pushing towards a specific field instead of broader/general education. Worry that this may prevent some from being able to pursue education.

Agency Data



- The statistical data the agency gathers for reporting should be included in the assessment process.
- Examples of this kind of quantitative data:
 - numbers of customers served,
 - demographic data about them,
 - identification of services provided
 - Identification of outcomes achieved.
- Agency Report Data can also include success stories about the outcomes achieved. This would be an example of qualitative data.

Agency Data in the Community Profile

What services did the agency deliver?

What impact did they make?

Data elements:

Number served by neighborhood

Number on waiting lists and/or unserved

Gaps in services

Current/future program funding

Eligibility requirements/ barriers

Cost per unit of service

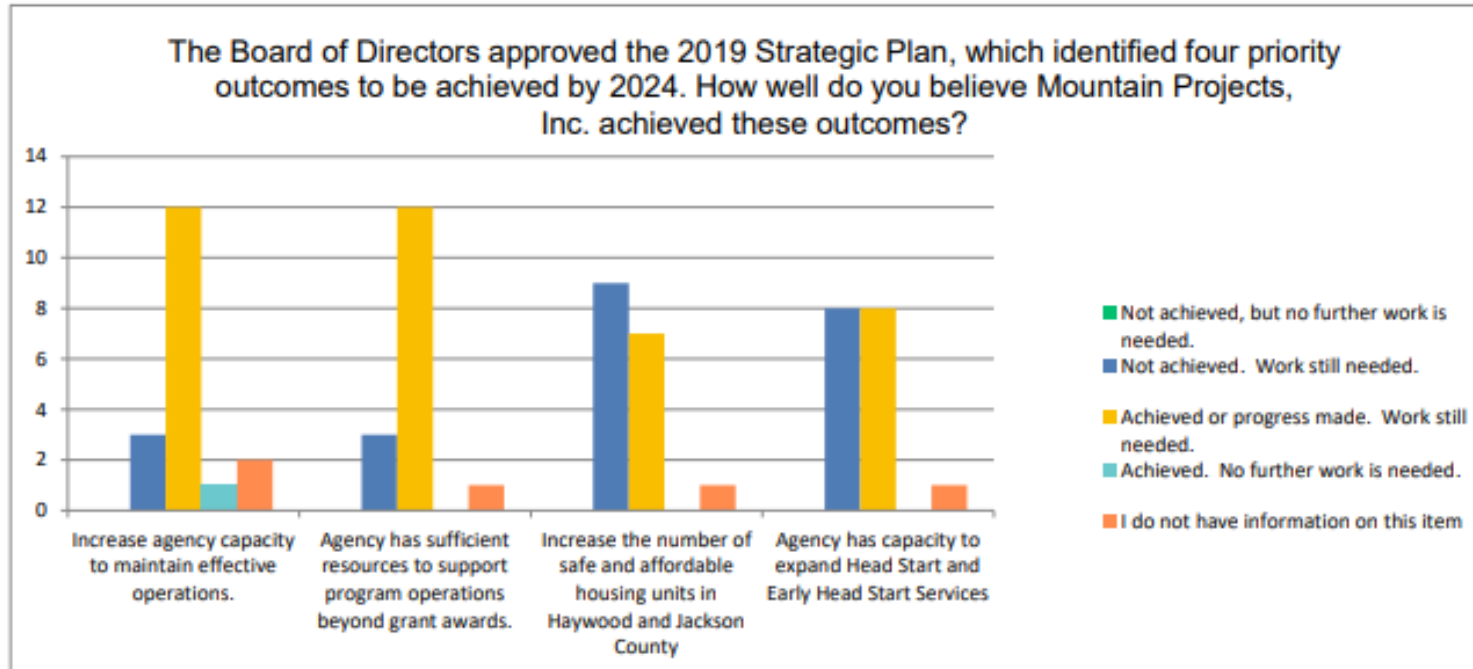
Cost per unit of outcome

Find out about:

- Did we provide the services we projected? (The number and types of services?)
- Did people request services that we could not address? What were they? For what population?
- Do we have an unduplicated count of our customers? Which customers received multiple services?
- Can you connect services and outcomes for each customer?
- What information can you get from the financial data?
- Does the data identify any systems/policy issues?

Agency Level Needs Must Be Included

SURVEY DATA: REVIEW OF 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES



"I think we are doing great work, but I believe that once we make it beyond the pandemic, we will have the capacity to increase in these areas." *Mountain Projects Agency Leadership member*

Look at prior Strategic Plan.

- Were agency level outcomes identified?
- Were the agency outcomes based on data from the assessment process?
- Is there still a verified need to be addressed?

Community Resources

What is a resource?

Any thing that can help customers meet needs.

Examples:

Tangible assistance from a faith base organization

Availability of a summer youth program

Substance abuse treatment facility in the neighborhood

Emergency room services within 15 minutes of the neighborhood

Library open at times that are easy to access

Parks are safe for children to play

Questions to ask about Resources

- What resources have been used in the past?
 - Are they still available?
- What resources are being developed?
- What resources are threatened?



Community Resources

Existing? Emerging? Threatened?

Data elements:

Lists of employers/industries

Identify education opportunities (K-12, community colleges, 4 year colleges)

Healthcare (hospital systems, mental health)

Other service providers (public, nonprofit, private)

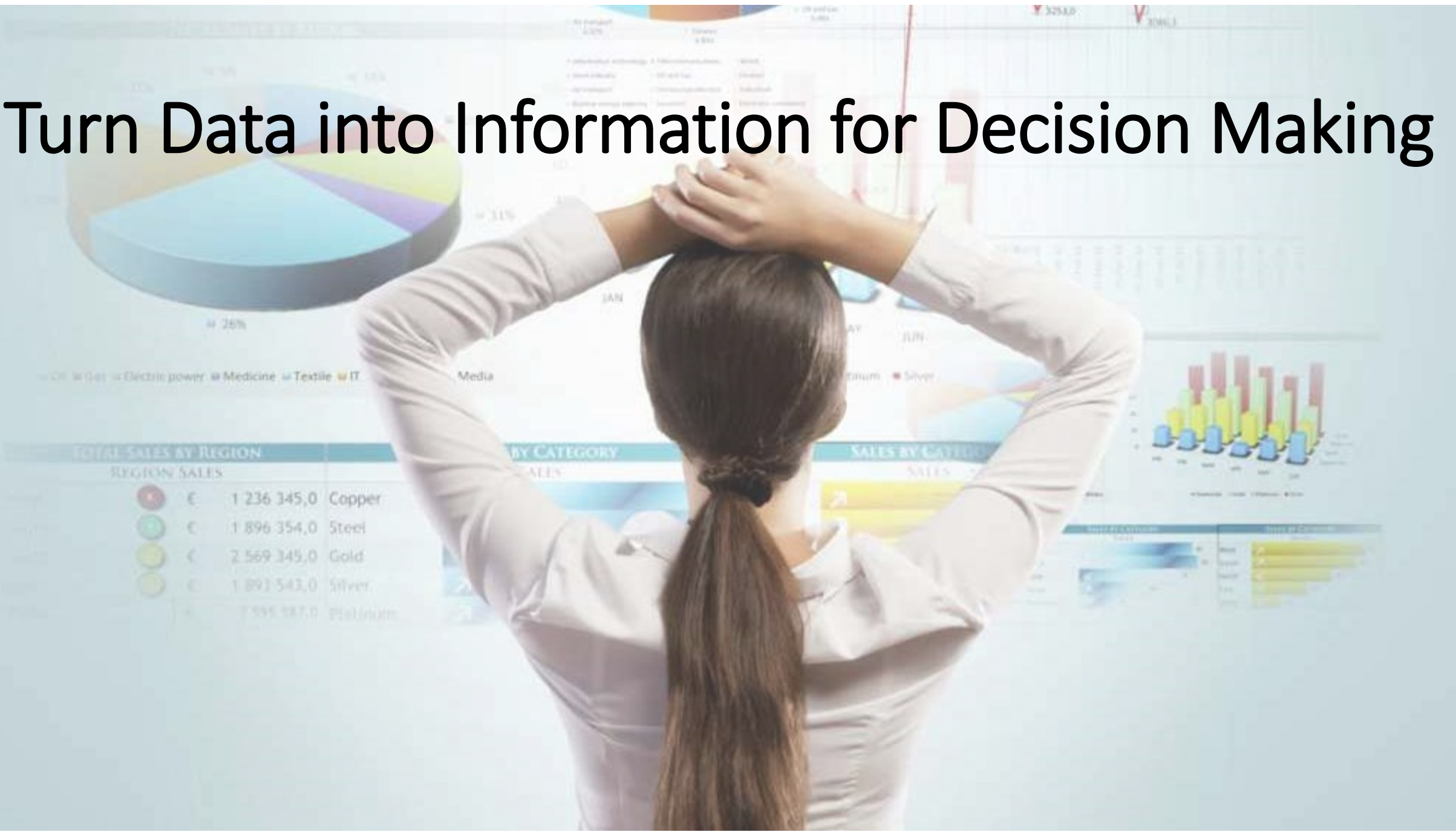
Community based organizations

Philanthropy groups

Find out about:

- Possible partners for specific areas of need:
 - Workforce development opportunities
 - Adult education supports
 - Affordable housing units
 - Other
- Referral networks and processes
- Funders
- Community engagement opportunities for our customers

Turn Data into Information for Decision Making



TOTAL SALES BY REGION			
Region	Region Sales	Category	Sales
Region 1	€ 1 236 345,0	Copper	1 236 345,0
Region 2	€ 1 896 354,0	Steel	1 896 354,0
Region 3	€ 2 569 345,0	Gold	2 569 345,0
Region 4	€ 1 892 543,0	Silver	1 892 543,0
Region 5	€ 7 595 587,0	Platinum	7 595 587,0

SALES BY CATEGORY			
Category	Sales	Region	Sales
Category 1	1 236 345,0	Region 1	1 236 345,0
Category 2	1 896 354,0	Region 2	1 896 354,0
Category 3	2 569 345,0	Region 3	2 569 345,0
Category 4	1 892 543,0	Region 4	1 892 543,0
Category 5	7 595 587,0	Region 5	7 595 587,0





Identifying Needs by Level:

Family
Community
Agency



Education

**Area of Concern:
high school
graduation**

LEVELS OF NEED

- Individuals do not have high school diplomas. **(Family)**
- Our community has a low high school graduation rate. **(Community)**
- Our agency has a need for additional resources to establish or expand GED preparation programs for adult customers who have not graduated high school. **(Agency)**

It's all three? Create three statements!



- The area of concern may be seen on all three levels, but a **separate statement must be made for each level.**
- In the Education example on the previous slide, we see **THREE** statement that indicate the three levels of need.

Clarify the Need!

Don't identify a service that could address the need.



Families need Weatherization service.

Actual Need: Families have high utility bills.



Families need rental assistance payment.

Actual Need: Families are at risk of eviction.



Individuals need job skills training.

Actual Need: Individuals lack job skills.



Clarify the need!

Don't identify a strategy that could address need. (Community Level)



- Type of Strategy
- Our community needs to develop summer programs for youth.
 - **Actual Need: Our community does not provide access to summer programs for youth.**

Clarify the need!

Don't identify a strategy that could address the need. (Agency Level)



- Our agency needs to provide employment services so our customers do not have to go to another agency.
- **Actual Need: Our agency lacks the trained staff to provide employment services.**
- Our agency needs to establish shelter services for the homeless.
- **Actual Need: Our agency does not have resources to provide shelter services for the homeless.**

Type of Strategy

Type of Strategy

Below are examples of how the identification of needs by level would be integrated into the assessment report:

Example 1: Identified Domain: Employment

Family level: Individuals do not have good paying jobs

Community Level: There is a lack of good paying jobs in our community.

Agency Level: Our CEE does not have the resources to provide appropriate job training to help low income individuals secure available jobs.

Example 2: Identified Domain: Health

Family level: Individuals abuse substances.

Community Level: There is a lack of drug treatment service providers in the community.

Agency Level: Our CEE does not have experienced staff to work with the individuals who abuse substances.



Jefferson Franklin
COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

**Community Needs
Assessment
2020**



Review the CNA Report
***Is data analyzed?**

***Are key findings prioritized?**

***Are there recommendations
that will help in creating the
Strategic Plan?**

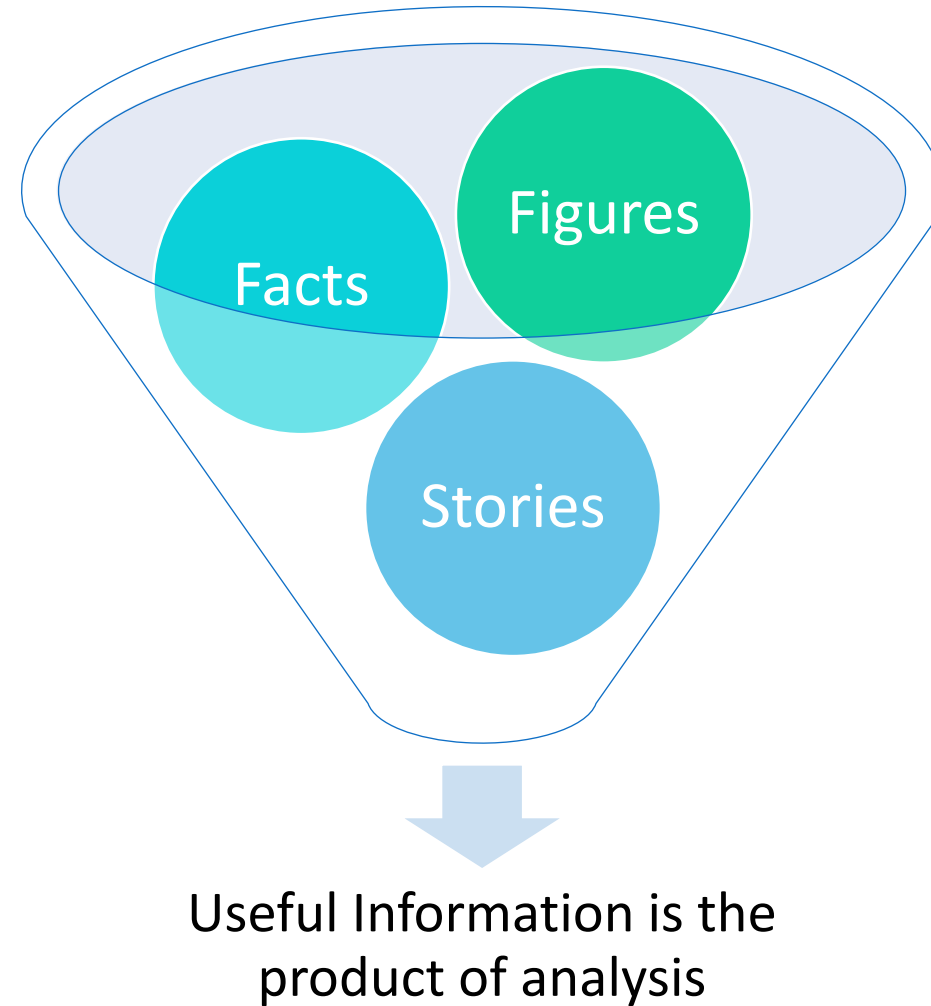
CSBG Organizational Standards

Standard 3.4 • The community assessment includes **key findings** on the causes and conditions of poverty and the needs of the communities assessed.

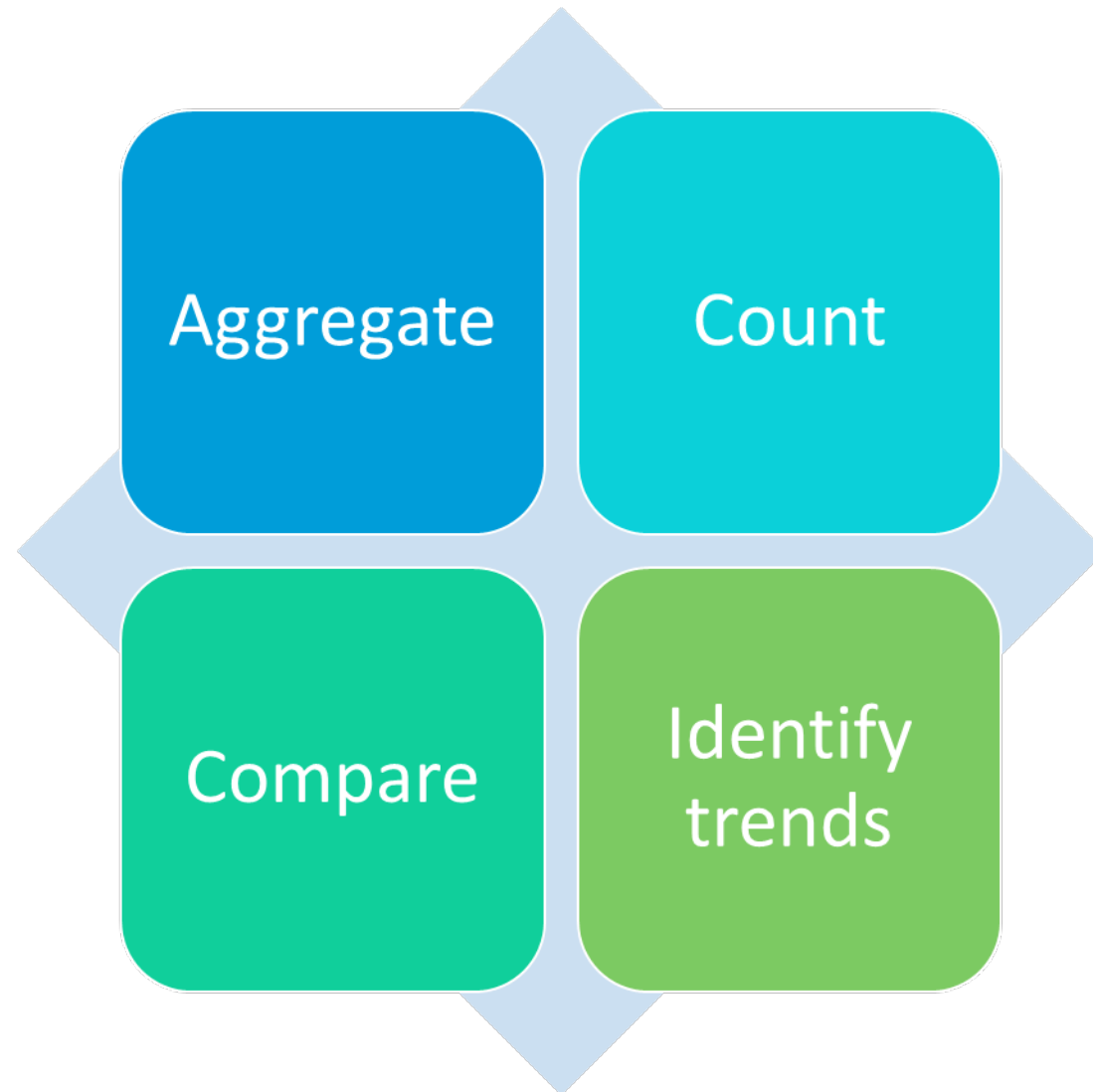
- ▶ Each domain includes an **analysis** of the causes and conditions of poverty
- ▶ Key findings include an **analysis** of the primary causes of poverty in the service area
- ▶ Key findings identify **high priority** needs



Raw data is not
information!
It must be
analyzed before
it becomes
useful!

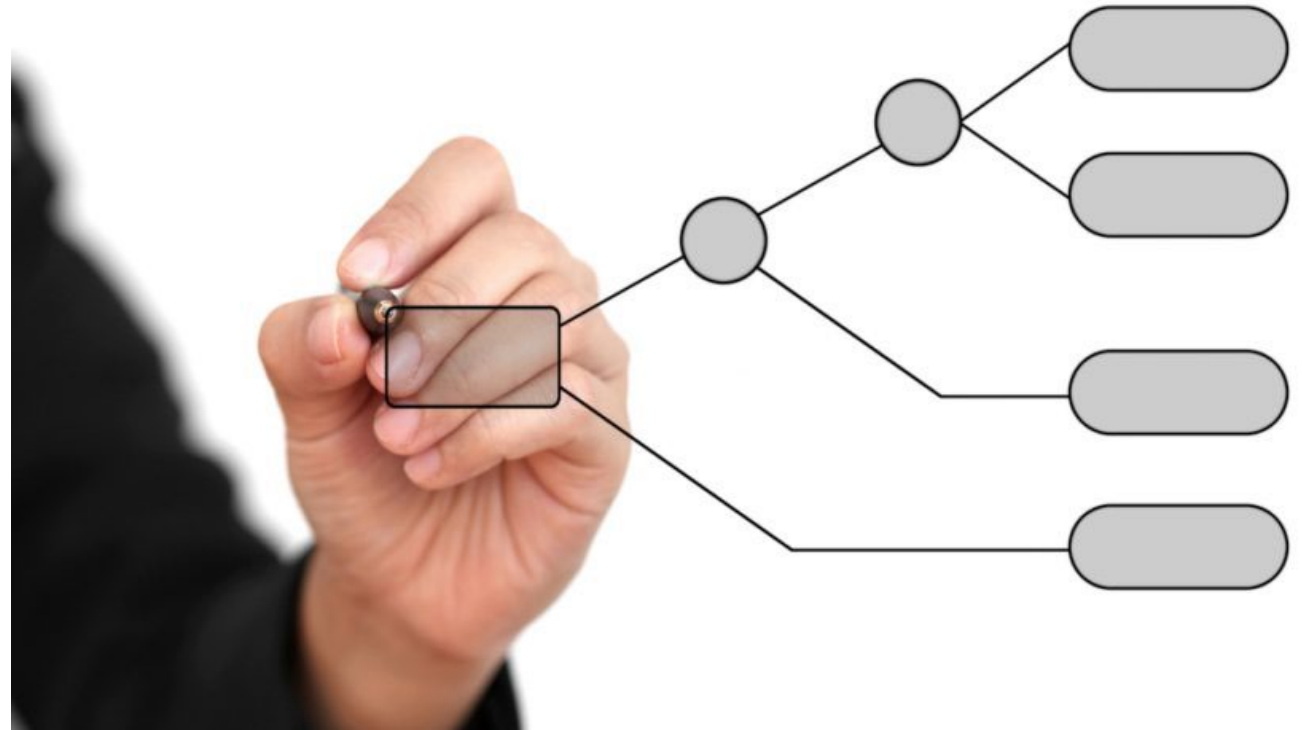


Simple Analysis Techniques



Do you see evidence of these steps in Analysis?

1. Organize findings by Domains.
2. Ask and answer questions about the different kind of data collected
3. Identify the level of need: Family, Agency, Community.
4. Pair Needs and Resources – is there a match?
5. How was priority selected?



Identify Trends

Has the community profile remained stable over the past several years?



Identify Trends

Has the profile remained stable over the past several years?
Is there more or less of something?

Data

Comparison with last year

Comparison with last three years

Comparison with other providers

Analysis

- Increases and decreases in specific areas (population, requests, services, etc.)
- Changes in priority of needs
- Consider if you can predict potential changes in future needs
- Are the trends you are seeing similar to other providers in the community?

Which needs will the agency address?

The agency must have a process of identifying the needs that it will actively address.



Prioritize the Need -- Based on:

- Alignment with the agency's mission
- Scope of the issue
- Level of need
- Reasonable expectation that outcomes can be achieved
- Available resources
- Cost and estimated impact
- Alignment with the CSBG National Goals



Pairing Needs, Resources, and Partners



What is the agency already doing?



Are there resources available to continue or expand services and strategies?



What parts of the need can this agency address?



What can be coordinated with partners?
What are community partners already doing?



How can partnerships be built and maintained?

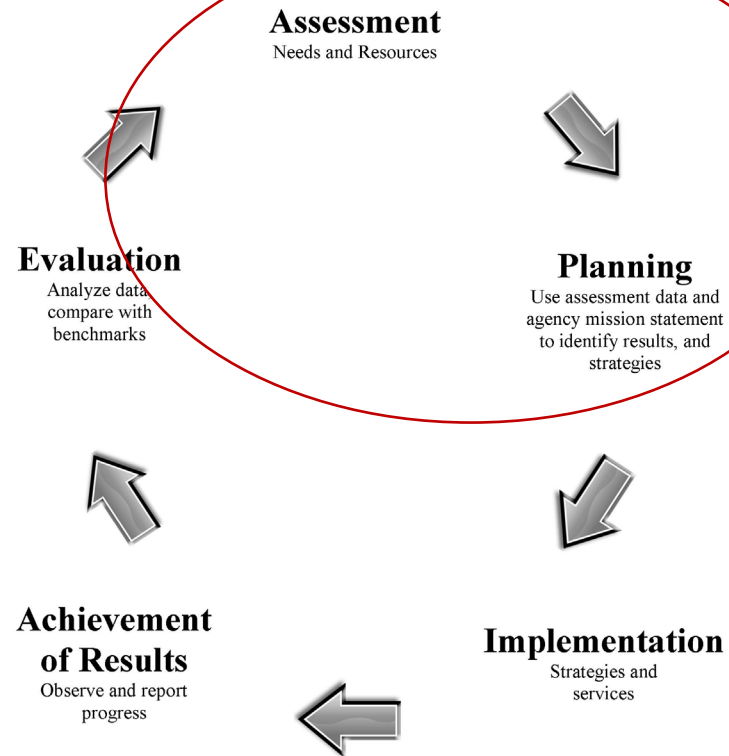


What may take advocacy efforts?

Identification of needs and resources drive planning.

Use CNA report
Planning for Services
and Strategies

The Results Oriented Management and Accountability Cycle



Writing the Report

- Describe the assessment goals and methods.
- Organize data in a way that will be useful to readers.
- Identify what raw data you will include to make your points.
- Identify key findings and top needs by level (family, community, agency).
- Create recommendations.



The Community Needs Assessment Report

The “data turned into information” must be presented in a way that is easily understood by the audience.

And it must have some conclusions and recommendations to be the bridge to Planning.



Next Steps

What questions do you have about reviewing Community Needs Assessment documents?

What support do you think would be useful as you start talking to agencies?

ROMA Checklist Handout



Contacts



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