

Asset-Mapping and Connecting in Communities

What is Asset Mapping?

Asset-Mapping is a group exercise with people from all different walks of life and interests. Their common bond is that they each have something to offer - their perspective, enthusiasm, connections, support, curiosity, creativity, etc. Once gathered, participants are invited to identify specific strengths and resources - that is, “assets,” - within the community.

What is an asset? An asset is a person, thing, or quality that holds value. This is something unique about your community, the special strengths and advantages that make your community so valuable. After naming these special characteristics, participants will begin to make connections between all of the assets that have been named and listed.

What does Asset-Mapping accomplish? Asset-mapping helps a group to change perspectives and shift paradigms: from one based on what we *lack*, to energetic new ways of seeing tremendous value and possibility in what we *have*, the connections between them, and the people in our community.

Where does Asset-Mapping come from?

Asset-Mapping is a key practice in **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** -- a strategy for sustainable community-driven development. Developed by faculty at Northwestern University, ABCD and its methodologies help communities of all sizes mobilize around the resources and strengths they already have and create greater economic and social opportunity for their members. Asset-Based Community Development is

- **Asset-Based:** starting with what is present, not what is absent
- **Internally-Focused:** utilizing the gifts and talents of local residents
- **Relationship-Driven:** stewarding connections between and among individuals

Changing our Perspective

<u>Deficit-Based</u>	vs.	<u>Asset-Based</u>
<i>Problems</i>		<i>Possibilities</i>
<i>Blame</i>		<i>Shared ownership</i>
<i>What's missing</i>		<i>What's there</i>
<i>Scarcity</i>		<i>Abundance</i>
<i>Risks</i>		<i>Courageous leadership</i>
<i>Needs</i>		<i>Strengths & capacities</i>
<i>Top-Down</i>		<i>Inside-out</i>
<i>Do to</i>		<i>Do with & enable</i>
<i>Charity</i>		<i>Partnership</i>

PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES

“Sustainable development involves processes that constantly create connections among all of these resources, and that harness their collective power behind a compelling vision for their future.”

Luther Snow,

The Power of Asset-Mapping

Partners' Six Types of Assets

<p>Physical Assets</p> <p>Things that you can see, touch, or feel. These include land and natural resources, buildings and space, equipment, materials and objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure• Buildings and land• Utilities• Gardens, parks, playgrounds	<p>Individual Assets</p> <p>The gifts of the hands, head, and heart. These are the things that an individual knows a lot about, can make or create, and what motivates them to action. These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Special knowledge or education• Professional/vocational skills• Hobbies• Personal values
<p>Institutional Assets</p> <p>Businesses, firms, public agencies, and nonprofits with budgets and staffs. Individuals participate in institutions because of salaries, sales, taxes, or other legal/financial considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood businesses• Local nonprofits• Government agencies	<p>Associational Assets</p> <p>Voluntary groups, associations, networks, and organizations of individuals who gather to do or enjoy something together that they could not experience on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual capacities of members• Common goals• Local connections & knowledge• Leadership potential• Energy
<p>Economic Assets</p> <p>Our spending power, our investing power, and our capacity to provide valuable goods or services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Things that are shared, traded, purchased, or exchanged• Can be formal or informal• Where you spend or invest your money	<p>Narrative Assets</p> <p>Stories that are touchstones for the community/congregations, that contribute to a general reputation and culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background and personal history• What you like to do and contribute• Stories of including those who are marginalized• Stories of when the community was at its best• Stories of economic/social growth