

# Georgia Family Connection Comprehensive Community Assessment



# Georgia Family Connection Strategic Planning

Communities seek to fully understand the issues that affect children and families living in their communities and connect the necessary partners to address the high priority issues they have identified in order to see improvements in well-being for children, families and communities.

# Comprehensive Community Assessment

“A community assessment is important because it **lays the foundation upon which programs or services, as well as their organizational structure, will be built.** By involving community leaders, service providers, and-most importantly-residents in gathering data, community assessment **helps to establish program ownership among these groups.** As a result, community assessment ensures that the new services will **respond to community-specific needs,** thus establishing a trusting relationship between the community and the new service provider.” (Know Your Community, 1995)

# Key Elements of a Quality Community Assessment

- ❖ Build relationships and partnerships.
- ❖ Establish key roles for stakeholders, including community members, throughout the process.
- ❖ Use existing data and collect new data.
- ❖ Identify needs and strengths in your county.
- ❖ Summarize and USE your findings to establish priorities for the collaborative.

# Community Assessment Process

WHY??

To identify and document the opportunities, challenges, strengths, and needs of a specific geographic community and its residents.

# Community Assessment Process

WHY??

To build and strengthen relationships among community leaders, service providers and most importantly, community residents.

# Community Assessment Process

WHY??

To have the information needed to make good decisions for a community collaborative strategic plan.

# Steps in the Community Assessment Process

- ❖ Convene a community assessment and implementation committee.
- ❖ Review secondary (existing) data.
- ❖ Determine questions to be answered with primary data (new data you have to collect).
- ❖ Develop methods for new data collection.
- ❖ Collect new data (interviews, focus groups, surveys).
- ❖ Analyze data collected.
- ❖ Create report using secondary and primary data.
- ❖ Use the report for strategic planning and **community and partner engagement**.



# Step 1:

## Convene an Assessment Committee

- ❖ Comprised of collaborative partners, including community members
  
- ❖ Responsible for active participation and oversight of the assessment process including:
  - Determining key assessment questions
  - Identifying existing data
  - Determining need for new data collection
  - Deciding appropriate data collection methods
  - Collecting new data, including public perception data
  - Ensuring data is synthesized into narrative format
  - Presenting the data at a community-wide meeting

## Step 2:

### Review secondary (existing) data

Collect trend data describing county in comparison to the region (if possible) and Georgia

#### ❖ Demographic

- Adult Population
- Child Population
- Race/Ethnicity
- Age
- Disability

#### ❖ Social and Economic

- Income
- Employment
- Crime
- Types of industries
- Volunteerism
- Transportation
- Housing
- Poverty

## Step 2: Review secondary data – cont.

Collect trend data describing county in comparison to the region (if possible) and Georgia

### ❖ Health and Well-Being

- Births
- Deaths
- Teen Pregnancy
- Substance Abuse
- Child Abuse/Neglect
- Physicians
- Hospitals

### ❖ Education

- High School completion
- School population
- Grade retention
- Absenteeism
- Adult educational attainment
- Test scores

# Usefulness of Secondary Data

Information that another agency has collected and compiled.

- ❖ Includes standardized data that is comparable across sites.
- ❖ Provides data your collaborative may not be able to access directly.
- ❖ Provides data your collaborative otherwise may not have thought of collecting.

## Step 3a: Determine Questions to be Answered with Primary Data

- ❖ Review secondary data and determine what additional questions remain– **remember, existing data may include community perceptions and beliefs.**
- ❖ Determine areas for “deeper” look.  
e.g. absenteeism, may need to see grade breakdown, or parent feedback.
- ❖ Assess collaborative strengths and needs.

# Step 3b: Assess Collaborative Strengths and Needs – Look Inward

- ❖ Identify collaborative well-being and collaborative status

## Possible tools include:

- Family Connection Self Assessment
- Collaborative Focus Group
- Family Engagement Survey

# Usefulness of Primary Data

Information gathered first-hand by your community assessment committee.

- ❖ Provides neighborhood, age-group, and/or service recipient specific data.
- ❖ Provides data on residents' perceptions of their community.
- ❖ Provides data on residents' priorities for their community.
- ❖ Identifies community differences in perceptions and priorities.

## Step 4: Develop the methods for new data collection

- ❖ Key Informant Interviews
- ❖ Focus Groups
- ❖ Community Surveys
- ❖ Record Reviews



# Definitions

- ❖ **Key Informant Interviews** - A one to one interview with a public official, agency staff, or community leader that yields detailed responses to specific questions.
- ❖ **Focus Groups** - A formal group meeting guided by a trained leader with a specified group of individuals designed to solicit opinions, anecdotes, experiences and impressions on designated topic(s).
- ❖ **Community Surveys** - A formal systematic tool to gather information on residents' opinions, status and/or service utilization.
- ❖ **Record Reviews** — Review of existing records collected by a local agency, such as review of school records for specific grade(s).

# Why do Key Informant Interviews?

- ❖ Allows for in-depth, one on one, exploration of specific topics.
- ❖ Uncovers key community members opinions, knowledge and experiences.
- ❖ Provides opportunity to observe nonverbal communication messages.
- ❖ Provides opportunity to discover previously unknown issues.

# Why do Focus Groups?

- ❖ Allows for data collection with a number of individuals in one meeting and in a relatively short time.
- ❖ Provides opportunity for group interactions that often bring out topics or issues which may not rise from individual interviews or surveys.
- ❖ Allows for exploration of specific topics.
- ❖ Allows for generation of new topics/ideas.
- ❖ Collects depth of opinion, rather than simple yes or no response.

## Why do Focus Groups? – cont.

- ❖ Discover new topics/issues/concerns.
- ❖ Engage a group of individuals that are otherwise inaccessible.
- ❖ Identify appropriate language for surveys.
- ❖ Identify appropriate questions, areas for examination in surveys.
- ❖ Obtain "exploratory" follow-up data for questions that arise from secondary data or survey responses.

# How are Focus Groups Different Than Other Group Meetings?

- ❖ Focused on specific discussion topic(s)
- ❖ Well-planned
  - Group composition
  - Questions and Timing
  - Environment
  - Data collection
- ❖ Managed by a trained facilitator to help keep the group on task and manage the group discussion

# Why do a Community Survey?

- ❖ Allows the collection of common data elements from a large number of community residents.
- ❖ Assures respondent anonymity.
- ❖ Utilizes multiple methods of administration.
- ❖ Comparatively easy to collect data on a wide range of topics.
- ❖ Comparatively easy to enter and analyze data.
- ❖ Provides opportunity to collect data from a wide variety of community residents.

# Step 5: Collect New Data

- ❖ Identify the individual(s)/group(s) from whom you want to collect data.
- ❖ Identify what data you want to collect.
- ❖ Develop questions and protocol.
- ❖ Develop method(s) for storing and analyzing data collected.
- ❖ PILOT the instrument and protocol.
- ❖ Conduct the interview(s), focus group(s) or surveys.
- ❖ Transcribe or type notes for interviews and focus groups.
- ❖ Enter survey data in database.

## Step 6a: Analyze the Statistical Data

- ❖ Examine trends in indicators over the last five years
- ❖ Compare county data to neighboring like counties, region and the state
- ❖ Compare sub-county data where possible (e.g. neighborhoods, school systems)
- ❖ Look for emerging patterns across indicators (e.g. health indicators trends look similar)
- ❖ Examine statistics for various sub-groups (e.g. by age, race/ethnicity)



## Step 6b: Analyze the Primary Data

- ❖ Identify gaps in representativeness
- ❖ Identify any problems with missing data
- ❖ Compare and contrast findings from different groups (e.g. compare teens to adults or compare different neighborhoods)
- ❖ Look for emerging themes by topic
- ❖ Look for overall emerging themes
- ❖ Describe findings and use quotes to illustrate the key points

## Step 7: Create Community Assessment Report

- ❖ Summarize data and make comparisons – among groups of respondents and/or across counties, region or with the state.
- ❖ Describe and discuss trends and changes in county status.
- ❖ Be sure to highlight the most pressing issues facing the community (based on both primary and secondary data).

# Community Assessment Report

## Should Answer:

- ❖ What do families and community groups want to see happen in their community?
- ❖ To what extent do assets of individuals and agencies in the community match the interests, concerns and needs of children and families?

## Could also answer:

- ❖ Are the community resources and services appropriate, accessible and of acceptable quality?
- ❖ Are the assets of families, informal associations, and agencies being used to the best advantage of the children and families in the community?

## Step 8a:

### Discuss Findings with the Collaborative – To Create Your Strategic Plan

- ❖ Highlight strengths and needs of the county
- ❖ Determine priority areas
- ❖ Identify populations of focus – those most in need
- ❖ Identify service gaps
- ❖ Identify needed system changes – improvements to system of services for families and children
- ❖ Identify collaborative development needs

# Step 8b:

## Use Your Community Assessment – Beyond Your Strategic Plan

- ❖ Advocate for activities/programs/services
- ❖ Engage new partners or maintain engagement with existing partners
- ❖ Obtain funding – prepare grant proposals
- ❖ Link to community-wide planning agencies
- ❖ Build public will and public awareness
  - Conduct presentations to community organizations
  - Summarize findings in news stories

Questions?

