

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

A Community Needs Assessment (CNA) helps communities determine where and how to use limited resources to address related needs.

The CNA serves as a starting point to identify and measure issues impacting the community in the areas of employment, education, housing, transportation, and health.

Data for determining community needs can be collected through surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, public meetings, direct observations, and interviews.

Explaining Needs

Needs could be as concrete as the need for food and water



Needs could be as abstract as improved community cohesiveness

If older adults in a community need help getting around town, but your community has no public transportation there is a need.



Examining needs help us to know what is lacking, and points us in the direction of future improvements

WHO ARE COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS?

A stakeholder is a person, group or organization that affects, or can be affected, by what happens in a community. Any person who has something to gain or lose by the outcomes of a planning process or project is a stakeholder.

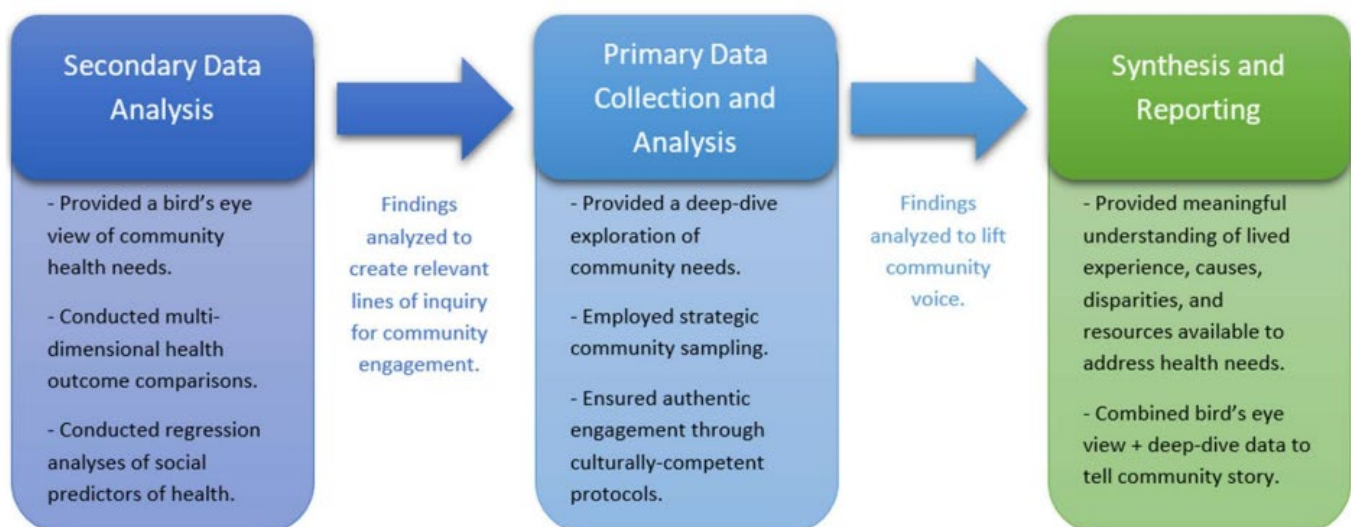
Typically, stakeholders in community-building activities include residents (both youth and adults), business owners, social service representatives, community development corporations, nonprofit organizations, government officials, faith-based leaders, real estate agents and developers, educators, youth groups, and media outlets. Commitment and participation of a broad cross-section of stakeholders are essential for successful community building.

Stakeholders have knowledge of the community; they will continue to live or work there after the professionals and experts are long gone; and only they can sustain improvement efforts over the long haul.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

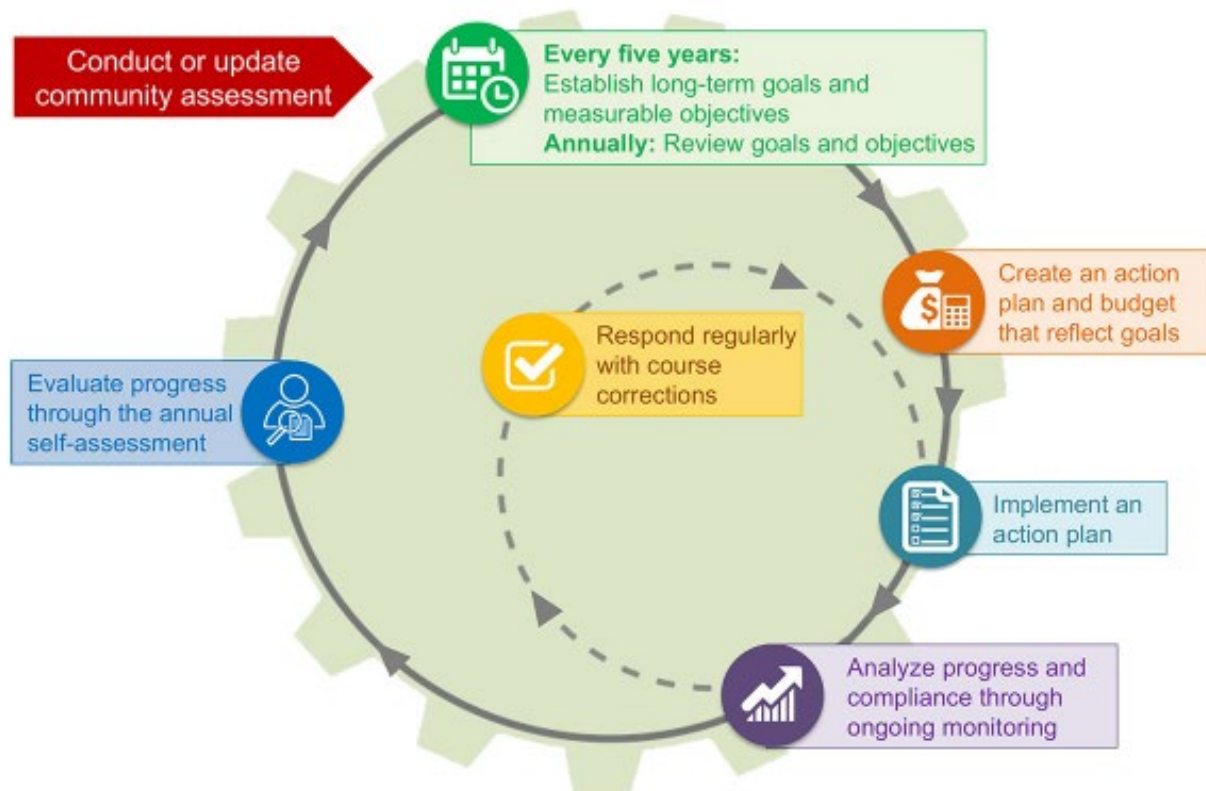
Primary data sources such as information collected from community members through surveys, questionnaires, focus groups, public meetings, direct observations, and interviews.

Secondary data sources such as community demographic data, vital statistics, hospital records, morbidity and mortality reports, and literature reviews also provide valuable information.



WHY CONDUCT A COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

Through the community assessment process, Monroe/Pike County Community Action Agency are able to establish baseline information and a current snapshot of the community. This, in turn, enables the counties to project trends, develop strategies, and support continuous quality improvement.



Eight basic reasons why programs conduct a comprehensive community assessment.

1. Meet Federal Regulations
2. Make Decisions and Program Planning
3. Educate Staff and Stakeholders
4. Address Changing Priorities and Policies
5. Respond to Trends and Changes in the Community
6. Mobilize Community Resources
7. Maximize Community Partnerships
8. Increase Financial Resources

