

Existing Assessments— Building on Existing Planning Activities

Over the past few years, many other state or county agencies and organizations have engaged in needs assessments and planning efforts. Data and assessment reports often exist. The results of these planning processes need to be reviewed to see what information currently exists that can help serve Extension's situational analysis needs.

This approach is fundamental to any situational analysis. Depending upon the information provided in existing assessments, other data collection is often needed.

Description of the Process

1. Begin by locating all the existing assessments conducted during the last two to three years. These could include, but are not limited to:

- Family preservation and support planning
- Community health needs assessments
- Child care resource and referral needs assessments
- Land use planning
- Economic development reports
- County government strategic plans
- Non-profits/CBO's needs assessments
- Teen Assessment Project (TAP) reports

2. Create a broad-based review committee using the Diversity Matrix found in Appendix 1 to work with the county Extension office staff. The role of the review committee is to review the information, validate its accuracy and reliability, and identify gaps and areas of overlap between the existing information and that, which is needed for the Extension planning process.

3. Where information from the existing assessments is inadequate or lacking, the review committee chooses an appropriate method for collecting the needed information.

4. Based on the information, needs, concerns and assets of the county are identified and listed.

Involvement of Oversight Committee

The oversight committee provides general guidance to the whole process. Members of the committee may know of existing assessments to use and/or be able to help validate the accuracy and relevance of existing information. The oversight committee also helps identify individuals to serve on the review committee.

Case Example provided Tedi Winnet, Kenosha County.

Areas for Consideration

Level of staff involvement:

- Staff identifies, collects and compiles all existing needs assessments.
- The county office team decides how to acquire information in an area where no existing assessment information is available.
- Staff works with a review committee.
- Meetings are held with the review committee and the Extension oversight committee.

Resource needed:

- Existing needs assessments

Time requirements:

- Varies, depending upon ability to locate existing needs assessments
- Time required meeting with review committee and Extension office oversight committee