

Introduction to Community Asset
Mapping

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Training for New York City Department of Probation

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What is Asset Mapping?

- Community asset mapping is a strength-based approach to community development.
- The goal of asset mapping is to document a community's existing resources, incorporating these strengths into community development work.
- The process of asset mapping can include identifying the **institutions, individuals, and citizen associations** existing within communities that serve as positive resources.
- Approaching individuals and communities from an asset-based mentality empowers them to recognize their own strengths and capacities.

How Does Asset Mapping Work?

Institution Mapping creates a map of positive institutions within the community. These can be oriented around solving a particular problem, or institution mapping can be completed on its own.

For example:

- Churches
- Schools
- Police stations
- Grocery stores
- Medical services
- Local businesses
- Parks
- Libraries

How Does Asset Mapping Work?

Individual Mapping creates a map of the “gifts, skills and capacities” of the individuals living in the community, usually oriented around solving a particular problem.

Citizen Association Mapping creates a map of the associations through which people within communities come together.

Activity: Planning an Asset Map

Consider the challenge of finding jobs for young people in the community where you work.

Individual mapping: *Identify the qualities and connections of individuals that you might want to connect with in order to help young people find a job.*

Citizen Association mapping: *Consider organizations you could contact, or refer youth to, in order to network.*

Institution mapping: *Consider which community institutions could you reach out to in order to help young people obtain jobs.*

Using Asset Mapping with young people

This process is useful for:

- A) Introducing them to a new community in a positive way
- B) Empowering them to see their own community through a positive lens
- C) Directly engaging them in the process of community development

Planning Asset Mapping Activities with Youth:

- Introduce asset mapping and its purpose
- Ask youth to consider what makes a community strong
- Stick to the basics: creating just 1 type of asset map is fine
- Participate in group activity together
- Encourage youth to think creatively about their asset maps
- Make it fun and meaningful

References:

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COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

What is asset mapping? Asset Mapping is a positive method of redeveloping communities which begins with a **strength-based** approach. There are three types of asset maps:

- **Individual maps:** Identify individuals with connections or capacity to lead change within the community (e.g. elected officials, school principals, police commissioners, pastors).
- **Citizen Association maps:** Identify platforms for civic engagement and participation (e.g. housing boards, youth groups, clubs).
- **Institution maps:** Identify public institutions within the community (e.g. schools, libraries, hospitals).

How does asset mapping work? Community cartographers seek to identify the resources that are present in the community, and focus on the problem-solving abilities of the neighborhood's residents. This can be accomplished through community exploration, internet research, surveying, etc.

What is the goal of asset mapping? Understand resources, relationships and structures within a community as a means for bringing change.

What does an asset map look like? An asset map can take many forms. Options include:

- A comprehensive list of powerful individuals, associations, and institutions within a community;
- A physical map of community resources;
- A database containing institutions, resources, and community contacts.

How is asset mapping different from other methods of community development? It focuses on what a neighborhood *has* instead of on what it *needs*, assuming that many solutions to a community's problems already exist in the community.