

Asset Mapping

Definition

A strengths based method to identify and mobilize the people, organizations, places, and relationships that already exist in a community to advance shared goals.

What This Means

Asset Mapping looks at what a community already has, its people, groups, and resources, instead of focusing only on what's missing. It helps highlight strengths and uses them to create positive change.

Key Steps

- Identify personal strengths and skills among residents.
- List local organizations like churches, clubs, and nonprofits that help the community.
- Highlight schools, libraries, and government programs as supports.
- Use maps and data tools to show community opportunities.
- Connect people and organizations to reach shared goals.

How Do We Achieve This

- **Map organizational assets** - Inventory community groups, nonprofits, small businesses, and faith organizations and what they offer.
- **Leverage institutional resources** - Engage schools, libraries, health systems, and local government as anchors that can share space, data, and staff.
- **Visualize data (maps & dashboards)** - Turn assets and key indicators into easy-to-read maps to inform action.
- **Mobilize connections** - Use the map and directory to link people and organizations to act together.

Examples

- In Maryland, city agencies and residents worked together to map neighborhood assets, like local businesses, churches, community centers, and active residents.
- In Chicago, IL, the ABCD Institute trained community members to identify neighborhood skills, informal networks, and small businesses that could help address local challenges.
- In Trenton, NJ, Faith leaders worked together to map existing ministries, outreach programs, and volunteers across Trenton to see where they were already serving and where gaps remained
- In the Appalachia region, residents, clinics, and public health departments identified local health resources like volunteer EMTs, telehealth hubs, and transportation options.
- In Oakland, CA, Schools, afterschool programs, and local nonprofits mapped where youth programs existed and where none were available.

In Short

Asset Mapping = Discovering what already exists and connecting it to what's needed.

It turns a list of "what's wrong" into a roadmap for "what's strong."