

The University of Alabama
Center for Economic
Development

**Community Inventories
Information Guide**

Beginning Activities for Community Development

To begin to develop your community, it is important to know all the resources available. A “Community Assets Inventory” gives you information on the places you have to market. The “Community Resources Inventory” gives you a current and thorough listing of the organizations and people that can be called on or coordinated to expand a town’s current offerings. An “Inventory of Available Buildings” gives you a current listing of places to house your business and cultural opportunities. Although developing this information takes time and effort, the information will be utilized locally and can enhance your marketing opportunities throughout the market trade region you occupy.

Community Assets Inventory

It is useful to develop a thorough list of a community’s assets. These are the physical, natural and cultural attributes that a community has that can be a basis for further enhancement or economic development. Examples would include: historic downtown, historic buildings, bridges, cemeteries and places; rivers, caverns, unique biological species of birds, reptiles; birthplace of famous persons; location of first-time events or historic events; artist’s colony, museums, theatres, music, art, cultural festivals, etc. In addition, it is important to capture the infrastructure or transportation assets in the area, as well as educational and other aspects of quality of life.

It is useful to have a community or group meeting, where the group brainstorms and develops an exhaustive list of community assets. The next step is to make sure there is a written description and contact information for all those assets that have economic value. These written descriptions can be used for flyers, brochures, websites, etc.

Community Resources Inventory

To begin or enhance the process of community development, it is helpful to build a database of community organizations that offer programs, services and activities to the local community.

Collecting this information can be done in various ways: mailed or face-to-face survey, or assigned to one or more persons to research and collect.

The end result is a “Community Resource Guide” which gives the local community, as well as those from outside, a comprehensive listing of professional, service and volunteer organizations that can be drawn on for community improvements. (*See Community Toolbox-Community Resource Guide*)

Community Toolbox
Community Resources Guide

<u>Type of Association</u>	<u>Examples/Activities</u>
Artistic	Musical, theatrical, writing
Business	Chamber of Commerce, trade groups, business clubs
Charitable Drives	Red Cross, United Way, Volunteers of America
Church related	Volunteer groups for maintenance and youth/senior help
Civic Events	Mule Day, Watermelon Festival, Flea Market, Art Fair
Community Support	Friends of the Library, hospital auxiliaries
Elderly	Senior citizens clubs
Ethnic Associations	Black Heritage, Scottish Association
Health and Fitness	Aerobics, walking, tennis
Interest Groups	Book clubs, Genealogy, Historic Preservation
Ladies' Groups	Civic, Gardening, Association Chapter
Local Media	Newspaper, newsletters, local cable/radio
Men's Groups	Civic, educational, political, social
Neighborhood	Crime watch, clean-up
Outdoor Clubs	Master Gardeners, Audubon, conservation
Political	Democrats, Republican, caucuses
Recreation	Team sports, walking, cards
School	Parent/ Teachers, Alumni, school clubs
Service Clubs	Civitan/Civinettes, Kiwanis, Rotary, local
Study Groups	Bible, literary & heritage
Youth	Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA

Your Community: Assets and Opportunities

1. What are some of your community’s major assets?
2. What are some unrealized, or under-developed opportunities for your community?
3. Does your community have a team of people or organizations in place, which can begin to carry out community development? If yes, who are they?

If not, what organizations can be called on to begin the process of organizing such a team?