

## Gathering Information about a Community Need

**What does your community need?** Use the questions in the following four categories as guides for finding out. As a class, you might agree to explore one topic, for example, how kids get along at school, or hunger and poverty, or an environmental concern. Or you might decide to learn about general needs at school or in the surrounding area.

Form smaller groups, with each group focusing on one category and gathering information in a different way.

### Finding out about \_\_\_\_\_

#### Media

What media (newspapers—including school newspapers, TV stations, radio) in your community might have helpful information? List ways you can work with different media to learn about issues and needs in your community.

---



---



---



---

#### Interviews

Think of a person who is knowledgeable about this topic in your area—perhaps someone at school, in a local organization, or government office. Write four questions you would ask this person in an interview.

An interview with \_\_\_\_\_ .

Questions:

- 
- 
- 
-

## Gathering Information about a Community Need *continued*

### Survey

A survey can help you find out what people know or think about a topic and get ideas for helping. Who could you survey—students, family members, neighbors? How many surveys would you want to have completed? Write sample survey questions.

**Who to survey:**

**How many surveys?**

**Questions for the survey:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Observation and Experience

How can you gather information through your own observation and experience?

Where would you go? What would you do there? How would you keep track of what you find out?

### Next Steps

Share your ideas. Make a plan for gathering information using the four categories. If you are working in small groups, each group may want to involve people in other groups. For example, everyone could help conduct the survey and collect the results.

***I never perfected an invention  
that I did not think about  
in terms of the service it might give others . . .  
I find out what the world needs,  
then I proceed to invent.***

*Thomas A. Edison, inventor*

# Mapping the Community: Assets and Needs

When learning about a community, find out the specific assets and needs.

Why this matters:

How this can be accomplished:

**Assets** can be people, structures, the natural environment, an existing program, economic means, history, culture, and more.

Apply the **MISO** method to discover:

## ASSETS

## NEEDS

### MEDIA

All kinds—  
newspapers to maps

### INTERVIEWS

Capture diverse voices

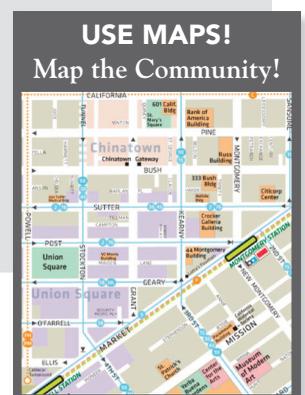
### SURVEYS

Collect diverse ideas  
and opinions

### OBSERVATIONS

Widen your vision

USE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS to develop questions, set a timeline, identify partners, clarify roles and responsibilities, and determine what you will do with the information you learn.



## Who Do I Trust?

**Strengthen an argument** with information from trustworthy sources. Apply this idea of *trustworthy sources* to the Action Research MISO method—*media, interview, survey, and observation*.

### MEDIA SOURCES

Media can include internet, newspapers, books, maps, journals—a variety of print and mixed media. To determine if a media source is trustworthy, select a

**SOURCE**

Then determine:



What is the date of the source, for example, publication or film? \_\_\_\_\_

If an older source, has new information been discovered on this topic? **Y / N**

Have you compared older findings with newer findings? **Y / N** Explain:



Who authored this information? \_\_\_\_\_

What makes this author an expert on this topic? Describe.



Who published this information? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the producer/publisher biased in any way? **Y / N** Explain either position.



If biased, have you compared the point of view of this source with another source? **Y / N**

Explain:

## Who Do I Trust? *continued*

### INTERVIEW SOURCES

What makes a person a reliable source to interview?  
Select two people to interview.



**Remember, you do not need to have a degree or work for a specific company to be an expert. Experience also builds expertise. For instance, you may be an expert in a sport because of all the time and effort you have dedicated.**



#### **INTERVIEWEE:**

How is the interviewee an expert on this topic?

Is the interviewee biased in any way? Explain your response.



#### **INTERVIEWEE:**

How is the interviewee an expert on this topic?

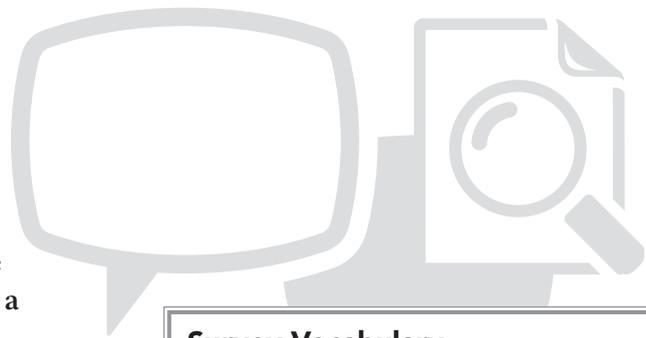
**It is acceptable to interview a person with a strong opinion or stance. Just be sure to recognize that this is likely not the only point of view!**

Is the interviewee biased in any way? Explain your response.

## Who Do I Trust? *continued*

### SURVEY

How can you ensure that survey evidence is reliable and appropriately connected with your topic? Select a topic worthy of a survey. Consider the following:



#### **Group selected to survey:**

What makes this group an important source of information on this topic?

#### **Demographics of participants.**

Remember that the more participants you have, the more reliable the data, however, stay true to the demographics that you decided on above.

#### **Target number of participants:**



#### **Survey questions:**



#### **Survey process:**

How many people surveyed \_\_\_\_\_ Why this number?

#### **Survey Vocabulary**

**Participants:** people you survey

**Demographics:** participant descriptors, i.e., age, income, race, gender

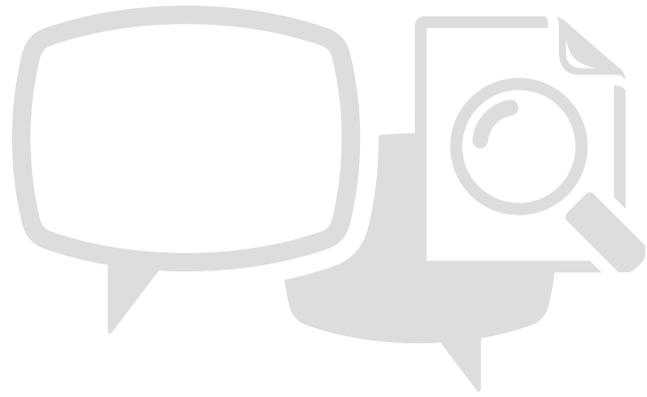
**Sample size:** number of participants.

**Reliability:** the likelihood your survey will have similar results if given to a similar group of participants.

## Who Do I Trust? *continued*

### OBSERVATION

How can focused observations add to research?  
Select a topic to observe. Consider the following:



**What did you observe?**



**What questions do you have about what you observed?**



**How might you investigate answers to these questions?**



**In what ways might another observer interpret things differently?**



**How did observation add insights or information that may have been missed through media, interview, and survey?**

*Note that these observation questions can be applied to experiments also.*