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THE OPPORTUNITY GAP
Identifying Best Practices to Ensure Student
Achievement in California's K-12 Schools

CSU The California State University

Community Resource Mapping Project

Target Audience

- Higher Education Faculty

Grade Levels

- N/A

Topic Areas

- Ethnic Studies
- Foster/Homeless Youth
- History/Social Science
- Policy

Description

A tendency that exists with community organizations is to focus on just the needs or lack of resources in the community. Every community has a varying degree of needs and lack of resources that should be addressed. Instead of a focus on the deficits or needs of a community, the focus should turn to assets and strengths, an emphasis on what the community does have, not solely on what is lacking. These strengths or assets can be used to address those community needs and even to improve the quality of life for community members.

Community Resource Mapping provides an alternative approach to the more common "needs" and "deficits" models of community resource assessment. Mapping focuses on what communities have to offer by identifying assets and resources that can be used for building a system to support and care for children, youth, and families.

To focus on an asset-based model of working with communities, the first place to start is with a focus on identifying community assets and resources. For the purposes of this project, a community asset or resource is that which can improve or enhance the quality of life for community members. Therefore, begin to think of community resources in the following ways:

- Community resources can be people, residents, or organizations
- Community resources can be a place where community members gather
- Community resources can be services and agencies
- Community resources can be businesses, civic and religious organizations, or political organizations

Finally, utilize community resources mapping when individuals or communities want to achieve the following: a) find resources to mobilize and address community needs, b) leverage talented and skilled community members to initiate community improvement efforts, c) encourage community members to take responsibility and initiative to improve the quality of life in their community, and d) build and strengthen community ties and relationships to support successful community improvement efforts.

The Community Resource Mapping Project will provide students with the opportunity to map their local school and surrounding community. Students can complete the Community Resource Mapping Project (Course Assignment) as an individual project assignment during the semester, or students can complete the project assignment as a Capstone for the course.

Opportunity

Community Resource Mapping Theory and Practice

Utilize community resources mapping when individuals or communities want to achieve the following: a) find resources to mobilize and address community needs, b) leverage talented and skilled community members to initiate community improvement efforts, c) encourage community members to take responsibility and initiative to improve the quality of life in their community, and d) build and strengthen community ties and relationships to support successful community improvement efforts.

Values and Goals of Resource Mapping

- Recognize that everyone has skills and talents that are relevant to community well-being.
- Embrace the belief that people exercise their abilities, their community is strengthened.
- Envision neighborhoods, communities, as places where strengths, assets, and capacities of people are identified. valued, and leveraged into action.
- Be respectful and mindful of cultural sensitivities in your approach to community resource mapping.

Theoretical Framework for Community Resource Mapping

When developing a theoretical framework for community resource mapping, several key concepts and theories can be explored with students. Below are several theoretical frameworks that can support this process:

- Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD): ABCD is a assets/resources-based approach that focuses on identifying and mobilizing the assets and resources within a community. It emphasizes the idea that communities have strengths and capacities that can be harnessed to bring about positive change.
- Social Capital Theory: Social capital refers to the connections, networks, and relationships that exist within a community. Social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social relationships in promoting

collective action and community development and identifying and leveraging social networks and relationships as community assets/resources.

- Resilience Theory: Resilience theory focuses on understanding how communities and individuals can adapt and thrive in the face of adversity and change. It emphasizes building on existing assets/resources and capacities to enhance and promote community resilience.

Recommended Citation

Bagwell, J. & Edeburn, E. (2024). Community resource mapping project. CSU Center to Close the Opportunity Gap (CCOG) Clearinghouse. https://ccog.calstate.edu/clearinghouse/community-resource-mapping-project

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