

# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide



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# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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## Introduction

Local elected officials, appointed staff and volunteer leaders are continually involved with the challenge of identifying community needs in order to work together in solving community problems. One effective method for identifying important problems is conducting a community needs assessment survey. These pages describe one method of community surveys that provides rapid feedback to community leaders.

Typically, the City Council will organize a survey committee to define community issues and develop a questionnaire. On a designated evening, citizens distribute and collect the questionnaires and code the results preparatory for computer analysis. During this process, community leaders gain insight about local citizens' attitudes and opinions about community issues. This activity produces a cadre of 60 to 80 interested citizens who not only assist in conducting the survey but are often willing to assist in carrying out activities related to the identified needs.

The process described in the following pages involves citizens and local officials in identifying issues, collecting information, and interpreting the results of the survey.

## Organizing and Designing the Questionnaire

While local elected officials remain central throughout the survey process, they need to recognize that volunteer leaders and volunteer groups develop ownership as they become engaged and are eager to assist in strengthening local government.

A working example questionnaire is provided in this guide. This questionnaire is comprehensive. It treats most concerns of the community including planning, human relations and cultural enrichment, economic development, physical environment and community services. The questionnaire may also be developed to address specific concerns of city officials, such as projected needs for additional revenue, willingness of citizens to pay more taxes to improve specific services and/or programs and intergovernmental cooperation. The City Council, assisted by volunteer leaders, adapts the questionnaire to meet the particular needs of their city. They are assisted in this activity by community development specialists from Utah State University Cooperative Extension Service.

The questionnaire is designed for one legal-size sheet, printed on both sides, making it convenient to administer and review. Although a

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questionnaire in this format and an eight or nine page instrument may both contain the same amount of information, citizens are more willing to complete surveys on a single sheet.

## Procedure for Conducting Survey

Using the USU Extension Community Needs Assessment method, a community can conduct a survey in one evening. Community leaders should receive the results in less than a month. Considerable planning and organization prior to conducting the survey is important. Experience in many Utah communities shows that elected officials and others will succeed by following these steps:

1. Contact the Community Development Specialists at Utah State University and solicit assistance.
2. Appoint a community Survey Chairman to help:
  - a. publicize the survey through radio and newspaper.
  - b. mobilize 60 to 80 people (30 to 40 survey teams) to conduct the survey and code the results; and
  - c. assist the City Council with a town meeting to report the results of the survey.
3. Designate an evening to conduct the survey.
4. Adapt the questionnaire to meet the needs of the *community*.
5. Prepare a letter to be sent from the Mayor/City Council encouraging residents to participate in the survey.
6. Work with the Community Development Specialist in preparing the survey instrument.
7. Divide the city into sections with approximately 15 homes in each section. Since logistically it is difficult to do more than 600 questionnaires in one evening, communities over 2500 population should use a random sample of households.
8. Meet with the Community Development Specialist and survey teams (should include city council members) on the evening designated to conduct the survey. Follow these steps: (allow approximately three hours)

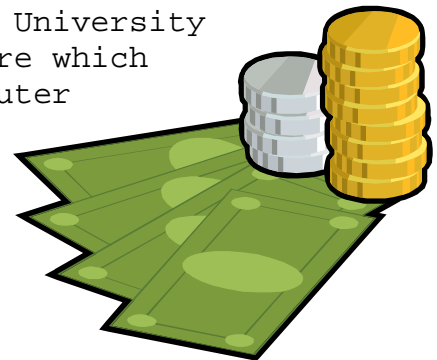


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- a. Community Development Specialist will conduct a 30 minutes
  - b. Each two-member team will take 15 of the questionnaires, and return envelopes; deliver one of each to each designated household in the area; if needed review the mayor's letter with an adult (over 18) household member who comes to the door; leave the questionnaire and request it be filled out immediately; then proceed to the next home. (One hour)
  - c. The survey team will return to homes receiving the questionnaire and collect them in the sealed envelopes. (30 minutes)
  - d. All team members will return to City Hall to help code the results for use by a data input operator. This process is vital because it involves citizens in observing the results. (One hour)
9. The Community Development Specialist will take the coded responses to Utah State University for programming and computation and will produce an easily readable analysis of community attitudes and preferences, including bar and pie charts.
10. Multiple copies of computer reports will be provided to the community so that they may be available to the City Council, Planning Commission or other groups, and can be displayed in the City Hall, library, etc.
11. Hold a publicized town meeting. Report the results of the survey and what these may mean in terms of community improvement actions and to gain a commitment from citizens to serve. Send a of survey highlights.

The cost for this service is low. Utah State University Extension charges \$2.00 per completed questionnaire which covers some of our printing, data entry, and computer charges. Communities engaged in the Community Needs Assessment Survey process follow an agreement that outlines the responsibilities of local government and USU Extension Service.



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## **Training Sessions (Orientation and Coding)**

The training sessions need to be conducted in a room large enough to accommodate 60 to 80 people at 10 to 12 tables. Ample space is needed for each team to work out coding of questionnaires.

### **Orientation**

Orientation for the community survey team will take 20-30 minutes with the following agenda:

1. The Mayor should welcome the team members including an appropriate statement concerning the value of the survey in establishing priorities and developing action programs for the community.
2. The Survey Chairman will then give each team a list of approximately 15 households to be contacted. In large communities a selected random sample, with names and addresses, should be given team members.
3. The Survey Chairman will provide each team with 15 questionnaires, 15 letters from the City Council and 15 envelopes.
4. The Community Development Specialist will emphasize that the time involved in the survey and coding will be approximately three hours, and also the importance of team members returning to the meeting room with the completed questionnaires to help code results.
5. The community Development Specialist will read to the team members the letter from the Mayor/City Council which addresses:
  - a. The importance of the survey to citizens and the City Council in identifying community needs and in setting priorities;
  - b. The necessity of completing the questionnaire immediately, placing it in the envelope and sealing it;
  - c. That the survey will be picked up in 30-40 minutes; and
  - d. The number of households to be surveyed during the evening.
6. Discussion

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## Coding of Results

When team members return to the meeting room to code results, the following will occur:

1. The community development specialist will demonstrate to team members how to code the questionnaire for the computer. (Some additional persons (2-3) are needed to help with this part of the process.)
2. When coding the responses to the questionnaire, team members gain "insights" concerning attitudes of community residents, who are stressing their particular concerns. This is particularly rewarding to team members, and helps to gain their cooperation to carry out projects targeted to identified needs.

## Plan of Action

Careful analysis of the printout will identify areas of concern and issues that citizens may be willing to support for improvement. Some projects or programs will require financing while others can be achieved by community volunteer action. For the survey to be successful, immediate action should be taken on one or two projects identified in the survey. These may include short term projects such as tree planting, community clean up, or the organization of a community celebration. Survey results may also be used to develop a long range master plan including establishing and enforcing zoning regulations, improving the appearance of the city, initiating industrial development or improving the library.

Leaders should remember that "success begets success." Completion of one project or program will encourage people to work on other programs of a more complex nature.

## Neighborhood Attitudes

Community leaders may want to determine the attitude and or views of people in different neighborhoods within the city. This may be accomplished by dividing the city into desired areas and assigning district numbers to questionnaires during the survey process. For example, main and center street may divide the city into four equal parts or the voting districts may be used to divide the city into a larger number of neighborhoods. A computer will provide neighborhood attitudes for each question and a composite answer for all neighborhoods.

The chart on page 9 gives an actual example of a Yes/No question for West Bountiful City. Note that 58.9% of the households in neighborhood #1

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were in favor of more commercial zoning while over 50% of the households in neighborhoods 4, 5, 6, and 7 were opposed to more commercial zoning. Also note that 238 of the total households (54.3%) were in favor of more commercial zoning while 200 households (45.7%) were opposed with 29 households not answering the question. (Ninety-seven percent of the households that were contacted during the evening answered the questionnaire.)

## Sample Printout Question

CROSSTABULATION OF A6 FAVOR MORE COMMERCIAL ZONING BY NEIGHBORHOOD  
NEIGHBORHOOD

COUNT		ROW									
COL PCT		TOTAL									
A6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
YES	1	33	32	30	24	27	19	23	33	17	238
		58.9	56.1	55.6	46.2	44.3	50.0	44.2	76.7	68.0	54.3
NO	2	23	25	24	28	34	19	29	10	8	200
		41.1	43.9	44.4	53.8	55.7	50.0	55.8	23.3	32.0	45.7
COLUMN		56	57	54	52	61	38	52	43	25	438
		12.8	13.0	12.3	11.9	13.9	8.7	11.9	9.8	5.7	100.0

NUMBER MISSING OBSERVATIONS = 29

The following procedures may be used when providing data on a neighborhood basis:

1. Treat each neighborhood as a separate unit in the random selection of homes. (Extension specialist can help with sample selection.)
2. Obtain a map of the city and divide the map into sections (divided along main and center street or neighborhood lines.)
3. Follow the procedures outlined in the training session with the additions below:
  - a. Assign survey teams to a specific neighborhood. Have the team members write the neighborhood number on top of their questionnaires after they pick them up.



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b. Entries will be made in the computer on a neighborhood basis.

## Successful Programs

City councils and community groups have used survey results in many beneficial community projects. They may also be used in decision making during planning meetings. For example, Hyrum City consolidated their police force with Cache County's force after determining that a majority of citizens would support the cooperative effort.

City Councils can use information from the surveys to train new City Council members and in the development of city master plans.

One city doubled their mill levy and increased their water and sewer rates and worked to build or improve six priorities identified through the survey. These included: the construction of a fire station, installation of storm drainage, the improvement of the culinary water system, upgrading criminal justice, resurfacing city roads and installation of curbs, gutters and sidewalks.

In one year, Moroni City accomplished six major programs or projects identified as needs through their questionnaire. These included: construction of a fire station with labor from volunteer firemen, installation of a pressurized irrigation system with volunteer labor, conducting a cleanup day during which time parents and youth hauled truck loads of trash to the city sanitary landfill, installation of eight blocks of sidewalk, installation of a culinary water system and building a new medical center.

Economic development advocates and other groups of people have promoted their programs using the USU Community Needs Assessment process.

One member of the Sugar House Business District committee, reported,

"...the Business Survey was very well received by the members of the Master Plan Update Management Committee.....It was wonderful to hear our State Representative and our City Councilmember say the attitudes of the business district reinforce those of the residential community. We've always been told that the two groups would never agree on anything. But based on the results of these two surveys, we finally may have the means of resolving some old feuds in our neighborhoods."

In addition, the KIDS ORGANIZED to PROTECT our ENVIRONMENT (KOPE) group used results from the Sugar House survey to demonstrate the amount of public support for their Hidden Hollow project. Their Community Development Block Grant application, which had been recommended by the

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Mayor's Advisory Committee to receive \$4,695 for an outdoor classroom, received \$10,695 from the city council as a result of their survey.

Not only do City Councils appreciate the valuable information from community needs assessments, but citizens are pleased to be asked about their opinions on community issues. Citizens participating in the survey often add comments such as the following, excerpted from actual questionnaires:

*"Thank you for asking my opinion. I like this questionnaire..."*

*"I appreciate feeling like I have a voice that someone wants to hear. If this [surveying residents] is continued, you will always have grateful residents..."*

*"...Thanks for asking our opinions. That's one of the great things that makes RH a great place to live!"*

*"I appreciate the opportunity to provide input."*

During a time of increased feelings of alienation and impersonal government the USU Community Needs Assessment process not only provides a means to gather valuable information, it also provides a way for citizens to become involved in their local government.



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## Sample Survey

WHITE CITY AREA COMMUNITY SURVEY  
November 2004

This survey is sponsored by the White City Volunteer Community Council and Utah State University Extension. We appreciate your help. To preserve your confidentiality do not put your name on the survey.  
Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

**SERVICES:**

**1. How would you rate each of the following services in the White City Council area?** [EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, POOR, DON'T KNOW]

	EXC	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	KNOW	DON'T
a. law enforcement..	4	3	2	1	8	___
b. fire protection..	4	3	2	1	8	___
c. ambulance service	4	3	2	1	8	___
d. emergency 911....	4	3	2	1	8	___
e. mental health service.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
f. garbage collection.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
g. roads/highways/streets.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
h. snow removal.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
i. parks and recreation.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
j. animal control...	4	3	2	1	8	___
k. sidewalks/pedestrian safety	4	3	2	1	8	___
l. storm drainage...	4	3	2	1	8	___
m. street lighting..	4	3	2	1	8	___
n. UTA bus service..	4	3	2	1	8	___
o. library service..	4	3	2	1	8	___
p. postal service...	4	3	2	1	8	___

**2. The Salt Lake County Sheriff's Department performs a variety of services. How would you rate the effectiveness of the following?** [EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, POOR, DON'T KNOW?]

	EXC	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	KNOW	DON'T
a. traffic speed control.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
b. other traffic laws.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
c. parking control..	4	3	2	1	8	___
d. visible residential patrol.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
e. school safety....	4	3	2	1	8	___
f. neighborhood watch.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
g. narcotics enforcement.....	4	3	2	1	8	___
h. gang control.....	4	3	2	1	8	___

**3. Should the Salt Lake County**

**Sheriff's Department continue to police the White City Community Council area?**..... YES NO KNOW  
1 0 8 \_\_\_

**4. How safe do you feel in your neighborhood during the:**

	VERY SAFE	SAFE	UNDECIDED	UNSAFE	VERY UNSAFE	___
a. day..	4	3	2	1	0	___
b. night	4	3	2	1	0	___

**5. Which, if any, are problems in your neighborhood?**  
DON'T

	YES	NO	KNOW	
a. Vacant lots.....	1	0	8	___
b. Condition of houses.....	1	0	8	___
c. Cost of housing.....	1	0	8	___
d. Vandalism.....	1	0	8	___
e. Burglaries.....	1	0	8	___
f. Recreational drug use.....	1	0	8	___
g. Gangs.....	1	0	8	___
h. Too much street parking.....	1	0	8	___
i. Other (please list_____)	1	0	8	___

**6. Please rank the following methods to finance improvements in the White City Council area from 1 through 4 with 1 being your most preferred method and 4 being your least preferred method of financing. If you use the "other" category rank them 1 through 5.**

	RANK
a. User fee.....	___ ___
b. Special Service District Fees.....	___ ___ c.
Property tax.....	___ ___
d. Community fund raisers.....	___ ___
e. Other (List_____)	___ ___

**7. Which of the following services, if any, should be consolidated throughout Salt Lake County?**  
DON'T

	YES	NO	KNOW	
a. Police force.....	1	0	8	___
b. Police records.....	1	0	8	___
c. Fire department.....	1	0	8	___
d. City and County Government..	1	0	8	___
e. Garbage collection.....	1	0	8	___
f. Planning and Zoning.....	1	0	8	___
g. Other (List_____)	1	0	8	___

**8. Below is a list of services that generally require taxes for maintenance and construction. Would you be willing to pay more taxes if you knew the money would be spent in the White City Community Council area for that particular purpose?** DON'T

	YES	NO	KNOW	
a. To improve fire protection..	1	0	8	___
b. To improve police protection	1	0	8	___
c. To improve ambulance service	1	0	8	___

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- d. To improve streets and roads 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- e. To improve street lighting.. 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- f. To improve sidewalks..... 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- g. To improve curb and gutter.. 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- h. To provide additional parks. 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- i. To upgrade existing parks... 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- j. To provide recreation facilities..... 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- k. To expand and improve the storm & ground water drainage system..... 1 0 8 \_\_\_
- o. Other (List \_\_\_\_\_) 1 0 8 \_\_\_

**LOCAL GOVERNANCE:**

**9. How would you rate the effectiveness of each of the following in meeting White City's community needs?**

	DON'T				
	<u>EXC</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
a. Community Council	4	3	2	1	8 ___
b. County Government	4	3	2	1	8 ___
c. State Government	4	3	2	1	8 ___

**10. Within the past 12 months, how would you rate your experience in working with the following levels of Government?**

	NO CON-				
	<u>EXC</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>	<u>TACT</u>
a. Community Council	4	3	2	1	8 ___
b. County Government	4	3	2	1	8 ___
c. State Government	4	3	2	1	8 ___

**11. Please rank 1 through 4, with 1 being your most preferred and 4 being your least preferred choice for governing White City. If you use the "other" category, rank them 1 through 5.**

	<u>RANK</u>
a. Unincorporated County.....	___ ___
b. Township.....	___ ___
c. Become part of Sandy City.....	___ ___
d. Become part of a consolidated Salt Lake County (Metro County).....	___ ___
e. Other (List _____)	___ ___

**12. Did you participate in the annual clean up?**

	DON'T		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
.....	1	0	8 ___

**13. Should the annual spring cleanup be continued?**

	DON'T		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
.....	1	0	8 ___

**14. Do you participate in the recycling program?**

	DON'T		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
.....	1	0	8 ___

**15. How would you rate the enforcement of the following:**

	DON'T				
	<u>EXC</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
a. zoning regulations	4	3	2	1	8 ___
b. home business permits/regulations..	4	3	2	1	8 ___
c. new building permits.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___

- d. Remodeling permits 4 3 2 1 8 \_\_\_
- e. "junk" ordinance.. 4 3 2 1 8 \_\_\_
- f. weed ordinance... 4 3 2 1 8 \_\_\_
- g. ban on continuous 24 hr street parking..... 4 3 2 1 8 \_\_\_

**16. From the issues listed below, choose the top three that you feel the Mayor and County Council should address during the next year. Rank these by placing a 1 next to your top priority, a 2 by your next priority, and a 3 by your 3<sup>rd</sup> priority.**

	PRIORITY				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>
a. Completion of Bear Park.....	___	___	___	___	___
b. Install/repair sidewalks.....	___	___	___	___	___
c. Install street lights.....	___	___	___	___	___
d. Pedestrian safety near schools..	___	___	___	___	___
e. Repair streets with drainage problems	___	___	___	___	___
f. Speeding.....	___	___	___	___	___
g. Enforcing regulations.....	___	___	___	___	___
h. Other (Please Specify _____)	___	___	___	___	___

**PARKS AND RECREATION:**

**17. How would you rate each of the following recreation services in the White City Council area?**

	DON'T				
	<u>EXC</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
a. Availability of local parks.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
b. Availability of regional parks..	4	3	2	1	8 ___
c. Baseball.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
d. Track facilities	4	3	2	1	8 ___
e. Tennis.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
f. Practice gyms...	4	3	2	1	8 ___
g. Equestrian paths	4	3	2	1	8 ___
h. Volleyball.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
i. Ice skating.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
j. Picnic areas....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
k. Soccer.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
l. Football.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
m. Hockey.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
n. Other _____	4	3	2	1	8 ___

**18. Do you or family members use Bear Park?**

	DON'T		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
.....	1	0	8 ___

**19. How would you rate the following at Bear park?**

	DON'T				
	<u>EXC</u>	<u>GOOD</u>	<u>FAIR</u>	<u>POOR</u>	<u>KNOW</u>
a. Parking.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
b. Pavilion.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
c. Picnic areas....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
d. Playground equipment.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
e. Playing fields..	4	3	2	1	8 ___
f. Restrooms.....	4	3	2	1	8 ___
g. Other _____	4	3	2	1	8 ___

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20. Do you have children who participate in the county's organized sports programs?....

	DON'T		KNOW		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>		
	1	0	8	___	

21. Do you have access to the Internet?.....

	DON'T		KNOW		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>KNOW</u>		
	1	0	8	___	

IF YES, do you access the internet through:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>			
a. a computer in your home.....	1	0	___		
b. a computer at your work.....	1	0	___		
c. a computer at the library....	1	0	___		
d. other(_____)	1	0	___		

**BACKGROUND:**

This information is required for funding from state agencies. As this survey is confidential, please do not put your name on this survey.

22. Are you: [Circle number]

1. MALE    2. FEMALE    3. BOTH ANSWERED SURVEY    \_\_\_

23. How many years have you lived in this neighborhood? [Circle number]

1. 0-3 YEARS	4. 11-15 YEARS
2. 4-6 YEARS	5. 16-25 YEARS
3. 7-10 YEARS	6. OVER 25 YEARS    ___

24. Are you renting or are you buying/own your own home? [Circle number]

1. RENTING    0. BUYING/OWN    \_\_\_

25. How many family members reside in your home? [Circle number]

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8 OR MORE    \_\_\_

26. Which category best represents the age of the head of household? [Circle number]

1. 18-24	4. 45-54
2. 25-34	5. 55-64
3. 35-44	6. 65 OR OLDER    ___

27. Which of the following categories best describes your gross total family income during the last year? [Circle number]

1. LESS THAN \$10,000	5. \$35,000 - \$49,999
2. \$10,000 - \$14,999	6. \$50,000 - \$74,999
3. \$15,000 - \$24,999	7. \$75,000 - \$99,999
4. \$25,000 - \$34,999	8. \$100,000 OR MORE    ___

28. In what industry is the major wage earner in your home employed?[Circle number]

01. AGRICULTURE
02. MINING
03. CONSTRUCTION
04. MANUFACTURING
05. RETAIL/WHOLESALE
06. TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, AND PUBLIC UTILITIES
07. FINANCE, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE
08. GOVERNMENT (INCLUDES EDUCATION)

09. SERVICES (INCLUDES RETAIL) \_\_\_\_\_

10. RETIRED \_\_\_\_\_

11. HOMEMAKER \_\_\_\_\_

12. STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

29. What was the last year or grade in school you completed? [Circle number]

1. GRADE SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_
2. SOME HIGH SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_
3. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE \_\_\_\_\_
4. SOME COLLEGE/VOCATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_
5. VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRADUATE \_\_\_\_\_
6. COLLEGE GRADUATE \_\_\_\_\_
7. SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL \_\_\_\_\_
8. GRADUATE DEGREE \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing our survey. If you have additional comments and/or ideas to assist the White City Community Council in serving you better, please feel free to add them here:

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## Sample Press Release No. 1

### Community Progress Survey

Residents of \_\_\_\_\_ will soon have an opportunity to tell what they think is right or wrong with the community

through a "Community Attitude Survey" according to an

announcement today by \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Mayor) (Community)

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ said a questionnaire covering nearly every

phase of the community including planning, human relations and

cultural enrichment, economic development, physical environment

and community services will be circulated soon. Community

Development Specialists from Utah State University will assist

with the survey.

"The primary purpose for conducting the survey," Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_ said, "is to find out where the community is doing a

good job and where it needs to improve. With this information

we can identify problem areas and develop action programs."

"We want to know how \_\_\_\_\_ measures up as a

(community)

place to live and the only way that we can be sure that we are

getting a complete picture is by asking people who really know -

the people who live here."

"We would appreciate your cooperation when one of our local

citizens comes to your door with the survey."

# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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## Sample Press Release No. 2 Community Progress Survey

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ would like to remind the citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ of the attitude survey that will be conducted next week with the assistance of Community Development Specialists from Utah State University Extension Service.

"This is a great opportunity for \_\_\_\_\_. It can  
(Community)

provide the foundation for a community development program designed to enhance the quality of life with every citizen, not just the individuals who are willing to take the lead. For this reason it is imperative that the people who take part in the survey cooperate to the fullest. Everyone who has the opportunity to fill out the questionnaire should do so and do so honestly."

The Mayor emphasized that individual responses are confidential,

that only total group responses will be reported. The survey

questionnaire will be distributed and collected next \_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

between 7:00-9:00 p.m. The survey findings will then be used as a guide for community progress programs.

# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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## Sample Press Release No. 3 Community Progress Survey

After reviewing the results of the Community Attitude Survey, Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ said he/she believes the future growth of the community can be planned more effectively. "We knew there were some areas that need work," Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ said, "but we learned several things from the survey which I feel are extremely important. There were a large number of people who expressed dissatisfaction with \_\_\_\_\_ and believe \_\_\_\_\_.\* At the same time, it was generally agreed our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were excellent."

The attitude survey was conducted by the citizens of \_\_\_\_\_ (Community) with the assistance of \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ (Community Development Specialists) \_\_\_\_\_ in a door-to-door canvas. \_\_\_\_\_ (State University Extension Service)

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ said a detailed presentations of the survey results will be released at a community mass meeting on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(date and time) (place)

A computer printout will also be displayed in the City Hall, public library and Post office.

"One of the most important things we have learned from the survey," Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ said, "is the people of \_\_\_\_\_ (Community) are really interested in their community. This was shown by the splendid cooperation and response we received."

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\* Fill in some specific findings.

## Community Needs Assessment Survey Checklist

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# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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Instructions: Use the times of this sheet to guide you as you progress through the survey process:

## Preparation Before the Survey

1. Contact the Community Development Specialist at Utah State University and solicit assistance.  
[Stan.Guy@usu.edu](mailto:Stan.Guy@usu.edu) (435-797-3221)
2. Appoint a community Survey Chairperson:\_\_\_\_\_
3. Designate an evening to conduct the survey:\_\_\_\_\_
4. Adapt the questionnaire to meet the needs of the community.
5. Publicize the survey through radio and newspaper.
6. Mobilize 60 to 80 people (30 to 40 teams) to conduct the survey and code the results.
7. Prepare a letter from the Mayor/City Council encouraging the townspeople to participate in the survey.
8. Work with the Community Development Specialist in preparing the survey instrument.
9. Divide the city into sections with 15 homes in each section. Provide a map showing each section.

## On the Evening of the Survey

10. Conduct a training session with the Community Development Specialist, the Survey Chairperson, and the citizen volunteers.
11. Teams deliver the questionnaires.
12. Pick up the questionnaires.
13. Code the questionnaires
14. Provide refreshments

## Dealing with the Data

15. Coded questionnaires are returned to the University for computation.
16. Results (printouts) are returned to the community within a month.
17. Use the results of the Utah Community Needs Assessment Survey.

# Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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## Agreement between Utah State University Extension Service and Local Governments

### INTRODUCTION

Successful community needs assessment surveys are built on cooperation at several levels: between citizens and appointed or elected officials, between leaders and the Extension Service Community Development staff, and among citizens in the community. Cooperation depends on goodwill and on understanding. To facilitate understanding and cooperation, and to ensure success of the community needs survey process, the following commitments by each party are identified:

#### Extension Service Agrees to:

- Provide examples of questions from other surveys, letters, publicity
- Assist in sample selection, question construction, etc.
- Train the survey chairperson in how to organize for a survey
- Print the questionnaire and provide copies for data collection
- Be available to community for consultation during the planning phases
- Provide training in data gathering techniques to volunteers (citizens and officials) the night of the survey
- Provide instruction and supervision for coding by volunteers
- Present results of analysis to city council with interpretation and suggestions for their use
- Provide copies of computer printout for community use
- Be available to respond to further requests

#### The Local Government Agrees to:

- Appoint a community survey chairperson
- Provide support to the chairperson
- Adapt the "basic questionnaire" to meet the community's needs
- Provide information to be used to select sample
- Select the sample
- Prepare address lists and maps for each team (15 homes/lists)
- Select an evening to conduct the survey
- Publicize the survey to generate interest, support, and community support
- Mobilize adequate teams of volunteers to conduct survey and code results
- Prepare letter from council encouraging residents to participate
- Provide space (school, city hall, etc.) for conducting training session for volunteers the evening of the survey
- Arrange for official to

## Community Needs Assessment Survey Guide

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participate in the data  
collection and coding

- Provide volunteers for coding the questionnaires
- Schedule time during official meetings for survey results to be presented
- Publicize results and recognize those who assisted
- Use survey results to identify community needs, plan programs, and organize future activities