



Lions Clubs International

LIONS CLUBS COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Because Lions help where help is needed

Once a year, your club should assess the programs and services you provide to your local community. Through a simple assessment, you will be able to understand:

- What kinds of volunteer services your community needs.
- Which projects and programs are important to the people in your area.
- Whether your clubs' current service projects are still needed by the community.
- If other organizations in your area are providing similar services.

To accurately assess the needs of your community, follow the steps below:

Step One: Introduce the Community Needs Assessment to the Board

Present the importance of conducting a needs assessment with your club's board of directors. Explain how the assessment will help the club identify and focus on programs and services that are needed in the community.

Step Two: Appoint a Committee

After receiving approval from the board, discuss the importance of conducting the community needs assessment at a club meeting. If members agree to the assessment, appoint a task force to handle the assessment.

Step Three: Develop a Questionnaire and Cover Letter

Have your task force begin their work by developing a questionnaire and cover letter. You may use the sample questionnaire and cover letter provided or customize your own to include questions that will help you assess the specific needs of your community. If you choose to use the one provided, visit the Lions Clubs International Web site and search MK-9A for a writable PDF version of the questionnaire.

Step Four: Decide Who to Contact in the Community

Before beginning your assessment, your task force will need to decide who can best evaluate the needs of your community. Make a list of the people you think should take the assessment. Consider visiting your villages' official Web site for ideas of who to contact. Often, the village Web site will provide e-mail addresses and phone numbers of important personnel.

Some ideas of people you can contact to help determine the needs of your community include:

- Principals
- Teachers
- Library personnel
- Environmental service workers
- Park district coordinator
- Police
- Fire fighters
- Hospital administrators
- Doctors & nurses
- School counselors
- Social workers
- Student leaders

Step Five: Survey Community Contacts

Contact the people on your list and give them the community assessment questionnaire you developed. Consider that the questionnaire can be answered by e-mail, over the phone, in person or by postal mail. Use the method of contact that best fits the situation of each contact.

Step Six: Analyze Survey Results

Once the questionnaires have been compiled, the task force can begin reviewing and analyzing the results. Try to answer the following questions:

- Does your community have specific needs for services your club can provide?
- Are other clubs and organizations duplicating your club's efforts, in which case you may consider finding a way to work together on a project?
- Do any of your programs need to be updated, improved or suspended?
- In summary, what does your community need and how can your club help?

Step Seven: Share the Results

Ask the task force to share the assessment at a club meeting. Get feedback from your fellow members and discuss whether your club's current services and programs are meeting the needs of your community. Open up the floor to new ideas that can help serve your community better. In addition, if you have uncovered opportunities and needs outside the service area of your club, consider informing the district governor and district membership chairperson.

Step Eight: Follow Up with the Survey Participants

Send a message thanking respondents for participating in the survey. Discuss how their input has helped the club define programs to better serve the community. Use this as a recruitment opportunity and ask if they are interested in working with Lions and invite them to attend the next club meeting.

Dear {Name}:

To provide better service to {Name of Community}, the {Club Name} Lions Club is conducting a survey of resourceful people and those with expertise in the community. Our goal is to clearly identify humanitarian services, which we -- as a service club -- could provide. We hope you will help us identify areas of need within our community.

By completing the attached questionnaire, you will help us determine needs and areas of concern. Please feel free to comment on any community service needs which you feel would benefit our community. We also encourage you to forward a copy of this survey to any other person whose comments you believe would be helpful to our survey.

Please return the completed questionnaire by {date}. After we have compiled our data, a representative of our club will provide you a summary of what we learned from the assessment and how we might work together. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me at {phone number and/or e-mail address}. I am happy to hear from you.

Sincerely,

{Name of Lion},
{Lion Title}
{Name of Lions Club}

Sample Cover Letter