

**Somebody Cares  
Community Assessment  
and  
Outreach Planning Tool**

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## I. Executive Summary

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always...**Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.** (Isaiah 50: 9-12)

American cities need Repairers and Restorers today like never before. Christians are the only ones that can fit the job description. Qualifying will, however, take laying down self-serving ambition; refusing to create personal empires; and working together in unity to see the restoration come in our communities that only God can bring.

If that is your heart's cry, this tool is for you. It is our prayer that God will guide you through this process; and that He will give you wisdom, knowledge and revelation of His purpose for your city. Embracing a shared vision for community transformation with other believers is imperative for effective community outreach to occur. We believe that as churches unite to bring the transforming love of Christ to their community in tangible ways, God will do a mighty work. As neighborhoods are impacted, change will occur in the lives of individuals and families living there. Then they will be able to reach their God given potential.

Because God created family to be the cornerstone of society, we encourage you to focus on strengthening and equipping struggling families. It is important that a majority of families in any community be thriving relationally, financially, physically, emotionally and spiritually in order for the community to thrive. So this tool uses a Community Wellness Scale that focuses on identifying issues in the community that put families at-risk in those areas. Once issues have been identified, a plan should be prayerfully crafted to address them. In order to break the cycle of suffering that has held many families in poverty for generations, the issues hindering progress should be addressed in an integrated fashion.

As you work through this assessment please understand the underlying philosophy of ministry is "transforming the hurting" rather than simply "helping the hurting". Instead of creating an agency to provide a service, create a process that

empowers families to embrace a new life. Think in terms of the “wholeness” and “completeness” of individuals and families so that your efforts result in healthy families and a thriving community.

The goal is attainable but will not come easy. It will involve not only physical assistance but also education enabling recipients to overcome a poverty or victim mindset. Because of the complexity and breath of community transformation, strong partnerships between churches, civic/government organizations, local nonprofits and national agencies will be required.

Local partnerships are the foundation of any successful community transformation work. Those with like-mind and heart need to commit to work together, support each other, and love one another. That itself will be a strong testimony and role model for those you serve and will illicit a blessing from God that breaks many strongholds.

May God bless you beyond your expectations as you embark on this wonderful work!

## II. Community Assessment

### a. Target Community

1. Identify the target community that you desire to impact. Include location as well as any other descriptors that will clarify the selected group.
2. Give a demographic and socio-graphic profile of families in the target community. (Family make-up, age breakdown, ethnic background, education and adult literacy level, employment rate, religious belief, etc ...)
3. Explain the greatest needs expressed by residents:
4. What are other pressing needs in the community?
5. Who are the informal community leaders? Who has a say as to what happens in the community (Grandmas, gang members, pastors, drug dealers, union leaders)?

6. Use the attached Community Wellness Scale in Appendix A to honestly rate the target community in each area.

| Condition | Shelter | Nutrition & Food Security | Health Care | Alcohol/ Drug Use | Employment | Income/ Budget | Adult Education | Children's Education | Parenting | Family Relations | Spiritual Relationship |
|-----------|---------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------------|
| Thriving  |         |                           |             |                   |            |                |                 |                      |           |                  |                        |
| Safe      |         |                           |             |                   |            |                |                 |                      |           |                  |                        |
| At-Risk   |         |                           |             |                   |            |                |                 |                      |           |                  |                        |

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. Include any baseline information you have gathered? (I.E. crime rate; drop-out rate; adult literacy level; health indicators; % on public assistance; % home owners; unemployment rate, etc..)

## **b. Vision for the Future**

Defining a shared vision for the community is an important part of the transformational process. It gives you something to plan and work toward as well as evaluate progress against. Spend time praying and dreaming about the potential of this community. Ask members of the community to share their hopes and dreams as well. Once you have spent time developing a shared vision, describe the highlights of transformation as you succinctly describe how you see the community:

1. Five years from now:

2. Ten years from now:

### **c. Community Outreach Network Description**

1. What churches and organizations are interested in working together to bring transformation in the target community?
2. Which of these organizations are located or have a branch within the target community?
3. Briefly describe the strength or specialty each organization brings to the network?
4. What criteria will be used to screen network partners (ie Statement of Faith, agreement to a working covenant, proximity, program offering)?



## **d. Community Outreach Assets**

List and briefly describe resources available to the community, by category. Consider all resources available in the community, including those offered by government agencies, secular organizations, all faiths and denominations as well as service groups. Place an asterisk “\*” by the resources or programs offered by one of the network partners. Place an “x” by resources or programs that, for one reason or another, are NOT conducive to bringing positive transformation in the community (i.e. offered by a cultic or violent group; band-aid program requiring no accountability; etc..).

1. Shelter and Housing

2. Food Security and Nutrition

3. Health Care

4. Substance Abuse Recovery

5. Livelihood (Job training and placement, work adjustment )
  
6. Financial Skills (financial management, debt reduction, community banking)
  
7. Adult Education (adult literacy, GED, TESOL, a variety of life skills)
  
8. Child Development and Education (other than public schools)
  
9. Family and community relations (including parenting and fatherhood programs)
  
10. Spiritual outreach and discipleship

## e. Service Gaps Defined

Compare the Community Wellness Scale with services provided in the programs and services available. Focus on areas where the community is at-risk or just moderately safe first. Consider the service ability (number of people able to be served) as well as scope of service programs and resources available in the community. Based on your observations and knowledge of the community define major service gaps that need to be filled for families in this community to move toward a safe and thriving situation.

Answer the following:

1. In what areas/categories is the community at-risk or moderately safe for which there are NO services or resources readily available to help families?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. In what areas/categories is the community at-risk or moderately safe for which there are inadequate (either in capacity or scope) services or resources available to help families?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Based on your knowledge of the situation, would it be better to help expand the capacity and/or scope of existing services to more fully meet the need OR to begin a new program to provide an alternate source of service to meet the need? (Answer for each area/category separately).

4. Based on community input and your knowledge of the situation of families living there, prioritize the areas/categories that should be addressed to bring about transformation in families by most pressing to least pressing. If you identified needs not listed on the Community Wellness Scale feel free to include them in this list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **(Most Pressing Need)**
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_ **(Least pressing need)**

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### III. Outreach Planning Tool

#### a. Strategic Programs

Review your prioritized areas of need. Based on your knowledge and understanding of the community prayerfully consider the following:

1. What current community programs can the network help expand to assist a greater number of people and/or provide additionally needed services? List programs including: a brief description, sponsoring organization or church, proposed expansion (service capacity and/or scope of service), way in which the network can support the expansion.

| <u>Program Description</u> | <u>Organization/Church</u> | <u>Proposed Expansion</u><br>(# Served/Scope of Service) | <u>Type of Network Support</u><br>(funding, volunteers, space, etc...) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1.                         |                            |  |  |
| 2.                         |                            |  |  |
| 3.                         |                            |  |  |
| 4.                         |                            |  |  |
| 5.                         |                            |  |  |
| 6.                         |                            |  |  |
| 7.                         |                            |  |  |
| 8.                         |                            |  |  |
| 9.                         |                            |  |  |
| 10.                        |                            |  |  |

(Use additional pages if necessary)

2. What new programs or resources can be provided in some way through your network? List programs in order of priority including: a brief description, service organization or church, supporting organizations or churches, proposed start date, anticipated service capacity and scope of service. Use additional pages if necessary.

| Program Description<br>(ie food panty, GED prog. etc.) | Service Org | Support Org | Start Date | Capacity | Scope |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 2.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 3.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 4.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 5.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 6.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 7.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 8.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 9.   |             |             |            |          |       |
| 10.  |             |             |            |          |       |

## **b. Operational and Financial Plan**

Now that you have a clear understanding of community needs and have identified services that your network is committed to providing it is time to spell out detailed plans for each program that will be implemented or expanded. It is not necessary or feasible to draw up the operational and financial plans (or business plans) for all projected programs before starting any. But it is important to lay out the plan for each program before it is begun to insure success. As each program plan is drawn up be sure to consider how it will impact the operations, financing and services of those programs already underway and those planned for the future. In collaborative, community reaching efforts it is imperative that no-one resorts to myopic thinking or vision, even though that may be a natural tendency. Each new or expanded program will need the full support and prayers of all the members of the network, not just those directly involved in that program. If a cooperative and supportive attitude can be maintained then transformation is already beginning!

There are several model business plans for non-profits that can be use in developing your operational and financial plan for each program. Select the model that best fits the personality of your network and use it for each program that will be implemented or expanded. Here are a few you can consider:

1. The Center for Nonprofit Excellence has an excellent outline for a Nonprofit Business Plan. See <http://www.cfnpe.org/site.cfm/np-businessplan.cfm>.
2. The website Nonprofit Expert as a good outline to consider at <http://www.cfnpe.org/site.cfm/np-businessplan.cfm>.
3. The Structured Employment Economic Development Corporation has a model for programs that are Social Purpose Businesses at <http://www.seedco.org/nvn/>.
4. The website bPlans also has some guidance available in program planning at <http://www.bplans.com/dp/article.cfm/191>.

### **c. Conclusion**

As you embark on community transformation your network of committed ministries and churches needs to continue meeting together on a regular basis. When you meet, share struggles, successes, and testimonies that are underway. Pray with one another and for one another. Revisit the Community Assessment and Planning Tool you have created frequently. Update and revise it as necessary. Keep in mind what King Solomon said in Proverbs 16:9; “in his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” so be flexible as God intervenes along the way to produce His desired end -- IN and THRU you!

Authors Note: This tool is intended to equip the Body of Christ to impact their cities and communities in a greater way. It is a work in progress. If you have questions about or comments regarding any aspect of this tool please contact the office of Somebody Cares America/International at (713) 621-1498 so we can discuss it with you. Any helpful insights or constructive critiques are welcome so we can incorporate them into the tool for the benefit of others. We would also value any testimonies you have along the way to share with other communities embarking on the same process.



## APPENDIX A

### COMMUNITY WELLNESS SCALE