



HOMWORK 2: COMMUNITY NEEDS

What are Community Needs?

Community needs are areas where individuals, groups or the entire community are lacking. They may be physical, spiritual, mental or social.

Needs:

- Open up opportunities for your congregation to connect people to the hope and joy of Christ.
- May address basic human needs (food, shelter, clothing) or developmental needs (art, music, life-enhancing opportunities).
- Should be met by your church for the sake of the beneficiary. The church's motive should always be to serve others as Jesus would serve, not to serve them so they'll come to a worship service. If done correctly, church growth will happen. It may grow from more people coming to the church. It may grow from the individuals in the church growing spiritually because they are involved in meeting these needs.

How do Community Needs impact your MARKETING PLAN?

Knowing and understanding community needs helps us meet people where they are as opposed to creating offerings and messages that we *think* they would connect with.

Example:

A church in an area with a high number of retired people may assume they should provide medical services or social events for senior adults. A thorough community needs assessment reveals that the primary need is for these senior adults is to feel useful. So their marketing plan features ways to connect people with volunteer opportunities that allow them to serve others locally and around the world.

Knowing and understanding community needs gives the church the opportunity to become an integral part of the community.

Example:

A church located in a hurricane-prone area has a beautiful building with a long history. Through discussions with community leaders, they learn there is a need for emergency shelter facilities. The church offers their building to be that shelter and hosts hurricane preparation clinics, conducted by the local emergency services.

Read/Reflect

Read the following and answer the questions.

From these examples, how did the church connect their values/vision to the communities' needs?

What did the church have to change in order to meet those needs? (What did they *start* doing and what did they *stop* doing.)

What about the church stayed the same?

Do these stories prompt any new thoughts about our church?

Review/Respond

Review the **Community Demographic and Behaviors Reports** you received with your **MARKETING PLAN** Workbook and write your thoughts to the questions below.

How would you describe your community? (Circle all that apply.)

- Inner-city
- Suburb
- Revitalized neighborhood
- Urban fringe
- Rural
- Heavily religious – Christian
- Heavily religious - Other
- Un-churched
- Transitional (many people moving in)
- Transitional (many people moving out)
- Young families
- Single adults
- Aging/retirement age
- Many preschoolers
- Many elementary age
- Many middle and high school students
- High to middle income housing
- Multi-family housing
- Low-income housing
- Mobil homes
- Condominiums
- Governmentally impacted area
- Industrially impacted area
- Militarily impacted area
- Resort area

Other descriptions: _____



What demographic descriptions represent the highest percentage of people in your community?

Race: _____

Age: _____

Marital status/family situation: _____

Income range: _____

Education: _____

How would you describe the people in your community: Who are they? What makes them unique from people in other communities? What is important to them? What are their struggles? Where do they spend their time? What do they respond well to? What turns them off? What would pique their interest about church?

What are needs you might assume people in your community would have? Consider:

- Relational needs: friendship, life purpose/direction, a way to use their time and talents.
- Physical needs: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, pregnancy care; perhaps people or groups have a need for meeting or facilities space (gym, library, kids areas), after school care.
- Socioeconomic needs: abuse protection or healing, freedom from addiction, financial advice, marital or parental counseling.
- Circumstantial: widowed, divorced, job training, language training, unique job situation (travel a lot, dangerous, etc.).

NOTE (on the questions that follow): Having an activity doesn't necessarily mean you are meeting a need. When answering the following, carefully consider how your church is meeting real needs that go beyond general participation.



What are needs that your church is currently meeting?



What are ways that your church is meeting needs within the congregation that could benefit the community as well (if more people knew it was available)? What new things could the church begin to do to meet community needs?

Observe/Pray

Before or during the **Action Steps**, spend time around your community and observe things from your **MARKETING PLAN** perspective. Pray for God to open your eyes to see your community from a fresh perspective and to help you see how your church can connect with these people.

- Walk your dog around the neighborhood.
- Take your kids to the park.
- Shop and/or eat at a restaurant.
- Have coffee at a coffee shop.
- Attend community events.
- Attend another church's services.

As you do, write your observations and thoughts below:

What additional questions does this raise that you might want to include in conversations with people during your **Action Steps**?

Write out your prayer for your community:


