

Sample Community Needs Assessment

Club Name: Kiwanis Club of Make-Believe

Project: Weekend Backpack Program

STEP 1: We defined and narrowed our scope.

- A state agency released findings that identified hunger as a major need among our state's population. It was defined as one of the state's top priorities to address in the next five years.
- Our club set out to identify hunger-related needs for students and families within the local school district.
- Need to address: hunger
- Community members we hope to serve: children and families
- Geographic area to assess: local school district

STEP 2: We decided to collaborate rather than work alone.

- We identified the following community partners to work with to complete a community needs assessment:
 - Community leaders: to provide knowledge and information regarding hunger in our community.
 - Local school corporation: to identify hunger-related needs of the local students.
 - Local food bank: to help identify the hunger-related needs and potential resources available.
 - United Way: to help connect our Kiwanis club with potential partners that also address hunger issues.

STEP 3: We collected data.

We began with a focus group with representatives from our identified community partners. The meeting was held at one of the elementary schools in the local school corporation. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, we determined it would be most appropriate to work with leaders in this area, as opposed to requesting the attendance of individuals in need, who may not wish to identify themselves publicly.

Community meeting:

The goal of this focus group meeting was to explore hunger within the school corporation and determine if it was a major need. We used information from the state-wide research effort to get started.

We discussed possible ways to tackle the issue of hunger in this specific school district.

Focus group discussion areas:

- Hunger research and statistical information
- Information from local food bank regarding food distribution
- Discussion with representatives from school district about hunger-related information and needs

STEP 4: We determined key findings.

From focus group meeting, we confirmed that hunger is a major issue facing this school district and our community. These were our key findings:

- Local food bank: provided information regarding an increase in the number of families/children visiting the food bank, specifically from a zip code within the local school district.
- Local elementary school principals: provided information on the high percentage of students who receive free or reduced lunch at particular schools.
- Community leaders: shared a previously determined need for additional food resources for families and children who may not qualify for state-funded food programs.

Leaders determined a food program to supplement kids' meals received at school would assist in battling current hunger issues among children and families. It was suggested the program could operate every weekend and serve students at three local elementary schools, where the need was greatest.

STEP 5: We set priorities and created an action plan.

Our Kiwanis club determined we would work to provide weekend meals to at least one of the three elementary schools with the hope to increase our reach in the future. The next steps were for key leaders from the represented organizations to discuss ways to implement such a program during the school year.

We formed a working group to research available resources and similar projects for best practices.

We formed an additional group to assist our Kiwanis club with identifying current and future resources.

STEP 6: We shared our findings.

We scheduled an informational meeting that was open to the community and invited our key players. We shared our findings and our action plan and recruited additional volunteers for the project.