


2010 SOUTHWEST CLUSTER CONFERENCE Conducting a Statewide Community Needs Assessment Process




peers. practice. knowledge. tools.



Colorado Needs Assessment

TOYA NELSON

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON COMMUNITY SERVICE



Increasing Effectiveness of Civic Engagement and Public Policy

Using the Results of the Governor's Commission on Community Service's Statewide Needs Assessment to Help Your Community

Found at: <http://www.colorado.gov/gccs/>

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Presentation Goals

- How and what we did
- Issues / trends impacting Colorado communities and non-profits
- Public policy and civic engagement implications
- How to replicate in your community

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Agenda

1. About the Commission
2. Overview
3. Methods
4. Community Assets - Strengths
5. Issues
6. What communities said they want
7. Action
8. Replication
9. Discussion / Questions

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Mission

Serve as a catalyst for the promotion and expansion of community service and volunteerism to all Colorado residents as an effective means to address civic and social issues and improve the overall well being of communities throughout the state.

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Have you participated in needs assessments ?

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What do you want to learn from this session?

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Who are you?

- AmeriCorps*
- Consultant to state commission*
- Grant recipient*
- Learn and Serve America*
- Points of Light*
- SeniorCorps*
- VISTA*

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1. OVERVIEW



1. Overview

Why a needs assessment?

Determine current status and future needs of communities to ...

1. manage current resources: efficient, effective, community issues-focused



1. Overview

Why a needs assessment?

Determine current status and future needs of communities to ...

2. inform three year plan (2009 – 2011)
 - Corporation for National and Community Service
 - Colorado State Service Plan



1. Overview

Why a needs assessment?

Determine current status and future needs of communities to ...

- 3. obtain, distribute, manage additional resources



1. Overview

Secondary Purpose

- 1. Provide information for communities
 - During the process
 - Final report



1. Overview

Secondary Purpose

- 2. Inform wider audiences
 - local
 - state
 - national



1. Overview

Secondary Purpose

- 3. Develop relationships



1. Overview



Framework

- > GCCS mission
- > Colorado Promise
- > 2006-2009 Strategic Plan for the CNCS
- > Lt. Governor's Strategic Initiatives




1. Overview



Focus

- > Topics / Issues - general
 - What is important to communities
 - How citizens are involved in communities
 - What is working to engage citizens
 - What supports are need to expand service, volunteerism, civic engagement





**1. Overview**

Focus

- **Topics / Issues - specific**
 - Vary by community
 - Civic engagement
 - Conservation and environment
 - Serving people with a disability
 - Education
 - Early childhood development / learning
 - Health care
 - Youth development

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**1. Overview**

Focus

- **Site selection criteria**
 - GCCS resources
 - Geographic location
 - Diversity of perspective
 - Economy
 - Resiliency
 - Perceived need
 - Ability to engage in ongoing collaboration with the GCCS to build community capacity

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**2. METHODS**

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2. Methods

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2. Methods

Gather data

- Interviews
- Small groups
- Community forums
- Secondary data collection

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2. Methods

Process

Refer to attachments

1. Create materials
 - who we are
 - purpose
 - who are you + opportunity for continued input
 - questions: context + specifics
2. Create database – keep it simple!!

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2. Methods



Process

3. Select community
4. Contact key community members
 - obtain info about community
 - determine protocol, time, place, who to invite, food



2. Methods

Process

5. Send invitations
6. Conduct community forum, etc. - record comments
7. Thank you
8. Follow-up
9. Enter data into database



2. Methods

Process

10. Write draft (6 communities)
11. Send draft to community
12. Follow-up community forum
13. Thank you
14. Write final report (6 communities + 1 state-wide)

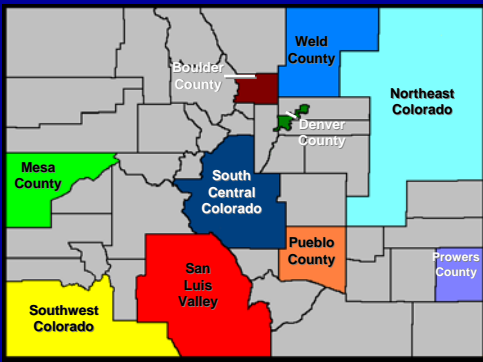


2. Methods

Community Process

- Visited 11 communities / areas
 - 19 counties
 - 80 towns / cities
 - 2 Native American Indian Tribes
- Conducted
 - 34 Forums
 - 8 Small groups
 - 2 Audiences with tribal representatives
 - 20 Interviews during visits + numerous others
- ~ 500 people participated
- Observed / Participated in
 - Creating Pueblo's Future Conference
 - Rural Philanthropy Days – Northeast
 - Rural Philanthropy Days – South Central
 - Community Revitalization Association, Lamar focus group

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2. Methods

Limitations

- 1 person
- 9 months
- 6 target communities + more
- Snapshot

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2. Methods

Limitations

- Non-scientific method
- Samples: "convenience," "availability," "snowball"
- Sites vary widely \approx generalize
- Secondary sources
- More information available



3. ASSETS - STRENGTHS



Every community is unique



3. Assets - Strengths

Self-perception

- Not who I thought they were
- Self-define



3. Assets - Strengths

STRONG!!!

- Resilient
- Small town
- Friendly
- Great people
- Much potential
- Cooperative
- Giving
- Hub
- Safe
- Overcome adversity



3. Assets - Strengths

- Family oriented - close knit
- Many sub-communities
- Diverse (faith community, culture, race)
- Outdoor recreation
- Arts



4. ISSUES



4. Issues

- Economics
- Health
- Health care
- Housing
- Immigration
- Transportation



4. Issues

- Aging population
- Inadequate early childhood education / resources / services
- Inadequate resources & services for infants, children, and youth
- People want to stay, but can't afford to
- Brain drain



4. Issues

Culture of ...

- Substance abuse – route
- Family violence
- Teen pregnancy
- Education – drop out

... in small pockets



4. Issues

- Dramatic, unpredictable economic fluctuations
- Cost of fuel
- TABOR



4. Issues

- State / federal governments don't know or care about us
- People in the rest of the state look down on our community
- Lack of leadership
- Strategic growth



4. Issues

- Increasing need – decreasing resources
- Too many non-profits
- Volunteers: time limited, issue specific
- Lack of communication, coordination



4. Issues

- Anger and lack of trust toward all government (including local) and "outsiders who come here, take resources, and leave us worse off."

- *Unfunded mandates (government)*
- *Farm land (Russians)*
- *Water (Aurora, Denver)*
- *Pollution (New Mexico coal plants)*
- *Minerals (uranium, oil, gas)*



4. Issues

- **Civic engagement**
 - Many opportunities at all levels
 - Time limited and issue specific
 - Core group (5%)
 - Same person on Board & providing direct service
 - Few people
 - + attend government / school meetings
 - + run for office, unless big issue or salary
 - + vote



4. Issues

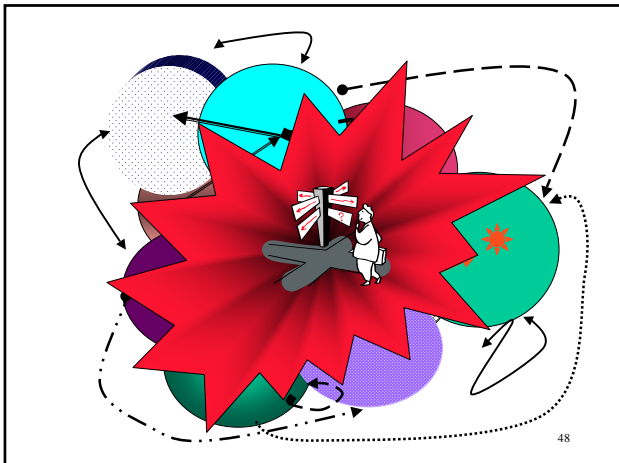
How currently addressing

- Individual agencies
 - individual issues
 - individual volunteers
- Ask government to solve
- Ask business / industry to help
- Seek foundation funding

Except early
childhood
councils
& GJ


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I can save this star fish

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4. Issues
What works to stimulate civic engagement?

- Don't know
- Individual passion / interest
- Subsidy (fuel, stipend)

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5. WHAT COMMUNITIES SAID THEY WANT

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5. What they said they want

Community

- Develop shared community perception: strengths, issues, vision
- Establish volunteer center / coordinator / services / network
- Increase collaboration, cooperation, communication

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5. What they said they want

Community

- Decrease number of organizations
- Provide leadership training, skills building
- Determine what motivates civic engagement & increase it

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5. What they said they want

Community

- Identify and address TABOR effects
- Public education
 - what is civic engagement (e.g., vote, volunteer)
 - what's in it for me
 - how to participate

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5. What they said they want

Community

- Stimulate parental involvement
- Fund prevention programs



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5. What they said they want

Community

- Increase higher paying jobs
- Improve community's image



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5. What they said they want

Community

- Increase attention and resources
 - state & federal government
 - foundations
 - community
- Address immigration



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5. What they said they want



Organization

- Build organizational capacity & resources & increase efficiency & effectiveness of organizations
 - increase collaboration, cooperation, communication



5. What they said they want



State-wide

- Help build capacity
 - technical assistance
 - training
 - materials
- State-wide civic engagement campaigns





5. What they said they want



State-wide



- Disseminate info about best practices for collaboration
- Increase funding for sustainability

 **5. What they said they want** 

State-wide


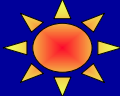
- Assist with leadership development
- Continue to visit and build local relationships
- Address TABOR issues

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 **6. Action** 

A. Develop State Service Plan

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 **6. Action** 

B. Continue Existing Programs

- 7 focus areas
- High need geographic areas

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6. Action



C. New service strategy initiatives

- Statewide civic engagement / volunteerism campaign
- Expand volunteer center infrastructure
- Expand services / new initiatives re: services to people with a disability



6. Action

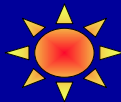


C. New service strategy initiatives

- Increase resources / services regarding early childhood care and education
- Expand youth mentoring and tutoring collaborative programs



6. Action

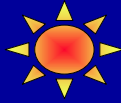


C. New service strategy initiatives

- Develop volunteer and community service opportunities for job seekers and workforce centers



6. Action



D. Passage of the Kennedy Serve America Act

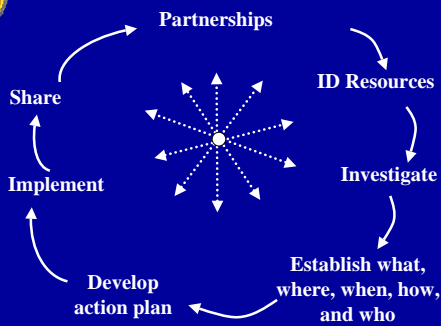
- Expand existing and launch new initiatives in alignment with federal resources and needs identified through the needs assessment



7. REPLICATION



7. Replication





8. Questions / Discussion

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"Building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in Colorado"

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