



## “How to Plan and Conduct a Better Club Project”

by  
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One of the most difficult challenges for many Clubs, today, is identifying a project that actually fulfills a local community need, and then creating a plan that will lead to the successful completion of a project to support that need by the local Lions Club.

As a community service organization, it is very important to remember why we actually exist. Our motto is: WE SERVE, not: WE FUND RAISE. Many of our best projects do require extensive fund raising, but, first we need to identify what the true community need actually is. If we just “Fund Raise” without any particular need in mind, we will be missing out on one of the most important opportunities that this organization provides to each of us: the feeling of satisfaction that we all receive when we fulfill an actual need.

Therefore, the first, and certainly the most important, step in this process is to identify an actual community need. It really doesn't matter whether you are planning a community service project or a local fundraiser type of project that will fund that specific need. Your first step is to identify the needs of your local community and then to select one need from that list for your Club to focus on for a project. To assist you with this process, please refer to the Lions Clubs International's “Lions Community Needs Assessment” form that is available from the LCI website at:

<http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/content/pdfs/mk9.pdf>.

A reprint of that document appears, beginning on the next page.

## Lions Clubs International

# *Lions Community Needs Assessment*

## WHAT SERVICES DOES YOUR COMMUNITY NEED?

Every year each local Lions Club should assess the programs and services you provide to your local community. Through a simple analysis, you will be able to understand and accurately determine:

- what kinds of volunteer service your community needs
- whether your clubs' current service projects are still needed by the community
- if other organizations in your area are providing similar services

This assessment will help you better serve your community by helping you focus on projects and programs that are important to the people in your area. In addition, by conducting programs that are meaningful to your community, your club will be able to demonstrate leadership and pride that can help build team spirit within your club and attract new members.

Take the following steps to accurately assess the needs of your community:

### *Step One:*

#### Discuss Analysis with the Board

Impress upon your club's board of directors the value of conducting a community needs analysis. Explain how it will help the club find and focus on programs and projects that are still needed and are exciting and challenging to all involved -- including club members.

### *Step Two:*

#### Appoint a Committee

After receiving a go-ahead from the board, discuss the importance of an annual assessment with club members at a meeting. If necessary, appoint a committee or task force to handle the assessment.

### *Step Three:*

#### Decide Who to Contact in the Community

Before beginning your assessment, you and your committee will need to decide who can best evaluate the needs in your community. Make a list of the people you will want to contact. This list will need to be selective, since you cannot reach everyone; however, you will want to make sure that all major resources are contacted. For example, you will want to talk to someone who has a solid understanding of educational services and needs in your community. In addition, you will want to talk to "experts" in environmental, health, recreational, social and youth services.

Here are some examples of the types of people you will want to contact:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Educational Services</b> .....   | High school principal or teacher, director of the local library.   |
| <b>Environmental Services</b> ..... | City or county official in charge of environmental issues.   |
| <b>Recreational Services</b> .....  | Park district coordinator, people in charge of community activities and programs.                                |
| <b>Social Services</b> .....        | Police, fire fighters, voting registration personnel.  |
| <b>Health Services</b> .....        | Hospital administrators, doctors, nurses.  |
| <b>Youth Services</b> .....         | School counselors, social workers, student leaders, people in charge of community youth programs and activities. |

After completing your list, secure addresses and phone numbers of each contact...so the work can begin.

### *Step Four:*

## Survey Community Contacts

Call the contacts on your list to see if they would participate in the assessment. Explain that the survey can be handled by phone or by mail. If a phone survey suits your contact, pull out the questionnaire and begin asking questions. (A copy of the questionnaire is included.) If your contact would rather complete the assessment in writing, then mail your contact the questionnaire. Attach a cover letter; see the example. Also, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope to increase the likelihood of a reply.

### *Step Five:*

## Analyze Survey Results

The task force can begin reviewing and analyzing the completed questionnaires. Does your community have specific needs for services that your club can provide? Are other clubs and organizations duplicating your club's efforts? Do any of your programs need to be updated, improved or even stopped? In summary, what does your community need? And how can your club get involved?

### *Step Six:*

## Share Your Results with Your Club

Ask the task force to share the analysis at a club meeting. Get feedback from your fellow members. 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 make your community better.

### *Step Seven:*

## Share Your Results with Other Lions

Your multiple district membership chairman would be interested in your findings. In addition, if you have uncovered opportunities and needs outside your club service area, you would want to alert your district governor.

### *Step Eight:*

## Share Your Results with the Survey Participants

Thank them in writing or by telephone for participating in the survey. Discuss how their input has helped the club define their programs to better serve the community. Ask if they are interested in working with the Lions. Find out if they want to learn more by attending the next club meeting.

Lions Clubs International  
*Lions Community Needs Assessment*  
Questionnaire

Name of Resource Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Expertise: (please check one)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Services   | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Services         | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Services |

1. Can you identify specific community service projects in your field that you think are successful?  
 No  Yes

Please list: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. If you answered yes to question one (1), why do you think the community service projects you listed are successful?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3a. Can you identify specific needs in your field that, if met, would help service the community?

No  Yes

Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3b. How do you think this need can best be met?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4a. Do you know of any duplication of efforts by other volunteers in your service area? Are there two or more organizations doing the same programs and fulfilling the same needs?  No  Yes

Please describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4b. How can the groups work together to eliminate unnecessary duplication or coordinate joint efforts?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you feel that residents in this community are aware of the services and facilities offered?

No  Yes

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. In your opinion, is there room for more volunteer involvement and programs in your service area?

No  Yes

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed survey to:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Sample Cover Letter

*To be attached to questionnaire prior to mailing to community resource people*



**WE SERVE**

**The International Association of Lions Clubs**  
(Lions Club International)

Date

Name/Address

Dear (Name):

To provide better service to (name of community), the (name) Lions Club is conducting a survey of important resource people in this community. Our goal is to clearly identify those humanitarian services, which we -- as a service club -- could provide. We hope you will help us identify areas of need within our community for which we may offer assistance.

By completing the attached questionnaire, you will help us determine needs in certain areas of human concern. Please feel free, however, to comment on any community services need which you feel would benefit our community. We also encourage you to forward a copy of this survey to any other resource 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 contact you to discuss what we learned from the assessment and how we might work together. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to call me at (phone number). We would be happy to hear from you.

Sincerely,

(name of Lion)

(name of Lions club)

## ***Once a Community Need has been identified:***

Step 1: Create a committee to address the need.

Step 2: Brainstorm for possible solutions to the need.

Step 3: Select one (or more) solutions to solving the need.

Step 4: Plan a Lions Club project to solve the need.

Step 5: Advertise the project.

Step 6: Conduct the project.

Step 7: Report the project.

Past Project Examples:

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The members of the class are encouraged to share examples of their own past successes and failures with one another. Many of our best ideas in Lions are “stolen” – so please feel free to share your ideas with one another in this class.

