



Community Assessments in Rural Michigan

The Michigan Rural Council (MRC) is pleased to announce a community assessment process available to small and rural communities across the state of Michigan. This is a program that provides an affordable opportunity to assess a community's problems and challenges, identify assets and define issues to be addressed. Our hope is that the assessment will serve as a community's first step toward long-range planning.

The two goals of this project are to help small, rural communities to choose their own destinies and determine how to get there and to aid in the assessment or re-assessment of community assets in a changed economic landscape.

The community assessment process is intended to empower communities by giving them the tools to plan for the future in the manner of their choosing. The process is locally led from the beginning, and consists of multiple listening sessions in which everyone in the community has a chance to voice their opinion. The same three questions are asked at each listening session:

- 1) What are the major problems and challenges in your community?*
- 2) What are the major strengths and assets in your community?*
- 3) What projects would you like to see accomplished in your community in the next 2, 5, 10 and 20 years?*

Meetings should be scheduled with representatives from municipal departments, CDCs (Community Development Corporations) and/or local nonprofit organizations, community groups, business owners, chambers of commerce, DDA and/or Main Street Organizations, property owners and/or local private developers, community members of diverse demographic groups, and other community stakeholders and leaders. After the assessment is completed, each community will receive a detailed report including feedback from participants, short-term and long-term goals indicated, and resources and strategies for moving forward.

These assessments will be completed on a first come, first served basis. The only cost to communities is a nominal fee of \$250 to assist in offsetting travel costs for the facilitation team.

To be a part of this program, simply complete a brief community application (available on the Michigan Rural Council's website at www.michiganruralcouncil.org). The simple application is designed to give us enough background information to assemble the best resource team to conduct the assessments.

If your small, rural community is ready to take control of planning its future, apply today!

Questions? Contact the MRC at (517) 485-3588 or email Jessica AcMoody at acmoody@cedam.info