TOOL 1: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION WORKSHEET

Use the information gathered in your interviews and other background work to fill out the following questionnaire. Remember -- the description you write is for you to use, so don't hesitate to adapt or alter these questions to more aptly fit your community. This worksheet is adapted from the work of David Scheie.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name of the organization/community: _________________________________________

Date this form was completed: _______________________________________________

What are the geographical boundaries for this community? __________________________

Approximate size, in numbers, of this community's population: ________________________

Who is actively involved in this community or organization?

People who regularly attend meetings/events: ________________________________

People you consider to be "members": _____________________________________

How do you define a "member"?

People you consider to be "leaders": _______________________________________

How do you define a "leader"?

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION:

Fill out blanks using approximate percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Residents</th>
<th>Group Members</th>
<th>Group Leaders</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian-American</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>European-American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino/Latina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Adapted from the Community Toolbox, University of Kansas, http://ctb.ku.edu.
ISSUES, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES:

Describe the three most major areas of concern for this organization in the coming year. For each issue, list the primary goal and the strategy that is being used or will be used to approach it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Primary goal</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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TOOL 2: GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Once you have decided whom to interview, take a look at the following tips on conducting interviews.

- Dress accordingly -- you'll probably want to wear something much different for a cup of coffee with a homeowner than an interview with the president of the bank. Would a teenager be more comfortable if you wore jeans or a suit? Would a local politician be offended if you show up in shorts? Think carefully about this; how you dress and act can have a huge impact on what you hear.
- Take a few minutes to make small talk and make your interviewee comfortable. If you are doing the interview on your home turf (your office, for example), or even a neutral site, ask about his physical comfort. Offer him a drink; explain where the bathroom is. Showing you are concerned about their comfort can be the first step towards a trusting relationship.

1 Adapted from the Community Toolbox, University of Kansas, http://ctb.ku.edu.
Explain why you have asked for the interview. Be very clear with what will be done with the results of your interview -- is this just for your own personal reference, or could it going to end up in a formal report or the local newspaper? Give the interviewee a chance to ask any questions he or she might have about your presence.

Ask the individual for his or her definition of the community. Some people only see their community as a narrowly defined location; still others will view it in broader, more abstract terms. This might be a good time to pull out your unmarked map, let the interviewee point out key locations in the area, and give you his or her view on where the physical boundaries of the community lie.

Ask questions to follow up on any leads that come out of what the interviewee has said so far. Start directing the conversation a bit more, but base your questions on statements that the interviewee has made.

**Example: Possible interview questions**

- How long have you been a member of the community?
- How do you feel about the community?
- What do you feel are some of this community's strengths?
- What are some ways in which improvements in the community could be made?
- What makes you proud of your community?
- What can you tell me about the history of the community?
- What do you think lies in the future for this community?

Try asking things in different ways. If you're having difficulty getting the interviewee to understand any of your questions, you can use your own experience to illustrate situations you're concerned with. For example, "When my father was injured at work several years ago, our neighbors really helped my family out by bringing meals to us, driving my dad to his medical appointments when my mom had to work, that kind of thing. Do you think people in this community would do the same kind of thing for one another? Why or why not?"

Another technique you may want to use to get more information from the interviewee is to bring up hypothetical situations -- the "what if?" questions. For example, "What if a needle exchange program were started downtown to cut down on HIV infection? Do you think community leaders would support it or be opposed to it?" The interviewee will often respond with examples of how similar things have occurred in the neighborhood.

Let the interviewee end the interview. Once you've gathered all the information you need, ask the interviewee what he or she wants to know from you. The interviewee will feel

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validated by the opportunity to express his or her questions, and the questions may reveal more useful information to you.

- This is a good time for you to start getting to know people and building real relationships with them. Folks will generally be impressed that you care enough about the community to be doing all this research, so be sure to take the time to set aside your notepad or tape recorder and just talk a bit with your contacts.

- Thank the interviewee for his or her time. Following up with a short thank-you note isn't just good manners -- it helps your contacts remember who you are, and leaves them with a positive impression. That way, they're more willing to work with you in the future.

- Consider finding a local teammate for the entire process. Having someone to bounce ideas off of, especially someone who is intimately acquainted with the community, is very effective.

\[1 \text{ Adapted from the Community Toolbox, University of Kansas, http://ctb.ku.edu.}\]