

Community Asset Mapping Worksheet

We practice engaged journalism in order to better serve our communities as a public service. To do that, we need to have a clear picture of the information landscape we are in or will be working within. Community asset mapping is a tool borrowed from community organizers and service providers that has proven incredibly useful for journalists beginning to engage and report in new communities.

The process is practiced as an ongoing cycle and revisited as your understanding of a community and its resources grows. Asset mapping is also a great way to help a new reporter get to know a new place or beat, or to help a newsroom identify what information a community needs.

Assessing information needs:

What media is already in the space?



Community Asset Mapping (continued)

What information needs are being met well?

What information seems to be missing?

How are people finding information?

Community Asset Mapping (continued)

Understanding a beat or community:

1. Who holds traditional power and/or influence in this space?

- Government officials, university professors, topic experts, organizational leadership, etc.

2. Whose voices are missing from this space?

- Age, race, gender, socioeconomic, education level, employees vs. management, activists vs 'regular people', etc.

3. Where do people gather around this topic or in this community?

- In person
 - Community centers, educational institutions, local businesses, government, informal spaces
- Online
 - Social media, organizational or government websites, message boards, newsletters



Community Asset Mapping (continued)

What are people talking about?

Who else is covering this beat or community?

Review some case studies on how community [mapping has helped newsrooms](#).

There are robust tools available to guide you through the traditional asset mapping process — we recommend [edraw's step-by-step outline](#).

For a thorough guide on assessing your local news ecosystem and information needs, we also recommend the [Democracy Fund's step-by-step toolkit](#).

