

Prepare

1. Agree on the value and purpose of the information that you will collect
2. Determine when you want to use this data
3. Determine exactly what you want to know
4. Determine who will find the information
5. Identify possible sources of information
6. Set limits as to how much information you want to collect

Collect

7. Collect the data
8. Identify gaps in your knowledge
9. Redo the process to try to fill those gaps -- or collect your own data
10. If possible, you might want to compare data for your community with that of other communities, or that of the nation as a whole or to trend out your own community's data over time.

5. Review data and analyze

Analyzing information involves examining it in ways that reveal the relationships, patterns, trends, etc. that can be found within it. It's helpful to have analysis from those with expertise in statistical analysis on hand as well as those with expertise in the characteristics of the local community.

6. Formalize findings

Produce reports with the information specific populations need. For example, you might develop an executive summary for community-wide release as well as a report that provides detailed data for a specific organization.

7. Share results

Sharing what you've learned with the community and partners involved in the project shows transparency in your motives and engagement with everyone involved. ECS has a [Community Assessment Communication Plan](#) template to help you plan who and how you will share your results.

8. Partners use findings for planning

Now that the community can see where it has strengths and challenges, coalitions and partners can conduct problem analysis, develop logic models, draft action plans, and think about long-term sustainability.

