



#### **Mission**

We believe the voluntary sector holds the key to improving life in our communities and around the world.

By providing tools to help organizations create more impact in their communities, Help 4 NonProfits aims to benefit the world for both today's and tomorrow's generations.

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## **Brainstorm Questions: Assets and Resources for Building a Better Future**

As we head out to make our communities better places to live, what assets and resources do we already have to build upon? We get so used to thinking about what our organizations and our communities do NOT have - what they need. It is important, as we begin the work of building the future of our communities, to acknowledge the strengths - the assets and resources - that both our communities and our organizations have, upon which we will be building that future.

For each of the following, list the assets / resources your organization has, your community has, individuals working on the issues have - assets that can be built upon as we work to build a better future. You do not have to own the asset / resource - you may simply have access to it (for example, owning a building, vs. leasing it - it's still a space that you can use!). If it can be used as a stepping stone to the future we want to create, it is applicable.

There are no right or wrong answers. It doesn't matter if you can't think of how you might use a particular asset or resource - it matters that we list what we've got to work with. Someone else may just look at the asset you wondered about, and think of the perfect way to leverage that resource in an innovative way. When it comes to listing these assets and resources, the watchword should be, "When in doubt, include it."

*NOTE: The following questions are not meant as a test or a quiz where points would be docked for failing to answer each one. They are intended as brainstorming questions, to encourage you to think of all the things your organization and your community have to build upon.*



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## Organizational Assets and Resources

### **Physical Resources**

- What facilities do we have, or have access to?
- What equipment do we have, or have access to?
- What open spaces do we have, or have access to (parking lot, unbuilt dirt lot, agricultural field, etc.)?

### **Human Resources**

#### **Board:**

- What talents / skills / expertise do our board members have?
  - What talents / skills / expertise do our board members have access to, through people they know?
  - Skills might include marketing / other communications skills, technology skills, trades / professional skills, skills related to your mission, and others.
- What relationships / connections do our board members have?
  - What relationships / connections do our board members have access to, through people they know?
- What financial resources do our board members have / have access to?
- What skills / connections / resources have you been surprised to learn a particular board member has?

#### **Staff:**

- What talents / skills / expertise do members of our staff have?
  - What talents / skills / expertise do members of our staff have, through people they know?
  - Skills might include marketing / other communications skills, technology skills, trades / professional skills, skills related to your mission, and others.
- What relationships / connections do members of our staff have?
  - What relationships / connections do members of our staff have access to, through people they know?
- What financial resources do members of our staff have / have access to?
- What skills / connections / resources have you been surprised to learn a particular employee has?

#### **Volunteers:**

- What talents / skills / expertise do our volunteers have?
  - What talents / skills / expertise do our volunteers have, through people they know?
  - Skills might include marketing / other communications skills, technology skills, trades / professional skills, skills related to your mission, and others.
- What relationships / connections do our volunteers have?
  - What relationships / connections do our volunteers have access to, through people they know?
- What financial resources do our volunteers have / have access to?
- What skills / connections / resources have you been surprised to learn a particular volunteer has?

### **Human Resources (continued)**

#### **Donors / Other Supporters:**

- What talents / skills / expertise do our donors / other supporters have?
  - What talents / skills / expertise do donors / other supporters have, through people they know?
  - Skills might include marketing / other communications skills, technology skills, trades / professional skills, skills related to your mission, and others.
- What relationships / connections do our donors / other supporters have?
  - What relationships / connections do our donors / other supporters have access to, through people they know?
- What financial resources do our donors / other supporters have / have access to?
- What skills / connections / resources have you been surprised to learn a particular supporter has?

#### **Clients / Patrons / Program Participants / Customers:**

- What talents / skills / expertise do our clients / patrons / program participants / customers have?
  - What talents / skills / expertise do clients / patrons / program participants / customers have, through people they know?
  - Skills might include marketing / other communications skills, technology skills, trades / professional skills, skills related to your mission, and others.
- What relationships / connections do our clients / patrons / program participants / customers have?
  - What relationships / connections do our clients / patrons / program participants / customers have access to, through people they know?
- What financial resources do our clients / patrons / program participants / customers have / have access to?

### **Mission-Related Resources**

- What program-related resources do we have that have not been addressed in the items above - perhaps the operational flow of our program, the work we actually do in our programs, the research that goes into those programs, the relationships those programs build, etc.?
- What assets / resources do we have that relate to the issues we address? To our advocacy work? To our public awareness / public education work? Is there knowledge we have acquired, upon which we can build? Stories we can tell?

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## Community Assets and Resources

### ***Policy / Civic Engagement Infrastructure***

As we address the issues of importance to our organization's mission, what assets / resources does our community as a whole have related to how policy is made and how the community is governed?

- Do we have relationships with policy-makers and decision-makers?
- Are there particular policy-makers who are assets in and of themselves?
- Is the system in our community (or parts of that system) open to change?
- Are there ongoing efforts already in existence to create positive change?
  - Are these through institutions / organizations with whom we could partner or otherwise build upon as we do our work?
    - Nonprofit organizations?
    - Congregations?
    - Unions?
    - Chambers of Commerce?
    - Service clubs?
    - Advocacy organizations?
    - Neighborhood associations?
  - Are there specific individuals who are doing this work, with whom we might partner or otherwise build upon their work?
- Is there a history or tradition that can be built upon to create the change we are seeking? Is there a culture of civic engagement?
- Is the news media in our community relatively accessible? Are there specific media people with whom we already have relationships?

### ***Financial Infrastructure***

As we address the issues of importance to our organization's mission, what financial assets / resources does our community as a whole have?

- Are there financial institutions, foundations, large corporations, others large organizations with financial wherewithal in the community?
- Are there community-based financial organizations such as credit unions, who could assist with access to capital?
- Are there individuals in the community with access to capital?
- Are there well-established small business owners, with relationships that might be leveraged for access to capital? (A small business with a relationship with the local bank, for example.)

### ***Physical Infrastructure***

As we address the issues of importance to our organization's mission, are there ways the community's physical infrastructure can help further our cause?

- Are there facilities that might be helpful assets / resources to build upon as we do our work?
  - Hospitals?
  - Government facilities (meeting rooms, libraries, conference centers, etc.)?
  - Schools (public / private / university / K-12 / preschool / trade)?
  - Places of worship?
  - Museums?
  - Hotels? Restaurants?



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**Physical Infrastructure (Continued)**

- Is there equipment we can build on as we do our work?
  - Technology (High speed internet access, video conferencing capability, telemedicine infrastructure)?
  - Vehicles (trucks, busses, planes)?
  - Mechanical equipment (packaging equipment, other industry-specific equipment)?
- Are there open spaces that might be helpful assets / resources to build upon as we do our work?
  - Parks / trails?
  - Amphitheaters, open air gathering places?

**Community Residents Themselves as Assets!**

As we address the issues of importance to our organization's mission, in what ways are the community's residents themselves an asset?

- Do community members have professional skills or trades skills that can help us further our work?
- Are there particular groups of community members who have time to assist us?
- Is there a culture of volunteering? Is there a culture of community engagement?
- Is there a core of people already interested in the issues behind our mission?
- Are there people in the community who are connected to others doing similar work - elsewhere, or locally?