



Resources for Needs Assessment

Types of Needs or Gaps

When conducting a Needs Assessment, it is important to consider all types of needs related to your program. For example, it may be obvious that students need academic support in math measurement, but you may also need to consider materials, such as protractors or graph paper.

Need areas related to your program may include **student support** in academic performance, health or talents; **facilities** or special **venues**, such as a theater or an outdoor play area; **materials**, such as general supplies or special technology tools like pedometers; and **staffing**, such as teachers in a certain field, professionals, or law enforcement.

Types of Assets

As you work through this process, you will also want to take note of useful assets that may either fill an existing need or complement your program in ways you may not have thought of yet. Be on the lookout for all types of campus and community assets that can later be mapped to your needs. In the mapping process, these 'matches' may form the basis of your program development *strategies*.

Individuals, such as a local librarian, park ranger, city official, and also your local campus teachers can be considered assets to meet your needs. Local **organizations or associations** can be a great resource for engaging programming, financial sponsorship, or sharing materials. **Environmental resources**, often overlooked, can be valuable for outdoor activities, such as water sampling a local stream, or collecting plants from a nearby park for identification. Also, consider any pertinent **relationships or networks** that could be called upon for support or funding, such as philanthropists or 'movers and shakers' that are interested in your work.

Information Gathering Techniques

There are many different sources of information for your needs and asset inventory, and also many information gathering methods. While this often is dependent on your time and resources available, it is important to be thorough and deliberate about choosing appropriate collection methods.

First, you may want to begin with what is currently available such as **existing plans or reports** produced by the campus or district, which define specific goals and objectives for meeting student needs.

Existing information and datasets provided by local, state, and national government agencies as well as private institutions are often available online and provide historical or current snapshots of the population in demographic, academic, financial or other various contexts.

New information and data can be collected using survey instruments, interviewing key stakeholders, observations, or group forums. Surveys, for example, are fairly quick and easy and can provide a large amount of information that may be quickly aggregated to determine the most prominent need areas and assets available.

Types of Information Sources

Existing Plans or Reports

District Goals and Plans: This would include understanding the District's vision and mission as well as a review of the District Improvement Plan and the District Strategic Plan. Consider what District goals or objectives could be addressed through a Texas ACE program.

Campus Improvement Plans (CIP): As a campus reviews their data from AEIS, discipline, attendance, teacher performance, family engagement, and campus environment, they are required to write a plan to address the areas that need to be improved. These plans include specific objectives and strategies that will be employed to bring the campus to the next level. Your ACE program is required to be directly aligned with the CIP and address the areas where the program can help the campus reach their objectives.

Existing Information and Datasets

Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR): This report can be downloaded from the TEA website at <http://tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/index.html>. The TAPR reports provide a great deal of performance information about a public school and district in the state. These reports provide extensive profile information about students, staff, and programs. This report will help inform grantees about which academic areas in a campus or a District needs additional support. It will also break down the sub-groups of the student population which are most at risk of falling behind.

Student Discipline, Promotion, and Attendance Data: This data can be obtained through a District's PEIMS department, from the Campus Principal, Counselor, or Attendance Officer. Additionally, you can access TEA's Discipline Data Reports at [https://tea.texas.gov/Reports and Data/Student Data/Discipline Data Products/Discipline Data Products Overview/](https://tea.texas.gov/Reports_and_Data/Student_Data/Discipline_Data_Products/Discipline_Data_Products_Overview/) to compare discipline rates by district, region and state. These reports can be a resource to narrow down what issues may be affecting your district. TEA's required objectives include these three areas and thus it will be important that you analyze this data and develop a plan to improve the percentages at each of your centers.

Government Statistics and Datasets: U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics; Local law enforcement agencies; Texas Workforce Centers; Juvenile Justice and Texas Youth Commission programs are additional resources for you to consider (i.e., criminal referrals, migration stats, socio-economic stats).

New Information / Data

Family Needs: Family member's perspectives can provide critical information to help you define program goals. Grantees can conduct surveys with families to determine their need for afterschool care, their need for transportation for the child afterschool, their own educational needs (GED/ESL), and to gauge their current engagement. Perspectives can also be gathered in open forums or group meetings.

Campus Staff and Student Interests: Grantees who give their students a voice in programming are reporting higher attendance and greater satisfaction. There are several means of getting students' opinions: focus groups (pull together a group of 20 diverse students and facilitate a conversation regarding potential activities), surveys (creating a list of options to which students respond by checking), or by giving them an interest inventory (simple list of activities based on interest) by which they can consider many different options in different categories to voice what they want in their program.

ACE Program Evaluations: An important resource for all experienced ACE programs is feedback and reviews of programs from the previous year(s). Looking back, you may find activities that were needed, but not delivered, certain unmet objectives that should be covered, or new assets among the campus or community that can enhance the upcoming program year.