

# Upward Development - Head Start Community Needs Assessments

## Our approach

Our goal is to design an inclusive process that meets the needs of each Head Start program and paints a clear, comprehensive picture of communities served. The discussion itself is valuable, and we strive to create community assessment reports that are easily understood by a wide variety of stakeholders. Our reports are data-driven, and we offer context and analysis for the numbers to create highly useful, relevant program planning tools. We can complete five-year reports or annual updates, depending on your needs. We are familiar with the different needs of urban, suburban, and rural communities.



## Steps in our process

### With Head Start leadership staff

- ✓ Define the service area and outline the scope of the demographic study.
- ✓ Determine additional sources of information we will use (*any or all of the following*):
  - Staff surveys (recent surveys and/or a survey designed for this project)
  - Community partner interviews
  - Parent surveys (recently completed)
  - Recent Policy Council input on community needs
- ✓ Create an opportunity for a small group (3-6 people) to review a draft report and provide feedback.
- ✓ Meet periodically throughout the process (3-4 times) to get updates and ask clarifying questions
  - We often do these check-ins via Zoom, with at least one visit in-person during the process
  - *We are still masking in person, and appreciate the same of clients.*

### Andi and Upward Development

- ✓ Review program materials to understand funded slots, program options, children and families served.
  - *We will provide a complete list of materials required.*
- ✓ Conduct research into demographics and the service area using approximately 60 external sources.
  - Federal, state, and local data; as current as possible.
- ✓ Contact regional and state partners as needed when custom data sets are required.
- ✓ Engage consultant partners for additional insight and expertise.
- ✓ Look at the surrounding community holistically, recognizing the intersection of factors that affect children and families who may be eligible for Head Start.
  - This includes equity considerations and a review of historically underserved groups.
- ✓ Share survey responses with Head Start staff (when we administer surveys)
- ✓ Develop a community needs assessment report that includes:
  - Information neatly organized by topic area, with an executive summary
  - Tables, charts, and infographics to convey data
  - Written summaries providing analysis and context for the data we discover
  - A program summary, plus a demographic profile of the children and families served
  - Appendices with more detailed information and resources.
- ✓ Deliver the final report to Head Start leadership, preferably with some or all Policy Council.
- ✓ Answer clarification questions as needed once leaders have an opportunity to fully review the report.
- ✓ Make minor corrections as needed to ensure accuracy and completeness in the final CNA report.
  - The final report will meet or exceed Head Start Program Performance Standards

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## Head Start Program Performance Standards – Community Needs Assessment Requirements

The community assessment must use data that describes community strengths, needs, and resources and include, at a minimum:

- (i) The number of eligible infants, toddlers, preschool age children, and expectant mothers, including their geographic location, race, ethnicity, and languages they speak, including:
  - (A) Children experiencing homelessness in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento Local Education Agency Liaisons (42 U.S.C. 11432 (6)(A));
  - (B) Children in foster care; and
  - (C) Children with disabilities, including types of disabilities and relevant services and resources provided to these children by community agencies;
- (ii) The education, health, nutrition and social service needs of eligible children and their families, including prevalent social or economic factors that impact their well-being;
- (iii) Typical work, school, and training schedules of parents with eligible children;
- (iv) Other child development, child care centers, and family child care programs that serve eligible children, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschools, and the approximate number of eligible children served;
- (v) Resources that are available in the community to address the needs of eligible children and their families;
- (vi) Strengths of the community.

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### Questions? Ready to discuss your project?

Please contact Andi Kemp, Principal Consultant

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Pronouns: they/them

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*Why are pronouns important? Learn more* → <https://genderspectrum.org/>



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STRONGER ORGANIZATIONS. MORE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.