

Pet Support Services

Surveying Community Needs and Values

What Is the Purpose of a Community Survey?

To develop pet support services that meet the needs of your community, welfare organizations should have a thorough understanding of what those needs actually are. The best way to do so is by communicating directly with the source. [Surveying the people in your specific community](#) helps identify existing social services and identify specific gaps that your organization can potentially fill. Providing an opportunity for the individuals of your community to make their needs heard not only encourages trust in your organization, but can direct the development of future programs, make the case for additional funding, and garner support from policymakers by utilizing the survey data gathered.

Community surveys can cost money to facilitate, but if your organization does not currently have the funds to support a large-scale community survey effort, there are secondary options. However, smaller-scale, alternative options may not always yield holistic results, especially without targeted outreach to areas you do not regularly interact with. Still, they can be beneficial to collect preliminary community feedback.

Smaller-scale options can include:

- **Online form:** Creation of an online-based form such as [Google Forms](#), [Jotform](#), or a form integrated into your organization's existing CRM such as [HubSpot](#). This form should be embedded into your organization's website, or shared through a direct link in recurring outreach to connect with the widest audience possible. In addition to survey questions, the form should include instructions, purpose, and relevant deadlines. Results should be evaluated by organizational leadership and relevant teams for strategic planning.
- **In-person or virtual community meetings:** [Community meetings](#) may be hosted virtually or in-person and should have a facilitator or moderator to establish rules or expectations and maintain meeting flow. Sharing a list of questions in advance with potential attendees may also help with meeting structure and preparedness.
 - When hosting in-person community meetings, consider varying event locations between your organization, and local community hubs such as city hall, public libraries, or community event spaces across your service area to expand public reach.

Defining Your Service Area and Creating Assessment Questions

The following resources can help define the geographic boundaries of your service area, identify primary objectives and the types of data you hope to collect, create assessment questions, and more.

- [Create the Assessment National Recreation and Park Association](#)
- [Conducting Needs Assessment Surveys - Community Tool Box](#)
- [Needs Assessment - U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Community Needs Assessment: The Resources and Examples Your Organization Needs - Galaxy Digital](#)

Collaboration with Municipalities

Some municipalities may already be planning on administering, or have previously completed, community evaluations or surveys. Consider collaborating with municipalities to be included in any existing initiatives, specifically within an animal services section. If any animal services questions are already in place, consider if they align with services currently offered. If you are not a municipal animal services organization, begin building connections with your local municipal shelter and city representatives to advocate for the adjustment or addition of survey questions to best support your collective animal services efforts.

Not sure where to start building relationships with local officials? [See the HASS government communications guide here.](#)