

Community Assessment of Programming for Youth Index

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX

<http://www.communitydevelopment.uiuc.edu/capy/>



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in collaboration with

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Communities are faced with many challenges as they work to foster and retain young people and help them be productive workers and responsible citizens in the community. Although many prevention programs target youth-at-risk behavior, it is difficult to estimate their impact in the community when often youth programs are evaluated separately from other programming initiatives. University of Illinois Extension Task Force related to youth programs developed the Community Assessment of Programming for Youth (CAPY) Index evaluation protocol that communities can use to evaluate how well they address needs of local youth.

What is the Community Assessment of Programming for Youth (CAPY) Index?

In any community the investment made towards building programs that provide meaningful activities and services for youth most definitely enrich local quality of life. Many communities struggle with finding the resources necessary to fund and staff quality youth programs. A prerequisite for planning community wide youth programs and accessing resources for creating new programs or enhancing existing ones needs to be an assessment of current programming. An inventory and evaluation of current youth programming can be challenging and is often left out of the planning process. University of Illinois Extension has developed a straightforward evaluation and benchmarking instrument to assess the state of programs existing in rural communities. The Community Assessment of Programming for Youth (CAPY) Index provides an information framework from which community leaders can assess the quality and breadth of available programming and thereby make better decisions on how to invest in youth programming initiatives.

The CAPY Index is a diagnostic and evaluation tool designed to provide decision-makers with greater insight on how to best allocate investments for new and existing youth programs. Completing the CAPY Index survey provides the community with an assessment of existing programs. Using the tool for evaluation the community can identify areas to target new investment whether it is to improve existing programs or to develop new programs for which there is need. The organized framework of the CAPY Index allows community planners to present a comprehensive document outlining resources when working with grant agencies to document current and future need for youth services.

The CAPY Index not only enumerates the breadth and quantity of community youth programs, the Index focuses on various community assets including those related

to the local social, physical and economic infrastructure. Questions documenting the social infrastructure within the CAPY Index focus on how well a community supports collaboration and networking to meet local goals for youth programming. The social assets questions in the survey also provide insight to perception related to quality of life. The questions related to measuring the physical community assets focus on how well the physical environment supports the existing and the potential development of future youth programs. And finally, the economic community assets measured in the CAPY Index explore how the community assigns financial resources to support youth programs. Because the CAPY Index is comprised of such a variety of questions, it is difficult for a single member of a community to answer all the questions included in the survey. Therefore, it is important to elicit input from a diverse group of community leaders and have a committee representing diverse community stakeholders to direct this activity.

The CAPY Index as a Benchmarking Tool

The objective of the CAPY Index is to provide communities with an evaluation strategy empowering them to evaluate their local initiatives without the need for hiring an external consultant. The Index allows communities to have evaluation materials ready to meet their local needs as they work to improve programming, apply for new funding or report on local progress in this area. This self-assessment evaluation and benchmarking tool measures programmatic outcomes along a spectrum ranging from low level of community programming to a well established offering of programs.

The CAPY surveys calculate a score or index value based on how a community evaluates its available youth programs. The score generated by the CAPY Index is unique to each community completing the survey. Although, it may not truly be a good surrogate for the state of youth programs in the community; however, looking at the index over time allows the community to measure change and progress toward community-driven youth programming goals. In this capacity, the CAPY Index becomes an effective benchmarking tool. The calculator for the CAPY Index generates an instant score that can be used as a baseline or benchmark of community programs for youth. The CAPY Index can be completed now to create a baseline measure of your community's level of youth infrastructure. Use this tool again in six months, in one year and in two years to measure progress toward meeting your local community goals.

How Should A Community Use the CAPY Index?

Use a projection unit and computer and login to the CAPY Index and project the survey on a screen. Your committee can go through the questionnaire and shout-out answers to the survey. One person serves as a recorder checking responses to the questionnaire online. This process would be enhanced if a facilitator managed the activity. The facilitator will make certain that there is full participation enabling group decision-making. The facilitator will bring the group to consensus as they answer each of the questions.

or

Print copies of the CAPY survey and ask each member of the committee to answer as many questions as they can. Then, at a group meeting the committee can come to consensus as they complete the questionnaire as a group.

Logging on to the CAPY Index

To login, go to <http://www.communitydevelopment.uiuc.edu/CAPY>. Enter with an easy to remember User ID. Your privacy will be protected, University of Illinois Extension does not release the data collected to any third party. Each time you access the site, use the same ID and the information you inputted earlier will be stored and displayed. If this is your first time at the site, you will be asked to create a unique login. On the first page identify the name of your community and estimate the size of the population. Then click on "Now Start the Questionnaire". Respond to the survey question and at the bottom of the page calculate your score and go to the next step. Repeat the process for questions 25-27, and then go to the next step. Complete question 28 then calculate your score and enter "Submit and Evaluate Your Score".

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