



THE COMMUNITY SURVEY: A TOOL FOR PARTICIPATION AND FACT-FINDING

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Surveys bring decision-oriented information into the public policy-making process. Surveys also provide an excellent way of checking the pulse of the community and getting specific and current information from a cross-section of residents in a timely manner. This circular addresses the need for information on designing and implementing surveys at the community level and from the perspective of the community.

How you plan to use the information gathered should inform the decisions you make in designing, conducting, and analyzing the survey, as well as presenting its findings. Some possible objectives of your survey might be to inform local policymakers, provide community education on certain issues or programs, or enhance citizen participation in the policy-making process by:

- ◆ gathering information on residents' attitudes and opinions
 - ◆ measuring behaviors and population characteristics
 - ◆ soliciting community reactions to policy proposals or solutions
 - ◆ having residents assess the effectiveness of programs, facilities, and services
 - ◆ informing people about new or planned public services
 - ◆ making residents more aware of community problems and their effects
 - ◆ providing residents access to the public policy-making process
- providing an opportunity for communities to influence public decisions