

# 2020

## COLORADO COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS



A GUIDEBOOK FOR



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>ADKAR</b>	A framework for lasting change:  Awareness of the need for change Desire to support change Knowledge of how to change Ability to demonstrate skills & behaviors Reinforcement to make the change stick
<b>AES</b>	Agricultural Experiment Station
<b>CCI</b>	Civic Capacity Index
<b>CNA</b>	Community needs assessment
<b>CPP</b>	County Program Plan
<b>CSFS</b>	Colorado State Forest Service
<b>CSUE</b>	Colorado State University Extension
<b>EFNEP</b>	Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program
<b>FLTI</b>	Family Leadership Training Institute
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>OEE</b>	Office and Engagement & Extension
<b>PRU</b>	Planning & Reporting Unit
<b>RACI Diagram</b>	Diagram showing who is: Responsible   <b>A</b> ccountable   <b>C</b> onsulted   <b>I</b> nformed

## Introduction

The mission of Colorado State University Extension is to empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources. We have developed an understanding of community issues because of our long history in the state and because our agents live in the communities they serve.

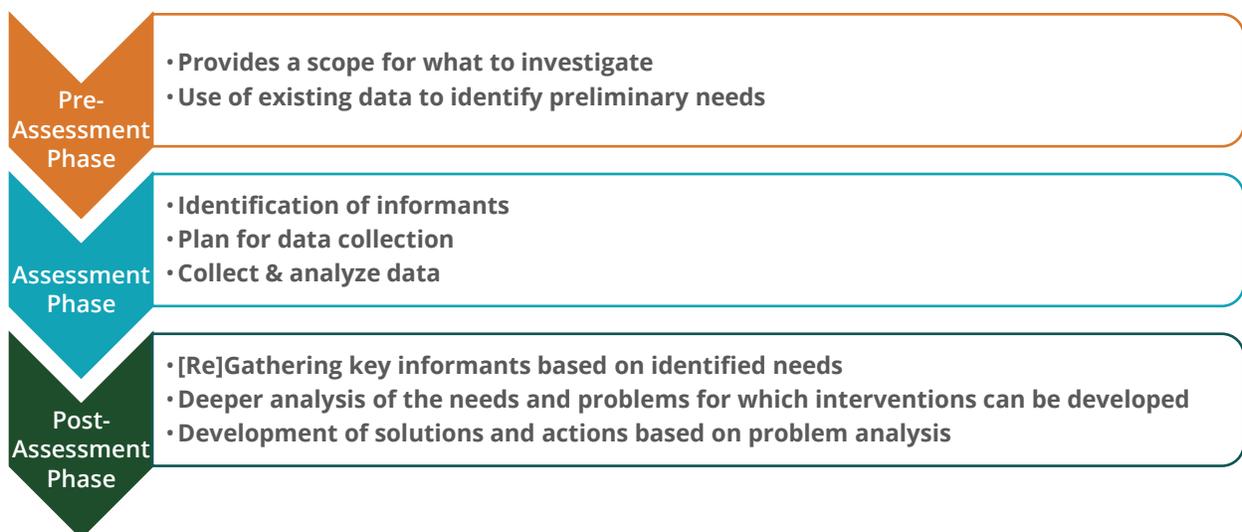


Illustration by Brian Breneman

**At the same time, changing demographics, evolving technologies, information overload, and a growing distrust of science has led us to reflect: How can CSUE maximize our impact at this time and into the future?**

A needs assessment is a process of understanding needs and how to meet them (Donaldson & Franck, 2016). For CSUE, periodic formal needs assessments can complement the less intensive and more informal ways in which needs are regularly identified. Formal needs assessments support our core values of being inclusive and science-based. They can help us identify and engage with new community members and partners, raise awareness of our work, provide evidence of the importance of existing programs, understand barriers to our programs, and discover new opportunities for impact. Using the results of needs assessments to develop new educational resources and partnerships can reinvigorate our daily work and ensure our relevancy at a time of great uncertainty.

### A careful and meaningful needs assessment includes:



What follows is detailed guidance on the particular community needs assessment (CNA) process for CSUE. This process is based on the experience and guidance from the following:

- Larimer County Extension’s CNA from 2019-2020
- Input from a wide ranging steering committee including county Extension directors, staff of CSU’s Office of Engagement & Extension, CSU faculty, and others;
- Key references such as the 2016 University of Tennessee Extension’s Needs Assessment Guidebook for Extension Professionals.

Introducing CNAs to CSUE statewide is part of the vision of Vice President for Engagement & Extension and is also part of CSUE’s Blueprint for Diversity and Inclusion. Our CNA process outlines a number of ways to be intentionally inclusive of both traditional and non-traditional community members.

The specific goal of the CNAs is to inform CSU’s Office of Engagement & Extension (OEE) and the CSU strategic transformation plan with opportunities to maximize impact based on assessed needs of diverse Coloradans.

CNAs have four objectives in order to achieve this goal:

1. Identify local, regional, and statewide issues for which OEE and CSU resources can have the greatest impact
2. Understand barriers and opportunities for engagement, especially for populations that are underrepresented in current programming
3. Support planning efforts based on assessment results
4. Build capacity in CSUE staff for conducting needs assessments and planning programs

While County Extension offices will lead CNA efforts on behalf of OEE, it is critical that other OEE units get value out of the data and that opportunities for collaboration between OEE units are identified and nurtured.





# **COLORADO COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS**

## **Process Overview & Timeline**

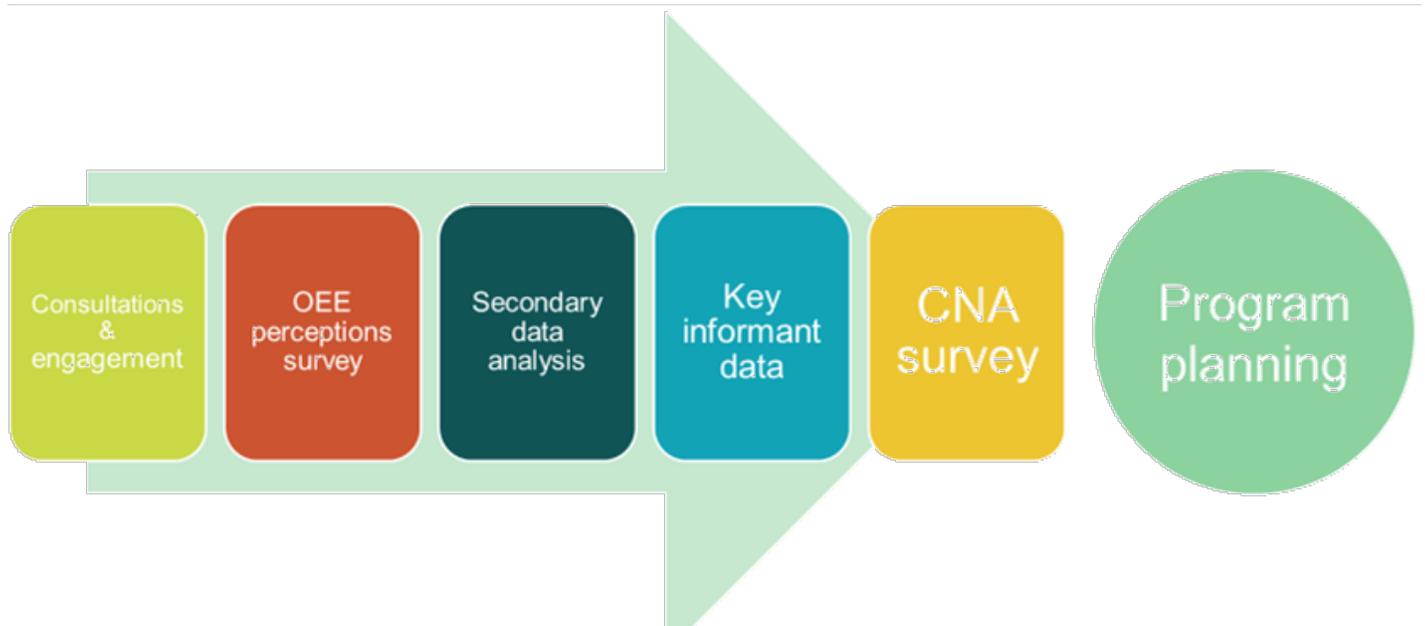
# Community Needs Assessment Process Overview & Timeline

An overview of the process, a timeline for key deliverables, and roles of county offices in CNAs is shown below.

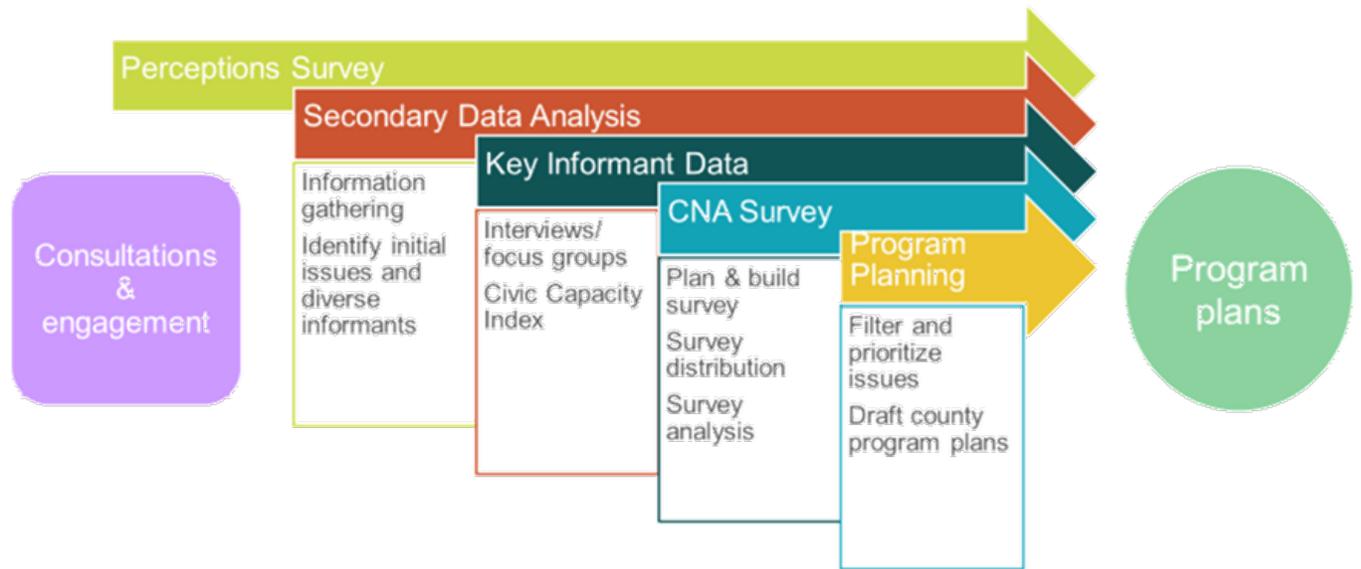
Detailed information about each step of the mixed-method CNA process is contained in the “Steps” section of this guidebook.

To achieve our goals, county Extension offices will be widely supported with the skills and resources needed to execute these steps. County offices will also have the flexibility to tailor CNAs to their specific communities.

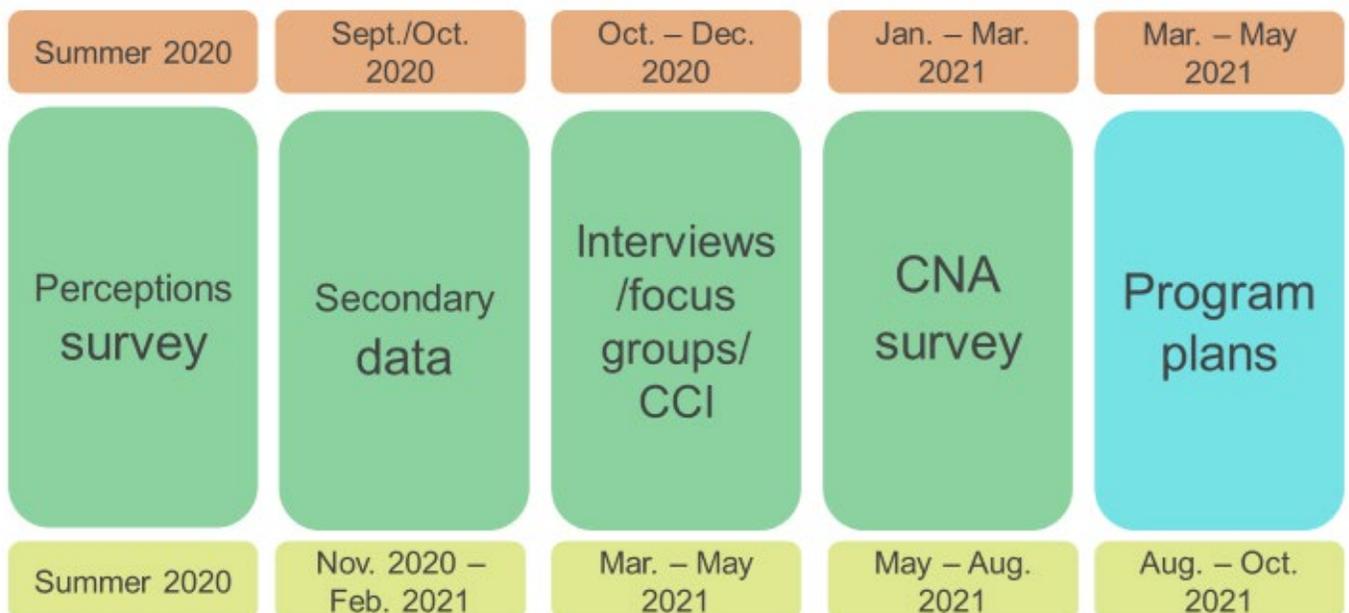
## CSUE Community Needs Assessment



## Detailed Overview of the CNA Process



## Pilot and Statewide Timelines



In summer 2020 all county Extension offices will disseminate a baseline survey to existing contacts about perceptions of OEE, including familiarity with off-campus OEE services, the unique values we add, ways we can enhance our services, and barriers to access. This data will inform both OEE and CSU's Office of the President. Next, county demographic and economic profiles will be provided to county CSUE offices to start the process of utilizing secondary data for the CNA. Training will be provided to support county agents in identifying and analyzing other secondary data sources related to community needs. County profiles and secondary data will also be used to identify key informants to interview during the next stage of the CNA.

Because diversity and inclusivity are critical components of these CNAs, identification of key informants is a significant piece of the CNA process that must reflect both traditional and non-traditional Extension stakeholders. Use of a Community Engagement Resource chart to identify ways to engage populations that have been historically underrepresented in OEE programming will be facilitated by the Front Range Diversity and Inclusion Specialist and others. Key informant interviews and/or focus groups will serve to establish new relationships, reinforce existing relationships, provide us with another key data point for the CNAs, help us identify issues to be included in eventual electronic surveys, and set a foundation for dissemination of those surveys utilizing informant networks.

Electronic CNA surveys (Qualtrics) will be constructed that reflect needs identified through perception surveys, secondary data collection, and key informant interviews/focus groups. Counties will be able to select issues to include on their surveys based on the "reasonable potential capacity" of an office. For example, a single agent county may choose to ask about a smaller range of needs, knowing that resources will be a constraint. Counties with Regional Engagement Centers, on the other hand, may ask about issues that are not asked about in other counties. That said, if an issue is chosen for inclusion into a survey, it will be asked about using the same language in all counties to allow for data aggregation.

Once the electronic surveys are built and a distribution plan involving both CSUE and informant networks has been detailed, they will be disseminated as widely as possible. A standard survey question will allow us to analyze data from existing OEE learners separate from potentially new learners. Surveys will be analyzed as our final key data point in the CNA process. Data will be summarized by demographics as needed to highlight different areas of impact for different groups.

Counties will then be guided through a process of combining information from the key data points of the perception survey, secondary data, key informant interviews, and the electronic CNA survey in a way that highlights critical areas for potential impact as well as divergent data. With involvement of county office staff and other stakeholders, this will result in the creation of County Program Plans (CPPs) for implementation of results.



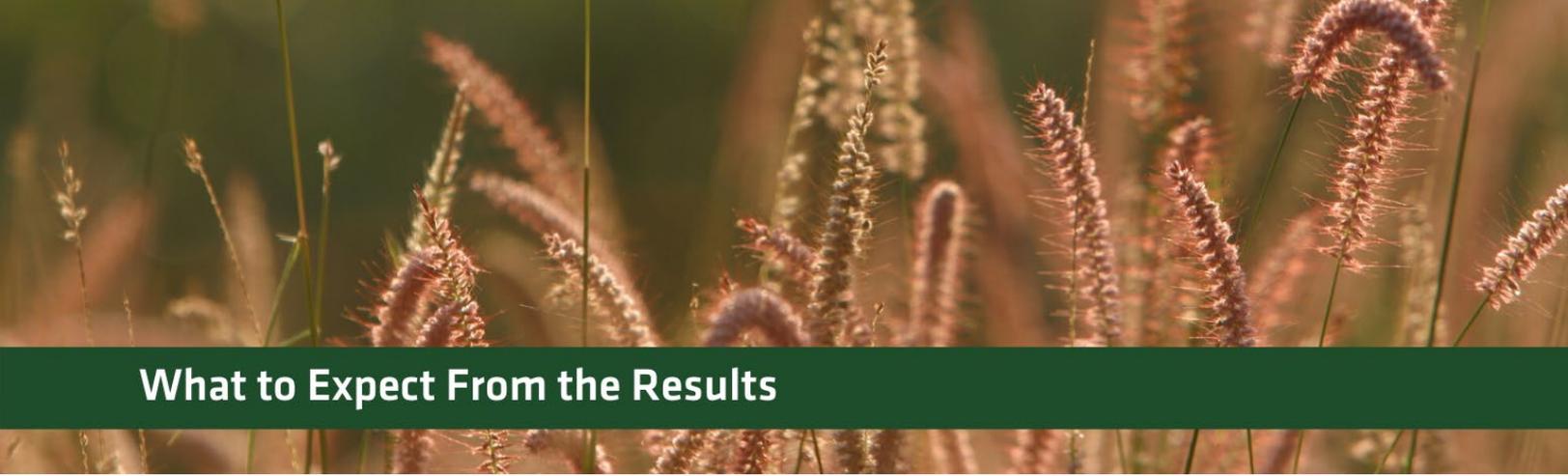
## Roles & Responsibilities

Note that a pilot cohort of counties will continue with the CNA process immediately following the perceptions survey, whereas the remaining statewide CNA process will rollout on a longer timescale. All CNAs and associated County Program Plans will be completed by the fall of 2021.

We envision that Extension Areas would conduct CNAs together. Non-pilot counties would have an opportunity to partner with other adjacent counties to conduct CNAs even if they are not part of an area. This will allow for efficiencies and ensure that there are sufficient resources to complete each piece of the CNA. In this arrangement, a “lead” county could conduct key informant interviews on behalf of partner counties. A RACI diagram illustrating who is **Responsible**, **Accountable**, **Consulted**, and **Informed** for each major CNA task is included below for reference (Montgomery, 2019).

	Distribute perceptions survey	Collect & analyze secondary data	Conduct key informant interviews/ focus groups	Distribute Civic Capacity Index to key informants	Build electronic CNA survey	Filter and analyze all data	Write a County Program Plan
Lead county/single point-of-contact	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Partner county	R	R	C	C	C	R	R
County/Area Directors	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
CSUE AD of Program Support & consultant	C	C	C	C	R	C	C
AES, Engagement Centers, other CSU units	I	C	C	I	C	C	C
Community partners	I	C	I	I	I	C	C

Note that although County/Area Directors are ultimately accountable for the CNAs, they may choose to ask a staff member to lead the implementation of the CNA (the County single point-of-contact).



## What to Expect From the Results

While a process for using all data collected over the course of the CNA to create CPPs is described in the final step of the CNA process, this section provides a general overview of what to expect out of the assessment. Between the perceptions survey, secondary data, key informant data, and the CNA survey, OEE will have a lot of useful information about important issues, barriers to Extension programming, and opportunities for impact. This information can be used to guide individual county Extension staff, county CSUE offices, PRUs and other program teams, and other units of OEE. Expect that CNAs will help you identify big buckets of priority issues in your community such as “health and well-being” as well as smaller buckets of priority issues such as “nutrition”, “mental health”, and “substance abuse”. In some cases, qualitative data can provide insights into the specific problems within those smaller buckets that OEE may choose to address, such as “lack of mental health services available to youth”.

Although this guidebook provides a set of tools to help make sense of the data and identify priority issues for impact, there is no set formula for determining how to use CNA results. It will be up to individuals, counties, program teams, and OEE to make sense of the totality of data collected, and this will require follow-up with new and existing partners and community representatives. CNAs may show us that we are already uniquely positioned to have significant impact on certain community issues. If CNAs show us opportunities for impact in new areas, we can use those results in internal discussions for more resources as well as in grant applications. (This is the concept of “funding follows focus”.) In some cases, staff may be able to shift a portion of their time to meeting new needs. In other cases, new partnerships might be developed to meet needs, with OEE playing a supporting role. Counties with few staff may be more limited in their abilities to pivot to new opportunities.

County Commissioners and Extension advisory board members will need to be engaged in the process from the start. We will need to be clear that CNA results may have broader value to the community and that we can share these results with potential partners. At the same time, county Extension offices and OEE will filter results through the lens of our mission to empower Coloradans with educational resources. The structured CNA process will provide a snapshot into current opportunities for impact, but this snapshot will have to be supplemented by ongoing, less formal ways of capturing needs moving forward.

Finally, although we do not anticipate obtaining IRB approval so that we can publish the results of CNAs in scholarly journals, we do expect that CPPs can serve as work products that may prove valuable when applying for faculty promotions.



## Staff Involvement & Support

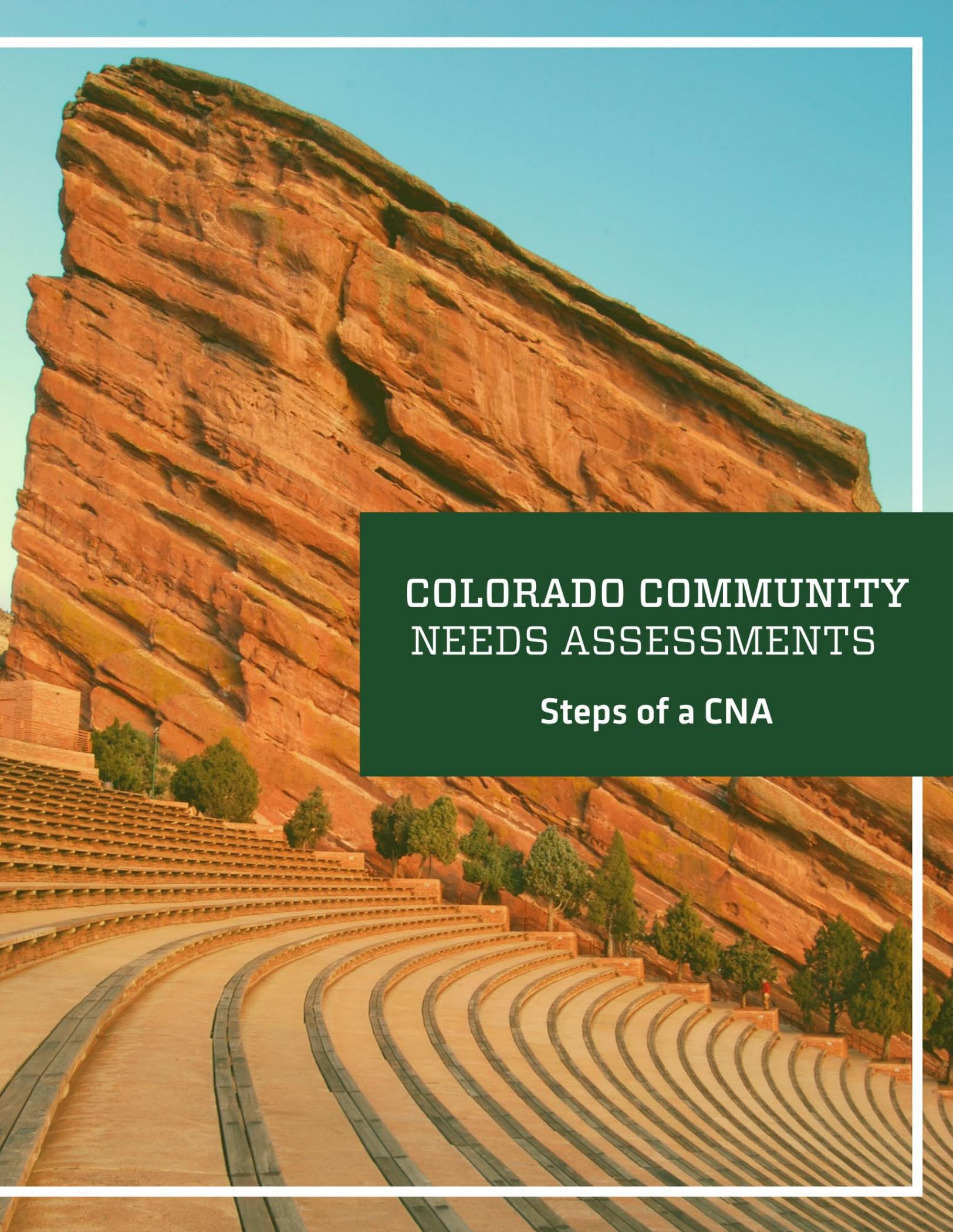
In order for the goal and objectives of the CNAs to be achieved, OEE staff need to be involved throughout the process. The CSUE state office and those participating in the pilot cohort for CNAs will provide support for CNA single points-of-contact and CSUE staff through the lens of an ADKAR framework. (ADKAR posits the need for five concrete outcomes for lasting change: **A**wareness of the need for change, **D**esire to support change, **K**nowledge of how to change, **A**bility to demonstrate skills & behaviors, and **R**einforcement to make the change stick.) Opportunities to support CNA single points-of-contact include:

- An initial distance learning session to provide an overview of CNAs, CSU perception surveys, and county partnerships for CNAs
- Consultations with CNA leads as needed to introduce the work to advisory boards and county commissioners
- Training on secondary data collection and inclusive key informant identification
- Training on conducting key informant interviews/focus groups
- Guidance on selecting issues for inclusion into the CNA survey
- A supported process for interpreting and summarizing data for the creation of County Program Plans

In turn, CNA single points-of-contact can facilitate staff to collectively review demographic and secondary data, identify key informants, select issues to include on CNA surveys, draft a robust survey dissemination plan, and write CPPs. All Extension staff should have opportunities to raise questions and be intimately involved along the way. New staff may receive particular insight from engaging in the CNA process, as they have the potential to meet new community members and set a future course for their work before it becomes established.

So before going further into the details:

- ✓ Are the benefits of doing a community needs assessment clear?
- ✓ Do you have a general sense of the procedures involved?
- ✓ Can you identify the supports available to you in carrying out a CNA?
- ✓ Are the outcomes of a CNA reasonably clear?



# COLORADO COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

## Steps of a CNA



## Step 1: Consultations & Engagement

The first step of the CNA is for county Extension offices to become familiar with the overall process and to engage County Commissioners and CSUE advisory board members as appropriate. It is also important that all staff have opportunities to reflect on their own understandings of needs assessments and ask questions about this particular CNA process. As matters of practicality, counties need to understand their roles in the process, the roles of other supporting entities like the state office or consultants, and our expected timeline for the rollout. County offices should also begin thinking about potential partner counties and designating both a lead county and a single point-of-contact for CNAs, especially if the single point-of-contact may be someone other than a County/Area Director. When considering county partnerships, think about how much you may have in common with one or more adjacent counties, whether or not there would be overall efficiencies gained by partnering, and availability of staff time and effort to conduct CNAs themselves.

The CNA webpage can provide quick reference points for counties to become more familiar with the CNA process and as collateral to provide to Commissioners and advisory board members. Those two key stakeholder groups will likely want to understand what the CNA process means for them, the county Extension office, and the communities they serve. Commissioners and advisory board members may provide suggestions to the county single point-of-contact about potential key informants, important survey content (to capture issues important to communities), survey distribution methods and channels, and other issues throughout various points of the CNA process. Some Commissioners may be hesitant to change what the Extension office is currently doing, so it may be important to emphasize that CNAs can leverage existing data about community needs, provide documentation for new funding opportunities, strengthen partnerships and collaborations, help ensure that duplication of efforts is avoided (as CSUE and partners learn more about each other's services), and provide value to broader county efforts outside of CSUE. While we don't expect the results to change our CSUE offices and OEE offerings overnight, we may understand new opportunities to look for "growth edges" – what we might reasonably be able to provide in the medium-term future should resources be acquired or shift.

In addition to engagement with Commissioners and advisory board members, county single points-of-contact must think about how and when to ensure that all county staff are engaged throughout the process. Check-ins should be considered before each key step in the CNA process and when results from any step of the process become available. The CSUE state office will also provide guidance on staff engagement.



## Step 2: CSU Perceptions Survey

The perceptions survey is an initiative of President McConnell to understand familiarity with OEE resources and services, efforts that might better meet community needs, barriers to accessing OEE resources, and general questions about the value and quality of CSU's community engagement services more broadly. It is an 8-minute online survey that county Extension offices will disseminate to existing contacts.

A handful of demographic questions are included in the perceptions survey. This will help OEE determine whether the respondents are representative of the county's demographic profile, whether perceptions of CSU and OEE differ by demographic segments (which can be a basis for more tailored programming), and to compare demographics of the perceptions survey to those of the more in-depth CNA that will involve a broader range of respondents. The number of responses we receive for a given county will also help us determine where we may need to boost survey distribution efforts for the later CNA survey.

Data from the perceptions survey will be used to inform both the President's office and OEE. The perceptions survey may also provide basic information about needs that could inform key informant interviews and the CNA survey questions. Data from the perceptions survey will be shared back with county Extension offices and kept accessible to those offices, as the information may inform the creation of CPPs later on.





## Step 3: Secondary Data Analysis

### 3a: Information Gathering

This step of the CNA process includes gathering demographic and secondary data. The purpose is to develop a fuller understanding of the makeup of our communities and to strengthen our understanding of key issues. In addition, demographic data combined with identification of key issues from secondary data can help us identify the key informants to involve in later steps of the CNA process.

OEE will pull together a wide range of demographic and economic/workforce data in a standard “County Profile” format for use by county Extension offices. Because of our intention to be inclusive with the CNAs, we will provide counties with demographic data that highlights the presence of traditionally underrepresented audiences in addition to more typical demographic data. These demographic data will be compared to state level data as a reference and will include (purple = select underrepresented/ “Champion” groups identified by National 4-H):

- Race/ethnicity
- Age
- Gender
- Income
- % in poverty
- Home ownership vs. renters
- Educational attainment
- High school graduation rates
- Immigrant and refugee
- English language learners
- With disabilities
- Economic/workforce profile
  - Unemployment rate
  - Employment and income by sector/industry
  - Top 10 employers
  - Commuting patterns
  - Location quotients

County Profiles will also include county Census of Agriculture profiles and Tapestry Maps from ESRI that break down areas within a given county according to dominant “lifestyle modes”. These lifestyle modes can provide insight into the values and interests of a community, such as valuing outdoor recreation or maintaining homes and gardens.

Aside from these County Profiles, the strategic collection and analysis of secondary data is key to understanding community issues at a deeper level and identifying potential partnerships with organizations working on the issues. For the purpose of the CNAs, secondary data can be broken down into general and topic-specific sources. General sources include reports from local governments such as:

- Strategic plans
- Needs assessments
- Budget documents
- Bommunity/economic/workforce development-related documents (i.e., a Community Development Action Plan from the local Community & Economic Development District)
- Health district surveys such as a County Public Health Assessment or a Community Health Improvement Plan

These documents either implicitly or explicitly describe local priorities. They should be considered standard secondary data for county Extension offices to collect and analyze.

Topical secondary data would include reports focused on natural resources, tourism, agriculture, or other specific issues facing particular communities and/or populations. (See [Appendix A](#) for a list of common general and topic-specific secondary data sources.)

Collection and analysis of this secondary data would be county-specific based on the county’s demographics, conversations with staff, and suggestions from advisory boards and/or County Commissioners. For example, a county’s demographic data may reveal that there is a high population of Latinx and a high percentage of mental health issues in a given community relative to the rest of the state. This county may decide to seek topical secondary data on **issues** facing those two populations in addition to collecting the more standard set of secondary data. In another example, if a county is host to a CSU Regional Engagement Center, that county will likely want to work with the Center to collect more detailed workforce data in addition to the standard set of secondary data.

It should be noted that topic-specific secondary data will become relevant again once basic priorities are identified through key informant interviews and CNA surveys. Once those basic priority issues are revealed, topic-specific secondary data focused on the priority issues can provide more detail on specific problems that could be addressed through an OEE/partner intervention. Also note that general and topical state- and national-level reports and data may contain information helpful to counties, especially in the absence of local data. Staff will need to use their resourcefulness and discretion to identify potential secondary data and decide whether or not to analyze that data. ***It is critical that any secondary data come from a reputable, unbiased, research-based source and is not outdated (consider sources from 2015 to the present).***

### 3b: Identify Initial Issues & Diverse Informants

Once a county Extension office gathers secondary data, staff can screen it for:

- a. Key community issues/needs;
- b. Possible contributing factors to those issues/needs;
- c. Barriers to accessing OEE resources;
- d. Potential strategies/opportunities for OEE work; and
- e. Potential partners

While screening secondary data, agents can also identify specific key informants or a desired type of key informant. For example, if secondary data reveals youth mental health to be a significant community issue/need, key informants could include the county public health department and the school district.

One guideline for developing a list of community issues/needs is to stretch a little beyond OEE's current capacity to meet needs. It is good to list issues which CSUE or OEE can't address with current resources because the CNA can have value to the broader community, the CNA can spark new partnerships, and "funding follows focus." On the other hand, be cautious of delving too far into issues that OEE can't reasonably address in coming years even with a modest influx of resources, as we want to make wise use of our time and effort on the CNAs.

[Appendix B](#) contains a spreadsheet template to record data insights and to list key informants. The information in this spreadsheet will remain accessible to counties throughout the CNA process and will be useful during future steps such as survey and CPP creation. **Examples of key informants and secondary data analysis are pre-populated for reference purposes only.** [Appendix C](#) provides a list of key informants identified in the Larimer County CNA process.

[Appendix D](#) is a Community Engagement Resource chart and instructions. Although this particular chart is labeled for the Latinx community, it can also be used to understand ways to engage with other populations that have been underrepresented in CSUE programming. The chart can also be used to help identify key informants. It is important to not feel limited in identifying key informants by who we already know, and the Community Engagement Resource Chart provides a framework for thinking about how to access new informants directly or through existing partners. Beyond that, EFNEP coordinators and FLTI program participants are potential close collaborators that can help OEE reach out to new informants if available in your county/area.

***If your county/area is host to an Agricultural Experiment Station, Colorado State Forest Service Office, or CSU Regional Engagement Center, also reach out to those collaborators to ensure that we identify their key informants for potential interviews.*** Then, coordinate as needed with other county CSUE offices that are served by these collaborators (but do not host them) when considering interviews of these informants.

Be aware that the process of gathering secondary data and identifying key informants could seem overwhelming at first. There are many issues that are important to our communities that could be addressed with additional OEE or partner resources. There are many topic-specific sources of secondary data that you may or may not choose to analyze. Needs of community members within your county may differ significantly based on the specific city, town, or geographical area they live in. The idea behind this step of the CNA process, as well as the actual key informant interviews/focus groups, is to gather information that could inform OEE and partner efforts down the road and prepare a county Extension office to build a CNA survey for the general public. Hearing and sifting through many ideas - even divergent ones - about community issues and potential solutions is a normal part of this stage of the CNA process. For now, it's important to identify high-level community issues that OEE or close partners may even potentially be able to act upon, even if you don't know what those actions may consist of in the moment. The CNA survey and the analysis by county Extension offices will help sort and prioritize this data.





## Step 4: Key Informant Data

### 4a: Key Informant Interviews/Focus Groups (Lead)

Key informant interviews can play a critical role in needs assessments. A 'key informant' is an individual who provides important perspectives and firsthand knowledge of the community and more specifically, the needs of the community. For example, an assessment of the health status of the community would be enhanced by seeking the opinions of doctors, nurses, caregivers, and healthcare coordinators. Key informants can help you understand why something is happening or the history and context of an issue. A limitation of key informants is that they are not reliable reporters of the actual number of persons affected by a social problem or the demographic and geographic distribution of the problem. (This is one reason why we are complementing key informant interviews with secondary data collection and a broad CNA survey.)

In the case of CSUE's CNA, contacting key informants is important for five distinct reasons:

1. We are interested in their perspectives on issues important to the population they represent.
2. Informant interviews present opportunities to build or enhance partnerships for future programming/efforts. (Should an issue that a key informant is addressing rise to the top of community priorities, CSUE may wish to involve that same key informant in exploring programming partnerships in program planning later in the CNA process.)
3. In addition to providing us with valuable in-depth perspectives on issues, key informant interviews can also help us select issues to include on our CNA surveys.
4. Key informants can distribute our CNA survey to their contacts later on in the process.
5. We will ask key informants to also respond to the Civic Capacity Index electronic survey.

Once a list of *potential* key informants is finalized, it is time to select 10-15 key informants to interview. Keep in mind all informants may not agree to participate in an interview or scheduling may not align, so have a prioritized list of people to contact. For cases where interviewing all listed isn't feasible (due to very large lists and/or resource and time constraints), a county should be strategic in selecting key informants to interview.

The following are factors to weigh when considering key informants to interview:

1. Does interviewing an informant allow you to build a relationship with a new part of your community?
2. Is the issue or demographic that the key informant represents particularly significant in your community as confirmed by demographic data and/or seeing the issue come up repeatedly in the secondary data?
3. Can a single key informant represent multiple key demographics and/or issues? (For example, perhaps the Latino Chamber of Commerce can speak to both issues facing the small business community in general as well as issues facing the Latinx community in general.)
4. Is the issue that the informant represents one that you can reasonably see OEE addressing in some way, even if you don't currently know how?
5. Can the informant represent perspectives of those who are known to have challenges accessing the internet? (Because the CNA survey will exclusively or largely be electronic, it's important to hear from those who can represent populations without easy access to the internet in the key informant interview step.)
6. If partnering with another county on the CNA, is a potential informant able to speak to issues that span multiple counties?
7. When looking at your list of potential key informants, do you have a mix that can speak to the needs of various cities and towns within your county?
8. In the spirit of partnership with other CSU units, ensure that key informants identified by an AES station, Regional Engagement Center, and/or a State Forest Service office in your county (or that serves your county) are included in your final list of key informants.
9. Finally, because those about to graduate from high school are key demographic for CSU Online, consider representation from the school system when finalizing key informants.

Note that ***if you select a state agency to be a key informant, interviews of that agency will have to be coordinated with the CSUE AD for Program Support*** so that we are not contacting the same agency multiple times for the same interview (by different counties). One interview can be completed and the data can be shared across counties in this case. Also note that if county Extension offices are partnering with other adjacent county offices on the CNA, the grouping may choose to designate a lead county that would be responsible for all or most of the key informant interviews. This option is put forward in the acknowledgment that adjacent counties may have significant overlap in potential informants and that some counties may have more staff capacity to interview informants than others. Another option is to ask informants to fill out the ***Secondary and Key Informant Data*** spreadsheet from [Appendix B](#) ahead of interviews so that you can use the interview to go deeper.

The process of finalizing key informants is a good opportunity for staff to provide input and come to a consensus. It may also present an opportunity to work more closely with AES, Regional Engagement Center, and/or Forest Service colleagues (for the purpose of selecting key informants and understanding potential intersections of informants, issues, and work). Selecting key informants as a collective can allow for questions about the exercise, key informants, and the CNA process in general to surface and be addressed. CSUE and OEE staff should feel good about the final list in that it reflects current and potential OEE work and opportunities.

### **Interviews vs. Focus Groups**

Although we envision individual key informant interviews for the majority of CNA work in this step, conducting one or more focus groups is an option as well. Focus groups are planned discussions to capture perceptions from a select group of people. As with interviews, focus groups are useful when you want to understand experiences, viewpoints and/or impressions. One disadvantage of focus groups is that the data can be challenging to analyze because they represent multiple voices instead of just one (Mertens, 2010). According to Donaldson and Franck (2016), focus groups are useful when:

- You need visual aids.
- You ask sensitive questions.
- You need a group to develop ideas.
- Interaction and “building on ideas” will provide useful information.
- One person shares and it triggers a memory for someone else.
- Time to collect information is limited.
- You ideally have at least one person to facilitate and one person to record.

If considering a focus group, ideal participation is made up of the following:

- Six to 10 people per group
- Those who would be comfortable with one another, but do not necessarily know one another
- Diversity in gender, race/ethnicity, residence and other areas to offer rich perspectives
- If asking about one specific topic-area, ensuring all are familiar with that topic.

For example, Larimer County Extension utilized a focus group to get information from recent participants in its Family Leadership Training Institute (FLTI) program. That focus group was an opportunity to get a lot of qualitative information from traditionally underrepresented individuals in CSUE programming and it provided a level of comfort for the participants that they may not have had in a personal interview.



If you want to bring groups larger than 10 together at one time for the sake of broad input and efficiency, you may want to create smaller subgroups of participants who have a similar association to the topic being discussed. As an illustration, if you are assessing infant and child nutrition, select participants who are all parents for one subgroup. Another subgroup might be all elected officials. In this way you can get a greater cross-section and potentially see patterns across the groups (Donaldson & Franck, 2016). Multiple focus groups can be facilitated at once with multiple facilitators and note takers.

[Appendix E](#) contains a protocol and sample questions for key informant interviews. [Appendix F](#) contains a protocol and sample questions for focus groups. When the interviews and/or focus groups are completed, use the Secondary and Key Informant Data spreadsheet from [Appendix B](#) to enter key points. Because information received from focus groups can be more challenging to analyze and synthesize, you can employ these two tasks:

1. Identify common responses within each focus group; these are referred to as common themes.
2. Compare and contrast themes across the different focus groups.

You can fill out the spreadsheet for focus groups based on common responses. If your focus group was composed of multiple subgroups, consider using other rows to capture themes that were significantly stronger for one subgroup compared to others.

#### **4b: Civic Capacity Index (Lead)**

**What it measures.** The CCI measures a community's ability to collectively respond to shared, complex social challenges in cooperative, equitable, and democratic ways. The CCI helps shape and evaluate local community development and intervention strategies such as civic leadership training programs, needs assessment, capacity building initiatives, problem solving, and technical assistance. This is often referred to as a community's ability for community-driven change. The CCI is looking out how community members and decision makers learn, plan, and act together when responding to complex challenges. In short, the Civic Capacity Index is designed to assess and help transform civic culture.

The CCI is especially useful to help communities assess their collective capacity to respond to current and future challenges and to create a deeper understanding of why some communities respond more effectively to challenges than others. Simply put, it taps into key features of community resilience. For a needs assessment, it will generate a profile for a group or the community based on seven features of community-driven change. These include collaborative leadership, organic coalitions, confronting racism and injustice, purposeful collaboration, social capital, and trust/cohesion. Sample items may be found in [Appendix G](#).

**How to use it.** The CCI should be distributed to your key informants after the interview. If FLTI is offered in your community, consider distributing the CCI to graduates of the program. It will be available through Qualtrics.

A brief measure of community resilience will be incorporated into the CCI so that you can diagnose why community resilience might be low and what to do about it. For instance, if there is little cohesion and social capital—neighbors or youth banding together for a common purpose—then involving families in 4-H or similar programs might be an effective response. If respondents indicate that they have limited access to the decision-making process because they are from a minority or low-income group, then launching an FLTI program would be a potential solution. When programs are implemented to develop social capital, civic leadership, equity and inclusion, or other aspects of civic capacity, the CCI can be used as a pretest and posttest to assess progress in meeting objectives. Community-specific profiles from the CCI and resilience measure will be generated along with interpretation of the findings and suggestions for actions going forward. These reports may provide some guidance as to which issues to include on the CNA survey to probe needs more broadly.





## Step 5: CNA Survey

### 5a: Planning and Building the Survey

After you have completed your key informant interviews and/or focus groups, you are ready to build your survey. The CNA survey is an opportunity for us to collect broad, quantitative data to help us prioritize community issues that OEE and/or local partners may address. Counties will be able to ask their community members about how important different issues are to them. The issues asked about on each county's survey can be customized to that county based on issues captured through secondary data analysis, key informant interviews/focus groups, and possibly the CCI. That said, all counties that choose to ask about a certain issue must ask about that issue in the same way so that OEE can aggregate data while maintaining statewide survey response reliability.

CSUE will have a bank of issues to select from based on the Larimer County and pilot cohort CNAs, a list of PRU focus areas, social scientists from CSU, and conversations with other OEE units such as AES and the Regional Engagement Centers. If counties do not see an issue that they would like to ask their communities about from that bank, they will be able to put those issues forward to the CSUE state office. The state office will then coordinate those "outstanding issues" so that any time a given county asks about those issues, they are asked in the same way.

Counties will want to select or suggest issues that OEE may develop a "reasonable potential capacity" to address or for which they already have the capacity to address. For example, secondary data and key informant interviews may reveal that youth mental health, wildfire mitigation, affordable housing, and nutrition are four key issues for the community. The county CSUE office currently offers programming related to youth mental health. The local CSFS office offers resources related to wildfire mitigation. Even though the county CSUE office does not currently offer programming related to nutrition, a statewide PRU offers those resources. The county decides to ask about youth mental health, wildfire mitigation, and nutrition because OEE collectively either currently offers or can see itself reasonably offering resources in those areas independently or in partnership with local organizations. It decides not to ask about affordable housing because it could not see itself addressing that issue even with a modest potential influx of resources or shift in priorities and/or because that issue is well addressed by other organizations in the community. It can still serve as a potential partnership for Extension to connect the community to the organizations that support and work on affordable housing.

The Secondary and Key Informant Data spreadsheet from [Appendix B](#) should help you select which issues to ask about since it was used to document issues from secondary data and key informants/focus groups. The level of detail of issues we plan to ask about on the survey should (ideally) be similar to the level of detail you've captured for issues listed in that spreadsheet. For example, the Larimer County CNA survey asked respondents how important the following issues were for them in the broad category of Health & Well-Being:

- Physical health and exercise
- Nutrition and healthy cooking
- Mental health and stress management
- Healthy aging resources
- Affordable healthcare resources
- Substance abuse prevention and addiction resources
- Resources for individuals with mobility issues and disabilities

Health & Well-Being was one of seven broad categories Larimer County decided to ask about. Toward the end of the survey, respondents were asked to identify the top three categories that would impact them the most:

- Health and well-being
- Yard, property, and land management
- Natural resources and environment
- Family, household, and finances
- Youth development
- Community support
- Food and agriculture industry

In this way, Larimer County was able to understand how important both broad categories of potential OEE programming were as well as issues within the broader categories. Not only can Larimer County Extension make use of results like this, but the results also have value for other existing and potential community partners, county departments, the PRUs, and other OEE units.

In addition to asking these types of survey questions, surveys may use Qualtrics display logic to include one or more branches for specific populations served by other OEE units. For example, in a county with a significant population of agricultural producers and an Agricultural Experiment Station (AES), that survey could include a branch specifically for respondents who indicate that they are agricultural producers. That branch will ask questions that can inform AES in addition to CSUE. In this way, other units of OEE can squeeze even more value out of the CNA survey. Because of its broad applicability across populations, CSU Online may want to integrate its questions into the general CNA survey rather than create a separate branch.

Aside from issues, expect that standard survey questions will ask about:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Level of education
- Employment/business owner
- Zip code
- Rural/urban/suburban residency
- Part-time or full-time residency
- Home ownership (vs. rent)
- Whether children are in the household
- Whether the respondent is an agricultural producer
- Income
- Previous level of involvement with OEE
- How respondents currently access information for broad categories (i.e., business, government agency, Extension, social media, etc.)

Surveys will be available both in English and Spanish. CSUE's Diversity and Inclusive Engagement Specialist for the Front Range Region and potentially members of under-represented groups will review surveys before they are finalized to identify unfamiliar or inappropriate terms and concepts.

## **5b: Survey Distribution**

Our approach to survey distribution and sampling is a mix of purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling requires that you select people who can speak to your topics or belong to a specific group of people. A snowball sample involves distributing a survey to a certain individual or group and then asking that individual or group to distribute it to their contacts (Donaldson & Franck, 2016). Convenience sampling allows anybody who is available and finds the survey to answer it. The distribution of this survey will leverage multiple modes: social media (convenience), key informants and program participation lists (purposive), and people our key informants know (snowball). In the case of our CNA survey, if you have identified and confirmed an important community issue through your secondary data and key informant interviews, you'll want to distribute the survey to those who can speak to that issue. You'll also want that individual or group to distribute the survey to their networks. This is why you have (ideally) asked your key informants if they'd be willing to distribute the survey to their networks when you conduct their interviews.

Our approach also involves convenience sampling because you'll want to survey as many people as possible from any part of your communities. This involves utilizing Extension, county, and other listservs and networks available to you. Because a risk of utilizing existing listservs and networks is that the responses will reflect our existing learners, we want to ask them to distribute the survey themselves if possible. We will also include a standard survey question related to familiarity and involvement with CSUE/OEE so that we can analyze data according to existing and potentially new learners.

In addition to using email listservs to distribute the survey, also leverage social media to the extent possible. We envision that surveys will be available electronically through Qualtrics. Although paper surveys may allow us to reach individuals without internet access, they come at a cost of time spent having to enter data into Qualtrics afterwards. Any sort of skip logic/branching feature would have to be adapted for use in a paper survey as well. Counties who feel that it is critical to utilize paper surveys to capture responses from a certain audience will be responsible for adapting their own surveys and entering data from those surveys into Qualtrics.

One way to work with the need to reach individuals without easy access to the internet is to make the survey available on a computer in your Extension office during the open survey window, setting up time and use parameters as appropriate. Providing multiple tablets for individuals attending events such as a county fair is another method for obtaining electronic survey responses from those who may not have easy access and/or just to increase response rates in general. Posting printed notecards or flyers at the computer banks of public libraries can be another way to market the survey to those without private internet access. Postcards/flyers at libraries and elsewhere can contain Qualtrics QR codes to allow the survey to be taken on respondent smartphones. Importantly, the state office plans to cover the cost of incentives for counties to offer survey respondents so that anyone exposed to the survey link will be made aware of a potential reward for responding.

Although our approach to survey distribution doesn't utilize random sampling, we can use what we know about sample sizes required for survey validity through random sampling to provide minimum goals for county survey responses. In general, counties will want between 300-400 responses at minimum to ensure the survey represents the county with a 3-5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Though the survey responses may represent the sentiment of the county, you may not achieve demographic representation so responses for subgroups may not represent those subgroups reliably.

Taking all of this into account, each county will want to outline a comprehensive survey distribution plan. Features of this plan would include:

- What to include in the body of a survey distribution email and title of the email
- What to include in any sort of flyer or notecard advertising the survey
- A list of email listservs to utilize for survey distribution
- Who will contact various listservs (it's best if all staff contact the people they know as opposed to a central individual contacting all listservs)
- A list of social media to utilize
- A list of key informants/partners to contact about distributing the survey
- A list of physical locations for individuals to respond via public computer, tablet, or paper copy
- The open survey window (a period of at least three weeks is recommended)
- A schedule of initial contacts and reminders (weekly is recommended)
- Thoughts about the best days of the week or times of the day to market the survey via the different methods listed above (see tips below)

### ***Tips for successful online survey distribution (Donaldson & Franck, 2016)***

1. Send out the link at a time when people are more willing to complete a survey — avoid sending out the survey at 8 a.m. on a Monday for example.
2. Send out at least one reminder — most people take surveys right after they receive them, so it's important to send out reminders to increase response rates. Average respondents complete surveys in about four days. Follow up by focusing on the person, such as, "We realize this is a busy time of year, and we understand how valuable your time is. We are hoping you could give about five minutes to complete a short survey..."

See [Appendix H](#) for a copy of Larimer County Extension's initial survey distribution plan. [Appendix I](#) contains sample language for what to include in the body of an email.

## **5c: Survey Data Analysis**

The CSUE state office and our consultant will analyze data from each survey and provide results to counties in useful formats such as PowerPoint and Excel. Results will include the following:

- Respondent breakdown by demographics along with previous level of involvement with OEE
- Comparisons of respondent demographic data to county demographic data
- A breakdown of significant demographic differences between those who currently uses OEE resources vs. those who do not (i.e., those who currently use our resources tend to be older, more affluent, etc.)
- A breakdown of overall priorities by broad category
- A breakdown of priorities within each broad category
- How respondents currently access information for broad categories (i.e., business, government agency, Extension, social media, etc.)
- For each breakdown of priorities, highlights of significant differences between demographics (i.e., households with children prioritize Youth programming more highly than households without children)
- Note that although adjacent counties may choose to partner with one another on the overall CNA, survey results can be broken down by individual county and by zip code or city/town within counties



## Step 6: Program Planning

### 6a: Filtering Issues

Now that information has been collected from multiple sources, the next step is to synthesize it in a way that can guide planning for action to address community needs. In a sense, this will be like weaving together different themes to tell a story or perhaps several stories. No doubt, though, that this can be a daunting task with a lot of information to absorb and process.

To briefly recap CNA data sources and the insights they can provide (or not) about community needs:

- The **perceptions survey** provides insights about community members' familiarity with OEE and its work as well as some efforts that might be undertaken to better meet the community's needs.
  - ✓ **Strengths:** (a) information might suggest that marketing campaigns would be helpful, and (b) also could point to some unmet general needs, especially in different demographic sectors.
  - ✓ **Drawbacks:** (a) if the surveys were completed only by existing CSUE contacts and not a more representative group of residents, faulty estimates of the scope of needs can result, and (b) there won't be as much depth about needs as one might gain from focus groups and key informant interviews.
- **Demographic and secondary data** from websites provide information about the makeup of the communities' audience—and its diversity—as well as topical issues that other entities might be addressing now or in the near future.
  - ✓ **Strengths:** helps identify (a) potentially underserved groups, (b) needs that aren't being addressed but maybe should be, and (c) potential collaborators around topical issues. **Social indicators** are especially helpful in identifying trends or emerging issues, like a drop in teen pregnancies or an increase in opioid use.
  - ✓ **Drawbacks:** (a) information might not be available for smaller communities or at the neighborhood level, (b) data might be outdated, and (c) data usually does not provide information about solutions that have been tried before and either worked or failed.

- **Key informants and focus groups.**
  - ✓ **Strengths:** can provide useful qualitative information about the characteristics of a target population—their preferences for consuming information, social networks, values, and beliefs—and the nature of their service needs. They can also provide insights into root causes of problems and potential strategies beyond what can be found in some other sources of data.
  - ✓ **Drawbacks:** they are not reliable sources of information about the actual number of persons affected by a social problem or the demographic distribution of needs.
  
- The **Civic Capacity Index** provides a profile of the key ingredients of how the community as a whole plans for the future and responds to needs and crises (community resilience).
  - ✓ **Strengths:** may pinpoint key processes that are weak or absent and thus may undermine the community's capacity to meet citizen's needs, or strengths that can be leveraged through collaborative efforts.
  - ✓ **Drawbacks:** (a) using the CCI to guide initiatives likely requires collaborations that cross sectors and get service providers and administrators out of their silos, which may be resisted; (b) solutions likely involve systems changes that take some time; and (c) the CCI does not provide information that is specific to the needs of individuals and families.
  
- **CNA surveys of individuals.**
  - ✓ **Strength:** They (potentially) can provide quite accurate information on the extent and distribution of a social problem when there are no existing credible data. For instance, if survey results indicate that very few people are opposed to childhood vaccinations even though there's a fair amount of noise about that issue in the press, one would be inclined to focus attention on other higher-priority issues (assuming an unbiased survey sample).
  - ✓ **Drawback:** The main caveat to survey data is that unless good survey methods are used, the results can be skewed, particularly if the views of those most affected by a problem (e.g., marginalized groups) are underrepresented.

This recap should make it clear that no single source provides clear cut guidance for settling on an action plan. Instead, the information needs to be synthesized through filters including:

- how important an issue is to your community at-large
- how important an issue is to various populations within your community, especially populations that have been underrepresented in past OEE programming and/or those that may provide new "markets" for Extension resources
- what is actionable/feasible given a reasonable potential to add or shift resources or to partner with other organizations
- lessons learned from previous programming efforts

**If one was to articulate a single filter through which to process all data, it would be the question: How can OEE maximize its impact in Colorado communities?**

To start filtering, a [Community Toolbox](#) developed by the University of Kansas suggests first listing the major takeaways from each of the methods used (the perceptions survey, secondary data, key informants, and the CNA surveys). You can create a new spreadsheet or add on to the Secondary and Key Informant Data spreadsheet ([Appendix B](#)) to accomplish this. In the spreadsheet, list important issues identified by each method and note similarities and differences between methods. If some findings contradict others, what differences in values, experiences, and priorities might that reflect? Might they be due to differences in the accuracy of the methods?

Use your survey results to pay particular attention to priorities of those who are less familiar with OEE/CSUE and key demographic groups that may have been underrepresented in survey responses and your community. If we want to expand our reach and maximize impact, it is important to identify priorities of those who have not been represented well in past OEE programming. Discuss as staff in order to gain the best shared understanding you can of priority issues.

Beyond that exercise, various tools exist to help you filter and prioritize issues to address as a county Extension office. The table below lists some of these tools and considerations for their use, and [Appendix J](#) contains the actual tools along with others you may choose to use.

Tool	Description	Pros	Cons	When to Use
<b>Core competency identification</b>	Identify your unique set of competencies that drive success	Aligns potential issues with our strengths, expertise, and what makes us unique compared to other organizations in a program space	Can sometimes be difficult to clearly define specific individual or group competencies	When you need to narrow down the issues you choose to address and want to leverage your strengths to do so
<b>Cut Before You Add</b>	Reflect on current (and potential) offerings to see where to invest and where to cut back	Helps you prioritize both new and existing programs; Straightforward and intuitive	Benefits from a broad understanding of you or your team's overall strategy; Implies that you already know your core competencies	When you are considering taking on new initiatives but may need to cut back on existing initiatives first; When you already understand your broader strategy and core competencies
<b>2x2 Prioritization Matrix</b>	Consider current and potential offerings from the perspective of what is impactful and feasible	Helps you prioritize both new and existing programs; Straightforward and intuitive	Still requires judgment as to whether you want to take on high impact initiatives that require significant time & effort	When you need a simple tool to help you prioritize which issues to address; When there is already broad agreement on your mission

Identifying and leveraging core competencies can solidify your niche in providing educational resources and can allow you to maximize your ROI on program development, as the time and effort (inputs) required to generate a certain output or outcome may be relatively low. That said, just because an issue is outside of your core competencies doesn't mean that you shouldn't pursue it. The important point is to weigh the costs and benefits of developing or refining a given program/resource with the costs and benefits of developing or refining a different program or resource. If you already have a good understanding of your competencies, the **Cut Before You Add** and **2x2 Prioritization Matrix** can help you make more pointed decisions about issues to address.

Other tools to help with issue selection are included at the end of this step. Note that the Nominal Group Technique ("dot voting", for example) can be used in conjunction with many other tools in order to gather individual input for group decision-making.

## 6b: County Program Plans

As county CSUE offices go through the process of filtering priority issues, start summarizing your takeaways in a draft County Program Plan (CPP).

This draft should include:

- ✓ A list of issues that your county CSUE office collectively decides are priorities because of our potential to have impact on them in partnership with our communities (from step 6a)
- ✓ A short description of preliminary or possible contributing factors associated with each issue (i.e. economic uncertainty is a factor that contributes to mental health issues)
- ✓ Any supporting data associated with the issues (such as "there has been a 200% increase in opioid overdoses in the last two years")
- ✓ Potential barriers to those who may try to access OEE resources for those issues
- ✓ Potential strategies OEE could use independently or in partnership with other organizations/agencies to address the issue
- ✓ Potential partners for each issue (including OEE/CSU partners)

So step 6b involves building onto the work done in step 6a. Data from key informant interviews and secondary data collection should provide answers to some of these questions.

In essence, the draft CPP would contain all of the elements from the Secondary and Key Informant spreadsheet ([Appendix B](#)), but only for the top priority issues for the county CSUE office. [Appendix K](#) provides a CPP template. On that note, as you build out your list of issues, contributing factors, etc., you may see that some of the issues that you identified as priorities in Step 6a are no longer priority issues for your county Extension office. Conversely, perhaps issues lower on the priority list will rise to the top. The deeper dive into contributing factors, barriers, strategies, and potential partners may help you solidify which issues provide the greatest opportunity for CSUE (and OEE) impact.

Critically, county CSUE staff should be heavily involved in the processing of different data sources and the writing of the CPP. Staff voices and insights need to be valued and heard, especially if they have concerns about gaps between current work and the priorities identified through the data. In addition, other units of OEE need to be considered in addition to CSUE priorities. If you believe that CSU Online, for example, could address a certain issue independently or in partnership with CSUE, then list that in the draft CPP.

Draft CPPs can be shared in whole or part with community partners such as potential program beneficiaries (our learners), County Commissioners, Extension advisory boards, local and state organizations and agencies, PRUs, and other OEE units for feedback and revision. Not only will this help to shape the development and co-creation of programs, but it will also ensure that duplication of efforts is avoided and that we take advantage of partnership opportunities.

Once CPPs are “final”, they can serve as a county’s primary program planning reference in the same way that Plans of Work capture PRU program plans and Plans to Invest capture individual staff program plans. They can be formally shared with the CSUE Program Leadership Team in order to inform resource decisions at regional and state levels and to further inform PRU Plans of Work. At the individual level, individual Plans to Invest should reflect priorities captured in the CPPs.

Of course, taking action to actually develop or refine programs and resources based on a CPP is required if OEE is to better meet community needs. Although county CSUE staff already have expertise in developing and revising programs to meet community needs, additional support for program development is provided on CSUE’s [Program Planning & Reporting webpage](#). [Appendix L](#) provides an overview of the CSUE program planning process for reference and to see where this CNA work fits. Should a county want to incorporate its program planning efforts into a more comprehensive strategic guidance document that also accounts for mission, vision, values, and internal/staff needs, an example from Larimer County Department of Health and Environment can be found [here](#). The CPP can be updated over time as needs and issues evolve.



# COLORADO COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

## Summary

## Summary

The needs of Coloradans for educational resources delivered by OEE and partners can be determined in a number of ways. In this particular effort, we are using a holistic, mixed methods approach including a perceptions survey, secondary data analysis, key informant interviews/focus groups, a Civic Capacity Index, and a CNA survey. County Program Plans will represent the high-level results from the CNAs and will be used to inform program development by individuals, county CSUE offices, regional and statewide CSUE offices, and other units of OEE. This in-depth, locally-driven approach to understanding and planning for impact in Colorado communities can build on existing ways of understanding and planning for impact. It can also result in the creation of new programs and partnerships. This type of CNA is resource-intensive and is not something that will be repeated more than every three to five years. During this interval between formal, holistic CNAs, OEE can use different methods to continually refine our understanding of needs and plans for impact.

## Helpful Sources

- [Colorado Department of Education: Guide for Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#)
- [Colorado Department of Education: School-Based Needs Assessments](#)
- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment \(CDPHE\): Colorado Health Assessment and Planning System \(CHAPS\)](#)
- [NASCS Community Action Guide to Comprehensive Community Needs Assessment](#)
- [Tennessee Extension Needs Assessment Guidebook for Extension Professionals](#)

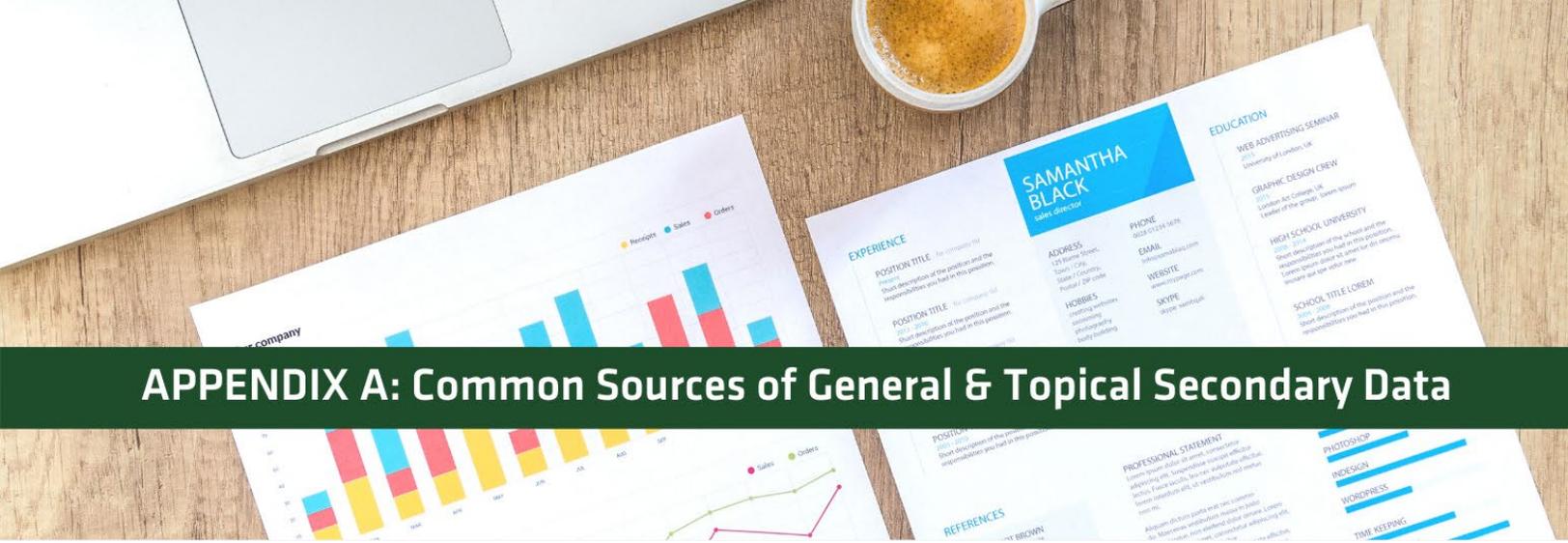
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# **COLORADO COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENTS**

## **Appendices**



## APPENDIX A: Common Sources of General & Topical Secondary Data

### General

- Local government needs assessments
- Local government strategic plans
- Local government budget documents
- Regional Council of Government reports
- [American Community Survey](#)
- Resiliency reports like [Larimer Resiliency Framework](#)
- Advocacy-Based Latinx Leadership Development Opportunities in Larimer County
- Poll of Coloradans: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/colorado>
- Poll of Coloradans: <http://coloradoissues.homestead.com/>

### Community & Economic Development

- [Colorado Department of Local Affairs/Community Development and Planning](#)
- [Office of Economic Development](#) – Infrastructure, quality of life, transportation
- [Community Services Block Grant \(DHHS/ACF\) IS Survey: State Assessments](#) (Client demographics, outcomes obtained and services utilized)
- [Community Services Block Grant dashboard, by county](#)
- Community Development Action Plans (from local Comm. & Econ. Development District)
- Housing needs assessments like [Chaffee Housing Needs Assessment](#)

### Food & Agriculture

- [2017 Blueprint of Colorado Agriculture](#)
- [USDA Agricultural Statistics for Colorado](http://nass.usda.gov/co) (nass.usda.gov/co)
- [Colorado Food Systems Map](#) (interactive)
- <https://www.agweb.com/article/top-ten-political-issues-facing-agriculture>

### Health & Well-Being

- Community Health Needs Assessments ([see select County health websites below](#))
- Community Health Improvement Plans
- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- [CDPHE VISION tool](#) (interactive)
- [CDPHE Healthy Kids Colorado Survey](#)
- [CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System](#)
- [Colorado Department of Human Services Statewide Needs Assessment of Primary Prevention for Substance Abuse \(SNAPS\)](#)

- [CDPHE 2016-2020 Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment](#) -child welfare data (annual), including child maltreatment and foster care
- [Colorado Division of Aging & Adult Services, Area Agencies on Aging](#) - statewide list of Area Agencies on Aging
- [Self-Sufficiency Standard for Colorado 2018](#) – individual and family economic security
- [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) – consumer and family financial management
- FINRA Investor Education Foundation - [Financial Capability Study \(Colorado\)](#)

## Sustainability

- [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment](#)
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs [Sustainability Planning](#)

## Youth

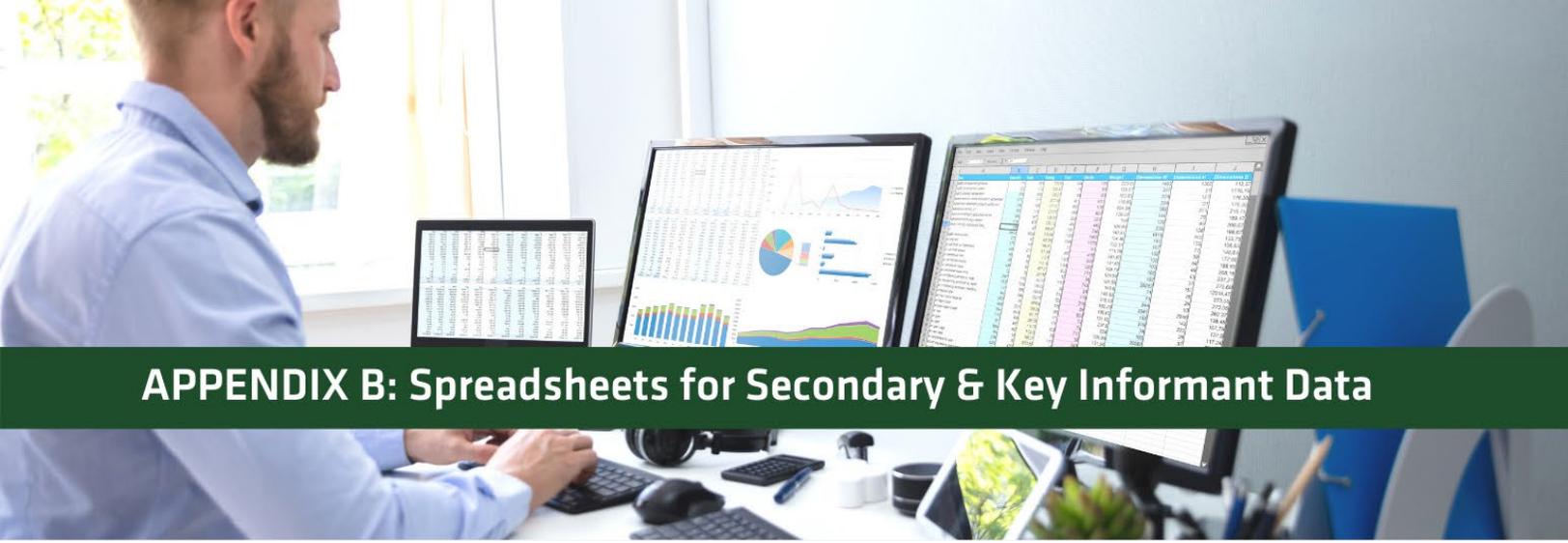
- [4-H Healthy Living Survey](#)
- [Kids Count Colorado](#)
- [Colorado Department of Education Comprehensive Needs Assessments](#)
- [Colorado Department of Education](#) - graduation rates
- [Children’s Bureau \(ACF\): Child Maltreatment](#)
- [Child Welfare League of America - 2018 Colorado report](#): Multiple child outcomes; similar to Kids Count; [Child Welfare Outcomes State Data Review Portal](#)
- [School district performance outcomes](#) - standardized testing results, [health and wellness](#)

## County Health Websites<sup>1</sup>

- [Boulder Community Health Assessments](#)
- [Denver \(Metro\) Community Health Needs Assessment \(Children’s Hospital\)](#)
- [Denver \(Metro\) Community Health Needs Assessment \(UCHealth\)](#)
- [Denver Regional Council of Governments](#) - data and surveys on aging
- [Douglas Community Needs Assessment](#)
- [Douglas Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition Needs Assessment](#)
- [El Paso Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Jefferson Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Larimer Community Health Needs Assessment \(UCHealth\)](#)
- [Larimer Community Health Needs Assessment \(Banner Health Fort Collins\)](#)
- [Larimer Community Health Needs Assessment \(NCMC Loveland\)](#)
- [Logan Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Mesa Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Morgan Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Pueblo Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Weld Community Health Needs Assessment](#)
- [Yampa Valley Community Health Needs Assessment](#)

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<sup>1</sup> These mostly are based on social indicators, not key informants or focus groups.



## APPENDIX B: Spreadsheets for Secondary & Key Informant Data

Note: this is available in MS Excel for your use. This version is for reference only.

### Key Informant List

Use this spreadsheet to list potential key informants based on demographics, other CSU units (i.e. AES) if present in your county, and secondary data. You do not have to identify potential informants for each row shown. Pre-populated data is for example purposes only. You can decide which informants to interview later on based on this list.

Demographic	Key?	Key informant 1	Key informant 2
Race/ethnicity	Latinx	La Familia	
Income & % in poverty	Low income	County human services	Catholic Charities
Age	Seniors	Senior center	
Educational attainment			
Home ownership vs. renters			
Employment by sector	Agriculture	Local farm leaders	Local ag businesses
Immigrant and refugee	Somali	Somali community leaders	
Rate of mental illness	High rate	County public health	Local non-profit, law enforcement
With disabilities	High rate	County manager	CO department of human services
Other CSU Unit Informants		Key informant 1	Key informant 2
Ag Experiment Station*		Local farm leaders	
Colorado State Forest Service*		Local forest landowners	
CSU Regional Engagement Center*		Partner community colleges	
CSU Online		Local high schools	Community colleges
<i>*Reach out to these units if present in your county, then coordinate with other county CSUE offices as needed to interview unit-identified informants</i>			
Issue from secondary data		Key informant 1	Key informant 2
Opioid addiction		County public health	Local homeless shelter
Mental health for farmers		County public health	Farm Bureau

## Secondary and Key Informant Data

Use this spreadsheet to document what you've learned from your review of secondary data and from your key informant interviews. Pre-filled examples should give you a sense of what is important to capture.

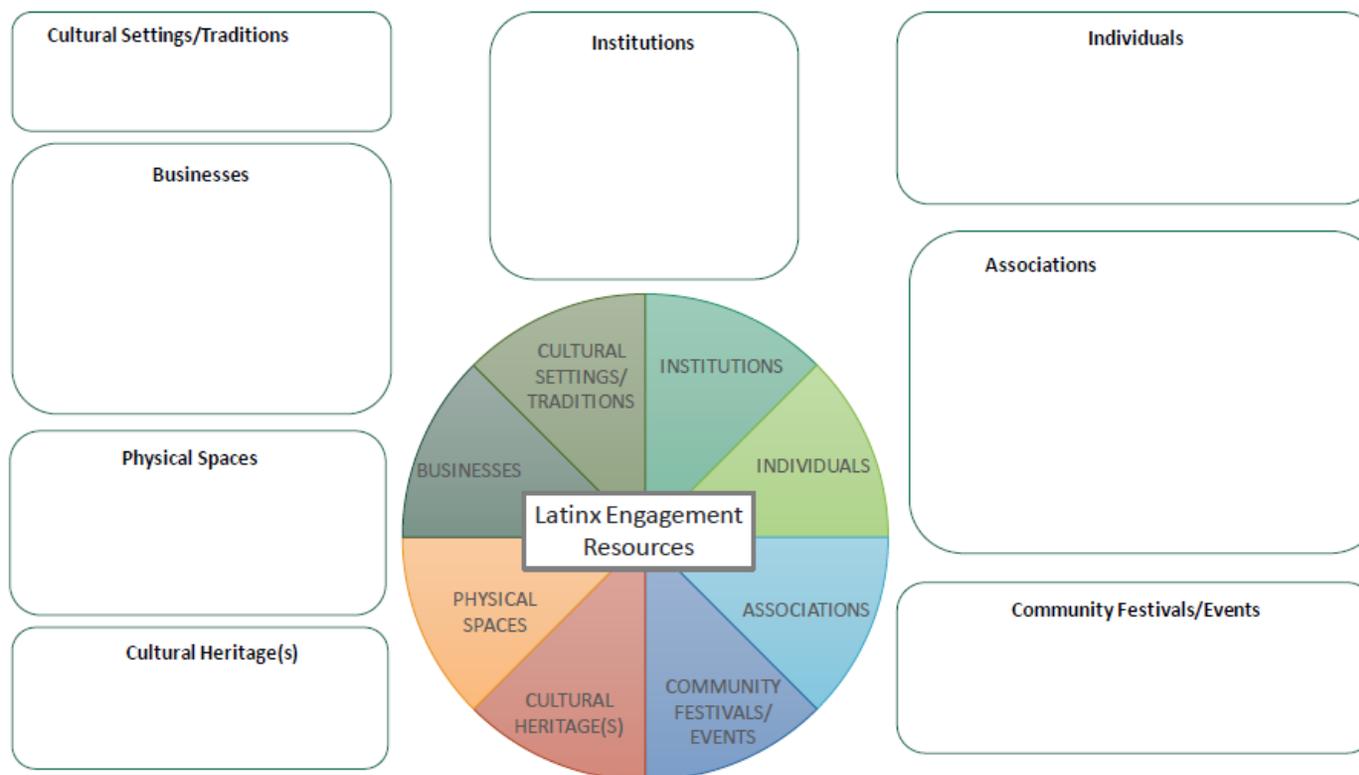
Data source/ key informant	Date of publication/ interview	Key issue/need	Possible contributing factors	Supporting data (social indicators)	Barriers to accessing OEE resources	Potential strategies for OEE	Potential partners
County strategic plan	October 2018	Opioid addiction		Over 100 overdoses were recorded in the county in 2017	Lack of awareness		County public health, CDPHE
Community Health Improvement Plan	July 2019	Mental health for farmers		The county received 20 calls to its crisis hotline in 2018	None	Crisis hotline	County public health
Farm Bureau	April 2020	Mental health for farmers	Economic uncertainty, stress		None	Annie's Project	County public health, Farm Bureau, Corn Growers
La Familia	April 2020	Childcare for Latinx families	Both parents often employed full-time to earn living wage		Lack of awareness, translation	4-H programs for Latinx youth & referrals to social services	La Familia

## APPENDIX C: List of Larimer County CNA Key Informants

Key External Stakeholder	Area of Expertise	Location	Current Partner?
4-H Foundation	Youth development, 4H	Larimer County	Y
A Little Help		Berthoud	
Berthoud RAFT	Seniors, transportation, Berthoud	Berthoud	
City of Fort Collins Neighborhood Services	Homeowners, Renters, Educational	Fort Collins	N
Early Childhood Council of Larimer County	Childcare, youth development	Larimer County	Y
Estes Park Economic Development Corporation	Childcare, housing, economic development	Estes Park	
Estes Park Housing Authority	Housing	Estes Park	
Estes Valley Crisis Advocates		Estes Park	
Estes Valley Library			
Gardens on Spring Creek	Environment, youth development, education	Fort Collins	
Generation Connect	Youth, seniors	Loveland/Fort Collins	
House of Neighborly Service	Low income, Loveland	Loveland/Berthoud	N
La Familia	Latinx community, youth development, health	Fort Collins	
Larimer County Department of Health & Environment	Government agency, health, environment	Larimer County	Y
Larimer County Extension (Former Employee)		Larimer County	
Larimer Small Business Development Center	Small businesses, economic development	Fort Collins	N
Loveland Public Library		Loveland	
Master Gardener/Advisory Board Member	Volunteer, environment, adult education	Larimer County	Y
Matthews House	Family stability, youth development, domestic violence, career development	Fort Collins	
Partnership for Age Friendly Communities	Seniors	Larimer County	Y
Poudre High School Family Engagement Liaison	Youth, rural, mental health, workforce development, Latinx populations	Fort Collins, Wellington	
Poudre River Public Library	Needs assessments, education, community events, youth dev.	Fort Collins	N
Raisin Roots Farm	Agriculture	Fort Collins	Y
Red Feather Lakes Library	Rural, education	Red Feather Lakes	Y
Wellington Town Administrator	Rural, education, youth development	Wellington	
YMCA Estes Park Center	Youth development, environment, Estes Park	Estes Park	

## APPENDIX D: Community Engagement Resource Chart and Instructions

This chart helps to identify local resources that may be tapped in order to engage with the Latinx community, such as cultural settings, traditions, businesses, physical spaces, cultural heritage(s), institutions, individuals, associations, and community festivals and events. The chart can be completed with information gathered from local partners and it can be adapted to engage other groups that have been underrepresented in CSUE programming. Staff have also used online databases of nonprofit organizations and service providers, as well as individual program websites, to research and record information about various resources on this chart. Examples of resources for the Latinx community are provided below (*courtesy of Erika Sandoval, Diversity & Inclusive Engagement Specialist, Front Range Region, CSUE*).





## Latinx Community Engagement Resource List

### Cultural Settings/Traditions

Home, church, special gatherings, cultural group performances

### Businesses

Spanish language media, (Hispanic) Chamber of Commerce, business associates, restaurants, food trucks, specialized stores, travel agencies, banks/credit unions, remittance locations, farmers markets, Latinx-owned, run companies

### Physical Spaces

Gardens, parks, playgrounds, parking lots, bike paths, walking paths, forest (s), preserves, picnic areas, campsites, fishing spots

### Cultural Heritage(s)

Rites of passage, special holidays, hometown assistance, family stories, artistic traditions, traditional agricultural knowledge, special recipes

### Institutions

Schools, afterschool programs, universities, Community Colleges/Technical Training Programs, libraries, community-based organizations, museums, local government, hospitals, social service agencies

### Individuals

Elders, parents, youth leaders, youth workers, respected yard duty/security, Latinx-serving program leaders, artists, entrepreneurs/business owners, activists, extended family networks, (in)formal Latinx community leaders

### Associations

Hometown associations, unions, tenant/neighborhood associations, business associations, health/fitness groups, cultural groups, elder groups, advocacy networks, family support groups, heritage groups, hobby & collectors groups, charitable groups, Latinx fraternities/sororities, mutual/immigrant support groups, political organizations, service clubs, veterans' groups, youth groups, civic events groups

### Community Festivals/Events

Sports tournaments, health fairs, special holiday gatherings, locally specific gatherings



## APPENDIX E: Key Informant Interview Protocol

***Much of the following protocol comes directly from Donaldson and Franck’s “Needs Assessment Guidebook for Extension Professionals” (2016).***

When conducting key informant interviews, preparation is extremely important because interviews can be challenging if you ask about highly personal topics. Interviews mainly provide qualitative data (such as perceptions, values, opinions, and information from personal observation) in contrast to quantitative data (quantities, amounts, percentages, proportions, facts, etc.) (Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

Although the list of sample questions below can be useful for your interviews, you’ll want to review and customize them before starting your interviews. When you contact the interviewee to invite them to participate in an interview, it’s important to know how long the interview will last. Practicing questions in advance and thinking through possible answers can help you gain a sense of how long the interview will take. A useful step is to interview coworkers to help determine the approximate length of the interview, to help build confidence in the questions and the interview process, and to identify any questions that are unclear. To be considerate of people’s time and attention spans, ideally the interview should not last more than 30 minutes. The following procedure can help you to stay on task and on time:

1. If recording, test equipment the day before the interview. Purchase any needed supplies (i.e., batteries for the recorder).
2. Engage in some small talk to put the interviewee at ease.
3. Inform the interviewee that the purpose of the interview is for CSU’s OEE to collect information for our comprehensive, statewide community needs assessment. Information provided by the interviewee will be used to understand important issues facing local communities in order to help ensure that local and statewide OEE resources align with community priorities.
4. Assure the interviewee that the interview is confidential.
5. If recording, get the interviewee’s verbal permission to before recording.
6. Ask if the interviewee is ready for you to begin recording.
7. Conduct the interview, being sure to record responses verbally or in written form.
8. If you do not understand an answer, be honest and ask the interviewee to clarify for you.

9. Resist the temptation to offer advice about how to answer (Creswell, 1998).
10. Watch the time and do not go over time.
11. Thank the interviewee for participating.
12. Return to the office to review notes and reflect on the interview. Reflecting is important because it can provide a context for the interview. What was the mood of the person being interviewed? Were they engaged or distracted? Did they have an agenda separate from the topic of interest? What were the key findings from the interview?
13. If recorded, listen back to the recording and takes notes as needed.



## **Sample Questions and Interview Form**

Date:

Participant name:

Make the interviewee feel comfortable by starting with some small talk.

Provide a high-level background about CSUE and OEE, including CSUE's mission to "empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources".

Explain that the purpose of the interview is to understand your perspective on the issue or population you've chosen them to represent so that CSUE can more clearly understand specific community needs. Should an issue that the key informant is speaking about rise to the top of community priorities, CSUE may wish to involve that same key informant in exploring programming partnerships in the implementation phase of the CNA process.

### **Questions**

1. I would like to learn more about your experience working on X issue or in the Y (demographic such as Latinx) community. Can you provide me a little personal background?
2. Based on this experience, can you help me understand more about the particular issue (or issues facing this demographic) in our community?
3. Can you think of any contributing factors associated with this issue (such as mental health being one possible contributing factor to homelessness)?
4. Are you aware of others who are working to address this issue/these issues, including potential partners for CSUE/OEE?
5. (If you are in need of more informants, consider asking for a good contact at this point.)
6. Knowing what you do about CSUE/OEE, can you suggest any kinds of strategies for us to develop and/or deliver educational resources to address this issue/these issues? Please feel free to suggest bold opportunities for how we might work in new ways.
7. If we were to develop and/or deliver these educational resources, what kinds of barriers come to mind about how people may find and access them?

To finish up, mention that you have two more “asks” of them as a key informant:

1. Our next step in the CNA process will be to distribute our CNA survey as widely as possible. Would this key informant be willing to distribute the survey to her/his contacts and/or does this key informant suggest any specific ways to reach the population s/he represents with a survey?
2. Would this key informant be willing to respond to an 8-minute “Civic Capacity Index” electronic survey to help us gauge community readiness for change?
3. Finally, does the key informant have any questions for you?

When developing your own custom questions to ask, consider the following:

- Start with prompts, such as “Describe for me...”, “Tell me about a time when...”, “Can you give me an example of...”, and “Tell me about a situation that...” (Gupta, 1999).
- If asking about behaviors, more accurate information is obtained when you ask about a specific time period rather than asking people what they “usually” do.
- The time period you select should correspond to the topic. For example, the last 12 months would apply to home ownership or pregnancy, whereas the last 24 hours would apply to eating dairy products.





## APPENDIX F: Focus Group Protocol

*Much of the following protocol comes directly from Donaldson and Franck's "Needs Assessment Guidebook for Extension Professionals" (2016).*

### Preparation

When planning and preparing for focus groups, consider the following:

- Secure a location that will be comfortable for the specific group you're expecting. Some groups may not be comfortable in a government building, for example, so be sensitive to those dynamics when selecting a location.
- Set up the room so that groups of seven to 10 people plus a moderator and recorder/note taker can interact comfortably. Round tables are good options for this. Also provide name tags and refreshments.
- Ensure that you have at least one recorder or note taker per group, and that these individuals have the equipment or supplies they need to record or take notes.
- If you think the focus groups may go longer than one hour, plan for a break after an hour.
- Review the list of "Moderator Best Practices" at the end of this protocol.

### Introduction

The introduction sets the tone for the focus group. The moderator introduces her/himself and any others who are playing a working role in the activities (i.e., recorders, moderators). Also cover the following:

- Background: provide a high-level background about CSUE and OEE, including CSUE's mission to "empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources."
- Purpose of the event: explain that the purpose of the focus group is to understand your perspectives on the issue or populations they've been chosen to represent so that CSUE can more clearly understand specific community needs.

- Confidentiality: explain that we have recorders/note takers because we want to make sure to capture your experiences and ideas. **That said, everything that you say is confidential. We ask that you do not share what others have discussed with people outside of this group.**
- Length of the focus group: Reiterate the agenda and time boundaries of the focus group, including any planned breaks.

### Ground Rules

1. First, there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinions and perspectives on the needs of your community.
2. Second, you do not have to agree with everyone else in this room if that is not how you really feel. We expect people will have different views on these questions.
3. Third, we want you to feel comfortable saying good things as well as critical things. We are not here to promote a particular way of thinking. We just want to understand your viewpoints.
4. Fourth, we ask that you talk one at a time.
5. Consider other ground rules (such as turning cell phones off if possible) or opening it up to the group to suggest other ground rules (time permitting).

### Sample Questions for an Issues-based Focus Group

1. I would like to start by learning more about each other. Can you introduce yourself and provide a little background on your work or experience with X issue?
2. Based on your background and experience, what do you see as some of the root causes associated with this particular issue in our community?
3. Are you aware of others who are working to address this issue/these issues, including potential partners for CSUE/OEE?
4. Knowing what you do about CSUE/OEE, can you suggest any kinds of strategies for us to develop and/or deliver educational resources to address this issue? Please feel free to suggest bold opportunities for how we might work in new ways.
5. If we were to develop and/or deliver these educational resources, what kinds of barriers come to mind about how people may find and access them?

## Sample Questions for a Demographic-based Focus Group

1. I would like to start by learning more about each other. Can you introduce yourself and provide a little background on your work or experience with Y demographic?
2. Based on your background and experience, what do you see as some of the main issues facing this demographic in our community?
3. Can you think of any root causes associated with these issues (such as mental health being one possible root cause of homelessness)?
4. Are you aware of others who are working to address these issues, including potential partners for CSUE/OEE?
5. Knowing what you do about CSUE/OEE, can you suggest any kinds of strategies for us to develop and/or deliver educational resources to address these issues? Please feel free to suggest bold opportunities for how we might work in new ways.
6. If we were to develop and/or deliver these educational resources, what kinds of barriers come to mind about how people may find and access them?

## When developing your own custom questions to ask, open-ended questions are best.

For example:

- “Where does your child do homework?” rather than “Does your child do homework in your car on the way to school?”
- “What do you like best about...?” and “Think back...” questions usually work well.
- Question order needs to be logical; ordering questions from general to specific works well.
- Many focus groups use fewer than 10 questions.
- Avoid “Why” questions — Instead of “Why did you attend the Grain Conference?” ask, “What prompted you to attend the Grain Conference?”

## Closing

To close, thank the participants for sharing their experiences and perspectives. Thank the moderators and recorders/note takers. End with an opportunity for participants to ask questions of you, time permitting.

## Moderator Skills

The person conducting the focus group will be referred to as the 'moderator.' The first skill in moderating is the ability to "initiate and maintain a conversation with a stranger" (Frey & Oishi, 1995).

A good moderator uses the following skills:

- Be mentally prepared.
  - Be alert, friendly and free from distractions.
  - Listen.
  - Be completely familiar with questions.
- Discourage any controlling talkers.
  - Look at other participants.
  - Look down while they are talking.
  - Cross your hands.
  - Change your posture.
  - Shuffle your notes.
  - More direct techniques — "Let's take the next four minutes to silently write ideas for this question. [After four minutes] Now, I would like each person to share one idea at a time."
- Control your reactions.
  - Remain neutral; don't evaluate or judge in any capacity.
  - Keep your opinion to yourself.
  - Never say "that's good" or "excellent." Nod your head to encourage dialogue but don't show agreement with an idea.
  - Think about what you are communicating verbally and nonverbally.
- Keep listening.
  - Do not defend or justify.
  - If a participant seems especially emotional (angry, euphoric, etc.), ask the person to describe how they feel.
  - Validate by saying, "I understand why you would feel that way. Tell me more."
  - Validate by saying, "We're trying to get as much information as possible, so I appreciate you. Would anyone else like to share?"
- Offer appropriate questions.
  - Use pauses and probes.
  - Ask your question then pause.
  - Don't talk to fill the silence — allow people to think about the question.

- After someone stops speaking and no one else responds, wait 5 seconds, then call on someone else to comment.
- Probes:
  - “Would you explain further?”
  - “Tell me more.” or “Would you provide an example?”
  - “I don’t understand. Tell me more.”
  - Repeat the question.
  - Repeat the reply.
- Be flexible and consistent.
  - Moderators balance flexibility in questioning with consistency between and among different focus groups.
  - If everyone has spoken, ask if there’s anything else, then move on to the next question.
  - Participants should be having a conversation with each other; you are listening to that conversation.





## APPENDIX G: Civic Capacity Index Sample Items

### **Collective Leadership**

There are many people exercising leadership, some with positions of authority, many without.

### **Confronting Racism and Injustice**

The community works openly to address past racial issues and injustice.

### **Institutional Synergy**

Government agencies engage with the public on an ongoing basis to inform, consult, involve, and collaborate.

### **Engaging Civic Culture**

There is a widespread attitude of resilience, prosperity, and hopefulness based on common values, vision, or civic culture.

### **Organic Coalitions**

Coalitions learn from each other and from past efforts about what works and doesn't work.

### **Purposeful Collaboration**

Authentic processes are in place that create commitment and confidence, with people feeling that they are respected and valued.

### **Learning Together**

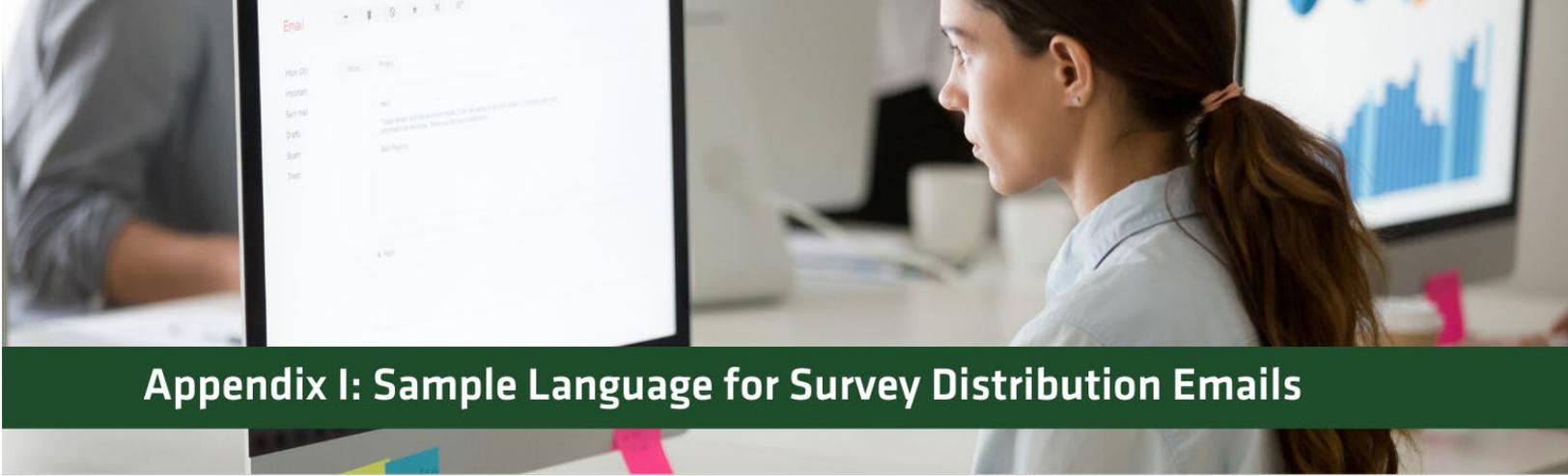
Stakeholders have the knowledge and skills to constructively engage with each other and collectively move to action.



## Appendix H: Larimer County Extension's Initial Survey Distribution Plan

### Community Assessment Survey

Article			
		Due to be out just after Thanksgiving. Have to see how timing/venue can work us	Larimer Connection newsletter <input type="checkbox"/>
11/15/2019	Other	Draft of landing page for survey	Qualtrics <input type="checkbox"/>
11/20/2019	Collateral	Half sheet handout with QR code and web address encouraging participation	Paper handout <input type="checkbox"/>
12/2/2019	Website	Survey promo	Home page slider <input type="checkbox"/>
12/2/2019	Facebook	Introduce Survey	LCE Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/2/2019	Website	Feature highlight?	Lar Cty Website <input type="checkbox"/>
12/2/2019	Next Door	Introduce Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
12/2/2019	Facebook	Introduce Survey	Lar County Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Facebook	Introduce Survey	Lar Cty Farmers' Market Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Instagram	Introduce Survey	Lar Cty Instagram <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Other	Introduce Survey	Lar Cty Twitter <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Instagram	Introduce Survey	Lar Cty Farmers' Market Instagram <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Email	Emailed to 898 4-H Families	Pam Heeneey <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Email	Emailed to 208 FLTI list	Lisa Auer <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Email	Emailed to 11 colleagues	Matt Halloran <input type="checkbox"/>
12/3/2019	Email	Emailed to Larimer County Alliance of Grandfamilies group - 33 people	Sue Schneider <input type="checkbox"/>
12/10/2019	Email	Emailed to Master Gardener list about 125	LCE Master Gardeners <input type="checkbox"/>
12/11/2019	Facebook	Reminder	Lar Cty Farmers' Market Page <input type="checkbox"/>
12/11/2019	Facebook	Reminder	Lar Cty Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/11/2019	Facebook	Reminder	LCE Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/12/2019	Instagram	Reminder	Lar Cty Farmers' Mkt Instagram <input type="checkbox"/>
12/12/2019	Instagram	Reminder	Lar Cty Instagram <input type="checkbox"/>
12/13/2019	Other	How easy is it for Extension to purchase 10 \$25 gift cards. Can be difficult to do through CSU	Gift cards (Amazon) <input type="checkbox"/>
12/18/2019	Facebook	Reminder that survey closes on the 20th	LCE Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/18/2019	Facebook	Reminder that survey closes on the 20th	Lar Cty Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/18/2019	Facebook	Reminder that survey closes on the 20th	Lar Cty Farmers' Market Facebook <input type="checkbox"/>
12/18/2019	Next Door	Reminder that survey closes on the 20th	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Appendix I: Sample Language for Survey Distribution Emails

Help us focus our efforts to improve education and resources that benefit the community by taking this short survey. PLEASE SHARE. We want everyone's input! Taking the survey will only take about 10-12 minutes of your time, but will help us plan for many years!

**SURVEY LINK:** <http://bit.ly/larimercty> Ten randomly selected people who complete the survey will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card. The survey will close on December 29th

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and opinions with us!

**Larimer County Extension  
Community Needs Assessment**

Tell us how our research-based information  
and education can improve your life.

**SURVEY**  
*We need your input*

LarimerExtension.org

LARIMER COUNTY  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

## APPENDIX J: Tools to Help Filter & Select Issues to Address

### Core Competency Identification

(From Upboard: <https://upboard.io/>)

Competencies	Description	Importance	Defensibility	Competency Strength
What are our key strengths (technologies, assets, business models, capabilities, etc.)?	What does this competency allow us to do?	How strategic is it for the future? 1 = Low; 10 = High	Can competitors copy it? 1=Easy; 10=Hard	Score of 15 or higher indicates strategic capability & likely differentiator
				0
				0
				0
				0
				0

## Cut Before You Add

(From LBL Strategies)

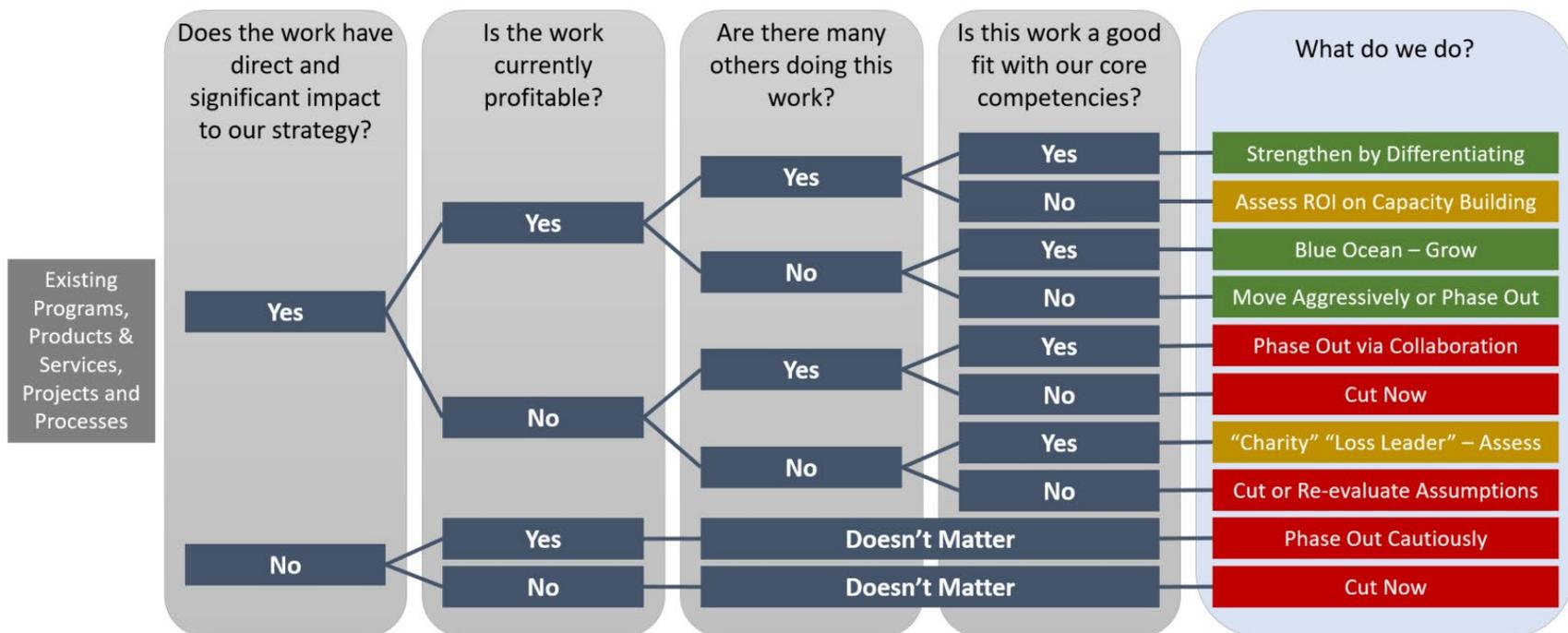
### How to use this template

**Why use it?** – No matter how large or small, every organization has limited resources. Use this template to trim back current programs, products & services, projects and processes, so the team can focus on what’s really important.

**When to use it?** – Prior to implementing new initiatives or when narrowing down areas of focus.

**Instructions:** Use this decision tree to evaluate your existing programs, products & services, projects and processes. Complete the Implications and Conclusions sections below. **NOTE: For public sector programs, instead of answering whether a program is “profitable”, answer whether it is “successful” or “impactful”.**

### DECISION TREE



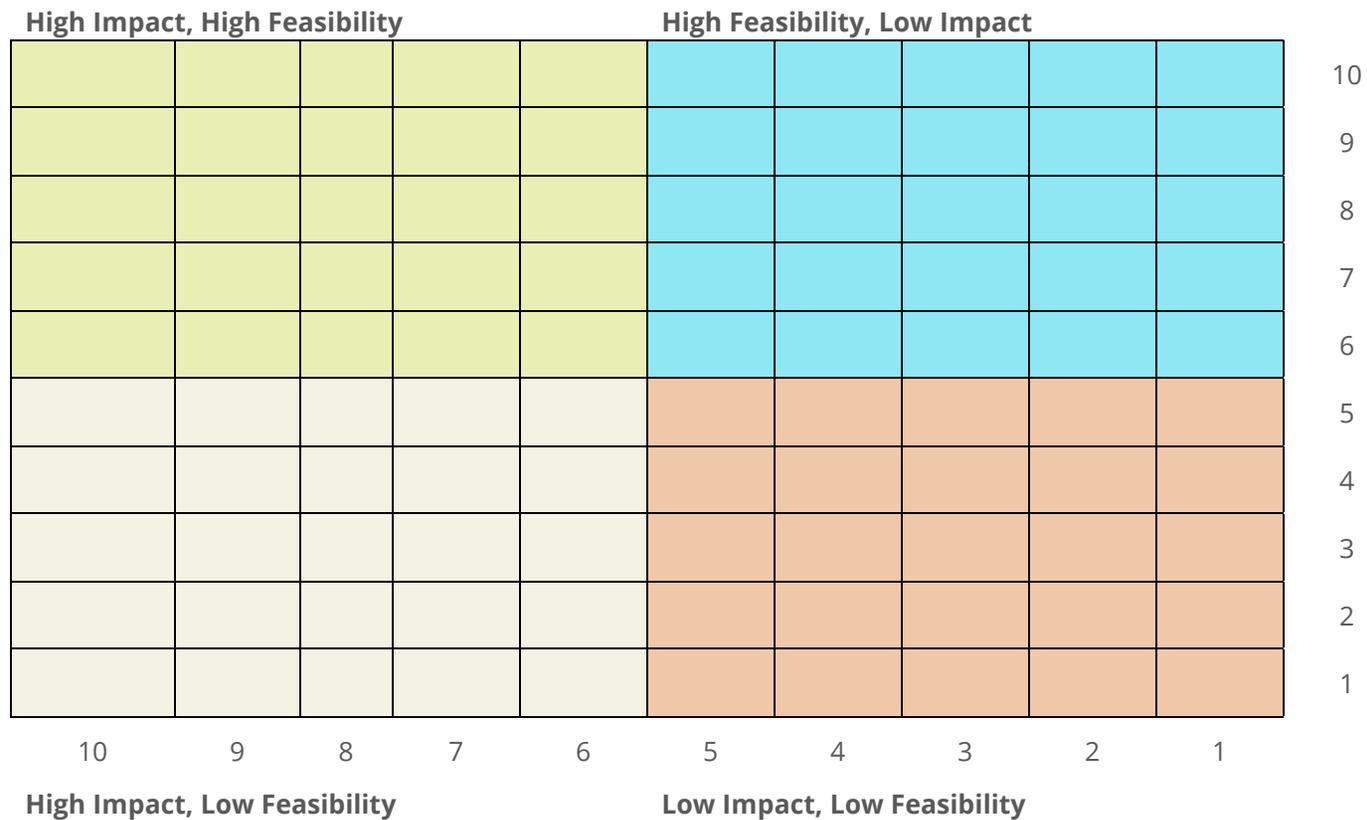
Modified from this article: <https://trinaisakson.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/27-Shift-MacMillan-Matrix-as-Decision-Tree.pdf>

## 2x2 Prioritization Matrix

(Adopted from LBL Strategies)

Instructions:

Each member of a group ranks a list issues 1-10 according to perceived “strategic impact” and 1-10 according to perceived feasibility to implement. Use the average scores for impact (y-axis) and feasibility (x-axis) to place issues on the matrix below. Discuss implications.



## Size and Seriousness Test

(Donaldson & Franck, 2016)

- *Size*: What is the percentage of the population affected by the issue...from 1 percent to 100 percent? Assign ranks to the issues based on the size of the population affected; 100 percent would be assigned a 1 and the next ascending percentage would be assigned 2, etc.
- *Seriousness*: What is the urgency of this issue? To what degree will it affect the quality of life, environment and/or economy? Assign ranks to the issues based on the seriousness; 1 would be assigned to the most urgent issue, 2 would be assigned to the issue judged to be the next most urgent, etc.
- Finally, add the two ranks together. The issue with the lowest score is the priority issue.

## PEARL Test

(Donaldson & Franck, 2016)

PEARL is an acronym for propriety, economics, acceptability, resources and legality. Use this series of questions to evaluate each issue systematically and determine the priority issue:

- *Propriety*: Is a program for this issue suitable? Can the issue be solved through education (as education is the business of Extension)?
- *Economics*: Does it make economic sense to address this problem? Are there economic consequences if a program is not conducted?
- *Acceptability*: Will this program be accepted in the community? Can any barriers to acceptability be overcome?
- *Resources*: Do we have what we need to conduct the program?
- *Legality*: Do current laws allow program activities to be implemented?

## APPENDIX K: Sample County Program Plan Template

Key issue/need	Contributing factors	Supporting data (social indicators)	Barriers to accessing CSUE resources	Strategies for CSUE	CSUE intended impact	Partner organizations
Mental health for farmers	Economic uncertainty, stress	Prevalence of county mental health issues 2x state average	None	Annie's Project	Empower women to share in ag business decision-making	County public health, Farm Bureau, Corn Growers
Childcare for Latinx families	Both parents often employed full-time to earn living wage	3x as many Latinx families in the county have two working parents compared to non-Latinx families	Lack of awareness, translation	4-H programs for Latinx youth & referrals to social services	Provide meaningful growth opportunities for Latinx children in need of care	La Familia

## APPENDIX L: CSU Extension Program Planning Framework

