

Asset Mapping Resources

What is Asset Mapping?

Asset mapping is a process that helps communities think broadly about the individuals, groups, services, and interventions that support youth and families and allow them to thrive. Planning processes often start by identifying deficits and problems. By starting with a strength-based approach, communities can identify well-known and sometimes hidden potential for solutions. The process requires participation by all members of the community, particularly those who are consumers of services and are often not at formal decision-making tables.

There are many different models and approaches to asset mapping across disciplines. This resource is designed to help you identify which approach is best for your community based on your resources and capacity. The list provided in this resource is not all-inclusive as many jurisdictions have developed their own approaches.

What Asset Mapping is Not

Asset mapping is not formal evaluation or research. It typically does not need a credentialed researcher to complete the process. Asset mapping is primarily a qualitative process completed through dialogue, surveys, and focus groups. It is recommended this information then be layered with other local data to create a holistic picture of the assets and needs.

Asset mapping typically assists a jurisdiction in identifying what exists in a community's continuum of care. There is a broad array of youth justice programs and services, ranging from prevention programs for young children and youth at risk of delinquency, to intervention programs serving high-risk youth in secure residential settings, to reentry programs for youth returning to their communities. Most models do not

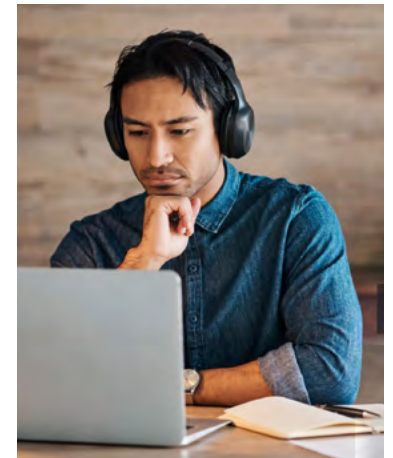
measure the effectiveness of a program. This is something to consider when assessing gaps/needs. *Citation: OJJDP Continuum of Care for Communities Infographic (2023)*



Choosing an Asset Mapping Model

There are many things to consider when deciding what type of asset mapping model will fit your community's planning needs. Here are some important things to think about when selecting a model:

1. **BUDGET.** Some models are free, while others have a fee to utilize their technology or service. Consider sustainability and long-term access to the information gathered if you select a fee-based model.
2. **TIME INTENSITY.** The duration of the process varies by model. Some only require one or two meetings while others engage community members in a variety of ways such as focus groups, surveys, etc. Consider how this mapping activity fits into your broader planning process and timeline.
3. **STAFF CAPACITY.** As mentioned above, asset mapping can be time intensive. Consider the staff resources you have dedicated to this activity. Some communities contract with facilitators, community based/neighborhood organizations, or local universities who have expertise in this work. Matching your capacity to the model is important to ensure fidelity as you proceed.
4. **EQUITY.** Engaging the voices of system-involved and -impacted youth and families is an essential element of the Continuum of Care planning process. Some models have clear guidance on this engagement while others are more generic in approach. Consider the experience of your staff, partners, and planning council. If your community has experience in this level of engagement, that will help with the variety of models that might fit your needs. Also consider if the model helps support accessing broader community voice from other under-represented populations within your community.
5. **GEOGRAPHY.** Some models are primarily focused on gathering information through individual, neighborhood, and/or community surveys or focus groups. These often require access to internet or transportation to attend. These are important considerations for rural and urban jurisdictions alike. Strive to set up a process that allows as many community members as possible equitable access to participate. Some models are also unique to a specific jurisdiction. Consider if they can be easily replicated for your community.
6. **EVIDENCE-INFORMED.** Typically, these models have been developed by state and national entities through decades of trial and error. Evidence-informed approaches utilize standardized questions and processes that have been proven to work across jurisdictions. Consider your capacity to implement these with fidelity to the model.
7. **TECHNOLOGY.** Many models utilize a survey approach. Surveys can be done by text, online, or on paper. If you choose an electronic format, consider your access to survey software and cost. Paper surveys can be time intensive to collect and often have a low response rate. Local colleges or universities can be good partners in this area.
8. **TRAINING.** Some models offer training on how to facilitate their process. Consider if this fits your broader planning time frame and budget. Connect with your community partners to see if someone in your community is already trained.



Models to Consider

Place Matters Maine: Community Asset Mapping

This project maps assets for transition-aged youth throughout Maine's 16 counties and provides tools and resources to support local asset mapping. Supported by the Cutler Institute, Muskie School of Public Service-University of Southern Maine
*OJJDP RFP

- [Community Asset Mapping - Place Matters \(placemattersmaine.org\)](https://placemattersmaine.org/)

KEY ELEMENTS: Sustained university/research support. Aligns directly with OJJDP COC. Contributes to a larger statewide assessment and planning model. Website with reports and resources. Engages youth, family, and community voices. Free resources.

INTENSITY:  Medium

CONSIDERATIONS: Specific to Maine. Assets were collected through an online survey for each county. This survey is closed and not available for general use. The survey may be replicable, but a site would need technology and support resources to utilize this approach.

Participatory Asset Mapping

An instructional toolkit for using and applying Participatory Asset Mapping to support strategic planning efforts by building on existing community strengths. Produced by Community Research Lab. *OJJDP RFP

- [Participatory Asset Mapping.pdf](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: This process uses actual visual maps. Strong community participatory component. Extensive glossary of terms. Provides information on using wiki maps if not involved in CA work. Facilitation guide provided. Provides ethical considerations. Toolkit is free.

INTENSITY:  High

CONSIDERATIONS: Healthy City website is specific to CA and is sunsetting at the end of 2024. Toolkit PDF has good concepts but ideally is linked to the Healthy City quantitative data tool. Only using the visual map could be limiting to broader planning needs. Minimal information on how to engage youth and families.

UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

Basic overview of community assets, asset mapping use cases, and asset mapping implementation. Supported by UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. *OJJDP RFP

- [Health DATA Program \(ucla.edu\)](https://ucla.edu/health-data-program/)
- [Section 1: Asset Mapping](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Provides a 10-page general overview of Community Asset mapping. Free.

INTENSITY:  Low

CONSIDERATIONS: Resources are focused on health systems. Training videos on the website but they are geared toward the data tools. Data appears to be for CA. Additional workshops are offered at a cost.

Rural Health Information Hub

This website provides extensive resources on community asset mapping for rural health spaces. It serves as a broader clearinghouse of information rather than a specific model to follow. *OJJDP RFP

- [Identify Community Needs and Assets - RHlhub Community Health Toolkit \(ruralhealthinfo.org\)](https://ruralhealthinfo.org/)

KEY ELEMENTS: Rural & Health Focus. Extensive website that includes current resources. Resources with clear definitions, example programs, and implementation recommendations. Highlights equity and diversity. Has links to other toolkits/resources. Free.

INTENSITY:  Low

CONSIDERATIONS: No printable templates. The website is extensive which requires time to review and search for specific information. Minimal information on how to engage youth and family voice.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

This toolkit and related resources were developed by NCJFCJ specifically for courts and stakeholders to map substance use resources and gaps. It was supported by OJJDP as a part of the larger opioid initiative. *OJJDP RFP

- [Targeted Resource Mapping Toolkit: Six Strategies to Fill Community Service Gaps - NCJFCJ](#)
- [Targeted Resource Mapping Toolkit: Mapping Resources Along a Continuum of Services to Address Substance Use Disorders - NCJFCJ](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Clear concise printable toolkit. Highlights equity and diversity. Provides resource on how to create a mapping team. Provides worksheets and tools for facilitators. Provides considerations for implementation and sustainability of a directory. Free.

INTENSITY:  Low

CONSIDERATIONS: Minimal information on how to engage youth and family voice. This model is focused primarily on formal substance use services.

RFK Probation System Review

Published by RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice. This is focused on probation systems but can apply to broader juvenile justice systems. This includes community engagement and process mapping which is slightly different than asset mapping.

- [Probation-System-Review-Guidebook-3rd-Edition-Printer-Friendly.pdf \(rfknrcjj.org\)](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Encourages engagement of community, youth, and family voice. Follows the process youth and families go through in the JJ system and identifies needs and resources. Highlights equity and diversity. Provides sample documents and examples for facilitators/groups to follow. Focused on evidence-based results. Strong data component.

INTENSITY:  High

CONSIDERATIONS: Probation specific. RFK provides training and technical assistance for a cost. Requires a skilled facilitator and cohesive leadership team to do this without technical assistance. Minimal information on how to specifically engage youth and families.

Unlocking your Community's Hidden Strengths: A Guidebook to Community Asset-Mapping

Published by AYJA and Southern Poverty Law Center

- [Unlocking Your Community's Hidden Strengths: A Guidebook to Community Asset-Mapping | Southern Poverty Law Center \(splcenter.org\)](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Clear focus on individual, neighborhood, and community assets. Provides templates and step by step guide. References the benefit of quantitative data. Free.

INTENSITY:  Medium

CONSIDERATIONS: The resources provided are Alabama specific but give the reader ideas of where to start in their location. Surveying and gathering qualitative information require facilitation experience. Data mining suggestions are somewhat outdated, i.e. references looking in phone book. Minimal information on how to engage youth voice in the process.

Asset Based Community Development Institute/Asset Mapping Toolkit

Published by Dan Duncan, Clear Impact, Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute, housed at Northwestern/DePaul University. The founders of the institute, John McKnight and Jodi Kretzmann. Key question is, "What can we do with what we already have to get what we need?"

- [D. Duncan Asset Mapping Toolkit Nine Steps to Increase Residential Engagement.pdf \(depaul.edu\)](#)
- [Tool Kit | Resources | ABCD Institute | DePaul University, Chicago](#)
- [ABCD Institute | DePaul University, Chicago](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Clear community, strength-based approach. Nine specific action steps. Active online support community. Aligns with collective impact concepts. Provides a variety of tools to meet different community focuses. Free.

INTENSITY:  Medium

CONSIDERATIONS: Model is not youth justice focused, but concepts can translate to JJ system work. Missing a clear quantitative data component. Provides options for fee based support.

Community Tool Box

Center for Community Health and Development- University of Kansas

- [Home | Center for Community Health and Development \(ku.edu\)](#)
- [Chapter 3. Assessing Community Needs and Resources | Section 8. Identifying Community Assets and Resources | Main Section | Community Tool Box \(ku.edu\)](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: This website is organized well as a toolbox. Each section builds on the next with clear research support documented at the end as well as links to additional resources. Provides user-friendly checklists and tools. Free.

INTENSITY:  Medium

CONSIDERATIONS: There is a lot of information, which takes time to review. This framework is not youth justice focused, but concepts can be applied to youth justice work. Limited quantitative approach.

Qualitative information gathering requires some facilitation experience.

Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping

The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM). This model was originally designed by SAMHSA in the early 2000's to help communities link the issues between substance use and criminal justice.

- [Criminal Justice System Sequential Intercept Model | SAMHSA](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: SIM Mapping training provided by SAMHSA's GAINS Center. Used to guide sites in a broader planning process. Data collection manual resource to help sites prepare data necessary for SIM process.

INTENSITY:  High

CONSIDERATIONS: Training is provided through a solicitation process. Costs are likely associated with attending the training. Specific to mapping assets for substance use and mental health.

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)/ SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results)

General framework for strategic planning commonly used by organizations.

- [SWOT Analysis Template: How to do vital strategy groundwork \(cascade.app\)](#)
- [SOAR Analysis: What It Is & Step-By-Step Guide \(2024\) \(cascade.app\)](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Familiar framework that most people have participated in. Simple to facilitate.

INTENSITY:  Low

CONSIDERATIONS: Lacks guidance on including quantitative information. The approach is not youth justice specific but can be applied in youth justice planning work. Does not provide specific guidance on how to engage youth and family voice.

Journey Mapping (Learner Experience Mapping)

This process has benefits across many disciplines and is used to map an individual's experience in a program or system. This activity is often utilized with youth and allows them a creative way to express their experience within the system(s) and programs that serve them.

- [\(5\) \(PDF\) Utilizing journey mapping to evaluate youth programs and social service systems: Case studies \(researchgate.net\)](#)
- [Mapping-the-Impact-of-Systems-and-Places-on-Youth-Pathways.pdf \(placemattersmaine.org\)](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: Focused on centering youth voice in the planning process. No formal training required. Free. Allows for creativity by youth and facilitator. Less intimidating for youth and families.

INTENSITY:  Medium

CONSIDERATIONS: Asking youth and families to describe their experience could trigger past trauma. Essential to create a physically and psychologically safe space for this activity. Requires an experienced, engaging, and creative facilitator.

Prevention Institute Coalition Building and Collaboration Toolkit

While not specifically asset mapping, this site provides useful tools and resources for building effective coalitions which will aid in asset mapping activities. The site also provides tools on how to effectively measure collaboration.

- [Tools | Prevention Institute](#)

KEY ELEMENTS: User friendly research-based guide and tools. No training needed. Free.

INTENSITY: Low

CONSIDERATIONS: Not a specific asset mapping model. The institute does provide training and support for a fee.



Intensity Key

The tools in this guide have been given an intensity rating based on general characteristics of the approach. They are designed to be a guide and not prescriptive. Communities need to determine what is the best fit for their planning process.

Low Intensity: A model rated as “low intensity” is general in nature. There is generally no required training involved to facilitate the model. There are minimal technological requirements. Someone with limited experience in facilitating an activity like this could use this approach with expected success.

Medium Intensity: A model rated as “medium intensity” has a more structured framework that should be carefully followed to result in expected outcomes. Training may be required, and some facilitation experience is beneficial. The model may have a technology component to mapping.

High Intensity: A model rated as “high intensity” has a highly structured framework that must be followed for fidelity. There is likely required training, and high level facilitation skills are necessary. The framework may be specific to a topic area. The model may have a higher-level technology component to mapping.