



# School Community Asset Mapping

10 Points School District

School Community Asset Mapping (SCAM) creates a collective inventory of the positive and valued aspects of a community by identifying the places, institutions, programs, and people that contribute to making our communities great places to learn and live. Asset mapping is an inspiring way to learning more about the resources available to your school community to enrich student learning as well as to support your students and school families. School community assets can include information on local artists, scientists and other experts, parks, local historic buildings, and green businesses, but can also include resources like cultural activities and events, arts, cultural and service organizations, social service agencies, and community organizations that are part of the greater community context.

Each school will decide how to complete its asset inventory and identify the types of resources to be included in the data collection process. Information can be summarized on a traditional map or hosted on a web-based map, organized into a database, or summarized in a report. School Community Asset Mapping initiatives that have been completed for a school or updated within the past three years and shared with the school community will meet the program submission standards for this action.

## Why is it important?

The process of identifying school community assets helps members of the school understand what resources they currently have that are supporting a sustainable economy and environment, or supporting the social and cultural needs of students, staff and families. By reflecting back on this starting point, schools can identify and understand opportunities to link, leverage, expand, or support new programs, organizations, activities, and businesses that support a sustainable future. The Community Tool Box (see "Resources") defines community assets as anything that can be used to improve the quality of community life.

These can include:

- Physical structures or places, including parks, schools, hospitals, places of worship, recreational resources, libraries, historical places, neighborhoods within communities, clinics, and social/fraternal organizations. Natural assets, like wetlands, trails, and open space, or informal gathering places are also part of the community's assets.
- Community resources such as health clinics, tutoring centers, social services organizations, faith-based organizations, recreational groups (both organized sports and informal recreational activities), civic and fraternal organizations, economic development or business associations, and job training programs.
- Businesses that provide local jobs and services for students and the school community. Businesses are also an important treasure trove of experts, services and materials for the school community.
- People are also community assets. Understanding and identifying people who routinely volunteer, mentor, and share their expert knowledge and organizational skills to strengthen communities can be a force for school community improvement. Local experts, such as scientists, artists, designers, historians, and technology specialists, would also fall into this category.

## Who should lead and be involved with this action?

School Community Asset Mapping is most successful when all parts of the school community are engaged in organizing and leading the process. The school Green Team could invite the school principal, other district administrators, school board members, and parent-teacher groups, and also could reach out to municipal and county officials, civic organizations, art and culture centers, nonprofit groups, athletic organizations, and business associations for

representatives to serve on the SCAM Committee.

Successful projects have also been initiated as a class or grade level project or even as a capstone service project for high school seniors or scouts. Students, staff, and families can play important roles in gathering information on community assets by inviting them to events organized to identify school community assets.

Schools may want to consider partnering with all schools in your district as well as with your municipal Green Team to develop a school and municipal community asset map. If schools work together to develop a district-wide School Community Asset Inventory, all participating schools will earn points for this activity. Some municipalities have already completed an asset identification and mapping project that could also serve as a great starting point for your school efforts.

## **Timeframe**

The School Community Asset Mapping project can be done in less than a month, but could also take up to twelve months to complete, depending on the technology and method used for the inventory process. Schools can also choose to view the school community asset identification as an ongoing project that is updated on an annual basis to recognize and celebrate new community resources and programs that are supporting community sustainability.

## **Project costs and resource needs**

A School Community Asset Mapping project can range from simple and low-cost efforts using interview techniques and paper maps, to technology-enhanced programs that use global positioning software, cameras, and interactive mapping programs to help gather and record sustainability resources and activities. Volunteer time and some school staff time is required for the simplest initiatives. School Green Teams should consider partnering with other schools in the district, municipal Green Team, civic groups, business associations, and nonprofit partners to identify, locate, and map community assets. Great technology is available for free or at low-cost to develop web-based and print versions of asset maps. These programs also allow the public at large to use web-based maps to locate and to nominate programs, organizations, businesses, and projects that support a more sustainable school community.

## **What to do, and how to do it ("How to")**

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A school does not need to follow this guidance exactly, as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

1. Appoint a committee, class or grade level to lead the asset mapping effort. Consider inviting students, staff, administration, classes, families, civic groups, and community organizations to be part of the planning and implementation team.
2. Determine the focus of the asset inventory data collection process. While inventories can focus on specific areas, they resulting school community asset map should be expansive in its approach.
3. Review and select the asset inventory approach that will work best for your individual school. Choose an approach that takes into account the amount of time the committee, class, or set of classes are willing to volunteer, as well as the technical or organizational needs of the chosen inventory method. Determine the level of staff support available to support the project. Inventory approaches can include:
  - a. Using interviews to identify community resources. Assets then can be put in a database, oral history, and/or summarized and identified on a community map.
  - b. Community Meetings or Events. Organize a school community meeting or event to gather asset information. Information can be gathered at meetings specifically organized to gather input on community assets or incorporated as an activity at regularly organized school Green Team meeting or event.
  - c. Web-based research can be used to quickly identify a wide range of organizations, businesses, places and institutions that serve as school community resources.
  - d. Online Mapping Tools. School community members can be invited to identify resources on a web-accessible map. Web-based maps can be supplemented with data collected from web-based research, community meetings, or combined with information gathered via field work/phone interviews.
4. Complete data collection and produce a final report, database/Excel sheet, or map of the resources organized into categories.

5. Share community asset information with the school Green Team and others who participated in the data collection process, and celebrate existing resources, programs, organizations, places, and people that are contributing to a sustainable school community. Schools can share the SCAM by posting the school website and sending an announcement on the completion of the SCAM to school staff and key school partners or distributing the document directly to school staff and key school partners via email.

Through this process, the school community will gain a better appreciation of the collective knowledge and expertise it has to draw upon, as well as an understanding of how past activities have influenced the types of programs and solutions that the school community might view as possible and desirable in the future.

## What to submit to earn points for this action

In order to earn points for this action, the following documentation must be submitted as part of the online certification application in order to verify that the action requirements have been met.

1. Description of Implementation – In the text box provided on the submission page for this action provide a short narrative (about 300 words or less) of what has been accomplished and the impact it has or will have on the school community.
2. School Community Asset Map as a text document, map or spreadsheet format that groups the assets into categories. The School Community Asset Mapping effort needs to have been completed or updated within the last three years. You may provide links to the school webpage or commercial website if the School Community Asset Map can also be viewed on a website.
3. Evidence that the School Community Asset Map was shared with the school staff and key school partners by either posting the document on the school website and sending an announcement on the completion of the SCAM to school staff and key school partners or distributing the document directly to school staff and key school partners via email.
4. Optional: Samples of outreach materials, survey tools, workshops, or meeting materials used while completing the Asset Mapping data collection.

## IMPORTANT NOTES:

There is a limit of six uploaded documents per action and individual files must not exceed 20 MB. Excerpts of relevant information from large documents are recommended.

All action documentation is available for public viewing after an action is approved. Action submissions should not include any information or documents that are not intended for public viewing.

## Spotlight: What New Jersey schools are doing

### Midland Park High School, Midland Park School District

Knowing one's community and the events and places within that community is a vital aspect of becoming part of that community. With all that goes on in people's lives on a daily basis it can become overwhelming to decipher what is happening, where to go, and what can you do to help in your own town. Creating a community map for Midland Park and some of the surrounding areas, our goal was to make aware all that our town has to offer. View the approved submission [here](#).

## Resources

### COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING APPROACHES

**The Asset-Based Community Development Institute's** Discovering Community Power: A Guide to Mobilizing Local Assets and Your Organization's Capacity— contains community mapping worksheets, partnership worksheets, and asset inventory worksheets

<http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/images/kelloggabcd.pdf>

**Community Tool Box** Section 8: Identifying Community Assets and Resources - contains tools useful for compiling an inventory of local organizations/institutions/private sector businesses/populations and for conducting interviews among these populations

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/identify-community-assets/main>

## **Strengthening Community Education: The Basis for Sustainable Renewal, Mapping Community Assets**

**workbook** by Diane Dorfman. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

<https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/resources/Documents/DorfmanMappingCommunityAssetsWorkBook.pdf>

**UCLACenter For Health Policy Research:** Community Asset

[http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/Documents/tw\\_cba20.pdf](http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/Documents/tw_cba20.pdf)

## **WEB-BASED COMMUNITY ASSET MAP EXAMPLES**

**Atlantic Highlands NJ Green Map** shows Nature, Culture and Society, and Sustainable Living

<http://www.opengreenmap.org/greenmap/atlantic-highlands-green-map>

**CommunityWalk** is a website dedicated to providing a powerful yet simple and easy-to-use interface for creating informational, interactive, and engaging maps. With the ability to show photos, add comments, display interactive media, hide and show categories of locations, this free software can help communities create maps using volunteer and community input.

<http://www.communitywalk.com>

**Green Maps Around the World:** The "Green Map" System energizes a diverse global movement of local mapmaking teams charting their community's natural, cultural, and green living resources with award-winning universal icons and adaptable multi-lingual resources. Youth Green Mapping resource are available for free, but there is very modest fee to use the platform.

<http://www.greenmap.org/>.

[http://www.greenmap.org/greenhouse/en/participate/youth\\_intro](http://www.greenmap.org/greenhouse/en/participate/youth_intro)

**Jersey City NJ Green Map:** Sustainable Living, Nature, Culture and Society

<http://www.opengreenmap.org/greenmap/jersey-city-nj>