Assess Shortcut

Take Stock. What challenges do you face? What strengths, assets, and resources do you have to face those challenges? Are there residents who face more challenges than others?

Here is a step-by-step guide you can use to understand your community's strengths and challenges.

Step 1: Prepare to Assess

The *County Health Rankings* provides a starting point for improving health and increasing health equity. Review your data to better understand how long and how well residents in your county live. As you get ready, consider:

- **Why** assess?
- **What** does community mean?
- **Who** will be involved?
- **How** will you conduct your assessment?
- **Where** to start?

Step 2: Generate Questions

Brainstorm questions to guide your assessment. Think about what you want to know about your community's health outcomes and the factors that influence how long and how well people live.

Not all Americans have the same opportunities to lead long and healthy lives. Who is most affected by gaps in opportunities for good health? Why?

Step 3: Gather Your Data

Gather data to help you answer your questions. Start with existing data and, if needed, collect your own. Be sure to think about the people, places, organizations, services, and policies already in your community. How can you build on what's already working?

Step 4: Use Data to Drive Action

Data tell a story. Data analysis allows you to drive attention and action to the areas of greatest need in your community. Examine community trends and compare your data to other communities for useful context and insights. Consider different sources of data to get the full story.

You may want to connect with data analysis experts to better understand how you move your data to action.

Step 5: Share Your Results

Share your results to raise community awareness, influence public opinion, and mobilize support. Be sure to create feedback loops. How will you incorporate community feedback?