

Why an Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Approach?

The ABCD approach is a strategic choice for the Kenton County Longevity Readiness Plan because it allows communities to build on existing resources, driving growth and sustainability. The ABCD method emphasizes leveraging local assets to foster community and organizational development, creating sustainable and impactful growth¹.

The goal of the Kenton County Longevity Readiness Project is to create a longevity-ready Kenton County across sectors and establish a culture that values our older community members. By embracing this ABCD approach, we aim to support the project goal by discovering what matters to Kenton County residents as they grow older, developing a sense of empowerment among county residents, and revealing our community's strengths.

Here's why the ABCD approach stands out:

1. **Empowerment through Strengths:** ABCD emphasizes identifying and leveraging existing assets within the community, empowering members to recognize their contributions and capacities. This fosters a sense of ownership and pride, translating into deeper community engagement and loyalty².
2. **Sustainable Organizational Growth:** By building on what already exists rather than creating dependencies on external support, ABCD cultivates sustainable practices that are more likely to withstand economic shifts³.
3. **Stronger Relationships:** Focusing on assets strengthens relationships among members, fostering greater collaboration and a culture of trust and commitment⁴.
4. **Innovation and New Revenue Streams:** ABCD's emphasis on what is possible encourages exploring innovative ways to mobilize resources to generate new service offerings and revenue streams¹.
5. **Adaptability and Resilience:** ABCD is dynamic, allowing strategies to continuously adapt and capitalize on emerging opportunities, keeping communities agile³.

Tools

The ABCD approach uses two primary tools: Asset Mapping and Action Analysis.

1. **Asset Mapping** - key asset categories that might be relevant⁵:
 - a. **Physical Assets:**
 - **Facilities:** Office space, meeting rooms, or event spaces that enable the delivery of programs and services.
 - **Equipment:** Computers, vehicles, or other equipment necessary for operational effectiveness.
 - b. **Social Capital:**
 - **Community Relationships:** Connections with local communities, non-profits, businesses, and governmental agencies.

- Partnerships: Collaborative relationships that enhance program delivery and extend reach.
- Reputation: The organization's standing in the community and among stakeholders, which can facilitate a more significant impact and easier access to resources.
- Advocacy Ability: The ability to influence policy and decision-making at local, state, or national levels.
- Legal Expertise: Knowledge and resources to navigate legal challenges and opportunities.

c. Intellectual Assets:

- Programs and Services: Innovations in service delivery program designs that can be replicated or scaled.
- Expertise in Specific Areas: Specialized knowledge or capabilities that address specific community needs or issues.
- Data and Research: Information collected through the organization's activities that can provide insights into community needs and program effectiveness.

d. Cultural Assets:

- Organizational Culture: Values and principles that guide the organization and resonate with its community and stakeholders.
- Community Traditions and Practices: Cultural knowledge and practices within the community that can inform and enhance service delivery.

e. Financial Assets:

- Funding Sources: Includes grants, donations, and other funding forms supporting the organization's activities.
- Endowments: Long-term investments that provide a steady income and financial stability.
- In-kind Contributions: Donations of goods and services rather than cash, which can reduce operational costs.
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Incorporating these assets into an ABCD approach involves recognizing and mapping these resources and strategically mobilizing them to enhance the project's effectiveness and sustainability. This process optimizes resources and fosters a deeper connection with the community, leading to more impactful and enduring outcomes.

2. **Action Analysis** uses a chart structured as follows:

How To?	Driving Forces	Restraining Forces	Assets Needed	Steps
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Each column of the Action Analysis tool is designed to structure and guide efforts toward effective problem-solving or strategic implementation. This is especially useful in complex scenarios involving multiple variables and stakeholders⁶.

1. How To: These are the goals and objectives of the process. It outlines the specific actions or strategies to advance the organization's mission. For example, "How to improve transportation in central Kenton County"
2. Driving Forces: Identifies positive factors supporting successful completion.
3. Restraining Forces: Lists obstacles, challenges, or constraints that could hinder progress.
4. Assets Needed: Specifies resources required to implement the actions, aiding in planning and readiness.
5. Steps: Break down actions into manageable steps for implementation, progress tracking, task delegation, and time management.

References

¹Mathie, A., & Cunningham, G. (2003). "From clients to citizens: Asset-based Community Development as a strategy for community-driven development." *Development in Practice*, 13(5), 474-486.

²Kretzmann, J.P., & McKnight, J.L. (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. ACTA Publications.

³Green, G.P., & Haines, A. (2015). *Asset Building & Community Development*. Sage Publications.

⁴McKnight, J., & Block, P. (2010). *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

⁵Haines, A. (2009). *Asset Mapping as a Tool for Community Building*. Sage Publications.

⁶Marcus, M.S. (2001). *Action Analysis Tool*, derived from The University of Southern California, Force Field Analysis Project (1979-1983) and Kurt Lewin, Force Field Analysis (1940). Consultants for Community Resources.