

Applied Survey Research

First Things First Needs and Assets Report for the Yuma Regional Partnership Council



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"Helping People Build Better Communities"

SAN JOSE OFFICE

991 West Hedding, Ste 102, San Jose, CA 95126
Phone: 408.247-8319 Fax: 408.260-7749

SANTA CRUZ OFFICE

P.O. Box 1927, Watsonville CA 95077
Phone: 831.728-1356 Fax: 831.728-3374
www.appliedsurveyresearch.org

Contact: Susan Brutschy
President

susan@appliedsurveyresearch.org



Applied Survey Research (ASR) was pleased and honored to be chosen by the Yuma Regional Partnership Council to conduct the 2010 Needs and Assets Report. As we commence this partnership, we wanted to provide some background information about our organization, our values, and our proposed methodology.

Organization Background

ASR is a nonprofit social research firm dedicated to conducting and using community-based research to help people build better communities. For nearly 30 years, ASR's two offices have provided services such as needs assessments, strategic planning, program design, and evaluation.

We use both quantitative and qualitative methods, including survey research, secondary data analysis, focus groups, key informant interviews, case studies, and participant observation. Many of our studies have involved diverse, vulnerable populations to better understand the issues that affect them, such as childcare, education, school readiness, domestic violence and child welfare, substance use, housing and homelessness, quality of life, and health care. ASR works with organizations of all sizes, ranging from the federal government, to foundations, counties, cities, and non-profit organizations.

Experience and Expertise

ASR brings the following expertise:

- ✓ **The ASR Team knows Community Assessments.** ASR is an award-winning organization that excels at conducting community assessment projects, community health assessments, children's reports, homeless census and surveys, program evaluations and community strategic planning processes. In 2007, ASR won a first place award at the Community Indicator Consortium Innovation Awards, sponsored by the Brookings Institution in Washington DC. The award was given for our Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project (CAP), which we started in 1994 and is now one of the longest assessment projects in the nation. In our 30 year history, we have conducted numerous community assessment projects and health assessments.
- ✓ **The ASR Team knows Arizona Communities.** ASR has worked with partners such as Coconino County Alliance Against Drugs, Alliance for Children's Early Success, Citizens Against Substance Abuse, United Way Of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff Community Foundation and Coconino County Health Department. We conducted the Coconino County Community Health Assessment in 2003, the Alliance for Children's Early Success Community Assessment in 2007, and the Underage Drinking in Coconino County executive summary, to name a few.
- ✓ **The ASR Team Knows Native American Tribal Communities.** ASR has a participatory philosophy for working with tribal communities. We are very concerned about collecting accurate local data and have

typically felt that the U.S. Census, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and other federal agencies do not always generate quality or accurate data due to their inability to work closely with local tribal communities. With this in mind, ASR seeks out quality local data and directly involves community members in the assessment project.

ASR is currently finalizing a study for the Yakama Tribal Council. For this project we recruited and trained a dozen enrolled Yakama members to conduct field surveys at the homes of local Yakamas. Over 650 surveys were conducted that addressed demographic, financial, housing, and community engagement issues. There was a 95% participation rate and the quality of data was excellent. Some of the issues that respondents were particularly concerned about included public health issues, community safety concerns, homelessness, development in ceded lands, fractional land ownership issues and other tribal concerns. ASR worked with local tribal personnel to craft data collection tools that reflected local concerns and integrated those tools into a scientifically sound data collection strategy.

In addition, we have conducted numerous Community Assessment Projects which had strong involvement and participation from the tribal community, including Lake County, Nevada County, Flagstaff, and Anchorage. These projects involved the development of indicators by tribal members.

✓ **The ASR Team Knows Children Zero to Five.** Since 2001, ASR has worked with multiple First 5 California counties, the equivalent initiative to FTF in Arizona. ASR has evaluated and conducted community assessments, and family surveys for over two dozen counties. In addition, ASR works with organizations to help make program and community-wide improvements in the areas of child care, children's health, school readiness, child abuse and neglect, and early childhood development. ASR regularly presents at the California First 5 conferences and the American Public Health Association conferences on findings pertaining to children 0 to 5 years old and their families.

✓ **The ASR Team Knows Vulnerable Populations.** ASR has a 30 year history of **working with vulnerable populations** such as:

- Young children,
- Low-income Latino families,
- Native Americans,
- Families who have experienced domestic violence and child maltreatment,
- The homeless, and
- Children and families with disabilities.

We have met with them, talked with them on the phone, and visited their children's classrooms. Additionally, ASR has conducted GIS mapping of these vulnerable communities in order to best target limited dollars.

ASR is committed to cultural competence. ASR views cultural competence with a wide lens to include not only race, ethnicity, and language but also economic differences, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, geography and a myriad of other differences that emerge within and between communities. In order to provide services that are culturally competent, ASR has hired staff who are bilingual and bicultural. Our bilingual Spanish-speaking staff will have a direct role in this project. We consider culture and language in every aspect of evaluation including in the design of our evaluation plan, in choosing outcomes and indicators, in the creation of survey instruments, in the translation of all materials, in pilot testing our instruments to ensure they are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the populations served, and that they show a high degree of discriminant validity and internal consistency amongst target population. We include bicultural ASR staff, grantees, and where possible, community members in our evaluation processes.

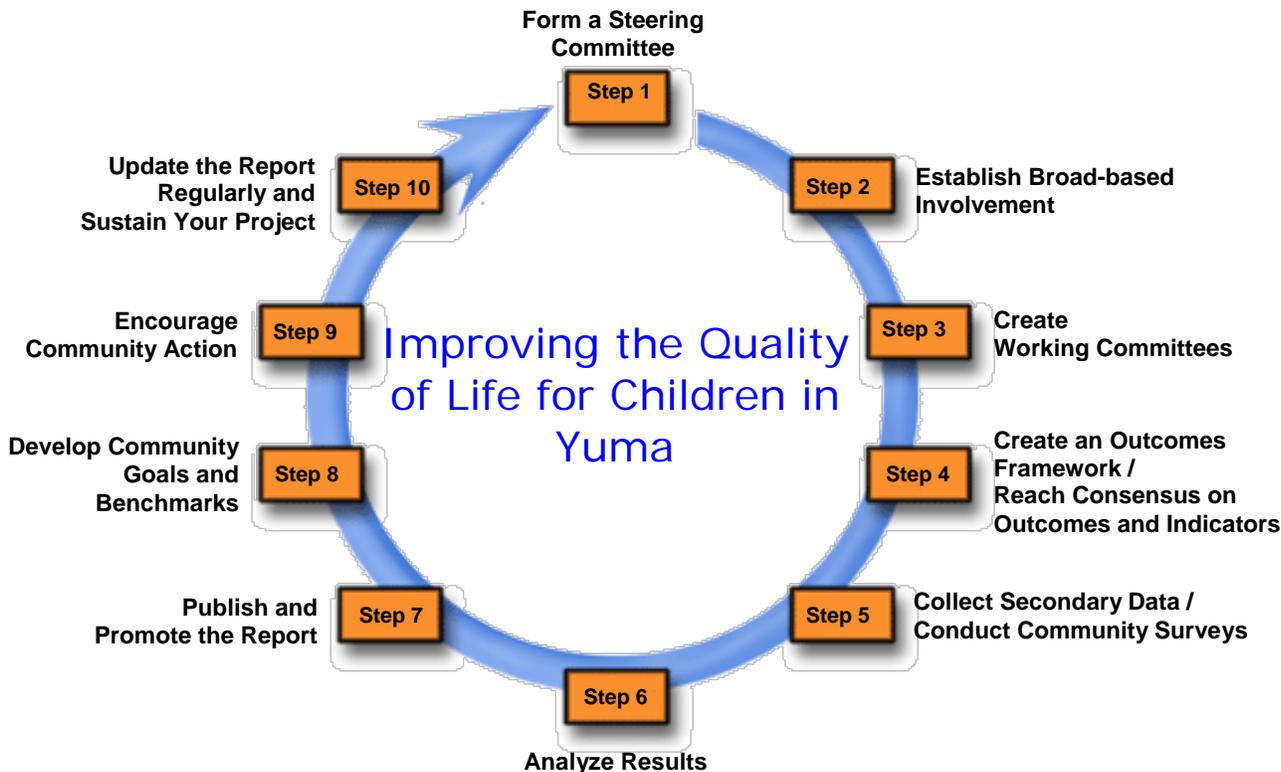
✓ **The ASR Team Knows Rural Populations.** ASR is a community-based organization located in Southern Santa Cruz County, a rural farming community. ASR has extensive experience working within rural communities. For example, ASR conducted an intensive data-collection effort targeting farmworkers in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys. Additionally, ASR was contracted by the Washington State Farm Worker Housing Trust to conduct a survey of farm workers in Washington State. The 2006 Washington State Farm Worker Housing Survey provided an intimate look into the lives, economics and work habits of farm workers in Washington State. More than 2,880 45-minute surveys were administered during a 7 month harvest season on topics ranging from work history, income and expenses, family and health information, to farm workers attitudes towards civic engagement. The surveys were conducted in the fourteen largest agricultural regions which together represent 95% of the state's farm worker areas. Surveys were administered by teams of bilingual and multi-lingual interviewers who were selected for their knowledge of the farm worker community and trained by ASR in survey methodology. Interviews were conducted at public sites where farm workers gather such as grocery stores, flea markets, housing complexes, labor camps, co-ops, parks and sporting areas, laundromats and other locations.

✓ **The ASR Team Helps Turn Data Into Action.** ASR helps its partners to make data “come alive” so that data are used by policy makers, the media, and the public. ASR helps partners create policy briefs, inform legislation, and reach out to print, radio and television media. ASR helps turn information into action. For example, data from the Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project acted as a catalyst for the creation of a new collaborative with over 110 members to decrease teen binge drinking and access to alcohol. Results showed decreases in alcohol use and Social Host Ordinances have been passed in all but one city in all of Santa Cruz County.

✓ **The ASR Team Creates Vivid, Graphically-Interesting Reports and Presentations.** ASR is gifted at sorting through reams of paper and mountains of data to find the most compelling messages to present to both lay audiences and experts in the field. For ASR data needs to tell a valid story, be comparable, show trends, and be compiled from multiple sources where possible.

Methodology

ASR has developed a ten step community improvement cycle to help launch community assessments and to sustain community action which emerges from the assessment project, as shown in the following visual. ASR will be conducting steps 1 through 7 for the Yuma Regional Partnership Council, but ASR is also available to conduct steps 8-10, if desired. ASR will customize this model for our work in the Yuma region.



Indicator Selection

ASR will guide Ashley Pascual, Regional Coordinator in indicator selection using criteria stipulating that indicators need to be valid, relevant to policy decisions, available on a regular basis, and understandable to the general user and public. Indicators must also have communication power (the ability to resonate with a broad range of audiences) and proxy power (the ability to relate to several other indicators, showing similar trends). Our experience consistently proves that using these criteria leads to gathering meaningful data to further policy development and social action initiatives.

While some of the selected indicators should be standardized to allow for comparisons to the state and nation, and some indicators represented in the 2008 Needs and Assets report may be selected to build upon those baselines, ASR will recommend that the majority of the selected indicators represent the unique characteristics of the Yuma region.

Secondary Data

Secondary (pre-existing) data will be collected from a variety of sources. We understand that many communities do not have updated or relevant federal or state data at the regional level for children zero through five and their families. With the support of the Council and local agencies ASR will:

- Look for data at the level of the community, city, or area,
- Look for data at the county level,
- Look for data collected in geographical regions with similar populations, and
- Include state comparisons where relevant.

Face-to-Face Survey

ASR will develop a self-administered, face-to-face survey of parents who have children birth to five years old. The surveys will be collected based on a “convenience sample.” This is a sample where the respondents are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher, in this case the regional council. The survey questions will be developed in collaboration with the Regional Coordinator and oversight from the Yuma Regional Partnership Council, and be tailored to the specific needs and interests of the region.

It is our experience that face-to-face interviewing using a “Survey Saturday” approach garners valuable data from marginalized residents who may have lower incomes, are unlikely to answer a telephone survey, or are without a telephone. The Survey Saturday approach focuses interviewing in front of area stores, laundromats, public places, etc. ASR uses the “train the trainer” model, where community members are trained to conduct the actual surveys, both in Spanish and English, or other local languages in the region. ASR will have an hour-long survey training for the volunteers who would then go into the community and distribute surveys to family organizations and selected groups throughout the region. Trained volunteers canvass the areas where people will congregate and pass out surveys. An incentive is usually recommended for these trainings. Surveys can also be administered to targeted groups from different agencies during the week after Survey Saturday.

Additional Data Collection

During the indicator selection process, ASR will work with the Regional Coordinator and Partnership Council to identify gaps in available data and the most appropriate method of collecting the information, such as the face-to-face survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, etc.