

Building the Bridge from Client to Citizen: A Community Toolbox for Welfare Reform

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Community-Building Tools

Is "welfare reform" a *community* issue? Absolutely, most community activists would say. But can communities *do* anything about welfare reform? Probably not, argue many community leaders, not at the *local* level: at most, we can organize and advocate for a more generous set of policies at the federal and state levels.

But a closer look at emerging community-building efforts reveals a significantly different answer. Around the country, inventive community builders are creating local approaches that could powerfully affect the ways in which welfare reform unfolds in the next few years. What can these community builders contribute to this moment of reform, a moment filled with both intense fears and real possibilities? Is it possible that the "tools" being invented and adapted for rebuilding troubled communities could also provide useful ways for citizens to support the journey from welfare to work?

Consider, for example, the five tools described in Figure 1 that are emerging as a kind of starter kit for a Community-Building Toolbox. In the discussion that follows, we will provide a somewhat fuller introduction to each of these five tools, some examples of their usefulness, and their potential application in the context of welfare reform.

Figure 1

Five Community-Building Tools

- **A Capacity Inventory**

This tool is designed to gather information about a given individual's capacities, skills, talents, interests, and gifts. It comes in many shapes and sizes, and provides the information that will help rebuild connections to community life and to the economy.

- **A Self-Help Peer Group**

From Alcoholics Anonymous to the Grameen Bank's loan circles, this powerful tool provides support *and* the opportunity to help others.

- **A Circle of Support**

Invented in Canada as a way to reconnect people with disabilities to the larger community, this tool assembles a group of friends — not peers, not professional helpers — to support a person's vision or plan for the future.

- **An Associational Inventory**

This tool is designed to rediscover the vast array of small-scale, face-to-face, voluntary groups that exist in even the poorest communities. These groups represent important points of reconnection and contribution for people who have been isolated as recipients of money or services.

- **A Business Inventory**

Finally, a set of interviews with local business owners (and other employers as well) provides valuable information about local opportunities for reconnecting with the economy.

Tool 1: A Capacity Inventory

Many communities are discovering that collecting information about a recipient's skills and abilities is the essential first step in moving that person toward productivity and active citizenship. As long as people are defined *solely* by their needs, problems, and deficiencies, they will remain recipients and clients. But the moment they and their neighbors begin to focus on their capacities, new possibilities for connection and contribution begin to appear. "What do you do best? And where can you do what you do best?" Those central questions open doors, as the following examples illustrate:

- In one struggling, isolated Portland neighborhood, a group of neighborhood women organized the Neighborhood Pride Team. They started their community-building work by interviewing their neighbors about their skills and abilities. What they discovered was a gold mine: along with cooks, musicians, gardeners, and computer experts, they uncovered a llama bridle maker, a motorcycle circus aerialist and a resident sword swallower. They've nurtured these skills carefully, and the neighborhood has come alive as a result. NPT has created its own community-development corporation and job-skill center. Residents have created a handful of new businesses, while others have been connected to existing jobs. Pride has indeed been restored to this community. (See Appendix A, Table 1 for their capacity inventory.)
- In Minneapolis, the church-based community-organizing group called Interfaith Action worked with their predominantly Hispanic

congregations to uncover skills and talents that could be mobilized for economic development purposes. They found vastly underused capacities and experience in, for example, theater, music, arts and crafts, and specialty foods. Some of the still-unfolding uses of this wealth of skills include new enterprises and job connections, a new business and community relationship, and plans for a three-day Fiesta and a "mercado," or market, built on the businesses of the dozens of entrepreneurs uncovered by the inventories. (See Appendix A, Table 2 for Interfaith Action's adaptation of the capacity inventory.)

- In New York's South Bronx, the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association has two decades of community-development experience, and has been an important factor in the efforts to rebuild that part of the city. For the past decade, Banana Kelly staff and leaders have used a capacity-inventory process with the new residents of the apartments they build and manage. The skills and talents of residents become major resources for governing and maintaining the buildings, and for planning and leading future Banana Kelly projects.

Often, capacity inventories explore two broad categories of skills, those that might lead to employment or enterprise creation, and those that might be contributed to the community. Obviously, both sets of skills are important in the context of welfare reform as well.

Just as important as the economic development agendas are civic or community-building activities that are often fed by the capacity-inventory

process. Neighbors create a skills bank where talents can be bartered (or offered freely); a learning exchange, through which people teach and learn from each other; and a variety of community celebrations featuring the cultural and artistic skills of residents. All of these activities reconnect recipients to the broader community as valuable contributors to the well-being of the whole. New relationships collapse some of the boundaries between the employed and those without jobs, between “haves” and “have-nots.” These connections are critical not only because they provide social support, but because they open paths to economic opportunity as well. ¹

Tool 2: A Self-Help Peer Group

Many are already familiar with the extraordinary power of this tool. In fact, self-help groups are the fastest growing form of associational life in America. Evidence of their extraordinary power has proliferated in recent years:

- Twelve-step or self-help groups have involved more than 25 million Americans, and represent some of the most effective approaches available for addressing everything from alcoholism to eating disorders.
- Peer support groups in many communities are proving to be powerful educational tools, with students teaching students often more effectively than those non-peers called teachers.

¹ For many more examples of capacity inventories, and their uses in different kinds of communities, see *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents*, by John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight, and GERALYN SHEEHAN, 1997, and *A Guide to Mapping and Mobilizing the Economic Capacities of Local Residents*, by John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight, and Deborah Punttenney, 1996.

- The experience of Chicago’s Women’s Self-Employment Project and its sister organizations across the country demonstrates the power of peer-driven “loan circles” modeled on Bangladesh’s Grameen Bank experience. Low-income women with entrepreneurial ideas support each other’s business-development strategies and efforts. The resulting microenterprises provide households and neighborhoods with dozens of new success stories.

The self-help tool converts people who have needs into people who have resources and who give help. As Frank Reisman, director of the National Self-Help Clearinghouse, puts it, “paradoxical as it may seem, giving help is the best way of being helped.”² Clearly the effort to move from dependency and clienthood to interdependence and productivity can be aided immeasurably by a committed group of peers.

Tool 3: A Circle of Support

People in the United States may be less familiar with this tool, whose power is more evident throughout Canada. Briefly, a “circle” is comprised of a small group of unpaid people, friends, each of whom agree to come together around an individual’s dream for his/her future, and to help that person realize that dream. People come together to help make the vision concrete, to set goals and discuss barriers, to strategize about how to move from here to there. The “client” learns to plan, to gather resources, to ask for help, to build new relationships, to use his/her skills, to reconnect with the broader

² Frank Reisman, “Ten Self-Help Principles,” *Social Policy*, 1997, p. 8. The work of Reisman and his colleagues at the clearinghouse is invaluable for anyone seeking to apply self-help to new areas such as welfare reform.

community. The circle of support (See Figure 2) can be a powerful community-based tool for moving people from clienthood to citizenship.³

Although circles of support are largely a Canadian phenomenon, their power to transform lives is now being demonstrated in the United States as well.

Linda, for example, is a single parent with several children. She has developed a circle of support — made up of eight of her Canon City, Colorado, neighbors who are working to help her realize her dream to go back to college and become a nurse. Once a month the group meets to help Linda deal with challenges such as tuition payments and child care. Linda's circle has led not only to college but also to ever-wider ties to the community for Linda and for her children.

Another circle of support has formed around Joan in Denver, a welfare recipient who has been diagnosed as chronically mentally ill. Joan is a talented writer, and dreams of writing professionally. Her circle has helped her deal with her illness, social isolation, and economic challenges. Today she writes for a neighborhood paper, reads her poetry in public, and has joined a local church where she trains others who want to learn to use a circle of support.

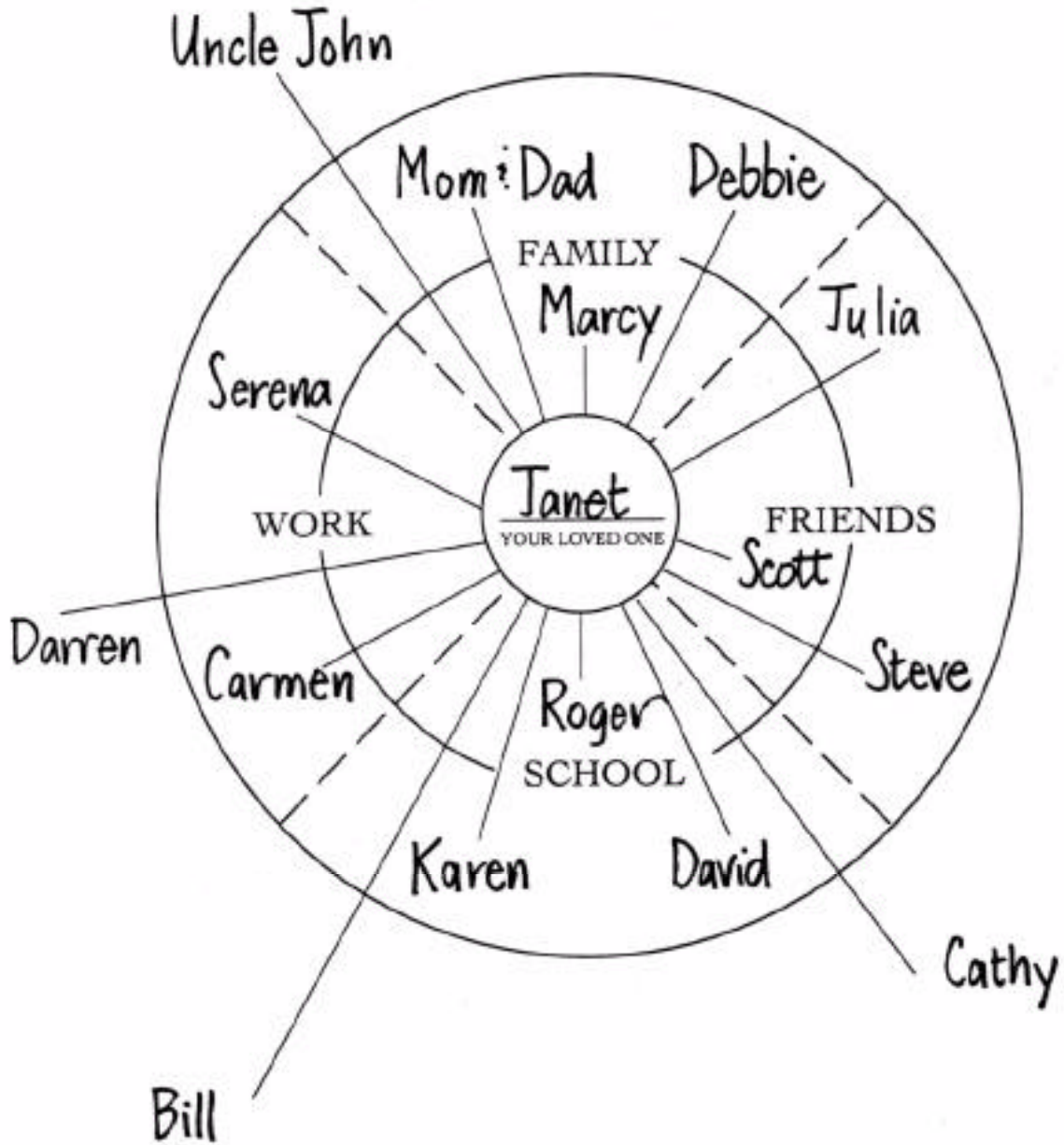
Tool 4: An Associational Inventory

“Associations” (so named by Alexis de Tocqueville) are the voluntary organizations at the center of every community. They are small-scale, face-to-

³ Two powerful books describing circles of support in some detail are: Judith A. Snow, *What's Really Worth Doing and How to Do It*, 1994; and Al Etmanski et al., *Safe and Secure: Six Steps to Creating a Personal Future Plan for People with Disabilities*, 1996.

Figure 2

Sample of a Circle of Support



face groups whose members do the work. They can be very small or quite large, informal or formal. They function as activators of residents, as amplifiers of the talents, resources, and skills of individual community members. They can include religious groups, social and cultural groups, groups bringing together youth or elders or women or men, groups organized for neighborhood improvement or advocacy, and many others.

In fact, voluntary associations have long been recognized as the foundation of community life. From the civil rights movement to the still-growing Alinsky-style community-organizing movement, activists have long recognized the critical community-building powers of churches, block clubs, and all the other local associations that still define our communities.

Current studies are beginning to reveal both the density and usefulness of these often overlooked community resources. Table 1, for example, offers a preliminary summary of the types and numbers of associations in one of Chicago's poorest neighborhoods, Grand Boulevard, a community of 30,000 plus on the city's near South Side.⁴

Far from being a neighborhood bereft of resources, which is how Grand Boulevard is often regarded, this community turns out to harbor a rich and varied associational life, one whose extent astonished even longtime community leaders. What is more, a large majority of these groups indicated in follow-up interviews that they would be very willing to take on many more community-building tasks, if only someone would ask and organize them. Many, in fact, indicated a willingness to welcome welfare recipients into their midst, and to support recipients as they become stronger contributors to the life of the community (see Appendix B, Tables 1 and 2).

⁴ *Voluntary Associations in Low-Income Neighborhoods: An Unexplored Community Resource*, by John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight, and Nicol Turner, 1996.

Table 1

An Associational Map of Grand Boulevard		
Type	Groups Included (Number)	Number
Religious Congregations		71
Age/Gender Defined	Youth (24), Seniors (12), Women (5), Men (4), Parents (4)	49
Public Institution Connected	Schools (15), Public Housing (14), Parks (8), Police (7)	44
Social/Recreational/Cultural	Special Interest (12), Athletic (9), Cultural (6), Social (2), Local Chapters of National Groups (4)	33
Non-Public Housing Residents	Tenants (8), Block Clubs (25)	33
Religious (not congregations)		31
Neighborhood Improvement/Advocacy	Improvement (16), Advocacy (12)	28
Physical Health	Self-Help (9), Health & Disability (6)	15
Economic	Business (6), Employment (1)	7
Political	Party (1), District (2)	3
Racial/Ethnic	History (2), Political (3)	5
Total		319

Source: *Voluntary Associations in Low-Income Neighborhoods: An Unexplored Community Resource, 1996, page 5.*

Surely these voluntary associations constitute a vital set of resources for any community's welfare-reform toolbox.

Tool 5: A Business Inventory

The final tool in the community's kit is a thorough inventory of local businesses. Obviously, such an inventory can be used not only to reveal present and future employment opportunities, but also to build relationships

with a key sector of the community that is often, and inexplicably, left out of the welfare-reform discussion. The involvement of local employers will also help ensure that any job-training programs are designed with real employment opportunities in mind.⁵

In one low-income Chicago neighborhood, for example, resident public housing leaders decided to conduct a thorough inventory of the businesses within the square mile surrounding their development. Much to their surprise, they found 199 enterprises. About half were very small, employing fewer than five people. But nearly 100 were larger, and many were looking for qualified workers. Interviewers pressed employers about ways to increase local hiring and local purchasing, as well as their interest in investing in the neighborhood and involving their employees in community-development activities. One clear result of these systematic interviews is the reconnection of local residents to the labor market closest to them.

Together, these five tools identify and build on the skills and capacities of the recipient and the local community. The capacity inventory identifies a client's economic and civic skills. The self-help peer group provides valuable support and an opportunity to grow through helping others. The circle of support connects a person to friends and neighbors willing to walk together into a new and promising future. An associational inventory reveals a wide set of possibilities for reconnecting with and contributing to one's own community. And a business inventory uncovers the local potential for employment.

⁵ For further approaches to a business inventory, see *A Guide to Mapping Local Business Assets and Mobilizing Local Business Capacities*, by John P. Kretzmann, John L. McKnight, and Deborah Puntenney, 1996. A set of important questions to pursue with local business owners is contained in Appendix C.

The Community-Building Toolbox and Welfare Reform

Clearly, these five innovative approaches constitute a toolbox for residents working to construct a community-based response to welfare reform. However, using this toolbox to help people move from welfare to work depends first on a community-based understanding of the welfare recipient's experience.

Always the object of others' help or service, many welfare recipients, or clients, experience continuous, numbing vulnerability. Disconnected first from a productive role in the economy, the client is also frequently cut off from opportunities to act as a citizen and contribute to the community's life and well-being. This double disconnect traps many in a cycle of increasing isolation and despair. Recipients also often have to overcome some combination of the four strongest and most universally cited barriers to the return to productivity: good health, including access to insurance and services; adequate child care; effective and affordable transportation; and the opportunity to save and accumulate financial assets.

The client/recipient's dilemma points to the critical role local communities must play if people — our neighbors — are to be supported in their efforts to reconnect, to move from “dependent welfare recipient” to “active community citizen” and “work-force producer.” The Community-Building Toolbox provides a set of opportunities for communities to take welfare reform seriously as a local challenge. It reminds community leaders and residents — especially those active in key institutions such as churches, community organizations, even schools and chambers of commerce — that they can act in powerful ways to reconnect recipients to their communities' economic and social centers.

Using the Toolbox

Not all the tools in the box will be appropriate for every recipient who wants to move from isolation to connection. Just as each community is one of a kind, every person's life experience is unique, including her or his encounters with the welfare system.

For example, observers divide the recipient population into three very broad categories:

- “Citizens in crisis,” people whose experience of welfare is triggered by an emergency — a job loss, health problems, the death of a loved one — and one who will only receive assistance for a short time.
- “People with permanent disabilities,” whether physical or mental, who can certainly be more centrally and productively involved in community life, but who will in all likelihood always need some public economic assistance.
- “Client families,” a group between these temporary and permanent recipients. These “long-term welfare families,” have been the central focus of much of the national welfare reform debate.

Different combinations of the five tools may be helpful in addressing different life circumstances and community contexts. Perhaps, for example, the self-help peer group will be most helpful to those in the “client family” category, while both those folks and “people with permanent disabilities” could use circles of support. Each community must construct its own toolbox, using the tools most appropriate to the challenge at hand.

The Role of the Community Guide

This sketch of the toolbox leaves a central question. Who is the carpenter? Whose job is it to assemble the tools and begin to use them? Obviously, no current job description includes carpentry, or community building, defined in just this way. But a number of communities are exploring one approach involving a community guide — a term often used in Canada's circles of support — who could use these tools most effectively.

A community guide is probably not a professional helper. Rather, the guide is probably a well-connected and trusted community resident, a person who recognizes the capacities of others, who builds relationships and trust easily, who regards the community itself as a rich and varied set of resources. Such a person might seed the capacity-inventory process, introduce peers to each other and help the self-help group get started, assemble the initial circles of support, and initiate inventories of local associations and businesses.

A community guide, or guides, should be connected in some way to a representative community council comprised of leaders supportive of these approaches. Such a community council might offer support for guides as well as recipients/citizens, garner money and other resources, help interpret the work to the larger community, and work on important policy changes in areas such as health care, child care, transportation, and savings.

What seems evident is that communities already have such people in their midst, along with many of the raw materials for building stronger and more inclusive local communities. A set of handcrafted and customized tools provides a way for communities to organize around and build on those resources, to ultimately build the bridge from welfare dependency to productive citizenship.

Of course, these community-based approaches to welfare reform exist in a larger context of policy development and contention. Anyone serious about welfare reform will recognize that larger issues of justice and equity must also be addressed. Clearly, discussions about the nature, extent, and proper division of federal and state contributions to our most vulnerable citizens are critical. Such debates about the shape of effective welfare reform deserve all the energy and attention they are getting, and more.

At the same time, we should recognize that this particular moment of policy change is fraught with both difficult challenges and significant opportunities for positive change. The challenge is much too important to leave to the Beltway policymakers; it is a challenge meant for all of us.

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APPENDIX A

Samples of Capacity Inventories

Table 1: Neighborhood Pride Team

Table 2: Interfaith Action

More samples of capacity inventories can be found in the ABCD workbook, *A Guide to Capacity Inventories: Mobilizing the Community Skills of Local Residents*. The inventory used by Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association (see p. 4) is similar to the one used by the Neighborhood Pride Team.

Have you ever done Construction and Repair Work, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Painting	Y	N	W	
Porch Construction or Repair	Y	N	W	
Knocking out walls &/or demolition	Y	N	W	
Wall Papering	Y	N	W	
Furniture Repair	Y	N	W	
Repairing Locks	Y	N	W	
Building Garages, Fences, Play Equipment	Y	N	W	
Building & Remodeling Rooms	Y	N	W	
Tile Work	Y	N	W	
Installing Drywall & Taping	Y	N	W	
Plumbing Repairs	Y	N	W	
Electrical Repairs	Y	N	W	
Bricklaying & Masonry	Y	N	W	
Jewelry or Watch Repair	Y	N	W	
Stop here if no affirmative response by this point.				
Cabinetmaking	Y	N	W	
Furniture Making	Y	N	W	
Installing Insulation	Y	N	W	
Plastering	Y	N	W	
Soldering & Welding	Y	N	W	
Concrete Work (Sidewalks)	Y	N	W	
Installing Floor coverings	Y	N	W	
Repairing Chimneys	Y	N	W	
Heating/Cooling System Installation	Y	N	W	
Putting on siding	Y	N	W	
Cleaning chimneys (chimney sweep)	Y	N	W	
Installing Windows	Y	N	W	
Building Swimming Pools	Y	N	W	
Carpentry Skills	Y	N	W	
Roofing Repair or Installation	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of Maintenance, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Window Washing	Y	N	W	
Floor Waxing or Mopping	Y	N	W	
Washing and Cleaning Carpets/Rugs	Y	N	W	
Routing Clogged Drains	Y	N	W	
Caulking	Y	N	W	
General Household Cleaning	Y	N	W	
Fixing Leaky Faucets	Y	N	W	
Recycling	Y	N	W	
Cleaning Gutters	Y	N	W	
Cleaning/Maintaining Swimming Pools	Y	N	W	
Floor Sanding or Stripping	Y	N	W	
Wood Stripping/Refinishing	Y	N	W	

Have you ever done any type of Horticultural or Agricultural work? Y N W				
Mowing Lawns	Y	N	W	
Planting and Caring for Gardens	Y	N	W	
Pruning Trees and Shrubbery	Y	N	W	
Irrigating	Y	N	W	
Rototilling	Y	N	W	
Operating Farm Equipment	Y	N	W	
Landscaping	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of arts/crafts, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Jewelry making	Y	N	W	
Graphic Arts (Printmaking, Drafting)	Y	N	W	
Greeting Card making	Y	N	W	
Stained Glass	Y	N	W	
Pottery or Ceramics	Y	N	W	
Picture Frame building	Y	N	W	
Quilt or Banner making	Y	N	W	
Writing (If yes, what type of writing?)	Y	N	W	
Storytelling (Would you like to tell personal or family stories to someone who would write them down?)	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of work with food, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Catering	Y	N	W	
Serving Food to Large Numbers of People	Y	N	W	
Preparing Meals for Large Numbers	Y	N	W	
Clearing/Setting Tables Large Number	Y	N	W	
Washing dishes for Large Numbers	Y	N	W	
Operating Commercial Food Prep Equip.	Y	N	W	
Bartending	Y	N	W	
Meatcutting	Y	N	W	
Baking	Y	N	W	
Child Care, Other than your own children, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Caring for Babies (under 1 year)	Y	N	W	
Caring for Children (1 to 6)	Y	N	W	
Caring for Children (7 to 13)	Y	N	W	
Taking Children on Field Trips	Y	N	W	
Do you have a current driver's license? Y N W				
Have you done any type of commercial transporting, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Driving a car	Y	N	W	
Driving a van	Y	N	W	
Driving a bus	Y	N	W	
Driving a taxi	Y	N	W	
Driving a tractor trailer	Y	N	W	
Driving a commercial truck	Y	N	W	
Driving a vehicle/delivering goods	Y	N	W	
Hauling	Y	N	W	
Driving an ambulance	Y	N	W	

Have you ever done any Equipment Operating or Repairing Machinery? Y N W				
Repairing radios, TVs, VCRs, etc.	Y	N	W	
Repairing Other Small Appliances	Y	N	W	
Repairing Automobiles	Y	N	W	
Repairing Lawnmowers/Small Engines	Y	N	W	
Repairing Trucks/Buses	Y	N	W	
Using a Forklift	Y	N	W	
Repairing Large Household Equipment	Y	N	W	
Repairing Heating & Air Conditioning	Y	N	W	
Operating Heavy Equipment (eg. a crane)	Y	N	W	
Fixing Washers/Dryers	Y	N	W	
Repairing Elevators	Y	N	W	
Operating Manufacturing Machinery	Y	N	W	
Electronic Assembly	Y	N	W	
Moving Furniture or Equipment	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of Supervision, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Writing Reports	Y	N	W	
Filling out forms	Y	N	W	
Planning Work for Other People	Y	N	W	
Making a Budget	Y	N	W	
Keeping Records of all Your Activities	Y	N	W	
Interviewing People	Y	N	W	
Managing Property	Y	N	W	
Assisting a Teacher (Adults)	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of sales, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Operating a cash register	Y	N	W	
Selling products Wholesale(Which ones)	Y	N	W	
Selling products Retail (Which ones)	Y	N	W	
Selling Services (Which ones)	Y	N	W	
How have you sold these products or services (door-to-door, store, other)	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any thing with music, paid or unpaid? Y N W				
Dancing	Y	N	W	
Composing	Y	N	W	
Singing	Y	N	W	
Playing an instrument (Which one?)	Y	N	W	
Working with a Band	Y	N	W	
Setting up Sound Equipment	Y	N	W	
Have you ever done any type of Safety or Security work? Y N W				
Guarding Property Resid/Commercial	Y	N	W	
Emergency or Disaster Preparedness (Earthquake, Search and Rescue)	Y	N	W	
Armed Guard	Y	N	W	
Crowd Control	Y	N	W	
Ushering at Major Events	Y	N	W	
Installing or Repairing Alarms	Y	N	W	
Firefighting	Y	N	W	
Traffic Control Flagging or Crossing	Y	N	W	

Other:				
Upholstery	Y	N	W	
Photography	Y	N	W	
Sewing	Y	N	W	
Knitting and/or Crocheting	Y	N	W	
Assisting in the Classroom (Children)	Y	N	W	
Teaching	Y	N	W	
Hair Dressing and/or Hair Cutting	Y	N	W	
Phone Surveys	Y	N	W	
Product Demos	Y	N	W	

Are there any other skills that you have which we haven't mentioned?

PRIORITY SKILLS

1. When you think about your skills, what three things do you do best?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

2. Which of your skills are good enough that people would hire you to do them?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

3. Are there any skills you would like to teach?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

4. What skills would you most like to learn?

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Here are some activities happening in our neighborhood. Which ones interest you?

Name of Group or Activity	Yes	Already Involved	Other
Safety Action Team: Policing/Foot Patrol			
Community Gardens			
Volunteer with Youth			
Woman to Woman			
Community School			
Neighborhood Pride Team			
Parent/Child Play Groups (5 and under)			
Neighborhood Association			

Enterprising Interests and Experience

A. Business Activity

1. Are you currently earning money on your own through the sale of services or products? Yes _____ No _____
2. If yes, what are the services or products you sell?
3. Whom do you sell to?
4. How do you get customers?
5. What would help you improve your business?

B. Business Interest

1. Have you ever considered starting a business? Yes _____ No _____
2. Did you plan to start it alone or with other people?
Alone _____ Others _____
3. Did you plan to operate it out of your home? Yes _____ No _____
4. What obstacle kept you from starting the business?

C. Are you interested in another type of career?

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Age: _____ (If precise age is not given, ask whether the person is in the teens, 20s etc.)

Sex: F _____ M _____

I give my permission to enter my name and phone number into the skills bank.

Signed: _____

Interviewer: _____

Table 2

INTERFAITH ACTION- COMMUNITY TALENT INVENTORY

NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____ ZIP:_____

PHONE:_____ INSTITUTION:_____

LIST BELOW THE ANSWERS YOU GET TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What do you do well? For example, cooking, "I'm a good listener," cross-stitching, public speaking, plumbing, etc. (We want to know practical skills and social skills).

Have you ever been paid for any of these skills?

No_____ Yes_____ Which Ones_____

2. When you think about all of these skills which would you say are the ones you are best at or enjoy doing most?

Would you be interested in making money doing them or teaching someone else to learn them? (i.e., a gardener selling produce, someone who makes quilts selling them at a craft fair, teaching someone carpentry skills etc.)

Which skill would you like to use to - Make money_____

Teach others_____

Have you tried to make money on a skill and been successful? No_____

Yes_____

What skills_____

What happened_____

3. Have you ever thought of starting a business at home or in the neighborhood?

No_____ Yes_____

What kind of business would you start?

Why haven't you started it?

What would lead you to try?

4. What are some of the groups you belong to? Do you have a role in these groups? (chair, fund-raiser, treasurer, troop leader, etc.)

5. Can we list these skills in a published inventory for the community?

Volunteer Yes_____ No_____

Paid Yes_____ No_____

This inventory was completed by:_____

APPENDIX B

Associational Interest in Community Economic Development Projects

Table 1: Job Training/Placement

Table 2: Local Economy

Results from a survey of associational leaders in Chicago's Grand Boulevard neighborhood indicating willingness to become involved in a range of community economic development strategies.

Table 1

	Job Training/Placement			
	Willing To Do	Not Willing To Do	Uncertain	Have Done So Already
Start a job training program in the neighborhood	15	6	2	2
Participate in existing job training program in the neighborhood	19	2	2	7
Participate in an inventory of the job skills and interests of local residents	14	7	2	1
Inform members of neighborhood through postings	18	2	3	6
Inform non-members of local jobs through postings	19	2	2	5
Help local teenagers find jobs	19	1	2	4
Connect unemployed residents to the workplaces of employed members	18	3	2	4

Source: *Voluntary Associations in Low-Income Neighborhoods: An Unexplored Community Resource, 1996, p. 19.*

Table 2

	Local Economy			
	Willing To Do	Not Willing To Do	Uncertain	Have Done So Already
Start or attract new businesses to the neighborhood	18	0	5	2
Buy at new businesses in the neighborhood	18	2	3	2
Invest in new businesses in the neighborhood	15	6	2	2
Buy at existing local businesses	20	1	2	3
Improve the general business climate	16	3	4	1
Invest in the expansion of local businesses	17	4	2	1
Get banks to provide credit to existing local businesses	19	2	2	1
Close undesirable local businesses	12	4	7	0

Source: *Voluntary Associations in Low-Income Neighborhoods: An Unexplored Community Resource, 1996, p. 20.*

APPENDIX C

Making Contact with Local Businesses

Survey questions for finding out what community-building capacities exist within the local business community.

Making Contact With Local Businesses

What information should you ask for?

There are four general categories in which you will want to gather information: local hiring, local purchasing, local involvement, and local investment. These categories have to do with the extent to which the businesses are connected with, or participating in the local economy. In each category there are a number of questions you will want to ask which will give you information about the extent of the business capacity in that area, and the extent to which the capacity has been mobilized for the benefit of the local economy. The following list gives examples of the categories and some of the questions you will want to ask.

- **Local Hiring.**

How many people do you employ — both full time and part time?

In what types of job categories do you employ people, for example:

Professional, technical, or managerial positions

Clerical, sales, or service positions

Processing work or machine trades positions

Do you have entry-level jobs?

What qualifications do entry-level positions require?

Do you tend to promote from within?

How do you conduct employee searches when you are hiring?

How many of your employees are residents of the community?

Do you work with any local organizations to promote local hiring?

- **Local Purchasing.**

What kinds of office products does your company require?

What kinds of services does your company require?

Do you patronize local companies for products and services?

What other kinds of things does your company buy?

Does your company purchase these items from a local supplier?

What kinds of things does your company look for in a supplier?

Would you be willing to consider changing to local suppliers?

- **Local Investment.**

Does your business do its banking with a local institution?

Does that institution have a commitment to local development?

What services does your company look for in a banking institution?

Would you be willing to consider changing banks to a local institution?

Does your company own local real estate?

How does your company reinvest profits back into the community?

- **Local Involvement.**

Do you have any volunteer, training or internship positions available?

Are any of these positions suitable for young people still in school?

Are any of these positions suitable for adults preparing for work?

Do you currently have any linkages with local high schools?

Do you currently have any linkages with employment programs?

Does the company sponsor local projects or organizations, for example:

Sports teams

Youth clubs

School organizations

Does your company contribute time and energy to local projects?

Does your company belong to a local economic development organization or Community Development Corporation (CDC)?

In what other ways does your business contribute to the community?

Remember to adjust the questions to suit the particular business and the answers you are getting. Be flexible, and be sensitive to the fact that some of these questions may appear threatening, especially if the business is *not* currently doing any of these things. The point of the visit is to encourage the business to see itself as a community asset, and to see the value of creating community linkages, not to focus on what they might not be doing.

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