

13WAYS

There's Always A Way

Welcome to your 13 Ways Community Survey – A simple community survey tool to engage your citizens and gather real-time insight. This site gives you the tools to invite participants, track progress and share your results.

Survey Results

Overall



Water



Your score is in the Green 

Well done! Your community appears to be in good shape and it appears that you have done some fine work in getting to a place where you have a good supply of quality water, not just for today's needs, but into the future as well. Water is the most precious resource we have. You can only survive for 3 minutes without air, 3 days without water, and 3 weeks without food. You can do without just about everything else. Water is critical to our survival and the survival of our communities. With continued population growth (7 times larger than 250 years ago) and climate change issues, water will grow to be an ever-greater concern in our daily lives. The last step most communities take is in finding ways to incentivize better and more efficient water practices. Congratulations on taking this step. Remain vigilant.

Business



Your score is in the Green 

This is a good sign. Your community has a solid foundation for its economy—but don't take this for granted. It's important to remember that without ongoing support and diligence, things can change for the worse. So you need to continuing to work as a community to maintain a strong economic base.

We all know the economy of a community is important to its future. The economy

provides the lifeblood, namely money, that allows people to live and thrive in your community. Without money, people will move. It is just that simple. Too many communities fail to realize that competition is like exercise for the economy. The more competition there is, the stronger the economy gets, and the healthier the economy becomes. Some communities and business owners worry that competition can hurt a small community, so they chase competition away, but all that does is put the economy on the couch where its muscles will eventually atrophy. Good work in embracing the value of competition. Keep it up. The world is changing and the work needed to keep your local economy strong is not going to go away.

Youth



Your score is in the Red ■

There are obvious issues in how your community engages its younger citizens. While all is not lost, the time to begin changing those relationships is now. You need to start small, and work to build momentum.

The first place to start is to change your definition of youth. You can't imagine they are only those who are under 18 anymore. Instead, consider youth as those with young families who are now investing in the community. They need a chance at a leadership role. It is also not only those who have never left the community who need to be engaged. You need to actively engage those who have left to go off to school, or to explore. You need to keep that connection with them so they are always reminded of where they came from, and that they are always welcome back. Those that do come back need to be shown some appreciation, and some trust, by encouraging them to take on leadership roles. They will have diverse experiences and new ideas that could help your community get out of its rut and try new things.

There are different degrees of this, of course, but we are confident that your community does a pretty fine job of chasing young people out of town. When they are 14, they probably regularly hear of how horrible the community is and how it has no hope. When they are 24, they are told that there are better opportunities elsewhere, and if they are educated they should move to a larger center. When they are 34, they are likely told they are too young to lead and don't have enough experience, or have ridiculous ideas. It varies by community, but so many communities that score Red here are doing a fine job of

finding ways to get their youth to leave, and then wondering aloud why they left. Those attitudes and that talk have to change or the young people in your community will continue to leave, and the future of your community will leave with them.

Who You Are

Who You Are



Your score is in the Yellow ■

Well, you have some challenges. We can't tell from this survey whether they are debilitating challenges or not, or whether things are getting better (headed to Green) or worse (headed to Red), but you need to be aware of the issues and work to resolve them.

You have very likely done some work to identify what makes you unique, but it may only be on a superficial level, which is why you are getting moderate results. Your community may have mountains, which distinguishes it from a lot of other communities, but have you worked on what distinguishes your community from those other mountain communities in your vicinity? We have more than one feature that makes us unique. It is a combination of features that will distinguish you from the pack, and those features will also show you directions in which you can grow, if you dig deep enough to find them. It requires an open mind, a lot of exploring, and a little coaching to get there, but the results are worth it.

Shop Elsewhere

Shop Elsewhere



Your score is in the Green ■

Ok, you have the basics of local economics down. People support local businesses and local businesses support the community in return. It's a wonderful circle of economic life. We need to warn you, however, that the world is changing quickly, and even if you are doing really well in this regard, that might not be the case in a few years if you aren't

adapting. Downtowns are, and always have been, about socialization. Commodity businesses used to be what brought us downtown to socialize, but that is less so the case with the growth of online retail. The future of your local economy is still about keeping those dollars in the community, but now you have to ask yourself what types of businesses will bring people downtown to spend money and socialize. Hint: what can't they get on the internet?

Paint/Beauty



Your score is in the Green ■

Most communities presume beautification is one of those projects that should only happen after everything else is done. Good for you in not buying into that falsehood. You have obviously realized that your ability to attract families and businesses to your community begins with being aesthetically attractive. You may have detractors tell you this work to beautify your community is only superficial and not important. It is ok to acknowledge that beauty is not everything, but remind them that the community can be wonderful but no one will stick around long enough to find that out if they aren't attracted to the community. You may even want to remind them that they may love their spouse for much more than their outer beauty, but that it was likely their outer beauty that first attracted them, and drew them in long enough to fall in love with what their spouse was on the inside. It is the same with your community.

Don't Cooperate



Your score is in the Yellow ■

Your community faces some challenges when it comes to cooperation amongst its citizens and with others outside the community. Remember, you need to address these

challenges, but you also need to ensure they don't get worse over time as well. And these challenges can be addressed—it all comes down to relationship building.

Building relationships takes time and attention to ensure they are fruitful and meaningful. Think of it like a marriage. When you formalize your relationship, it doesn't mean it is going to last forever. It is a contract that can be terminated. What keeps the marriage together and strong is not the contract, but the attention to always building the relationship. There are a lot of communities where relationships are built and formalized, and then completely ignored. Those relationships fall apart just like marriages that aren't attended to with passion. If you want to have meaningful relationships with other people, organizations, and communities, you must be vigilant and diligent in your efforts. How hard you work at it depends on how deeply you understand the importance of those partnerships and relationships.

Live in the Past

Live in the Past



Your score is in the Yellow 

The only thing that is really guaranteed is that things will always change. Your community has obviously been trying to adapt to changing circumstances, but obviously needs to be more vigilant about it. There are ways to address these challenges while working to ensure that problems don't grow into a crisis.

Letting go of some old grudges within the community, and with neighboring communities, is the first place to start. Without letting go of the past your community will have a really hard time finding a path to the future. A lot of community success stories begin with people, organizations, and divergent communities coming together to work on something for the future. If you want to find success, you need to work on bringing people together with a common focus on what you will do, not what others have done to you in the past.

Seniors

Seniors



Your score is in the Green 

There are a lot of communities out there trying to be young and hip, who forget just how much value there is in addressing the needs of seniors. They need appropriate housing, they want to feel needed, they want to volunteer and contribute to the community, they want social activities that are right for them, and of course, they spend money. Those things are important in addressing seniors' needs.

No matter how well your community is doing in addressing seniors' issues, you can always do better. Remember, they are a growing demographic with time and money, and they will go where they are lured, and they will take their time and money with them if you can't compete. If you do compete, however, you may not only keep your seniors, you may find yourself with a growing population and economy because you are attracting seniors from elsewhere.

Nothing New



Your score is in the Yellow 

Your community may have trouble considering new solutions to old problems, or it may fail to consider new opportunities for old advantages. We don't often appreciate the great things we have in our community. We fail to realize the potential of what we have, and fail to build on it as a strength. There are so many people who have grown up and lived their entire lives by the mountains who don't even notice them anymore. They have become blind to them.

Likewise, there are others who don't appreciate the expanse of open sky above them, or the attractive set of small businesses on Main Street, or the chance to see a local play produced by local talent. When we fail to appreciate them and see their potential, we fail to capitalize on new opportunities right before our eyes. Your community needs to assess its strengths and weaknesses openly, and consider new opportunities for success and new ways to address challenges.

Outsiders and Immigrants

Outsiders and Immigrants



Your score is in the Yellow ■

How welcoming a community is can only be measured by the desire of its people to purposefully and deliberately make outsiders - whether they look different, think different, eat different foods, or worship different gods - feel welcome in the community. Here is a place where your community struggles.

We all have busy lives, so it is difficult to find the time to meet and greet new people in a meaningful way. Besides, the world has changed and you can't just talk to strangers and be welcoming like you used to. Or at least those are the things we say to make us feel better. Besides, there are programs designed to help newcomers integrate into the community and find what they need. However, they are typically impersonal. Being welcoming needs to be more personal and more proactive.

Usually, there are several communities we each belong to outside our larger community. We belong to our family, the community of parents whose kids play the same sport, the community of those in a certain profession or income bracket, those who have tattoos and so on. We belong to certain groups with whom we share similarities. In some communities, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find groups that we can be part of, because they are hard to identify, hard to find, and hard to gain admittance to. As a community of communities, you must go find the newcomers and welcome them in, before they leave, because then it is too late.

Complacency

Complacency



Your score is in the Yellow ■

Somewhere your community settled into a bit of a nap, and now it is dangerously close to becoming full on hibernation. It is a good time to get a gathering of the people of

influence, not the people of power (more details are in 13 Ways to Kill Your Community), and talk about the future. Don't just talk about the same old stuff. Talk about new technology, the new economy, political leadership issues, and volunteer organizations in the context of what people want to see your community become, not just what it is. If you are a little stagnant, which this assessment indicates based on your responses, it is time to wake everyone up and get ready for tomorrow. Success comes from preparing for the future, not simply enjoying the present.

Responsibility



Your score is in the Yellow ■

It looks like you need a little work in this area. It is quite easy for a person, or an entire community, to blame someone else and say, 'it's not my/our fault.' We have worked with some communities who could make that their new town slogan: 'Welcome to Our Town – It's Not Our Fault.' If you are going to turn things around, you really must own it and be personally committed to change. Start with yourself, and then gather some friends who are also willing to own it, as well. Be aware, however, that making change doesn't start with attacking others, or being confrontational. Making change starts with you. To borrow from a great philosopher, "Let he who would change the world, first change himself." If you start with yourself, you will find others will follow you and begin to take on responsibility for the future of your community, as well. After all, we all want to be part of something great and to enjoy success.