

- Unit 1 Historical Trends and Orientation to Public Needs Assessment
Planning and Planned Change

INTRODUCTION

The hallmark of public needs assessment planning and planned change transcends community boundary, organizational assets, and capacity building of the professionals and citizenry, and impacts many needs-based aspects of the public sector, its systems, practices, and processes. The needs-based issues we face in society, organizational setting, and programs or services that use systems delivery require professionals in the public sector to assess current practices and think creatively about solutions, as well as work effectively with a variety of stakeholders and outside parties to effect planned changes. However, the multifaceted nature of the needs-based issues also signifies that change management might require policy formation and coordination of the efforts of change agents to impact organizational service delivery systems.

This course on public needs assessment and planning will thus help you to evaluate and apply various assessment methods that can be utilized to define the scope of these public issues. It will also help you develop an action learning capacity and integrated logic model of planned change that can generate service and program use policies to shape performance evaluation and service delivery systems. The framework for generating such service or program use policies is value-oriented, which goes also to suggest that planned change should focus on producing comprehensive solutions. Gathering needs-based action learning data about the problem, making sure the right people are in the room to craft a pragmatic solution, and implementing a realistic action plan and evaluation system are components of these methods.

So, where exactly do we begin the process of public needs assessment planning and planned change? First is the awareness phase, in which we must determine what we actually know about the needs-based issues. Then, we move to the change designing phase, in which we must determine how such knowledge-based action learning can be translated into shaping planned change of the public needs assessment project. In most cases, our knowledge base might be limited, dated, or reflective of only one viewpoint. We then need to explore broad historical trends about the needs-based issues of planned change to help us better expand our understanding through gathering additional information about causes and effects, linkages, and a scope of solutions. Notice that at this point, we have only narrowed down the needs-based issues that necessitate planned change; we have not narrowed it down to only one pragmatic solution. Thus, we are not quite there yet!

With the input of our stakeholders, we collaborate to create action learning model in the facilitation of our quest for the planned change resolution that can serve the

needs of the community at the organizational and citizenry levels. An action learning solution is a creative method guided by an appropriate questioning inquiry about problem-solving action, capacity team building, and coaching mechanism tailored to organizational learning and community development. From this solution, we develop an action plan grounded in planned change framework and outcome-based assessment methods to measure how successful that plan of action can be implemented. Putting the planned change into action is what actually brings us into the implementation phase.

This final stabilization phase, also considered post-assessment because it consists of the actions that follow the assessment process itself, remains important because the execution of the plan is the reason that we plan in the first place. This unit begins with the historical trends and orientation to some general public needs assessment tools and activities as an introduction to the process, something that you will be able to apply to the problems facing your own communities, citizenry, and inherent organizations.

OBJECTIVES

To successfully complete this learning unit, you will be expected to:

1. Analyze the evolution of needs assessment, shaping generic methods of performing public needs assessments.
2. Examine the growing concept, and the uses and practices, of performing public issue analysis and how this impacts needs assessment and planning.
3. Assess the uses of action learning solution for designing planned change and integrated logic model of public needs assessment to address society's problems.

Unit 1 Study 1 Studies

Planning Change

Readings

Note: Be certain to read the unit introduction, as it may contain important information and references pertaining to this unit's content and activities.

Use your *Bridging the Gap Between Asset/Capacity Building and Needs Assessment* text to read Chapter 1, "Beginnings," pages 1–23.

Use your *Designing and Managing Programs* text to read Chapter 1, "Contemporary Issues in Human Service Program Planning and Administration," pages 3–19.

Use the Capella University Library to complete the following:

- Read Muhammad and Rashid's 2011 article, "[The Growing Concept and Uses of Training Needs Assessment](#)," from *Journal of European Industrial Training*, volume 35, issue 5, pages 439–466.
- Read Wicks and Stieglitz's 2003 article, "[Action Learning: AL Proves to Be an Effective Tool for Contemporary Public Administration Education](#)," from *PA Times*, volume 26, issue 10, page 3.

An important note about the readings in this course: While the number of pages you are being asked to read may seem big, the actual raw work you are doing is much less. There are many great forms, models, diagrams, and graphics represented on these pages to help you get a different view of the content. The pages are small too.

Multimedia

In most cases, the hardest part of beginning a public issue needs assessment process is not only defining the scope of what the problem is, but also developing an action learning capacity to aid integrated logic model of planned change that can generate service and program use policies to shape performance evaluation and service delivery systems. So, what exactly is entailed in such integrated logic model of planned change to implement the public needs assessment project?

Click Planning Change to learn more about how to begin this process of developing an action learning capacity for such integrated logic model of planned change.

Unit 1 Study 2
Riverbend City Media



Riverbend City: Getting Started Mission

In this course, you will be utilizing Riverbend City simulations for a public needs assessment case analysis.

Click Riverbend City: Getting Started Mission to complete the multimedia presentation. In this presentation, you will view an introduction to Riverbend City and understand how to navigate the simulation.

The simulation case analysis for this course is focused on a specific neighborhood in Riverbend City. A public needs assessment and related planning for this part of the community had been performed 10 years ago, but the plan has not been reviewed since then. As a result of the recent disaster, it is obvious that the area has undergone some major changes and a new needs assessment and plan should be completed. You will learn more about the specific case later in this course.

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D1

Your Experiences With Public Needs Assessment

A public need is defined as the gap between what is happening now in society and what needs to be happening to ensure the best services, programs, or projects for the people. The needs assessment process is what we use in the public sector to bridge or fill that gap.

For this discussion, you will describe a public needs assessment that you have worked on as part of your job or in your daily life, or one you are aware of in your community.

In your post, define and describe the following:

- Historical trends that structure public needs assessment planning and planned change.
- The need or gap in services, programs, or projects, and when it occurred.
- The people who were involved in trying to develop a comprehensive action learning solution.
- The scope and success of the action learning solution.
- Status of the issue today.

In addition, provide a logic model to illustrate how the needs-based issues can be narrowed down to impact planned change.

Remember to use citations and references as appropriate. Your initial post should be at least 250 words and follow current APA style.

Response Guidelines

Provide substantive comments to the posts of at least one peer, comparing major commonalities or differences in your public needs assessment examples to those of your peer. Ask any questions to better understand the examples he or she has provided.