

# Community Health Assessments in Practice – A Webinar Series

*How the Kansas Chapter of the Local Health Department Academy of Science (LHD AoS) Can Support Your Community*

Session 2 – April 22, 2026



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## CHA Webinar Series

- **April 8** – Setting the Foundation: CHAs and Meaningful Community Engagement
- **April 22** – From Numbers to Knowledge: Collecting, Interpreting, and Using Primary and Secondary Data
- **May 6** – Making it Matter: Communicating Findings and Starting the Conversation

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# From Numbers to Knowledge: *Collecting, Interpreting, and Using Primary and Secondary Data*



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## Today's Presenters



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## What is a Community Health Assessment (CHA)?

- Also known as community health needs assessment (CHNA)
- Refers to a state, tribal, local, or territorial health assessment
- Identifies key health needs and issues through systematic, comprehensive data collection and analysis
- Results in a comprehensive report about the community's current health status, needs, and issues
- The CHA justifies how and where resources should be allocated to best meet community needs

Definitions adapted from the CDC

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## Why do a CHA/CHNA? What are the benefits?

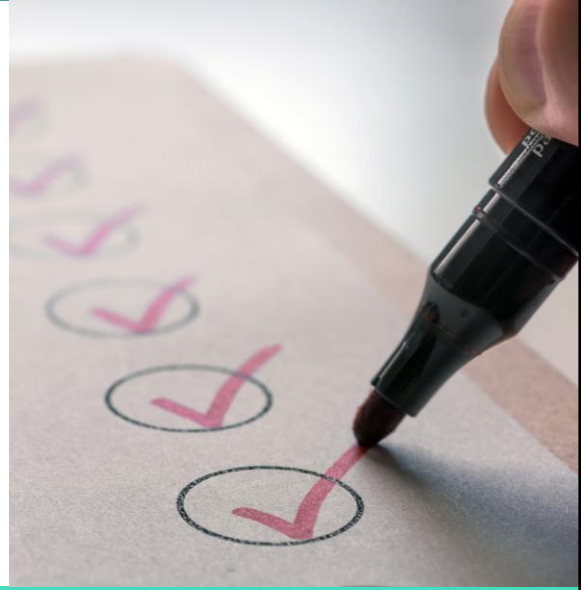
- Shared understanding of community needs
- Support in prioritization of resources
- Improved cross-sector collaboration
- Increased credibility for data-informed concerns
- Meet requirements



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## CHA/CHNA Requirements

- Health Departments: Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) Standards
- Non-profit Hospitals: IRS Standards for non-profit hospitals
- Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHC): Health Center Program Compliance Manual
- Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)- CCBHC Certification Criteria



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## Main Components of a CHA/CHNA



- Engagement of community partners
- Collecting and reviewing data
  - Secondary data (existing data sets like BRFSS or those on Kansas Health Matters)
  - Primary data (data you collect yourself- community surveys, interviews, focus groups, community town halls, etc.)
- Identification of main community health needs
- A report that is shared with the public

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# Data Components of a Community Health Assessment



## Secondary data

- Broad set of indicators of community conditions
- Can be hard to interpret; sometimes several years old, incomplete, and/or unavailable
- Typically collected by someone else

## Primary data

- Specific to your questions and audiences
- Planning and execution can be challenging
- Typically collected by you

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# Methods of Data Collection



## Secondary data

- **Existing records:** may be client records, meeting notes, etc.
- **Secondary data:** publicly available data related to certain indicators in various geographic areas

## Primary data

- **Surveys:** usually customized to fit your needs and specific topic
- **Interviews/focus groups:** allow more in-depth answers on specific topics

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# Secondary Data

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## Starting with Secondary Data

### Overview of secondary data sources

- Kansas Health Matters
  - <https://www.kansashealthmatters.org/>
- RWJF County Health Rankings
  - <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Kansas Communities That Care
  - <https://kctcdata.org/>
- Others?



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## Starting with Secondary Data

### Things to pay attention to

- Metrics
  - Percentages
  - Ratios
- Note data year(s) – Some data won't be available all years
- Missing data due to response rate or community size
- Question wording and answer categories



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## Starting with Secondary Data

### Most common categories for social determinants

- Access to healthcare/insurance
- Poverty/income
- Education
- Employment
- Housing
- Transportation
- Others?



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## Starting with Secondary Data

### Demonstration of using suggested websites

- Make sure you know what you're looking at
- Verify it's the right county
- Make sure you note the year and try to be consistent
- Some data requires you to read the footnotes



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## Primary Data

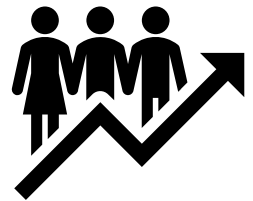
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## Collecting Primary Data

### Reasons for primary data

- Specific to your organization, community, and/or goals
- Opportunity for direct feedback
- Gives people a voice and engages the community
- Can help explain secondary data



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Methods of primary data collection

- Surveys (community/client)
- Key informant/client interviews
- Focus groups
- ThoughtExchange and other participatory data gathering methods



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Considerations for Surveys

- Provides countable data
- Customizable
- Generally easier to interpret (with multiple choice)
- Anonymity/Confidentiality
- People are used to them
- Some people are suspicious of surveys and how their data may be used
- Fairly easy to distribute (online, hard copy, etc.)
- Have to be precise in language of questions
- Have to know how to do analysis



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Survey Tips

- Shorter is better
  - Survey fatigue
  - Focus on essential information that is actionable and connected to your purpose, not on what might be interesting to know
- Closed-ended questions: Make sure they ask what you think they are asking
- Open-ended questions: May seem simple, but you will have a lot of data to analyze on the back end
- Pilot your survey
- Survey templates in Alchemer! Survey school!



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Considerations for Interviews

- Allow you to go in-depth and ask follow-up questions
- You get context for the answers
- You can explain questions to ensure understanding
- Can help explain survey/secondary data
- Need to ensure objectivity of interviewer
- Social desirability and lack of anonymity



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Interview Tips

- Interviews can be time-consuming
  - Time to schedule and conduct
  - Time to wade through the data
- Think about the various sectors in your community and try to get representation from individuals connected to those sectors
- Broad questions can allow priorities to emerge more than very specific questions
- You don't have to do as many interviews as you might think – saturation



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## Collecting Primary Data

### Considerations for Focus Groups

- Group dynamics affect discussion
  - Can help elicit information
  - Can inhibit participation or candid responses
- Can be hard to convene
- May need to draw out or manage some participants
- Can help explain survey and/or secondary data
- Social desirability and lack of confidentiality



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## Collecting Primary Data

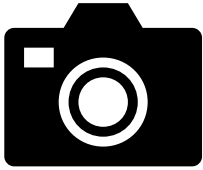
### Tips for Focus Groups

- Use only a few broad questions
- Keep discussion time to 90 minutes or less
- Focus should be on listening
  - Do not share information or challenge misinformation
  - Stay objective
- Can be a good way to involve underrepresented populations
- Time considerations
  - Consolidating large amounts of data
  - Can be time-consuming to analyze



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## ThoughtExchange, Participatory Methods, etc.



 ThoughtExchange



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## Questions?

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# Thank you!

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## Coming Up...

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