An African-American Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area, Phase 1

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An African-American Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area, Phase 1

Created by Graduate Students of the
Community Project Design and Management Course in
Affiliation with the Illinois State University
Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development

Fall 2009 Semester

An African-American Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area, Phase 1, Fall 2009

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Section 1: Executive Summary

Over the course of the Fall 2009 semester, students in the Community Project Design and Management class worked with members of West Bloomington to recognize the growing needs within the community. Along with the African-American Focus Workgroup (AAFW) and the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership (WBRP), the students completed Phase 1 of an African-American resources and needs assessment resulting in this report. This document reflects needs, wants, and hopes of the West Bloomington community and the AAFW. Comprehensively, this document is meant to serve as a bridge between community members and AAFW members.

As Bloomington as a whole continues to grow and expand, some members within the community feel the difficulty of being left out of development. Therefore, the project's purpose was to help ascertain the assets and deficiencies within the West Bloomington neighborhood with the participation of community members, and to help the AAFW integrate their goals with those of the WBRP. This report can aid future efforts and provide useful information in the development of the West Bloomington area.

The report includes a brief review of the literature considering race, education, income, age, public space, housing, civil society, and community-based participatory research. The report also includes sections outlining the research methods used, the research findings along the same themes used in the literature review, a discussion of limitations and barriers to research, and conclusions and recommendations.

Appendices include Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol for ethical treatment and protection of research participants, definition of the study area for drawing out *Census* data, and a Survey Design and Administration Protocol Handbook to aid in administering surveys drafted

for AAFW member organizations to use with their staff and volunteers, patrons, and the general public.

Student researchers analyzed public data and local reports to understand the background and demographics of the West Bloomington community. Reports consulted include these topics: housing conditions and issues; food justice; *Census* data on race, income, and age; community and economic development; and education statistics for District 87 and West Bloomington schools.

Through various focus groups, four common themes appeared: the need for greater communication between and among local organizations and community members; the need for additional activities, especially for young people; a lack of accessibility to various services offered by (or in) the City of Bloomington and surrounding areas; and distressed amenities. Communication can be strengthened between the WBRP and the AAFW, between West Bloomington community members and the City of Bloomington, and among all of these groups and members.

Focus group findings also show that the West Bloomington community and organizations serving it do not offer activities to people of all age ranges. In addition, all focus groups shared comments about transportation issues within West Bloomington. Regarding distressed amenities, focus group participants brought up issues concerning poor housing conditions, inadequate amenities at local parks, and old infrastructure in need of repair or replacement.

Findings from key informant interviews also acknowledged several areas for enhancement within the West Bloomington community. Within the community, apathy and a lack of respect among residents were identified as negative attributes coupled with a perceived lack of police presence in the area. Residents linked these attributes to a fear of crime, and

specifically, drug dealing, prostitution, and gang activity and recruitment. Resource

collaboration and greater awareness of available resources also are viewed as necessary

enhancements within the community and those serving it.

West Bloomington residents serving as key informant interviewees identified issues of

homelessness, overcrowded housing facilities, and a lack of affordable housing. Some

interviewees expressed a desire for better notification of neighborhood events. Several

interviewees mentioned a desire for better communication between the City of Bloomington and

West Bloomington community and a better working relationship with the police department.

Additionally, multiple interviewees discussed the importance of education, including the need

for more job training and literacy programs.

This report includes conclusions and recommendations based on findings from key

informant interviews, focus groups, local and public data review, and past and future surveys.

These recommendations are broken down into three categories focusing on the City of

Bloomington, the West Bloomington neighborhood, and youth.

City-related recommendations include the following:
- The Bloomington Police Department can increase its visible presence in the West Bloomington neighborhood by providing foot patrol.
- The City of Bloomington should develop a plan for addressing infrastructure needs in the West Bloomington area.
- The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System can evaluate the current mass transit bus routes for West Bloomington.
- Improved civic awareness and education can increase residents' skills and abilities to address grievances and development issues within their community.

Neighborhood recommendations advise the following:
- Primarily, communication among all stakeholders needs to be improved.
- Stakeholders can increase awareness of available services, programs, and resources that can benefit community members.
- A community fair can be held within the West Bloomington neighborhood.
- A feasibility study should be performed for a multi-purpose community center to be located in the West Bloomington neighborhood.

The youth recommendations suggest the following:

- Encourage The Bloomington Boys and Girls Club to determine if additional services could be added to benefit the teen youth of West Bloomington.
- Increase the availability of summer programs to benefit both working parents and children.
- Explore effective strategies for identifying and dealing with barriers to development, especially those that apply to youth and crime.
- Stakeholders can collaborate on a campaign to bring awareness and encourage action around the need for more volunteer mentors, especially male mentors who are needed for West Bloomington male youth.

In conclusion, this report sheds some light on the needs, wants, assets, and resources of the West Bloomington community. It is our hope that this report will serve as an impetus for enhanced relationships among the AAFW, the WBRP, West Bloomington residents, and the City of Bloomington, as well as provide information and materials to aid in future development.

Section 2: Acknowledgements

The students of Sociology 477: Community Project Design and Management wish to express our sincere appreciation to Sharon Mills for her assistance in preparing this report. We also extend our gratitude to members of the African-American Focus Workgroup (AAFW) and the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership (WBRP), State Farm, Inc., and State Farm Bank, who partnered with us and aided us along the way. In addition, we are grateful to AAFW and WBRP members Felicia Shaw, Tony Jones, and Heather Paul whose knowledge of the West Bloomington area and support for the project helped us greatly in accumulating the appropriate data. Also, our efforts would not have been possible without the sincere generosity of Bonnie Lentz of the Jesus Coffee House, and the members of the West Bloomington community, who made this project possible through their interest and participation. It is for you this report was created in hopes of developing stronger communities and a better quality of life for everyone in the future.

Sixteen students completed Sociology 477 under the direction of course instructor Sharon Mills. Students contributed to all stages of the project including project planning and Institutional Review Board protocol development, research implementation, data analysis, report writing and editing, presentation development and delivery, and event planning. Sociology 477 students deserve recognition for their participation and perseverance throughout the semester to complete the project and this report. Those students wishing to be identified include:

Karishma Amatya	Tyler Curtis	Dana Overman
Nicholas Beaty	Casandra Fritzsche	Emily Putnam
Jamie Boban	Andrew Griffin	Jared Ulschmid
Joanna Bossi	David Johnson	Tessa Zevallos
	Sasha Miranda	

Section 3: Introduction

Over the course of the Fall 2009 semester our class worked together with members of West Bloomington to recognize the growing needs within the community. Most of the students are master's degree candidates participating in either the Applied Community and Economic Development (ACED) sequence, the Peace Corps Fellows program, or the Peace Corps Masters International program as part of the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. The Sociology 477 (SOA 477) class, Community Project Design and Management, brought together a diverse cohort of individuals who are currently studying economics, sociology, and political science.

The class comprised a unique group of students who have worked with domestic and international organizations in various capacities. Some of these organizations include AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, Habitat for Humanity, International Red Cross, labor unions, and grassroots development initiatives. Students' past practical field experience is complemented by their current academic endeavors to cultivate necessary skills and knowledge for continued community development work in both domestic and international service.

The primary goal for this class was to create an informative document for the community as a whole. Our class utilized a multi-faceted approach to community development combining in-class readings, course presentations, field research and interaction, and a grant writing exercise which culminated in the production of this document, a resources and needs assessment of the West Bloomington community for the African-American Focus Workgroup (AAFW).

This document is intended to reflect the needs, wants, assets, and hopes of the West Bloomington community and the AAFW. It is meant to serve as a bridge between community members and AAFW members. This resources and needs assessment is meant to help the

AAFW with a variety of development topics including initial planning and programming, potential future goals, and insight into the African-American and West Bloomington communities.

The need for such a project has been highlighted by voices within the community. As the City of Bloomington continues to grow and expand, some members within the community feel the threat of being left out of the development process. West Bloomington residents have repeatedly expressed the desire for help in such areas as housing, transportation, and healthcare. By recognizing the growing need for better communication and collaboration, the AAFW has taken a solid step towards improved community activism.

The stakeholders and communities of interest for our final report are varied. Initially, our report is aimed at the AAFW, our main audience, and data are relevant for their future development goals. Linkages between the AAFW and the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership (WBRP), however, quickly became apparent during the course of our research. Because many members of the targeted African-American population live in West Bloomington, the WBRP is also a stakeholder in our research. As a result, both groups have the potential to use this information to assist members of their communities.

The purpose of this report is to help ascertain the assets and deficiencies within the West Bloomington area and to help the AAFW integrate their agenda with that of the WBRP. This report contains detailed information on the methods used by four distinct research teams, findings regarding assets and needs, conclusions and recommendations, and Appendices with supplementary research information, materials, and draft surveys for future use.

This report serves as another step in the community development process for the West Bloomington area and serves as an initial step in AAFW research and development efforts. By

providing information about numerous aspects of West Bloomington community development, the project team seeks to make local organizations more informed about the area and populations they serve. By using multiple data collection methods, the project team hopes to realize a more complete picture of the area and inform future research efforts.

The report identifies numerous assets within the community that can be used as a basis for building community pride and aid in developing solidarity among community members. The report also outlines potential improvements in community organization efforts which may help facilitate revitalization. Areas for improvement include building consensus among groups and community members, reducing isolation of interested parties, acknowledging and addressing competing interests, and integrating previous information gathering efforts into current group practices. By providing this information, organizations and individuals can identify available resources and possible roadblocks.

This report will be made available to all interested parties; it will be incumbent upon each of them to use it to their benefit. Ultimately, the report represents the collective efforts of the SOA 477 class. The class intends it as a tool for understanding and aiding in subsequent West Bloomington and African-American development efforts.

Section 4: Review of the Literature

Eight overarching themes arose throughout our research while conducting *Phase 1* of an *African-American Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area* including the following: race, education, income, age, public space, housing, civil society, and community-based participatory research.

<u>Race</u>

The West Bloomington community enjoys a diverse population. According to the *2000 Census*, West Bloomington comprises 2,300 community members, 24 percent of whom are African-Americans and 8.6 percent of whom are Latinos/Hispanics, and is considerably more diverse than the City of Bloomington as a whole. Despite a history of Federal legislation to encourage the desegregation of neighborhoods, racially and ethnically diverse communities are the exception rather than the rule (Nyden, Maly, & Lukehart, 1997). These communities represent an opposition to what sociologists Douglas and Denton (1993) have defined as the *American Apartheid*, a historical segregation and marginalization of these populations from housing and employment markets.

Issues of race and ethnicity are constructed within social contexts; therefore, developing and sustaining greater racial diversity should begin with communities and collective action. Communities can begin this discourse through awareness and engagement in accomplishing a collective goal (Nyden et al., 1997). Self-conscious communities have been defined as communities that couple their awareness of racial and ethnic differences with the development of community organizations and social networks to promote sustainable diverse communities

(Nyden et al., 1997). The idea that diverse communities can come together to develop social networks to achieve a common goal largely relies on the development of social capital.

Throughout the literature, social capital has been noted as important in addressing common problems that are not easily resolved by individual actions (Green & Haines, 2008). A widely used definition conceptualizes social capital as "The features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and trust, which facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 1993, p. 35). The development of social capital within diverse communities is essential to building a comprehensive plan for development and revitalization, as only those who become involved in the process shape and develop the goals and outcomes (Green & Haines, 2008).

Education

While the diversity of West Bloomington should be considered a vital asset to the area, it presents several challenges regarding education. National education figures demonstrate a historically substantial "achievement gap," that is, a gap in the academic performance between Caucasian students and ethnic minority students (US Department of Education, NCES, 2009). This gap has been narrowing since 1999 national assessments; currently, the gap is between 26 and 31 points on a 500-point scale for 4th and 8th grade reading and mathematics measures (US Department of Education, NCES, 2009). However, the achievement gap still warrants considerable attention from educational professionals and policymakers.

Education in the United States is primarily a policy area that is left to the various states and localities (US Department of Education, 2009). Although the Federal role expanded through the No Child Left Behind Act, state and local governments still play a much greater role in providing education for America's children. In fact, Federal expenditures on "elementary and secondary education is a little under 8 percent, which includes funds not only from the

Department of Education (ED) but also from other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services' Head Start program and the Department of Agriculture's School Lunch program" (US Department of Education, 2009). Education policy and funding is a critical issue for local policymakers, school administrators, and the community as a whole.

Income

There is an extensive literature about the importance of education in reducing the income gap between blacks and whites. By looking at *Census* data, research indicates that in 2002, blacks with a college degree had 94 percent of the median income of whites with a college degree ("The Power of Higher Education to Close the Black-White Income Gap," 2003). The reduction of the income gap is due primarily to college-educated African-American women who have higher median incomes than white women ("It's the Strong Academic Performance of African-American Women," 2001, p. 33). Other studies and variables related to the income gap paint a different picture.

A study by The Brookings Institution in 2007 indicated that median income has increased for both white and black families, but the rise has been less for black families. The study also indicated that children from white families tend to exceed their parents' income while children raised in black families tend to fall below their parents' income levels. "There was no progress in reducing the gap in family income between blacks and whites. In 2004, median family income of blacks ages 30 to 39 was only 58 percent that of white families in the same age group" (Isaacs, 2007, p. 2). Mark Thoma (2006) from the University of Oregon found there is always a higher rate of unemployment for blacks than whites. He also noted "There does appear to be a long-run decline in the gap since the early 1980s, but recently the decline has been reversed" (Internet resource).

Age

Much of the literature on high-risk or disengaged youth stresses the importance of understanding the local conditions of youth and their community. The usual call for "more cops and jobs" to combat youth delinquency needs to be reevaluated. A study of gangs in Milwaukee discovered that the lack of social institutions results in the development of an underclass. "Without community controlled institutions, conventional values will have diminished appeal, neighborhoods will segment, solidarity will weaken, and working residents will continue to flee" (Hagedorn, 1991, p. 538).

According to Daniels, McClanahan, and Djakovic (2008), effective social institutions can reduce and/or prevent crime and delinquency. Other research indicates there is not much known about disconnected youth. It is important to understand the literature surrounding disconnected youth, but information must be reinforced with knowledge of the local community and the youth themselves (Daniels et al., 2008). Any effort "to prevent high-risk behaviors must . . . be placed in the social context in which those behaviors are occurring" (Dryfoos, 1996, p. 11).

Public Space

The effective use of public space within neighborhoods is an important component of vibrant communities, as it plays a crucial role in the development of social networks. Fleming, Baum, and Singer (1985) argued that common spaces within neighborhoods are one of the key locations for casual social interaction. Furthermore, they serve a vital function in the growth of social ties among neighbors. These common spaces include parks, community gardens, or any public space where community members may gather.

Kuo et al. (1998) found that "greener" neighborhood common spaces help to form stronger neighborhood social ties. In a study of inner-city neighborhood common spaces, they

determined that when compared to individuals living adjacent to relatively barren spaces, residents living near common spaces with more vegetation had "more social activities and more visitors, knew more of their neighbors, reported their neighbors were more concerned with helping and supporting one another, and had strong feelings of belonging" (Kuo et al., 1998, p. 843). The research of Sullivan et al. (2004) supported these findings and added that not only do trees and grass within neighborhood common spaces increase the amount of social interaction, they also contribute to the overall social cohesion and vitality of the neighborhood.

Developing usable outdoor public spaces or neighborhood "greening" is a common theme within community organizing efforts. The involvement of residents in these efforts is essential for their long-term success. As Hester (1984) noted, residents "share the use of these spaces and can be involved in acquiring, planning, and changing them" (p. 24). Through their involvement, residents develop a sense of collective-symbolic ownership, which not only increases the use and maintenance of these spaces, it also can aid in strengthening the social networks within the community and increase the neighborhood's social capital overall.

Housing

The provision of housing should be seen as an element of the effective use of public space, as it in large part defines economic and social well-being for American families. Apart from the individual benefits of quality housing, the stock of housing contributes to the appearance and well-being of a neighborhood (Green & Haines, 2008). West Bloomington's neighborhoods, Olde Towne and Gridley, and Allin and Pricket, are some of the longest-standing and are home to many historic residences. While the historic heritage of these homes could be considered an asset, if not properly maintained, these homes can present a challenge to the neighborhood as a whole.

Physical housing features have been linked to specific health outcomes; among these is the prevalence asthma and lead poisoning (Jacobs et al., 2009). Older homes are commonly conflicted by maintenance issues such as humidity, mold, water leaks, and poor ventilation and air conditioning units; these conditions have been linked largely to development of asthma and other respiratory disease (Jacobs et al., 2009). Although there may be other risk factors that are also likely to be important, the large health differences among lower-income and minority families compared with other populations suggests housing conditions may contribute to chronic disease in some populations (Rosenberg and Wilson, 2001, in Jacobs et al., 2009, p. 597). Minorities are more likely to be subject to poor physical housing conditions; the children of these at-risk populations are especially vulnerable.

Along with the physical condition of older homes, the prevention of home foreclosures is an issue with which West Bloomington is confronted. Foreclosures have been viewed as a serious threat to neighborhood stability and well-being, particularly in lower-income neighborhoods (Immergluck & Smith, 2006). Foreclosures can lead to boarded-up, vacant, or abandoned properties, which in turn may contribute to physical disorder in the community. These properties create havens for criminal activity and may discourage the formation of social capital, which leads to further disinvestment in a neighborhood (Immergluck & Smith, 2006). Immergluck and Smith conducted a study to evaluate the impact of foreclosed homes on nearby property values in Chicago. Their findings suggest that foreclosed homes may significantly decrease the property values of surrounding homes: "Our most conservative estimates indicate that each conventional foreclosure within an eighth of a mile of a single-family home results in a 0.9 percent decline in the value of that home" (Immergluck & Smith, 2006, p. 58).

Civil Society

While the concept of civil society is one full of ambiguity, Civil Society International (2003) provides a straightforward yet exhaustive definition, describing it as a: "'third sector,' distinct from government and business." Civil society comprises "'intermediary institutions' such as professional associations, religious groups, labor unions, [and] citizen advocacy organizations, that give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation in democracies" (Civil Society International, 2003).

There is a rich body of literature that argues that strong social networks are essential for grassroots participation in the democratic process (Hauss, 2003). This means that not only must individuals be involved in strong social networks, but there also must be a strong network of institutions for citizen participation. These institutions are often called "civil society organizations" (CSOs) and are an essential component of a healthy civil society (Hauss, 2003). Faith-based organizations (FBOs), civil society organizations that are tied to religious institutions, have a rich history as powerful agents of change within communities, in large part due to their detachment from governmental or corporate entities (DeVita, 2001). However, the effectiveness of FBOs can be enhanced by successful collaboration with other CSOs, governmental agencies, and community businesses.

Community-Based Participatory Research

To establish a strong civil society, community assets and needs must be identified and tapped into. This is where community-based participatory research comes in. Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is "a partnership approach to research that equitably involves, for example, community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process" (Israel et al., 2008, p. 48). The most challenging component of CBPR is

creating a genuine partnership between the researchers and community members. CBPR emphasizes the belief that community members must be included as decision-making participants throughout the research process (Wallerstein & Duran, 2008).

Israel et al. (1998) affirm that community-based participatory research focuses on addressing social, structural, and physical environmental inequities through the active involvement of community members throughout the research process. However, the focus is not only on inequities and problems facing a community, but is also on the community's strengths and resources. CBPR builds upon the strengths, resources, and existing relationships within the community, and it seeks to expand the social structures that allow community members to better work together (Israel et al., 1998, 2008).

Community-based participatory research is a reciprocal process with a mutual transfer of knowledge, skills, and capacity between researchers and community members (Israel et al., 1998). CBPR is not a means to an end; the process of CBPR itself produces its own benefits to participants in the form of knowledge and improved social networks. However, it must be noted that to be successful, community-based participatory research requires trust between all partners. Therefore, to establish and uphold that trust, CBPR calls for a long-term commitment by all involved to both the research process and the partnership (Jones & Wells, 2007).

Section 5: Project Design and Research Methods

__Project Initiation and Scope__

Sociology 477: Community Project Design and Management is designed to be an applied

tools and methods course for students seeking master's degrees in sociology, political science, or

economics with a common concentration in community and economic development.[1] Drawing

on past experience, project partners, and literature, the Fall 2009 course and research project

were designed with several applied and theoretical frameworks in mind. These include the

following: community-based participatory research (Dennis & Neese, 2000; Israel et al., 2008;

Park, 1999; Wallerstein & Duran, 2008); assets-based development (Green & Haines, 2002;

Kretzman & McKnight, 1993); and human and community development models stressing

communication, relationship, research, action, and reflection for learning, improvement, and

transformation (Argyris, 1991; Biech, 2001; DeFilippis & Saegert, 2008; Institute of Cultural

Affairs, 2000; the Peace Corps; Play for Peace-Illinois, 2008; Wheatley, 2002).

Planning for the Fall 2009 course and community-based project, *An African-American*

Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area, Phase 1, began in Spring 2009

and continued throughout the summer and fall. The course instructor met several times during

2009 with representatives of the AAFW and WBRP to discuss project needs, desired goals or

outcomes, stakeholders including primary communities of interest, research methods, project

progress, and deliverables or outputs. The SOA 477 class also considered these issues and

planned and implemented project activities during the course of a semester.

The AAFW's and WBRP's expressed needs for information to support decision-making

about development efforts on the Westside, including AAFW development, provided the impetus

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[1] This course is also cross-listed as POL 477 through Illinois State's Politics and Government Department.

for research. Both groups want to ensure that residents, particularly African-Americans, and organizations serving those residents, have opportunity to provide input into plans for development in West Bloomington. This research project was a first step in AAFW plans to evaluate West Bloomington residents' needs for social services, ideas for development in the neighborhood, and resources or assets available in the area to meet residents' needs.

Major initial research activities included development of a scope of work and an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Protocol—an ethics review for research with human subjects—which was approved during the semester. The IRB Protocol outlines the use of focus groups, key informant interviews, review of public and local data, and development of surveys and administration protocol, and considers steps to be taken that will ensure protection of people in the research process. See a fuller description of each research activity (or method) later in this section and see supplementary information and resources in the Appendices, including a Project Logic Model with desired project outcomes in Appendix 1.

SOA 477 researchers sought information (or developed surveys for future use) about the following:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the West Bloomington neighborhood;
- Existing needs in the neighborhood and how they are (or are not) being addressed;
- Ideas for meeting the needs of West Bloomington residents and for development in the neighborhood;
- Current service availability, effectiveness, and opportunities for expansion; and
- Ideas for promoting and/or supporting collaboration among organizations that have a stake in the West Bloomington neighborhood.

The project's primary communities of interest include the West Bloomington study area (outlined in the map on the report cover) and African-American residents of West Bloomington including adults and minors. Stakeholders for the project include the AAFW, WBRP, faith-based and other human service organizations serving West Bloomington, West Bloomington

residents with special emphasis on young people and African-Americans, West Bloomington landlords and other business owners in or adjacent to the area, State Farm, State Farm Bank, local government, City of Bloomington taxpayers, and SOA 477 students.

Research Methods

The following sub-sections briefly introduce the IRB Protocol and each of the primary research methods used.

Institutional Review Board Protocol and Class Commitments

The SOA 477 class made many commitments to the course, each other, and the community project during the semester. A class contract stressing safety, commitment, respect, accountability, and having fun was introduced on the first day and reviewed during the semester. The class elaborated on this contract and expressed the need to allow for and respect differences of opinion, ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate if they choose, communicate with one another, allow for constructive criticism, and be open to others' ideas and to change.

In addition to these considerations, the class also reviewed Illinois State University policies and procedures regarding research with human subjects (or participants) and constructed a protocol for the conduct of their research with West Bloomington residents, the AAFW, and the WBRP. The ISU IRB *Policies and Procedures Manual* (2006) states:

> Federal regulation, *Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46*, requires that all institutions receiving federal funds, which conduct research using living humans as subjects, establish and operate an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of the IRB is to ensure the protection of these human subjects. IRBs are guided by the ethical principles embodied in *The Belmont Report* and by additional local standards and expectations. This policy provides both background and direction for the mission of the Illinois State University IRB (p. 1).

SOA 477 IRB protocol includes narrative outlining all research methods to be used, the populations to be included in research, how participants will be recruited for participation, and any expected risks or benefits to them. The protocol also includes documentation seeking consent of adults to participate, consent or assent of minors to participate, parental permission for minor participation, a one-page fact sheet about the project with contact information, and a script for inviting participation in interviews. (See Appendix 2 for an overview of IRB protocol, policies, and documentation.)

As mandated by the Illinois State University IRB, student researchers informed potential participants about the project, sought their consent, instructed them of their rights and potential benefits or risks to them, and made it clear that participation was voluntary. Participants could withdrawal their participation at any time with no penalty. General focus group and interview guidelines also assured confidentiality and encouraged anonymity in discussing issues outside of the group. Finally, participants were asked to focus on the future in terms of neighborhood and/or social services improvements that would enhance quality of life in West Bloomington.

Public and Local Data Review

A review of existing public information was conducted for the purposes of this report. The knowledge gained from this data review was used to substantiate or discredit findings of other research methods and to develop new findings not previously identified in the community-based participatory process. The major bodies of information that proved beneficial to this report include:

- *Area and Building Conditions Reports 2008*
- *City of Bloomington Consolidated Plan 2005-2010*
- Economic Development Council of the Bloomington-Normal Area (various reports)
- Gridley, Allin, Prickett Neighborhood Newsletters
- *McLean County Assessment 2000*
- *Nuestros Niños Hispanic Family Workgroup Report 2007*

- The *2000 US Decennial Census*
- The Illinois State Board of Education *School Report Cards*
- The *West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan*

These data sources were reviewed for significant qualitative and quantitative information applicable to the West Bloomington study area and to compare the West Bloomington area with City, State of Illinois, or National statistics. Public data analysis also included determining significant differences in key variables (level of education, access to services, housing quality, etc.) within certain socioeconomic sub-groups (age, race, and income sub-groups). Arranging the public data findings in this way allows for an understanding of the information within a relative context. Comparing data across different time and geographic boundaries was limiting. Instances of this are most readily apparent in the use of *Census* data, which is presented throughout the report in both figures and in-text references.

2000 US Decennial Census **and Definition of the Study Area**

The study area used in generating data from the *2000 US Census* was not completely consistent with the predetermined geographic boundaries of the West Bloomington study area that is included on the report cover. As such, it was necessary to "trim" the West Bloomington boundaries to effectively analyze *Census* data. See the map and table in Appendix 3 for a *Census*-defined West Bloomington study area.

Within cities, *Census* data is grouped geographically in decreasing size by census tract, block group, and blocks. The West Bloomington geographic boundaries fall across two *Census* tracts and four *Census* block groups. (There are two block groups within each tract.) Two of these block groups are completely contained with the geographic boundaries of West Bloomington. The other two block groups are only partially contained within the geographic boundaries. To prevent data error by including extraneous observations, the two partial block groups were excluded from the study area. The resulting *Census*-conformed West Bloomington

study area consists of Census Tract 15, Block Group 1, and Census Tract 16, Block Group 3. This *Census*-conformed area contains 76 percent of the total West Bloomington population and is believed to be representative of the entire West Bloomington population.

The timeliness of *Census* data is also a factor which should be considered. The most recent data source allowing the comparison between a precise geographic definition of West Bloomington (based on the WBRP-defined West Bloomington target area) and the City of Bloomington as a whole was the *2000 US Census*. The comparative nature of the demographic data presented in this report is still believed to be valid, despite the fact that it is almost ten years old.

Again, please see Appendix 2 which contains a list of census blocks used to define the West Bloomington area. This information may be used to evaluate changes in the West Bloomington area after the *2010 Census* data has been made available.

Focus Groups

Focus groups, as defined by the Bureau of Applied Statistics, are "a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their attitude towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging" (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001, p. 120). Furthermore, Bloor et al. (2001) states:

> Focus groups can be used for more than, say, the generation of information on the collective views on what is the optimum sized gap between the top of the soap powder packet and the level of soap powder inside, or on whether or not groups react positively to pictures of [a] prematurely bald UK politician wearing a baseball cap. Focus groups can yield data on the *meanings* that lie behind those group assessments (p. 120).

Focus groups bring together groups of people to form ideas on different concepts.   SOA 477 community project focus groups had a similar aim. To create a diverse breadth of knowledge on both the African-American population of West Bloomington, and the West Bloomington area, SOA 477 held three distinguishably different focus groups. The first focus group was with residents of West Bloomington. This was an informal gathering of ideas as well as an open discussion of different things happening in West Bloomington. The next focus group was a more formal gathering of AAFW members. The final focus group was an informative gathering with the youth of West Bloomington.

To plan for focus groups, SOA 477 first investigated the project study area. West Bloomington offers a diverse array of services, people, and localities. After SOA 477 examined the study area, the class made plans to hold several different focus groups. The IRB protocol was written to include minors and adults as focus group participants. Steps in planning and implementing focus groups included development of pertinent questions to ask focus group participants, followed by a class decision on which questions would be the most beneficial questions to pose. During this timeframe, SOA 477 also worked with a few different organizations to identify and invite participants.

For focus groups with the AAFW and The Boys and Girls Club members, SOA 477 reviewed consent forms with participants. Consent forms include project information and participants' rights (e.g., voluntary participation and right to withdrawal participation at any

time). After this "informed consent" process, SOA 477 asked predetermined questions of each group as a whole. With larger audiences, smaller focus teams can be formed. If uncomfortable, participants have no obligation to answer any specific question. Each focus group yielded different results, but some common themes arose. A description of each focus group follows; focus group findings are included in Section 6: Research Findings.

African-American Focus Workgroup, October 12, 2009. On Monday, October 12, 2009, SOA 477 students held a focus group with AAFW members. In organizing the event, SOA 477 collaborated with Felicia Shaw, AAFW coordinator, WBRP member, and State Farm, Inc. employee. Ms. Shaw made arrangements for the venue with class input, invited AAFW members to the meeting, and planned for hospitality. The meeting was held from 5:30-7:00 pm at Mount Pisgah Church in West Bloomington. Thirteen members of the AAFW were present to participate in the focus group, along with six SOA 477 students. The agenda allotted 30 minutes to be devoted to the focus group; the remaining time was filled with general "housekeeping" discussions which were much needed since the group hadn't met since January 2009.

Ms. Shaw served as facilitator of the focus group. In general, questions asked concerned AAFW information needs and decision-making to better serve the community. In addition, Ms. Shaw posed a question through the meeting agenda about AAFW suggestions for questions to include in SOA 477 interviews and on surveys for organizations, program and service patrons, and community members generally. See the Appendices for drafts of these three surveys.

West Bloomington Walk and Talk, October 22, 2009. At the suggestion of the SOA 477 class, Heather Paul, WBRP member and State Farm, Inc. employee, arranged a meeting at the Jesus Coffee House in West Bloomington for the purpose of talking with community members and introducing class members to the area. Bonnie Lenz, proprietor of the Jesus Coffee House,

graciously hosted the event and participated in the Walk and Talk sessions. In addition to all 16

class members, 5 WBRP and community members participated in the tour and discussion. After

a short informal meeting, participants split into four groups and canvassed the area by cars rather

than foot (due to the weather and ability to cover more area) to better understand the particular

concerns of residents within the area, to see West Bloomington structures and their conditions,

and to map the assets that often go overlooked in areas seeking revitalization.

The Boys & Girls Club of Bloomington, November 9, 2009. Four high school-aged

youth and young adults participated in this focus group with several SOA 477 class members.

Four broad questions were asked:

1. What services, offered by West Bloomington and Bloomington as a whole, are you able to
    benefit from?
2. What services should West Bloomington offer more of?
3. What reputation does West Bloomington have in the Bloomington community?
4. How different is West Bloomington and/or Bloomington compared to other communities you
    have lived in?

As with the other focus groups mentioned above, several themes emerged from this group

and are discussed in Section 6.

Key Informant Interview Methods

Identification of Community Stakeholders. Through various resources available to the

Stevenson Center and the SOA 477 course instructor, SOA 477 class members identified a

variety of African-American stakeholders in the West Bloomington community. Some of these

resources included the AAFW member list and organizational information, a list of minority-

owned businesses in the area, Felicia Shaw of State Farm, and the WBRP. SOA 477 identified

African-American stakeholders by category. The categories were decided based on the desire to

interview a diverse group of West Bloomington African-American residents including minority

business owners, youth, single parents, educators, religious leaders, and social service agency representatives.

      Pre-Interview Process. As a first step in the pre-interview process, Key Informant research team members reviewed the IRB protocol submitted for research. This was done to ensure that all processes and steps outlined in the document were being followed correctly in the identification of key informants. The team also used consent forms developed with the IRB protocol which participants reviewed and signed before interviews took place. Finally, SOA 477 developed a list of questions to be used to guide conversation during interviews. These questions include the following:

1. What are the strengths of the West Bloomington neighborhood (or community)? What are its weaknesses?
2. What needs exist in the neighborhood (or community)? How are they being addressed? What are your ideas for meeting the needs of West Bloomington residents?
3. What can you tell me about the services that are currently being offered to West Bloomington residents? (with appropriate follow-up questions to ascertain quality, utilization, potential improvements, etc.)
4. What would you like to see developed in the West Bloomington neighborhood (or community)?
5. What are your ideas for promoting and/or supporting collaboration among organizations that have a stake in the West Bloomington neighborhood (or community)? What do organizations need to make collaboration possible?

      Common Community Location. The SOA 477 class decided to hold key informant interviews in West Bloomington to facilitate community involvement. Key Informant Team members worked with Bonnie Lentz to schedule meeting times and identify and invite participants for interviews at the Jesus Coffee House. In addition to participants, several community members were invited but chose not to participate for various reasons such as not having enough information about the project or questions prior to the scheduled interview day and/or feeling as if their past efforts to participate had had no effect.

Interviews. On November 7, 2009, 13 of 16 SOA 477 members participated in 9 interviews as interviewers and notetakers at the Jesus Coffee House, Washington St., West Bloomington. The course instructor conducted one additional interview on another day. A wide range of individuals participated—minority business owners, youth, single parents, educators, religious leaders, and social service agency representatives—and helped SOA 477 glean a breadth of information.

At the Jesus House, SOA 477 members greeted participants at the door and briefly oriented them to the process. After that dialogue, SOA 477 members provided the consent form to sign whereby participants could agree to participate in the process (or not). All individuals signed the consent form.

Next, SOA 477 members paired an interviewee with two student researchers; one student served as interviewer and the other served as notetaker. The pairing was random and dependant on availability. This grouping would then go to a more private area to conduct the interview. SOA 477 advised participants of their rights including the option to terminate the interview at any time or refrain from answering any questions.

Data Analysis and Findings. After all interviews were complete, students typed up their interview notes to share with the class. Members from the Key Informant Interview Team compiled notes from all 10 interviews. Responses to all five questions were examined. For each question, repeated responses were tracked and unique responses were noted. After tallying all responses, the group identified overarching strengths, weaknesses, and needs of the community according to interviewees. The findings were categorized and shared with the class for reporting.

Survey Research Methods

An AAFW and WBRP request indicated a need for three standardized surveys. In designing the surveys, the Survey Research Team considered these target populations: the general public; the staff and volunteers of WBRP and AAFW organizations; and the patrons of these organizations.

Prior to this project, the AAFW piloted a survey at the August 2009 Bloomington Cultural Festival to determine West Bloomington residents' needs and primary methods of communication. Out of 41 completed surveys, only 9 respondents could be identified as West Bloomington residents. Unfortunately, due to this survey's small sample size, the results achieved cannot be considered statistically significant or be generalized to West Bloomington residents as a whole. This survey's preliminary results are included in Appendix 4.1.

Regardless of this pilot survey's low response rate, it contains relevant information. Thus, it has been revised and included as the "public" survey mentioned above (see Appendix 4.2). Revisions to the survey include question wording, answer categories, numbering, and formatting. Demographic questions about race and gender also have been included. This survey will be useful to members of community organizations throughout West Bloomington to attain general information about the community they serve.

The Survey Research Team created a second survey, an Organization Survey, for WBRP and AAFW organizations to use with their staff and volunteers. To encompass the diversity of organizations, the design of this survey needed to be simple, standardized, and broadly applicable to multiple organizations. The Organization Survey's focus is to gain opinions, perceptions, and information of organizational staff and volunteers in five key interest areas: (1) basic information about the organization; (2) the organization's support needs for

maintenance, enhancement, or expansion of services and programs; (3) issues of staffing, training, and accessibility; (4) communication and collaboration; and (5) perceptions of the strengths and challenges, and the gaps and duplications of services, both in the organization and across organizations, especially those serving West Bloomington residents and/or African-Americans. For a copy of the Organization Survey, see Appendix 4.3.

A third survey was created for the clientele of WBRP and AAFW organizations to gather important information from them. The survey is general in design for use by different organizations. There are four key interest areas: (1) transportation and accessibility; (2) communication; (3) improvements and gaps; and (4) strengths. This survey will allow service providers to gather information on needs and areas that can be improved and to understand how patrons receive information and access transportation to programs. The standardized nature of this survey, as with the others, will allow for a comparison of potential improvements and gaps across many different organizations. This will provide an understanding of how organizations can collaborate to better meet the needs of the communities they serve. For a copy of the Survey for Program and Organization Patrons, see Appendix 4.4.

Survey design and administration protocol are found in Appendix 4.5. This instructional set of guidelines will be helpful to WBRP and AAFW organizations in administering the three surveys included in the Appendices. Furthermore, it will aid the organizations in designing and administering future surveys. Included in Appendix 4.6 is a cover letter template which includes consideration for human subjects' protection for these three surveys and subsequent surveys.

Finally, Appendix 2 in this report outlines the IRB protocol and ethical guidelines Stevenson Center students followed in their research. These guidelines, or consideration of

them, also can aid organizations and individuals continuing to gather information to assist with future planning and organization or program enhancement.

Section 6: Research Findings

Our research findings have been organized according to the eight overarching themes

discussed in our literature review: race, education, income, age, public space, housing, civil

society, and community-based participatory research.

<u>Race</u>

West Bloomington enjoys a very diverse population. According to *2000 Census* data,

when compared to the City of Bloomington Township[2], West Bloomington has a higher

percentage of Blacks or African-African Americans (23.8%), than the Township (or City) as a

whole (8.6%).

Figure 2.
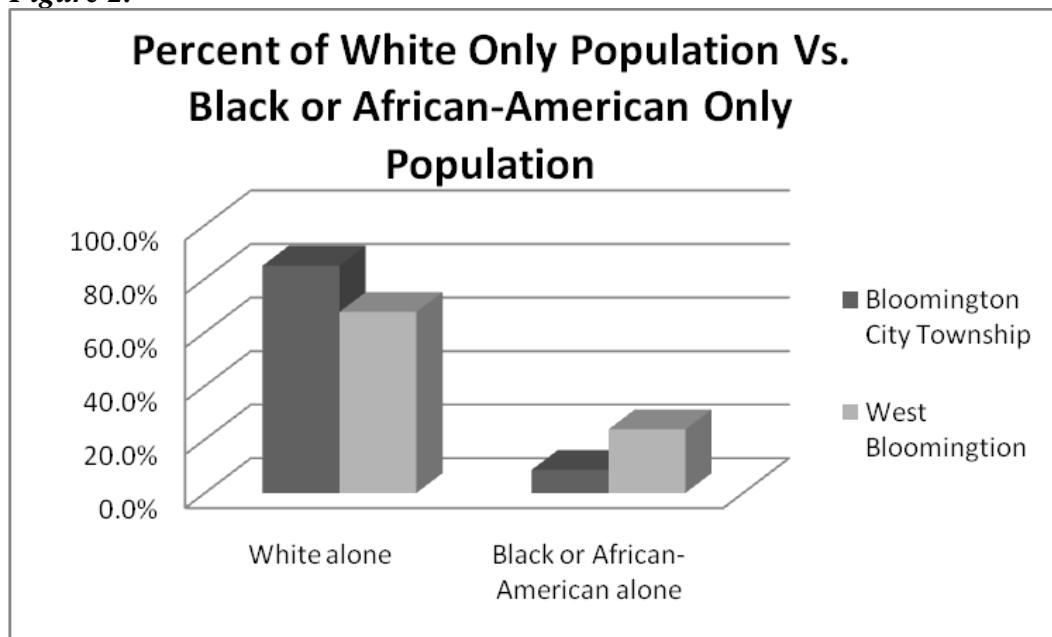
Source: US Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data*

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[2] For the *Census*, the City of Bloomington is defined as (or by) the City of Bloomington Township.

Education

        Education data are derived from the Bloomington District 87 *Illinois School Report Cards* published annually by the Illinois State Board of Education. The analysis below is of the schools within the West Bloomington study area. District 87 *Illinois School Report Cards* can be accessed online at http://www.district87.org/reportcards.php.

Data Considerations

        While the District 87 *Illinois School Report Cards* include data across a multitude of demographic and performance measures, for the sake of our research we focused on performance on Illinois standardized tests and observed trends across racial and socioeconomic lines. The State of Illinois was the basis of comparison. Explanation of the various measures can be found by accessing the *Report Cards* online.

District 87

        Overall District 87 performance on all Illinois standardized tests remained constant from the 2006-2007 school year to the 2007-2008 school year (77.4% of students met Illinois Learning Standards 2006-2007 and 77.7% met Standards 2007-2008). While the State's overall performance rose by 1 percentage point during this period (73.8% to 74.8%), it still remained below the performance of District 87. High school graduation rates for the District (89.2%) were slightly better than that for the State (86.5%). No significant racial trends could be found, except local Hispanic students graduated at a much higher rate than Hispanic students throughout the State (92.9% compared to 75.7%). However, District 87 has much room for improvement, as it did not reach Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in either Reading or Mathematics, and was identified as a district in need of improvement according to AYP specifications of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Bloomington High School

Graduation rates across all socioeconomic and racial demographics were considerably higher for Bloomington High School (BHS) than for those of Illinois as a whole. However, there is still significant room for improvement. According to Federal and State standards, BHS is not making AYP in Reading, Mathematics, or AYP overall, and is on "Academic Watch Status." In fact, there was a drop in overall performance on all State-administered tests from the 2006-2007 school year to 2007-2008 (61.4% met Illinois Learning Standards in 2006-2007; 58.4% met Standards in 2007-08).

Bloomington Junior High School

There were no significant differences between Bloomington Junior High School performance on all State-administered tests compared to Illinois performance overall. Economically disadvantaged students across all grade levels do not significantly outperform or underperform the rest of the State. Minority students outperform minority students throughout the State, with the exception being Hispanic students, who are significantly below Hispanic students across the State and underperforming in 7th grade Reading and Science and 8th grade Reading.

West Bloomington Elementary Schools

The data for Bent, Irving, and Sheridan Elementary Schools, the elementary schools within the West Bloomington study area, varied considerably. Whereas Bent Elementary School experienced a decrease in grade-by-grade ISAT performance for each subject from the 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 school years, Irving Elementary School had a significant improvement of test scores, and Sheridan experienced a slight improvement. After a review of the District 87 *Report*

Cards for the three elementary schools within the West Bloomington study area, no significant trends across racial groups or socioeconomic status could be found.

Income

There are disparities among income levels within West Bloomington and Bloomington City Township. Overall, 55.6 percent of West Bloomington households have an income of less than $30,000 per year compared to 25 percent of Bloomington City Township households.

Figure 3.
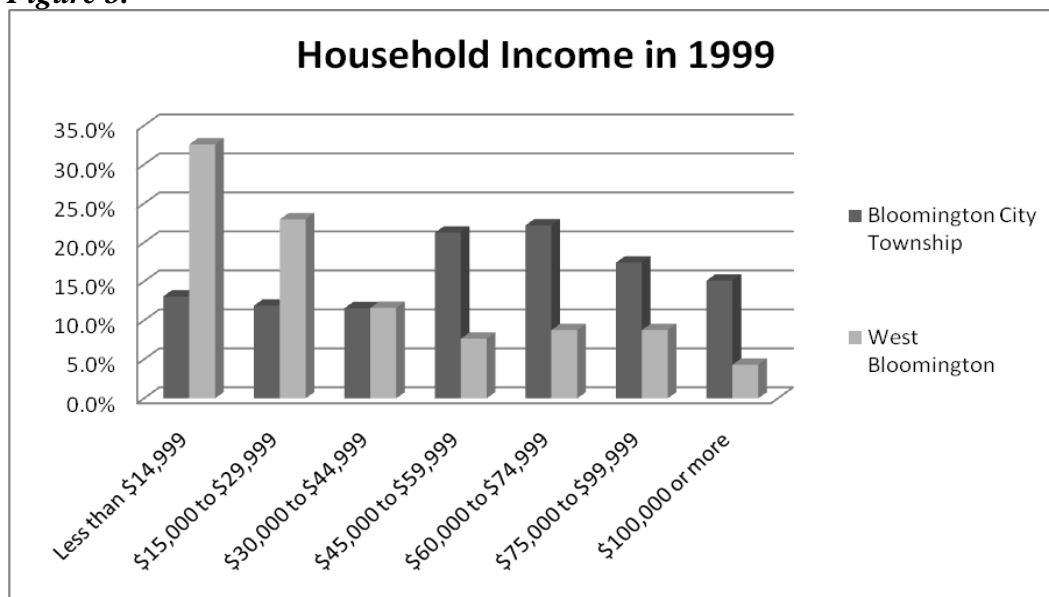
Source: US Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data*

Disparities also exist in the incomes between Whites and Blacks or African-Americans within West Bloomington. Overall, Blacks or African-Americans in West Bloomingtoin have a lower household income than Whites: 82 percent of Blacks or African-Americans, compared to 60 percent of Whites, have an annual household income of less than $45,000 per year.

Figure 4.
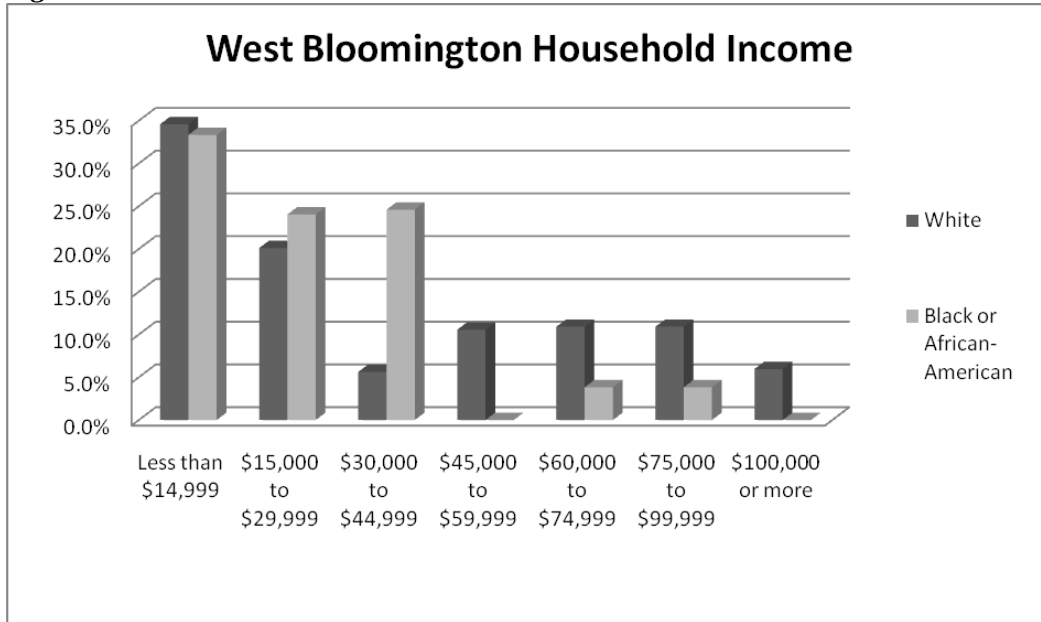
Source: US Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data*

Age

According to the *2000 Census* data, there is a considerable difference between the age distributions of White and Black or African-American residents in West Bloomington; 33.5 percent of Black or African-American West Bloomington residents were aged 14 and under in 2000, whereas only 17.5 percent of White residents were in the same age range.

Figure 5.
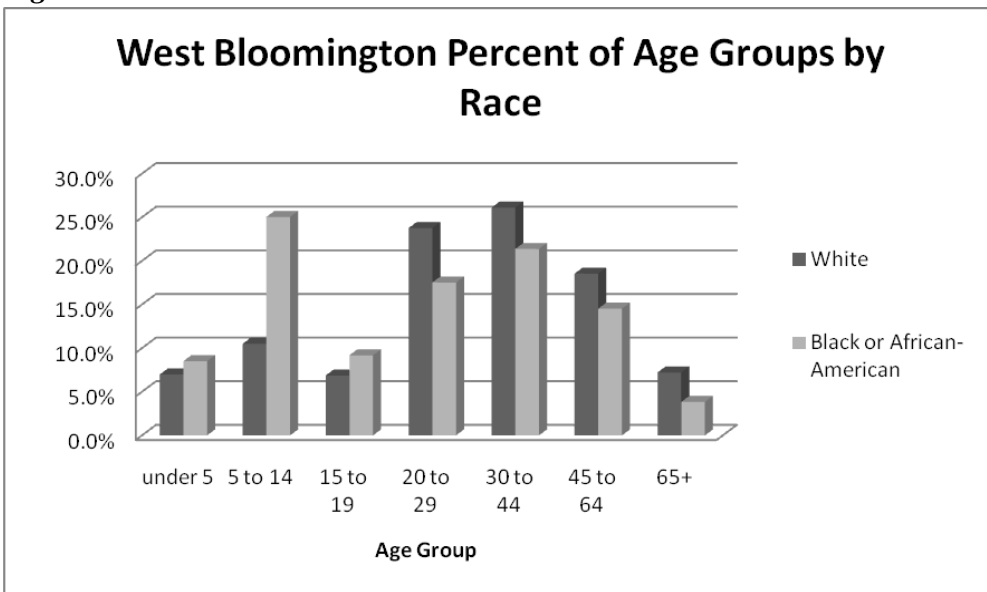
Source: US Census Bureau, *Census 2000 Summary File 3 (SF 3) - Sample Data*

Public Space

The residents of West Bloomington identified several public space assets throughout the focus group and key informant interviews. These included:

- Historic architecture of older homes;
- Numerous parks on the Westside;
- Access to Constitution Trail;
- Community gardens; and
- More aged trees than many other parts of Bloomington.

Housing

The 2008 *West Bloomington Plan Area and Building Conditions Report* highlights the large percentage of housing stock in the area that is in poor condition. This document also outlines the less than adequate condition of the sewer and water systems in the area. The *City of Bloomington, Illinois, Consolidated Plan 2005-2010*, points to a shortage of affordable housing in Bloomington as a whole. Recent foreclosure information shows there has been an increase in foreclosure since 2003.

Figure 6.
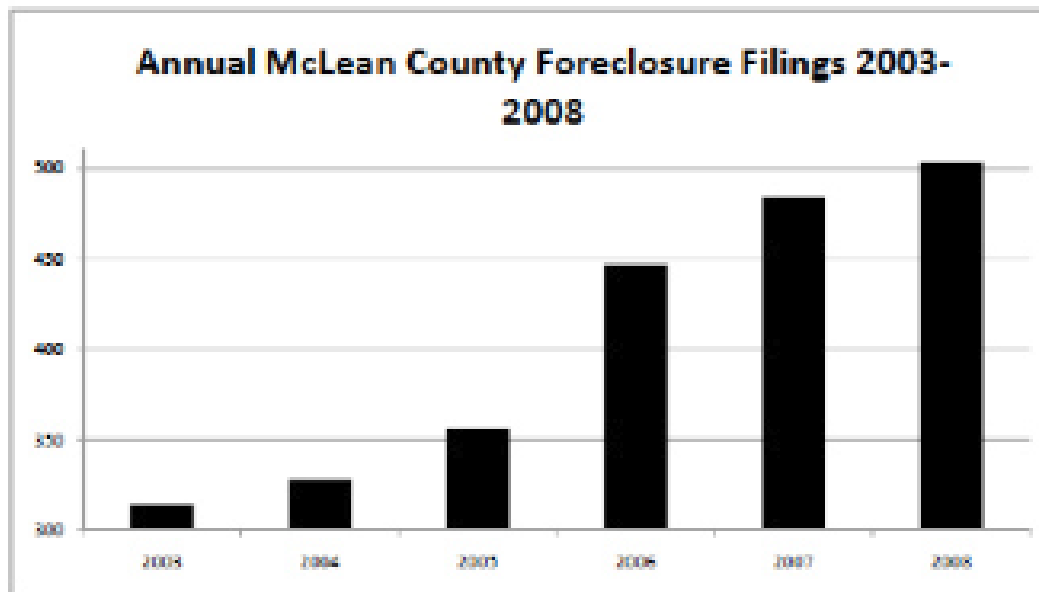
Source: McLean County Clerk's Office

Civil Society

Throughout the focus groups and key informant interviews, a number of civil society organizations (CSOs) were identified as active within the West Bloomington area. The Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and Western Avenue Community Center were all identified as organizations offering easy access to programs for children. Examples of other social service agencies serving the area include Home Sweet Home Ministries, the Jesus Coffee House, The Salvation Army, and Safe Harbor Shelter. There also are a large number of churches within the area including Wayman AME and Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church, two of the longest-standing churches serving the West Bloomington and African-American communities.

Community-Based Participatory Research

Two community-based participatory research methods employed in this research were key informant interviews and focus groups. The qualitative findings of these methods are outlined below.

Resources

Many strengths of the community were identified through interviews and focus groups with West Bloomington community members. Several interviewees mentioned the plethora of churches present as being an asset to the neighborhood. Additionally, a strong sense of community was conveyed as a West Bloomington strength. Specifically, citizens mentioned the positive aspects of community spaces such as parks and gardens and community events where they could gather (for example, festivals). Furthermore, West Bloomington residents saw their high level of diversity, along with good neighbors who participate in neighborhood watches and respect for property, as major assets for their community.

Social service agencies, and the programs and services they provide, were mentioned several times as a positive addition to the community. Interviewees mentioned specific agencies including The Boys and Girls Club, Home Sweet Home Ministries, the Jesus Coffee House, Safe Harbor, and The Salvation Army. Also, West Bloomington was identified as being centrally located with easy access to other areas of town. It is close to the downtown area and to the local civic center.

Key Informant Interview Findings

Key informant interviewees also acknowledged several weaknesses of or areas for improvement in the West Bloomington community. Within the community, apathy and a lack of respect among residents were identified as negative attributes along with a lack of police presence in the area. Residents directly linked these attributes to a fear of crime, specifically drug dealing, prostitution, and gang activity and recruitment. Citizens interviewed perceive that their needs are being overlooked. One resident specifically mentioned a lack of streetlights in the 700 block.

A lack of resource collaboration and a lack of awareness of available resources are viewed as organizational and community weaknesses. Issues of homelessness were identified through these interviews including overcrowded facilities and a lack of available facilities specifically for men, families including men, and women and their children. The lack of affordable housing was mentioned both as a weakness and a need of the community. A number of residents saw certain aspects of housing, such as affordability, maintenance, and overcrowded conditions, as negative contributions to West Bloomington. It is worth mentioning that key informant interviewees did not make reports of problematic landlords.

Key informant interviewees also identified several issues involving youth. Specifically, residents stated that The Boys and Girls Club was located outside of the West Bloomington area. There also were reports of bullying, a need for more positive male role models, and a need for additional activities and facilities available to local youth.

The key informant interview findings include additional needs of the community as expressed through residents. Some interviewees articulated a desire for better notification of neighborhood events. Several interviewees mentioned desires for better communication between the City of Bloomington and West Bloomington and a better working relationship with the Police Department. A few residents want more collaboration among churches in the area. One resident identified a desire for a grocery store within walking distance of the neighborhood. Several interviewees expressed needs for improved public transportation in the area.

Education, a primary emphasis of the AAFW, was mentioned by multiple interviewees including the need for more job training and a comprehensive literacy program for children and adults. The Star Literacy Program in Normal provides a potential model. A few residents mentioned the desire for a multipurpose community center that would provide programs for people of all age groups. Specific programs they mentioned for inclusion are the following: activities for recreation/sports, childcare, youth mentoring, and more services for young people ages 11-18.

Focus Group Findings

Throughout the focus groups, we were able to identify four common themes: lack of communication between community members; lack of activities; lack of accessibility to various services offered by the City of Bloomington; and distressed amenities. While some themes were more prevalent in one focus group compared to another, each focus group raised concerns of

these four themes and the need to address the issues.

Regarding "lack of communication," much can be done to better serve the community. There appears to be a lack of communication between the WBRP and the AAFW with members of the AAFW not successfully being engaged in the WBRP's progress. Student researchers observed a lack of communication between the WBRP and the community; the WBRP has much opportunity and potential to successfully engage *all* members of the West Bloomington community. Members of the AAFW also noted a lack of communication (and other barriers) in its attempt to raise awareness among community members of services offered by their respective organizations.

Concerning the issue of "lack of activities," findings from the Walk and Talk and the Boys and Girls Club focus groups show a lack of activities for youth in the West Bloomington community. All groups agreed there are activities available for young children, but after age twelve, there are not a lot of activities available. This specific concern was not addressed at the AAFW focus group, but AAFW members mentioned there are a lot of activities available for children in West Bloomington.

The theme of "lack of accessibility to various services offered by [or in] the City of Bloomington" was prevalent in all three focus groups. This theme was not mentioned as specifically as the other themes; it was sensed more as an underlying current. Most participants of the focus groups felt that if the City of Bloomington cared more about West Bloomington, than its community members might also care more about it.

"Distressed amenities" are visible throughout the community of West Bloomington. Members of the AAFW discussed distressed amenities with regards to seeking funds to improve facilities and the possibility of a community center. Participants of the Walk and Talk discussed

poor housing conditions. The participants of The Boys and Girls Club focus group discussed the distressed amenities of the Club and the need for better amenities at local parks. Boys and Girls Club focus group participants also mentioned the need for better housing.

Limitations and Barriers of Research

As with any research project, the current study was constrained by several barriers. Three primary challenges limited the breadth and depth of our findings: community engagement, time, and communication. In spite of these challenges, this research process was still successful at generating significant findings and materials which will aid future community development initiatives in West Bloomington.

Several trusted community members were helpful in mitigating the effects of these limitations. The Jesus Coffee House, Mount Pisgah Baptist Church, and The Boys and Girls Club were crucial for conducting our interviews and focus groups. The support received from AAFW and community members at these spaces was essential in our efforts to reach the targeted community.

A significant limitation of this research process was the lack of comprehensive representation from populations of interest. Through our interviews and focus groups, we talked to a very small segment of the African-American population living in West Bloomington. The population size of these studies reduces the confidence that this study's findings can be assumed to represent the entire community. Therefore, any discussion of our report should also acknowledge this limitation.

A constricting time horizon for the completion of this project and report was also limiting. This project was organized to coincide with the Illinois State University fall semester time structure. This 18-week period was much shorter than the necessary time needed to conduct

a full-scale community needs and resources assessment. With more time, the level of trust and communication with community members could have been much greater. Furthermore, trying to organize 16 full-time graduate students' schedules with the needs of the project was quite difficult.

Communication proved to be a significant barrier for our research team. As the project progressed, communication between important interest groups waned. A lack of communication between the WBRP and the AAFW, and also between these groups and the Stevenson Center students, became apparent. Concerning the WBRP and the AAFW, the issues and concerns raised by the two groups are not cohesive. While there are individual members that overlap both groups, the groups do not appear to be doing much work together at this time. Also, the main body of reference for this project was the WBRP. As such, the class believes the needs of the AAFW and West Bloomington community members, particularly African-Americans, are not significantly represented here. These limitations exaggerated confusion and misunderstanding of the desired role of this project's student researchers.

Another barrier our research team faced was the inability to engage the African-American community. The class desired a community-driven direction for the project. Our goal was to perform a needs and resources assessment for the African-American community in West Bloomington, yet much of our research involved non-African-American community members. Building relationships within the African-American community in West Bloomington was a challenge throughout this project. These barriers may be a result of time limitations and/or the need for greater communication and collaboration. With more time and communication, a greater percentage of African-American West Bloomington community members could have been included in this assessment at various phases of its development, research, and reporting.

Finally, other limitations and challenges that need to be recognized relate to specific research methods, several of which are mentioned in the research methods Section 5 of this report. Namely, the *Census* data is outdated as it reflects the *2000 Census* report. A limited number of interviewees and focus groups were conducted resulting in low levels of community-wide representation. There are a number of foreseen challenges regarding distribution of draft surveys included in the Appendices. Having acknowledged limitations and barriers of the current study, attention will now be turned to researchers' recommendations for future development efforts and research, based on the research findings.

Section 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This report provides a brief review of the literature on race, education, income, age, public space, housing, civil society, and community based participatory research. It also outlines the project design and research methodology, research findings including a discussion of limitations and barriers of research and for the West Bloomington neighborhood to overcome, and recommendations for consideration. By compiling this information into one comprehensive report, the project team hopes that a preliminary stage is set for incorporating all members of West Bloomington into the development efforts affecting their community.

SOA 477 has endeavored to provide a stepping stone for future research, action, reflection, and community involvement. This report provides valuable information for a variety of stakeholders involved in West Bloomington community development. Our joint efforts have produced a report that analyzes existing public data and information gleaned from key informant interviews and focus groups. SOA 477 team members also developed three distinct surveys for future data collection and advice for their use.

The following recommendations are based on the research findings and are broken down into three categories focusing on the City of Bloomington, the West Bloomington neighborhood, and youth. City-related recommendations include increasing police foot patrol, increasing the number of routes of the current mass transit system, and improving the civic awareness and education of residents. Neighborhood recommendations advise organizing a community fair and implementing a feasibility study for a multipurpose community center. The youth recommendations suggest adding more summer programs to benefit local youth, increasing coordination among existing programs, and implementing an awareness campaign on the need for more volunteer mentors.

City of Bloomington Recommendations

Some community members feel their needs are being overlooked by the City of Bloomington. There is a prevalence of house fires, a perceived lack of police presence, a lack of adequate street lighting, and roadways and sewage systems in need of repair. Residents also identified a need for more access (i.e., increased routes) to public transportation. SOA 477 research team members make the following recommendations related to the City of Bloomington.

The Bloomington Police Department can increase its visible presence in the West Bloomington neighborhood by providing foot patrol. This would allow for a familiarity between the police officers and the citizens of the neighborhood, potentially resulting in a reduction of the fear about crime that some residents have and improved relationships among community members and City of Bloomington staff and officers.

The City of Bloomington should develop a plan for addressing infrastructure needs in the West Bloomington area. An assessment of needed repairs should be conducted; then, repairs need to be completed to serve residents of West Bloomington, as well as the citizens of Bloomington-Normal as a whole. Improved infrastructure in the West Bloomington area will increase community safety and pride as well as provide aesthetic benefits.

The Bloomington-Normal Public Transit District can evaluate the current mass transit bus system routes for West Bloomington. We recommend an examination of the schedule to better accommodate residents wanting to access services outside of the area. Additionally, routes should be examined to provide neighborhood youth and young adults improved access to the universities and community colleges in the area.

Improved civic awareness and education is recommended to increase residents' skills and abilities to address grievances and development issues within their community.

Neighborhood Recommendations

The West Bloomington neighborhood has a rich cultural tradition and an established sense of social capital. These assets should be utilized when moving forward with any future community development projects. Increasing communication among all stakeholders will help make projects more successful and contribute to their sustainability. Within the community, it is necessary to address the issues of communication, apathy among residents, trust among stakeholders, resource collaboration, awareness of available resources, respect among community members, and quality, affordable housing including any issues with absentee landlords.

Primarily, communication among all stakeholders needs to be improved. A lack of communication hinders progress and prevents all voices from being heard. Increased communication among all stakeholders is imperative for the success of West Bloomington development efforts.[3]

Stakeholders can increase awareness of available services, programs, and resources that can benefit community members. By increasing awareness of available services in the area, as well as Bloomington-Normal as a whole, community members will be better equipped with knowledge to meet their needs. Increasing awareness and communication among stakeholders go hand in hand.

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[3] Instructor's note: SOA 477 research team members felt strongly about issues of communication among stakeholders. Future development efforts can pay attention to communication, both what it looks like when it is working and facilitating development, and the specific challenges it presents. In doing so, there is greater potential for stakeholder interests to be recognized and addressed and for new ideas, action, and progress to take place.

A community fair can be held within the West Bloomington neighborhood. This fair would include representation from all local service agencies, community- and faith-based organizations, the City of Bloomington, etc. This would allow residents to become more familiar with available resources. For instance, one resident recommended that a health clinic be established in Bloomington; however, one currently exists in the area.

A feasibility study should be performed for a multi-purpose community center to be located in the West Bloomington neighborhood. This type of facility would provide opportunities for interaction among all age groups and address the generational gaps experienced in West Bloomington.

Youth Recommendations

We encourage The Bloomington Boys and Girls Club to determine if additional services could be added to benefit the teen youth of West Bloomington. Transportation to and from the Bloomington Boys and Girls Club can be examined to enable more young people to utilize the facility.

Increasing the availability of summer programs would benefit both working parents and children. We recommend coordination with and among the current programs that exist, including any school district summer activities. West Bloomington should explore the opportunities to promote collaborative and non-competitive youth activities. These activities can reduce aggression and violence among youth and increase communication and understanding among people. Play for Peace can be used as a model.

Effective strategies for identifying and dealing with barriers to development, especially those that apply to youth and crime, must continue to be explored. The issues of drug dealing, prostitution, gangs, and gang recruitment have all been identified as areas that need to be

addressed. Furthermore, several young people indicated that bullying is an issue. An increased presence of law enforcement officers may curb some of these issues. Increasing programs, services, and activities directed at youth, as well as awareness of their availability, would decrease the likelihood of young people being exposed to more unsavory elements of society as they avail themselves of positive activities and interactions.

Stakeholders can collaborate on a campaign to bring awareness and encourage action about the need for more volunteer mentors, especially male mentors who are needed for West Bloomington male youth. This campaign could be delivered on a biannual basis.

In conclusion, this report sheds some light on the needs and wants of the West Bloomington community. It is our ultimate hope that this report will serve as a starting point for an enhanced relationship among the AAFW, the WBRP, West Bloomington residents, and the City of Bloomington. Thank you to all who had a hand in the completion of this research and report.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." --Margaret Mead

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sociology 477 Course and Project Logic Model

Program Logic Model					
Program Name: Sociology 477: Community Project Design and Management and the African-American Resources and Needs Assessment of the West Bloomington Area, Phase 1					
Inputs (What resources are dedicated to this program)	**Activities** (What services are provided)	**Outputs** (What amounts of service were provided)	**Outcomes** (What are the life changing benefits to Program Participants) (Outcomes should be in logical, sequential order and follow an if, then logic)		
			Initial ⟹	Intermediate ⟹	Longer-term
Course materials and literature; students; instructor; location; equipment; project partners (AAFW of the WBRP); primary communities of interest (West Bloomington and its residents, especially African-Americans) **Constraints:** Time; money; space; IRB; lack of familiarity; group size; academic integrity; Illinois State University (ISU) policies and procedures	Reading; lecture; facilitation; discussion; grantwriting; reflection; teambuilding; research **Research activities:** plan, implement, analyze, and report on research involving ISU Institutional Review Board Protocol; key informant interviews; focus groups; public and local data review; and development of surveys and administration protocol	16 students taught over 15 sessions with a project presentation and celebration as final exam; team project report; individual grant proposals; tools/methods gained for community development and research; number of project participants	a. Increase students' and other stakeholders' (AAFW, WBRP, West Bloomington residents) knowledge, skills, and participation with community development b. Share resources gathered and developed through the project c. Produce and disseminate a report with research findings and recommendations for development	d. Increase information for decision-making among stakeholders e. Stakeholders (AAFW, WBRP) use project information and research products for program, organization, and community development f. Increase educational opportunities	g. Develop social capital, networking, and collaboration (that is, develop connections among organizations and people) h. Increase community outreach i. Increase awareness of organizations, programs, and services

Appendix 1: Sociology 477 Course and Project Logic Model

Appendix 2: Project Fact Sheet and Illinois State University Institutional Review Board Protocol for the Protection of Human Research Subjects

Introduction

The following Appendix highlights issues and documentation included in the required protocol for research with human subjects that SOA 477 class members completed and University officials approved in the first half of the Fall 2009 semester. The full protocol narrative is not included here.

At the end of this Appendix, excerpts are taken from the *Illinois State University Institutional Review Board Policy and Procedures Manual for the Protection of Human Research Subjects* (2006) that highlight some basic terms and overriding ethical principles of 1) Respect for Persons, 2) Beneficence, and 3) Justice. The full *Policy and Procedures Manual* can be accessed via the Internet at http://www.rsp.ilstu.edu/documents/CurrentIRBPolicyandProcedure-revised11-06.pdf.

This Appendix demonstrates SOA 477 students' consideration of IRB issues and ethical concerns which guided their research and interactions with participants. The Appendix can serve as an educational reference for the African-American Focus Workgroup, the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership, and other researchers as they consider information needs and future research activities.

FACT SHEET
West Bloomington African-American Resources and Needs Assessment

What is the West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment? This is a research project that will evaluate West Bloomington residents' needs for social services, ideas for development in the neighborhood, and resources available in the area to meet residents' needs.

Why is this assessment needed? The West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership (WBRP) and the African-American Focus Workgroup (AAFW) want to ensure that residents, particularly African-Americans, and organizations serving those residents, have opportunity to provide input into plans for development in West Bloomington.

Who is conducting the assessment? Graduate students associated with Illinois State University's Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development are working with the WBRP and AAFW to conduct the assessment.

How will the assessment collect information? Researchers will:
- Review existing information, such as census data and local reports
- Conduct focus groups
- Interview key participants such as West Bloomington residents and organizational representatives
- Analyze survey data and develop surveys that organizations can use in the future

What types of information is the assessment looking for? Researchers will gather information on:
- Strengths and weaknesses of the West Bloomington neighborhood
- Existing needs in the neighborhood and how they are (or are not) being addressed
- Ideas for meeting the needs of West Bloomington residents and for development in the neighborhood
- Current service availability, effectiveness, and opportunities for expansion
- Ideas for promoting and/or supporting collaboration among organizations that have a stake in the West Bloomington neighborhood

How will the information be used? The WBRP and AAFW will use information in future planning. Materials to be developed include a report and public presentation that can be shared with residents, social agencies, churches, government bodies, and others.

What is the timeline for this assessment? Project planning began in spring 2009. Information gathering began in summer and will continue throughout the fall. The final report and presentation are expected by December 15, 2009.

For more information about this assessment, please contact the project director, Sharon Mills, Illinois State University, 309-438-5326, smmills@ilstu.edu.

Illinois State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Department/Unit Representative Protocol Review Form

After completing this review form, please attach a copy of the entire protocol to this form and forward to the Research Ethics & Compliance ~ Campus Box 3330. For more information, templates, and forms go to **www.rsp.ilstu.edu**.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Title	West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment
PI Name	Sharon Mills, Director, Applied Social Research Unit, and Instructor, Sociology 477: Community Project Design and Management
Co PI Last Names				
(Write one or two sentences briefly describing the proposed research)	Graduate students taking Sociology 477 (and representing Illinois State's Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development), in conjunction with the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership and African-American Focus Workgroup, will engage in research related to West Bloomington needs and resources. A community-based participatory research framework will be used that engages community stakeholders, including primary communities of interest, in multiple aspects of the research process.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants:	
1. How many of each type will be recruited?	__? up to 100__ Total Adults (over 18) = __?___ Males __?___ Females _ ? up to 20__ Total Minors (under 18) = __?___ Males __?___Females
2. Of the above numbers, how many participants will be specifically recruited from the following populations?	_____ Prisoners _____ Mentally Handicapped _____ Mentally Ill _____ Physically Disabled _____ Pregnant Women _____ Physically Ill _____ Other: (please specify)
3. How will they be recruited?	Students will invite selected stakeholders to participate in key informant interviews through direct contact, telephone, email, or mail. Felicia Shaw, a State Farm employee coordinating the African-American Focus Workgroup, will invite focus group participants.
4. Informed Consent for Participants over 18	Does the study include an informed consent process that includes all of the elements? _X___ Yes ____ No Is the informed consent form included? _X__ Yes ___ No
5. Consent for Minors or those	Does the study include a parent/ guardian permission process that includes all of the elements? __X__ Yes ____ No Is the parent/ guardian permission form attached? __X__ Yes ____ No

requiring a guardian	Are appropriate assent forms or scripts attached? _X___ Yes _____ No
B. Procedure(s)	
1. Which techniques will be used to collect data	___ Questionnaire ___ Files/ Records ___ Task(s) _X__ Interview ___ Physical Exercise ___ Specimens ___ Treatment ___ Observation ___ Tests _X__ Other: Focus groups will capture information from the African-American Focus Workgroup and potentially other invited stakeholders. Collection and review of public (e.g., census data) and local (e.g., existing assessment reports) data also will be used.
	Recording: ___ Audio ___ Video _X__ Still Image Could identification of subjects and/or their responses be damaging to standing, employability, insurability, reputation, or be stigmatizing?
	_____ Yes	__X__ No Still images may be captured to archive the process being used (e.g., in focus groups) and the engagement of community members in the process. No names will be recorded. Consent forms ask permission to take and use images. Care will be taken in using specific photographs to ensure that the rights and potential risks to participants are considered. Other images of the West Bloomington neighborhood of interest may be included in the project report and/or presentation to provide a visual point of reference related to project findings.
2. Will the study involve…	Psychological Intervention? _____ Yes ___X__ No Biomedical Procedures? _____ Yes ___X__ No Deception? _____ Yes ___X__ No
3. Does the protocol adequately state a plan for…?	Storing the data securely? __X___ Yes _____ No Access to the data? __X___ Yes _____ No Use of the data? __X___ Yes _____ No Disposition of the data? __X___ Yes _____ No

III. RISKS

For each of the following potential risks below, does the protocol adequately describe how risks will be minimized?			
Psychological Intervention?	___ Yes	___ No	X__ N/A
Biomedical Procedures?	___ Yes	___ No	X___ N/A
Deception?	___ Yes	___ No	X___ N/A

Coercion of Minors	___ Yes ___ No X___ N/A
Coercion of Prisoners	___ Yes ___ No X__ N/A
Risks to Mother and Fetus	___ Yes ___ No X___ N/A
Risks to Social Standing and Reputation	___ Yes ___ No X___ N/A

Other:

IV. BENEFITS

Does the protocol state anticipated benefits? _X__ Yes ___ No ___

V. DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

Please review your responses above carefully! All shaded areas indicate an expedited or full level of review

Name (please print):	Date:
Recommended Level of Review: ___ **Exempt** ___ **Expedited** ___ **Full**	
Comments:	

Appendix C: Research Involving Minors as Subjects

If some or all of the subjects of the proposed research will be minors (under the age of 18), provide the following information.

1) Provide a justification for the inclusion of minors that documents the benefits that are likely to accrue to a child participating in the project

Graduate students taking Sociology 477: Community Project Design and Management (and representing Illinois State's Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development) are seeking to assess needs and resources of the West Bloomington area, including the availability and effectiveness of social programs, especially those intended for minors. It is important to include input of minors who may benefit from social programs and resources to improve utilization and quality of services.

Through inclusion of minors (and their parents), Sociology 477 students, project partners, and social service providers will improve their understanding of the perceived needs for and opinions of available resources. Sociology 477 students will work and share information with the West Bloomington Revitalization Partnership, the African-American Focus Workgroup, and other interested parties so these groups may enhance existing services, plan for new services or programs, and collaborate to make effective use of available resources.

Minors also may benefit personally, by having the opportunity to express their opinions and needs involving programs and resources that concern them. Minors are being given an opportunity to become directly involved in the improvement process through their participation.

2) Specify how parental permission will be obtained and documented. Attach copies of all letters and permission forms.

Permission for participation in surveys or interviews will be obtained and documented through parental/guardian consent forms. The parental/guardian consent form briefly describes the objective of the project, stresses the voluntary nature of participation, and states that participants may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty. Parents/guardians of the participating minor are ensured that all information collected in the study will remain confidential, and there are no anticipated risks involved in their participation. The parental consent form is attached.

3) Specify how you will obtain **assent** of minor subjects. Attach copies of assent forms for children who can read (8 to 17 years) or script (for children under 8 years) for verbal assent.

Assent of minors will be obtained through assent forms to all minors 8 years of age and older. The assent form states the objective of the research and why it is important that the minor is involved. The assent form makes it clear there is no penalty or punishment for choosing not to participate, and that the minor is allowed to quit whenever they would like. The assent form is attached.

4) If subjects are school children and class time is used to collect data, describe in detail the activity planned for non-participants. Who will supervise those children? This information must be included in the consent form.

The Sociology 477 students do not intend to collect data during school hours or during class time.

5) For projects involving children under 8 years of age, what non-verbal cues will you watch for to indicate the child is ready to end or pause participation?

The Sociology 477 students do not intend to collect data from children under the age of 8 or to involve them in the research process.

6) Specify provisions for minimizing **coercion** on minors to participate.

Provisions for minimizing coercion will be achieved by ensuring all participants clearly understand that their participation is voluntary. Before conducting a survey or interview, Sociology 477 students will receive verbal and written assent to ensure that participants are aware of their ability to stop participating at any time.

Appendix K: VIDEO/AUDIO TAPING

West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment

1)   If all or some of the subject(s) of the proposed research will be audio or videotaped, **justify** why the use of audio or videotaping is necessary to the study.

No participants will be video or audio taped. Digital photographs may be taken at a focus group meeting to document the process used and participation of the community of interest in research (e.g., African-Americans, West Bloomington residents, representatives of the African-American Focus Workgroup). Digital photographs may be taken of the West Bloomington neighborhood of interest to visually present the area within publications or presentations. Photographs of minors will not be used without parental permission being given. If pictures of minors are taken, no minors will be identified by name in photographs.

2)   Who will have access to the tapes and for what purposes?

Digital pictures may be used in project reporting, presentations, and other dissemination mechanisms, for instance, a piece on project progress and results published in a local neighborhood association newsletter.

3)   Where will the tapes be stored and what security measures will be taken to prevent unauthorized persons from accessing the tapes?

N/A.

4)   What are your plans for the ultimate use and disposal of the tapes?

N/A.

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR ADULTS
West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment, Fall 2009

Dear Participant:

We, the students of the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development at Illinois State University, in conjunction with the African-American Focus Workgroup, are conducting a research study to gather information that local organizations can use for decision-making as they work to revitalize the West Bloomington neighborhood. We are requesting your participation, which will involve sharing your experiences and opinions as a stakeholder in the West Bloomington community, in either a focus group meeting or interview.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and is expected to last about one hour. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will not be any penalty. The results of this research study may be published, but your name will not be used in conjunction with anything you said. Although there may be no direct benefit to you personally, the possible benefit of your participation is greater understanding of West Bloomington residents' and organizations' needs and resources and ideas for improving quality of life in West Bloomington. Organizations may use the project to inform their decision-making and increase their collaboration to better the West Bloomington community.

We anticipate only minimal risk to you for participating, nothing beyond what would occur in everyday conversation on these topics. For example, a person who is interviewed may feel awkward if he/she does not have an informed opinion about some of the questions asked. In addition, there is a slight risk that individuals interviewed in focus groups will receive negative reactions from others in the focus group if they say an unpopular opinion. Please know you do not have to have all of the answers but your input is important. Also, interview and focus group guidelines encourage respect (and tolerance) for others' opinions and their right to share these. Interviewers and focus group facilitators will work to ensure everyone has an opportunity to provide input if they want to and keep conversation focused and as comfortable for everyone as possible.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call Sharon Mills, Project Director, at (309) 438-5326. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Research Ethics & Compliance Office at Illinois State University at (309) 438-2529.

Thank you for your participation and interest in improving the West Bloomington community.

- -
Consent for Participation in the West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment

Print Name: _____

Please check the following statements if you agree:
_____ I agree/consent to participation in the above study.
_____ I agree/consent to my picture being taken and possibly used in project reports,
          publications, presentations, etc. without the use of my name.

Signature _____   Date _____

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR MINORS
West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment, Fall 2009

Dear parent/guardian of participant:

We, the students of the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development at Illinois State University, in conjunction with the African-American Focus Workgroup, are conducting a research study to gather information local organizations can use for decision-making as they work to revitalize the West Bloomington neighborhood.

We are requesting the participation of your child to better understand the needs of minors in West Bloomington. This participation will involve minors sharing their experiences and opinions of current resources and programs targeting minors in the West Bloomington community.

Your child's participation in this study is <u>completely voluntary</u>. Your child may choose not to participate or to withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. The results of this research study may be published, but we assure you your child's name will remain confidential.

Although there may be no immediate benefit to your child, the possible benefit of your child's participation is the opportunity to become directly involved in improving services and programs provided for minors now and in the future. This will improve your community and neighborhood as a whole.

We anticipate only minimal risks for participation, nothing beyond what would occur in everyday conversation on these topics. For example, your child may feel awkward if he/she does not have an opinion about some of the questions asked in a group setting or interview. In addition, there is a slight risk that some children will receive negative reactions from others in the group if they say an unpopular opinion. We will assure your child he/she doesn't have to have all of the answers but his/her input is important. Also, our interview and focus group guidelines encourage respect for others' opinions and their right to share these. Interviewers and focus group facilitators will work to ensure everyone has an opportunity to provide input if they want to and will keep conversation focused and comfortable for everyone.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call Sharon Mills, Research Director, at (309) 438-5326. If you have any questions about your or your child's rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Research Ethics & Compliance Office at Illinois State University at (309) 438-2529.

Thank you for your participation and for allowing us to better understand the needs of children in West Bloomington.

- -

Consent for Minor Participation in the West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment

Please check the following statements if you agree:
_____ I agree/consent to my child's participation in the above study.
_____ I agree/consent to my child's picture being taken and possibly used in project reports, publications, presentations, etc. without the name of my child.

Name of Minor _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____Date _____

MINOR ASSENT FORM FOR PRE-TEENAGERS
West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment, Fall 2009

We are students from Illinois State University. We are doing a study to learn about what kinds of programs would make your neighborhood a better place. We are asking you to help because we don't know very much about how people your age feel about your neighborhood and the programs in it. We think your opinion is very important, and it will help us understand how to improve your community and neighborhood for everyone.

If you agree to participate, we are going to ask you some questions about your neighborhood, the types of programs you are involved in, and how you think programs can be improved. You can ask questions at any time during the interview (or group discussion). If you decide at any time not to finish, that is ok.

It is possible you may feel a little uncomfortable if you think you don't have an answer or the "right" answer. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. We will help make the conversation comfortable for everyone.

If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to share your ideas. If you don't want to share your ideas with us, don't sign this paper. No one will be upset if you don't sign this paper or if you change your mind later.

Your signature: _____ Date _____

Your printed name: _____

Signature of person obtaining consent:_____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent:_____

MINOR ASSENT FORM FOR TEENAGERS
West Bloomington African-American Needs and Resources Assessment, Fall 2009

We are students from Illinois State University. We are doing a study to learn about what kinds of programs would make your community a better place. We are asking you to help because we don't know very much about how people your age feel about your neighborhood and the programs in it. We think your opinion is very important, and it will help us understand how to improve your community and neighborhood for everyone.

If you agree to be in our study, we are going to ask you some questions about your neighborhood, the types of programs you are involved in, and how you think programs can be improved. We want to know if you have any ideas on what people your age need, how they feel about programs that already exist, and what they would like to see in the neighborhood. You may benefit from the opportunity to share your ideas or from improvements made in the neighborhood in the future.

You can ask questions about this study at any time during the interview (or group discussion). If you decide at any time not to finish, you can ask us to stop the interview or leave the discussion.

It is possible you may feel little awkward if you feel you don't have an answer or the "right" answer. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. We just want to know what you think about your community and neighborhood. We want everyone to have a chance to participate if they want to and respect other people as they are sharing their opinions. We will help to make the conversation comfortable for everyone.

If you sign this paper, it means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you don't want to be in the study, don't sign this paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't sign this paper or if you change your mind later.

Your signature: _____ Date _____

Your printed name: _____

Signature of person obtaining consent:_____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent:_____

Excerpts from the *Illinois State University Institutional Review Board Policy and Procedures Manual for the Protection of Human Research Subjects* **(p. 2, 5-6)**

I. Human Subject Research Protection

A. Basics

Federal regulation, *Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46*, requires that all institutions receiving federal funds, which conduct research using living humans as subjects, establish and operate an Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of the IRB is to ensure the protection of these human subjects. IRBs are guided by the ethical principles embodied in *The Belmont Report* and by additional local standards and expectations. This policy provides both background and direction for the mission of the Illinois State University IRB.

B. Important Terms and Concepts

There are several critical terms that are used throughout this procedures manual. It is important that all Principal Investigators and other researchers; department, school and unit IRB representatives; and members of the IRB Executive Committee share a common understanding of these terms.

Research means any systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. Research activity that will involve human subjects necessitates IRB review and approval. It is the IRB, not the researcher, that will determine in each case whether a particular activity is research and where it exists in the review and approval process. Investigators may not avoid the requirements of the IRB by referring to their research activities by other names (e.g., holistic investigations, naturalistic interactions, or preliminary inquiries). Nor do the planned results of a research activity (e.g., a paper to be presented at a meeting or one submitted for journal publication) alter the requirements for an IRB review.

Research Protocol is a written description of a planned research activity in sufficient detail to allow for a review of the proposed research activities by the IRB. Research protocols submitted for IRB review are to follow a particular outline, detailing just the information necessary for a proper IRB review in clear and plain language. Incomplete protocols, protocols containing confusing or highly technical language, or protocols involving excessive and unnecessary detail (e.g., the entire first three chapters of a dissertation) are unacceptable.

Human Subject means a living individual about whom a research investigator (whether faculty, staff or student) obtains: (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual or (2) identifiable private information or records.

Review is a process by which the members of the IRB weigh the risks of the research activities against its potential benefits. Research protocols are classified into one of three groups (exempt

review, expedited review, or full review) depending on the nature of the research activities and the anticipated risks to the human subjects.

II. Illinois State University Policy for Protection of Human Research Subjects

A. Ethical Principles

Illinois State University is guided by ethical principles regarding all research involving human subjects as set forth in the report of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, entitled *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research* (also known as the Belmont Report). These principles include:

1. Respects for Persons
Respect for persons incorporates at least two ethical convictions: first, that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents, and second, that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection. The principle of respect for persons thus divides into two separate moral requirements: the requirement to acknowledge autonomy and the requirement to protect those with diminished autonomy.

2. Beneficence
Persons are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making efforts to secure their well-being. The term "beneficence" is often understood to cover acts of kindness or charity that go beyond strict obligation. Two general rules have been formulated as complementary expressions of beneficent actions in this sense: (1) do no harm, and (2) maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms.

3. Justice
An injustice occurs when some benefit to which a person is entitled is denied without good reason or when some burden is imposed unduly. Another way of conceiving the principle of justice is that equals ought to be treated equally. There are several widely accepted formulations of just ways to distribute burdens and benefits. Each formulation mentions some relevant property on the basis of which burdens and benefits should be distributed. These formulations are: (1) to each person an equal share, (2) to each person according to individual need, (3) to each person according to individual effort, (4) to each person according to societal contribution, and (5) to each person according to merit.

The university is also guided by, and will comply with, the requirements set forth in Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) for the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as those of other applicable federal, state, and local agencies.

Appendix 3: *Census*-Defined Study Area
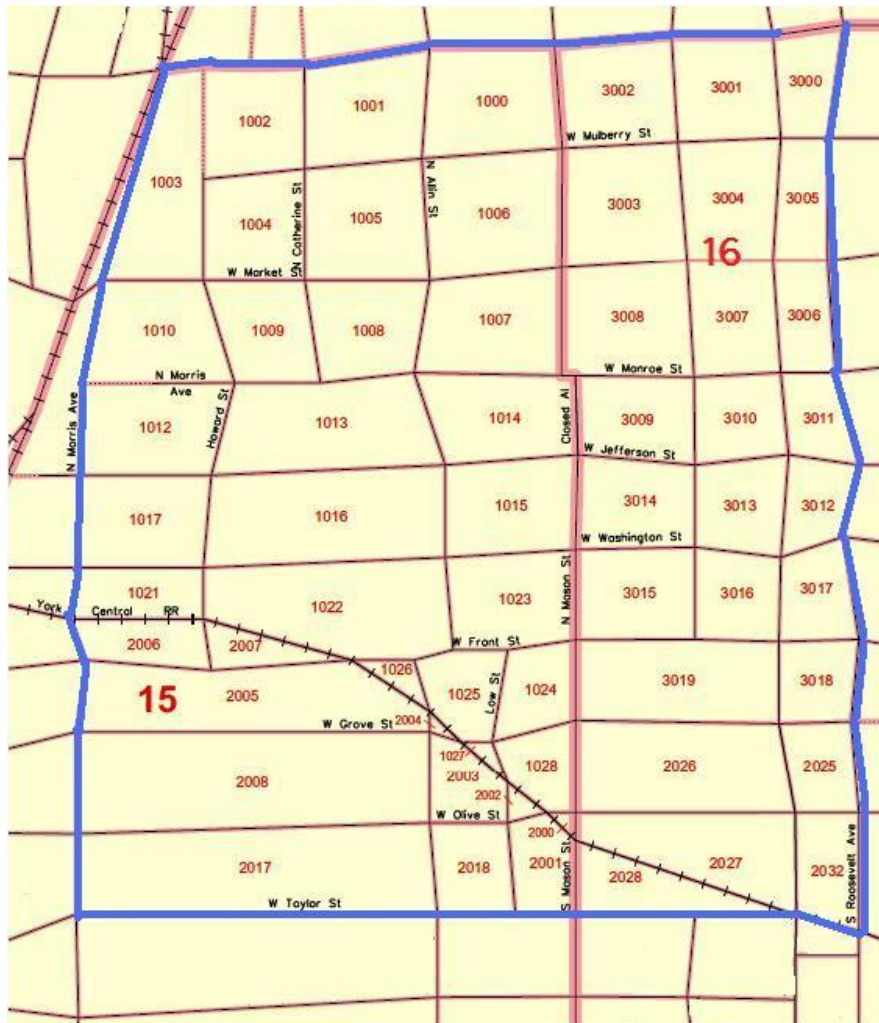
Census Groupings	West Bloomington *Census* Designations
Census Tracts Contained within West Bloomington Study Area	15 and 16
Census Block Groups Contained within West Bloomington Study Area	15.01 and 16.03
Specific Blocks Contained within West Bloomington Revitalization Plan (in addition to all blocks in 15.01 and 16.03)	**Tract 15, Block Group 2, Blocks:** 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2017, 2018 **Tract 16, Block Group 2, Blocks:** 2025, 2026, 2028, 2032

Appendix 4.1: Cultural Festival Pilot Survey Results

Survey distributed Summer 2009	All 41 Respondents			W. Bloomington Residents (n=9)		
Average Age			38.4			41.6
Average Household Size			3.9			2.9
Best ways to provide information about community events?	Internet	31	52%		4	33%
	Handouts (direct mail)	17	29%		4	33%
	Posters/flyers	7	12%		2	17%
	Other	3	5%		1	8%
	No Response	1	2%		1	8%
Own a computer?	Yes	36	88%		7	78%
	No	5	12%		2	22%
Regular access to internet?	Yes	36	88%		6	67%
	No	3	7%		3	33%
	No Response	2	5%		0	0%
Use email?	Yes	37	90%		7	78%
	No	3	7%		2	22%
	No Response	1	3%		0	0%
Have cell phone with texting?	Yes	33	80%		9	100%
	No	6	15%		0	0%
	No Response	2	5%		0	0%
Do you read the Pantagraph Newspaper?	Do not subscribe	12	28%		3	30%
	Occasionally	20	46%		5	50%
	Seldom	6	14%		1	10%
	Never	3	7%		1	10%
	No Response	2	5%		0	0%
What radio station do you listen to most of the time?	Seldom listen to radio	7	15%		0	0%
	WJBC AM 1230	3	6%		1	8%
	WXRJ FM 94.9	20	43%		6	46%
	WBNQ FM 105.4	9	19%		3	23%
	Other	8	17%		3	23%
What is your main source of transportation?	Do not have car	2	5%		0	0%
	Own a car	34	79%		8	89%
	Ride the bus	5	11%		1	11%
	Friends & family	2	5%		0	0%
	Taxi services	0	0%		0	0%
What types of services or programs would you like to see more of in your community?	Child care	15	13%		3	9%
	Mentoring youth/adults	24	20%		7	20%
	Tutoring youth	17	14%		5	15%
	After school programs	24	20%		9	26%
	Job training	18	15%		5	15%
	Financial education	17	14%		5	15%
	Other	1	1%		0	0%
	No Response	2	2%		0	0%

Appendix 4.1: Cultural Festival Pilot Survey Results

Appendix 4.2:
West Bloomington Communication and Interest Survey

Local human service organizations are interested in improving communication with the community and improving their programs and services. Please share your input to help them serve the community better.

About You

1. What is your age? _____

2. How many people are in your household? _____

3. Gender: a. Male   b. Female

4. Age: _____

5. Which of the following best describes your race? *(Please circle all that apply.)*
    a. White   b. African-American   c. Asian or Pacific Islander   d. American Indian   e. Other

6. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?
    a. Yes   b.   No

7. Near what cross streets is your residence located?_____

Communication

8. What are the best ways to provide you information about community events? *(Please circle all that apply.)*

    a. Telephone
    b. Email
    c. Flyers
    d. Mail
    e. Word of mouth
    f. Signs and posters *(Which locations are best?)*_____
    g. Other *(Please specify.)*_____

9. Do you have a computer?
    a. Yes
    b. No

10. Do you have Internet access at home?
    a. Yes
    b. No *(Please specify where you access the Internet, if you do.)* _____

11. Do you use email?
    a. Yes
    b. No

12. Do you have a cell phone with texting?
    a. Yes
    b. No

13. Do you read the *Pantagraph* newspaper?
    a. Frequently
    b. Sometimes
    c. Rarely
    d. Never

14. Do you listen to the radio?
    a. Frequently
    b. Sometimes
    c. Rarely
    d. Never

15. What radio station do you listen to lost of the time?
    a. WJBC AM 1230
    b. WXRJ FM 94.9
    c. WBNQ FM 105.4
    d. Other **(*Please specify.*)** _____

Transportation

16. What is your main source of transportation?
    a. Own a car
    b. I normally ride the bus
    c. I depend upon friends & family for transportation
    d. I use taxi services
    e. Other **(*Please specify.*)** _____

Community interests and needs

17. What types of services or programs would you like to see more of in your community?

    _____

    _____

    _____

18. Please provide any other comments or suggestions about organization programs and services, or the best ways to communicate about them, here.

    _____

    _____

    _____

19. Would you like to be contacted about community or organization events or volunteer opportunities?

    a. Yes ⟶ **(*Please provide contact information below, detach, and submit separately from this survey*.)**
    b. No

Thank you for participating in this survey!

If you are interested in volunteering or becoming informed on upcoming programs and events please provide your information here. (***Please detach and submit separately from your completed survey.***)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Preferred method of communication: _____

Please indicate any specific interests you have in volunteering and/or any skills, knowledge, or other resources you would like to share: _____

_____

_____

Appendix 4.3: Organizational Survey

This survey is divided into five sections. **Section I** asks for basic information about your organization. **Section II** focuses on your organization's support needs for maintenance, enhancement, or expansion of services and programs. **Section III** explores issues of staffing, training, and accessibility. **Section IV** looks at issues of communication and collaboration.   **Section V** asks for your perceptions about the strengths and challenges, and the gaps and duplications of services, both in your organization and across organizations, especially those serving West Bloomington residents and/or African-Americans.

Section I: Information about your organization

1.   Name of organization_____

2.   Name of person(s) filling out this survey *(Optional)*_____

3.   Title of person(s) filling out this survey *(Optional)*_____

4.   Phone number(s) of person(s) filling out this survey *(Optional)*_____

5.   Can we call you for more information if necessary? ***(Circle one.)***   a. Yes   b. No

6.   In our report, can we say your organization completed the survey? ***(Circle one.)***   a. Yes   b. No

7.   Is your organization: ***(Circle one.)***   a. For-profit   b. Non-profit   c. Unit of government

8.   What is your organization's primary mission or purpose?_____

    _____

    _____

9.   What geographical area(s) does your organization serve? ***(Circle all that apply.)***
    a.   West Bloomington

    b.   Bloomington

    c.   Normal

    d.   Other McLean County city/town **(*Please specify.*)** _____

    e.   Other **(*Please specify.*)** _____

10. What are your organization's primary programs and services? ***(Please describe.)***

    _____

    _____

    _____

11. Is your organization working under a national charter? ***(Circle one.)***   a. Yes   b. No

Section II: Organization Maintenance, Enhancement, and Expansion

12. Does your organization need any additional resources to _maintain_ its current level of service to its clients? *(Please circle and describe all that apply.)*
    a. Organization has no additional support needs to maintain current level of service.

    b. Replace computers *(How many?)* _____

    c. Replace other equipment *(What kind and how many?)* _____

    d. Update software *(Describe.)* _____

    e. Staff training *(Describe.)* _____

    f. Facilities improvement *(Describe.)* _____

    g. Other *(Describe.)* _____

13. Is there a current need to _enhance_ or _expand_ your organization's services or programs? *(Circle one.)*
    a. Yes, but there are no current plans to expand or enhance services or programs

    b. Yes, and there are current plans to expand or enhance services or programs

    c. No ⟶ **SKIP TO QUESTION # 15**

14. What resources would your organization need to _enhance or expand_ its services or programs? *(Please circle and describe all that apply.)*
    a. More facility space *(How many additional square feet?)* _____

    b. More staff *(What kind and how many?)* _____

    c. More computers *(How many more?)* _____

    d. More equipment *(What kind and how many?)* _____

    e. More staff training *(Describe.)* _____

    f. Updated technology *(Describe.)* _____

    g. Other *(Describe.)* _____

Section III: Staffing, Training, and Accessibility

15. Is it difficult for your organization to employ qualified staff? *(Circle one.)*
    a. Yes   b. No ⟶ **SKIP TO QUESTION # 17**

16. Why is it difficult for your organization to employ qualified staff? *(Please circle all that apply.)*
    a. Salaries not competitive
    b. Inadequate time for training
    c. Inadequate resources for training
    d. Benefits not competitive
    e. Long hours
    f. Dangerous working conditions
    g. Large caseloads

    h. Unhealthy or stressful working conditions
    i. Vehicle needed for job duties
    j. Liability issues
    k. Not enough qualified people available
    l. Other *(Describe.)* _____
    _____
    _____

17. Is it difficult for your organization to attract or retain volunteers? *(Circle one.)*
    a. Yes

    b. No ➡️ **SKIP TO QUESTION # 19**

    c. Not applicable ➡️ **SKIP TO QUESTION # 19**

18. Why is it difficult for your organization to attract or retain volunteers? *(Please circle all that apply.)*
    a. Inconvenient hours

    b. Public unaware of volunteer opportunities

    c. Vehicle needed for job duties

    d. Undesirable working conditions

    e. Lack of recruiting resources

    f. Liability issues

    g. Inadequate resources for training

    h. Inadequate time for training

    i. Other *(Describe.)*_____

19. Please describe any training or technical assistance needs you or your organization's staff and volunteers have at this time or foresee needing. _____

    _____

    _____

20. Is your organization able to meet clients' needs within its hours of operation? *(Circle one.)*
    a. Yes   b. No *(Please describe why not.)* _____

    _____

Section IV: Communication and Collaboration

21. Is information that supports service operation given and received in a timely manner between administration and staff in your organization? *Please use the scale 1 ("Not at all") to 5 ("All the time").*

Not at all				All of the time
1	2	3	4	5

22. How effective or ineffective is your organization's communication about its services and programs to clientele and the public? *Please use the scale 1 ("Very ineffective") to 5 ("Very effective").*

Very ineffective				Very effective
1	2	3	4	5

    Please explain how it is effective or ineffective: _____

    _____

    _____

23. How does your organization communicate information about its services and programs? *(Circle all that apply.)*

a. Brochures	i. Radio ads
b. Direct communication to other agencies	j. Signs/posters
c. Email	k. Speaker bureau(s)
d. Flyers	l. TV ads
e. In-service training/continuing education	m. Web page
f. Newspaper ads	n. Other *(Describe.)* _____
g. Press releases	_____
h. Public meetings	_____

24. In the last year did your organization make available any of the following resources to other groups or organizations? If so, did you charge a fee for these resources? *(Note: this question has two parts.)*

Circle all the resources made available.   *Did you charge a fee?*

a. Rooms for meetings/program activities --	Yes	No
b. Office space for other organizations --	Yes	No
c. Equipment used in your facility ---	Yes	No
d. Equipment loaned out --	Yes	No
e. Staff expertise --	Yes	No
f. Volunteers ---	Yes	No
g. Training ---	Yes	No
h. Other *(Specify.)* _____	Yes	No

25. In the last year did your organization use any of the following resources from another group or organization? If so, did you pay a fee for these resources? *(Note: this question has two parts.)*

Circle all the resources used.   *Did you pay a fee?*

a. Rooms for meetings/program activities --	Yes	No
b. Office space ---	Yes	No
c. Equipment used in their facility --	Yes	No
d. Equipment used in your facility ---	Yes	No
e. Staff expertise --	Yes	No
f. Volunteers ---	Yes	No
g. Training ---	Yes	No
h. Other *(Specify.)* _____	Yes	No

26. Would your organization consider making (or continuing to make) available any of the following resources to other groups or organizations? If so, would you charge a fee for these resources? *(Note: this question has two parts.)*

Circle all resources you would make available.   *Would you charge a fee?*

a. Rooms for meetings/program activities --- Yes   No

b. Office space for other organizations -- Yes   No

c. Equipment used in your facility -- Yes   No

d. Equipment loaned out --- Yes   No

e. Staff expertise --- Yes   No

f. Volunteers -- Yes   No

g. Training -- Yes   No

h. Other *(Specify.)* _____   Yes   No

27. Please comment about opportunities for resource sharing among organizations serving West Bloomington residents and/or African-Americans. _____

_____

_____

_____

28. Please comment about barriers to resource sharing among organizations serving West Bloomington residents and/or African-Americans. _____

_____

_____

29. What are your ideas for improving communication within and among organizations and the public?

_____

_____

_____

Section V: Challenges, Strengths, Gaps, and Duplications

30. Which one best describes **your organization's** present ability to serve clients needing your services or programs? *(Circle one.)*

a. It can serve many more clients than are presently being served.

b. It is serving close to the maximum number of clients.

c. It is serving the maximum number of clients.

d. It is serving more than the maximum number of clients than staff or facilities can handle effectively.

31. What are the greatest challenges to your organization in providing its services or programs? *(Please circle up to five.)*

a. There are no major challenges

b. Not enough staff

c. Child care issues for clients

d. Transportation—clients can't get here

e. Hours not convenient for clients

f. Eligibility requirements for clients

g. Client resistance

h. Insufficient operating funds

i. Not accessible to persons with disabilities

j. Language barriers

k. Clients can't afford cost

l. Too much paper work

m. Lack of volunteers

n. Not enough facility space

o. Inability to attract or retain qualified staff

p. Other *(Describe.)* _____
_____
_____

32. What are your organization's strengths in providing its services or programs?

_____

_____

_____

33. Please describe any gaps in your or other organization's programs or services in the past year. By "gaps" we mean situations where a service is unavailable or insufficient to meet needs.

_____

_____

_____

34. Please describe any potential duplication in programs/services and/or describe opportunities for collaboration within your organization or among organizations. _____

_____

_____

_____

35. Please share any further ideas you have to improve your organization's ability to meet its mission.

_____

_____

_____

36. Please share any further ideas you have to improve other organizations' ability to meet their missions. _____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

Appendix 4.3: Organizational Survey

Appendix 4.4:
Survey for Program and Organization Patrons

Organizations serving West Bloomington residents and African-Americans are interested in your opinions about the organizations, services, and programs you utilize in the area. These organizations hope to work with their patrons and with each other to improve programs and services, and communication about them, in the future. Thank you for your time and input in this effort.

1. Name of organization participating with: _____

2. Name of programs or services participating with in above organization: _____

_____

3. Gender: a. Male   b. Female

4. Age: _____

5. Which of the following best describes your race? *(Please circle all that apply.)*
   a. White   b. African-American   c. Asian or Pacific Islander   d. American Indian   e. Other

6. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin?
   a. Yes   b. No

Transportation and Accessibility

7. What form of transportation do you (or family members) use to get to this program/organization? *(Please circle all that apply.)*
   a. Drive myself

   b. Ride the bus

   c. Walk

   d. Get a ride

   e. Other *(Please specify.)* _____

8. Can you (or family members) easily access this program/organization using public transportation if needed?
   a. Yes   b. No   *(Please explain.)*_____
   _____

9. Do you have any suggestions on how access to this organization/program through public transportation could improve?   _____
   _____

10. In your opinion, do you think not having transportation to this program/organization keeps people from participating?
    a. Yes   b. No

11. Are the hours of operation of this program/organization able to meet your needs?
    a. Yes   b. No

12. Do other members of your family participate in this program/organization?
    a. Yes   b. No

13. Do you feel this organization provides programs or services for all different age groups?
    a. Yes   b. No *(If no, please explain which age group is left out.)*_____

    _____

Communication

14. How do you receive information about this organization and its programs and services? *(Please circle all that apply.)*

    a. Telephone   f. Signs and posters *(Which locations?)*_____

    b. Email   _____

    c. Flyers   g. Other *(Please specify.)*_____

    d. Mail   _____

    e. Word of mouth

15. What are the best ways to inform your community about programs, services, or organizations? *(Please circle all that apply.)*

    a. Telephone   f. Signs and posters *(Which locations are best?)*_____

    b. Email   _____

    c. Flyers   g. Other *(Please specify.)*_____

    d. Mail   _____

    e. Word of mouth

Improvements and Gaps

16. What kind of resources does this organization/program need to enhance its services?

    _____

    _____

17. Do you feel this organization/program has enough staff to take care of you/your families' needs?
    a. Yes   b. No *(If no, what additional staff are needed?)* _____

    _____

18. What other programs or services would you like to see this organization offer to help meet your or your families' needs? _____

    _____

    _____

19. What else can this organization/program do to enhance its services?

    _____

    _____

Strengths

20. What programs or services, if any, are you receiving from this organization that you also receive somewhere else? _____

_____

_____

21. What do you like most about this organization and/or its programs and services?

_____

_____

_____

22. Would you be interested in volunteering your time to make improvements to this organization and/or its programs and services? (If yes, please provide your information at the bottom, tear off, and submit separately from your completed survey.)
    a. Yes   b. No

23. Would you like to be notified of other activities, programs, or events going on in your community? *(If yes, please provide your information at the bottom, tear off, and submit separately from your completed survey.)*
    a. Yes   b. No

Thank you for participating in this survey!

- -

If you are interested in volunteering or becoming informed on upcoming events please provide your information here**. *Please tear off and submit separately from your completed survey.***

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Preferred method of communication: _____

Please indicate any specific interests you have in volunteering and/or any skills, knowledge, or other resources you would like to share: _____

_____

Appendix 4.5: Survey Design and Administration Protocol (for Self-administered Surveys)

Components of Survey Research:
Surveys represent one of the most common ways of collecting data from specific populations both small and large. In survey research the researcher selects a sample of respondents from the population they would like to gain more information from; and then administers a standardized questionnaire to collect the data.

The procedures used in social survey research have a major effect on the likelihood that the resulting data will describe accurately what they are intended to describe (Fowler, 2009). Four key aspects bring together survey research and aid in obtaining accurate data: sampling, designing questions, the format of a questionnaire, and administration protocol.

Sampling:
Sampling is defined as the selection of a small subset of a population representative of the whole population. The keys to good sampling are finding a way to give all (or nearly all) population members the same (or a known) chance of being selected and using probability methods for choosing the sample (Fowler, 2009).

Question Design:
Using questions as a measure to gather information is an essential part of the survey research process. Developing a survey entails carefully writing out the questions. There are nine key points to keep in mind when designing survey questions:

(1) Avoid leading the respondent. Questions should be unbiased; nevertheless, background information regarding the research topic can be given but in a reserved, objective fashion.
(2) The terms and language of the question should be clear, yet specific.
(3) Avoid using double-barreled questions, i.e. two questions in one. More often than not, when the word "and" or "or" is used, the question is double-barreled.
(4) Make sure the respondents have the information they need to answer the questions.
(5) Respondents should be willing to answer the questions. That is, the respondent should feel comfortable answering questions and, in turn, give more honest answers. This is imperative when researching matters of sensitive issues or illegal activity.
(6) Questions should be relevant to the respondents. This will allow for more valid data.
(7) Questions should be short and to the point, yet the meaning should be clear. Longer questions can lead to confusion, which in turn affects the respondent's willingness to complete the survey.
(8) Avoid negative terms. Negative terms often lead to confusion and will jeopardize validity of the data.
(9) Avoid use of biased terms that may evoke emotional or strong feelings from the respondent. Questions should be simple and straightforward.

Questionnaire Format:
It is very important that the survey be reader friendly. Questions should be spread out and uncluttered creating a large amount of "whiteness" on the page. This format aids in the vertical flow of the survey and gives the respondent the sense that they are completing the survey in a timely manner. Instructions and transitions (e.g., finally, next) should be placed strategically throughout the survey as the respondent moves from one subtopic to the next. Again, this will help aid in the flow, creating a smooth and timely completion by the respondent. However, that being said, questionnaires should be kept under twelve pages in length if a high response rate is desired.

A survey's response rate is the result of dividing the number of people who were interviewed by the total number of people in the sample who were eligible to participate and should have been interviewed. A high response rate is key to legitimizing the results of the survey. When a survey receives a high response from a large percent of its sample population, the results are more accurate because more of the population is represented.

Visual aids (such as boxes or arrows) are a useful tool in guiding the respondent through the survey. Contingency and matrix questions can help save space and allow for additional questions to be covered. They also help the respondent to easily understand what is being requested.

Example Contingency Question:

Have you ever smoked marijuana?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, about how many times have you smoked marijuana?

☐ Once

☐ 2 to 5 times

☐ 6 to 10 times

☐ 11 to 20 times

☐ more than 20 times

Example Matrix Question:

	Satisfaction						
	Very Unsatisfied	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Purchase in Next 6 Months?	Brands Considering
TV	○	○	○	○	○	☐	
DVR	○	○	○	○	○	☐	
MP3 Player	○	○	○	○	○	☐	
Cell Phone	○	○	○	○	○	☐	
Laptop Computer	○	○	○	○	○	☐	
Desktop Computer	○	○	○	○	○	☐	

The ordering of questions for self-administered surveys is crucial. The questionnaire should begin with a few topical questions that stress the importance of the topic while, at the same time, engage the respondent. Sensitive questions relating to the research topic can be placed in the center of the survey, allowing the respondent to first become comfortable with filling out the questionnaire. Demographic questions should be the last subtopic of a self-administered survey. If information regarding the income level of the respondent is relevant to the research, strategically place this question last in questionnaire format and design. Questions regarding income often tend to be the questions respondents most frequently refuse to answer.

Administration Protocol:
The goal of a self-administered survey is to be completely self-explanatory. If respondents do not understand what is being asked of them, the validity of the data is at stake; therefore, clear instructions are essential. Survey administration is a standardized procedure; all respondents should be receiving the same information in the same manner. Furthermore, a few sampling guidelines can aid in the representativeness of the sample: (1) if possible, a large sample size is desired; and (2) the sample should represent the larger population of interest. In addition, it is imperative that the administration of a survey aim to give all or nearly all members of the sample population an equal chance of being selected to complete the survey.

Administering a survey also requires an accompanying cover letter. The cover letter should, like the survey, appear neat and professional. The cover letter should be printed on letterhead or include a logo from the organization requesting or collecting the information. Additionally, a cover letter should address six key points:

(1) An introduction to the topic, that is, the purpose of the survey;
(2) Who is requesting the information;
(3) Who is to complete the survey;
(4) When the survey is to be returned (usually within 10 days);
(5) Where the survey is to be returned to as well as a phone number for any questions that may arise; and
(6) Why the respondent's participation is important.

To conclude, each cover letter to accompany a survey should be limited to one page and include a signature to aid in personalization.

Ethics in Survey Research:
All survey research should be carried out in ways designed to avoid risks to participants, respondents, and interviewers. All participants must consent to voluntarily participate in the research process. An Institutional Review Board (IRB) guarantees subjects' rights and interests are protected. Before data collection begins, approval must be granted by an IRB (if the institution completing or sponsoring the research is a recipient of Federal funds). Various populations are considered "protected populations" and they include: (1) children; (2) the mentally disabled or ill; (3) prisoners or other institutionalized peoples, and (4) pregnant women.

As part of informed consent, respondents should be provided information about the following:
    (1) Respondents should volunteer to participate and should be informed for what it is they are volunteering;
    (2) The name of the organization doing the research;
    (3) The sponsorship, that is, who is funding the research;
    (4) A brief description of the purpose of the research;
    (5) The extent to which the answers are protected, that is confidential versus anonymous;
    (6) Cooperation is voluntary and no negative consequences will arise if they choose not to participate; and
    (7) Respondents can opt out at any time without harm and skip any questions they do not want to answer.

Appendix 4.6: Survey Cover Letter Template

Place on organizational letterhead or otherwise identify who is administering survey.

Date

Dear Respondent,

We are inviting you to participate in a research project to study _____. Along with this letter is a short survey that asks a variety of questions about _____. We are asking you to look over the survey, and, if you choose to do so, complete it and send it back to me [or other return method listed] by [date].

The results of this project will be used to _____. Through your participation, we hope to understand _____.   We expect the results of the project will be useful for _____ We will share the results by_____.

There are no known risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey [or identify potential risks] and your responses will not be identified with you personally. No information that identifies you specifically will be shared with others. Please do not put your name on the survey.

The survey will take you about _____ minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and there is no penalty if you do not participate. Regardless of whether you choose to participate, please let us know if you would like a summary of the results.

We hope you will take the time to complete this survey and return it. If you have any questions or concerns about completing the survey or about participating in this study, you may contact [project director/contact information and person/organization responsible for ethical review if applicable]. Thank you for participating in this project!

Sincerely,

Name