

## **Methods for assessing community needs**

*Surveys* – Surveys can provide accurate descriptions of your people based either on a complete head count or a representative sample of the people from your community. Surveys can be conducted by a self-administered, mailed questionnaire; self-administered questionnaires that are delivered and picked up or gathered at meetings; face-to-face interviews; or telephone interviews. If the survey method is used, consideration needs to be given to instrument design, sampling, sampling lists, data collection, and analysis.

*Key Informants* – This approach utilizes people who are most likely to be knowledgeable about the community as a source of information. The results from the key informant interviews may be more suggestive than conclusive, but can provide a good basis for resolving problems.

*Focus Groups* – Focus groups involve assembling small groups (up to 10 persons) in order to engage in a free and open conversation. When used in combination with another technique that yields more standardized data such as a survey, focus groups can make an excellent contribution.

*Community Forum* – This method allows for broad participation in a single meeting and provides an appearance of inclusiveness for all interested parties to attend and participate.