A Model for Community (Home Town) Assessment

Your assignment is to assess your home community to increase your understanding of how it functions to support its residents. The following listing covers a wide variety of community characteristics. Each bullet under the various categories may not apply to every community. However, some facet of each category must be addressed. This report should be an 8-10 page paper (12 point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins) following APA formatting. Use the headings in the outline but write the report in narrative, not outline format. REMEMBER, THIS IS NOT A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AD FOR YOUR COMMUNITY. YOU MUST BE REALISTIC AND ACCURATE IN YOUR IDENTIFICATION OF ITS CHARACTERISTICS.

Use of Census and other secondary data is required.

You must have at least 6 sources of information for this report. One source must be a community member & s/he must be clearly identified in Reference list and cited within text. Choose your community member wisely!

Sources of information for this report may include, but are not limited to:

♦ census data (must use!)
♦ interviews with community members (a family member may be included here, if they can make a substantive contribution)
♦ interviews with community officials or historians (either formal or informal) and information published by the community
♦ local newspapers and their archives
♦ websites of governmental units or local organizations
♦ local libraries – reference books about the community
♦ telephone books – sections on government and human services
♦ exploration of or tours of your community

Please note: ALL SOURCES OF INFORMATION MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN YOUR REFERENCE PAGE UTILIZING APA FORMATTING AND THROUGHOUT THE BODY OF THE PAPER. NOT DOING SO WILL RESULT IN AN "F" FOR THE COURSE (NOT JUST THE ASSIGNMENT). THIS PENALTY WILL ALSO APPLY TO OTHER FORMS OF PLAGIARISM. PERSONAL COMMUNICATION MUST BE DOCUMENTED IN REFERENCES IDENTIFYING THE PERSON AND HIS/HER TITLE OR ROLE IN COMMUNITY. IF THIS PERSON IS A RELATION OF YOURS, THIS MUST BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED.

Contents of Home Town Assessment Paper

Name of community and Location: Introduce your community by name. Identify if you are reporting on just your hometown or including areas surrounding it and, if so, why.

♦ physical setting within county
♦ boundaries
♦ relationships to other communities
♦ type of community – i.e. bedroom, urban (see text).

Populations Characteristics: Report in percentages where appropriate
- overall size
- age and gender distribution
- race/ethnicity
- rurality
- other characteristics as needed
- compared to state demographics through the use of a table

Income: Report in percentages where appropriate
- poverty rate: by race/ethnicity; by age
- median household income by subgroup or per capita income
- are there large numbers of very wealthy and/or very poor people in the community?
- comparison to state demographics through the use of a table

Commerce and Industry: Report in percentages where appropriate
- major employers and industries
- unemployment rates – by subgroup
- have the rates changed recently and if so, why?
- stability of employers – have any moved in or out recently?

Housing:
- what types of housing are predominate (does not refer to type of household, i.e. single parent)? i.e. single family homes, apartments, etc.
- what are the conditions of the housing in general? i.e. mostly new, well-kept, deteriorating
- what percent of homes are owner occupied?
- how available is moderate and low-cost housing?
- what housing options are available for senior citizens?

Education: Report in percentages where appropriate
- drop out rate
- average educational level – by subgroup
- extracurricular programs
- structure of school system
- student-teacher ratios
- per pupil costs
- comparison to state demographics through the use of a table

Social/Cultural/Informational Systems
- parks
- cultural resources i.e. theaters, orchestras, playhouses, etc.
- activities and resources for older residents
- recreational activities – bowling alleys, golf courses, skating rinks, lakes, pools
- how many newspapers are there and how often do they publish?
- are the newspapers locally owned and operated
- how does one learn about local government activities and cultural events?
- what are the principal civic and service organizations?
- neighborhood groups? business organizations? cultural groups?

Religion and churches
- how many religious institutions and how varied are they beyond Christian religions?
- what is the role and influence of religion in the community?
Government
- what is the local governmental structure? mayor, city council, manager, supervisors?
- does the community have its own fire, police, waste management, etc.? If yes, how big? If not, how are these services provided?
- Financial stability?
- What is the tax structure? Why does it matter?

Political factors
- what is the role of political parties in your community?
- what percent (out of how many registered voters of the population) are Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Other?
- what are the major issues? Values?

Social and health systems
- number and type of hospitals, clinics, doctors offices
- assisted living and nursing homes facilities
- number and type of social service agencies – both public and private
- planning bodies
- problems & limitations of each
- responsiveness of services
- informal helping systems

Power distribution
- Assess with reputational, positional, or issue methods and provide evidence of your assessment

Bringing it all together
- major community difficulties and steps being taken to deal with them
- gaps in services and facilities
- concerns of the community, including who is concerned and why
- conditions that led to the situation and what has been done in the past to deal with the problem
- strengths and limitations of the community for dealing with the problem

Statistical Data and Demographics
This section shows the various tables that ought to be included with your Hometown Assessment to augment the description/narrative of the pieces described above. The project should address current statistical data that describes your home community. The narrative cannot be written until you have completed gathering the statistical data and demographics! So start here! Also, all tables, charts, and lists must be cited in the text! However, each of these tables, charts, and lists will be an appendix in your paper (which comes after References and are not part of the minimum page count).
The final product of the statistical data and demographics should include the following headings:

1. Location
   □ This section of the project should include a map of your home community, the name of the community, the overall size, and identify the county and state the community is located in. Be sure that it is size appropriate for showing your community. Not a dot in the middle of the state/county.

2. Table 1: Distribution of Age, Gender and Race/Ethnicity and Comparison to the State.
   □ This table should compare local community statistics with state statistics in relation to the distribution of age, gender and race/ethnicity.

3. Table 2: Poverty Rate and Comparison to the State
   □ This table should compare local community statistics with state statistics in relation to the poverty rate overall and broken down by Female Headed Household and Families with Children.

4. Table 3: Median Household Income and Comparison to the State
   □ This table should compare local and state statistics in relation to the overall median household income and by Female Headed Household.

5. Table 4: Unemployment Rates and Comparison to the State
   □ This table should compare local community statistics with state statistics in relation to unemployment rates overall and broken down by age and gender.

6. Table 5: Housing
   □ This table should break down the type of housing (single family homes, apartments, etc.) available in the community, the percentage of housing that is owner versus renter occupied, the percentage of vacant housing and the number of foreclosures.

7. Table 6: Educational Level and Comparison to the State
   □ This table should compare local community statistics with state statistics in relation to education level overall and broken down by age and gender.

8. Table 7: Political Affiliation
   □ This table should break down the number of registered voters by their party affiliation (democrat, republican, independent, etc.)

9. List 1: Social Services
   □ This list should highlight the types of social services available within the community and whether each social service provider is a private nonprofit, private for profit or public agency. Include addresses and phone numbers.

10. List 2: Housing Assistance
   □ This list should identify the types of housing available within the community for low and moderate cost (i.e. HUD or Section 8 approved) and for senior citizens.
11. List 3: Health Services
☐ This list should highlight the types of health services available within the community and whether each health service provider is a community health clinic, a private practitioner or affiliate of a larger medical center.

12. List 4: Religious Institutions
☐ This list should highlight the religious institutions to choose from within the community.

13. List 5: Civic, Service, Neighborhood, Business and Cultural Groups
☐ This list should identify the types of civic, service, neighborhood, business and cultural groups (i.e. Rotary Club, Jaycees, Crime Watch, Citizens Against Crime, etc.) to get involved with in the community. Include addresses and phone numbers.

14. List 6: Cultural and Recreational Activities
☐ This list should highlight the types of cultural and recreational activities (i.e. parks, theatres, comedy clubs, bowling, golf, etc.) available within the community.

15. Chart 1: School District
☐ This chart should provide a visual explanation of the organization of the school district serving the community.
☐ Include information on the graduation gap or the drop-out rate (School districts themselves may/may not report this information. Info may be found on KidsCount website or through other means).