



# Interpreting Multiple Types of Needs Data

## Objectives:

- ✓ Reorganize needs data from many different sources while appraising its worth
- ✓ Combine the data and formulate a plan of incorporating an appropriate amount of needs assessment information from each data source

## Advance Preparation:

- ✓ Collect or generate copies of the data summaries done as a last step in other unit lessons

## Materials Needed:

- ✓ One sheet of blank paper for each participant
- ✓ Chalkboard and chalk or flipchart and marker
- ✓ One copy of "[The Whole Enchilda](#)" for each participant
- ✓ One copy of "Existing Data Summary" for each participant
- ✓ One copy of "Attitude Survey Summary" for each participant
- ✓ One copy of "Key Informant Summary" for each participant
- ✓ One copy of "Focus Group Summary" for each participant

**Time Needed:** 2 hours

## BACKGROUND

Data is meaningless until and unless it can be synthesized and acted on in some fashion. Often Extension personnel consider needs assessment practices to be just one of the methods we have discussed. They might, for example, plan all their programs based on data from one survey or from Census data alone. However that data typically represents just one piece of the data that needs considering.

This lesson will pull together the data generated as a result of this unit's lessons on needs assessment. While this can be a time-consuming and frustrating process, it is also rewarding in that all the pieces of the community needs assessment puzzle will come together. It is a good idea to have your patience, conflict resolution, negotiation and compromise skills polished and ready before you complete this lesson.

## INTEREST APPROACH

- Ask if anyone knows what a smuckenhogger is. The answer will be no.
- Explain that we are going to draw a smuckenhogger today. Pass out blank sheets of paper for drawing to each person.
- As you read each of these characteristics aloud, have the participants draw it on their paper:
  - He had a large, elongated body
  - He has four legs but two are longer than the others
  - His head is erect and upright on his body
  - His ears are small and he has a large, protruding nose and mouth
  - He has one large eye and sharp teeth
  - His body is covered with spots and very coarse hair
- Ask participants to pass their various interpretations around the room so that everyone can enjoy them.
- Explain that we all see and do things a little differently - that is what makes us unique. We could likely take the best of everyone's idea of what the smuckenhogger looks like and create one that we would all be happy with. This idea of compromise among group members to satisfy a purpose is what we need to do in order to come to grasp many different types of needs assessment data as well.

## LESSON

- Ask the group if they know how it feels to complete a 1,000 piece puzzle.
- Ask them how they feel if they get to the end and find that several pieces are missing.
- Indicate that over the last several meetings, we have been formulating large puzzle pieces and it is now time to get on with the task of putting the puzzle together.
- Distribute the Handout "The Whole Enchilda" and discuss the various types of data we have collected over this unit.
- Distribute the following handouts and encourage each participant to review them in detail paying particular attention to the large "puzzle pieces":
  - "Existing Data Summary" (created for use in the Attitude Survey lesson).

- "Attitude Survey Summary" (created in the Application of the Attitude Survey lesson).
- "Key Informant Summary" (created in the Application of the Key Informant lesson).
- "Focus Group Summary" (created in the Application of the Group Sessions lesson).
- Explain that the challenge is in filling in the large pieces of the puzzle and in deciding where the puzzle pieces overlap.

## APPLICATION

- With the summary handouts setting the tone, have the advisory members assist in reviewing the needs uncovered in this unit.
  - On the flipchart or chalkboard, write the words "High Priority" and "Middle Priority" and "Low Priority". Then review each summary and ask for help deciding which items go in which column. For example, one *opinion* that came from a key leader is that our teenage pregnancy rate is epidemic - based on the other data in the summaries, is this a high, middle or low priority for Extension educational programming
-