

# CAPACITY PROFILE

## A self-assessment tool

The *Capacity Profile* is a self-assessment tool to help community organizations learn more about themselves: what works and what doesn't work. It is also a means of assessing the success or potential success of a community development initiative.

The profile is created by drawing a bar opposite each characteristic listed on the following page. (A description of each characteristic is included.) The bar starts at the neutral position and extends into the 'weak' or 'strong' side of the graph. The length of the bar drawn indicates the strength or weakness for each characteristic. A blank line indicates that the characteristic is not applicable for the community or initiative being assessed. You can think of the bars as representing percentiles. 'Neutral' signifies the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. Therefore, strength can range from 50 to 100%, and weakness from 0 to 50%.

A completed capacity profile reveals 'gaps' that need to be corrected and opportunities that should be pursued.

Samples:

	0%	WEAK	NEUTRAL	STRONG	100%
<i>Characteristic 1 (strong)</i>					
<i>Characteristic 2 (somewhat weak)</i>					

About the characteristics.

The twenty-eight characteristics were identified through work supported by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. Based on their analysis, "the more these factors are present in a community, the more likely the success of a community building effort."

The characteristics are divided into three categories:

- Characteristics of the community;
- Characteristics of the community building process;
- Characteristics of community building organizers.

For more information about these characteristics, the Foundation published *Community Building: What Makes It Work*. To contact the Foundation, write to: Wilder Research Centre, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1295 Bandana Boulevard North, Suite 210, Saint Paul, MN 55108, or call 612-647-4600. Their web site address is: [www.wilder.org](http://www.wilder.org).

CAPACITY PROFILE EXERCISE

1. Characteristics of the Community

	0%	WEAK	NEUTRAL	STRONG	100%
1A Community awareness of an issue					
1B Motivation from within the community					
1C Small geographic area					
1D Flexibility and adaptability					
1E Pre-existing social cohesion					
1F Ability to discuss, reach consensus, and co-operate					
1G Existing identifiable leadership					
1H Prior success with community building					

2. Characteristics of the Community Building Process

	0%	WEAK	NEUTRAL	STRONG	100%
2A Widespread participation					
2B Good system of communication					
2C Minimum competition in pursuit of goals					
2D Develop self-understanding					
2E Benefits to many residents					
2F Focus on product and process concurrently					
2G Linkage to organization outside community					
2H Progression from simple to complex activities					
2I Systematic gathering of information and analysis of comm'ty issues					
2J Training to gain community building skills					
2K Early involvement/support from existing, indigenous organizations					
2L Use of technical assistance					
2M Continual emergence of leaders as needed					
2N Community control over decision making					
2O The right mix of resources					

3. Characteristics of Community Building Organizers

	0%	WEAK	NEUTRAL	STRONG	100%
3A Understanding the community					
3B Sincerity of commitment					
3C A relationship of trust					
3D Level of organizing experience					
3E Able to be flexible and adaptable					