4. Community Demographic Data

To better understand the community, basic demographic information should be collected. Most of the necessary information will be available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census or other government agencies. Collecting and comparing data for the last several years will enable the community to see short-term trends in the age and ethnic distribution of the community's population, as well as its social and economic structures. It is also important that those working on the assessment have an up-to-date profile of their community. Often, changes in the population composition and economic status of neighborhoods occur very gradually, over time. Current data will preclude judgments being made based on outdated perceptions. These data also should be compared with city-level information.

Table 1 identifies the questions to be answered about the community, the information that will be needed to answer those questions, and the sources of that information.

Table 1—Community Demographic Data			
Questions to Be Answered	**Information Needed to Answer**	**Sources of Information**	**How to Obtain**
1. What are the community's characteristics?	Age, race, gender, mobility, income, and education levels for the most current year.	U.S. Census Bureau	Online search
2. Has the population of the community changed?	Age, race, mobility, income, and education levels as percentage of the total population over the last 10 years (compare community and city/county).	U.S. Census Bureau	Online search
3. Have the community's service needs changed?	Unemployment, public assistance, teen parent rates, demand for drug/alcohol services over 10-year period.	U.S. Census Bureau, various state, county, and local agencies	Online search, phone contact with various organizations

Answers to the following questions should be fully addressed:

1. What are the community's racial, economical, cultural, and historical characteristics?
2. How has the population of the community changed?
3. Have the service needs of our community's residents changed? In what ways?
4. What social or demographic factors (including changes or shifts) may be adding to the gang problem?

Descriptive information should be collected in geographic areas or sectors of the jurisdiction, utilizing the unit of analysis the community uses when conducting planning studies (e.g., for new schools, parks, services). The unit of analysis needs to be small enough to distinguish differences within the community. The following data should be collected:

▪ Population
▪ Age/gender

- Race
- Mobility/transience
- Educational attainment
- Median household income
- Female-headed households
- Unemployment rates
- Families receiving public assistance
- Other general risk factor data that may be locally available from community and governmental agencies, such as substance abuse levels (and specific areas of concern), domestic violence rate, teen birth rates, etc.
- Other critical variables as determined locally

A sample table for collecting this data is found in **Exhibit 4.2** on page 37.

Where are these data found?

Census data are collected only every 10 years, and the last full census was conducted in 2000. However, the Census Bureau releases annual estimates and projections by demographic characteristics (age, sex, race, and ethnic origin) for the nation, states, and counties. Annual intercensal estimates of income and poverty are also available online for counties and school districts. Additional census data can be searched by ZIP code to investigate a particular section of the community more closely. These updates are published every year on July 1. An annual statistical abstract provided by the U.S. Census updates most of the demographic information and is available at public libraries or online. Other data will be available directly from various state and local agencies or from public or university libraries. Much of the data needed for this portion of the assessment can be found online. Although collecting these data for the community as a whole is useful, collecting census data for the smallest geographic area—preferably the census tract, where available—is more useful for making area comparisons within the community.

For more specific data to address local community concerns, such as substance abuse addiction rates, domestic violence rates, teen births, etc., community partners should be enlisted who are familiar with accessing these types of data. This data may be collected at the county or city level by governmental agencies tasked with addressing these issues. Other possible sources of information include:

- Local hospitals (injury reports, including those using firearms)

- Community-based agencies (current service levels)

- Community health agencies

How should this data be analyzed?

In general, it is helpful to look at data for the overall community and compare it with data for the target community. How does the area compare with the overall metropolis, city, or county economically, racially/ethnically, educationally, and in age/gender breakdowns? What specific problems and/or issues should be known about this community in advance? How has this changed in the past 10 or 20 years?

For example, in **Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5**, some community demographics are reported in a format that shows distinctive differences between the target community and the larger community.

Sample Community Demographic Tables

Table 2—Poverty Rates		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Families	15,138	457,549
Families below poverty	26.16%	15.98%
With related children under 18 years	31.93%	21.78%
With related children under 5 years	34.39%	25.51%
Female-headed families	3,129	109,723
Female-headed families below poverty	44.28%	30.34%
With related children under 18 years	54.02%	36.84%
With related children under 5 years	60.66%	44.81%
Families below 150 percent of poverty level	43.85%	27.31%
Families below 185 percent of poverty level	54.73%	34.67%
With related children under 18 years	64.20%	46.24%
With related children under 5 years	70.20%	53.18%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

Table 3—Employment Status		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Population 16 years and over	59,824	1,472,506
Population in labor force	30,964	931,236
Percent unemployed	12.35%	7.57%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

Table 4—Educational Attainment		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Population 25 years and over	45,182	1,201,154
Less than 9th grade	40.94%	14.80%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	23.24%	14.79%
High school graduate (or equivalent)	18.83%	20.42%
Some college, no degree	9.87%	19.06%
Associate degree	1.50%	3.95%
Bachelor's degree	3.63%	17.30%
Graduate or professional degree	1.98%	9.68%
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000		

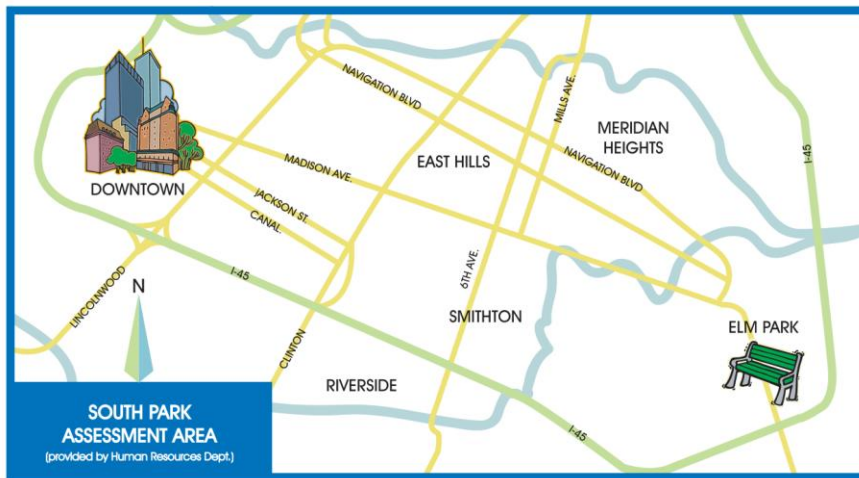| Table 5—Citizenship and Mobility		
	South Park	**Metropolis**
Native	56.18%	73.60%
Foreign-born	43.82%	26.40%
Entered 1990 to March 2000	20.79%	13.78%
Naturalized citizen	10.21%	6.98%
Not a citizen	33.61%	19.42%
Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2000		

A narrative description of the community, as found in **Exhibit 4.1** on page 35, can also be provided**.**

Exhibit 4.1
Sample Community Description

How is the community described?
South Park is a predominantly Hispanic, working-class community of nearly 85,000 residents. The population of the community is more male, younger, and more heavily Hispanic than the population of Metropolis. (See **Table 5**, previous page.)

More than 80 percent of Hispanic residents in South Park are of Mexican nationality, compared with 72 percent of Metropolis's Hispanic population. No other nationality has a sizeable percentage of South Park's overall Hispanic population. Though Salvadorans comprise less than 3 percent of these populations, their percentages are over 5 percent in Riverside and Smithton, and their numbers reach to just over 10 percent in the census tract that includes the Straightham Golf Course.

SOUTH PARK ASSESSMENT AREA
(provided by Human Resources Dept.)

While the overall statistics for South Park demonstrate that the population is substantially more likely to be foreign-born than the overall Metropolis population, these statistics do not demonstrate the disparity found across different census tracts in this area. In fact, the percentage of the population that is native-born ranges from a high of 66.6 percent in a portion of East Hills to 37.7 percent in an apartment community in southern Elm Park. One in five residents entered the country in the last ten years; one in three is not a citizen.

Compared with other Metropolis communities, the neighborhoods of South Park are among Metropolis's least educated. Barely one-third (35.82 percent) of the population over age 25 has a high school diploma, compared with 70 percent of Metropolis's population. And while 27 percent of the city's population has at least a bachelor's degree, this is the case for less than 6 percent of South Park's population. In a ranking of Metropolis's neighborhoods, each South Park community falls in the lowest quartile for educational attainment, with the Meridian Heights, East Hills, and Elm Park areas having the lowest rates in Metropolis.

South Park is also among Metropolis's poorest communities. Nearly half of all households (48 percent) earned less than $25,000 in 1999, and nearly 80 percent earn less than $50,000. By comparison, only a third of Metropolis households earn less than $25,000, and only 64 percent earn less than $75,000. While this area is not Metropolis's poorest, most of the neighborhoods of South Park are among the poorest 25 percent in Metropolis.

Poverty statistics demonstrate how poor South Park families are. One in four families lives below the poverty index. More than half of the area's female-headed households with children under age 18 live below poverty. There has been virtually no change in poverty rates in South Park. Based on 1990 Census data, 30 percent of families were living in poverty, as were 58 percent of female-headed households with

children under the age of 18. However, South Park's unemployment rate in 1990 was only 7 percent, though it is now as high as 16 percent in the East Hills.

Employment statistics by industry demonstrate that workers in South Park are more likely to be employed in construction and manufacturing jobs than the overall Metropolis workforce. In fact, nearly 20 percent of South Park workers are in construction industries.

South Park's population is less English-speaking than the rest of Metropolis. Of the more than 75,000 residents over the age of five, only 19 percent speak English only; 81 percent speak a language other than English. The overwhelming majority of the non-English speakers speak Spanish (98 percent). Of the Spanish speakers, 58 percent (more than 35,000 residents) report speaking English "less than very well."

Exhibit 4.2
Data Collection Worksheet

General Descriptive Data		
Category	**Year**	
	Community	**City**
Total Population		
% Males		
% Females		
% African American/black		
% Hispanic/Latino		
% Caucasian/white		
% Asian		
% Native American/Indian		
% Other		
% Under 10 Years		
% 10–14 Years		
% 15–19 Years		
% 20–24 Years		
% 25–34 Years		
% 35–64 Years		
% Over 64 Years		
Median Household Income		
Average Household Income		
Poverty Threshold (family of 4)		
% Families Below Poverty		
% Female Households Below Poverty (with children under 18 years)		
% Unemployment		
% High School Graduates (25 years or older)		
% Single-Parent Households		
Teen Birth Rate (per 1,000)		
High School Drop-Out Rate		
Child Abuse and Neglect Confirmed Reports		
Number of Persons on Food Stamps		
Sources:		