

# What Is an Asset?

## Examples and Definitions

An asset is a useful or valuable thing, person, or quality. Assets can be categorized into four general areas: human, institutional/civic, physical, and cultural. Below are examples of the kinds of assets that can be found in any community.

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### Human Assets

The people across a community who possess skills, knowledge, networks, passions, and/or time that they may offer to their neighborhood and community.

- Residents (youth, parents, families, elders)
- Teachers; school leaders
- Community organizers
- Garden leaders
- Church leaders
- Bilingual individuals
- Block captains
- Volunteers
- Elected officials
- Local business owners

### Institutional & Civic Assets

Whether nonprofit, for-profit, or governmental, institutional and civic assets are entities, enterprises, associations, or groups in a community that provide programs, services, commerce, or affiliation.

- Government (municipal, state, federal)
- Houses of worship
- Schools; educational facilities
- Community centers
- Senior centers
- Museums
- Land management agencies
- Fire and police departments
- Recycling and waste facilities
- Hospitals; health centers
- Libraries
- Community kitchens
- Community Development Corporations (CDCs)
- Banks, credit unions, Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)
- Chambers of Commerce; merchant and trade associations
- Private or community foundations
- Community based organizations (CBOs)
- Neighborhood associations; block groups
- Lending circles, skills exchange
- Civic organizations, civic clubs, recreational clubs; membership organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Volunteer organizations
- Religious/faith-based groups

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## Physical Assets

Physical assets in a community can take shape as a place, a space, or a structure.

- Agricultural land and resources
- Natural resources (forests, lakes, ponds, streams, beaches, ocean)
- Landmarks (historical, cultural, architectural)
- Parks, open spaces, trails, community gardens, playgrounds, and recreational fields
- Civil infrastructure (bridges, streets, sewer and water facilities, street lights)
- Vacant land
- Brownfield (contaminated) sites
- Industrial parks

## Cultural Assets

Cultural assets are the arts, music, language, traditions, stories, and histories that make up a community's identity, character, and customs.

- Affinity groups and clubs
  - Ethnic, racial, and religious diversity
  - Historical resources
  - Artist collaborative; arts programming
  - Heritage crafts, skills, cultural traditions
  - Festivals, fairs, cultural celebrations, lecture series, open mics
  - Church/religious ceremonies, holidays and observances
  - Language
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