

Accessing Community Resources

What are community resources?

Community resources may take many forms—nonprofit organizations, businesses, schools, medical centers, foundations, scholarships, or any number of other programs. If you or your ward members are aware of resources that exist in your community, you will be better able to help members in need.

When working with individuals with barriers to employment, there are some key resources you may find helpful:

- Government and private social service agencies
- Government and private employment services
- Community and technical colleges
- Basic education programs
- Healthcare clinics

How do I get to know what resources are available in my community?

Becoming familiar with resources in your community requires creativity and exploration. Here are some ideas for getting started:

- Internet searching: Do a basic Internet search for a specific type of resource. Explore the websites of various organizations and agencies, and follow up by contacting agencies directly for more information.
- Public libraries: Many public libraries contain a wealth of information regarding resources, organizations, and events within a community, particularly those related to schooling and education.
- Chamber of commerce: Become acquainted with your local chamber of commerce. Chambers of commerce often hold networking and other events that provide opportunities to get to know individuals, businesses, and community leaders.
- Stop in: If you pass an organization or agency that looks like a potential resource, simply stop in and inquire. Organizations are often eager to share their work with community members.

During your initial contact with a community resource, there are a few key questions you may wish to ask that will help you understand the resource better:

- What is your mission statement?
- What services do you offer?
- Are there fees for your services?
- Whom do you serve?
- What are your eligibility requirements?
- How can one access your services?