

How is an income survey conducted?

A good income survey requires the cooperation of the entire community. Before the survey takes place, we work closely with community leaders and town officials to plan the survey implementation and be sure that the survey meets the funder's requirements. Usually, the survey methodology is dictated by the funding agency that will use its outcomes in their funding decisions.

Income surveys are conducted either through a door-to-door canvas by RCAP Solutions community development staff, by residents of your community who are trained to conduct the survey, and/or by a form completed by residents and mailed directly to RCAP Solutions or the governmental funding agency.

We believe that community education about the survey is crucial to its success, and communication to all residents about the survey is included in the plan. When the community knows why and how the survey will be conducted, there is a good foundation for its success.

Why not just use U.S. Census data?

The U.S. Census is conducted only every ten years, and may not represent the most current data on the socio-economic status of area residents. Also, Census data tracts (usually zip codes or groups of zip codes) rarely correspond exactly to the area to be served by a project after its completion. An income survey is the only way to gather information that is up-to-date, and specific to a project's service area.

What about confidentiality and privacy?

RCAP Solutions subscribes to the highest standards of privacy and confidentiality in its income survey work. Survey data are reported only to government agencies who require the data and analysis as part of their funding application review. Identifiable data are not made available to the general public.

What is an income survey?

An income survey is a study of the income levels of a community and its residents. Using a statistically sound data-collection methodology, community development professionals collect information from residents (either from all residents in very small communities, or a cross-section of residents in larger communities). Once collected, the data are analyzed using standard statistical analysis methodologies.

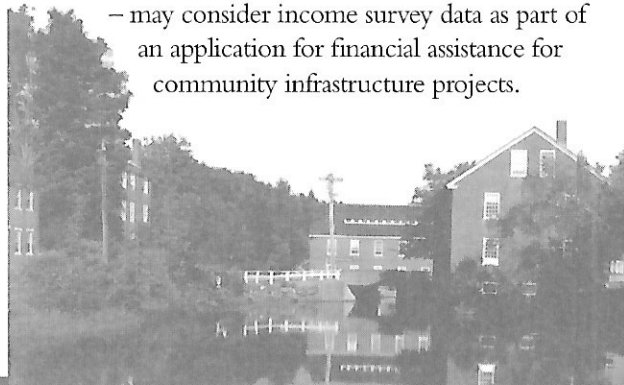
Why are income surveys important?

Income surveys can help your community qualify for financial aid, either in the form of grants or low interest loans, from government programs designed to assist low income communities address a wide range of community development needs. An income survey is often required by a community's application for state or federal aid to prove that the community is eligible for low interest rate loans and program grants.

Income surveys help you make the case that on its own, your community can not make needed upgrades to infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems because the community members could not afford the high user rates needed to pay for improvements if money was borrowed at market interest rates.

Who uses the data from an income survey?

Some government agencies – for example, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development Program and their state-level counterparts – may consider income survey data as part of an application for financial assistance for community infrastructure projects.



A team that leads to success

An income survey is successful when everyone – RCAP Solutions, community leaders, individuals and families – come together and collaborate on the project. In general, responsibilities are divided like this:

RCAP Solutions

- ▶ Educate community officials and residents about the income survey and its importance.
- ▶ Produce the survey and design the appropriate methodology.
- ▶ Conduct the survey through door-to-door and/or mail response forms.
- ▶ Analyze data and present the findings.
- ▶ Maintain strict privacy and confidentiality of all survey data and results.

Community Leaders

- ▶ Promote the survey's benefits to the community.
- ▶ Encourage community members to participate in the survey if asked to do so.
- ▶ Assure the community that the information requested is vital to the process and that information will be treated confidentially and respectfully.

Individuals and Families

- ▶ Understand that an income survey directly benefits you, your family, and your neighbors.
- ▶ Provide accurate answers to the questions you will be asked.
- ▶ Encourage neighbors to participate if asked.
- ▶ Go to community leaders with any questions or concerns you may have.



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