

When creating or redesigning a benevolence ministry, several things need to be considered to best serve the needs of your community. The following questions should be used by your entire team to help guide your assessment and planning of your ministry. Answer the questions individually and then bring your answers together as a group. Determine if your collective answers align with your congregation's overall mission, theology, and commitment to your neighbors.

- 1) **Community Engagement: What is your church's relationship to its surrounding community?**
 - What do you consider to be the physical boundary of your church community?
 - What is the demographic makeup of the community?
 - Is that reflected in your church?
 - How has your church engaged in this community in the past?
 - Do congregation members and leaders live within this community?
 - How does the community perceive your church?
 - Does your church partner with any other community group/organization?
- 2) **Involvement: Who else will be involved in the benevolence ministry?**
 - How many staff/volunteers will be working in benevolence?
 - Will you recruit more people?
- 3) **Valuing Diversity: How does your church engage with the diversity of your community?**
 - What ways does your church engage with people of diverse economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds?
 - Is your church intentional about doing this?
 - Is your congregation made up of people from diverse economic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds?
 - Have staff/volunteers been trained in implicit bias trainings?
- 4) **Listening to the Community: In what ways does your church listen to the needs your community?**
 - What are the needs of your community?
 - In what ways can your church help with those needs?
 - What are the strengths of your community?
 - How does your church build into those strengths?
 - How can your church add to those strengths?
- 5) **Empowerment: In what ways do you plan to empower the individuals you will work with?**
 - Does your benevolence program foster independence or dependence?
 - How do you plan on holistically caring for individuals when assisting them?
 - How do you plan on coming alongside individuals after assisting them financially?

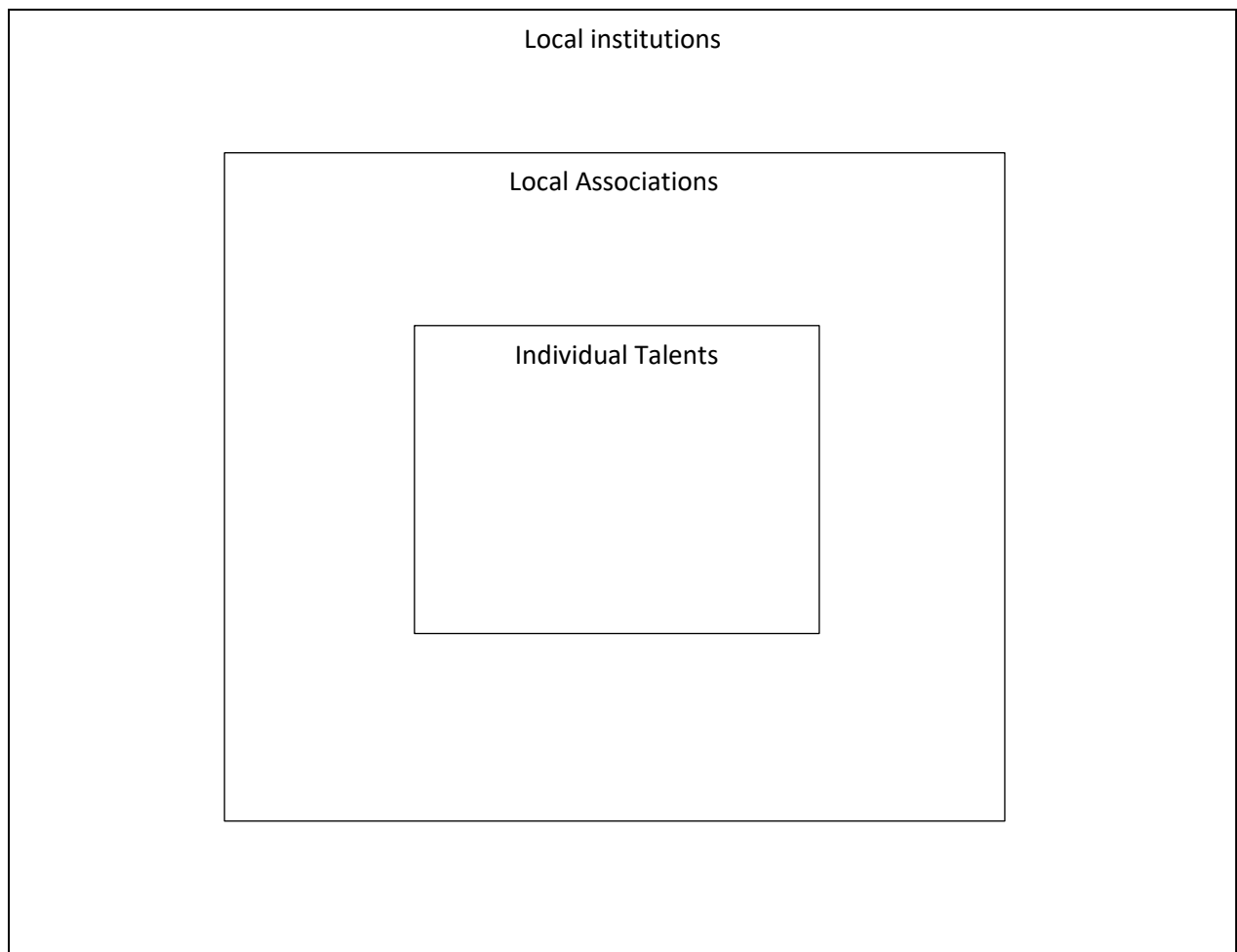
6) **Distributing Resources: What does distribution of resources look like for your church?**

- What resources are you willing/able to give to your community?
- How will you budget the benevolence program?

Asset Mapping

Assets are resources and strengths within communities, which community leaders can use for the advantage of their communities. Asset mapping is a tool that organizes available community resources, talents, and skills as a visual reference guide. This process can be followed to create an asset map.

- 1) Determine the boundaries of your community, then work with community members to identify strengths and resources of your focus area. The following three dimensions should be used to identify assets
 - **Local institutions:** churches, schools, hospitals, and libraries
 - **Local associations:** youth groups, cultural groups, and civil events
 - **Talents of individuals:** community volunteers, skilled individuals, and positive characteristics of different individuals
- 2) Plot these assets on the map



- 3) Consider what your church would like to do with this map. Some examples include...
- **Engage in neighborhood level Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) work:** follow the steps of the ABCD neighborhood model by creating a team to survey neighbors, create asset guides, build neighborhood relationships, leverage connections around local strengths, and determine a plan based on the input and willingness of neighbors.
 - **Further learning and research:** assemble a team to learn more about things happening in your neighborhood and larger community. Make connections with other organizations, attend community meetings, and research issues you are concerned about.
 - **Educate:** involve your entire congregation in getting to know your neighborhood. If you are a commuter church, determine how best to create congregant connections with neighborhood happenings and local relationships.

Creating a Purpose Statement

A purpose/mission statement is a concise description of the purpose of your ministry and its aspirations. This statement works to explain the purpose of your ministry to others and to create an outline for your goals. When drafting a mission statement, consider the following...

- Why does our ministry exist? What are we hoping to accomplish in one year? Five years? What is our vision for our neighborhood in the long-term? How do our hopes translate into our values and activities?
- What is our vision for our community? Are our planned activities aligned with this vision?
- How will we know when we are making a difference?
- Are there other benevolence ministries or models we can use to inform our program?

Draft a purpose statement:

Setting Goals

It is important for your outreach ministry or diaconal team to set effective goals for what you hope to accomplish. To begin, with your team, decide how you plan to carry out your purpose. Define what steps you will take to do so. From there, develop a few short-term goals (1-2 years). To make your goals strong, use the acronym SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Specific goals say what *exactly* you want to accomplish, therefore the more specific you get, the better. Measurable goals explain how you know when you have accomplished your goal. Achievable and realistic goals ask if your goals can actually be achieved

and if you will actually follow through with them. Lastly, time-bound goals focus on if you add a specific time-frame to your goals.

Draft a few short-term goals: