

Uncovering Stories of Place

Step 1: Choose at least one question in each category to investigate

ECOLOGY



- What natural resources exist in your area? What industries are based on these natural resources?
- In what ways do people value the open space, wildlife, and/or natural beauty of your region?
- Are there any public lands (state or national parks, national forest, open space, etc.)? If so, what/where are they?
- What are the major flora and fauna in your area? Do they need more or less habitat?
- Do people spend time outside in all seasons? What do they do?
- What natural spaces are accessible to all residents?
- How is electricity produced in your town? Where does it come from?
- Where does household water come from?
- Where does your wastewater and sewage go?
- Where does your trash go? Is any of it recycled or reused? If so, what organizations do this?
- What foods are locally grown and available? Where does the rest of your food come from?
- How does the natural landscape affect the culture of your community?
- What seasonal, weather-related challenges are faced by residents? What natural disaster has your community experienced?

ECONOMY



- Overall, what percentage of people have their basic needs met (food, water, and shelter)?
- Overall, what percentage of people have their wants met (recreation, vacations, and entertainment)?
- What percentage of the population is living below the poverty line? Why?
- What are the characteristics of the population (race, gender, age, background, education level, etc.)?
- Name three local businesses that provide services to your town.
- What are the major industries? How has industry in the community changed over time?
- Is the community older or younger in terms of age of residents? Why?
- What needs to be imported? What is exported?
- Who are the biggest employers in town?
- What is the unemployment rate?
- How common is it for people in the community to have multiple jobs?
- What types of family structures exist in your community (single parents, blended family, adoptions, foster care, multigenerational, same gender parents)?
- Is there access to employment for people with disabilities?

CULTURE



- What are the core values of this community?
- What unites this community?
- What different cultural/ethnic/religious backgrounds are found in your community now and in the past?
- What art forms, music, and sports are available for viewing or participation? Who is able to take part? Who is not?
- Who governs the community? How do they make decisions?
- What is an issue that is being discussed in the community? Who is engaged? Who is not?
- Is your community growing or shrinking in population? Why?
- What are the options for transportation in your area? What are the prices? What are the environmental impacts of each?
- Who has access to healthcare and mental health services in the community?
- What opportunities exist for recreation?
- Where do people get their food? Is fresh food available?
- Are differences (gender, religion, abilities, race) equally supported?
- Is there a local news source? If so, what is it?
- Who has access to electricity, waste systems, and water? Who does not?
- Why do people move here? Why do they leave?
- What is the history of this place? Whose history is it? Whose story is not told?
- Who is not being heard in this community?

