



# Healthy Church Solutions

## DISCOVERING YOUR MINISTRY COMMUNITY

Are you having trouble relating to your neighbors?

Does your church match the demographics of your community? One way to clearly see how your congregation matches up with the community surrounding your building is to develop a demographic profile map of your area and then plot your membership on the map. This will allow you to see several things. First, it will show you the characteristics of the people in your area and in which neighborhoods they live. This will help you understand their needs and ways in which you can reach out and minister to them. Second, it will show you where your members live in these profiled neighborhoods. With your own discernment, experience, and interpretive help from a HCG consultant, you can discover how well you are penetrating your community and if there are specific areas that you need to target with resources.

An example is, a church the HCG worked with that was saturating a large geographic area with postcards twice a year. After plotting its membership on the demographic map you could see specific areas where the church outreach was bearing fruit. Because of this, the church decided to focus its mailings only in the areas that were most responsive. This gave the church two options. First, it could choose to reduce its mailing costs. Second, it could choose to send mailings more often to the targeted areas.

Developing strategies that effectively carry out your missional calling is no easy task in today's ever-changing world. Not only do you need quick and easy access to information that will provide a proper understanding of your surrounding community and the existing congregants within your mission area, you also need to understand how they relate to one another. That's where MissionInsite, [www.missioninsite.com](http://www.missioninsite.com), comes in!

Below are demographic questions you need to ask in determining how large your ministry/outreach footprint is and who lives in your area.

- How many people live in the church area?
- Is the population in the church area growing or declining? At what rate?
- What is the ethnic diversity in the church area? Is there an ethnic group that warrants a new ministry or new work?
- How much lifestyle diversity (refer to Mosaic Minor Clusters) is in the church area?
- What are the major generational groups in the area? Are the generational groups growing or declining?
- How traditional are the family structures (two-parent families, blended families, single parent, single)?
- How educated are the adults? Does this reveal ministry concerns or opportunities?
- What is the blend of home owners, renters, and vacant properties? What are the ratios for housing structures (single family home, apartments, group quarters, etc.)? What does this tell you about your community?
- How does the average household income and individual income affected ministry in you area?
- What can be learned from information about occupations (professional, service industry, blue collar, academic)? What % of women are in the work force?

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