

# IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS AND LISTENING SESSIONS

Use this guide to plan and implement community interviews and/or listening sessions with key individuals or small groups from the community. The selected individuals should provide information on community perceptions of the COVID-19 vaccines and highlight key barriers and enablers related to COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake.

This guide includes:

- A script for opening a community interview/listening session,
- Sample informed consent, and
- Core questions you can use as a discussion guide.

The sessions should generally last about 60 minutes. A notetaker should accompany the facilitator to take detailed notes even if the session is recorded. You may also want to consider having a certified interpreter present in case the facilitator is not able to communicate in the language of limited English proficient populations. **You should adapt this guide—including the script, informed consent, and core discussion questions—based on community context.**

## Planning a Community Interview/Listening Session

- 1. Organize an internal meeting to discuss ideas for a community interview/listening session.**
  - Identify potential partners, organizations, and individuals to participate in the session. Get contact information through relevant in-person connections or research organizations in the local community or on the internet.
  - Identify and list key questions to discuss. Note any potential dates to propose to potential participants.
  - Identify community interview/listening session facilitators and notetakers from within your organization.
- 2. Contact community-based staff, organizations, and/or key figures to schedule the community interview/listening session.**
  - Identify and secure interpreter(s) if participants will have limited English proficiency and if facilitators are not able to speak the participants' language(s).



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- Contact organizations via telephone or email, as appropriate. Introduce yourself and explain the assessment goals and objectives.
- Explain to the participants how the information they provide will be useful for the assessment and the expected outcome of the interview/listening session.
- Propose potential dates and meeting mode (e.g., teleconference service).
- Ask for the participant's preference for participation (e.g., call or online session).
- Confirm dates and follow up prior to the session as a friendly reminder.

### 3. Conduct the community interview/listening session as follows:

- Get consent for participation and recording if applicable.
- Make sure to reserve the first few minutes for an introduction and explain the objective(s) of the session to the participant(s).
- Take copious notes on the key themes/ideas presented in each session.

### 4. After the listening session:

- Send a thank-you note to the organizer/trusted community member and participant(s), if applicable.
- Review and discuss the feedback/notes/translation among facilitators and notetakers.
- Summarize key themes/findings and next steps for each session.



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## Sample Community Interview/Listening Session Guide

Zoom meeting/call: [Enter date]

### Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Informed consent
- Brief situational update
- Main discussion
- Closing remarks and thank you

## Sample Script for Opening a Community Interview/Listening Session

### Welcome and Introductions

Hello, my name is [NAME] and I would like to thank you for joining us today for this interview/listening session on COVID-19 vaccine attitudes and perceptions. Please take a moment to briefly tell us your name and the organization you represent. After introductions, I will turn things over to [FACILITATOR'S NAME] for a brief situational update.

[Introductions around the phone] Thank you to everyone. We are so glad to have you here today.

We are also pleased to be joined today by [FACILITATOR'S NAME].

- Provide brief bio of local health department facilitator.
- EXAMPLE: Expand on the facilitator's role in the health department and the work they do.

Before we begin with this discussion, we would like to go over a few details.

### Informed Consent

Read the script for informed consent below to the participant(s) after the initial introduction of the objective of the community interview/listening session.

### Script

Your participation in this interview/listening session is voluntary. We would like to hear your honest opinions about the topics we discuss. Your responses will be written anonymously and reported in aggregate. There are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions. We encourage you to speak openly and honestly about your opinions and experiences. If you don't want to respond to a question, you don't have to. If a question doesn't make sense, stop me so I can clarify. Our discussion should take about 60 minutes.

[IF PLANNING TO RECORD SESSION] In addition to taking notes, would it be okay if we make an audio recording of our discussion? The recording will help us to summarize today's discussion. Just like the notes, any data from the recordings will be anonymous.



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### Brief Situational Update (by the facilitator)

Provide a brief situational update for the community interview/listening session. Adapt this update to the current circumstances surrounding COVID-19 in the community/phase of vaccine rollout. An example has been provided below:

- Thank you all for being here today. As you all are aware, the COVID-19 vaccines are widely available now across the country. You/your organization are/is an important part of this community, and you may offer insights on what your community is thinking and experiencing related to COVID-19 vaccination. It is important for us as the local health department to understand the different issues that may affect whether people in the community get vaccinated or not, and what we can do to ensure everyone accepts and has access to a vaccine.
- With that, I would like to turn this all back to you and give each of you a chance to share your thoughts and insights with us. We have prepared several questions in advance, so I would like to share a few of them and allow each of you to respond. However, we are also happy to “go off script,” so to speak, as needed, if other issues emerge.

### Main Discussion

Use the questions below to facilitate the main discussion. Adapt questions and add more probes as needed to elicit detailed information.

#### A. General Introduction

1. To start, it would be helpful to understand how COVID-19 has affected your community through the course of this pandemic. How do you think COVID-19 has affected your community?

#### B. COVID-19 Vaccine Attitudes in the Community

2. What do people in your community think about the COVID-19 vaccines?
  - a. What do you think about the vaccines yourself? What do parents in your community think about the COVID-19 vaccines?
3. Which groups of adults or children tend to not be vaccinated?

#### C. Barriers to and Enablers of COVID-19 Vaccination in the Community

4. What are the main reasons people in your community would want to get a vaccine?
  - a. What are the main reasons parents in your community would want to get their children vaccinated?
  - b. [Probe on vaccine availability, free transportation, educational campaigns, etc.]
5. What are some of the things that make it easier for people in your community to get a vaccine?
  - a. What makes it easier for parents to get their children vaccinated?
6. What are some things that make it harder for people or parents in your community to get a vaccine?



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- a. [Probe on vaccine access, lack of paid time off work, misinformation, attitudes toward vaccines, fear of side effects, trust in medical system/healthcare workers, fear of needing to show identification, etc.]
7. There's a lot of misinformation about the vaccines circulating on social media and in the news. What have you heard about the COVID-19 vaccines from sources you trust?
  - a. What have you heard about vaccination for children?
  - b. What are the sources you trust?

### D. Strategies to Improve Vaccine Confidence in the Community

8. How do you think that community organizations, schools, and faith-based organizations can build vaccine confidence and make vaccines more accessible?
9. How do you think the state or local health department is doing at building vaccine confidence and making COVID-19 vaccines accessible?
  - a. [Probe on messaging content (making sure it is culturally and linguistically appropriate), information sources, managing misinformation, other communication materials, access to vaccination provider sites (including having medical interpretation services available), any virtual events, or campaigns.]

### Closing Remarks and Thank You

End of discussion. Thank the participants for their time and ask them if they have any questions. Provide brief information about how findings from this session will be shared with the participants.



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# Notetaking Template for Community Interviews and/or Listening Sessions

Use and adapt this template as needed, but make sure the areas below are covered in addition to any other issues the discussion may have generated.

Community Interview/Listening Session Title or Number:

Community Interview/Listening Session Date and Time:

Community Interview/Listening Session Participant(s) (do not use personal names):

## FOR LISTENING SESSION ONLY

- Number of groups/organizations on this call: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of individuals in this listening session: \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes to Be Taken During a Specific Community Interview/Listening Session

Questions	Summary of key issues, important points, discussed action items, other interesting points
1. What effect has COVID-19 had on this community?	
2. What are participants' thoughts about COVID-19 vaccine?	
3. Who tends not to be vaccinated?	
4. What makes it easier for people to get vaccinated?	
5. What makes it harder for people to get vaccinated?	
6. What types of misinformation are circulating?	
7. Who are trusted messengers in this community?	
8. What role can the health department, community-based organization, or other organization play to make sure everyone gets a vaccine?	



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Synopsis of Discussions Above Based on Debriefing After a Specific Community Interview/Listening Session

Questions	Summary of key issues, important points, discussed action items, other interesting points
1. What are some summarized key themes from this community interview/listening session?	
2.	



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