



RESOURCE GUIDE 3-G

Guidelines for Survey Development

A survey is a written set of questions and/or statements that are designed to gather information from many respondents. A survey is appropriate to use when you need quantifiable information from different sets of respondents and when you want to gather lots of information quickly and efficiently. Surveys also enable you to document how youth experience the program and/or an event they attended.

<u>Advantages to Surveys</u>	<u>Disadvantages to Surveys</u>
Easy to administer	Difficult to get high response rate
Able to collect information from a large sample	Does not capture “voices” of respondents
Allows respondents to respond to questions anonymously	Requires staff expertise to conduct statistical analysis

WRITING GOOD SURVEY QUESTIONS

1) Ask one question at a time; Avoid double barreled Questions

A double barreled question asks more than one question, making it difficult to know which part of the question was answered.

Example:

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the childcare program.

I feel welcomed by staff and other youth at the center.

Revision:

I feel welcomed by staff at the center.

I feel welcomed by other youth at the center.

2) Use Accessible Language

Avoid questions with program jargon may be unfamiliar to respondents.

Example:



Have you ever attended the “Empower Us” workshop?

Revision:

Have you ever attended the workshop on youth empowerment?

3) Keep Questions simple

Use synonyms for longer words. Don't test reading comprehension and vocabulary.

Example:

To what extent are youth leveraging the social networks made through your center to garner additional resources?

Revision:

Do the relationships that youth make with each other through the center lead to increased sharing of information about additional resources?

4) Avoid using biased questions

Biased or leading questions can indicate to the respondent that they are expected to answer in a certain way.

Example:

Community organizing is hard.

Do leadership trainings help you feel prepared for community organizing?

(Much more prepared/ somewhat more prepared/ slightly more prepared/ much more prepared)

Revision:

The leadership trainings prepare me for community organizing.

(Agree/ Disagree/ Strong Agree/ Strongly Disagree)

5) Be specific in wording questions

The more concrete and specific your wording, the more confident you can be that the question will be answered the way you intended.

- Less specific: Are youth only activities are helpful to youth?
- More specific: Are youth only activities helpful to you?

Evaluation and Civic Activism Curriculum

Module 3: Data Collection Methods and Evaluation Tools



- Even more specific: Do the youth only activities provide you with support from other youth?

6) Pick an appropriate number of response choices

Too few can lead to an oversimplification of the issue.

How satisfied are you with the summer camp?

Satisfied 1

Not satisfied 2

Too many choices can lead to confusion about and minimize the differences between responses.

How satisfied are you with the family events?

Extremely satisfied 1

Very satisfied 2

Quite satisfied 3

Somewhat satisfied 4

A little satisfied 5

Not at all satisfied 6

Four to five choices is usually good. Sometimes it is useful to have a “don’t know” option to indicate when a respondent is not familiar with an aspect of the program or is unsure of its impact.

ADMINISTERING THE SURVEYS

- *Create a survey cover sheet.* The cover sheet provides the respondents with an introduction to the purpose of the survey, as well as information on how their individual answers will be used. The cover sheet has a “code #,” which can be used to maintain respondent’s anonymity, while at the same time providing you with a way to track the youth experiences over time.
- *Decide what kind of information you want to know from many or most of your respondents.* Consider what types of information are most important to gather. Surveys are a good way to gather information about what activities are most attended by youth, and what percentage like or dislike certain activities. on what parents are getting out of the program.
- *Pilot test and revise your survey.* Pilot test your survey with a few youth to make sure that the questions are clearly understandable and

Evaluation and Civic Activism Curriculum

Module 3: Data Collection Methods and Evaluation Tools

3



ask appropriate information from youth. Their responses can be useful to ensure that the survey uses appropriate language, is easy to understand, and is an accurate measure of their experiences.

- *Decide who will take the survey.* Select a sample to take the survey. You may want to survey youth involved in a particular activity or a cross section of youth involved in different activities to understand of range of experiences.
- *Administer the survey.* To ensure good survey results identify a convenient time to administer the survey and allow respondents enough time to complete it. Also provide respondents a quiet space to respond to the survey and when possible, provide non-English speakers the survey in their native language.