Tool 3.22: Survey Building Blocks

Why is this tool useful?

This tool outlines some basic building blocks that all surveys should contain. These are surveys that work best when administered interview-style, where a surveyor verbally asks the respondent survey questions and marks down the answers.

I.   Surveyor Information for Interview-Style Surveys

This is a section where the surveyor tracks their name, and when and where the survey is completed. This information is helpful to maintain a record of where and when you have conducted surveys, and can also be used to follow up with a surveyor if survey responses are hard to read and you want to ask the surveyor for clarification. Note: for self-administered surveys you will still want to track the date and site of survey administration but this does not need to be included on the actual survey.

> **SURVEYOR USE ONLY**
> Surveyor Name: _____
> Date of Survey: _____
> Survey Site: _____

II.   Introduction to the Survey

This is where you would insert instructions to the surveyor about how they should introduce the survey. There should be an introduction to your organization and what the survey is about. For example:

> *"This survey is being conducted by CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities. CAAAV is a pan-Asian community organization that works to build the power of low-income Asian immigrants and refugees in New York City.   This survey allows us to learn more about the experiences of Asian public housing residents, and will be used to write a report about Asians in public housing, which will include recommended changes for public housing.*

III.   Confidentiality/Anonymity

You should make clear to respondents whether their responses will be anonymous and/or confidential. This is important especially for vulnerable populations (such as undocumented immigrants, formerly incarcerated individuals, survivors of domestic violence, etc.) who might not feel comfortable answering certain questions if those questions may be tied to identifying information. Below is an example of language you could use:

> *"This survey is confidential and anonymous. Your name and contact information will not appear anywhere on the survey. We encourage you to answer every question to the best of your ability. However, if you do not feel comfortable answering a question, feel free to skip it. Your input is very important".*

IV. Screening Criteria

Sometimes it is best to build in screening questions into your survey. These are questions that make sure that you are targeting your **survey sample** (See Tool 2.5). For example, the sample in the below survey is Asian tenants living in public housing, and the screening questions reflect this. Also note the instructions to the surveyor for when respondents do not meet the screening criteria:

Screening Questions

READ: First I'm going to ask you a few questions to be sure you are eligible to complete the survey.

1) Do you identify as any of the following?

○ Bangladeshi   ○ Indian   ○ Vietnamese

○ Chinese   ○ Korean   ○ No, I do not identify as any of the above

○ Indo-Caribbean   ○ Pakistani

○ Other Asian ethnicity: _____

2) Do you live in public housing?

○ Yes   ○ No

V. Survey Instructions

When administering a survey interview-style, it is important to have clear instructions for what the surveyor should read to the respondent, and when they should follow directions that are not supposed to be read aloud. This is an example of some survey instructions, where instructions that the surveyor reads to the respondent is preceded by the word "READ":

If respondent answered "no" to any of these questions, READ: "Based on your answers, you are not in the target group for our survey, and you do not need to fill out the remainder of the survey. We thank you for your time."
Hand respondent information about CAAAV.

---

a. Skip patterns

These are sets of instructions throughout the survey that detail when surveyors are supposed to move on to a subsequent question or when they should skip a question based on the respondent's answer. Please also note that skip patterns can also be in self-administered surveys. This is an example of a set of skip patterns:

10) In the past 3 years, was there a time that you needed a translated version of a public housing document (like a hearing notice or a lease)?

    ○ Yes   ○ No

> ***(If "yes" ask question 11, if "no" skip to question 16)***

      11) Did you ask someone who works for public housing for that document translated in your language?

               ○Yes   ○No   ○I didn't know I could ask public housing for translation

> ***(If "yes" ask question 12, if "no" or "I didn't know" ask question 13)***

VI.   Survey Questions

We have developed some tips for crafting good survey questions (See tool 3.22). Overall, it is good to start with broad thematic categories of questions that you want to ask, and then come up with questions that fit within those categories. Below are some examples of categories of questions and corresponding survey questions:

Language Access

READ: "I'm going to start with some questions about your language needs and how well NYCHA meets them."

5) How difficult would it be for you to understand written information from the public housing authority (such as a letter or a lease) in English?

  ○ Extremely difficult   ○ Somewhat difficult   ○ Not very difficult   ○ Not at all difficult

6) How difficult would it be for you to have a conversation about housing matters (such as at a hearing or an interview) in English?

  ○ Extremely difficult   ○ Somewhat Difficult   ○ Not very difficult   ○ Not at all difficult

Experiences with Public Housing

26) If English is not your primary language, have you ever decided not to request a repair because you did not think you could talk to someone in your language?

  ○ Yes   ○ No

27) Has the public housing authority completed any repairs in your apartment?

  ○ Yes   ○ No

a. Demographic Questions

Demographic questions help us better understand who we have surveyed, and also allow us to look for any patterns in how different communities are impacted by the issue being studied. It also allows us to compare our survey data to other data from existing data sources or baseline data. It can be tempting to cram many demographics questions into the survey but it is important to keep in mind which demographic data will actually be used in your analysis. We have developed a bank of demographics questions as well as tools for using demographic data. (See Tool 3.19 and Tool 3.21).

VII.   Office use only section

This section should be at the bottom of the survey and should not be completed by the surveyor or respondent. The office use section will be used when entering survey responses into a database (See Tool 4.4).

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY (COMPLETED BY PERSON DOING DATA ENTRY)
Survey Number: _____
Language of Survey: _____
Name of Person Entering Survey: _____