

Interview Protocol

Community & Location _____ Date/time _____ No. of people attending _____
Researchers conducting session _____

My name is _____ and I will be facilitating this focus group interview along with my colleague(s) _____. The goal of this project is to discover the extent to which various community attributes as well as specific recruitment methods are likely to be successful. As a new resident we value your opinions and insights. We want to know what works and what does not. Ultimately this study will enhance the ability of rural places to attract and retain new residents by addressing critical questions related to rural in-migration. The information gleaned from this effort will be shared with wide variety of community stakeholders throughout the region including elected officials, civic leaders, and economic developers.

You were selected through a voluntary post-card response to a previously administered mail survey where your name was obtained through the purchase of a new resident mailing list. Between 10 and 15 focus groups will be conducted within the region with each group having approximately 6-10 participants.

Prior to the interview you were sent an introductory letter and two consent forms (one to sign and return and one to keep) prior to the session today. The focus group interviews will take approximately 90 minutes and will follow a designed interview protocol. As an incentive to attend, each person will receive a monetary honorarium of \$50 that will be mailed to them following the interview.

Did each of you bring your consent letter? If not, I have some here for you. (copies distributed). Does anyone have any questions?

If there are no further questions, let's get started with the first question.

[Note: the researcher will use phrases such as "Tell me more", "Could you give me an example?", "Could you explain that?" as prompts to solicit more detailed information when needed.]

1. To get started, let's introduce ourselves. In your introduction please tell us who you are, the community where you currently live as well as the community that you left and if anyone moved with you?
2. How did you discover your current community?
Probe: Did any of you travel here or go through the region on a vacation prior to u moving here?
3. Describe what attracted you to this community?
Probe: How did the panhandle or western Nebraska region play a role in that decision?
4. Is the community what you expected?
5. Were any of you former residents of this community? Can you tell me more?
Probe: Have you lived in a rural community before, and if so, where?
6. As a new resident, did you feel welcomed? Explain. Please describe several ways a community could help you feel welcomed.

7. Are you currently involved in community activities? [If someone says yes] can you give me an example. For those that are not involved, do you wish to be? If yes, how would you like to be involved? Were you active at your previous location?

8. Was there one dominant reason for moving to this area? If so, what was it and why?

9. When you were thinking about moving, what issues/situations pushed you from your current location (old one) and what issues/situations pulled you to this area?

10. Communities are now using a variety of tactics to attract new residents. I am going to pass out a list to each of you with some common and not so common recruitment actions. Please individually look at the list and circle the degree of influence (high to low) each action would have on your decision to move. There is also a line for you to add a tactic as well. I will go down the list and if you have any questions or need clarification, please let me know. Then I would like you to pass the cards forward and we will tabulate the results and discuss each one.

[See form]

[Note: lists are distributed and the researcher goes down each tactic and offers detail if needed. After participants have finished, the tactics are shown on a flipchart and tallied. Then participants are asked to explain the responses, focusing on those items that will influence their decision.]

11. What will keep you here?

12. Communities are also equally interested in retaining new residents once they have arrived. I am going to pass out a list to each of you with some community actions targeted toward new residents. Please individually look at the list and circle the degree of influence (high to low) you perceive each action or opportunity would have on your decision to stay in the community. There is also a line for you to add an action as well. I will go down the list and if you have any questions or need clarification, please let me know. Then I would like you to pass the cards forward, as we did before, and we will tabulate the results and discuss each one.

[See form]

[Note: lists are distributed and the researcher goes down each tactic and offers detail if needed. After participants have finished, the tactics are shown on a flipchart and tallied. Then participants are asked to explain the responses, focusing on those items that will influence their decision.]

13. What could push you away from this area in the future?

14. What advice would you give to communities in developing strategies to attract and keep new residents?