

Local Focus Group: 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 research we are conducting has to do with living in smaller towns. The purpose of this research is to gain understanding in how certain community images impact potential workers to the Great Plains. We will be asking you to share your perceptions and opinions about a series of images to learn if the picture represents what they portray. The information gathered from this effort will be shared with a wide variety of community stakeholders throughout the Great Plains including elected officials, civic leaders, and economic developers.

Your name was identified through a voluntary response invitation inserted in a new resident mail survey or were nominated by leaders in the community.

Prior to the interview you were sent an introductory letter and two consent forms -- one to sign and return and one to keep. This focus group interview 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 \$25 that will be mailed to you following the interview.

Did each of you bring your consent letter? If not, I have some here for you. (copies are distributed). Does anyone have any questions? We do ask that each of you respect each other's opinions and ask that you do not share specific comments made by any individual.

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. Were any of you former residents of this community?
3. Have you lived in a rural community before, and if so, where?

4. Describe what attracted you to this community?
5. Now, I would like to show you some pictures –
 - Please tell us about your impression of the community portrayed in the picture?

Note to researchers: The images represent the top overall five pull factors for the six communities combined –

- 1) simpler pace of life;
- 2) spend more quality time with family;
- 3) closer to relatives;
- 4) obtain a higher paying job;
- 5) less congested place to live.

[this will take some time]

6. The next five pictures are specific to a community. Again, please tell us about your impression of the community portrayed in the picture as it relates to several community characteristics; for example, safe environment.

[Note: Community members will decide which five pictures represent key characteristic from the lists below]

Groton

Pull Factors: To be closer to relatives; A better environment for raising children; To find better quality local schools; To spend more quality time with family; To find a simpler pace of life; to find a less congested place to live

Community Factors: Fire Protection; School System; Safety of Community; Environment for Children; Police Protection; Clean Environment; Senior living/services; Standard of living

Hot Springs/Edgemont

Pull Factors: To live in a desirable natural environment; To find a simpler pace of life; To find a less congested place to live; To find more outdoor recreational activities; to have a more desirable climate; To lower the cost of housing; To lower the cost of living

Community Factors: Natural science or recreational amenities; safety of community; fire protection; environment for children; senior living/services/clean environment; police protection; suitable housing and neighborhoods

Stanley

Pull Factors: To spend more quality time with family; to find a simpler pace of life; to be closer to relatives; to obtain a higher paying job; to find a safer place to live; to be nearer friends and family.

Community Factors: Environment for children; safety of community; fire protection; job security; school system; stand of living; senior living/services; health care services

Underwood

Pull Factors: To spend more quality time with family; to lower the cost of housing; to lower the cost of living; to have lower taxes; to find a less congested place to live; to be closer to relatives;

Community Factors: Safety of community; school system; suitable housing and neighborhoods; standard of living; environment for children; internet services; fire protection; police protection; affordable housing; community vision

Sidney

Pull Factors: To obtain a higher paying job; To obtain a job more in line with my skills; to spend quality time with family to find a simpler pace of life; to find a safer place to live; to find a less congested place to live

Community Factors: Safety of community; fire protection; environment for children; police protection; clean environment; opportunities to join local organizations;

Wayne

Pull Factors: To be closer to relatives, to obtain a higher paying job, quality time with family, job more in line with my skills, nearer friends and acquaintances, environment for raising children, simpler pace of life

Community Factors: Safety of community, environment for children, fire protection, clean environment, educational opportunities, stand of living, school system, senior living/services, community appearance

7. Now I would like to show you some words [the top three to five factors that the survey showed were important for this town] and tell me how you would show this word in a picture.

Groton

Pull Factors: To be closer to relatives; A better environment for raising children; To find better quality local schools; To spend more quality time with family; To find a simpler pace of life; to find a less congested place to live

Hot Springs/Edgemont

Pull Factors: To live in a desirable natural environment; To find a simpler pace of life; To find a less congested place to live; To find more outdoor recreational activities; to have a more desirable climate; To lower the cost of housing; To lower the cost of living

Stanley

Pull Factors: To spend more quality time with family; to find a simpler pace of life; to be closer to relatives; to obtain a higher paying job; to find a safer place to live; to be nearer friends and family.

Underwood

Pull Factors: To spend more quality time with family; to lower the cost of housing; to lower the cost of living; to have lower taxes; to find a less congested place to live; to be closer to relatives.

Sidney

Pull Factors: To obtain a higher paying job; To obtain a job more in line with my skills; to spend quality time with family to find a simpler pace of life; to find a safer place to live; to find a less congested place to live

Wayne

Pull Factors: To be closer to relatives, to obtain a higher paying job, quality time with family, job more in line with my skills, nearer friends and acquaintances, environment for raising children, simpler pace of life

8. You have been helping us gain understanding in certain community images. These images reflect factors that the new resident survey identified as important when making

a decision to move to the community. Are there other images that you think should be reflected?

9. Do you have any advice to communities in developing strategies to attract new residents?

Thank you for your time.