



Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant to Southern California Association of Governments Focus Groups Interview Framework and Questions

Background

The Caltrans Grant Work Plan calls for each Regional Broadband Consortium (RBC) to conduct 2 Focus Groups. Focus Groups generally are comprised of 8-12 people from a target population. Given the ongoing constraints due to COVID, it has been agreed upon with SCAG that each RBC will complete a total of 20 Interviews with participants from 2 different population groups, such as 2 distinct neighborhoods or points of service (such as health clinics, housing complexes, or community centers).

The purpose of the Focus Groups is to determine the potential for low-income residents, who are the majority of unconnected and underconnected households in the region, to reduce vehicle trips, and therefore decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, if they had access to high-speed Internet infrastructure and were digitally proficient. Assessing this potential is complicated because “essential workers” are comprised of a disproportionate percentage of low-income individuals who do not have an option to work remotely and often have to rely upon vehicles to get to work. To be sure, there are several other compelling reasons why all household must have access to high-speed Internet infrastructure and become digitally proficient. However, Caltrans Grant is required to gather data about the relationship between ubiquitous broadband and GHG.

Approach and Timetable

Reach RBC is responsible for determining the best approach for conducting and completing 20 Interviews of low-income individuals as described above. The Interviews may be conducted by RBC staff and/or volunteers, contract personnel, or a community-based organization(s) (CBO). If contract personnel or a CBO is engaged by the RBC to conduct and complete the Interviews, then the RBC should prepare a signed Vendor Agreement and submit to CETF.

The Focus Group Interviews will be conducted in January 2022 and results will be analyzed in February 2022 to provide input to the Final Report.

Interview Guide and Questions

Hello, my name is _____ from _____ working with the _____ Regional Broadband Consortium and Southern California Association of Governments to find out if we can reduce vehicle trips in the region by getting everyone connected to the Internet with fast, affordable, and reliable service. Do you have just 10 minutes to answer a few questions? If you can take the time to help us gather this important information, I have a \$20 gift card for you.

Thank you very much for taking to time to talk with me. As we begin, let me assure you that we are keeping all responses and information confidential.

To get started with this short Interview, we just need some basic information from you. (Some interviewees may be a reluctant to state their Name and/or provide specific Street Address and they may not have an Email Address. The Name of the Street, Zip Code, and Telephone Number are essential for verifying general geographic location and having a Unique Identifier. Interviewers may provide the Gift Cards to the Interviewees immediately following conclusion of the Interview by simply securing a signature or initials on the Master Roster.)

First and Last Name: _____

Address (or Closest Intersection): _____

City: _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address (Unless Needed to Send Gift Card): _____

1. How many people in your household? _____

2. Are there school children in your household?

YES	NO
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3. If YES, how many? _____

4. Are you employed (do you have a job outside your home or are self-employed)?

YES	NO
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5. If YES, does your Employer categorize you as an "Essential Worker" (or does your business make you an "Essential Worker")?

YES	NO
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6. If Interviewee is an Essential Worker, then ask: What kind of work do you do?

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL WORKER JOBS (Check Only 1)	YES
Health or Medical Care Provider	
Grocery Store Employee	
Uber or Lyft Driver	
Delivery Driver (such as Amazon)	
Daycare Worker	
Construction Worker	
Warehouse Worker	
Other	

7. Are you able to connect to the Internet at home:

YES	NO
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8. If YES, what device(s) do you use? (check as many as apply)

DEVICE	YES
Smartphone	
Tablet	
Laptop Computer	
Desktop Computer	

9. How satisfied are you with your current Internet service (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being the best)?

1	2	3	4	5	DK
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10. Why do you rate your home Internet service as a [fill in the # answer]? {Write explanation.}

11. Which company is your Internet Service Provider? _____

12. About how much per month do you pay for home Internet service? _____

13. If service cost is \$25 per month or less, ask which affordable plan: _____

14. Have you ever heard of the following Affordable Internet Service Offers:

AFFORDABLE INTERNET SERVICE OFFER	YES	NO
Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB)		
Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)		
Affordable Offer from an Internet Company		
Cell Phone or Smartphone LifeLine with Free Data		

15. If YES to any of the above Affordable Internet Service Offers (but, they don't subscribe to an Affordable Offer), ask: Why don't you subscribe to an Affordable Internet Service Offer? (Record the answer and then check all the Reasons below that apply.)

REASON	YES
I Don't Trust the Internet Company	
I Tried to Sign Up and Didn't Get Help from the Company	
The Company Tried to Sell Me a More Expensive Service	
The Affordable Offer Still is Too Expensive	
It Is Unclear How to Sign Up for the Program	
I Would Like Help to Sign Up	
Other	

Now, I want to ask you if you think you could reduce any vehicle trips (round trips) if you were connected at home to the Internet with fast, affordable, and reliable service?

16. If you were connected to the Internet at home with fast, affordable, and reliable Internet service, do you think you would be able to reduce any vehicle round trips each week, such as to go to work, go to school, go to the doctor, pay bills, or shop?

YES	NO
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17. If YES, what is your estimate of how many vehicle trips per week you could avoid by being connected at home to fast, affordable, and reliable internet service? _____
18. What kinds of vehicle trips would you be able to avoid if by using the Internet? (Write down answers and then check as many options that apply.)

KIND OF VEHICLE TRIP	YES	WEEKLY TRIPS REDUCED
Work		
Applying for a Job		
Health or Medical Care (Doctor Visit)		
Pharmacy		
School or Education		
Library		
Post Office		
Paying Bills		
Going to DMV		
Grocery Shopping		
Other Shopping		
Banking		
Getting Benefits from Public Agency		
Other		

19. Which of the following would make it easier for you to connect to the Internet?
(Check as many as apply and rate importance on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest.)

SUPPORT SERVICE	YES	NO	RATING 1-5
Better Internet Access at My Home			
More Affordable Home Internet Service			
Affordable Computer			
Hotspot to Connect to the Internet			
Computer Training for Me			
Computer Training for My Family			
Other (Describe)			

20. Are you currently participating in any of the following programs to help your family?

KIND OF PROGRAM	YES	NO
Medi-Cal (for Healthcare)		
CalFresh (Food Stamps)		
School Lunch Program (if relevant)		
College Financial Assistance		
Supplemental Social Security: SSI or SSP		
Southern California Edison CARE		
SoCalGas CARE		
Other		

21. Do you have anything else you want to share about what would make it easier for you to be connected at home to fast, affordable, and reliable Internet service?

22. Record demographic information from observation if possible (or ask if necessary).

GENDER	Female	Male

ETHNICITY	
African-American	
Asian – Pacific Islander	
LatinX	
Native American	
White	
Other	

AGE	
21 – 35	
35 – 50	
50 – 65	
Over 65	

23. Is there anything else that you want us to know about how having fast, affordable, and reliable Internet service at home would help you and your family?

CETF will provide information to refer for assistance to sign up for ACP or receive help with Digital Literacy Training if the Interviewee is interested.

Thank you very much for your valuable time and expertise. We are pleased to show our appreciation with this Gift Card.

(Record the appropriate information on the Gift Card Roster.)

Name of Interviewer: _____

Organization: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____