

Lesson 5A1: Discovery Interview Tip Sheet



This worksheet is intended to help guide your discovery interviews. You may need to conduct only one interview with one key individual, or multiple interviews with various significant stakeholders. The first interview should be with the subject matter expert within the organization who is most knowledgeable about both the project and the organization.

Suggested questions follow below. This list is far from exhaustive, and the interviewer should use their own judgment and adjust the questions throughout the conversation. Open-ended questions are often preferable, to start; they get the information flowing, create a rapport, and help the interviewer formulate the ensuing questions.

Prior to the interview, you should conduct some preliminary research on your own (e.g., studying the RFA, learning about the organization or program, etc.), so that during the interview, you can get into the substance more deeply and more quickly. If you are writing this grant for your own organization, and for a program you are familiar with, the nature/ context of your discovery interviews (who you interview, types of questions, objectives of interviews, etc.) will be different. **Ask critical questions.**

Note: *These questions are intended to stimulate the process, rather than to serve as a guide, or as a prescribed process to follow.*

- Tell me about the program? (if program is new to you)
- Is this a new program, or an existing one? If the latter, for how long has it been around?
- How would the proposed plan differ from currently available programs?
- How would the program impact the quality of life of people in the community to be served?
- What do you think sets your organization/proposed project apart from the other applicants/proposed projects for this grant?
- Do you think that [local elected officials/other partners] will support this project?
- How would the organization implement this? Staffing? Space? Training? etc.
- Do we have data to support the need/impact of the problem on the community?
- Why would the funder be interested in investing in an organization that is so [big? small? new/inexperienced?]
- Does the organization have the capacity to do what is being proposed? If not, what additional resources would be needed?



- Would this grant cover additional resources needed, or would it be necessary to find additional sources of funding? Is some of the additional funding already committed? Applied for?
- Does the organization have the management/staffing capacity needed for the work?

Pro tip: Be sure to take thorough notes during the interview – you'll most likely need to refer back to them later!