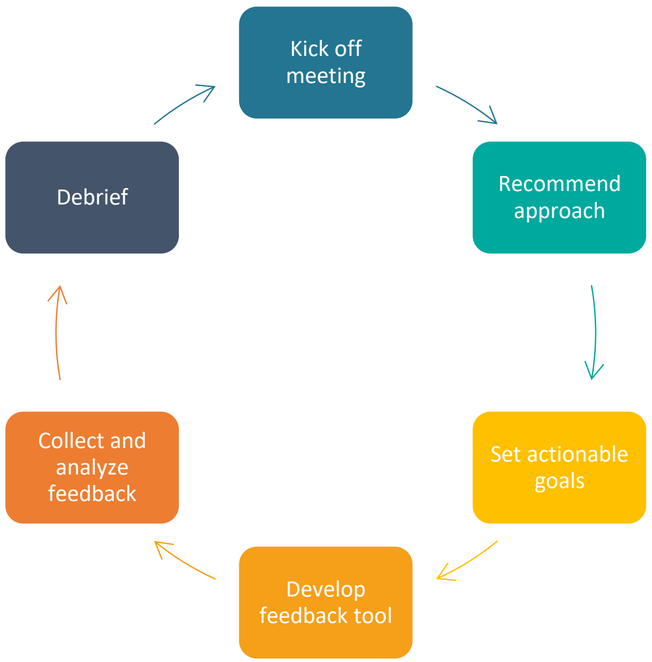
# DCDHS Planning & Evaluation Unit
# Consumer Feedback Guide

## Purpose

Priority 4 of the DCDHS strategic plan, *Vision: Next 2021-2026*, is to **Strengthen Our Partnerships**. One initiative that will help achieve this priority is to *seek feedback on the experience of our clients to broaden the community and lived-experience voice in service delivery*.[1] This document outlines types of consumer feedback where the Planning & Evaluation unit has expertise. This document is not meant to replace consultation with the Planning & Evaluation unit about what approach will work best for collecting consumer input, rather it is meant to transparently share guidelines used when making recommendations.

The Planning & Evaluation unit wants to collaborate with programs to get actionable consumer feedback relevant to program decision makers. Generally, you can expect to meet with Planning & Evaluation to talk about your needs. After that meeting, Planning & Evaluation will recommend an approach and work with you or a committee to set specific goals and develop a feedback tool. You will work collaboratively to collect data that Planning & Evaluation will typically analyze. Lastly, there will be a debriefing (see Figure 1). For ongoing/recurring projects this cycle is repeated as appropriate. Reach out to Planning & Evaluation early so you have appropriate time to go through this process.

**Figure 1: Consumer Feedback Process**




[1] "Vision: Next 2021-2026," Dane County Department of Human Services, Accessed December 29, 2021, https://strategic-plan.dcdhs.com/documents/pdf/VisionNext-final.pdf.

## Summary

For additional information on types of consumer feedback reference CADCA's guide to community voice through qualitative data.[2]

**Table 1: Types of Consumer Feedback Planning & Evaluation Has Expertise In**

| Feedback | Purpose | What to Expect | Investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **In-depth Interviews (IDI)** | • Dive deep into *why* or *how*<br>• Talk about personal or private topics<br>• Discover individualized journeys, experiences, or decision-making processes | • Working with small numbers (10-30 interviews)<br>• Qualitative data, not decisive but directional<br>• May need followed up with quantitative data after uncovering themes and hypotheses<br>• Can be done in-person, over the phone, video conference | • 2-4 months<br>• $200 - $600+ (incentives of at least $20 should be expected)<br>• Interviews last 30-60 minutes |
| **Focus Groups** | • Gather reactions to stimulus (such as ads, new program proposals, changes to programs, etc.)<br>• Brainstorm new ideas with input from consumers<br>• Understand group dynamics<br>• Study things that are social in nature and not individualized decisions<br>• Uncovers perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes | • Each group should be 6-10 people<br>• Groups should be of like-people, do at least three groups for each set of like-people<br>• Qualitative data, not decisive but directional<br>• May need followed up with quantitative data after uncovering themes and hypotheses<br>• Best done in-person, can do by video conference – need to be able to see body language | • 3-5 months<br>• Committed to doing at least 3 groups<br>• $360 - $600+ (incentives of at least $20 per person are expected)<br>• For best practice, should be done in a proper facility that would likely incur its own fee<br>• Also encouraged to provide a snack or meal, which is usually an additional expense<br>• Groups last 90-120 minutes |

[2] "Beyond the Numbers: Incorporating Community Voice Through Qualitative Data," Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), July 9, 2014, https://www.cadca.org/resources/beyond-numbers-incorporating-community-voice-through-qualitative-data.

| Feedback | Purpose | What to Expect | Investment |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Listening Sessions** | • Share information and gather reactions<br>• Hear from the public, those who self-identify as interested rather than those recruited to participate | • Less control of who shows up, open to the public<br>• Working with large numbers of people but may only hear from a few depending on design<br>• Better if you have multiple staff to facilitate and take notes<br>• Generally, a panel will share information and the facilitator will ask for reactions or there will be a series of small group discussions followed by large group brainstorming | • 2-3 months<br>• Must identify multiple panelists/facilitators/note takers depending on design<br>• Need to plan early so that sessions can be announced well in advance |
| **Surveys** | • Quantify responses<br>• Be able to generalize results to a broader population<br>• Good tool for tracking over time and comparing if results stay consistent or are changing | • Working with larger sample sizes than IDIs and focus groups<br>• Expect 10%-25% response rate when respondents know you<br>• When surveying people who don’t know you, a 5% response rate is good<br>• Ask mostly closed-ended questions<br>• Limit free-response questions (open-ends) to 3 or 4 maximum<br>• Many methods: intercept, phone, mail, and online | • Timeline varies greatly depending on modality and approach to developing survey instrument<br>• Expect anywhere from 2-6+ months to launch a survey<br>• Aim for 100+ responses<br>• Relatively low cost, incentives are **optional** |

## Considerations for Surveys

### Timelines

The amount of time it takes to field a survey varies greatly depending on modality and the amount of prep work needed to launch the survey. Some general guidelines:

- **Mail surveys take longer than online surveys.** For mail surveys, you need to allow time for the mail to get to the person, have them fill out the survey, wait for it to get back to you, and then have someone enter the data into an electronic format. With slowing postal service, fielding for mail surveys should be no shorter than 6 weeks. Online surveys when delivered by email can field in three weeks as people typically respond to the invitation to complete a survey within a week of receiving the email. However, a reminder email may be necessary to boost response rates and stretches the fielding timeline to 3 weeks. Online surveys with a paper invitation or general web posting (such as on a website or social media) need longer timelines.
- **Incentives increase the timeline.** Incentives need to be ordered 6-8 weeks in advance. If the incentive type and value are not decided on early in the planning process, it will delay ordering which can delay the launch of a survey. Incentives need to be sent quickly to respondents – either with the initial invitation or immediately after confirming survey completion.
- **Survey development work heavily affects the timeline.** Planning & Evaluation appreciates the opportunity to work with you to develop a survey tool or to recommend a survey tool to you. Fastest to slowest survey development: (1) required survey written by external entity that cannot be modified, (2) repeat survey or required survey with limited modifications allowed, (3) newly developed survey working with 1 or 2 internal collaborators, (4) survey developed in collaboration between Planning & Evaluation and a committee – this takes the most time because of scheduling.

### Additional Costs (Monetary and Staff Time)

Programs wanting to use a survey to gather consumer feedback need to be able to cover the following monetary and staffing costs.

**Table 2: Additional Surveying Costs**

| Monetary Costs | Staff Time Costs |
|---|---|
| • Postage – survey and any additional mailing (pre-notification letters and thank you letters/incentive mailing)<br>• Printing – survey plus envelopes and additional letters as needed<br>• Incentives<br>• Vendor fee for: phone interviewing, sampling if we don't have an internal list, foreign language administration/translation, etc. | • Staff time to participate in survey development<br>• Someone to put together physical mailings<br>• Someone to distribute and track incentives<br>• Someone to enter paper responses into the computer |