

Key Informant Interview Guide

Key informant interviews are in-depth interviews with people who have first-hand knowledge about the community. Generally conducted in person or by phone, they are a good information-gathering technique when you want to:

- ✓ Learn from community stakeholders with diverse backgrounds and opinions.
- ✓ Talk candidly about sensitive topics.
- ✓ Gather in-depth answers to complex questions.
- ✓ Initiate or strengthen relationships with important partners and other stakeholders.

Key informants can come from many different sectors. If you have started to map your community (see Community Mapping Guide) and identified some of the key players, you already have a list of prospective interviewees. These are generally the people best positioned to help you understand the community, and the challenges to aging in place.

Your first interviews should generally be with those likely to be closest to the program – typically, that will include representatives of the housing entity (such as managers, owners, and tenant leaders); health and social service organizations; and elected officials.

These are also the individuals with whom you will need to build strong and trusting relationships to make a NORC program work. Whether you are breaking the ice with people you do not know well, or building on existing relationships, seeking their input conveys the message that you respect their expertise.

If you already have regular meetings with some of these people, you might devote part of one or more of your meetings to a discussion about the community— in essence, a group interview with key informants. If you do not meet regularly, scheduling a series of one-on-one conversations might work best.

Some of the questions that you might want to ask:

- ✓ What is your organization's role in this community?
- ✓ How long have you been working here?
- ✓ What can you tell me about the community's history?
- ✓ What are some of its strengths and challenges?
- ✓ How do you interact with the older adults in the community?
- ✓ What do you know about them?
- ✓ How do you serve them?
- ✓ What do you think seniors are most concerned about?
- ✓ How do you think this community is likely to change over time?

Try to take notes during the conversations, if possible. If not, summarize the discussions immediately afterward so that you do not forget what was said.