

Specifications for the Key Informant Interview

Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Campaign, 2014

Background:

Let's remember why we are doing key informant interviews and what they are supposed to accomplish. The earlier thinking during the retail campaign was that all counties should ask the same questions so that we could have some statewide comparable data. However, during the past year the thinking on this has shifted, and it was deemed more important to have Local Lead Agencies collect data that are important to their specific retail objective and therefore to make the data collection instrument relevant to them. As a result, TCEC conducted some research and chose a number of questions that were used in data collection efforts elsewhere in the country from instruments that were extensively tested. We put them together in an interview guide that you could use as is, but it has questions on a number of suggested policies, and you may or may not want to ask your policymakers about all of these policies. You can use the instrument provided as a template and eliminate those questions that do not apply to your county, and you can add additional questions or follow-up questions as you choose. We have tested this instrument on several policymakers and they found the questions easy to respond to. It took about 20 minutes to complete the interview.

A few words about collecting qualitative data: Chances are that you (project directors and evaluators) will be collecting these data yourself rather than training others, so this part of the training is geared more towards you as data collectors rather than you as trainers of data collectors. Most of you have probably done key informant interviews before and therefore may be familiar with the basic rules of KII's, which is that they are supposed to be conducted like a conversation in which your conversation partner does most of the talking. There is nothing wrong with also collecting some quantitative data, as in yes/no questions (and we have those on the KII guide as well), but the main purpose is to get the informant talking through prompts and probing. It is important to remain unbiased and respectful and give the person that is being interviewed the floor.

Primarily, the informants for this interview should be policymakers, but some of you may want to include store owners and/or community leaders in the mix. Your packet has some supplemental questions for other types of KII's that you may want to consider.

Before the Interview

Send a letter through the mail with pertinent information about the retail campaign and the upcoming interview. Say that you will contact them via e-mail or by phone to set up an appointment. This is a helpful etiquette tip, and it also increases response rates.

Once the appointment is set up, fill in the interviewee's information into the interview guide (name of the person, their title, their role). You should not be asking for this information during the interview, instead you should be asking them to confirm the information you have.

During the interview, it's a good idea to record the conversation (with the informant's permission) so you have back up for your note-taking. Rather than transcribing the entire interview (which can be quite time-consuming), use the recording to capture key statements you may have missed or to get a quote just right. Always take thorough notes, even if recording, in case of technical difficulties. Write notes directly on the interview guide (and additional paper, if needed) or type them directly into the form on a computer.

Be sure to call the person on time (not too early, not too late).

During the Interview

Once you have the person on the phone, introduce yourself and then read the statement at the top of the interview guide. Read the exact words, but read them in an animated voice so that you are not "boring" the interviewee.

Although questions 2-4 have a survey format, encourage the interviewee to add comments if they want. Read the question exactly as phrased and take down both their survey answer (yes, no, etc.) and any comments.

While respondents are making comments, you may need to ask follow-up questions for clarification. If they ask you questions, answer as best as you can. If you do not have an answer, say that you are not sure but will be glad to research it for them (make sure to follow through if you promise to send information).

Note that some of the questions require recording yes/no/don't know answers as well as comments.



Retail Campaign Key informant Interview
with Policymakers and Community Leaders

Introduction: Hi, my name is _____ and I am (calling) from _____ to ask if you would participate in an interview being conducted on behalf of the California Department of Public Health.

You should have received a letter (e-mail) in the past week or so from the _____ (name of County Health Department) giving you some information about this interview. The letter said we would be calling (visiting) you; do you recall receiving it? (OR: We made an appointment to talk with you today. Is this still a good time for an interview?)

The interview should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. All your responses will be kept confidential. That is, your answers will be compiled with others so that no one will be able to identify your individual responses.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can skip any question you do not want to answer, and you can stop the survey at any time.

Let me briefly explain the purpose of the interview:

Because of Americans' poor health as well as rising health care costs, many US communities are enacting policies that benefit good health and discourage unhealthy behavior. The California Department of Public Health has just begun a campaign called "Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community." Local health departments and community organizations will develop policies that give consumers healthier options in many stores. Since you are a policymaker (or community leader), we would like to talk with you about your support or opposition to some suggested retail incentives and regulations. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

[Important note: if you are recording the interview, state: "If you don't mind I will be recording this interview for the sole purpose of transcribing it afterwards for our records."]

- 1. First, please confirm the information I have about you as a legislator (and/or community leader). Are you.....**

Name: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

Read the question and have the respondent confirm their name, title, and role that you determined prior to the interview.



- 2. In terms of California’s retail environment, such as corner markets, grocery stores, gas stations, mini markets, liquor stores, do you think that there is a connection between the health crises we are seeing (such as diabetes, obesity, lung cancer) and food, beverage, alcohol, and tobacco products that are being sold in stores?**

Yes

No

Maybe

Don’t Know

Refused

Please explain

This is a general question to see if the respondent is aware of the connection between the health crisis and the retail environment. Some respondents may be very well aware, while for others this may be a relatively new idea. Circle the response and ask if there are any further comments. If the respondent talks about specific policies that will be addressed later, say “I will be asking you about this specifically later” and steer the conversation back to the interview.

- 3. Do you think government should play a role in making the retail environment healthier, for instance through the regulation of the way in which tobacco, alcohol, food and beverage products are marketed, promoted, and sold?**

Yes

No

Maybe

Don’t Know

Refused

Please explain

This is also a general question, leading into the regulation of the retail environment. Again, take down the response and proceed as with question 1.



Now proceed to ask about specific policies by reading the instructions to # 4 and then reading each of the policy suggestions. Encourage the respondents to comment on their answers.

[This is also the place where you may decide to leave out certain questions or add additional follow-up questions to any of the listed ones].

4. I will give you a list of objectives from the “Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community” campaign, mainly regarding tobacco, but also including alcohol and nutrition. Please tell me if you are in favor or against such regulation and why or why not.

<i>Proposed strategy/legislation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Why yes or no (or other comment)</i>
a. Do you support incentives in the form of financial aid, tax credits, technical assistance (e.g. business planning) or other tangible goods and services in exchange for adopting meaningful and sustainable health-promoting practices such as reducing the number of tobacco and alcohol products and increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables sold in stores?			
b. Do you support requiring stores to purchase a local license if they want to sell tobacco so that the fees can be used for tobacco law enforcement?			
c. California's "Lee law" currently limits the amount of signage that alcohol retailers can display on their windows to no more than 33% of the storefront. Are you in favor of reducing storefront signage even further?			



<i>Proposed strategy/legislation</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Why yes or no (or other comment)</i>
d. Do you want to see regulations that limit the number of tobacco retailers in a community?			
e. Do you support regulating the type and package size of tobacco products that can be sold (for instance, restricting flavored tobacco because it is attractive to young people or selling single cigarettes because youth can more easily afford them)?			
f. Would you like to see a law against selling tobacco near schools (or limiting stores located near schools from obtaining licenses)?			
g. Would you support having a “Healthy Store” certification or a health rating system for stores that sell alcohol, tobacco, and food?			
h. Do you think we should prevent tobacco companies from handing out free tobacco samples?			
i. Should we have laws that put minimum prices on tobacco products and prohibit price promotions?			



5. In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers to regulating tobacco, alcohol, food and beverage sales and/or advertising?

When the respondent answers this question, probe several times to solicit additional barriers.

6. Do you have any recommendations about how the community, especially retailers, can get more involved in supporting and promoting healthier living for Californians?

When the respondent answers this question, probe several times to solicit additional recommendations.

Demographics

7. How would you describe your political leaning, for instance, do you see yourself as being very conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or very liberal?

- a. Very conservative
- b. Conservative
- c. Moderate
- d. Liberal
- e. Very Liberal
- f. Don't Know
- g. Refused

If you feel that this question is inappropriate, leave it out. However, policy makers are often quite public about their political leanings.

8. Mark	9. What is your age?	10. Do you use any tobacco products?
a. Male	a. 18 to 25	a. Yes
b. Female	c. 26 to 45	b. No
	d. 46 to 65	c. Decline to answer
	e. Over 65	

Do not ask if the person is male or female, just mark it.

Read the age ranges and mark the correct answer.

Read the question and mark the correct answer.

Thank you for your time.

End the interview by thanking the respondent for their time and ask them if they have any questions.