



Prepared for the National Endowment for the Arts

Our Town Study - Task 4

Round 1 Interview Protocol

Draft text for initial email to interviewees:

Dear [NAME],

As part of the Our Town Indicators Study for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), WolfBrown is conducting interviews with a subset of Our Town project partners. As a project partner, you are being invited to participate in an interview with a WolfBrown staff member.

The purpose of the Our Town Indicators Study is to learn from grantees' efforts and to understand how Our Town projects affect the quality of life, creative activity, perceived sense of place, and economic development in their communities. We hope that the knowledge gained through this study will offer significant benefits to all who seek to demonstrate how their communities are strengthened through the arts. Specifically, the purpose of the interviews is to collect information about the resources and partnerships that Our Town projects relied upon, the types and range of activities that projects encompassed, the immediate outputs of these activities (e.g., arts events, cultural asset maps), and short-term outcomes that provide evidence of progress toward improving the livability of communities (e.g., new job creation, local government approval of a long-term plan to integrate design into neighborhood planning).

The interview will last approximately 45 minutes and will not exceed 60 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You will not be compensated for participating. You may excuse yourself from the

interview at any time during the session and may decline to answer any questions. The phone interview will be recorded to ensure thorough data collection. However, the recorder may be turned off at any time during the discussion at your request. The WolfBrown interviewer will only use the recording as a check on her on notes taken during the interview. The audio file will be kept secure and destroyed no later than September 2014, the due date of the study report to NEA.

WolfBrown will prepare a report for the NEA summarizing findings from interviews conducted with Our Town partners from [START DATE] to December 2012. With your permission, we would like to be able to report your affiliation, job title and name. This information will be used to contextualize the data we collect and to triangulate data collected from different types of project partners.

If you are willing to participate, please respond to this email with your availability for an approximately 45 minute interview on the following dates (include your time zone): [LIST OF DATES] If you would rather not participate, please respond to this email with your declination.

Scheduling an interview indicates your agreement to participate in the interview. You authorize WolfBrown to use the interview information to provide feedback to NEA staff for the purpose of developing indicators and improving the Our Town application and reporting requirements. NEA staff may incorporate information from the summary report into documents they make available to other federal agencies, grantees, and others interested in NEA programs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Novak-Leonard

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NEA Project Director: Steve Shewfelt, Office of Research and Analysis,
National Endowment for the Arts, 202.682.5563, shewfelts@arts.gov



Round 1 interview questions:

Below is WolfBrown's proposal for Our Town - Task 4, Round 1 semi-structured interview protocol. At the start of each interview, the interviewee will be reminded of a) the voluntary nature of their participation, b) the interview being recorded, and c) the nature of how their responses will be used. Each interview will evolve differently and we plan to cover questions 1-8 in each interview, but do not intend to read this as a script, but rather use the questions to facilitate a conversation with each interviewee.

Data that will be documented for each interview:

- Interviewee Name
- Interviewee's Title & Organization
- Interviewee's Contact Information (email address and phone number)
- Date/Time of interview
- Interviewer Name

1. How are (you/your office) (involved in/supporting) the project and how did you initially become involved/supportive?
2. What has been done so far to implement the project? What is left to do?
3. Who have been the main contributors to the project's progress thus far?
4. How, if at all, has the project implementation to date differed from your expectations?
5. From your perspective, what are the key outcomes for this project - within the NEA grant timeline? In its entirety?



6. What data should the NEA be collecting or what questions should the NEA be asking to help to tell the story of what your project achieves (both over the short term and the long term)? Would these data / questions work for other projects?

7. What are some of the short-term outcomes you expect to see if the (key/long-term) outcomes are to be achieved? What evidence have you seen (or are you looking for) to demonstrate (achievement of/progress towards) those short-term outcomes?

8. To date, what do you see as the biggest challenges to realizing those outcomes?

Additional questions, if time permits:

- Do you have any observations about the nature and extent of [participating groups' (e.g. public, students, etc as described in project narrative)] (participation/level of engagement) in the project so far?

- Do you have any lessons to share at this point in the project?

- Are you accustomed to this sort of collaboration, or does this project take you into new territory?

