

Bridging Human and Health Services Across Climate Justice

Individual Community Stakeholder Interview Protocol

The climate justice exploratory meetings include semi-structured interviews with community stakeholders to identify community strengths, gaps (in capacity, knowledge, partnerships), and opportunities for improved resource coordination in climate resilience and adaptation. This is a collaborative approach between health and human services and highlights a new avenue in inter-agency collaboration between the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), both within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Purpose and use of information: The information collected will help inform an adaptation plan with ACF and ensure that Federal resources are accessible and responsive to identified community needs as related to environmental justice and the impacts of climate change on local communities.

Privacy: The information provided will be combined with that of other respondents and discussed internally among the contract team and with Federal staff within ACF. Descriptive information about programs may be included in summaries, but no individuals' identifying information will be provided publicly to the extent permitted by law.

Voluntary Participation: Providing information for the purposes described is voluntary.

Estimated time: Each focus group is expected to take one hour (60 minutes). These interviews will be conducted virtually on a platform such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

- Total interviews: 25
- Total public participants: 25
- Total interview time: 25 hours (1 hour per interview)

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Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour (60 minutes) per respondent with 25 individual respondents. This time allowance includes time for reviewing objectives, gathering information, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Individual Community Stakeholder Interview Discussion Guide

ACF will conduct interviews with several key community representatives in order to:

- Determine current environmental justice and climate change-related issues their community is facing;
- Determine what tools and resources their community is currently utilizing to address those issues;
- Identify gaps in partnerships and resources that their community is lacking that would help to aid in addressing those issues;
- Establish connections between community representatives and HHS-ACF; and

- Gauge the interest and willingness of representatives to participate in a larger-scale community-based meeting(s) centered around the topics of environmental justice and climate change.

Participant Characteristics: ACF will recruit participants for the individual stakeholder interviews through input and feedback from ACF program offices, ACF regional offices, and partners. Participants will be identified based on their roles in communities that are identified as high areas of impact from climate change or increased levels of environmental injustice impacting populations served by ACF programs.

Outreach Process: ACF will individually email each potential participant with introductory information about the purpose of gathering information and request their participation in a one-hour virtual interview conducted via Zoom or MS Teams. If the representative confirms their willingness to participate, ACF will schedule, coordinate, and conduct individual interviews with each participant, with logistical and communication support from its contractor, MDB Inc.

Introductions: *[Interviewer introduces self, reviews background and objective of this interview and overall Initiative, and asks for the participant's brief personal background]* (~10 minutes)

- Thank you for meeting with us today. My name is _____ and my company has been contracted by the Administration for Children and Families (referred to today as ACF) to conduct this interview. On the call today we also have _____ (introduction of ACF and other MDB staff on the call).
- ACF has asked us to conduct these interviews with important community representatives, like yourself, whose voice we want to ensure is heard in this effort to bridge health and human services across environmental justice and climate change challenges. ACF seeks to engage individuals and organizations to identify community strengths, gaps (in capacity, knowledge, partnerships), and opportunities for improved resource coordination in climate resilience and adaptation, as well as environmental justice. The hope is also to improve cross-sector connections to facilitate the transfer of valuable knowledge and ideas related to those topics.
- Before we begin, I want to preface a few things:
 - Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to stop at any time. If I ask any questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to respond.
 - There are no wrong answers here; we just want to know what you think.
 - If it's okay with you, I'd like to record our conversation. The recordings will only be used to confirm our notes and allow us to revisit this conversation. Additional project staff may hear the tapes at a later date. However, your name and personal information will be removed from any quotes and will not be used in any of our reports. The file will not be shared with anyone else besides those of us working closely on this information collection and will be deleted at the conclusion of the project.

- This conversation is entirely focused on environmental justice and climate change concerns, resources, or gaps in addressing these issues in your community and your experiences and knowledge as a [service provider/coordinator/member] within your community.
 - There are no wrong answers, we are here today to hear your view of these issues.
 - May I start recording now?
 - We will have about 50 minutes for the rest of our discussion.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?
 - To kick things off, can you give me some background about yourself and your role in your community?
 - Tell me about the type of work you are involved in in your community?
 - Great, thank you for sharing. Now I will begin to talk about environmental justice and climate change concerns in your community a bit more and ask you some questions.
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Interview Question Bank (~20-30 min)

The following set of comments and questions represents the universe of questions from which the interviewer will draw based on the interviewee's background.

1. Please share with us a little about yourself and the community you represent.
2. What are the key environmental concerns in your community?
 - *Probe: Such as pollution from industrial sites or facilities, lead exposure in homes or other buildings, exhaust from proximity to transportation routes or infrastructure, etc.*
 - *How are they impacting your organization and the most vulnerable members of your community?*
3. What are the most serious climate-related concerns your community is facing?
 - *Probe: Such as rising temperatures and increased severe weather?*
 - *How are they impacting your organization and the most vulnerable members of your community?*
4. Does your organization perform community needs assessments?
 - *Probes: How often are they performed?*
 - *What types of tools or resources do you use?*
5. Do you know of any local, state, tribal, Federal, or other government human services programs that address the environmental or climate issues in your community that you mentioned earlier? If so, please describe how they are helping your community.

6. Do you think there are gaps in governmental programs at any level – local, state or Federal – or policies that could better address the environmental and climate change issues as related to the provision of human services in your community? If so, please describe the gaps.
7. [Question frame for ACF grantees/service providers] Are you aware of success stories or lessons learned which have been documented on how ACF, or another Federal department, agency, or program has successfully addressed concerns of communities related to environmental justice and issues brought on by climate change? If so, please describe the experience.
 - [Question frame for community stakeholders] Thinking about other communities, are you aware of success stories or lessons learned related to environmental justice where concerns of community residents were successfully addressed? If so, please describe.
8. What other government agencies do you think ACF should work with to better address the environmental and climate change concerns of communities that may be historically underserved?
9. What recommendations would you provide to ACF and other Federal agencies on how they can better address environmental and climate change concerns related to human services in historically underserved communities?
10. Are there additional key representatives you work with whose perspectives you recommend we hear?
 - *Probe: Are there service providers, partners, communities, or regions you work with that face unique climate or environmental justice challenges we should hear from?*
 - *If your work is regional in nature, could you define region?*
11. There are a growing number of tools and visualization products that are intended to help visualize environment and climate risks, community vulnerabilities, and hazards. Have you seen any of these tools?
 - *Probes: Have you used any?*
 - *If so, what were you looking for or using it for?*
 - *Did you feel that it reflected the reality of your community?*
12. If a community meeting were held in your area, would you be willing to participate with other individuals engaged and invested in environmental justice and climate change in the near future?

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME, AND FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE WITH US. WE'RE GRATEFUL YOU WERE ABLE TO JOIN US TODAY.