

Focus Group Guide

Rockville Senior Citizens Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis

Moderator Instructions: Please use the following guide to direct the discussion with each group. Most of the text provided in this guide (below the Welcome section) can be used as a script to guide your conversation with participants. In a few places, instructions have been placed in the guide to help the facilitator insert the appropriate word(s); all of these instructions appear in ALL CAPS. Instructions should not be read to the participants.

Many of the questions have sub-questions to assist you in knowing what types of things you could ask to probe further. As you facilitate the discussion, focus on the primary questions but allow yourself time to do some probing so that you can gain a better understanding of the participants' views.

Participants: There will be a focus group for each of the following categories:

- Rockville Community Leaders
- African American residents 60 years of age and older not utilizing Rockville Senior Center
- Other residents 60 years of age and older not utilizing Rockville Senior Center

Welcome and Ground Rules

Welcome everyone. Thank you very much for coming to this group discussion about services for Rockville residents age 60 and older. Your insight and opinions are very important to the City of Rockville Senior Services in planning and allocating resources to meet the current and future needs of this older adult population.

I'm Ariana Napier and I'll be facilitating the group discussion today. That means I have a set of questions and topics that I will use to guide our discussion today. Ted Dunmire will be helping me by taking notes and may ask some additional questions at the end of the discussion. We're both from RTI International, a non-profit research organization. Our organization is working with the City of Rockville Senior Services to conduct a needs assessment and gap analysis study of Rockville's senior services. In other words, we are:

- Developing a comprehensive inventory of existing services for residents age 60 and older,
- Identifying gaps in services, or services that are needed, but currently not available, and
- Reviewing local and national trends and best practices in senior services.

Community Leader Group Objectives

Our goal today is to have a discussion on your ideas and opinions on services and programs in Rockville.

During this time, we will discuss topics such as:

- Special needs of Rockville residents age 60 and older, including needs that are being met as well as those that are currently unmet.
- Gaps in services and programs, or services that are needed, but currently not available.
- Implications of the unmet needs on residents age 60 and older and the City of Rockville.
- Duplication of services and programs within the community.
- Improvements needed in services and programs, both citywide and Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center.

The information we learn from the focus groups will help the City better understand the interest and needs of residents age 60 and older. By participating today, you are helping Rockville advance the discussion and planning of these topics. Your honest and open input is important. This group discussion will last one hour.

Senior Group Objectives

Our goal today is to get your ideas and opinions on services and programs in Rockville for adults age 60 and older. We are not asking anyone to sign up for programs and services.

During this time, we will discuss topics such as:

- Participation in existing services and programs offered through the City of Rockville and experience with other organizations providing services.
- Services and programs that might be needed, but currently not available.
- Issues that encourage or discourage you from participating in programs and services.
- Thoughts and opinions on Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center.
- Improvements needed in services and programs in Rockville.

The information we learn from the focus groups will help the City of Rockville better understand the interest and needs of people not currently utilizing services. By participating today, you are helping to identify issues important to you. Your honest and open input is important to us. This group discussion will last an hour and a half.

At the conclusion of our discussion we will ask you to complete a short confidential questionnaire.

Here are some ground rules that will help us work together:

First of all, I want everyone to know that there are no right or wrong answers. We want to know your honest ideas and opinions. Some of you may disagree with each other—and that is OK with us. We are here to learn from you, and we want to hear from everyone and learn what each of you thinks about the issues we will be discussing.

Second, if you do not understand a question that I ask, please let me know. I'll try to rephrase it or explain what we are trying to get at with the question.

You have probably noticed the audio recorder in the room. It is here because we are recording the group. We want to give you our full attention and be able to understand your ideas and opinions without being distracted by too much note taking. We will refer to the recordings when writing our report. When we write our report, we will report on what was said, but not on who said it.

Because we are recording, it is important that you try to speak one at a time. I may occasionally interrupt you when two or more people are talking at once in order to be sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that responses are accurately recorded. Sometimes I may need to move the discussion along to make sure we cover everything, and I may ask those people who have contributed a lot to the discussion to give others a chance to speak.

Should you need to step out of the room during the discussion, please feel free to, but we'd appreciate it if only one person would be out at any one time.

Privacy Statement

Your participation today is voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the questions asked, I want you to know that you don't have to answer the question and if you wish, you can simply refuse to participate further. As I mentioned, we will write a summary report of the findings from all the groups and interviews we conduct. Your names will not be used in any way in the report.

SENIOR GROUPS ONLY: Because this group discussion is part of research and some of the information may be private, I ask that you respect each other's privacy and not repeat what you hear today.

Are there any questions before we begin?

First, let's start by telling everyone our **first names and if you will, how long you've lived in Rockville.** [START BY SAYING YOUR FIRST NAME, THEN GO AROUND THE TABLE.]

Introduction

To give you a little background, the City of Rockville has asked us to assist with developing a comprehensive inventory of services for residents 60 years of age and older, to identify gaps in service needed but currently not available, and a review of local and national trends and best practices in senior services. This study will generate information about the lived experiences of this Rockville population and serve as a roadmap for Rockville Senior Services to meet the current and future needs of this changing population.

So, let's get started.

Rockville Residents Age 60+

Utilization of Services

- Are you aware of the programs/services available for adults age 60 and older offered through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center?
- Do you currently or have you ever participated in programs/services designed specifically for adults age 60 and older?

IF YES:

- What kinds of programs/services for adults age 60 and older have you participated in?
- Are these programs/services offered through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center?
- (MODERATOR: if participants use/attend programs/services somewhere besides Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center ask what programs/services they utilize and by what organizations.)

IF NO:

- Why not? Is there anything that prevents you from participating in programs/services for adults age 60 and older?
 - Are you interested in participating in programs/services? Why or why not?
 - What types of programs/services would you be interested in participating?
- Do your friends age 60 and older participate in programs/services?
 - IF NOT, why not?
 - IF YES, where do your friends participate in programs/services, are they through Rockville Senior Services/Senior Center or some other organization?
 - What types of programs/services do your friends participate in or would your friends be interested in participating?
 - Have you ever considered participating in programs/services offered through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center?
 - IF NOT, why not?

- [IF CONSIDERED BUT HAS NOT PARTICIPATED] Why haven't you participated in programs/services offered through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center?
- Is/Would transportation be an issue for you to participate in programs/services?
- Would you use programs/services through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center if offered at a community center such as:
 - Thomas Farm Community Center
 - Twin Brook Community Center
 - Lincoln Park Community Center
 - Rockville Swim Center
 - Some other location or neighborhood?

Awareness of the Programs/Services

- Do you feel knowledgeable about the programs/ services offered in Rockville? And how about the programs/ services offered by Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center? And county-wide?
- How easy or difficult do you find it to navigate all the programs/services offered in Rockville?
- Where do you get information about programs/services designed specifically for adults age 60 and older?
- What are the best ways to inform you about programs/services? (Newspapers (which ones), community events and bulletin boards, information on the City of Rockville website, Newsletters (email or hardcopy), something else?)

Gaps in Available Services

- Are there needs that are not being met for seniors in your community? IF SO, what are they?
- Are there programs/services that you or others would like to participate in that as far as you know are not currently available?
 - Which programs/services are those?

- How does not having these program/service affect you? What do you do to compensate for not having this program/service available?

Potential Barriers to Participation

(MODERATOR – FOLLOW UP ON ANY PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION)

- What have you heard about the programs/services offered through Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center?
- What is your impression of these programs/services?
 - Is there anything about Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center that makes you not want to participate?
 - [IF CONCERNS WITH PARTICIPATING] What could the Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center do to address your concerns with participating?
- Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center would like to see more adults age 60 and older who are not currently participating in programs/services start participating in the programs/services they provide.

[FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN GROUP: They would especially like to see more African American men and women participating in programs/services because the community is not utilizing these services in high numbers.]

What could the Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center do to get people like you [IF IDENTIFIED CONCERNS: with similar concerns] interested in participating in programs?

- [FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN GROUP: Why aren't more African American men and women participating in these services?]
- [FOR OTHER SENIOR GROUP: Why aren't you and your friends participating in these services?]

Innovation and Trends and Best Practices

- You've mentioned programs/services offered through [ENTER NAME OF ORGANIZATIONS MENTIONED DURING DISCUSSION]. Are there any local organizations that you especially like or believe to be unique or particularly beneficial in the programs/services they're providing adults age 60 and older in Rockville?

- What makes this organization/agency innovative?
- What services provided by this organization/agency do you consider innovative?

- Are you aware of any other organizations or programs/services offered in other places in this state that you've heard are providing especially unique services that Rockville may benefit from? What about organizations or programs/services in other places?

Community Leaders

Awareness of the Programs/Services and Senior Needs

- Do you feel knowledgeable about all of the senior services and programs offered in Rockville? And how about county-wide?
- What are your constituents age 60 and older telling you about their needs for services/programs?
- Is there a lack of awareness among seniors of the available services/programs? If so, what do you think contributes to this lack of awareness?

Gaps and Duplication of Services

- Where do you see a need for services/programs for adults age 60 and older? What senior services are needed that you'd like to see become available, but are currently not available in Rockville?
 - Why aren't they available?
 - What are seniors doing to compensate for not having this/these program/service available?
 - What do you think are the resulting implications for seniors of not having this/these program/service available? What are the implications for the City of Rockville?
- Do you think there is overlap or duplication of efforts and services for seniors in Rockville? If so, what's being duplicated?
 - Duplication between which organizations/agencies and services/programs?
 - Why does this duplication exist?

Potential Barriers to Participation

- Overall, what are some of the barriers to services seniors encounter in Rockville?

- How are these barriers being addressed?
- What barriers are not being addressed?
- Which populations of seniors in Rockville do you think are underserved (e.g., homebound, oldest seniors, ethnicity, language, geographic locations)? How are they underserved? Why do you believe they are underserved?

Evolution of Senior Services

- As the City's senior population increases, the demand for senior services will also increase. As a result, how do you think programs/services will need to evolve to meet the increasing demand? What do you see as the top priorities in planning for the future?
- What do you think Rockville Senior Services needs to do differently in terms of services/programs for adults age 60 and older? What needs to be improved?
 - Overall, what are your thoughts/impressions of the work and programs/services Rockville Senior Services/ Senior Center provides?

Innovation and Trends and Best Practices

- What are the most innovative organizations in Rockville providing services to seniors?
 - What makes this organization/agency innovative?
 - What services provided by this organization/agency do you consider innovative?
- What are some of the local trends and best practices in senior services in Rockville?
- Are you aware of any state or national trends or best practices in senior services that you believe Rockville may benefit from? What about other countries?

Conclusion

Those are all of the questions we had to discuss today. Is there anything we haven't covered that you think is important for us to know?

Does anyone have any questions they would like to ask about any aspect of this research?

FOR SENIOR GROUPS

Please take a minute to complete the short questionnaire about you and your household. Your responses are confidential, so please do not include your name on the questionnaire.

That concludes our focus group. Thank you very much for your participation.