



# **People of Color with Lived Experience: Focus Group Organizing Guidelines**

**Written By**

**Nicholas French**

**Bill Emerson National Hunger**

**Fellow**



# Part 1: Introduction and Racial Equity



# Introduction:

Feeding South Dakota's vision is "a state where no one person's health, wellbeing, or potential is hindered by the availability of nutritious food". Feeding South Dakota is the leading food bank in the entire state of South Dakota, meaning that it serves thousands of people each month. For many families, food programs such as these are shields from extreme food insecurity; however, many of South Dakota's most vulnerable people are consistently underserved.

In this state and around the country, People of Color face massive barriers to food security that are reinforced by a national history of racist policies and structural barriers. Most food deserts in Sioux Falls are concentrated in communities with larger amounts of people of color. Even worse, according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap, South Dakota's hunger is most concentrated in counties containing Native American reservations.

To fully realize Feeding South Dakota's vision, the organization must take active steps toward racial equity. For any program to be its most effective, it must be informed by the direct experiences and expertise of the people it is meant to serve. A great way to learn and evaluate the quality of an idea is to conduct a focus group. This document will be your guide.

# What is a Focus Group?:

- A focus group is a conversation of 5 (minimum) to 12 (maximum) people with a trained facilitator designed to understand the experiences of a specific group of people with a shared identity or experience.
- A focus group is typically 45 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes long. Any shorter will not provide enough information and any longer may exhaust participants.
- A focus group is a form of community engagement and research.
- A focus group is never a debate, but a constructive discussion in which participants share their experiences about a specific subject or program, as well as feedback for how they can be improved.



# Why Are Focus Groups Important:

- Focus groups enable an organization to better understand the community's needs directly from those with the most expertise and knowledge about the situation: people with lived experience.
- This is a more effective way to create new solutions and assess what works and what doesn't. There may be a program that is ineffective or causes unforeseen difficulties for the people you are trying to serve.
- Focus groups recognize the power that already exists within the community and gives participants the opportunity to contribute to positive change.
- Great way to learn about a specific community's needs such as a specific racial identity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, etc.



# What people do you need to conduct a Focus Group?

Role	Purpose
<p><b>Community Members/ Focus Group Participants</b></p>	<p>The community members are the most essential aspect of any focus group. Be sure to recruit at least 5 people who share an identity or an experience for the data to be the most effective. It is also best to recruit participants who do not already know each other to ensure that people are honest and feel comfortable to speak.</p>
<p><b>Trained Facilitator</b></p>	<p>The facilitator leads the focus group and ensures that the meeting moves according to the schedule. It is important that the facilitator is experienced with leading group conversations and handling high-emotion conversations with care. Facilitators must understand dialogue facilitation and common moderation methods. Facilitators must be knowledgeable about the history of BIPOC in the United States and know how to manage power dynamics between different identities. They should be able to ensure that all parties feel seen and heard while uplifting the most marginalized voices in the room.</p>
<p><b>Note Taker</b></p>	<p>The note taker will write down what the participants say and summarize main themes. The note taker does not replace a recording device.</p>

# Focus Groups and Racial Equity

- Focus groups are essential for understanding the needs and ideas of People of Color in the Sioux Falls and South Dakota community. For any social service program to be truly effective, it must incorporate the expertise of the most marginalized people.
- In the outreach materials, you must indicate that these groups are explicitly aimed for people of color to participate. If you do not specify this, the groups will often be majority white and many of the people of color may not feel they have a safe space to share their experiences candidly.
- If your outreach does result in having a mix of people of color and white participants, be sure to specify the percentage of participants of color who participated in the group within your report.



# Part 2: Creating a Focus Group





## Preparation:

Before you create your focus group, there are some questions you need to ask yourself. These will help clarify the purpose of your focus group, as well as what you want to create from it.

Who is the population you want to reach?  
(ex. People of Color, Native Communities, Reservations, Recent Immigrants, Black Residents).

What do you want to understand?  
(ex. Their experience with food insecurity, their thoughts on a specific program, language barriers, etc).

Where will the focus group be located? What time?  
More info on this later in the guide.

## Location:

- Your focus group should be conducted somewhere private where participants can feel comfortable.
- All participants should be gathered around the same table. Participants should be able to easily see, hear, and speak with other participants.
- The table should be small enough where you can easily pass around a recording device
- Locations should be booked a month ahead of time.

Space	Notes
<p><b>Sioux Falls Downtown Library</b></p>	<p>Great location that is easily accessible for racially diverse communities in Sioux Falls. The Conference Room is the perfect size and location for conducting a focus group. Other rooms are also useful. You can reserve the room under Feeding South Dakota. Book the room for at least 2 hours with 30 minutes before the meeting for setup.</p>
<p><b>Feeding South Dakota Conference Room</b></p>	<p>The Feeding South Dakota Distribution center contains a conference room that could be used for a Focus Group. May be difficult for community members to reach the offices.</p>

## Registration and Outreach:

The first materials you need are for registration. Your participants will need an easy way to sign up for the focus group. You will create the materials below to ensure that potential registrants can sign up easily.

### Registration Google Form:

Create a google form using your google account. The google form is the purple application, not to be confused with google documents. Your google form should contain the following:

- Header containing the focus group's name, the date it will be conducted, and the time periods in which it will held.
- Opening paragraph listing the mission of the focus groups and the qualifications for who can participate. Explain how the information from the group will be used.
- Explain that all responses will be anonymous.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to opt in to being cited.
- Explain that there will be a 10 participant cap, and that if more than 10 people apply, the participants will be randomly selected from the pool of applicants.

# Registration and Outreach:

## Registration Google Form cont.:

- Include the registration deadline.
- Include the date in which the applicants will be notified of their acceptance or denial.
- Explain that People of Color will be given priority for participation to address racial inequality.

## Specific Questions to Include:

- “Please provide your name”
- “Please provide your phone number (if unavailable write N/A)”
- “Please provide your email address (if unavailable write N/A)”
- “Please list any dietary restrictions”
- “Please list your race and ethnicity”
- “Do you wish to register for the Focus Group on X date”
- “Which county do you live in?”
- “Do you opt in to being directly quoted in the final material?”

# Registration and Outreach:

Questions Responses Settings

## Feeding South Dakota: Focus Group for People of Color Experiencing Food Insecurity (Insert Date, Month, Year, and Time Span of Focus Group)

Feeding South Dakota is conducting a focus group to understand the experiences of people from racially diverse communities experiencing food insecurity in the state of South Dakota. If you are currently experiencing or have experienced food insecurity in the past, we invite you to participate in a brief discussion to share your thoughts. The feedback from this group will be used to create a report outlining how Feeding South Dakota can better serve people of color within Sioux Falls and the entire state of South Dakota. All responses and statements will be anonymous, and the information will only be used to inform Feeding South Dakota's future programming.

To register, please fill out this form. Participation will be capped at 10 people per focus group. We will be randomly selecting from registrants to participate in the group, meaning registration does not guarantee participation in a group. We will notify you over email and phone number with more information if you are selected. We will provide more information in the future regarding future opportunities for participation if you are not selected for this focus group. Priority will go to people of color, as this focus group is designed to better understand the experiences of South Dakotans from racially marginalized communities.

The deadline to register for the (Insert Date) Focus Group is (Insert Date) at 11:59PM. All selected participants will be notified (Insert Date).

Thank you for taking the time to share your expertise and join in the effort to end hunger in South Dakota!

Please provide your name \*

Short answer text

Please provide your phone number (if unavailable write N/A) \*

Short answer text

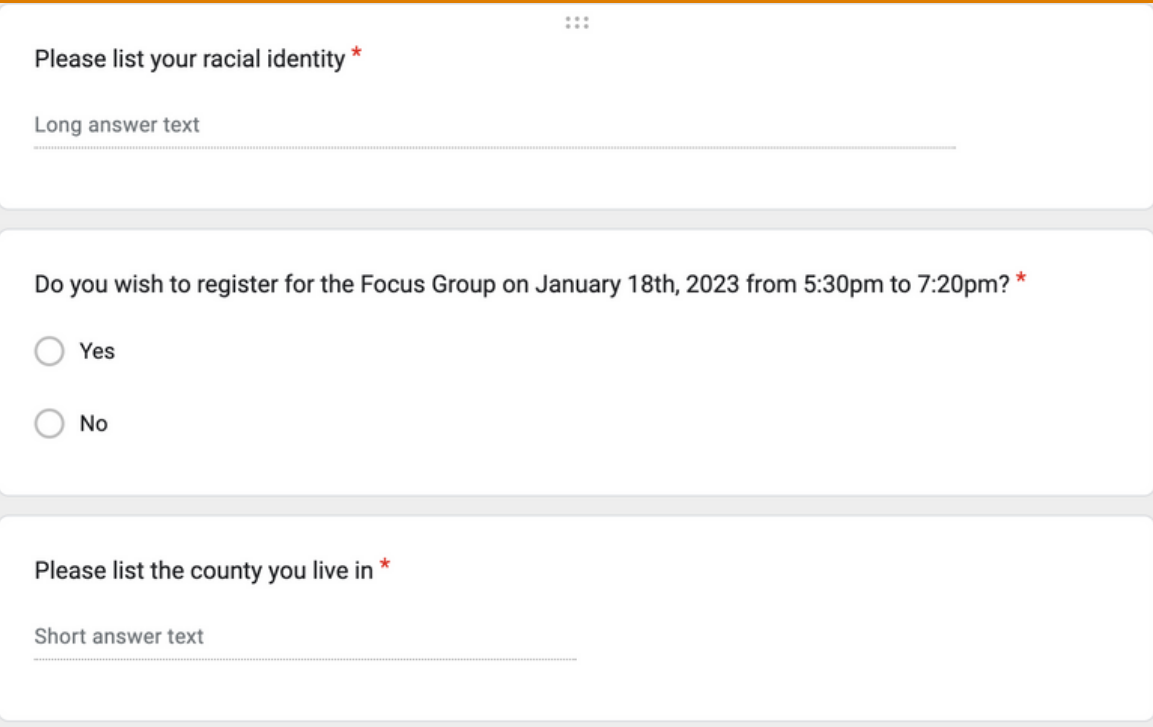
Please provide your email address (if unavailable write N/A)

Short answer text

Do you have any dietary restrictions? If so, please list them below \*

Long answer text

# Registration and Outreach:



Please list your racial identity \*

Long answer text

---

Do you wish to register for the Focus Group on January 18th, 2023 from 5:30pm to 7:20pm? \*

Yes

No

---

Please list the county you live in \*

Short answer text

## Registration Google Form cont.:

- If over 10 people sign up for the focus group, select the People of Color who signed up first. If fewer than 10 people of color signed up and there are still over 10 total applicants, use a name randomizer to select names from the applicants who are not People of Color.
- DO NOT disclose the location of the focus group in the sign up form. People who are not selected might still attempt to attend the meeting if you do.
- The registration deadline should be at least 4 days before the focus group. You should notify participants of their acceptance or denial no more than 2 days before the event.

# Registration and Outreach:

## Flyer:

**Your flyers will be the primary tool of spreading the word about your Focus Group. The flyer should be concise and easy to understand. It should also contain information about how to easily access the google form you have already created or reach you directly.**

- The flyer should show that Feeding South Dakota is hosting the focus group; It should also display the focus group's mission, the time it will be held, the date, and the registration deadline.
- Write that a meal will be provided.
- The flyer should contain directions on how to register. These steps can include:
  - A QR code to the google form.
  - A number through which applicants can reach you (see pg. 16)
  - An email address to contact you:  
info@feedingsouthdakota.org
- Mention that only 10 participants will be selected from the applicants.
- Include the date when applicants will be notified.
- DO NOT show where the focus group will be held. Participants who are not selected might attend the meeting if you do.
- An example flyer is featured on the next page.

# Seeking Focus Group Participants



\$100 in compensation, per participant, will be given in the form of gift cards.

**Who:** South Dakotans who identify as people of color who have experience with food insecurity/hunger.

**When:** January 18, 2024 from 5:30-7:20pm

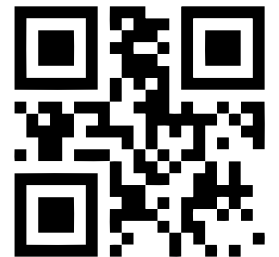
**What:** A meal will be provided to each participant. We are offering a second focus group opportunity to help us learn about food access, food programs, and cultural needs related to food. All responses and statements will be anonymous, and the information will only be used to inform Feeding South Dakota's future programming.

**Register:** By midnight on January 14. To register:

**Scan** the QR Code

**Call** 605-335-0364 ext. 123, or,

**Email** [info@feedingsouthdakota.org](mailto:info@feedingsouthdakota.org)



Ten participants will be randomly selected from registrants. Those selected will be notified via phone and email on January 16.



# Registration and Outreach:

## Phone number adjustment:

You should avoid giving out your personal number in any form of outreach. Instead, list your office number in any outreach materials. If you know you will be out of the office for long periods of time, you can redirect calls from your office phone to your personal phone using the steps below:

1. Press **Features** on your office phone. Use the up and down keys to highlight **Forward**. Press **Select**.
2. Use the up and down keys to highlight **Forward Unconditional**. Press **Select**.
  - a. **To Switch On and Off:** Highlight **Fwd Unconditional**. Press **On** or **Off**. If no destination is currently set, the display jumps to the destination field.
  - b. **To Select Which Calls:** Highlight **Call Type**. Press **Change** and when the required option is displayed press **Save**. Options are **External Only**, **External and Group**, **Non Group Calls**, and **All Calls**.
  - c. **To Set the Destination:** Highlight **Destination**. Press **Edit** and enter the number required or press **To VM** to forward to voicemail.

## Registration and Outreach:

### Organizations and Methods of Outreach :

There are a plethora of organizations in Sioux Falls who primarily serve people of color and the most marginalized people in the Sioux Falls community. They will be incredible helpers in spreading the word about the focus group. Before asking these organizations for assistance, however, be sure to learn about them and their purposes. Attend their meetings and speak with who they serve. You should establish a mutually beneficial relationship of respect. Some great organizations to reach out to include:

Organization	Description and Contact Information
The Department of Social Services	Human Services Organization/ (605) 367-5444, 811 E 10th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
The Department of Labor	Human Services Organization, (605) 367-5300, 811 E 10th St #41, Sioux Falls, SD 57103

## Registration and Outreach:

Organization	Description and Contact Information
The Urban Indian Health Organization	Native American Services Organization/ (605) 339-0420,1200 N West Ave Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Sioux Falls NAACP	Association dedicated to the advancement of Black people and civil rights for all People of Color/ 605-610 8876, PO Box 2611, Sioux Falls, SD, United States, South Dakota
The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Hispanic and Latino service organization/ selene@sd-hcc.org, 120 S. Indiana Ave, Sioux Falls, SD, United States, South Dakota
The African Community Empowerment Center	African Service Organization/ Edwin Tarplah at (605) 400-0353
The Siouxfalls Downtown Library	Library/ (605) 367-8700, 200 N Dakota Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
The Sioux Falls Multicultural Center	Multicultural Services Organization, (605) 367-7401, 300 E 6th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57103

## Registration and Outreach:

Organization	Description and Contact Information
The Siouxland Health and Human Services	Health Services Organization/ (605) 367-4217, Siouxland Health & Human Services Building 2nd Floor 521 N. Main Ave. Suite 201 Sioux Falls, SD 57104
THRIVE	Resource for families with children facing food insecurity/ (605) 274-2780, 2104 S. Summit Avenue, #237 Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Lutheran Social Services	Social Services Organization, 1-800-568-2401, 705 East 41st Street, Suite 200 Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Swamp Daddy's	Restaurant and gathering space for Sioux Falls Black community/ (605) 370-0711, 421 N Phillips Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Union's Gospel Mission	Christian Shelter and Meal Services/ (605) 334-6732, 701 E 8th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57103

## Registration and Outreach:

Organization	Description and Contact Information
Nikki's La Mexicana Grocery Store	Latinx and Hispanic product grocery store/ (605) 335-4130, 905 E 8th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Mi Pueblo Mexican Market	Latinx and Hispanic product grocery store/ (605) 271-1046, 2310 W 41st St, Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Sheger Addis Ethiopian Grocery Store	Ethiopian Grocery Store/ (605) 937-3763, 329-399 SD-115, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
East African Grocery Store	East African Grocery Store/ (605) 339-8510, 318 N Cliff Ave, Sioux Falls, SD 57103
African Market	Market serving the African population of Sioux Falls/ (605) 251-4722, 318 W 18th St Suite A, Sioux Falls, SD 57104

## Registration and Outreach:

Organization	Description and Contact Information
Biftu Restaurant and Grocery Store	East African Restaurant and Grocery Store/ (605) 271-2623, 301 S Garfield Ave Unit 4, Sioux Falls, SD 57104
The Hub	Networking and Skill-Building Organization for People of Color who are business owners/ 5013 South Louise Avenue unit 698, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57108, United States
Startup Sioux Falls	Organizations where businesses and nonprofits gather/ (605) 275-8000, 100 E 6th St, Sioux Falls, SD 57104

**These are only a handful of the many organizations that exist in Sioux Falls. Do your best to physically go to these locations and speak with the leadership as well as the people who work there. This is essential for building rapport and learning more about Sioux Falls and the experiences of People of Color in South Dakota.**

# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

You will need to communicate frequently with the people who sign up for your focus group. The images below are examples of the forms and communication materials you will need to ensure that all parties are properly informed.

## Acceptance Emails:

- After you have selected the participants, you will need to send acceptance and denial emails to each person on the date you indicated in the google form.
- When accepting an applicant, thank them for their interest and include the date, time, location, and information about a Zoom option in case the weather is difficult.
- If there is a Zoom option, include the link as well as a passcode in the email to ensure that no one enters the meeting without permission.
- Let them know how to contact you and what steps they should take if they realize they cannot attend the meeting.
- Call each accepted applicant and tell them all of the information above verbally. Many people may not frequently check their email.

# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

### Example Acceptance Email:

Subject: Feeding South Dakota Food Experience Focus Group

Greetings \_\_\_\_\_,

You have been selected to participate in Feeding South Dakota's Food Awareness Focus Group on X date. Thank you for your willingness to participate. As mentioned on the sign-up document, we would like to hear your experiences on food insecurity and navigating food assistance programs in Minnehaha County. You will be part of a racially diverse group with about nine other participants who have experienced food insecurity. Your responses to the questions will be kept anonymous. A \$100 gift card will be provided at the end of the focus group discussion. The date, time, and place are listed below. Please look for signs once you arrive directing you to the room where the focus group will be held.

Date: X/XX/XXXX

Time: X time – X time

Place: X Location (Include address and directions if necessary)

Due to local weather conditions, there will also be an option to join virtually over Zoom. Please use the link below to enter the Zoom meeting at X time on X date if you would like to use this option.

Zoom Link: Include Zoom Link

Passcode: Include Passcode to Zoom

If you will be attending virtually, you can receive your compensation from \_\_\_\_\_ at the Sioux Falls Downtown Library on X date from X time to X time and X date from X time to X time. Please email me to let me know which of these dates you will be picking up the compensation. Please ask the librarian where I am located if you have difficulty finding me.

If you need directions to the focus group or will not be able to attend for any reason, please call \_\_\_\_\_ at (Phone Number) or email [info@feedingsouthdakota.org](mailto:info@feedingsouthdakota.org). Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you and appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Feeding South Dakota



# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

### Denial Emails:

- You will also need to notify the people who could not be selected.
- Be sure to thank them for their interest and include information about Feeding South Dakota's other programming.

### Sample Denial Email:

Subject: Feeding South Dakota Food Experience Focus Group

Greetings \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for taking the time to register for Feeding South Dakota's Food Champion Focus Group on X date. Due to a large volume of participants and randomized selection, you were not selected for the upcoming focus group on this date. We will also be hosting our local mobile distributions, food

pantries, backpack programs, and other programs as usually scheduled. Please visit our website at <https://www.feedingsouthdakota.org/> to learn more about the services available to you. Thank you for your willingness to participate, and please be on the lookout for more information in the future regarding Feeding South Dakota's opportunities.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Feeding South Dakota

# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

### Reminder Email:

- Send a reminder email and phone call to each participant on the morning of the focus group.
- The information should be the same as the information on the acceptance email.

### Sample Reminder Email:

Subject: Reminder: Feeding South Dakota Food Experience Focus Group

Greetings \_\_\_\_\_,

This is a reminder that you have been selected to participate in Feeding South Dakota's Food Experience

Focus Group tonight on X date. Thank you for your willingness to participate. As mentioned on the sign-up document, we would like to hear your experiences on food insecurity and navigating food assistance programs in Minnehaha County. You will be part of a racially diverse group with about nine other participants who have experienced food insecurity. Your responses to the questions will be kept anonymous. A \$100 gift card will be provided at the end of the focus group discussion. The date, time, and place are listed below. Please look for signs once you arrive directing you to the room where the focus group will be held.

Date: X date

Time: X time – X time

Place: X location (include address and directions)

Virtual Option Zoom Link: Include Zoom link

Passcode: Include Zoom Passcode

If you need directions to the focus group or will not be able to attend for any reason, please call \_\_\_\_\_ at (Include Phone number) or email [info@feedingsouthdakota.org](mailto:info@feedingsouthdakota.org). Otherwise, we look forward to seeing you and appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Feeding South Dakota

# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

### Consent Forms:

- All participants must sign a consent form before they can participate in the group.
- A consent form protects Feeding South Dakota from any legal recourse and informs participants about how the information from the focus group will be used.
- Include information about the compensation and how it will be distributed.
- Request their consent to record the meeting and inform them that their responses will be kept anonymous unless they request otherwise.
- Ask them to print their first and last name.
- Ask them to sign their name.
- Ask for the date.
- Ask for their city of residence, state, and zip code.
- The consent forms should be distributed at beginning of the focus group and be paired with a letter containing each person's compensation.

# Communication and Consent

## Forms:

### Consent Form Example:



#### PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

This form provides my consent to participate in a focus group with up to nine additional individuals on X date. The focus group's purpose is to understand the needs and requests of people experiencing food insecurity in South Dakota.

I understand that the information provided by this focus group will be used to educate Feeding South Dakota on the varied experiences of south Dakota's communities, including racially and ethnically diverse communities, which will help inform future programs in an inclusive manner.

I will be compensated \$100 in the form of gift cards at the end of the study, for my participation. I understand that I can choose to stop participation at any time.

I consent to be audio recorded; however, I understand that information and responses obtained during the study will remain anonymous and Feeding South Dakota will not use my name in any reports or publications. To further protect the confidentiality of all participants, I agree not to share what other people talked about or who attended the group.

I understand that if I have any questions about this study, I may contact: Stacey Andernacht, Marketing and Communications Director, at [info@feedingsouthdakota.org](mailto:info@feedingsouthdakota.org) or 605-335-0364.

I have read and understand the information provided above and agree to participate in this study.

First and Last Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Compensation:

Participants must be compensated for their time and emotional labor. By conducting a focus group, you are seeking their expertise and experience. Guidelines for compensating community members with lived experience are listed below.

### Compensation Guidelines:

- Feeding America's standard for compensation is \$100 per participant.
- Compensation should be given in the form of gift cards that can be used anywhere. Community members need to be given the choice of how they will spend the money.
- Compensation should be given in an envelope that is paired with a consent form and directions about how to use the cards. This will prevent confusion on your part.



## Food:

**Your Focus Group will likely be held in the evening. This might conflict with participants' dinner schedules. Be sure to buy enough food to provide for everyone and follow the guidelines below.**

- Follow the dietary restrictions each participant listed in their google form.
- Sandwich meats and bread with condiments is a safe choice (be cognizant of pork restrictions).
- Platter/ Buffet style is a good idea.
- Include vegetables and fruit.
- Be aware of allergies.
- Buy plates and plastic bags for participants to take food home to their families.
- Buy utensils and serving utensils, as well as napkins.
- HyVee is a great company to cater from.
- Order food from caterer at least 2 days in advance.



# Microphone:

**You will need a recording device to capture the audio from the focus group.**

- The ZoomCorp recording device is perfect for recording a small group.
- Outsound Productions is a great local business to rent devices from (605-212-4603).
- Ask to receive a lesson on how to operate the Zoom audio recording device at least 2 days before the meeting to ensure there are no issues with the device.
- Be sure to by your own SD card or request to use an SD card from the company.
- After the focus group, insert the SD card into your computer and download the audio. Delete the data afterwards.
- Send invoice to supervisor after project is completed.
- Return Zoom recording device to Outsound Productions the day after the project is completed.



## Outline:

To conduct the focus group, you will need to create an outline that details how the focus group will be run. This will be your guide keeping time:

- Your outline should be a schedule, showing what you will be doing and how long each section of the Focus Group will be down to the minute.
- Give yourself at least 30 minutes before the focus group begins to prepare the room for the event.
- Include an introduction with an icebreaker to ensure that everyone feels comfortable.
- Write all of the questions you will ask. Give each question at least 5 minutes of time to be discussed.
- Include time for decompression after the focus group is complete.
- Follow the outline very closely, but be open to adjustment if necessary.





# Part 3: Conducting the Focus Group



## On Conducting a Focus Group

As the facilitator of a Focus Group, it is your duty to be a timekeeper, guide, and leader for the group. Be cognizant of everyone in the room and their various identities. Pay attention to who is speaking, who isn't, and what you can do to ensure that every participant is able to contribute and feel valued in the group.

Properly conducting a Focus Group requires practice, training, and patience. It is optimal to conduct a training for facilitator leaders before the Focus Group is conducted; however, if this is not possible, the rest of this guide can help you navigate serving as a group facilitator.



## The Opening 30 to 40 minutes:

The first minutes of your group will be some of the most important. Follow the steps below to establish the foundation for your group.

- Arrive at least 30 minutes before the group is scheduled to set up the sound equipment and food.
- Print out flyers with directions to your room and post them at the front of the library.
- When people arrive, ask everyone to get their food and be seated. Introduce yourself, your notetaker, and the mission of the focus group.
- Pass out consent forms to participants and allow them to read and sign.
- Do an icebreaker activity to ease any tension.
- Begin the recording (VERY IMPORTANT).



## Establishing Ground Rules:

Groundrules are an essential part of any focus group. These will be the agreements that every participant (including yourself) agrees to follow. If any issues arise, you can always come back to your ground rules.

### Example Groundrules:

Lean into  
discomfort

Respect other  
peoples' opinions,  
even if they do not  
agree with you

What is said here  
stays in the room,  
but the lessons  
can leave

We respect all  
identities and will  
not tolerate racism  
or homophobia

## Common Scenarios:

Below are some methods for facing situations that commonly occur during focus groups and group discussions. Use these as you see fit and feel free to adjust them depending on what you feel is necessary.

### Identity Dynamics in Discussion:

Be aware of the different identities in the room and how that might affect the groups's speaking patterns. Are there more women in the group than men, or vice-versa? What about non-binary or gender non-conforming? Are the men speaking more than the women? Is everyone comfortable? As a facilitator, it is your role to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak and feels comfortable. Ask people who have not spoken for a while if they have anything they would like to say. If you do not want to call them out directly, ask whether their side of the room has any ideas:

### Examples:

- "I notice you haven't spoken in a while. Please feel comfortable to share if you have any thoughts"

## Common Scenarios:

### Identity Dynamics in Discussion cont.:

**Race is another identity that should be accounted for. Are the Black participants not speaking or are they speaking substantially less than White participants? Are the Latinx or Asian participants being overlooked? Be sure to use the same strategies above to ensure that all participants feel comfortable speaking up.**

### Promoting Equal Participation:

**If one person seems to be speaking substantially more than other participants, politely notify them that you would like to hear from some other participants and ask whether anyone else has any thoughts. Thank the individual for their enthusiasm to participate.**

### Examples:

- “Thank you for your willingness to share your thoughts. We want to hear from some other people who we haven’t heard from, but you’ll get a chance to share!”

## Common Scenarios:

### Follow Up Questions:

If someone says something that you find interesting, don't be afraid to ask follow up questions. This is important for getting to the core of the topic.

### Examples:

- “That’s interesting. Can we unpack that a bit more?”
- “What did you mean by that exactly?”

It's also always a good idea to summarize what participants have said and repeat it to show that you are actively listening and potentially prompt them to speak more on the subject.

### Examples:

- “I notice you said (summary of statement of interest). I'd love to hear more of your thoughts on that”

## Common Scenarios:

### Discriminatory Behavior/ Racism:

If a participant says something that is racist or discriminatory, do not be afraid the step in and call out the behavior. Remind people of the ground rules and let them know that their words may have hurt others in the room, yourself, or members of the community as a whole. Take them through following steps:

### Examples:

- “A moment ago you made a statement that may have been offensive and harmful to members of x community. I want to remind you of the ground rules and let you know that we do not tolerate racism or any other kind of discrimination in this group”





## Common Scenarios:

### Guiding the Pace:

As a facilitator, it is your responsibility to guide the pace and time of the meeting. If participants are speaking about something that will be addressed in a further question, let them know that you will cover that subject further in the meeting and they should hold their valuable thoughts. If participants are talking about one question for a long time, let them know that their input is valuable, but you will have to move onto other questions for the pace of the meeting.

### Examples:

- “I’m glad that you have so much to say about this subject. Hold that thought for later in the meeting because you’ll be able to talk more about it in depth”
- “Your response is going to be the last that we spend on this question because we’re going to have to move onto the other questions.”

## Common Scenarios:

### Providing Emotional Space:

If there is a question that you know will be emotionally difficult for some participants to answer, let them know that they can always leave the room if need be to recuperate. The wellness of your participants is important. Be prepared to cover difficult questions, but adjust when need be depending on the energy of the room.

### Examples:

- “For this upcoming question feel free to leave the room if you need to breathe or take a break. This is a reminder that you are always allowed to leave if you feel you need to.”



## Debrief:

After the focus group is finished, thank everyone for contributing to the discussion. Ask how everyone's feeling and let them decompress for a moment. Give them their compensation with clear directions for how to activate it if necessary. Let them know that you have recorded the meeting and will work on the outcomes promised. Be sure that each of them receive a pamphlet containing information about Feeding South Dakota's programming.



## **Post Focus Group:**

**After the Focus Group, save the audio from the audio recording device to your work computer and transcribe the audio to word document.**

**To make transcription easier, assign every participant to a number and every time you hear that participant's voice write down their assigned number and what they said. It may help to separate the transcription task among at least 3 people because it is a lengthy process.**

**After the dialogue is transcribed, look at the quotes and find the common themes. Use an excel document to organize each theme and the quotes that match them. Use this as data to develop a written report.**

**Make the report visible to the community, especially the members who you interviewed. Keep quotes anonymous unless a participant allows you to directly quote them.**

# Part 4: Work Cited



## Work Cited:

Berkowitz, Bill. "Section 6- Conducting Focus Groups." University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development, 2023.

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/conduct-focus-groups/main>

"Feeding America Map the Meal Gap." Feeding America, 25 Jan. 2024,

<https://map.feedingamerica.org/>.

"Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group."

University of Mississippi, May 2016, pp. 1-13.

[https://irep.olemiss.edu/wp-](https://irep.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2016/05/Trinity_Duke_How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf)

[content/uploads/sites/98/2016/05/Trinity\\_Duke\\_How\\_to\\_Conduct\\_a\\_Focus\\_Group.pdf](https://irep.olemiss.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/98/2016/05/Trinity_Duke_How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf)

Smith, Suzanna et al., "Food Security & Food Access in Sioux Falls, SD." Augustana Research Institute For Sioux Falls THRIVE, May 2022, pp. 20.