



## Overview

This document provides a template for your reporting requirements.

Please provide 1-2 paragraphs (or as much as you'd like) in response to the following questions. Your responses will be vital information as we enter our period of reflection and adaptation.

We are happy to host you for a follow-up conversation at your convenience as well. This is optional and does not need to take place during the contracting period.

## Questions

1. Was there any new or important information you found in the stories? How does your organization plan to use that information?

Yes, the stories revealed new and important insights, particularly in how they can be tied to broader questions embedded in the collection tool. We learned more about the connections between individuals' lived experiences and overarching themes or patterns within the data. Notably, many respondents shared stories that were positive in nature, suggesting that when prompted to share a "story," they may assume the request is for narratives with happy or uplifting endings. This assumption highlights an opportunity to refine the framing of questions to ensure a more balanced representation of experiences, including challenges or complexities.

Our organization plans to use this information by elevating the term "lived experience" to ensure it is inclusive and free of bias, fostering a more equitable understanding of the stories shared. Additionally, we will leverage the dashboard as a collaborative tool to host sensemaking sessions with community partners, facilitating deeper discussions and joint analysis of the collected data. This approach will allow us to co-create insights, identify trends, and develop strategies that are grounded in the diverse experiences of the community.

2. Tell us about your experience collecting stories. We are interested both in what went well, and how it might be improved for your community.

Collecting stories was both rewarding and challenging. On the positive side, it provided an opportunity to hear deeply personal accounts that enriched our understanding of community dynamics. The process created a space for individuals to share their lived experiences, offering valuable insights into the challenges and successes within the community. However, there were notable hurdles. Many people struggled to take the time to submit their stories, particularly in rural areas where daily responsibilities often left little room for such activities. This highlighted the need for greater accessibility and flexibility in the storytelling process to accommodate various schedules and demands.

For individuals with traumatic experiences or those who are marginalized, there was significant hesitancy to share stories due to mistrust of systems and fear of potential harm. Some worried their disclosures could be misused or lead to further marginalization. Trust emerged as a major barrier, underscoring the importance of building safe, supportive environments for storytelling. Moving forward, we recognize the need to establish stronger relationships with community members, ensuring



confidentiality and emphasizing that their contributions are valued and protected. This involves the continuation of working with trusted local partners and creating processes that prioritize the emotional safety of participants.

3. Please share your thoughts on the co-design process. First, how would you describe this process to a colleague? Did you feel empowered to make key decisions? Knowing that this was our first year co-designing engagements, how might we improve the process next year?

The co-design process was a collaborative and engaging experience that emphasized partnership and mutual respect. To describe it to a colleague, I would say it involved working closely with our state partner to guide the objectives of the sensemaking session, providing feedback on materials and slide decks as they were developed, and feeling confident in facilitating the session itself. The process was iterative and allowed us to align our goals with the materials and approach. The StoryCollective group, with Dustin specifically, played a crucial role, offering incredible support and attentiveness to our needs and requests, which made the experience both productive and enjoyable.

Throughout the process, we felt empowered to make key decisions and that our contributions were valued. We also understood that the state partner works with multiple stakeholders, and there were times when we recognized their capacity was stretched due to other commitments. This awareness encouraged flexibility and patience on our part, reinforcing the collaborative spirit of the engagement. Despite these occasional challenges, we always felt that our input was appreciated and that the partnership was built on mutual trust and respect.

For future improvements, having a more structured, template-based approach to co-designing would be beneficial. A clear process to follow could help streamline efforts, ensure consistency, and make it easier to navigate busy periods when time is limited. This would allow for greater efficiency while still preserving the adaptability and responsiveness that made this year's process successful. Overall, the experience was positive, and we look forward to building on this foundation in future collaborations.

4. What were your key take-aways from our co-designed sensemaking session? Do you feel this was a valuable addition for your team? Why (not)?

Our key takeaways from the co-designed sensemaking session highlighted our team's ability to facilitate meaningful community engagements in a way that feels unique and innovative. The session demonstrated that we can go beyond traditional methods of interaction by creating a space for collaborative meaning-making that resonates deeply with participants. It reinforced our belief in the power of lived experiences as a foundation for insights and decision-making, and it showed that with thoughtful design and preparation, we are capable of fostering authentic, impactful conversations.

This was undeniably a valuable addition for our team. It provided not only a new approach to community engagement but also a model for how we might approach similar efforts in the future. The process and outcomes validated our efforts and inspired confidence in our ability to replicate and build upon this success. We see the value in continuing to design experiences like this, recognizing how they allow us to



connect with the community in ways that are meaningful, inclusive, and ultimately transformative. Moving forward, this session has set a strong precedent for how we hope to approach community interactions and sensemaking opportunities.

5. We invite you to provide any other feedback on MNSC that you may have. Feel free to share your thoughts on the initiative overall, your experience as a partner, or anything else that comes to mind.

The MNSC initiative has been a valuable and transformative experience for our team. As a partner, we have appreciated the collaborative spirit and the emphasis on co-creation throughout the process. The initiative's focus on elevating lived experiences and fostering meaningful community engagement aligns closely with our values and goals. It has been inspiring to see the thoughtful approach taken to ensure inclusivity and innovation in the tools and processes provided.

A special acknowledgment goes to Dustin, who has been essential to our work. He has consistently demonstrated availability, responsiveness, and a deep commitment to partnership. His ability to serve as a thought-partner, providing a critical eye where we may have overlooked something, has been invaluable. Dustin listens deeply to our feedback, ensuring that the state tools and processes continuously improve for all partners. This level of support and attentiveness has made a significant difference in our experience and success as collaborators.