



Contractor: Chinese Community Center

December 2024

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?

While some people talked about specific hardships they were facing or policies/resources they would like to see, so many of those who shared stories chose themes revolving around community, sense of belonging, diversity, sharing culture, and people helping each other. Many shared positive stories, but some also had negative experiences around these topics.

One take away for us is that when asked to share in this open-ended way, the majority of people chose themes like these rather than what we might typically consider more concrete issues such as rent prices, inflation, access to healthcare, etc. While these issues are obviously important, reading the stories people shared reinforced for us that much of the work we and our partners do — cultural events, language schools, festivals, resources and workshops and heritage languages, etc. — are equally important to people's sense of well-being. Many of the details they provided will help us shape future programming as we work to increase Chinese people's sense of belonging here in Minnesota.

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.

In general, we found that community members were willing to engage and open to the idea of sharing stories, but didn't always readily understand what exactly some of the prompts were looking for. Some of this was due to language differences ("story" not being as commonly used in Chinese to describe one's past experiences), but some of it was also cultural, especially among first-generation immigrants that we spoke to. Some of the more reflective themes of the questionnaire, even simple things like "think about what it's like to live in your community," are somewhat foreign to people in our community who grew up in completely different cultures and environments where these more abstract concepts weren't discussed with this type of direct vocabulary as much as they are here. We found we needed to take



some time to explain the purpose of the questions while being careful not to sway the type of response they may give.

It would have been helpful if there was an online Chinese version of the story collection tool, but we were able to make a Chinese translation that we could send to interested participants or print out and bring to events for in-person collection.

We found that some participants were more willing than others to take the time to provide a detailed story. While some people only shared a few sentences, we think it will still be valuable to see the other data points (questions with sliders, triangles, etc.) that all participants provided.

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?

We would describe the process as working with Dustin on co-designing an interactive session to reflect on community stories and feedback regarding community well-being and access to services. The planning process allowed us to tailor the session to our specific community, taking into account factors such as LEP participants and cultural differences that we thought might make some participants reluctant to share.

We were consulted on all aspects of the planning, including specific areas that Dustin thought we may want to pay special attention to, and also given the opportunity to provide general feedback/suggestions whenever we thought necessary. It was great that we were able to provide input into the design of the session, and Dustin could then take that input and handle all of the math and formatting (thank you!) to get all of the graphs and data points that we needed into the packet.

We were also empowered to plan the agenda, such as the location, timing, and general flow of the session, and asked who else from various state departments we may want to invite. It was a great collaborative process and there is nothing that we can think of to change. Dustin did an exceptional job and quick turnaround on such a tight timeframe, especially while managing projects for the other grantees as well.

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)?

We received great positive feedback about the session, both internally from Chinese Community Center members that attended and from the other attendees. It was a rare opportunity to enter into in-depth discussions and explorations of community issues with members of other AAPI



communities, strengthening our ties with them in the process. We were also able to learn about areas where our communities may face common issues, as well as areas in which our experiences differ - for example, refugee status of many in the Hmong and Cambodian communities and military veterans in the Vietnamese community, neither of which are often found in our own Chinese community.

Though background experiences differ, we learned that reducing mental health stigma is an important issue for all of our communities, as is finding ways to increase sense of community and belonging. It was valuable to have these discussions and to look at the data collected last year in a systematic way with facilitation from the Story Collective team. We will definitely be digesting the learning that we have done and looking for ways to apply these insights to our future programming.

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.

This is a valuable project and one that we hope the state will continue to support. It allows people to share their stories directly with the state, and is also an opportunity for us as community organizers to get more insight and data points regarding community needs which we can then share with different community and state stakeholders going into the future.