

YOUTH REACH MD

Survey Training

Prepared by
The Institute for Innovation & Implementation
University of Maryland School of Social Work



WHAT IS YOUTH REACH MD?

Maryland's first, multi-jurisdictional, comprehensive survey and census of youth and young adults struggling with housing.

The Goal?

- To learn how many youth experience homelessness in Maryland
- To better understand who these youth are and their experiences
- To learn how to better support these youth
- To maximize funding and resources available to support these youth
- To reduce and ultimately end youth homelessness in Maryland



WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Youth and young adults who are...

1. Under the age of 25
2. Not in the physical custody or care of a parent/legal guardian
3. Without a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence



ABOUT THE YOUTH REACH SURVEY

- The survey is 28 questions, and usually takes a youth about 10 minutes to complete
- Each question is designed to help us better understand more about youth who are experiencing homelessness in Maryland and the challenges they face.
- Each completed survey has tremendous value in helping us learn how to better address the needs of these youth and prevent future homelessness for youth in Maryland.



VOLUNTARY & CONFIDENTIAL

- **This survey is completely voluntary.**
 - No youth should be made to feel guilty for not participating or coerced into providing information they do not feel comfortable sharing.
 - The youth can choose not to take the survey, not to answer any question within the survey, or to stop taking the survey at any time.
 - The youth does not need to answer all questions for their survey to be counted.
- **This survey is completely confidential.**
 - Always respect the youth's privacy and allow them to complete the survey on their own.
 - We recommend providing an envelope to the youth with any paper surveys so the youth can return their responses confidentially in a sealed envelope.



INTERVIEWING 101

Goal is to get a good count of as many unaccompanied youth as possible so...

- **Be friendly and outgoing with potential respondents.**
 - Most of us prefer to talk to friendly people.
- **Ask the questions as written.**
 - We have attempted to write the questions in language appropriate for people in this age group. Asking the questions exactly as written ensures that the answers to the questions mean the same thing, regardless of who is asking the questions.
- **Let the respondent answer the questions.**
 - Some people will struggle with some questions and have to think or take time to answer. Other people may not be able to answer some of the questions. That is okay. If respondents get stuck, don't help them answer.
- **Unless, they need clarification.**
 - You can answer questions that they ask, but keep in mind that we want to keep as close to the language of the question as possible, so try to keep your answers simple and do not guide the youth to any particular answer choice.



INTERVIEWING 101

Goal is to get the respondents to answer the survey questions as honestly and openly as they are comfortable with, so...

- **Be clear that they can refuse to answer any question that they are not comfortable answering.**
 - At the start of the interview let the respondent know that they can refuse to answer any of your questions and that it is their right to refuse.
- **Be careful of your judgment.**
 - You most likely will encounter adolescents or young adults that talk about sex, drugs or past abuse. You may strongly disapprove of the topics being discussed or feel uncomfortable discussing them with an adolescent or young adult. However, it is important that you not show judgment toward the respondent.
- **Be considerate of the respondents feelings and level of discomfort.**
 - Just as you may be uncomfortable discussing some of the sensitive issues asked in the survey, the person you are interviewing may feel uncomfortable as well. Feel free to ask if the respondent would like to take a break or if they need to get a glass of water. Some of the questions will bring up emotional issues for folks, be respectful of their emotional reactions and allow them the time they need to process these questions.



EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION

Hi, my name is _____ and I'm working with the [Name of CoC or Implementing Entity] as part of Youth REACH Maryland. Youth REACH Maryland is a project to help us better understand the housing experiences of youth and young adults in Maryland, and how we can better help youth who may not have a stable or safe place to stay at night. To do this, we are surveying youth under 25 so that we can better understand their housing experiences. I would like to ask you a few questions about that. You will receive _____ for taking the survey. It usually takes about 10 minutes to complete and your participation is voluntary. All of your answers will remain confidential and we will not share any information specifically about you with anyone. Even though we will keep your answers private, there is a small risk that someone outside of our team might see them. There is also a small risk that you might feel uncomfortable answering some questions. However, you can skip any questions you don't want to answer or stop the survey at any time.

Do you have any questions?

Would you like to participate?



THE SURVEY QUESTIONS



BASIC INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Goals & Notes

- Collect basic demographic information and data essential for coding purposes
- If 25 or older, stop the survey here

Questions

1. Have you taken this survey already?
2. What is your DOB?
3. What are your initials?
4. How old are you?



LIVING SITUATION QUESTIONS

Goals & Notes

- Understand the youth's current living situation
- If youth is living in a house/apartment with their family, foster parents, or on their own AND they can stay indefinitely, then stop the survey here
- If surveying at night, youth should select where they are currently staying

Questions

5. Where did you stay last night?
6. How long do you think you could stay?
7. How long have you been staying there?



EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Goals & Notes

- Understand the youth's education needs
- Vocational training is typically after high school
- Question 9 – if currently in school, select most recently completed. If in college, select "some college"

Questions

8. Currently in school?
 - a. If yes, what level.
9. Highest grade completed



DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Goals or Notes

- Gain more detailed demographic information
- Can select multiple races/ethnicities
- "Prefer not to answer" option for Questions 13 & 14
- If the youth has a pregnant partner, should select N/A
- Living with = responsibility for caring for children daily

Questions

10. Race/Ethnicity
11. Hispanic/Latino/a
12. Gender Identity
13. Sexual Orientation
14. Pregnant
15. Children
 - a. How many?
 - b. Live with you?



DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Goals or Notes

- Yes/No Questions
- If youth is not sure, they should choose "no"
- If unsure of their age when they left foster care, youth should make their best guess

Questions

16. Military?
17. Foster care?
 - a. Age of exit
18. Group/Residential Home
19. Juvenile Detention
20. Adult Jail



HOUSING HISTORY QUESTIONS

Goals or Notes

- Better understand how youth's housing needs change over time
- If unsure of the number of moves, youth should make their best guess
- Select all that apply for Question 22

Questions

21. Moves in past two months?
22. Locations in the past two months?



HOUSING STATUS QUESTIONS

Goals or Notes

- To gain more information about a youth's current living situation
- Select all that apply for both questions

Questions

23. Currently living with guardian?
24. Reasons for not living with guardian?



SERVICES & SUPPORTS QUESTIONS

Goals & Notes

- To understand the services youth seek and barriers they face to receiving help
- If a youth asks about a service, keep descriptions simple and judgement-free
- If the answer is "sometimes" for Question 26, youth should select "no" and answer 26a
- If a youth is concerned about reporting illegal activity, remind them the survey is confidential

Questions

25. Services sought in the past year?
26. Received the help needed?
 - a. Barriers encountered
27. Sources of income?



LOCATION QUESTION (NON-SCHOOL SURVEYS ONLY)

Goals & Notes

- To help us better understand the best places to find youth
- If a youth is concerned about reporting their location, remind them the survey is confidential and all questions are voluntary

Questions

28. Closest nearby intersection or landmark?



COMMENTS SECTION

Goal

- Allow additional opportunity for youth to respond to survey or share any information they feel is important and was not asked about in the survey

Question

- Anything you would like to share to help us better serve you or young people like you?



EXAMPLE ENDING

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey! If you know of others who might be interested in participating you can tell them about [\[insert magnet event info or contact info for CoC\]](#) or tell them to go to youthreachmd.com for more information on how they can participate.

[provide incentives]

Is there anything we can help you with right now? [provide *Need Help?* Card, list of resources and/or case management hotline number]



CHECK OUT THE 2017 SURVEY GUIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION

QUESTIONS?

Contact your local Youth REACH MD Volunteer Manager
or
Email the YOUTH REACH MD Project Manager
amanda.miller@ssw.umaryland.edu

