

## Creating and Eliminating Survey Questions

A useful way to prioritize your questions is creating a chart. Computer programs such as excel are useful for this kind of chart.

### Example Chart

Label/ Type	Original Question	Decision	Reason/Notes	Modified Version
Screening	Are you paid directly by the owner of the home?	Keep	this was added as a screening question in order to screen out those who are employed by other DW's	
Contracts	Do you usually work with a verbal agreement, written contract	Eliminate	Taken care of elsewhere	
Wages	Last week did you show up for work only to be told you were not needed?	Modify	Needs re-wording	In the last month, how many times has this employer cancelled on you with little or no notice?

**Column 1:** Label the category under which the question falls. The questions with the same category should be next to each other to help you see all the questions that have to do with the same topic and notice if there is anything missing or repetitive.

**Column 2:** Write the original question. No need to refine it. You'll get to that later.

**Column 3:** Review all the questions under each topic and discuss which ones to keep or eliminate based on research/organizing goals. If you can't decide on some, keep the third column blank. It may need modification.

**Column 4:** Put your reasons for keeping or eliminating the question so that you have a collective memory of why you made the changes.

**Column 5:** If you decide you don't want to eliminate the question but it needs to be modified, write the new question down.

Remember that as you create, keep, modify or eliminate questions, all these decisions should be based upon your pre-determined goals. The key research questions and list of topics you created earlier should be displayed where everyone can see while they are engaging in this process.

## Structure of the Survey

Now that you have created all the questions for your survey, you have to order and structure them in a way that will be effective. The following is a list of tips about how to structure your survey.

- **Length of survey**  
Try to keep the survey as short as possible – 30 minutes *at most* for individual surveys. You will need to allow more time for interview surveys, but keep in mind that a respondent may get tired and not complete the interview. If the survey takes longer than 30 minute make sure you are offering some type of incentive.
- **Introduction**  
Avoid long introductions. The introduction should be short and name the organization doing the survey. It should also include how the information gathered will be used and let people know it is anonymous and/or confidential.
- **The First Questions**  
The first questions will set the tone for the survey. The person should feel they have information to contribute. By making the first few questions relatively easy to answer, you may have a higher success rate of getting surveys completely filled out.
- **The Last questions**  
Don't leave the most important questions for the end. Many surveys never get completely filled out.
- **Mix Up the Questions**  
Have a range of type of questions - yes/no response, range, open ended.
- **Develop Trust Up Front**  
If you must ask questions about personal questions such as immigration status, felony record, or health history place them later in the survey. Use the first part of your survey to develop the trust of the respondent and then place these questions near the end of the questionnaire.