

The New Rural Economy
The role of key institutions in rural communities

Name of interviewee:

Title:

Name of the institution

Address

Telephone

URL

Fax

Email

Interviewer

Community Name

NRE cell number

The purpose is to identify the critical pressure points on critical institutional services in the community, and to obtain their perspective on community issues.

Identify a local representative of health (hospitals, medical clinics, nursing homes), education (schools), and municipal government (or equivalent) institutions.

Try to interview:

- one of executive director, manager, or senior administrative person, in health.
- one of principal, vice-principal, or long-time teacher, in education.
- one of mayor, town councillor, or town clerk in local government

In some cases the institution might not be located within the site boundaries. Use your judgement to determine if the institution is near enough to warrant an interview. Your decision should be based on whether or not people in the local site feel that the institution is part of their community, even if it is physically located in an adjacent community.

There are three sections:

- ! Questions about services and programs provided by the institution itself.
- ! Questions about networks in the community.
- ! Questions about community action.

Services and Programs

1. Please provide a summary of the current services and programs offered.

2. Can you identify how these services have changed over time?

3. What are the current pressures or challenges you face in your current service delivery? (Examples might be: government funding cutbacks, declining enrollments, difficulty getting staff, out migration, building deterioration)

4. What changes do you expect to make to your range of services over the next five years? (Examples might be: closure, merger, expansion of programs, etc)

Networks in the Community

5. Besides providing basic services, what interesting things have you done together with others in the community? (Examples might be: the building is open to the public after hours, special programs, coop work placement for students in local businesses, local government speaks in the classroom, etc) Please name the agencies, organizations, or government, and for what purposes.
 - a With local businesses
 - b With businesses outside the community
 - c With other organizations within the community
 - d With organizations outside the community
 - e With other departments of government

f With other community members

7. Who has primary control over the total budget (the annual amount available for total spending) of this institution?

a local people

b regional body

c provincial body

d national body

(total budget or line items)

8. Who has primary control over how the budget is distributed across different line items of expenditure (the annual amount that is spent on each service or program, staffing, etc)?

a local people

b regional body

c provincial body

d national body

9. Who has primary control for setting the major policy (the primary objectives) and program (which programs and services are delivered) directions of this institution?

a local people

b regional body

c provincial body

d national body

10. Who has primary control over the day-to-day administration (the details of how specific programs and services are delivered) of this institution?

a local people

b regional body

c provincial body

d national body

11. What would happen in the community if this institution closed?

(Ask the following question in cases where a particular institution closed. For example, you might be interviewing the nursing home administrator, and you can ask her/him about the closure of the local high school.)

12. If the school, hospital/medical clinic, or local government office closed (or merged with another) in the last 20 years, what were the circumstances surrounding its closure, and what were the impacts in the community?

Community Action

13. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you evaluate the citizens of this community in the following terms: (Note: Ask them to explain their answers and provide details.)

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
openness to the opinions of many different people in the community	1	2	3	4	5	
ability to mobilize resources (time, money, volunteer)	1	2	3	4	5	
willingness to work together, cooperation	1	2	3	4	5	
ability to obtain government support	1	2	3	4	5	

14. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very good and 5 is very poor, how would you evaluate the businesses of this community in the following terms: (Note: Ask them to explain their answers and provide details.)

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
openness to the opinions of many different people in the community	1	2	3	4	5	
ability to mobilize resources (time, money, volunteer) on behalf of the community	1	2	3	4	5	

willingness to work together, cooperation with other businesses in the community	1	2	3	4	5	
ability to obtain government support	1	2	3	4	5	

15. What, in your opinion, are the most important formal or informal organizations, groups, committees, or boards which more or less define this community and contribute most to the “life” of this community/ Why?

16. What, in your opinion, are the prevailing attitudes of the people in this community? (Examples might be: independence, commitment to the community, “can-do” attitude, self-reliance.)

17. What, in your opinion, are the words that best describe how things get done in this community? (Examples might be: there is a high degree of consultation and discussion in the community, we rely on one or two people to do everything, we do things quickly, we do things slowly, we rely on our elected officials, we do things for ourselves, etc.)

18. How would you describe the “state of your community” today? (For example, it is prosperous, it is poor, it’s not like it used to be, etc)

19. What accounts for the current state of this community? Are there factors that this community can control, or are they external factors?

20. Looking back at the last 30 years, what have been the long standing strengths of this community? Please explain. (For example, we always pull together in times of crises, good people always run for council, our business people support local clubs, etc).

21. Looking back at the last 30 years, what have been the long standing weaknesses of this community? Please explain. (For example, we never got the civic centre built, too many people have always shopped out of town, high school kids go to school in another community and don't have any connection with this community)

22. To what extent does the younger generation (those under 30 years of age) have similar or different attitudes about this community than the older generation (those over 55 years of age) in this community? Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Please provide examples of similar attitudes and different attitudes.

Very similar attitudes 1 2 3 4 5 Very different attitudes

a this is a good thing

b this is a bad thing

Examples:

23. Have any new organisations / committees / boards been established in this community in the last 5 years? Why were they formed? (Examples might include: a youth council, an economic development committee, a "save our rink" committee)

24. Have any organisations / committees / boards ceased functioning over the last 5 years? Why did they stop functioning? (Possible answers might include: finished its mandate, no longer served its purpose, could not find leaders, key person retired)

25. How would you characterize where the "leaders" of this community come from? (Note: we define leaders in the broadest sense: people who are in elected and non-elected positions, as well as informal leaders such as school teachers, key business people, "movers-and-shakers", and others.)

_____ % were born and raised in this community

_____ % are from another rural or small town community

_____ % are from a larger community