



Office of Nutrition Services - RAE Unit

# Survey Builder Checklist

## Benefits of using a survey builder checklist

You can use this checklist to develop more effective survey questions. The checklist will guide you through a thorough review of your survey to make sure your questions provide the information you need in a useable format.

## When to use a survey

Surveys are just one approach to gathering information that can help you answer questions about your program or project. Consider the following questions to double check whether a survey makes sense:

- What question am I trying to answer? E.g., “What did participants learn from the training?” or “How many people attended the training?”
- Could other data sources answer this question? Think about administrative or programmatic data, census data, etc. that is available to the public or may be available from partners.
- Would another method provide a better answer? Consider whether a focus group or interview might work for the question at hand.

If there are no other viable data sources available and another method doesn’t make sense for the question, a survey is likely a good next step.

## What should I consider?

You’ll want to think about survey delivery and recruitment, as well as how you’ll analyze the results.

### How can I deliver my survey?

- Electronic survey
- Paper survey
- Phone survey

### How can I recruit people to take my survey?

- Who is the audience?
- Where are you most likely to encounter your audience?
- Can your partners help you promote the survey?
- Can you offer incentives?
- Is my survey accessible to everyone in my audience? Translating your survey into other languages and offering your survey in different formats can help.

- Is my survey easily available to everyone in my audience? Advertising or promoting your survey in multiple places will help ensure that many people in your audience have a chance to participate.

## How can I analyze my survey results?

- Online survey platforms, like Momentive, will auto-analyze some results.
- Data from paper surveys must be entered into a spreadsheet or database.
- Closed-ended questions can be turned into bar charts to see most common responses.
- Open-ended or write-in questions must be reviewed individually before themes can be identified.

## The survey builder checklist

Please use the following five questions as your guide to build a new or review an existing survey. For best practice, select the checkboxes to mark off each individual criterion as you move through the process of building or reviewing your survey.

### 1 Does the type of question make sense?

Meet these criteria:



Responses will give you the type of data you need to answer your research question.

Your questions will correspond with your goals and objectives.

You know how you will use this data.

### 2 Is the question language clear?

Meet these criteria:



Avoids jargon and acronyms.

Language is neutral and does not lead to a specific answer.

Question is easy for respondent to answer without a lot of thinking.

Avoid asking about two items in one question.

### 3 Does your question structure make sense?



Meet these criteria:

Question instructions are clear.

Question order is easy to follow.

### 4 Do your questions include the right response options?



Meet these criteria:

Minimize open-ended questions.

Response options include all or most options that the respondent might want to select.

Response options don't overlap.

Response options use balanced and consistent scales.

### 5 Are questions focused on your respondents?



Meet these criteria:

Questions ask about things they would know and their experiences.

Questions follow their language and culture.

Use the phrase "prefer to describe" instead of "other" as a response option.

Structure questions so respondent can "check all that apply" when appropriate.

## Survey examples

On the next two pages, you'll find a mock survey that provides an example of how to apply the Survey Builder Checklist criteria, and may be helpful as you draft your survey questions and response options. We've also included links to several other surveys for reference.

### Mock Survey

In this hypothetical example, the purpose of this survey is to assess how useful the Survey Builder Checklist is and identify opportunities for improvement. This survey could be sent to individuals who have accessed the Survey Builder Checklist during the last fiscal year.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this brief survey! Your responses will help us identify opportunities to improve the Survey Builder Checklist. If you have any questions, please reach out to the RAE Unit.

A brief introduction helps your respondents understand the purpose of your survey and how it will be used.

1. How many times have you used the Survey Builder Checklist?

- ☐ One time
- ☐ Two times
- ☐ Three times
- ☐ Four or more times

The question references the “Survey Builder Checklist” rather than the “SBC”, avoiding jargon. The response options do not overlap.

2. How easy or difficult was it to use the Survey Builder Checklist?

- ☐ Very difficult
- ☐ Difficult
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Very easy

This question provides an example of a balanced scale – very difficult to very easy.

3. What aspects of the Survey Builder Checklist were **most useful** to you? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Knowing when to use a survey
- ☐ Survey delivery methods Survey
- ☐ recruitment methods Survey
- ☐ question criteria
- ☐ Survey response criteria Survey
- ☐ examples
- ☐ Prefer to describe: \_\_\_\_\_

The respondent is asked to “check all that apply” since multiple aspects of the Checklist might be useful or not useful.

Questions 3 and 4 focus on usefulness, instead of asking about multiple items.

4. What aspects of the Survey Builder Checklist were **least useful** to you? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ Knowing when to use a survey
- ☐ Survey delivery methods
- ☐ Survey recruitment methods
- ☐ Survey question criteria
- ☐ Survey response criteria
- ☐ Survey examples
- ☐ Prefer to describe: \_\_\_\_\_

This question includes response options for all the sections of the Survey Builder Checklist – all the items the respondent might want to select.

5. What changes could be made to improve the Survey Builder Checklist?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

There is only one open-ended response question, and it is included at the end of the survey. This gives respondents the opportunity to provide more information, but does not ask for that information right away.

6. What gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer to describe: \_\_\_\_\_

The survey response options are inclusive of the respondents' gender identities. Using "Prefer to describe" is more inclusive than "Other".

## Links to additional surveys

- [SNAP Happy Adult Pre-Intervention Survey](#)
- [Demographic Card for Washington SNAP-Ed – English and Russian](#)

---

This material was funded by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-841-1410. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email [SNAPEdEvaluation@doh.wa.gov](mailto:SNAPEdEvaluation@doh.wa.gov).

DOH 940-044 September 2021

