

Master Aging Plan Focus Group Guide

To be completed by Department on Aging staff	
Focus Group Site:	Date:
Number of Community Members on Site:	Staff participating in focus group:
Facilitator:	
Notetaker:	Additional Comments
Start time: End time:	

Master Aging Plan Focus Group Guide for Moderators

Introductions & Welcome (2 minutes)

- Facilitators, moderators, and additional staff members will introduce themselves and state their affiliation with Orange County Department on Aging.

Moderator:



“Hello everybody. Thank you for taking the time to attend this focus group today. Every 5 years, the Orange County Department on Aging prepares a Master Aging Plan to ready the county for an aging population. Again, my name is, [moderator name], and I will be leading the discussion today. We are interested in learning more about your perspective about how to best promote a high quality of life among older adults in Orange County. Your responses will be kept confidential, and will help contribute to this important planning process. Please remember, there are no right or wrong answers, and we encourage active participation from everybody in the group so that we can hear everyone’s perspective.

Additionally, [note taker name(s)] will be taking notes during today’s discussion so that we can capture all the things you are saying.

If you have any questions during the discussion, please feel free to ask us. We really appreciate you being here with us today to share your perspective, so please help yourself to refreshments as needed.”

Opening Activity (5 minutes). “Aging in Orange County-free word association”

- Ask participants to do a free word association activity to get them focused on the subject of aging and speaking in the group.
- Notetaker will record responses on a flip chart for all to see.

Moderator:



“Before we begin our focus group discussion, we would like to start by asking you to name some words that describe what an ideal experience of aging in Orange County might look like to you. For example, what programs do you think you might need? We’ll give you a few moments to think, but feel free to shout out any ideas you might have and [Staff member/note taker name] will write them on the flip chart”

Materials: Flip chart, markers.

Discussion Guide (45 minutes – 1 hour)

Moderator:



“Thank you for sharing your ideas with us—that was a very helpful start to the discussion. Now we’d like to focus our discussion a little bit more and will probably refer back to many of the things you’ve already mentioned here on this chart. As we move through this discussion, we can add to this list at any time. Let me know if there is something that you think of that you would like to see on the flipchart.”

Question 1: How do older adults in Orange County understand and describe their own aging process?



“So we have just talked about what your ideal vision of aging in Orange County would look like. Could you share with us what it has been like for you to grow older in Orange County?”

Probes:

- What are the strengths or positive things about growing old in Orange County?
- What are the concerns and challenges associated with getting older in Orange County?
- When you think about growing older, tell me about....
 - community engagement
 - housing
 - staying in your home for as long as possible
 - accessing health-related services
 - opportunities for recreation, leisure, wellness activities
 - financial planning and preparing for the future
 - getting around the county and transportation
 - safety

“From what I’ve heard, it sounds like, *Summarize the points you have just heard, and ask* “is this correct? Are there any things you would like to add, or any things we’ve missed that haven’t been mentioned or that I forgot to summarize?”

[give space for people to think]

“Now that we have a better understanding of your experiences with aging, we’d like to talk about how the County plays a role in growing older in Orange County.”

Question 2: What is the role of Orange County government in the lives of aging older adults?

- What does the county do that makes aging easier for older citizens?
- What long-term care services are you familiar with that help older citizens live in their homes as they age?
- What services do you use as an older adult in Orange County?
- What services do you wish were offered?
- What services do you think are essential for the county to provide or maintain to allow citizens the opportunity to live where they choose as they grow old?

“Thanks for sharing that with us—you have talked with us about the different services you might need from the government, but are there any additional resources you can think of that help older adults age in place that are not County-based?”

Question 3: How can Orange County best partner with other organizations to create a positive community for older adults?

- What other non-government resources could be tapped to support older adults as they age?

- Do you know what long term care services are available to help older citizens live safely in their homes as they age?
- How do you feel about involvement of churches in providing services to older adults?

“Are there any additional comments or ideas you have about aging in Orange County that you would like to share with us regarding any of the things we have talked about today?”

Demographics (5 minutes)

Moderator



“We have a quick survey we would like you to fill out that just asks you questions about your background—we won’t be sharing this information with any other people outside of the Department on Aging, but would like to make sure we have an idea of who we have talked to throughout all of our focus groups.”

Staff member or notetaker should pass out demographics form

Have each participant either fill out the demographics section of the Perceptions of Aging survey. We will not collect income or socioeconomic information.

Materials: Demographics survey, pens.

Closing and Thanks



“Thank you so much for participating in this focus group with us. Your responses will be very helpful to us as we continue to develop the Master Aging Plan for Orange County. If you enjoyed participating in today’s focus group, please consider some other opportunities to remain involved throughout the planning process. This sheet lists a number of ways you can continue to remain involved including list-serv emails and work groups you can participate in.

Do you have any questions for us?

Thank participants for their time. Reiterate that their responses will be used to help the Master Aging Plan development process. Give them our contact information (e.g. business cards, half-sheet of contact information) and invite them to fill out a small workgroup interest questionnaire. Invite participants to complete the perceptions survey at the end of the discussion group. We will have paper copies and a link to the electronic survey on SurveyMonkey available.

Materials: Workgroup interest survey, pens.