

## Tips for Doing Surveys

### I. What are some strengths and weaknesses of using surveys for community research?

### II. Things to Consider:

**A. Prepare written objectives for the survey.** The more specific the objective, the better. From there, write specific survey items for each element.  
E.g., Objective: What are the language needs of the community?  
Specify in terms of: defining “language,” “needs,” “community.”

**B. Identify the *accessible* population.** This helps to reduce *sampling bias*.

**C. Design a survey that could provide some benefit to the chosen population.**  
Decide in advance how potential benefits could be accessed.

**D. Prepare a timeline.** From drafting the survey objectives and question items, conducting a literature review, revising, and disseminating the survey to compiling, reporting, and disseminating the results.

### E. Writing Survey Items:

#### 1. Each item should ask a single question.

E.g., Occupational status:

- Full-time employment
- Part-time employment
- Full-time student
- Part-time student
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Not a student

#### 2. Write specific information requests.

E.g., On average, how many times do you write in Chinese during the week?

- 0-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-9 times
- 10 or more times

#### 3. Use open-ended questions sparingly.

These may be appropriate when exploring new topics.

E.g., Experience with speaking Vietnamese?

#### 4. Ask about demographic information sparingly.

Avoid questions that could be intrusive into respondents' privacy.