

Beneficiary Voice



Anchor organizations such as libraries and museums benefit from connecting with families with young children not being served. Beneficiary voice is the process of designing, implementing, debriefing, and activating the feedback loop with families that are marginalized, living in communities not benefiting from your programs, services, and initiatives.

Goals

- Increase organizational understanding of how families with young children of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities think about libraries and museums.
- Increase your personal and organizational experiences with young children and families that do not access museums and libraries.
- Identify organizational and structural barriers to children and their families having the opportunity to take advantage of the exhibits, programs and resources museums and libraries offer.
- Explore how families historically and today have sought opportunities for themselves and their children can provide a foundation for offering new opportunities.

Designing

1. **Select a community** - using multiple data points; identify a community with low participation in museums and libraries.
2. **Spend time in the community** - If you can hold a visit in the community, spend time touring, e.g., available grocery stores, parks, transportation, housing types, cultural institutions, and libraries.
3. **Community partner** - Identify a trusted community partner connected to families.
4. **Establish a team** - Create a team of 2-3 leaders from libraries and museums to participate in the visit.
5. **Create a shared purpose** - Identify the purpose of the visit from the partner organization and each team member representing the museum and library.

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Implementing

1. Generate 5-8 broad questions starting with their hopes and goals for their children and family. You seek to hear what is and is not working to support the family's well-being.
2. Do not market your programs or services; you are there to listen to the hopes and wishes of what works and does not work for the participants. After the visit, consider with you team how what families have said applies to your program, services, policies and practices.
3. Do not ask multiple follow-up questions; you are committed to a feedback loop with families. If you cannot commit to returning, **do not** have the first visit as this will cause further harm.
4. Conversations with providers and advocates do not substitute for family discussions but may be used to prepare or gain other insight.
5. Conduct the visit in the primary language of the families.
6. Write "quotes". Do not take "notes". Ask families if you can record the conversation to capture their quotes.
7. The conversation should be at most 60 minutes, including time for opening and closing.
8. Offer a meal if in person.
9. Provide compensation for the families. If mom and dad come, both should receive compensation. Use gift cards to allow flexibility for families.

Debriefing

1. Plan the date for the debrief before the visit and include all team members and others who might be able to respond to families' hopes, goals, or concerns.
2. Prepare a list of all the quotes you hear during the visit and sort them by themes.
3. Consider who is best to respond to each quote which may or may not be your organization.
4. Consider what policy, practice, or procedure might respond to the family's statement if shifted.
5. Determine what programs, services and practices can be modified to be responsive but wait to make changes.

Activating Feedback Loop

1. Return to the community with the team within 3-4 months to share what you heard from the community; using quotes whenever possible.
2. New families may participate, so be prepared to hear further information and to review what you heard in the first session.
3. Please share with the community how you would respond to their interest using existing policies, programs or practices.
4. Listen for additional modifications.
5. Add other partners to the team to address areas outside your organization's scope or, at minimum, bring contact information for other partners.