



# 2024 Maternal and Child Health (Title V) Needs Assessment Focus Group Guide

## Overview

[The Wisconsin Title V Maternal and Child Health](#) (Title V) program needs your help! We are currently conducting a needs assessment as part of our Title V Block Grant. As part of this process, we are asking our community partners to facilitate focus groups. Focus groups are used to gather community members' needs, experiences, and perspectives. This information will provide essential context and insights as we develop statewide family health priorities for 2026–2030.

The goal for the upcoming needs assessment is to hear from people from all backgrounds and parts of our state, especially those most impacted by future family health improvement efforts and experiences. We want to hear from people who have families connected by bonds of love, kinship, and shared experiences, including nuclear families, extended families, single-parent families, same-sex parent families, adoptive families, multi-generational families, and chosen families. The definition of family has evolved to embrace diverse structures that provide support, care, and a sense of belonging.

## Basic Information

Focus groups will be held either in-person or virtually between June and the end of September 2024. Partner agencies will conduct the focus groups using the instructions, interview guide, and tips outlined in this packet.

## Focus group details

- Focus group will take approximately 75–90 minutes.
- Focus groups have two parts. First, participants will individually complete the Community Input Survey. Next, participants will be guided through a facilitated, group discussion.
- Notes from the focus group notes will be shared with the Title V Program using the online Focus Group Completion Survey.

## Compensation

- Community members who participate in a focus group will be compensated for their time.
- Instructions will come from Health Equity and Community Engagement Technical Assistance Provider Kendra Smith.
- Compensation processes will occur *after* you've documented a focus group using the Focus Group Completion Survey.

## Roles and responsibilities

---

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Title V Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create and distribute the “2024 Focus Group Packet.”</li><li>• Provide 1:1 support to agencies interested in conducting focus groups.</li><li>• Receive focus group data via an online survey.</li><li>• Analyze and interpret focus group data.</li></ul> |
|-----------------|--|
- 

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Partner agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare for the focus group using the “Focus Group Instructions.”</li><li>• Conduct focus groups using the “Facilitation Guide.”</li><li>• After the focus group:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Complete the Focus Group Completion Survey.</li><li>○ Mail hard copies of the Community Input Survey back to the Title V Program.</li><li>○ Communicate with Kendra Smith regarding compensation.</li></ul></li></ul> |
|------------------|--|
- 

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Kendra Smith<br>(Contractor) | Communicate with partner agencies to coordinate participant compensation. |
|------------------------------|---|
- 

## Questions

If you have questions or need assistance, please email [DHSTitleVNeedsAssmt@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSTitleVNeedsAssmt@dhs.wisconsin.gov).

# Part 1: Instructions

## Preparing for your focus group

Below are the minimum steps needed to prepare for a focus groups. Check the box when each task has been completed. Your agency may require additional steps and documentation not listed here.

| Several weeks before the focus group |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Select date and time</b><br>Determine the date and time of your focus group(s). Each focus group will take between 75 and 90 minutes.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Choose format</b><br>Determine what format you will use (virtual, in-person) and think through materials and/or technology needed.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Roles and responsibilities</b><br>Determine who from your agency will be involved and what their roles are. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Required: Facilitator, ideally someone with experience facilitating groups</li><li>• Required: Notetaker, ideally someone with strong attention to detail</li><li>• Recommended: Greeter (in-person) or technical support (virtual)</li></ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Attendance documentation</b><br>Decide how you will document who attends and their contact information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will not share this information with the Title V Program.</li><li>• You will share this information directly with Kendra Smith to coordinate compensation.</li></ul>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Community input survey completion</b><br>Determine how participants will complete the Community Input Survey (individual survey) before the group discussion occurs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Option 1: Participants complete the survey online using the QR code or URL.</li><li>• Option 2: Participants complete a paper survey. Please coordinate with the Title V Program to obtain blank and return completed surveys.</li></ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Notetaking and documentation</b><br>Decide how the notetaker will document participants' responses during focus group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Option 1: Participants respond to questions on notecards or sticky notes (in-person).</li><li>• Option 2: Participants respond to questions verbally and notetaker documents responses by hand (in-person or virtual).</li><li>• Option 3: Participants respond verbally, and notes are electronically transcribed (virtual).</li></ul> <p><b>Important:</b> Regardless of the option selected, notes need to be de-identified (names and other identifiable removed) and shared with Title V Program using the online Focus Group Completion Survey.</p> |
| <input type="checkbox"/>             | <b>Recruitment plan</b>   |

Recruit community members to participate, following your agency's policies and procedures. An ideal number of participants is **six to eight**, however a range of four to ten is acceptable. If you have more than ten people interested (and you believe they will all show up) we strongly recommend that you conduct multiple groups.

### Week before the focus Group

- Practice**  
Review the Facilitator guide (Page 5–7 of this document) and Tips (Page 8).
- Final prep**
  - Send reminders to participants.
  - Finalize room set-up, gather and prep materials: sticky notes, notecards, pens, hardcopies if needed (in-person).
  - Test technology (virtual).
  - Have Community Input Surveys prepped and ready to go.
    - If participants are completing the survey online, the URL and QR Code can be found on Page 9 of this document.
    - If participants are completing hard copies, please have them available.
  - Have the ground rules prepped and ready to go (print off copies or write on flipchart paper). These can be found on Page 10 of this document.
  - Have the list of resources prepped and ready to go (print off copies or write on flipchart paper). These can be found on Pages 11–12 of this document.

### Day of the focus group

- Conduct focus group**
  - Arrive early and greet participants as they arrive.
  - Document attendance.
  - Use the interview guide to facilitate the focus group.

### After the focus group

- De-identify and organize notes**  
If notes are handwritten, transfer to an electronic version like Notes or Word. Remove all identifiable information *before* sharing with Title V Program via the Focus Group Completion Survey.
- Complete Focus Group Completion Survey**  
Complete the Focus Group Completion Survey. A hard copy can be found on Appendix D for reference.
- Compensation coordination**  
After you complete the Focus Group Completion Survey, Kendra Smith will reach out to you to arrange for participant compensation.
- Return hard copies of the Community Input Survey**  
If participants used paper copies of the Community Input Survey, return the completed surveys to the Title V Program using the mailing materials provided to you.

## Part 2: Facilitator Guide

Below are the minimum steps needed to conduct a focus group. Add checkmarks or notes for each task completed. Your agency may require additional steps and documentation not listed here.

| <b>Introduction and overview (10 minutes)</b>               |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Welcome</b><br>Thank participants for being here and cover any housekeeping items.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Host agency introductions</b><br>Full Name, Role, Focus Group Role (Facilitator, Notetaker, Helper)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Participant introductions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Name Only</li><li>• Icebreaker (Suggestions)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Favorite restaurant or food to cook at home</li><li>○ One thing you are watching, reading, listening to right now</li></ul></li></ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wisconsin gets funding for the Maternal and Child Health and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) programs through a federal grant called the "Title V Block Grant."</li><li>• Community members perspectives and experiences are very important part of Title V. What you share today—in your survey and in our discussion—will help shape priorities for family health programming in Wisconsin.</li></ul> |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Agenda for today</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Part 1: Complete the Community Input Survey (online or paper) on your own</li><li>• Part 2: Group Discussion</li><li>• Compensation will be sent after the focus group</li></ul>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Confidentiality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Affirm importance of confidentiality and commitment to creating a safe space.</li><li>• Individual surveys are anonymous and sent directly to Title V.</li><li>• Group discussions: Notetaker will document your responses, but identifiable information will be removed. Notes will be sent electronically to Title V.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Community input survey (15–20 minutes)</b>               |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Community input survey</b><br>Ask participants to spend 15–20 minutes completing an individual survey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share URL and QR Code (Appendix A, Page 9) or paper copy of the survey.</li><li>• Remind them this is anonymous. They should not put their name on the survey.</li><li>• Give a two-minute warning before transitioning to the guided discussion.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Group discussion group rules and consent (5 minutes)</b> |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>                                    | <b>Ground rules</b><br>Review basic ground rules (Appendix B, Page 10) and allow the group to add their own.  |

1. All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers.
2. Respect the opinions of others even if you don't agree.
3. Try to stay on topic; we may need to redirect you so that we can cover all the material.
4. Speak as openly as you feel comfortable.
5. Avoid revealing very detailed information about your or family's personal health.
6. Protect others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group.
7. Others?

**Explain consent to participate**

I will now get your verbal permission to start the discussion. I will read a short statement:

"Your participation in this focus group is voluntary. You can share as little or much as you feel comfortable with. You can stop participating at any time. Your responses will be recorded by the notetaker. Your name and other identifiable information will be removed. These notes will be shared with Department of Health Services' Title V program through a secure online survey."

**Obtain verbal consent to participate**

Facilitator: Please raise your hand if you agree to the above statement.

Notetaker: Document that consent occurred.

Important: If someone does *not* agree to the above statement, assure them that it's ok and then offer two options.

1. They can stay but their responses will not be recorded, nor will they be considered a focus group "completer."
2. They are free to leave the focus group.

**Group discussion (40–60 minutes)**

**Instructions and response options**

Explain options for respond to questions.

- Verbal: Speak out, raise their hand, and/or
- Written: Show notecards or sticky notes, chat function

Explain that the notetaker will now begin taking notes.

**Discussion questions (10–15 minutes per question)**

The Community Input Survey asked you to choose the resources that would help you and the people living in your home be healthy. These include health and health insurance resources, support community resources, and personal resources. (Facilitator: See Appendix C, pages 11–12 for a list of resources included in the survey).

1. Can you share what you selected and why?
2. Was there anything not on the list of resources that would help you and your family experience better health?
3. What do you think should be the state's priorities for family health? Why?
4. What else should the Title V program know or take into consideration when setting priorities for family health programming?

**Discussion prompts (if needed)**

- Can you say more about that?

- Can you think of an example?
- Does anyone else have thoughts about that?

**Share back (if time)**

Notetaker read back key points, allowing group members to make adjustments or provide additional information.

**Wrap-Up (5 Minutes)**

**Thank you**

Thank participants for their time and affirm the importance of their contributions.

**Next steps: Compensation**

Share details about compensation type, delivery mode (email, mail, pick-up), and timeline for receiving compensation.

**Next steps: Needs assessment**

- Notes from this and other focus groups in Wisconsin are shared with Title V Program.
- Compile and analyze data from individual surveys, focus groups, and other sources.
- Listening session opportunities will be offered by Title V Program to ensure that our analysis and the priorities chosen to reflect what people feel are important for their families and communities. Stay tuned!
- Send participants home with one page document that has website linked and QR code. Share this QR code and link to others, but do not have another household member take the survey.

## Part 3: Facilitator Tips and Recommendations

### Do

- Open the session with a fun, non-threatening, open-ended question; this will enable everyone to develop a comfort level with speaking in front of the group and sharing their ideas.
- Pay attention to non-verbal signals—someone might be sending a cue that she or he is uncomfortable or might have something to say.
- Ask questions, one at a time. Probe when a response is unclear. Ask, “Can you say more about...” instead of “Why do you think...” The latter may make participants feel they need to defend their point of view.
- Balance participation by asking, “Who else has something to say?” or “I would like to hear more from...”
- Redirect the discussion when it strays too far off topic. Say something like, “These are important and interesting points. However, we need to bring the discussion back to our main focus on...”
- Record the participants’ actual words as much as possible. Avoid the temptation to paraphrase. This will show each participant that his or her ideas are unique and important.
- Check with participants that you understand what they are saying.

### Don’t

- Finish people’s sentences or make assumptions about what is being said by someone.
- Allow one or two people to dominate or to use the focus group for their own agenda.
- Permit side discussion: this can distract others from the main discussion.
- Take sides or challenge what is being said, remain neutral.
- Share your own opinions (verbally or non-verbally).
- Favor one participant over the others.
- Use jargon or technical terms.

### Other Resources

We encourage you to review the [Qualitative Data Standards Guide](#) on the DHS website.



# Appendix A. Focus Group Ground Rules

## Basic ground rules

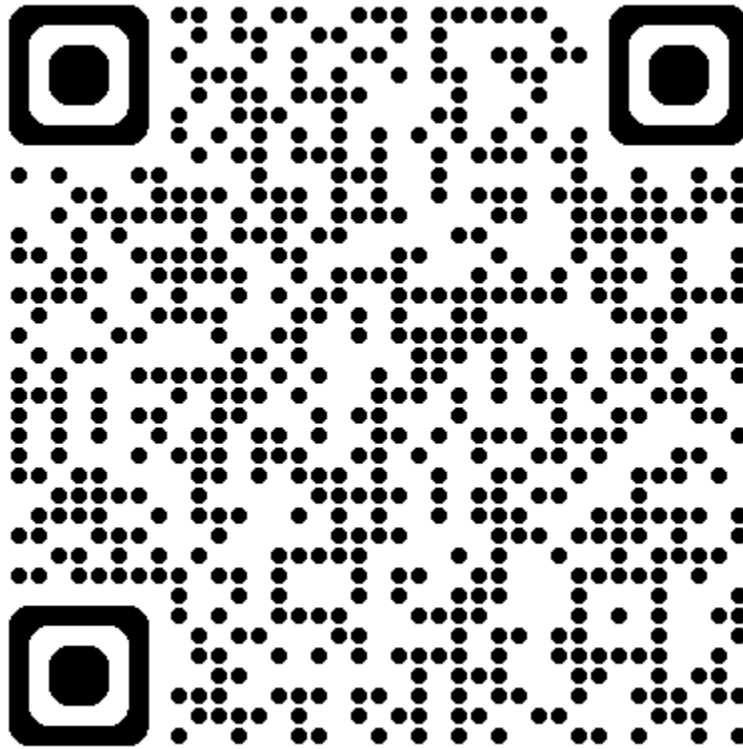
1. All responses are valid—there are no right or wrong answers.
2. Respect the opinions of others even if you don't agree.
3. Try to stay on topic; we may need to redirect you so that we can cover all the material.
4. Speak as openly as you feel comfortable.
5. Avoid revealing very detailed information about your or family's personal health.
6. Protect others' privacy by not discussing details outside the group.

## Add your own below

## Appendix B. Community Input Survey Links

**Link:** <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7804555/2024-MCH-Community-Input-Survey>

**QR code:**



# Appendix C. Resources Listed in Community Input Survey

## Health and health insurance resources

- Breastfeeding and chestfeeding help
- Physical health services that don't cost much or are free, like regular check-ups, physical therapy, or vaccinations
- Dental health services that don't cost much or are free
- Mental health services that don't cost much or are free, like seeing a therapist or psychiatrist
- Checkups and tests for my baby or young child to see how they're growing
- Baby care items, like diapers, formula, separate sleep surfaces
- Doctors and other health providers working together so that my and our health needs are met
- Health providers near where I or we live, like doctors, dentists, or therapists
- Health insurance
- Health insurance that pays for what we need, like treatments, medications, and doctors who are covered by our insurance
- Medicine or prescriptions delivered to me or us
- No waits to see a health provider
- Health providers who I or we can see at times that works for me or us, like evenings, weekends
- Health providers that accept my insurance
- Health providers that look like me or us
- Healthcare that's easy to understand and doesn't have too much paperwork
- Talking to a health provider through video chat ("telehealth")

## Support resources

- Paths for bikes on the roads
- Safe walkways where we live
- Bright lights on the streets
- Paths to walk where we live
- Clean water we can afford
- Clean air and green space where we live
- Safe parks near where we live
- Library near where we live
- Center for activities near where we live
- Police and emergency helpers who come quickly when needed and are helpful
- Childcare we can afford
- Childcare close to where we live
- Help finding local resources, like having a community connector
- Help with understanding health insurance benefits
- Help for me or us to get care at home, like nurses or therapists who visit homes
- Rest for family when needed, like a break for parents or caregivers

- Child resource center for kids with special health needs
- A plan for young children with developmental delays or disabilities to get services, like an Individualized Family Service Plan
- Cars, bike, or rides like Uber that we can count on
- Bus or train we can count on
- Transportation to get to health appointments
- Good schools for kids near where I or we live
- Help for children at school who need extra support, like a special plan for learning
- Help for young children to get ready for school, like Head Start or play groups
- Healthy food we can afford near where we live, like stores with fruits and veggies, food pantries, and farmers markets
- Community or personal garden to grow our own food
- Affordable and safe options to exercise
- Safe homes I or we can afford
- Quiet neighborhood

## Personal resources

- Health providers who can help us understand things in our language (like an interpreter, and reading materials written in our language)
- Health providers who look like me
- Health providers who respect my and our culture and identities
- Feeling safe in our neighborhood
- Feeling safe with our family
- Feeling safe at home
- Having friends and family who care about me or us
- Health providers who I or we trust and who treat us well
- Feeling confident and not scared to ask for help with our health
- Spending less time on phones and computers
- Support groups that help families like ours with special health needs
- Local social groups for families like ours
- Local religious or spiritual groups
- Having enough money to take care of basic needs
- Having time to focus on being healthy
- Jobs that let us take care of our health when we need to, like taking time off or having a flexible schedule

# Appendix D: Focus Group Completion Survey

Note: This hard copy is for reference only. Focus group completion surveys should be completed online.

## Page 1—About this focus group

1. Agency Name—Text box.
2. Who is the main contact person for this focus group?
  - Name
  - Email
3. When did you conduct this focus group? DD/MM/YYYY
4. How did you conduct this focus group? Choose one:
  - In-person
  - Virtual
5. Which of the following priority populations were present at this focus group? Select all that apply.
  - Pregnant or postpartum people
  - Parents and caregivers of Children and Youth with Special Healthcare Needs
  - Under-resourced families
6. (Optional) Is there anything unique about your focus group participants you wanted to share? (Text box)
7. Did all participants in the focus group agree to the “consent to participate” statement? Select one.
  - Yes
  - No
8. [Skip logic. If “No” to Q7] If one or more participant did not agree to the “consent” to participants statement, were their responses removed from the focus group notes?
  - Yes
  - No
9. [Skip logic. If “No” to Q8.] Please close this survey and remove the participants responses from the focus group notes. Once their responses have been removed, please re-open this survey and complete it.
10. Total number of people who participated in the focus Groups? Note: Only enter the number of community members who attended and should receive compensation. Do not count the facilitator, note taker, or other staff members. (Enter number)

## Page 2—Focus group notes

1. The Community Input Survey asked you to choose the resources that would help you and the people living in your home be healthy. These include health and health insurance resources, support community resources, and personal resources. Can you share what you selected and why? Copy and paste notes below. (Essay box)
2. Was there anything not on the list of resources that would help you and your family experience better health?

Copy and paste notes below. (Essay box)

3. What do you think should be the state's priorities for family health? Why?

Copy and paste notes below. (Essay box)

4. What else should the Title V program know or take into consideration when setting priorities for family health programming?

Copy and paste notes below. (Essay box)

## Page 3—Closing

Thank you for completing a focus group! Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Health Equity and Community Engagement Technical Assistance Provider, Kendra Smith, will be in touch with you soon to coordinate compensation.

**[Alchemer Action]** Email alert to Kendra Smith (cc: Needs assessment email) with agency, main contact, and # of participants.