

Sample Neighbor Interview Questions/Prompts

**Note that the goal is to take a “strengths-based” approach that comes from a place of respect, inclusivity, and deference. We want to gather information that allows us to share people in their best light. This list should not be used as a direct Q&A with an interviewee, but rather a guideline for the type of information that’s helpful to know when writing a story.*

- Start a conversation with something along the lines of “Tell me about yourself as a person...” and then ask natural “leading” follow-up questions that don’t result in yes/no responses.
- At a point in the conversation when it feels most natural, make sure to get the person’s name with the correct spelling (it’s very disrespectful to refer to someone by the wrong name or use incorrect spelling when writing a story).
- If possible, an age is helpful as it can give context. “Do you mind me asking your age?” is more polite than, “How old are you?”
- Information about household members is also helpful, including names and ages, as well as interests and passions of family members in addition to the interests and passions of the person you’re in conversation with.
- When there are kids in the home, learning about them and their interests and favorite activities individually or as a family helps paint a more complete picture.
- Learn more about someone’s contributions by asking “In what ways are you able to give back to your community now or have you given back in the past?”
- Give attention to the future by asking something along the lines of “Looking toward the future, what are some of your hopes or goals?”
- We also want to know about a person’s current situation and what created the need for help from the organization. What does this help mean for that person? What would it be like without a resource like this?
- Another question that can prompt someone to share from the heart is something like, “Is there a message you would want to give to the people who may read your story, like donors who make this service possible?”
- It’s always a good idea to end with a question like, “Is there anything I haven’t asked that you would want me to know?” This allows people to share or reiterate what is most important to them.

This is far from a comprehensive list but provides some general guidelines for moving through a conversation and ensuring the end result is a story that can be used to elevate that person as well as the mission of the organization. And don’t forget to get a signed release form and contact information!