

## American Lung Association Tip Sheet: Data Collection Instruments

Instrument	Pros	Cons
<p><b>Mail Survey</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to obtain individual, written information within several days or weeks of program activity</li> <li>to obtain primarily closed-ended responses on a range of issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time-efficient</li> <li>lower unit cost</li> <li>easy to implement</li> <li>less staff intensive</li> <li>good for sensitive topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generally low response rates</li> <li>slow data collection</li> <li>few open-ended questions</li> <li>may require additional incentives</li> <li>literacy issues need to be addressed</li> </ul>
<p><b>In-Person Written Survey</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to obtain immediate written, individual information</li> <li>to obtain primarily closed-ended responses on a range of issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>immediate responses</li> <li>less staff intensive</li> <li>good for sensitive topics</li> <li>specific written responses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>people may rush to complete it at the end of a training, etc.</li> <li>literacy issues</li> </ul>
<p><b>E-mail Survey</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to obtain individual, written information electronically almost immediately after program activity</li> <li>to obtain primarily closed-ended responses on a range of issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time-efficient</li> <li>lower unit cost</li> <li>easy to implement</li> <li>less staff intensive</li> <li>electronic responses for easier data entry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>may not be option for all being surveyed</li> <li>possible low response rate</li> <li>few open-ended questions</li> <li>may require additional incentives</li> <li>literacy issues need to be addressed</li> <li>possible concerns about anonymity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Face-to-Face Interview</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to have individual, open-ended discussion on a range of issues</li> <li>to obtain in-depth information on an individual basis about perceptions and concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>immediate responses</li> <li>high flexibility</li> <li>reach diverse populations</li> <li>high response rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not anonymous</li> <li>interviewee may alter responses to “please interviewer”</li> <li>relies on accuracy of interviewers’ recording of answers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Telephone Survey</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to have individual conversations on a range of issues</li> <li>to obtain information on individual basis on both open- and closed-ended topics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>speed of data collection</li> <li>potential for high responses rates</li> <li>good for long or detailed answers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>role of interviewer in eliciting responses</li> <li>cost</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus Groups</b></p> <p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to have an open-ended group discussion on a range of issues</li> <li>to obtain in-depth information about perceptions and concerns from a group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gather information from several people at once</li> <li>individual responses can stimulate additional ideas from others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>individual responses influenced by group</li> <li>transcription can be expensive</li> <li>participants choose to attend and may not be representative of target population</li> <li>participants may give “politically correct” answers, due to group pressure</li> <li>harder to coordinate than individual interviews</li> </ul>