PROVA WORKSHEETS

TEMPLATE

# Two-Page Findings Brief

*What you found, what it rests on, and what you are asking for*

**FOR:**
community organizations reporting the findings of their own inquiry to a decision-holder, and to the people who took part

**INCLUDES:**
a two-page layout with a word limit for each part, prompts for every field, a checklist to run before sending, a sending plan and a reply record

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# Contents


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 01 | How to use this template | 4 |
| 02 | Page 1 | 5 |
| 03 | Page 2 | 8 |
| 04 | Before you send it | 11 |
| 05 | Sending plan | 12 |
| 06 | Reply record | 13 |
| 07 | Further reading | 14 |


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# 01 How to use this template

Fill this in after you have counted the answers and shared the first results with the people affected (see *Running a Community Inquiry That Institutions Can Act On*). Write it for one reader: the person or body named in your study plan as able to act on the answer. If you are writing for several audiences, write for the decision-holder and send everyone else the same brief.

Keep to two pages. A decision-holder who reads only the first page should still know what you found, how sure you are and what you want. Put anything longer, such as the questionnaire, the full counts or a longer account of themes, in an appendix that you offer rather than attach.

Every number in the brief must come from your counts. If a number cannot be traced to the log or to the forms, leave it out.

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# 02 Page 1

## Title (up to 15 words)

State the main finding as a plain sentence, not a slogan.

| Prompt | Your entry |
|---|---|
| Main finding, as one sentence with a count | |

## Who we are and what we asked (up to 60 words)

| Prompt | Your entry |
|---|---|
| Organization, and who led the inquiry | |
| The question, as asked in your study plan | |
| Who you asked, where, and over what period | |
| Why you are sending this to this reader now (the decision and its date) | |

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## What we found (up to 250 words)

Give no more than three findings. For each one, state the count and what it is out of, the definition you used and the period. Add one short quotation only if it shows what the finding is like, and only if it cannot identify the speaker. Give findings that did not support your expectations the same space as those that did.

| | Finding, with count and base | Definition and period | Quotation (optional, de-identified) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |

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## What we do not know (up to 100 words)

Say whose answers you do not have and why, what the inquiry did not ask, and anything that would change the picture. Before writing this part, read *How Much Evidence Is Enough?* and *The Missing People Problem*.

| Prompt | Your entry |
| --- | --- |
| People you tried to reach but did not hear from, and what you know about them | |
| Questions you did not ask that a reader might assume you did | |
| What the findings cannot show (for example, cause, or experience beyond the group asked) | |
| Where participants disagreed about what the results mean | |

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# 03 Page 2

## What we are asking for (up to 120 words)

Make each request something this reader can decide. Number them. End with the reply you are asking for and its date.

| | Request | Which finding it rests on |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | Please reply in writing by [date], saying what was decided and why. | |

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## How we did it (up to 150 words)

| Prompt | Your entry |
|---|---|
| Method (survey, interviews, group discussions) and languages used | |
| Dates of collection | |
| Number approached | |
| Number who took part | |
| Number who declined | |
| Number who could not be reached | |
| How the questions were tested before use | |
| How the counting was checked | |
| How people affected took part in making sense of the results | |
| Anything that went wrong, and what you did | |
| Questionnaire and full counts available from [contact] | |

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## How we protected the people who took part (up to 80 words)

| Prompt | Your entry |
|---|---|
| How people agreed to take part, and that they could say no | |
| Who holds the answers, and that individual answers will not be shared | |
| The smallest group size reported | |
| When the answers will be destroyed | |
| That participants saw these results before or at the same time as this reader | |

## Contact (up to 40 words)

| Prompt | Your entry |
|---|---|
| Name, role, phone and email of the person who can answer questions about the brief | |
| Who may speak for the organization about the findings | |

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# 04 Before you send it

- ☐ The title states a finding, not an opinion.
- ☐ Every number has its base (“31 of 58”), and every percentage can be checked from the counts.
- ☐ No finding is stated more broadly than the people who answered.
- ☐ Findings that cut against your expectations are included and given equal weight.
- ☐ No table, number or quotation could identify a person, including by combining details such as floor, household size and language.
- ☐ Every request is something this reader can decide.
- ☐ The reply date is stated.
- ☐ Someone outside the committee has read it and could say back what you found and what you asked for.
- ☐ People who took part have seen the results, or will receive the brief at the same time.
- ☐ The brief fits on two pages at a readable type size, in each language you will share it in.

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# 05 Sending plan

| Field | Your entry |
| --- | --- |
| Date shared with participants, and how (meeting, letter, notice, messaging group) | |
| Languages and formats (print, large print, read aloud, translated) | |
| Decision-holder it goes to, and how (email, letter, delivered at a meeting) | |
| Others who receive copies, and when (elected officials, partners, press) | |
| Who will present it in person, if there is a meeting | |
| Covering note: one paragraph saying what is attached, the decision it is for, and the reply date | |

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# 06 Reply record

Keep this with the study plan. It closes the inquiry, or shows what follow-up is still open.

| Date | From | What they said | Requests answered | Requests not answered | Our follow-up, and by whom | Shared with participants on |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

**When there is no reply by the date:** write once more, naming the original date and asking for a new one. Record it. If there is still no reply, decide whether to raise it at a public meeting, with an elected official, or through a formal evidence request, and tell participants what you have decided.

**RELATED:** *Running a Community Inquiry That Institutions Can Act On*, for running the inquiry; *Community Study Plan*, for the study plan and consent terms; *Worked Case: A Tenants' Survey From Question to Brief*, for a full example from question to brief.

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# 07 Further reading

1. **Digital.gov, Plain language guide series**. Read it for writing for a busy reader: main point first, short sentences, common words.
2. **Pew Research Center, Writing Survey Questions**. Useful when describing your questions accurately, including how wording can shape answers.
3. **AAPOR, Standard Definitions**. Standard terms for reporting how many people were approached, took part, declined or could not be reached.

QUESTION IT

Found an error, or want to question this document? Contact Prova at hello@byprova.com.

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