

Youth First Impression Survey



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Youth First Impressions Survey

A program for community development through youth engagement

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Your name:

Community you are from:

Community you will visit:

Date of visit:

Time spent in the community (hours):

Weather conditions on date of visit:

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Introduction

You have volunteered to be a member of your community's visiting team in a **Youth First Impressions** community survey exchange. Thank you for your participation! Your team will make a short incognito visit to an exchange community you are not familiar with and record your first impressions. You are not expected to offer expert advice—you are simply expected to give an outsider's candid viewpoint on various aspects of the community you visit.

Preparing for your visit

You will need to make some preparations before the visit and complete some follow-up tasks afterwards. We encourage you to take time to familiarize yourself with the questions in this survey, which will make it easier to navigate the survey on the day of your visit.

The pre-visit preparations will take a few hours of your time. You are required to participate in an orientation to review the survey materials and travel logistics, as well as trainings on how to assess a community and record your observations. Your project coordinator will give you information on meeting spots, things you need to bring along, and any arrangements for costs such as meals. Additionally, the orientation and trainings may include spending some time reviewing online visitor information about your exchange community (i.e., taking a look at the community's website, Facebook and Twitter pages, etc.).

Typically the visit itself will take 4 to 8 hours, plus drive time. Longer distances between communities may require an overnight trip. You are encouraged to take safety precautions by following guidelines provided by your coordinator (e.g., remaining within the boundaries of the site visit), carrying a cell phone and sharing that number with other members of the visiting team, and avoiding situations that may be suspect.

After your visit you will need to work with your project coordinator to:

- Participate in a reflective team meeting to share and discuss your first impressions. This meeting will help with writing the survey report.
- Write a survey report (1 report per team). Providing constructive criticism and praise always requires some diplomacy so be sure to give careful attention to the words and phrases you use in the report.
- Create and deliver a presentation about your survey report to the exchange community.
- Consider how the positive things you saw in the exchange community could be brought back and integrated into your own. **An important piece of your involvement is to bring back ideas to make your community better and implement your own community project.** This will not only benefit your community, but also develop your communication and critical thinking skills, and creativity.

We strongly encourage the teams from the exchange communities to meet informally to discuss their experiences *after* the reports are written and submitted.

Suggestions for using this survey

Be discreet as you record observations and seek out information about your exchange community. The intent is to get an honest feel for how visitors perceive the community. Take as many pictures as you can without being obvious. Be sure to add notes about your pictures in this survey so that they can be quickly integrated into the report. Your project coordinator may provide pens, maps, and/or cameras for use during your visit. Your coordinator also may provide you with a link to an online version of this survey tool that can be accessed using a smartphone or tablet.

Remember:

- Be observant and take your role seriously—your sincere feedback is very valuable.
- This visit will result in better information if residents do not know you are there to assess the community.
 - Travel in small groups of 2 or 3.
 - You can appear to be shopping, checking out the schools, or making a social visit.
- Strike up casual conversations with residents and be interactive.
- Discover ways in which your exchange community shines, but do not ignore the “warts.” Feel free to record additional community strengths and weaknesses not included in this survey.
- Be sure to include details and comments because they will be the most useful feedback for your exchange community.

- And have fun!

Many questions in this survey ask you to provide feedback using a grade scale. Remember, people bring their own set of “lenses” to the visit, so complete your survey **independently** of your teammates (you’ll compare notes, pictures, and reflections afterwards). Use the following guidelines as you grade various aspects of the community based on what you experience:

- A = What I experienced far exceeded my expectations
- B = What I experienced was better than my expectations
- C = What I experienced met (but did not exceed) my expectations
- D = What I experienced did not meet my expectations
- F = What I experienced was far worse than my expectations

Your visit

Prior to arrival

Search for information about your exchange community via websites and social media. If the community has a website, write the URL here:

Grade and comment on the community website for its appearance and usefulness of information.

- A B C D F Not Applicable

Grade and comment on the usefulness and timeliness of information you obtained about the community through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.):

- A B C D F Not applicable

Identify and comment on any other websites or online sources you used to find information about the community. Was there any information you looked for but could not find online?

Contact the community’s visitor center (e.g., chamber of commerce) via email and phone, and grade and comment on the friendliness and helpfulness of staff (You can brainstorm questions as a team but have just one team member call and another email.).

- A B C D F Not applicable

What is the gut reaction you have about the community from the online research ONLY? Would you want to visit there with family or friends? Is this a community that seems welcoming to you and other visitors? Why or why not? Consider your income, age, interests, hobbies, family, health/disabilities, race, and ethnicity in your response.

10-minute impression

This activity is good opportunity to make sure you can navigate through the community. Consider having a map with you has you drive in and out of the various community entrances and areas.

Your project coordinator will drive you through the community for a 10-minute drive without stopping. What was your first impression? Your coordinator will pull over to the side of the road and give you time to write down what you felt about the community based on these first 10 minutes in the community.

Do you see compatible or conflicting land uses in the community (e.g., a park near a museum)? Do things seem appropriately located (commercial, residential, green space, etc.)?

Are there areas of the community that appear to be developing or declining?

Community entrances

Approach the community from the other major entrances. Grade and comment on each entrance. While there may be an obvious main entrance, there are typically multiple ways to enter a community. In some communities there may be entrances for other modes of transportation.

Entrance #1: Road name and direction: _____

A B C D F

Comments:

Entrance #2: Road name and direction: _____

A B C D F

Comments:

Entrance #3: Road name and direction: _____

A B C D F

Comments:

Entrance #4: Road name and direction: _____

A B C D F

Comments:

Other entrances (e.g., airports, bike trails, boat landings, train stations, snowmobile trails):

A B C D F

Comments:

(add icon) *Remember to take photos of the community's entrances.*

Downtown

Grade and comment on the overall appearance of the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the signage in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the quality (appearance, adequacy, etc.) of lighting in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the quality, availability, and necessity for parking in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the walkability (presence or absence of footpaths, sidewalks, pedestrian rights-of-way, crossings, building access, etc.) of the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety of facilities and services (housing, professional services, retail, recreation, accommodations and food, industry, parks, etc.) in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the quality of the natural environment in the downtown (trees, shade trees, flower plantings, pocket parks, green spaces, etc.).

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the quality of social spaces in the downtown (cafés, outdoor seating areas, restaurants, etc.).

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety of recreational opportunities for youth in the downtown. Do you feel there are places where youth can meet up or hang out?

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the window displays in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety of shopping options in the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety and quality of merchandise in the downtown shops.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the customer service you received during your visit to the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the accessibility of downtown merchants during evening and weekend hours.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety of shopping opportunities for young people in the downtown.

A B C D F

Does the downtown play a role in tourism? Is there potential for it to play a greater role? Why or why not?

Remember to take photos of the community's downtown.

Retail

Grade and comment on the overall condition of the retail sector.

A B C D F

Describe and comment on the variety of retail shopping available in the community (malls, specialty shops, strip malls, big box stores, etc.).

What retail stores or services did you find that were unusual or unexpected?

What stores or services were missing that you would expect to find?

What retail goods do local residents appear to need to travel outside of the community to find?

Are their stores or other outlets where residents and visitors can go to reuse, resell, and/or recycle goods (e.g., clothing, electronics, household items)?

What stores in this community would you travel a distance of more than 30 miles to shop at?

Remember to take photos of the community's retail.

Tourism

Does the community appear to have a strong tourism sector? Why or why not?

Does the community have a slogan or brand?

Grade and comment on the quality and appearance of existing tourist attractions.

A B C D F

What unique tourist features exist in this community?

What nature-based tourist attractions exist in the community?

If the community has a visitor's center, grade and comment on the customer service you received when you visited:

A B C D F

Comment on the availability and quality of community brochures, business directories, or community profiles if they are available.

Grade the availability and selection of overnight accommodations (hotels, motels, B&Bs, campgrounds):

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the customer service of front desk staff.

A B C D F Not applicable

Grade and comment on the variety of restaurants. Consider location, cost, and types of foods available.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of facilities to accommodate a wedding, conference, wedding, or other large event.

A B C D F

What have you seen that could be developed into a tourist attraction (natural or man-made)?

Remember to take photos of the community's tourism.

Housing

Describe the variety of residential housing in the community (apartment, townhouses, single-family, multi-family, etc.).

Grade and comment on the overall availability, quality, and affordability of housing in the community.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of the following:

Existing/older homes		A	B	C	D	F
Vacant lots for new homes		A	B	C	D	F
New homes		A	B	C	D	F
Apartments/rental housing		A	B	C	D	F
Transitional housing/homeless shelters	A	B	C	D	F	
Senior assisted living		A	B	C	D	F
Assisted living/group homes for those with disabilities		A	B	C	D	F

Do some neighborhoods or areas of the community appear more or less welcoming to a diverse range of residents (consider people of color, racial/ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, people with diverse religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, etc.). Why?

What are the most appealing and least appealing features of housing in this community? Why?

Remember to take photos of the community's housing.

Business and economy

What appear(s) to be the major employer(s) in the community?

Does there appear to be a primary industry in the community (e.g. agriculture, tourism, mining, advanced manufacturing, food processing, etc.)? Is the community noticeably dependent on any one type of industry?

Grade and comment on the appearance of industrial facilities.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of professional, commercial, and financial services (e.g., engineering, insurance, legal, print shops, web design, accounting firms, banks, ATMs, etc).

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of high-speed internet services in this community.

A B C D F

Remember to take photos of the community's business and economy.

Government, public services, education, and health

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of emergency services (e.g., police, fire, ambulance, and emergency medical).

A B C D F

Are municipal offices (city hall, courthouse, DMV, etc.) conveniently located?

Grade and comment on the helpfulness of government employees. You could enter the courthouse or city hall and ask them where you could buy a county plat book (i.e., map book).

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of schools:

Pre-school/Headstart	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Kindergarten	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Primary/elementary	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Middle schools	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
High schools	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Colleges/universities	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of healthcare facilities.

Hospitals	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Physicians	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Dentists	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Optometrists	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Chiropractors	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Mental health services	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Yoga/message	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Other medical offices and clinics	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Please specify if you found other medical offices and clinics.

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of social services (e.g., day care, senior center, counseling)?

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the variety and quality of retail food outlets (grocery stores, superstores, convenience stores, gas stations). Comment on location, cost, and types of foods available. Are healthy food options available and if so, where?

A B C D F

Comment on any apparent ways that residents grow their own food or access food from local farms (e.g., community gardens, backyard gardens, farmers markets, community supported agriculture farms or drop sites).

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of emergency food services (e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens, community meals).

A B C D F

Remember to take photos of the community's government, public services, education, and health.

Public Transportation

Grade the availability and accessibility of the following modes of public transportation:

Local bus	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Intercity or regional bus	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Van	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Train	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Taxi	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Ride sharing	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Shared bicycles	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

If there are various modes of public transportation, comment on how easy would it be to connect from one to another (e.g., bus stops near train depot)?
(box)

Grade and comment on the availability and usefulness of public transit maps/schedules/websites if applicable. If public transit exists, are people using it? If so, comment on the level of use.

A B C D F Not applicable

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of each of the following:

Streets	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Bike lanes on street	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Street signage	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Street lighting	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Street crossings	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Traffic controls	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Sidewalks	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Bus stops with shelters/shade	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Are community facilities and infrastructure accessible for people with disabilities, the elderly, people carrying luggage or pushing strollers, and youth with bikes, skateboards, scooters, etc.?

Grade the availability of public parking outside of the downtown.

A B C D F

Grade the signage for public parking.

A B C D F

Did you experience traffic congestion anywhere? If yes, where?

Remember to take photos of the community's public transportation.

Outdoor spaces

How would you describe the overall environmental health of the community (air quality, litter, noise pollution, etc.)?

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of the following outdoor amenities:

Benches	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Shade areas	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Drinking fountains	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Public art	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Landscaping/streetscaping	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Wireless internet access points	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Public restrooms	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Public trash containers	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Public recycling containers	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Household recycling containers	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of each of the following types of recreational facilities.

Parks (mowed and unmowed)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Public recreation facilities	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Non-motorized trails (bike, pedestrian, hike)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Motorized trails (ATV, snowmobile)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Grade and comment on the variety of trails (ATV, biking, pedestrian, equestrian, etc.). If trail facilities exist, are people using them? If so, comment on the level of use.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of bike paths and trails. If bike facilities exist, are people using them? If so, comment on the level of use.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on the availability and accessibility of bicycle parking near schools, retail areas, community services, and recreational facilities.

A B C D F

Grade the signage for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A B C D F

Grade and comment on your sense of safety as a pedestrian or bicyclist in the community. Are there any apparent incentives the community offers for transit users, pedestrians, or bicyclists (closer parking to destinations, "bicycle benefits" discount programs, etc.)?

A B C D F

Remember to take photos of the community's outdoor spaces.

Recreation and culture

Grade and comment on the availability and quality of the recreational facilities for each of the following:

Senior citizens	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Families	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Young adults	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Single adults	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Teens	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Children (6–12 years)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Children (0–6 years)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
(box)						

What recreational activities or facilities seem to be missing in the community?

Grade and comment on the visibility and accessibility of civic organizations and clubs (e.g., Lions/Lionesses, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.). Are there organizations and clubs that would appeal to a variety of age groups, including youth?

A B C D F

Does the community have historic buildings or places? Are they well maintained?

Does the community have a variety of faith-based places (e.g., churches, synagogues, temples, etc.)?

Does the community hold annual events or cultural festivals? What events do local residents recommend?

Grade and comment on how welcoming the community appears to be to people of all:

Ages	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Abilities (wheelchair access, deaf/blind)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Religions (variety of worship opportunities)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Races and ethnicities (Hispanic/Latino etc.)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Sexual orientation (LGBT individuals/families)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable
Marital statuses (single, married, divorced)	A	B	C	D	F	Not applicable

Do you feel certain groups are more welcomed than others? Why or why not?

Remember to take photos of the community's recreation and culture.

If you are visiting this community during night hours, please complete the following questions.

Grade and comment on the appeal of the community's evening entertainment options for youth.

A B C D F

What night-time locations/venues appear to be popular for youth?

Grade the adequacy of street and alley lighting.

A B C D F

Grade your perception of safety at night. Do you feel you can safely navigate the streets at night?

A B C D F

Remember to take photos of the community at night, if possible.

Firsthand comments from residents

Grade and comment on the friendliness of community residents.

A B C D F

Comment on the quality of information and assistance provided by community residents and local business employees.

If residents and local business employees did not have answers to your questions, were they able to refer you to someone else who could provide assistance?

In general, did residents you spoke with have a positive or negative attitude toward their community? Did you sense community pride?

Did residents identify a particular issue to be of major concern?

Additional observations

(1 page)

Reflections and wrap up

Did the information you collected prior to the visit accurately reflect what you observed and experienced?

What would bring you back to the community in the future?

How would you feel if your family moved here within the next 6 months?

List five positive things you observed about the community:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are three potential opportunities for improvement in the community?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What will you remember most about the community six months from now (negative or positive)?

What have you learned that has changed your impression of your own community?

What new ideas has this visit given you about what is needed in your own community?

Describe one idea that you will borrow for use in your own community and describe how you will implement it.

Remember to take photos of things in the community give ideas for a project that you can do in your own community.

Thank you for participating in the Youth First Impressions Survey! If you have any questions, please contact the UW-Extension Center for Community & Economic Development: cced@ces.uwex.edu; 608-236-8136