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AARP DC Villages Qualitative Study
Discussion Groups with Villages' Board Members, Volunteers and Staff
Discussion Guide – 9-18-09

I. Introduction (15 minutes)

A. AARP Welcome and Introduction

Project background
Introduction of AARP and ANR staff
Purpose of discussion groups

B. Moderator Introduction

- Ground rules – looking for your personal experiences, perceptions and opinions. No right or wrong answers
- Will guide through topic outline – will focus on your thoughts about your Village as well as your thoughts about your role in the Village
- Feel free to talk to one another in addition to responding to moderator
- Session will last 90 minutes or less

C. Participant Introductions

- Name
- Village represented
- Brief description of village – age, size, geography, purpose, other
- Your role (e.g., specific board responsibilities, specific staff job, specific type of volunteering)

Volunteers: We recognize that your view of your Village may be somewhat limited – but that’s ok. We are interested in your point of view. How many of you are actually members of your Village? (Show of hands)

II. Benefits of Membership (15 minutes)

- A. Why do people join your Village?
- (For Board members as well as volunteers and staff, if members) Why did you become a member? What were the benefits that prompted you to join?
 - What do your members perceive to be the benefits of membership?
 - What particular benefit or benefits do you think really get them to sign up?
- B. Why do people stay members of your Village (knowing that some of your villages may be quite new)?
- What benefits, do you think, make people renew their memberships?
 - What makes their membership seem valuable to them?

III. What has Worked and What Has Not (20 minutes)

- A. Overall, in your Village, what has worked and what has not?
- What do you think have been your big successes? Discuss.
 - Has your village stumbled or come up short, do you think, in any way? Discuss
- B. I want to review several different areas of Village operation and try to understand, based on your view of your Village, what has worked and what has not. Let’s look at each area one at a time:
- Member recruiting and outreach – what has worked and what has not. Discuss.
 - Member communications – what has worked; what has not. Discuss.
 - Member use of services - what has worked; what has not. Discuss.
 - Fund raising - what has worked; what has not. Discuss.

- Member satisfaction and retention - what has worked; what has not. Discuss.

B. Other areas

Did we miss anything? Is there any other important area where something has really worked or something has really not worked? Discuss.

IV. Challenges and Changes (10 minutes)

- A. What are the 2-3 biggest challenges facing your Village? Discuss.
- B. What are the 2-3 changes that your Village needs to make in the next year? Discuss.

V. Your Role (15 minutes)

We have talked about the Village. Now let's talk about your role as a (board member/volunteer/staff person) in the Village

- A. Thinking about your role, what do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment since assuming your role? What are you most pleased with?
- B. What about your role works well? What about your role does not work well?
- C. What needs to be changed about your role, if anything, to make it more valuable for you Village? Discuss.
- D. What needs to be changed about your role to make it more fulfilling for you? Discuss.

VI. The Future (10 minutes)

- A. Where do you see your Village five years from now?
- B. What will it take to get you there?

VII. Conclusion (5 minutes)



- A. What advice would you give to a Village just starting out?
 - What advice would you give to new board members/staff/volunteers?
- B. Do you have any other thoughts about your Village, or Villages in general, that you think would be helpful to AARP in identifying best practices and helping other new Villages?
- C. Thank participants.
- D. Final thank you/comments from AARP representatives.