

Clean Air Coalition of Western New York Community Study
Research Proposal
Bill Scheider, June 2, 2010

Sample

1. Tonawanda and nearby communities can be divided into several fairly distinct areas based on residential clustering and direction relative to the industrial corridor:
 - City of Tonawanda, Census Tract 78, which includes the Brookside Terrace neighborhood near one of the NYS DEC air monitors.
 - Kaufman Avenue area, plus the area around the Holmes Elementary School (Dupont Ave, Dunlop Ave, etc.), plus Sheridan Parkside (census tracts 83 and 84). This area also extends into the Town of Tonawanda between Military Road and Elmwood Avenue, encompassing 82.01 and 82.02 west of Elmwood. This area is generally east of the industrial corridor, and the Sheridan Park air monitor is located in the middle of it.
 - Riverside area, Census Tract 58. This area is south and southeast of the industrial corridor.
 - Grand Island, Census Tract 73.02. This is west of the industrial corridor and is the site for the DEC's control air monitor.
2. Initially, participants will be individuals with whom the Clean Air Coalition has had previous conversations as a result of canvassing activities or the individuals' calling CACWNY for help or information. Four to five individuals will be selected from each of the four areas based on their locations and an assessment of their likelihood of providing relevant information, as determined by previous contacts with them. Ideally, we would like to obtain a spread across each of the four areas and identify participants who seem most likely to provide thoughtful perspectives about their experiences rather than advancing a personal agenda.
3. If we are able to accomplish the initial set of 16-20 interviews expeditiously and the interviews themselves are not overly time-consuming and burdensome, we may increase the sample size. If necessary, additional participants will be identified by means of snowball sampling in which interviewers will ask respondents to suggest people from their neighborhoods who might be willing to share their stories.

Interview Process

1. Interviews will be conducted during the warm weather period, roughly June to September. Participants will be contacted by letter and a follow-up telephone call. Interviews will take place in participants' homes or at community locations they identify as convenient and comfortable for them.

2. A team of two trained members of the Clean Air Coalition will conduct each interview according to a standardized protocol. We currently have a pool of 4-5 volunteers who will conduct the interviews in teams of two. Interviewers will be trained to standardize the interview protocol as much as possible.
3. At the beginning of the interview, participants will be given a consent form that explains the purpose of the interview, their right to refuse to answer any questions and to terminate the interview at any time, and measures taken to insure their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they provide.
4. If respondents consent, interviews will be recorded using an MP3 recorder. Interviewers will also make written notes during the interview. As much as possible, respondents will be encouraged to tell their stories. If necessary, probes will be used to elicit certain specific information, but interviewers will be trained not to lead respondents to particular answers or points of view. See the question instrument for further details about the types of information that will be requested.

Data Analysis

1. The interviewers will be responsible for transcribing interviews into hard copy. Interviewers will be trained to avoid asking questions in a way that would incorporate personal identifying information into the recording. In addition, interviewers will screen transcripts remove any potentially identifying information. Data analysts will only see the transcripts without identifying information
2. A protocol will be developed for analyzing the narrative to extract important, and one or more data analysts will be trained conduct the analysis.
3. Results will be reported to the CACWNY Board and to the membership, and themes that emerge will be used to determine whether further research is warranted.

Human Subjects Protection

1. Only the two people who interview each subject will have personal identifying information. They will transcribe the interview and remove personal identifiers before anyone else sees the transcript. Consent forms will be stored separately in a locked file in the office of one of the participating faculty. Once identifiers have been removed from the transcripts there will be no way to link them to the consent forms, which is the only way to connect them to personal identifying information.
2. MP3 recordings will be erased as soon as the transcripts have been made.
3. Transcripts will be stored on password-protected computers in the offices of the three participating faculty. A small number of student assistants (2-3) may be recruited to help analyze the transcripts. Only the 3 faculty and 2-3 assistants will have access to the

transcripts. Only the final report written from the data will be accessible beyond these 5-6 individuals.

4. Respondents will be given an informed consent form that provides information about the study and its procedures, measures to insure anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation, and consent to record, as well as consent to interview.