

# Young Workers Interview Guide

<http://bit.ly/YWinterviewguide>

UCLA Labor Center  
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Social Movements and Labor

Guide was prepared based on information from the DataCenter Interview toolkit as well the Creative Interventions Storytelling and Organizing Project materials.

## Sections

- Verbal informed Consent Script
- Demographics of participant form
- Prep for Interviewers (before/during/after interview + checklist)
- Interviewing Tips
- Transcription Guide
- Interview Protocol

## **Verbal Informed Consent Script**

Dear Worker Participant,

As part of a research project at the UCLA Labor Center, we are being asked to investigate the working conditions of young workers in Los Angeles. We are interviewing 25 young workers for this study. The interview should last about 40 minutes and we would like to ask you questions about your current job and experiences as a young worker.

Because you have done this kind of work, we see you as an expert whose experience can shed light on the experiences of young workers in Los Angeles. By participating in this interview, you will be giving us valuable information about the situation of young workers with jobs like yours. We will use this information to make a report that will inform different stakeholders on the working conditions of young workers.

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant, but this information will help us develop a report so that the public will better understand the difficulties faced by young workers.

We will not use your name in any report or writing that comes from this project, and your identity will not be revealed so that no one will be able to know who you are if we use a quote from this interview. You are free to not respond to any question you do not wish to answer, and you are free to discontinue the interview if you choose. Please know that you have the right to stop the interview at any time or refuse answer any particular question. There are no known risks to you from answering these questions beyond that which would be encountered in daily life.

If you have any questions about this research, feel free to contact Janna Shadduck-Hernandez, Project Director at the UCLA Labor Center at [jshernandez@irle.ucla.edu](mailto:jshernandez@irle.ucla.edu) or at # 310-400-4913. If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to: UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program, 11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

I would now like to ask you if you agree to participate in the interview. If you say yes we will begin or we can schedule to meet another time and place at your convenience.

## **Demographics of Participant**

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS - Please fill out the following information before the interview.

1. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What industry do you work in?
  - a. Restaurant
  - b. Fast food
  - c. Grocery
  - d. Retail
4. What is your current position in the above industry/industries: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your race or ethnicity?
  - a. Latino or Hispanic
  - b. White
  - c. Black or African American
  - d. Asian
  - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - f. Mixed race
  - g. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. No response
6. If currently in school, please list type of school (UC, Community College, etc) attending:  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Where in Los Angeles do you live? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Where in Los Angeles do you work? \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Conducted by: _____
Date: _____ Length of Interview _____

## **Prep for the Interviewers**

## Leading up to the interview

- Before you begin meeting with interviewees, find a quiet, comfortable place to meet. Make sure it's a place where others won't overhear or listen to the conversation.
- **Test your recording equipment** and make sure the sound is clear.
- Review the interview questions to make sure they make sense and you are comfortable asking for this information. You may want to practice on a friend or co-worker.
- Turn on Do Not Disturb or airplane mode option on your phone.

## Things to bring to the interview

- Interview Protocol
- Demographic survey
- Consent form
- Recording device
- Charger /batteries
- Pen or pencil
- Headphones
- Water / snacks

## At the start of the interview

- If you haven't already done so, introduce yourself and your project to your interviewee. Explain who you are with, the objectives of the project, and why this is important in the short term and big picture.
- Go over the Consent form. Explain options for confidentiality and anonymity and ensure them they can stop anytime. Give them the consent form to keep.
- Allow the interviewee to ask any questions he/she might have. Avoid discussing outcomes you expect to find, as this may bias the interviewee towards expected responses.
- After this introduction, begin recording, double-checking that the equipment is running smoothly. Start the tape by saying your name and the date (including year) and location of the interview. To test participant's sound, ask them about the weather or a casual questions about their day.

## During the Interview

- Show genuine interest in your interviewee.
- Turn on Do Not Disturb on your mobile device (ask them to turn their phone off or on silent).
- Refer to the interview guide, but you don't need to follow it strictly. Instead, you should focus mainly on the rapport between you and your interviewee, referring to the guide as a backbone to keep you on track.
- Observe while interviewing, being aware of and sensitive to how the person responds to

different questions. Begin with questions that are easier to answer and slowly build into the more sensitive ones after the interviewee is more comfortable.

- Your interviewees aren't all the same; thus, there will be differences among your interviews. Some people may have more or less to say on certain questions.
- Keep the recorder running, even if you think the information is irrelevant.
- Allow for silences, take breaks if necessary.
- Do not state your opinion, agree, or disagree with anything that is said. Your role is simply an observer and you should not have any influence over the interviewee's responses. Be aware of and maintain neutral body language. Be culturally sensitive – don't be judgmental if something feels strange or surprising to you.

### **After the Interview**

- Double check that the interviewee is comfortable with everything said being on record. Ask the interviewee if there is anything else they would like to add and thank them again for their time.
- Ask if they have any questions for you and if would like to stay in touch with you regarding the results.
- After the interview is completed, say "Time Ended" or "End of Interview" so that when you come back to the interviews later, you'll know nothing got cut off.
- Make sure the sound is there.
- Download your file to a laptop.
- Transcribe the recording.
- Send the transcription and recording to Professor Janna.

### **Evaluation**

After an interview, do not simply move on to the next one. You should listen to the tape, examine your interviewing strengths and weaknesses, and determine what you can improve on for the next interview. Following are some questions you should ask yourself after listening to the tape: (taken from H. Rubin and I. Rubin's Qualitative Interviewing p. 164-167):

1. Did you approach personal and difficult questions too quickly, rather than building towards them to make the interviewee more comfortable?
2. Were the interviewee's answers of sufficient depth? If not, try to determine why.
3. Did you use enough probes and ask enough follow-up questions? If not, try to come up with more.
4. Were you able to keep a neutral stance, or did you inadvertently express some of your own opinions in the interview, possibly influencing the interviewee's responses?
5. Think about what the interviewee may be saying indirectly and develop follow-up questions to make the interviewee address these subjects directly.
6. Did your interviewee bring up themes that you did not previously consider, but would be helpful to include in your research? Revise your interview guide to include questions on these themes.

## Interviewing Tips

### Tips on Interviewing

- Keep questions clear and create a comfortable environment for the interviewee, always respecting his/her wishes.
- Be aware of your language and words the interviewee may not be familiar with. Take your cues from the storyteller – use their wording.
- Ask one question at a time and avoid interrupting the interviewee.
- Really listen and be affirmative to the answers by nodding and encouraging. Try not to gesture or make sharp movements while listening to the story; it may distract the interviewee or create discomfort.
- If a question doesn't seem relevant to them, it is okay to move on. There is usually some overlap between the questions.
- If the question has already been answered in response to a previous question, you don't need to ask it again, but you may want to check in to see if the interviewee has anything else to add on the point.
- Allow for silences; they give the speaker a chance to think. If you feel yourself rushing on to the next question, use periods of silence to review your interview guide or write down brief notes.
- Be sensitive to interviewee's time, energy level, and other commitments.
- Take breaks as necessary

### Be Mindful of Your Body Language

- Mirror the interviewee's body language. For example, if they maintain a formal decorum then respect that desire; if they take a more casual approach, you can mirror that behavior accordingly.
- Your body language, responses, and facial expressions should reflect appropriately the character of the story the interviewee is telling.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewee while s/he is speaking to show that you are interested, focused and engaged.
- If you need to review your questions during the interview, find a moment after the interviewee is finished speaking to pause, review your notes, and get back on track.

### Avoid Expressing Judgment

- Let the interviewee know that s/he is the expert on the topic and that there is no "right" answer. This can be stated explicitly and/or conveyed through nonverbal cues (e.g. encouraging smiles, nodding, etc.)
- Be culturally sensitive; if you hear things that are unfamiliar or that you disagree with please don't display a judgmental reaction.
- Do not state your opinion, agree, or disagree with anything that is said. Your role is

to ask questions, record what is said, and minimize your influence on the interviewee's responses.

- Emotional reactions may occur and it's best to be prepared; give your respondent time and show respect and support if s/he cries or becomes upset.

### **Probing Strategies<sup>1</sup>**

Often, we want or need more information than we get in response to a question during an interview. To probe is to ask follow-up questions when we do not fully understand a response, when answers are vague or ambiguous, or when we want to obtain information that is more specific or in-depth. Probes should be used when:

- The interviewee gives an incomplete or unclear answer.
- The interview is hesitant to answer a question.
- The interviewee has trouble expressing her/himself or seems too shy to speak at length.
- There is any reason for the interviewer to think that the interviewee has not given a complete report of her/his thinking
- Reassuring probes are needed when a interviewee seems to lack confidence.

Probing questions that encourage an interviewee to expand or go deeper on a subject include:

- Could you please tell me more about...
- I'm not quite sure I understood ...Could you tell me about that some more?
- O'm not certain what you mean by... Could you give me some examples?
- Could you tell me more about your thinking on that?
- You mentioned....Could you tell me more about that?
- This is what I thought I heard...Did I understand you correctly?
- So what I hear you saying is..."
- Can you give me an example of...
- What makes you feel that way?
- What are some of your reasons for liking it?
- You just told me about.... I'd also like to know about....

It is important to use neutral probes that do not suggest answers. All probes must be non-directive, that is, they must not "lead" the interviewee to a particular answer.

The most effective neutral probes are: (1) silence, (2) repeating the original question, and (3) brief, assenting remarks ("Ok." "I see." "Uh huh.")

The value of silence in an interview cannot be exaggerated. The interviewer who can wait patiently and quietly will soon find that several seconds of silence will often prompt an interviewee to expand on or clarify a previously inadequate answer.

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<sup>1</sup>

Adapted from: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/resources/pdf/tipsheet34.pdf>

## Transcription Guide

Please read all of these instructions before starting your transcription.

### To ACCESS FILES:

1. Connect your cell phone to a computer and download the file on to a computer. It should download as an mp3 file. Contact professors if you have trouble with this step.
2. Use Quicktime to play the recording (shortcuts below)

### CREATE WORD FILE

Begin your transcription with:

- File name - your name, Interview #1 or 2, industry ex. Saba\_Interview 1\_Restaurant
- The name of the file. e.g., Your last name, Your first name (Date of Interview) (if you do more than one interview per day, add employer a, employer b, etc.
  - Industry
  - Your name: "Transcribed by..."
- Add a footer to the document which includes:
  - Young Worker Interviews
  - The name of the file + Industry
  - Page numbers

5) Mark the person who is speaking by using initials.

a) Regarding the Interviewer, the files will include the Interviewer's name. You can use initials to mark the statements made by the interviewer, e.g., Waheed, Saba (3-22-11)

SW: My next question is about...

b) Regarding the Interviewee, label them by their initials .

EM: Well, I wanted to tell you this because...

6) Transcription formatting:

a) Single space generally and separate sections with a space when changing speakers.

SW: My next question is around promotions. What is the process for promotions for employees?

EM: We have a clear job ladder with trainings built in at each level. We have a strong promotion program that encourages employees to stay with the company for a long time and be invested in the company.

b) Break big sections of narrative into paragraphs where possible.

c) Break up long sentences.

- d) Repeated phrases or words such as, “you know,” “um,” or “like” can be left out. (you may keep these in if you plan to use transcripts to produce audio clips)
- e) Leave out interviewer responses when they are only showing that they are listening (such as, “wow,” “that’s interesting,” etc.).
- f) Where a word or a phrase is inaudible, type ( ).
- g) When there is an interruption, use dashes. For example: There was a—.

**SHORTCUTS:**

1. In Quicktime, the spacebar = play/pause; J = rewind (hit J a few times); L = fast forward (hit L a few times)
2. To switch from Quicktime to Word, press “apple + tab” (Mac) or “ctrl+tab” (PC)
3. Have an extra keyboard? You can attach it to your comp, put it on the floor and use the spacebar as a foot pedal.

**Save your transcripts in this folder: CREATE FOLDER**

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**EXAMPLE:**

SW: Can you describe for me the first day of work?

JA: I started my shift at 6am and had meeting with my supervisor. She conducted a two hour training.

SW: What kinds of things did they include in the training?

JA: First, it was all about safety and safety equipment....