



Economic Impact Survey Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **Is the mail-back survey linked to the onsite survey?**
 - Yes. The mail-back survey will be mailed to those who participate in the onsite survey AND agree to participate in the longer mail-back survey by providing their address.

- **Can a person participate in the onsite survey but not the mail-back survey?**
 - Yes. The mail-back survey is optional for those who participate in the onsite survey.

- **What are the projected start and end dates for surveying?**
 - We are asking volunteers to administer surveys from the month of July or August through September. The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor must send all of the data to the Alliance of National Heritage Areas in October. We will notify you when we have the approval to start surveying.

- **What types of visitors are we expected to survey? Does it matter if they are local residents who we may know, bicyclist at a state heritage site, or users of the survey site for purposes unrelated to tourism?**
 - It does not matter what type of visitor you survey as long as you attempt to survey a variety of visitors. In other words, don't focus solely on one group. It is important to maintain a balance between surveying local visitors and out-of-town visitors, if possible. The surveys will tell us where visitors are from and what types of users they are.

- **What if a tour bus shows up? Can we survey everyone in the group in order to increase our survey numbers?**
 - We want to avoid the over-sampling of large groups. Therefore, in this situation, we are asking our volunteers to only administer the survey to one individual from each group. Please see page 15 in the Volunteer Instruction Manual for specific guidance in this area. However, if many people in the group insist on taking part in the survey, then do the following:
 - go ahead and administer the survey to them
 - make a note of the situation in your Daily Report Form (Appendix B. of the Volunteer Instruction Manual)
 - mail back the surveys, even though they might not all be used

- **As a volunteer, what if I am unable to follow the exact schedule for surveying that is set out in the Volunteer Instruction Manual?**
 - As long as you track the time (season, date, time of day) of when you're surveying, you can administer the surveys on a schedule that works for you. For example, a four-hour time slot may not work for you. Therefore, you may only be able to survey one hour each day. That's fine.
- **Can I survey at a site that I am not familiar with?**
 - We encourage volunteers to survey at sites they ARE familiar with. Surveying at sites you are familiar with means that you understand the context of the site. Also, knowledge of the 30-mile radius will be helpful since visitors may ask you specific questions about the site and the local area.
- **What if a visitor hands back an incomplete survey? Can I approach the visitor in order to ask them to complete the survey?**
 - If you have that opportunity, it's OK to ask them if they can complete the questions they left blank. However, don't go out of your way to do so.
- **If you're getting the same type of visitors (for example just families or just females) should you stop and look for other types of visitors?**
 - Don't stop. Continue surveying and note the experience and conditions on your Daily Report Form (Appendix B. of the Volunteer Instruction Manual).
- **During holidays, certain sites such as campgrounds attract more people. Why are we not allowed to survey on holidays?**
 - Surveying on holidays would introduce the problem of over-sampling and that is something we must avoid. Also, the Alliance of National Heritage Areas prohibits surveying on holidays.
- **Does the survey only apply to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor?**
 - Yes. Even though visitors that you survey may be making other stops during their trip, we are only concerned with economic activity within the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor for this survey.
- **What if volunteers are capable of administering more than the preferred number of surveys (the preferred number of surveys is 60 at each site)?**
 - Based on standards set out by the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, we cannot recommend that volunteers collect more than 60 complete surveys. However, we encourage volunteers to sign-up for multiple sites in order to collect more surveys.
- **What if we administer 10 surveys in a single day that report that the visitors are unaware that they are currently in the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor? Is that data still valuable?**
 - Yes. This data is still extremely valuable to us.
- **Should volunteers survey visitors as they enter the site or as they exit?**
 - We recommend surveying people as they exit.

- **If asked by employees of the site, are we allowed to share the names and addresses of visitors we survey?**
 - No. Volunteers cannot share names, addresses or any other personal information about visitors with employees of sites.

- **Has the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor considered conducting an online survey instead of using the mail-back survey?**
 - Yes. We strongly considered using an online survey as opposed to the mail-back survey; however, we determined that the latter would be the most effective based on the following reasons:
 - Not every visitor who is surveyed will have access to the internet.
 - The onsite survey is linked to the mail-back survey. Therefore, volunteers would have to give visitors some type of identifier in order to complete the second portion of the survey online. This would prove to be difficult and potentially problematic.

- **Will volunteers have the tools to “educate” visitors about the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor?**
 - Yes. Volunteers will be equipped with resources such as corridor maps and literature about the ECNHC.

- **Many historical sites and museums are closed on Mondays. Does it make a difference which days of the week volunteers conduct surveys?**
 - No, it does not matter which days of the week volunteers conduct surveys.

- **What if a visitor hands back a survey that is illegible?**
 - In this situation, the volunteer is asked to clarify the illegible information and/or answers with the visitor. Once the information and/or answers have been clarified, the volunteer can write-in the clarifications accordingly on the survey.

- **If an incomplete survey is handed in by a visitor and the volunteer does not have the opportunity to ask the visitor to complete it, then will the mail-back survey still apply?**
 - Unfortunately we won't be able to use the mail-back survey that corresponds with an onsite survey that is incomplete.

- **Can volunteers work as a team at the same site?**
 - Absolutely. If volunteers want to work together as a team on a site in order to meet the minimum number of surveys, that is fine.