Listen4Good

IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY FEEDBACK LOOPS

A PRIMER

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WELCOME

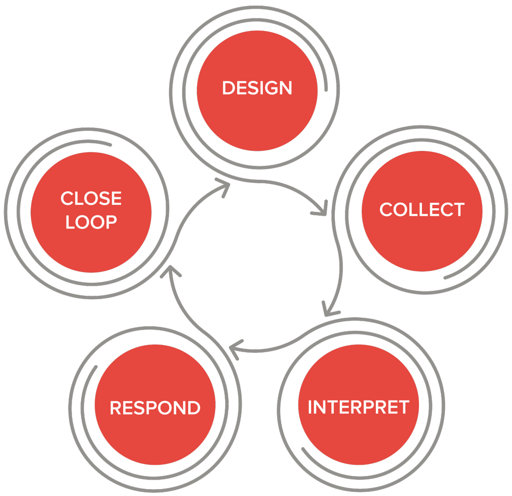
We're glad you're here! We designed this primer to be an ongoing resource for organizations that have "graduated" from Listen4Good (L4G). Now that you have reduced daily access to L4G, we wanted to ensure you had the information you needed to continue your feedback journey. We also know that there is often staff turnover within organizations. As such, this guide is intended to:

- Revisit the core practices and principles of Listen4Good to maintain your institutional memory.
- Provide you with food for thought and insights as you continue to sustain feedback loops and integrate them within your organization.

OVERVIEW

Systematically gathering and responding to feedback from your clients can make a huge difference for your organization and the people you serve. Check out this video on how feedback has transformed one Houston nonprofit or this video to see how feedback has empowered teens in Florida.

Completing a high-quality feedback loop process takes time—about 6 months based on our experience working with more than 200 organizations. This guide walks you through the **five steps** for building high-quality feedback practices, how to adequately prepare for feedback-gathering, and things to think about once you've completed a few successful loops.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN / **PREPARING YOUR ORGANIZATION**

GET STAFF BUY-IN

No single person in an organization can successfully implement feedback loops on their own. You'll need others along the way, so take time to engage staff on the why and what of your feedback exercise:

WHY Make clear that the goal is to improve clients' experience and NOT to blame or penalize anyone for organizational shortcomings.

WHAT Give staff visibility and input into the timeline and process. Ask them what types of topics would be helpful to get client feedback on or how best to administer surveys. Have them participate in interpreting the data you receive.

DEVELOP A PROJECT PLAN

Having a project plan (see Appendix A) can keep you on track and allow you to set expectations with staff. Most importantly, it can help you set a goal for when you want to have survey results in hand. For example, perhaps you need the data to inform your annual planning meeting. Identifying ahead of time when you'll need your data allows you to work backwards and set realistic deadlines. An effective project plan also considers who will need to be involved, to what extent, and at what steps in the process.

IDENTIFY PILOT PROGRAM

While you may want to institute feedback loops across all your programs, it's a significant lift to do that right out of the gate. We recommend starting with one or two programs that serve at least 50-100 participants. If a program serves less than that, surveying may not be the best method and you may want to consider focus groups or interviews as alternative methodologies.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN / **PREPARING YOUR CLIENTS**

Offering honest feedback can be intimidating, especially if you're dependent on an organization for food, shelter, or employment. Clients may not believe an organization really cares what they have to say or they may fear negative consequences if they say something critical. This can lead them to overstate the positive and stay silent on the negative—a dynamic we call courtesy bias.

Your main job in preparing clients is therefore to help your clients get as comfortable as possible with providing honest and potentially critical feedback.

To promote candor, overcome courtesy bias, and build trust, an organization often has to institute multiple rounds of feedback and visibly respond to what they learn. The more clients trust you, the stronger and more authentic your feedback loop will be. Of course, it goes without saying that you have to mean what you say to clients, and your actions during and after the survey process will speak louder than your words. Consider these tips for establishing early trust with clients:

WHAT Encourage clients to be honest in their feedback, no matter what. Be clear that providing negative feedback will have no impact on their access to services.

WHY Be up front about your goals for gathering feedback. You are not doing this for a grant or to get praise but to continuously improve based on client perspectives.

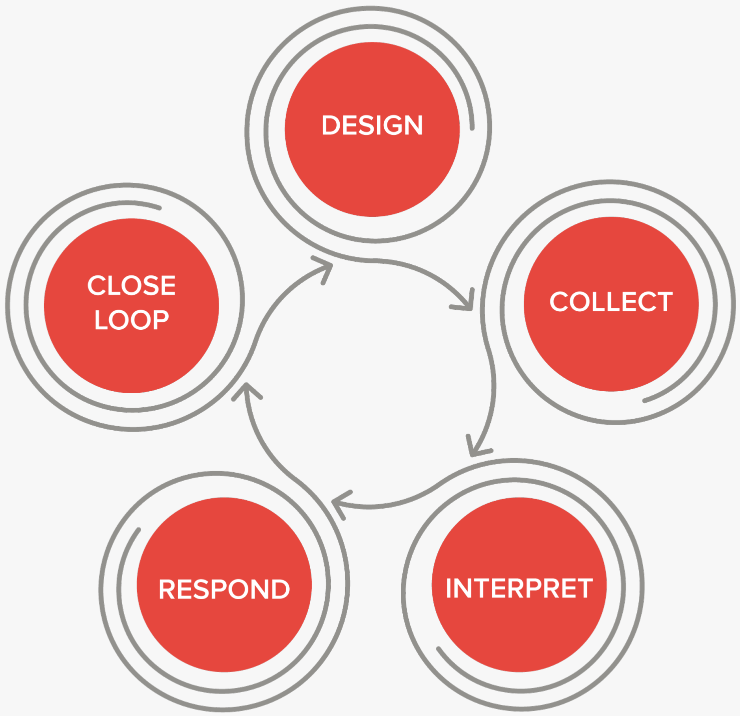
HOW We recommend starting with **anonymous** feedback. This assures clients they'll be protected and not punished for offering criticism. Also consider how you can engage clients early on to get input on survey questions and your implementation plan.

See examples of how other organizations have positioned Listen4Good to clients.

Once you've prepared clients and your organization, you can start your feedback loop by designing your L4G survey.

PARTNERING WITH CLIENTS

Throughout the feedback process, leverage the expertise of your clients! If you have a client advisory group or certain clients you regularly confer with, ask for their opinions and advice at each step. Specific places where we have seen organizations successfully engage clients include:



Design
Brainstorming questions, translating, and optimizing wording

Collect
Helping to administer surveys and make other clients feel comfortable

Interpret and Respond
Helping to make sense of feedback and determining how to respond

Closing the Loop
Sharing results back and/or leading focus groups with other clients

STEP 1 / **SURVEY DESIGN**

A carefully crafted survey will help you understand your clients' experience with your organization from a variety of angles. The goal is to keep the survey short (ideally, no more than 15 questions in total) to ensure higher survey completion rates. The L4G survey template can be found in Appendix B, and has the following four sections:

NET PROMOTER SYSTEM®

These three questions help you understand clients' overall feelings about their experience and allow you to compare your organization to peer nonprofits and agencies.* For more information on NPS®, click here.

EXPERIENCE

Two core and four optional questions that help you understand clients' perspectives about critical aspects of their service experience such as, to what extent their needs have been met, how frequently they feel treated with respect, how connected they feel, and how easy it is to access services.

CUSTOM

You can add up to five custom questions to cover topics not otherwise included in the L4G survey. To see what custom questions other organizations have asked, check out the L4G custom question bank.

DEMOGRAPHICS

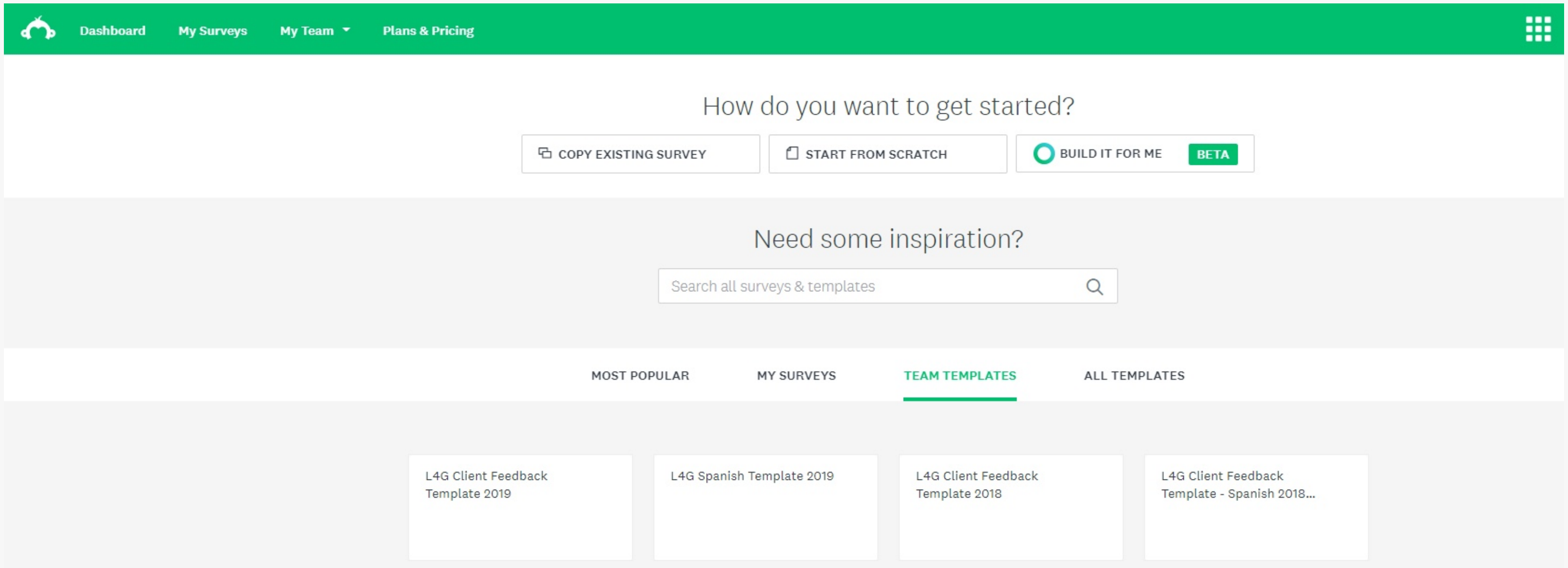
By collecting client demographics, you can understand how different groups are experiencing your organization. For example, does your organization meet the needs of women better than men? Do 12th graders rate your organization better than 9th graders? Demographic questions can also be customized to suit your particular population.

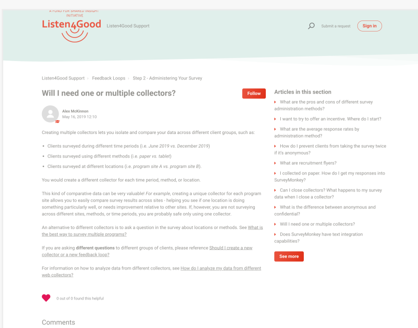
*The ability to benchmark, which simply means to compare your survey results with other L4G organizations, is a key benefit. In order to successfully benchmark, though, all organizations must ask the same core L4G questions in the same way. Benchmarked questions include:

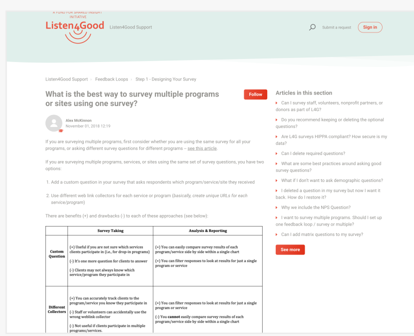
Q1. How likely are you to recommend...?
Q4. Overall, how well has the organization met your needs?
Q5. How often do staff treat you with respect?
Q6. How easy is it for you to get services?
Q8. How connected do you feel...?

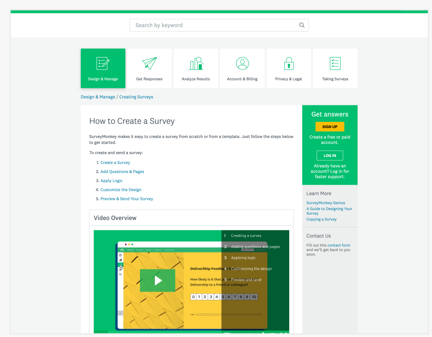
How to Create an L4G Survey in SurveyMonkey

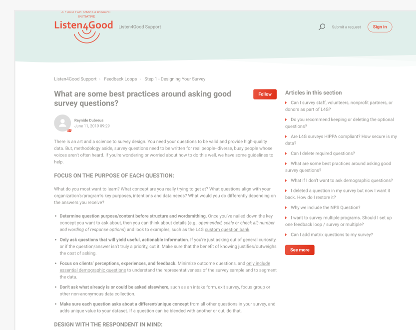
In order to get benchmarks and access the L4G survey in SurveyMonkey, go to “Team Templates” when creating a survey and select the L4G Client Feedback Template. Do not make changes to the benchmarked questions except where indicated.











If you already have an existing L4G benchmarked survey, create a new collector (i.e., link for collecting data). Click [here](#) for more info.

For advice on how to design your survey to survey multiple programs or sites, click [here.](#)

For support on creating a survey in SurveyMonkey, click [here](#).

For additional advice on how to ask good survey questions, click [here](#).

STEP 2 / **SURVEY ADMINISTRATION**

There is no perfect method for collecting data, but by reflecting on the following questions, you can craft a plan that works for your organization and clients.

WHO

Who will distribute your survey to clients—staff, volunteers, case managers? If possible, for survey administration, we recommend a person that has the trust of your clients and the appropriate language skills and cultural competency. Why? Because some clients may not feel comfortable providing negative feedback if they don't feel comfortable with who is in the room.

It may be helpful to hold a short training for survey administrators. This will establish a consistent protocol and align everyone on key client-facing messages. Check out our Staff Training and Talking Points discussion guide for help.

WHEN

When is a good time to survey your clients? Pick a time when your clients are most likely to be reflective and feel safe being honest. A highly emotional time—like when a client has just received medical news, graduated a class, or is feeling rushed—is not ideal.

HOW

Exactly **how are you going to survey your clients?** Determining your survey method involves weighing a variety of trade-offs. Onsite surveys tend to result in much higher response rates than offsite. But offsite surveys provide greater privacy and flexibility. Incentives can also help boost participation in some cases. Potential administration methods include:

ONSITE

- Computer
- Tablet
- Paper
- Interviewing

OFFSITE

- Email
- Text
- Paper / Mail-in

For more details on the pros and cons of each method, click here. And as always, ask your clients for advice on what would work best for them!

To launch your survey and set up your collectors (i.e., links for collecting data), check out SurveyMonkey's help section on Getting Responses. For more support on survey administration, check out our help articles.

STEP 3 / **INTERPRETING RESULTS**

Your survey results are in! But when you receive a lot of feedback data, it can be overwhelming. There are countless ways to slice and dice the numbers and responses, we've boiled a good analysis plan down to three critical elements:

1. KNOWING WHEN TO ANALYZE YOUR DATA

Before you interpret your feedback data, make sure you can trust it. Make sure to ask some foundational questions:

Q: **Do responses represent the opinions of a majority of clients or only the most vocal few? (i.e., Do I have enough responses?)** The easiest way to understand if you have "enough" survey responses is by calculating both your survey response rate and your client representation rate. These are different for every organization but, generally speaking, if you have a response rate over 50%, you're in good shape! Representation rates tend to vary between 15% and 40% based on service model.

$$\text{survey response rate} = \left(\frac{\text{\# of completed surveys}}{\text{\# of clients that were asked to take the survey}}\right)$$

$$\text{client representation rate} = \left(\frac{\text{\# of completed surveys}}{\text{\# of unique clients directly served by the program that was surveyed}}\right)$$

Q: **Does your respondent pool mirror your overall client population? (i.e., Am I getting an unbiased sample?)** Comparing your respondent demographics to your overall client population helps you check for bias and ensures the opinions you've received represent the concerns of the whole. For example, if you serve men and women but only received surveys from men, you wouldn't assume women felt the same way. Another reason to focus on representation is to understand whether you've included the voices of marginalized or minority populations.

If you have a lower response rate or biased representation rate, don't panic. Consider holding off on analysis while you collect more surveys, or if you decide to continue with analysis, be aware that the data may only be valid for a specific slice of your overall population.

STEP 3 / INTERPRETING RESULTS CONTINUED

2. ANALYZING YOUR QUANTITATIVE DATA

We recommend beginning with the numbers (quantitative data), and analyzing them in three different ways:

1. Look at your NPS® score, overall distributions, and means.

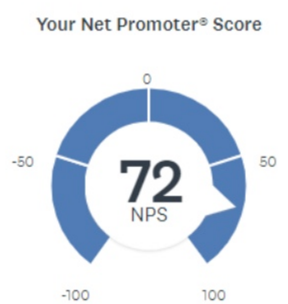
NPS® is your organizational thermostat and measures the temperature on clients' current feelings. To better understand how to interpret your NPS® score, click here. Next, look at the means and distributions for other quantitative questions. Where are clients rating more positively or negatively? How do the results on these other questions shed light on your NPS® results?

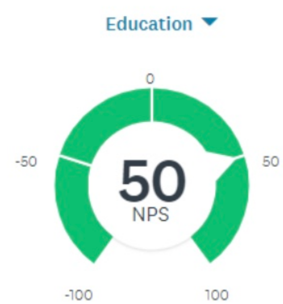
2. Compare your results to the benchmarks.

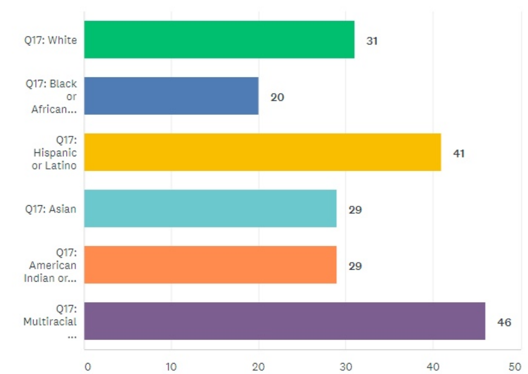
Benchmarks allow you to see how your clients' results compare to those of other organizations like yours. Are your average ratings lower or higher than the benchmark? If this is your second or third time doing the L4G survey, have your numbers gone up or down over time? For information on interpreting benchmarks, click here.

3. Compare client sub-groups.

One of the most important steps in analyzing your data is to compare results across sub-groups. These would be demographics like race/ethnicity, age, as well as program sites/locations or how long clients have been in the program. Sub-group analysis uncovers important differences in clients' relative experiences and is key for diving into topics like equity and inclusion. Are some client sub-groups having a notably worse (or better) experience than others?







For support on how to analyze data in SurveyMonkey, check out these help pages.

STEP 3 / INTERPRETING RESULTS CONTINUED

3. ANALYZING YOUR QUALITATIVE DATA

Open-ended feedback (or qualitative data) can be rich with actionable insights. We recommend the following steps to get the most out of your qualitative data.

READ

This one might seem obvious, but we can't emphasize enough how important it is to **read through all responses in a way that avoids fixating on a small number of overly positive or overly negative statements.** It can be helpful to do this in a team setting, involving administrative staff, program staff, or even clients. Write down the recurring themes you notice.

GROUP

Use the themes you noticed to organize your responses. "Tag" each client comment with a theme that captures its main point. After you have finished tagging, tally the number of instances that each tag or theme appears as a percentage of overall comments. By doing so, you'll have turned your qualitative data into quantitative data. For more tips on coding, click here and here.

COMPARE

Understand who is saying what. This is a little trickier, but it can reveal helpful insights. For example, if you separate your responses by different groups (e.g., NPS® promoters vs. detractors or client demographics like respondent gender, age or race/ethnicity), see if different patterns or themes emerge (e.g., one theme is more commonly mentioned by middle school students than high school students).

STEP 4 / **RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK**

You've analyzed your data. But now the rubber really meets the road. How will you respond to the feedback? There are two major elements of an effective response plan:

1. SHARE FINDINGS INTERNALLY

Before you can start responding to feedback, leadership, program, and front-line staff need to know what you heard! Sharing your findings ensures everyone has the same information—and gives staff space to understand the findings for themselves.

For this type of sharing, we recommend thinking carefully about the following:

WHAT

Don't share every single data point! It would be overwhelming for staff members who have not been intimately involved in the survey process. Different levels of detail will be appropriate for different audiences, but in general, a good feedback presentation includes the following elements:

- Key themes
- Areas for celebration
- Areas for improvement
- Discussion questions

Check out our PowerPoint template or examples of other organizations' presentations.

HOW

Think about whom to share the feedback data with (including clients) and in what order. No matter what, have empathy for how colleagues may react; people can feel judged if survey findings are negative. Create an environment of curiosity and learning, and give people time to process and discuss. How you set up, message, and manage the meeting will be critical. Click here for additional resources.

STEP 4 / **RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK** CONTINUED

2. MAKE CHANGES

There are **four main areas where we've seen organizations make changes** in response to client feedback.

1. Program Operations—*e.g., expanding hours, adjusting curriculum*
2. Staff-Client Interactions—*e.g., offering language support, providing additional staff training.*
3. Program Offerings—*e.g., adding new services, improving referrals.*
4. Organizational Culture—*e.g., establishing other feedback opportunities, establishing a client advisory council.*

But how do you know what potential changes to prioritize? This involves **three core tasks:**

1. Assess the feedback and weigh client benefit. First, determine which pain points are most pressing, and which improvements would make the biggest difference in clients' lives. One way to look at the severity of a "pain point" is in knowing how many people are affected by it. Alternatively, take an equity lens and focus on the pain points that affect the most marginalized groups.

2. Determine your organizational ability to respond. Some actions are easy to execute. Others are longer term and involve more interdependencies or resources. As you consider what to prioritize, compare the potential client benefit with the resources you'll need to make organizational changes.

3. Define clear next steps. Without a plan and some built-in accountability, things can often fall by the wayside. Be up front about who needs to do what, so you can follow through on the changes you've committed to. Use our action planning worksheet in Appendix C to help you in this effort.

STEP 5 / **CLOSING THE LOOP**

In this fifth and final step, you'll close the loop with your clients. Step 5 is arguably the most unfamiliar, yet critical step. It's about letting your clients know what you heard from them and how you're responding to their feedback. It shows clients that their voices have meaning. As an organization, going out of your way to acknowledge feedback, especially critical feedback, is a significant way to build long-term trust.

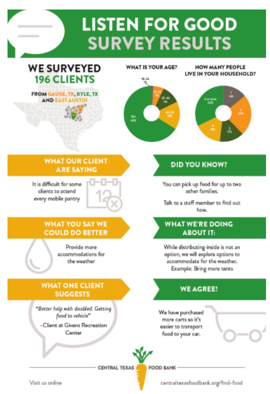
Below are some things to consider as you plan the most effective way to close the loop.

HOW The exact communication method you choose for closing the loop is up to you. You can hand out flyers, put up a poster, or create a web page — examples below. Access a template for closing the loop here.

WHAT Keep your message brief and relevant to your clients. Sharing specific data points isn't always helpful! Instead, share the broad strokes of what you heard and what you're doing in response.

WHEN It's common for closing the loop to unintentionally slip off your agenda. Don't fall into the trap of waiting for the perfect time. Just do it and your next feedback loop will be even more rewarding.

Examples:



EPILOGUE: SUSTAINING FEEDBACK

As you look to make feedback an embedded practice over the long-term, there are a few things to consider:

CULTURE

The practice of instituting feedback loops can change your organization. For example, having strong feedback loops can raise questions about how your organization adapts to new information, how open it is, and how it learns. Building client-focused feedback practices also raises broader questions about the role of clients as contributors to your organization and how to involve them in organizational decision-making. Be mindful about how to build on the spark created by L4G.

TECHNOLOGY

While you've started on SurveyMonkey, you may also have significant data collection efforts on other platforms. Be sure to check out how SurveyMonkey integrates with other platforms. Technology integration sounds wonky but can be key for sustaining practice.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER SURVEY EFFORTS

To sustain feedback, you also want to be thoughtful about the cadence with which you collect feedback and how it can be coordinated with other survey efforts to avoid survey fatigue—a real thing in many contexts and organizations.

STAFFING

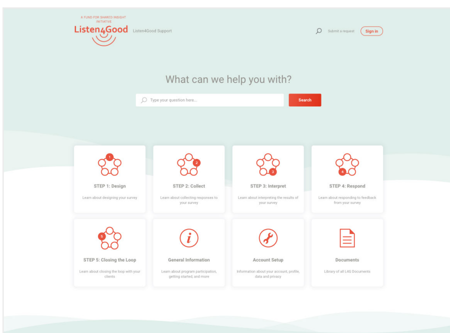
While it's helpful to have one person stewarding feedback, we think of feedback as a team sport. Continually asking who else needs to be involved and engaging champions internally will make feedback a stronger part of your organization.

Also click here for our best practices on ongoing survey administration.

EPILOGUE: SUSTAINING FEEDBACK CONTINUED

L4G COMPETENCIES FOR HIGH-QUALITY FEEDBACK LOOPS

If you want to see how your feedback practice stacks up and identify how you can continue to strengthen your approach, check out L4G's organizational core competencies for building strong feedback loops.



ACCESSING THE L4G HELP CENTER

L4G is currently building out a suite of interactive online resources to support organizations in their feedback work. Many of the links here take you to our new Help Center, which is organized by the steps in the feedback loop process.

Feel free to check out other articles of interest! However, note that the Help Center includes some references to our online web app (to which you don't have access) that is currently in beta testing.

Do not distribute Help Center articles outside your organization.

Listen4Good remains ready to help! If you have additional questions, please reach out to us anytime at feedback@fundforsharedinsight.org.

SUGGESTED PROJECT PLAN AND TIMELINE

Average 6-month cycle

	1 SURVEY DESIGN 4-6 WEEKS	2 SURVEY ADMINISTRATION 2-4 WEEKS		3 INTERPRETING RESULTS 2-4 WEEKS	4 RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK 2-6 WEEKS	5 CLOSING THE LOOP 4-6 WEEKS
START	6-8 weeks before survey launch	2-4 weeks before survey launch	Survey Live / Data Collection	1 week after survey close	2-4 weeks after survey close	4-8 weeks after survey close
TASKS	Sign up for SurveyMonkey account and L4G website (use same email!) Read Step 1 overview on the L4G website and plan project milestones Download and draft survey in Word Align on survey goals and questions with key staff & review with L4G consultant Program survey on the L4G website Survey Builder; translate if needed	Read through Step 2 on the L4G website and develop an implementation plan Set up a call to discuss with your L4G consultant Create survey collectors Train staff/volunteers; review client talking points Set up technology, if needed Figure out response rate calculation plan		Read through Step 3 on the L4G website Enter your response rates on the L4G website Login to SurveyMonkey and review means and distributions; compare to benchmarks Segment data by demographics + site Code and analyze qualitative data Identify key themes: areas for celebration and improvement	Read through Step 4 on the L4G website Use the Report Builder on L4G website to share survey results with staff At internal meetings, review feedback and prioritize areas for improvement Create an action plan to start making changes! Start with low hanging fruit Set up a call with your L4G consultant to discuss	Read through Step 5 on the L4G website and review closing the loop examples that might work for your organization Craft messages for clients – keep it short and relevant Determine communication channel that works best - leverage existing methods and forums! Plan for next feedback cycle
DON'T MOVE ON UNTIL YOU:	Have aligned with L4G consultant on survey design and completed the Survey Builder	Have agreed on an implementation plan with L4G consultant and launched your survey		Have entered your response rates and analyzed your data in SurveyMonkey	Have shared your findings internally and created an action plan for making changes	Have closed the loop and discussed next feedback cycle with your L4G consultant

APPENDIX B / **LISTEN4GOOD SURVEY TEMPLATE**

Please click here to download an editable version of the survey template.

Instructions:

- The gray boxes before a question or a set of questions contain relevant information and instructions for customization.
- Text that is shown in brackets << >> is customizable. **Otherwise, do not change text.**
- **Order matters.** We have designed the survey with a specific question order and ask that you keep to it except in extreme circumstances. The order of answer options is also intentional, always going from negative to positive.

SURVEY TITLE AND INTRODUCTORY TEXT

- **Rename the survey** to something engaging and relevant to your constituents.
- **Introduce the purpose of the survey** and describe how your organization will handle the feedback they receive. Keep it brief! Example below:

> "This is an opportunity for you to honestly tell us how we are doing as an organization and how we might do better. Your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Nothing you say in this survey will affect your ability to participate in << this organization's >> services in any way. Thank you for your feedback!"

NET PROMOTER SYSTEM / Q1-3

- **Replace** << this organization >> with your organization/program's name.
- **Customize Q1** by choosing option a, b, or c. If you choose option c, limit the language you include to 140 characters or fewer.

1. How likely is it that you would recommend << this organization >> to << CUSTOMIZE WITH OPTION BELOW >>?

a. **Standard:** a friend or family member

b. **General qualifier:** a friend or family member who is in a similar situation to you

c. **Specific qualifier:** a friend or family member who needed <<Y>>

NOT LIKELY AT ALL										EXTREMELY LIKELY
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

2. What is << this organization >> good at?

3. What could << this organization >> do better?

EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS / Q4-9

- **Replace** << this organization >> with your organization/program's name.
- **Q4 and Q5 are required.**
- **Q6 - Q9 are optional.** Include as many or as few of these questions as you'd like depending on their relevance to your program. They do not count toward your custom question limit.
- **Q9 may be customized to suit your program model.**

4. Overall, how well has << this organization >> met your needs?

o Not well at all
o A little bit
o Fairly well
o Very well
o Extremely well

5. How often do staff at << this organization >> treat you with respect?

o Never
o Rarely
o Sometimes
o Mostly
o Always

6. How easy is it for you to get services at << this organization >>?

o Not at all easy
o A little bit easy
o Fairly easy
o Very easy
o Extremely easy

EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS / Q4-9

7. Please explain your answer.

8. How connected do you feel to << CUSTOMIZE WITH OPTION BELOW >> at << this organization >>?

a. other participants [may be customized to suit your program model: i.e., “peers,” “cohort,” “other students”]

b. staff [may be customized to suit your program model: i.e., “your mentor,” “your case manager,” “adults”]

o Not at all connected
o A little bit connected
o Fairly connected
o Very connected
o Extremely connected

9. How often do you interact with << this organization >>?

o Every day
o A few times a week
o A few times a month
o Once a month
o Once every few months
o Less often than that

CUSTOM QUESTIONS

- You can add up to five customized questions to this survey, to be inserted before the final demographics section.
- When possible, use similar answer options or rating scales as existing Listen4Good questions.

<< INSERT CUSTOM QUESTIONS OR DELETE SECTION >>

Click here to see custom questions used by other L4G nonprofits.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS / Q10-12

- These questions are useful for making sure you have a representative sample and for segmenting results as part of your analysis.
- Please customize the answer options so they are most relevant to your constituents. The questions themselves cannot be customized.
- If you'd like to add an additional demographic question, please do so in your custom questions.
- While these questions are required in your survey, respondents can opt out of answering if they desire.

10. What is your age? (Optional)

o Under 13 years old
o 13 - 17 years old
o 18 - 24 years old
o 25 - 34 years old
o 35 - 44 years old
o 45 - 54 years old
o 55 - 64 years old
o 65 - 74 years old
o 75 years or older

11. How do you identify? (Optional)

o Female
o Male
o Prefer not to say
o Prefer to self-describe

Self-describe:

12. What is your race or ethnicity? (Optional)

o Asian
o Black or African American
o Hispanic or Latino
o Middle Eastern or North African
o Multiracial or Multiethnic
o Native American or Alaska Native
o Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
o White
o Another race or ethnicity,
Please describe below

Self-describe:

APPENDIX C / **TEAM ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET**

Please click <u>here</u> to download an editable version of the planning worksheet.

Assessing Client Feedback:

Key Issue Raised in Feedback	If addressed, Benefit to Clients (Low, Medium, High)	Outstanding Questions

Ability to Respond:

Key Issue Raised (from above)	Potential Actions	Feasibility – How Easy to Implement (Easy, Medium, Hard)	Outstanding Questions

APPENDIX C / **TEAM ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET** CONTINUED

Prioritizing Actions:

Action Planning – Next Steps:

To-Do Item	Staff Responsible	Other Staff to Consult	Timeframe	Needed Resources