

Fire Safety Education & Outreach Programs: Memphis, Tennessee

A Qualitative Research Project

Summary Report Prepared For
The National Fire Protection Association

December, 2012

Prepared By
Marsha E. Williams



BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an international nonprofit organization committed to reducing the burden of fire and other hazards by advocating for and providing codes and standards, research, training and fire prevention education initiatives. Through its Public Education Division, NFPA has partnered with fire departments in numerous cities across the country to develop outreach programs centered on low-income communities. In 2012, the NFPA's Public Education Division began such a partnership with the Fire Department in Memphis, Tennessee.

With a population of more than 650,000 and a poverty rate exceeding 25 percent, Memphis averages 3 residential structural fires per day and roughly 15 civilian fire fatalities per year. Through mapping, the Memphis Fire Department was able to identify neighborhoods with unusually high incidences:

- South Memphis, served by Fire Stations 10 and 14
- Orange Mound, served by Fire Station 22
- Parkway Village and Hickory Hill, served by Fire Station 35
- Frayser and Raleigh, served by Fire Station 47

Harvest Research Group LLC (HRG LLC) was commissioned to conduct qualitative research with members of these communities to inform the development of a fire prevention education outreach program. The goal of this research effort was to explore perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding fires and fire prevention, specifically:

- The salience and awareness of fire danger
- Knowledge of common causes of residential fires
- Awareness of fire safety measures
- Ideas and suggestions for fire safety outreach programs
- Motivations for behavior change

In addition, HRG LLC gauged reactions to three Fire Department outreach programs, one that is current and two proposed new ones.

- Fire and Life Safety Education for Children
- Home Safety Survey and Smoke Alarm Installation
- Arson Awareness and Prevention Program

RESEARCH DESIGN

In service of these objectives, six focus group discussions were conducted in Memphis from November 13-15, 2012. These included two traditional focus groups, held at Axiom Research, LLC, and four smaller group discussions for which area residents convened in the dining rooms of restaurants located in the high-risk neighborhoods across the city. Each discussion lasted up to two hours, and respondents were compensated for their time.

A total of 41 Memphis residents participated in this study, as reflected in the table below. With the exception of the pastors, all were from households with annual income at or below \$36,500 -- the median income in Memphis. Consistent with the neighborhood populations, the overwhelming majority of the participants were African American.

	Key Recruitment Criteria	Total Number of Participants
Group 1	Moms with kids age 8 and younger	9
Group 2	Pastors of churches in South Memphis	9
Group 3	Senior Citizens (age 66+) living in South Memphis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living independently or with relative, but not nursing home or assisted living facility 	6
Group 4	Adults age 21-34 living in Orange Mound	6
Group 5	Adults age 35-49 living in Frayser or Raleigh	5
Group 6	Adults age 50-64 living in Parkway Village or Hickory Hill	6

Caveat

Please keep in mind that qualitative research can yield valuable insights and can generate a wealth of information and ideas for further research. Although participants were drawn from the target neighborhoods the Memphis Fire Department and NFPA want to understand, they were not chosen to represent the communities statistically. Therefore, the findings should be considered directional, but not representative of the population in Memphis.

KEY FINDINGS

Salience and Awareness of Fire Danger

For the vast majority of these participants, crime is a far more salient threat to their quality of life and sense of safety than is fire danger. Despite the fact that numerous respondents spoke of neighbors or relatives who lost everything in fires, including their lives in two cases, on a day-to-day basis, crime and concerns about being victimized are the most pressing concerns. They worry about getting robbed or mugged, residential break-ins, random shootings, and violent assaults. This was especially the case for participants residing in South Memphis and Orange Mound, and senior citizens feel particularly vulnerable. Many respondents attribute the seemingly pervasive threat of crime to poverty, unemployment, gangs, drugs, and a generation of teens and young adults they perceived to be ruthless, with no respect or regard for others.

The perceived randomness of crime strips people of a true sense of control over their own safety. Most of these respondents believe there is only so much they can do to protect themselves from crime and violence. Many acknowledged the value of having at least one neighbor they could rely on to look out for their property while they're away from home (and vice versa). In this regard, older neighbors and homeowners were deemed far more trustworthy than younger ones or renters. In addition, respondents described a host of different steps they take to protect themselves. These included:

- Being alert and aware of their surroundings at all times
- Making sure doors have strong, secure locks and windows have bars
- Keeping doors locked at all times, and refraining from opening the door to strangers
- Limiting comings and goings after dark
 - A few senior citizens also said they avoid mid-afternoons when teens get out of school.
- Keeping entrances well-lit and frequenting only stores and gas stations that are well-lit
- Avoiding places where people tend to hang out aimlessly
- Acquiring a gun
- Maintaining a home alarm system (two respondents from Hickory Hill)
- Praying

"I changed my walking routine; I don't go at the same time everyday.... I look in every car when I leave and come home."

"You do what you can, and then hope for the best."

Most participants rated their sense of control with regards to protecting themselves from crime a 5, using a 10-point scale ranging from "no control at all" (1) to "complete control" (10). Gun owners perceived a much greater sense of control -- offering ratings as high as 8 -- compared to those without guns, because they feel confident they can take care of intrusions inside their homes.

However, when it comes to protecting themselves and their households from the risk of fire danger, respondents' perceived control was much higher, with most offering ratings ranging from 7 to 9. Interestingly, many of these participants shared stories of unintentional carelessness that *could* have led to serious fires in their homes, but didn't -- for example, falling asleep with pots boiling on the stove and awaking to smoke-filled kitchens, neglected candles, or accidental grease fires. It is perhaps because these incidents did *not* result in serious damage that some participants felt particularly confident in their ability to protect themselves.

That said, all of them were quite surprised to learn that the risk of fire in their communities was so high, and the subsequent discussions did lead many to re-evaluate their perceived sense of control, and lower the ratings a bit. Some of these residents admitted to feeling particularly vulnerable to fire danger, especially elderly participants who live alone, and

several living well below the poverty line. They worry that their homes present hazards that are financially out of their reach to eliminate, and they don't have the means to move to safer places. So they take steps to avoid the potential risks (e.g., not using wall outlets that spark or blow fuses) and those who believe in God pray for protection.

"If you're poor, you can't afford to leave. When you need new wiring and [circuit breaker] boxes in the house, [you] can't afford it."

"I'm depending on the Lord to just take care of me."

Knowledge of Common Causes of Residential Fires

Though fire danger is not top-of-mind, these respondents exhibited strong awareness of many of the common causes of fires – namely:

- Careless cooking
- Faulty wiring, especially in old houses
- Overloaded electrical outlets
- Careless smoking
- Space heaters
- Careless use of candles and incense
- Storing belongings too close to furnaces and hot water heaters
- Vandalism, drug use, and makeshift heat sources in vacant buildings
- Kids playing with matches
- Arson

Awareness of Fire Safety Measures

Only a small number of these participants indicated they had seen or heard fire safety materials or messages within the past few months. These were a couple of parents whose children were going on organized trips to the Fire Museum, and residents from Frayser who recalled firefighters handing out free smoke alarms, and reminders on local news to change the batteries in existing ones when daylight savings time ended. However, most were quite cognizant of steps that residents could take to protect themselves and their households from the risk of fire, such as maintaining working smoke alarms, keeping fire extinguishers on hand, and avoiding the above-mentioned, such as careless smoking and storing belongings too close to furnaces, that can cause a fire.

Just as most of these respondents are confident in their ability to prevent a fire from breaking out in their homes, they are also fairly certain they could escape a fire safely and get others out of the home safely, as well, even if it broke out during the night while everyone was asleep. Only the elderly residents were unsure they could survive this kind of situation.

The presumed steps they would take revealed several key findings:

1. Nearly everyone believed they would wake up in time to take action, many because they described themselves as “light sleepers.”
 - a. Only some of their homes have working smoke alarms, and these participants assumed the alarm would wake them in the event of a fire.
2. About half of these participants believed that they would have several minutes to react if they awoke to a house fire.
3. Very few, if any, have an escape plan they have reviewed and practiced with those in their households. While most could describe the escape route they would take based on their awareness of the entrances and exits in their homes, they improvised when presented with the possibility of doors being blocked by smoke or fire.
 - a. More than a few explained their doors require a key to unlock from the inside, but were certain they could manage this in a fire emergency.
 - b. Many considered exiting through windows as a sound alternative; however, window bars presented an obstacle for some, and others (particularly those in apartment buildings) were concerned about the distance between the window and the ground.

“I could go out the front. In the back, though, I wonder if I could get through the hallway and out of the house. The back door stays locked, so I’d have to get my key.”

“I would push an air conditioning unit out the window if I had to.”

4. The #1 priority of the parents, and mothers in particular, was getting to their children, and then trying to get out. They would rather be trapped inside with their children than be outside safely wondering if the kids would make it out. More than a few had very little faith that their children would actually follow an escape plan in a real fire emergency, regardless of how well-rehearsed or well-prepared they might be. So, parents contended that their instinct would send them to the children.

“My first priority is to save [my granddaughter].”

“Whatever burns will burn, but I [am willing to] die trying to get to my kids.”

Ideas And Suggestions For Fire Safety Outreach Programs

There was widespread agreement among these Memphis residents that, had they not been recruited to participate in this research project, they would not have known about the risk of fire danger in their community. All agreed that steps need to be taken to address the problem, and most acknowledged that responsibility for doing so lies with the city’s elected officials, the fire department, landlords, property managers, and the residents themselves. Some also suggested that homeowners’ and renters’ insurance companies and utility companies, such as Memphis Light, Gas & Water, should get more involved.

The focus groups yielded four key recommendations, each of which will be discussed in further detail.

1. Raise awareness of the risk of fire danger and educate the public regarding ways to protect themselves, their families, and their property.
2. Provide financial assistance (in the form of grants) to low income and elderly homeowners who are in need of electrical wiring upgrades.
3. Tear down vacant buildings.
4. Strictly enforce building codes in rental properties.

Raise awareness of the risk of fire danger and educate the public regarding ways to protect themselves, their families, and their property.

“Make people aware of the facts. If people were more aware, they’d be more conscious.”

“If you know better, you do better.”

Respondents offered ideas for several different efforts in this regard, including:

- An advertising campaign with television, radio, and print components
 - They envisioned public service messages that inform the public about the alarming rate of residential fires in Memphis communities, as well as the common causes of such fires, and that present simple actions that residents can take to protect their homes.
 - Such a campaign should consist of television and radio ads broadcast during peak times of the day; highly visible billboards throughout the city and especially in high-risk neighborhoods; and print materials that could be delivered by mail and distributed from fire stations, the Fire Museum, doctors’ offices, libraries, community events, and anywhere else people naturally gather.
 - Respondents were confident that this kind of advertising campaign could reach the vast majority of Memphis residents.
- A full day, weekend, or week devoted to fire safety in all of Memphis
 - As a part of this initiative, participants suggested the city sponsor a free, family-friendly festival complete with rides, food and beverages, live music, presentations and demonstrations sponsored by the Fire Department, and relevant giveaways (e.g., smoke alarms, batteries, etc.).
- Local news stories
 - In numerous discussions, participants questioned why local news seems to focus a lot of attention on crime in the city, but rarely seems to report residential fires. They recommended that stories of loss and tragedy resulting from fire become more salient in news coverage to drive and maintain awareness of the danger.

- Fire safety education provided by insurance companies that offer coverage to homeowners and renters
 - Recognizing that residential fires cost insurance companies a lot of money, participants in several focus groups suggested that homeowners' and renters' insurance coverage providers play a more active role in educating policyholders about fire dangers and preventative measures for protecting their homes. Suggestions included:
 - Mandatory home inspections prior to issuing and renewing policies, so that potential hazards can be identified and resolved, company representatives can advise residents about fire safety measures and preventative actions (e.g., working smoke alarms, multiple exits out of the residence, established escape plan, and so on) can be documented
 - Offering incentives – namely, reduced premiums – to policyholders who adhere to and maintain fire safety measures in their homes
 - Packaging fire safety brochures or one-sheets with premium notices or other mailings to policyholders

HRG LLC also engaged the participants in discussions about ways to get the fire safety message to as many people as possible, including residents that, for a variety of reasons, are hard-to-reach. Many suggested that the Fire Department take advantage of existing groups, places, and occasions where people already gather – e.g., churches, community centers, local events, Neighborhood Watch groups, etc. While several respondents acknowledged that fire fighters often have a presence at events such as church picnics or block parties, they recommend that the Fire Department expand its role beyond a mere presence, and use the opportunity to impart key information.

“The Fire Department comes to our annual church picnic and shakes hands; make it a full scale event.”

South Memphis pastors offered several ideas for ways that churches could assist with the fire Department's outreach efforts.

- Allow representatives from the Fire Department to address their congregations, either as a part of the regular service or in a special program, with fire safety messages on a quarterly or semi-annual basis.
- Distribute print materials and free smoke alarms to its congregation, and include fire safety tips and/or reminders in church bulletins, programs, or other publications.
- Recognizing that only some of their members live in the surrounding neighborhood, however, several pastors envisioned the church providing a bridge between the Fire Department and the South Memphis community -- soliciting names and addresses of area residents willing to allow firefighters to survey their homes, install smoke alarms, and offer suggestions for making the homes safer.
- In addition, a few pastors felt that church members might be able to assist in identifying hard-to-reach residents in the local community who may be at a greater risk of fire danger because of substandard housing, excessive clutter, and so on.

- Capitalize on the association of local pastors, currently numbering more than 400, to get the word out about fire safety initiatives and events.

A few participants also proposed that the Fire Department enlist the help of a spokesperson to be the face of the outreach program – someone well-known and well-respected in the Memphis area, be it a celebrity (e.g., player for the Memphis Grizzlies, local news personality) or community activist. A recognizable figure might help to capture residents’ attention and help the message to break through.

Provide financial assistance (in the form of grants) to low income and elderly homeowners who are in need of electrical wiring upgrades.

Many of these participants were quite cognizant of the fire danger associated with outdated wiring in old homes, but they were also aware that electrical upgrades come with a very expensive price tag, one that many residents cannot afford. Because such homes pose a threat not only to those living there, but also to their neighbors, most felt it was important that the city, or even non-profit organizations, secure resources to bring these houses up to code. A few acknowledged that such programs did exist several years ago to assist elderly homeowners with upgrades; however, the economic downturn may have eliminated them.

Tear down vacant buildings.

Abandoned buildings are a nuisance to Memphis area residents not only because of the fire danger, but also because of criminal activity that often takes place there. Without question, the great majority of these participants were in favor of tearing them down, although they questioned where the city might find the resources.

Strictly enforce building codes and rules at rental properties.

Nearly all of the participants were in agreement that the city should enforce building codes on all structures throughout the city. Rental property owners and landlords, particularly those with older buildings, were often villainized in the discussions, as the perception is they care only about the income from the property, not the safety or quality of life of the renters.

“I have an uncle who’s in a wheelchair in a rental, and it should be condemned. He can’t afford to go anywhere else, and the owners don’t even care.”

Some of the respondents were more sympathetic, however, recognizing that property owners are often challenged to maintain decent units by the tenants themselves. Renters were generally perceived to be far more negligent when it comes to taking proper care of their residences, increasing the risk of fire danger to themselves, as well as their neighbors. So with regard to this recommendation, strict enforcement applies not only to the city’s

oversight of the property managers, but to the landlords' oversight of the renters, as well. Participants want landlords to be fined for violations of building codes, and even given jail time for chronic or repeat offenders. They also expect property owners to issue fines and even evictions, if necessary, to renters who dismantle smoke alarms, amass excessive clutter, or engage in other practices that pose a threat.

Motivations for Behavior Change

While the focus groups yielded a variety of suggestions for fire safety initiatives, as well as ideas for reaching the broadest group of people, motivating residents to change their behavior is a daunting task. The findings suggest that fire safety messages that trigger an emotional response might be the most effective at motivating behavior change. For some, this meant instilling fear; others described it as "the shock factor."

"I hate to say it, but it takes a fire, an experience, [for people] to get serious."

What most participants believed would capture their attention, be it in an advertising campaign or a live event, is real-life testimonials from Memphis-area residents who have suffered a loss as a result of a fire. They may have lost their home and all of their possessions. They may even have lost family members or survived the fire with burns or injuries themselves. What these ordinary citizens can offer to any fire safety campaign is relatability, people with whom residents can identify. Their stories would allow Memphians to get close to the fire and experience the devastation and tragedy without actually going through it.

It might be especially impactful if these survivors described their own inaction or inadvertent carelessness prior to the fire -- how they might have removed the battery from the smoke alarm because the alarm would sound every time they used the fryer or how they had every intention to de-clutter the hallway, but never seemed to have the time. Participants envisioned impactful images on billboards or in print materials -- for example, children or elderly adults trapped inside burning homes or charred remains of family's belongings after a fire is extinguished. The more these real-life stories or dramatic images connect with citizens, the stronger the emotional reaction, and the greater the likelihood they will take the messages to heart.

"Get someone to come who's had a fire...a neighbor, someone you can relate to. They can share real-life feelings. They can talk about what they didn't do that they knew they should have done. They can tell you how it affected them."

"The billboard could show a firefighter trying to get a kid out a window [of a burning house]."

Numerous respondents also contended that meaningful incentives, such as gift cards, gas cards, or rent or mortgage rebates would motivate some to adopt fire safety measures. While such initiatives might be effective when it comes to things like installing or

maintaining smoke alarms, however, longer-term behavior changes and differences that require an investment in time (e.g., removing clutter) or money (e.g., re-wiring; replacing bars on windows) require internal motivation; residents need to care enough to make the investment.

“It would have to be something major to make me take time out of my day. You’ll have to tell me, ‘This is going to save you and your kids.’”

Whatever the approach, many participants acknowledged that this is an outreach effort that must be sustained long-term if it is to succeed in changing behavior. Keeping fire safety top-of-mind for residents on an ongoing basis may not be possible. However, if safe practices become as routine as buckling a seat belt before driving a car, then an occasional news story, a new billboard, or an annual fire safety event might serve as a sufficient reminder for most to refrain from taking risks.

Reactions to Fire Department Outreach Programs

Home Safety Survey and Smoke Alarm Installation

Reactions to this initiative were largely positive. Respondents appreciated knowing that the Fire Department would provide these services at no cost to residents. That said, some were apprehensive about allowing fire fighters into their homes; this was especially the case for younger adults, senior citizens, and women living alone.

- The younger adults, residents of Orange Mound, expressed far greater distrust of city employees than did other participants, although firefighters were held in somewhat higher regard than police officers and elected officials. Many of these respondents said they did not want people snooping around in their homes, regardless of their role or intentions. Instead, they would rather get a simple checklist of fire safety guidelines, along with the free smoke alarms and/or batteries, and assume responsibility for taking necessary actions themselves.
- Senior citizens worried that the home inspections might lead to mandatory improvements they either could not afford (e.g., electrical upgrades) or were not willing to do (e.g., remove excessive clutter). A few worried about the city forcing people out of their homes if they were deemed too unsafe.
- Women living alone worried for their safety by allowing strangers, albeit fire fighters, into their home.

Across the focus groups, the great majority of participants recommended these home safety surveys be planned (not necessarily individually scheduled) and announced in advance via local news, announcements in the newspaper and on the radio, notices mailed to residents in target communities, and perhaps even Robo-calls to households in target neighborhoods. Moreover, on the designated day(s), they recommended the Fire Department maintain a highly visible presence – e.g., fire trucks on the street, fire fighters in uniform, etc. Out of respect for the residents, it was suggested that the fire fighters who conduct the home visits present photo identification before entering anyone’s home.

Finally, several pastors suggested that church members from the community be recruited to volunteer and accompany the fire fighters on these home visits, not only providing reassurance, but also helping the Fire Department to access the homes of hard-to-reach neighbors.

Arson Awareness and Prevention Program

While many respondents acknowledged arson as a problem in their communities and recognized a need to address it, reactions to this program were lukewarm, at best. While most were open to the Fire Department showing people things they can do in their communities to help prevent arson, participants generally perceived it as something criminals or mentally ill people do, and not something that ordinary citizens can take steps to prevent. More importantly, however, only a small number readily admitted they would call and report suspicious behavior to the Fire Department; they believe this is the responsibility of every citizen. Most others worried about possible retaliation from the arsonists, should their identities be revealed. Because many explained that 9-1-1 calls can be traced back to the caller, and that emergency operators always ask for callers' names and addresses, the fear of being revealed (and subsequent retaliation) seemed quite real to them.

At the very least, an anonymous call-in number would be necessary to encourage residents to take action. A program such as this also requires an educational component to change the perception that arson cases cannot be reduced through preventative means.

Fire and Life Safety Education for Children

This initiative received overwhelmingly positive support across all of the focus groups. Respondents appreciate the fact that it's free, requires no real commitment or involvement from adults like them, and imparts important lessons to kids at an early age. Some also acknowledged that kids could be effective ambassadors for the Fire Department, carrying safety messages back home to their parents.

SUMMARY

For a variety of reasons, fire danger is not as salient or as pressing a concern for most Memphis residents as is crime. However, the statistics regarding the frequency of residential fires in high-risk Memphis neighborhoods shocked most of these participants into a much more proactive and preventative mindset. Addressing the problem will require a long-term, coordinated effort and the great majority of respondents believe that responsibility lies with the Fire Department, elected officials, community leaders, property owners, and residents themselves.

Four key strategies emerged from this research.

1. Raise awareness of the risk of fire danger and educate the public regarding ways to protect themselves, their families, and their property.
2. Provide financial assistance (in the form of grants) to low income and elderly homeowners who are in need of electrical wiring upgrades.

3. Tear down vacant buildings.
4. Strictly enforce building codes in rental properties.

The findings suggest that fire safety messages that trigger an emotional response might be the most effective at motivating behavior change. While incentives, such as gift cards or mortgage or rent rebates, may help with the initial adoption of some fire safety measures, real-life stories of loss and devastation shared by ordinary, relatable citizens will not only grab residents' attention, they might also give people the intrinsic motivation necessary to sustain appropriate fire safety practices over time.

APPENDIX

NFPA Focus Group Discussion Guide Ministers

INTRODUCTION

10 minutes

- Moderator introduction
 - Nothing personally invested in material
- No wrong answers; seeking honest opinions
- Recording discussion for research purposes only
- Participant Introductions
 - Name
 - Name of church; how long a pastor there

CONTEXT

20 minutes

1. What are some of the best things about being a pastor?
 - a. What about your specific church – what are the best things about being a pastor of your church?
2. Now, let's talk about the CHALLENGES, the big ones and the little ones. What are some of the challenges you face as a pastor of your particular church?
3. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the community that your church is in?
4. How would you describe the relationship between your church and the surrounding community?
 - a. What's the degree and nature of interaction between the church and the community?
 - b. Are there programs and/or services at the church that are available to the community? (PROBE)
5. What do you think are the most effective ways to reach out to the community surrounding your church?
 - a. What successes have you had (if any) in motivating the community to take action and/or get involved?
 - b. What do you see as the barriers or obstacles to community involvement?

For the rest of the discussion, I'd like you to focus on the community where your church is located – the South Memphis area.

THREATS TO SAFETY

20 minutes

NOTE: Fires may or may not come up here. If it does come up, I will explore in greater detail in the subsequent sections of the guide, but not here.

6. When it comes to feeling safe, and the safety of the people in South Memphis, what would you say are the biggest threats or concerns? (LIST)
7. What do you think are the best ways to eliminate or minimize these safety concerns? (EXPLORE FOR EACH)
 - a. What do you think could be done?
 - b. Where do you think responsibility lies?
8. What role, if any, do you think the church should play in assisting with/ addressing these threats to safety?
 - a. How might the church play a role?

FIRE KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS

15 minutes

Let's talk (more) about the risk of fires.

9. Have any of you ever been affected by a fire in your home, neighborhood or church community?
 - a. (IF YES) Tell me about that.
10. Did you know that your church is in a neighborhood with one of the highest risks of fire and fire deaths in Memphis?
 - a. What are your thoughts about that? (SHARE A FEW STATISTICS, AS NECESSARY)
 - b. Why do you think the threat of fire is so high in your community?
11. Let's make a list of the more common causes of fires. (LIST)
 - a. Are there other things you can think of, either inside a residence or in the community, that increase the risk of a fire?

PROBE:

- Careless smoking
- Heating hazards

- Wiring and electrical issues
- Careless cooking (kids and elderly)
- Vacant buildings

PREVENTION & SOLUTIONS

45 minutes

12. What do you think could/should be done about the risk of fires in your community?
- Who do you think can/should play a role in minimizing the risk of fire in your community? What can they do?
 - (AS NEEDED) What are some of the things that churches like yours can do to lessen the risk of fire in the neighborhood? (LIST)
13. Suppose we were put in charge of coming up with 3-5 ideas for ways to educate the community at large about the threat of fire and fire safety. What suggestions do you have?

PROBE FOR EACH:

- Who should take the lead on this one? Why is that?
 - How might we get the word out about this?
 - How likely is it that people in your church's community would participate in/respond to a program like this?
 - Any suggestions for what might motivate them to participate/respond?
14. (REVISIT PROGRAMS/SERVICES FROM Q4b AND Q5) Which of these programs do you think offer opportunities for the Memphis Fire Department to integrate fire safety education?
- How might that work?
15. Before we wrap up, I'd like to get your opinion about a few suggestions that other people have come up with to promote fire safety. What do you think about these ideas:

Home Safety Survey and Smoke Alarm Installation

- Firefighters would visit people's homes in teams of 2-4 and check for smoke alarms, install them if needed, or change the batteries in existing smoke alarms. There would be no charge for the alarms or installations.
- While in the home they would conduct a short safety survey and would assist with planning two ways out of the home and two ways out of the sleeping areas.
- They would also check for other fire hazards and give advice on making changes to make the home safer.

- Firefighters would also provide fire prevention information and help people with a home escape plan.
 - What do you think of this idea?
 - What concerns, if any, might you have about it?
 - If you were in charge of this kind of program, how would you go about scheduling these home visits?

Arson Awareness and Prevention Program

This program focuses on actions people in neighborhoods can do to help prevent a variety of types of arson in their neighborhoods.

- Memphis Fire Department would give presentations at community meetings or share educational information to show things people can do in their communities to help prevent arson in and around their homes or in vacant homes in their neighborhood.
- Residents would also be asked to call the fire department if they see someone starting a fire or to call a specific number if they have evidence of someone who intentionally set a fire.
 - What do you think of this idea?
 - What concerns, if any, might you have about it?

CLOSE

16. Does anyone have any parting comments you'd like to share before you go?

THANK YOU!

NFPA Focus Group Discussion Guide Residents/Moms

INTRODUCTION

10 minutes

- Moderator introduction
 - Nothing personally invested in material
- No wrong answers; seeking honest opinions
- Recording discussion for research purposes only
- Participant Introductions
 - Name
 - Who all lives in your home (and ages of kids)
 - Favorite leisure time activity

CONTEXT

5 minutes

1. What are some of the best things about living in Memphis?
 - a. What about your specific community – what are the best things about living in your neighborhood?
2. Now, let's talk about the CHALLENGES, the big ones and the little ones. What are some of the challenges facing your community?

THREATS TO SAFETY

15 minutes

NOTE: Fires may or may not come up here. If it does come up, I will explore in greater detail in the subsequent sections of the guide, but not here.

3. When it comes to feeling safe, and the safety of the people in your household, what would you say are the biggest threats/concerns that you have? (LIST)
4. Let's re-visit this list of safety concerns. How much control do you think you have when it comes to protecting yourself/your home from ____? (EXPLORE FOR EACH)
5. What do you think are the best ways to eliminate or minimize these safety concerns? (EXPLORE FOR THOSE THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN CONTROL)
 - a. What can you do to help minimize this threat to your safety?
 - b. Who else can help?
 - c. What do you think the city do to help you minimize this safety concern?

6. When do you think it's appropriate to dial 9-1-1? Any other occasions?
7. Have you ever dialed 9-1-1 for anything?
 - a. (IF YES) Tell me about that situation.
 - b. How satisfied were you with the response?

FIRE KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS

40 minutes

Let's talk (more) about fire danger.

8. Is this something that you worry about?
 - a. (IF YES) Why is that?
9. Have any of you ever been affected by a fire in your home or neighborhood?
 - a. (IF YES) Tell me about that.
10. How much control do you think you have when it comes to protecting yourself/your household from fire? (PROBE, AS NEEDED)
11. What do you know about the causes of fires? Let's make a list of the common causes. (LIST)
 - a. Are there other things you can think of, either inside your home or in the community, that increase the risk of a fire?

PROBE:

- Careless smoking
- Heating hazards
- Wiring and electrical issues
- Cooking dangers; kids and elderly
- Vacant buildings

12. Suppose a fire were to break out in your home early one morning while everyone was asleep. Do you think you would wake up?
 - a. Walk me through what you think would happen, step-by-step, from the second you realized there was a fire. What would you do first? Then what?
 - b. How would you get out? What about others in your home?
 - i. What if the main entrance was blocked by fire?
 - c. How much time do you think you'd have to get out?

- d. Do you have an escape plan for everyone in your household in case a fire was to break out?

13. Did you know that you live in a neighborhood with one of the highest risks of fire and fire deaths in Memphis?

- a. What are your thoughts about that? (SHARE A FEW STATISTICS, AS NECESSARY)
- b. Why do you think the risk of fire is so high in your community?

PREVENTION & SOLUTIONS

40 minutes

14. What do you think could/should be done about the risk of fires in your community?

- a. Who else can play a role in minimizing the risk of fire in your community? What can they do?
- b. (AS NEEDED) What are some of the things that people like you can do to lessen the risk of fire, both in your home and in your neighborhood? (LIST)

PROBE:

- Smoke detectors: awareness of proper use; responsibility for installation and maintenance
- Careless smoking
- Heating hazards
- Careless cooking behavior (kids and elderly)
- Wiring and electrical issues
- Blocked exits

15. Can you recall ever seeing or hearing any information about fire safety?

IF YES, EXPLORE

- a. What did you see/hear?
- b. Where did you see/hear it?
- c. What were the main messages?

16. Whose job do you think it is to educate the public about fire safety?

17. Suppose we were put in charge of coming up with 3-5 ideas for ways to educate people like us in this room about the risk of fire and fire safety. What suggestions do you have?

PROBE FOR EACH:

- a. Who should take the lead on this one? Why is that?

- b. How might we get the word out about this?
 - c. How likely is it that people in your neighborhood would participate in/respond to a program like this?
 - i. Any suggestions for what might motivate them to participate/respond?
18. Thinking more on a personal level now, what would motivate YOU to make necessary changes in your home and in your lifestyle in order to reduce the risk of fire?
- a. How likely would YOU be to:
 - i. Talk about how everyone would get out in case of a fire, create an escape plan, and practice it with everyone in your home?
 - ii. Install/maintain smoke detectors
 - iii. Eliminate cooking hazards (e.g., kids, elderly)
 - iv. Report someone setting a fire or similar behavior you might see in the neighborhood
19. Before we wrap up, I'd like to get your opinion about a few suggestions that other people have come up with.

Home Safety Survey and Smoke Alarm Installation

- Firefighters would visit people's homes in teams of 2-4 to check for smoke alarms, install them if needed or change batteries in existing smoke alarms. There would be no charge for the alarms or installations.
- While in the home they would conduct a short safety survey and would assist with planning two ways out of the home and two ways out of the sleeping areas.
- They would also check for other fire hazards and give advice on making changes to make the home safer.
- Firefighters would also provide fire prevention information and help people with a home escape plan.
 - What do you think of this idea?
 - What concerns, if any, might you have about it?
 - If you were in charge of this kind of program, how would you go about scheduling these home visits?

Arson Awareness and Prevention Program

This program focuses on actions people in neighborhoods can do to help prevent a variety of types of arson in their neighborhoods.

- Memphis Fire Department would give presentations at community meetings or share educational information to show things people can do in their communities to help prevent arson in and around their homes or in vacant homes in their neighborhood.
- Residents would also be asked to call the fire department if they see someone starting a fire or to call a specific number if they have evidence of someone who intentionally set a fire.

- What do you think of this idea?
- What concerns, if any, might you have about it?
- Where would be the best places to have these kinds of meetings or presentations?

Fire and Life Safety Education for Children

The Memphis Fire Department Fire Museum and Public Education group educates preschoolers through high-schoolers through its Fire Museum.

- Children from schools in Memphis are bused free to the museum where they participate in age-appropriate, hands-on activities that teach fire prevention and fire escape messages.
- About 80 percent of the Memphis school children participate in this activity every year.
 - Are you aware of this program?
 - Has your child or grandchild ever shared fire safety information with you after participating in this program?
 - What are some ways that the Fire Museum could communicate to or involve parents more with this program?

CLOSE

20. Does anyone have any parting comments you'd like to share before you go?

THANK YOU!