

QUEENS MEMORY

Volunteer Interviewer Guide

Thank you for volunteering to be an interviewer for the Queens Memory Project. The oral history interview process has several phases, and we want to make sure you have a clear guide to the process. If you have any questions or need support with any step, please get in touch with the team at queensmemory@queenslibrary.org.

General Guidelines

Please focus on interviewing adults. We ask that you not interview children age 13 or younger.

If you are interviewing children aged 14-17, you will need the consent of the interviewee's guardian. Please make sure you the guardian fills out the consent form along with the teen you'll be interviewing.

The Interview Process, from Outreach to Completion

Pre-Interview: Outreach, Consent, Technology

1. Contact a potential interviewee on your own or ask the Queens Memory team to connect you with an interested interviewee. We encourage you to ask relatives, friends and community members if you're not sure where to start. Please note that interviews can be conducted in any language. Our processing team may be able to assist with translation and transcription.

2. Contact your interviewee by phone or email for a pre-interview conversation. Discuss:
 - a. **Technology: How will you capture the interview?**
Discuss how you would like to record, for instance: in person at their home or at a local library location, or with a video call, or a phone call. Video conferencing programs like Zoom have built-in recording, and call recorders like Google Voice and Rev are useful when recording phone interviews. The library can provide access to Zoom or Streamyard, a video recording program that works in a browser on computers, tablets and smartphones.

If you need assistance with remote recording, contact us at queensmemory@queenslibrary.org to discuss options and test out different platforms.

b. Consent and Contact: How will their interview be shared? How will we be able to contact them?

These interviews will be stored in the Queens Memory digital archives and may be shared as excerpts on our public platforms and in our podcast series. We will inform the interviewee when their interview is published and whenever it appears on a library platform. Please send them a link to our Consent Webform and the appropriate pre-interview survey so we have their consent and contact information on file.

Consent Webform: <https://bit.ly/QM-Consent>

Pre-Interview Survey available in variety of formats here: <https://queensmemory.org/resources/>

Feel free to adapt this email template to share the links with your interviewee:

Dear (interviewee),

Thank you for agreeing to do an interview for the Queens Memory Project. This link is to the Queens Memory Informed Consent Form: <https://bit.ly/QM-Consent>. The Pre-Interview Survey is not required but the Queens Memory team encourages you to fill out as much or as little as you're comfortable sharing. I have attached it for your review.

You will submit the Consent Form after our interview but I'm sharing it now so you can read through it ahead of time. Please let me know if you have any questions

Thank you,
(interviewer)

c. Content: What will you discuss in your interview?

Refer to the [Suggested Topics for Interviews](#), which you can share with your interviewee so they have an overview of the project and interview process as well.

d. **Photograph: Would they mind sharing a recent photo?**

We like to pair photos of interviewees with their interview recordings on our public pages, such as Aviary, where we share interview excerpts: queenslibrary.aviaryplatform.com. Ask your interviewee if they have a photo or other image (such as an older snapshot or even an artwork) they would like to share. You can also plan to take their photo on the day of the interview.

Interview

3. When you are ready to start your interview, please begin with the following script:

“This is [full name of interviewer]. Today is [month/day/year]. I am interviewing [full name of interviewee] for the [first, second, etc.] time. This interview is taking place at [general address; may include description, such as home of, office of]. This interview is part of the Queens Memory Project.”

Then you can proceed with the interview! Ask any opening question that feels appropriate for what you’ll be discussing.

4. When you finish up, make sure to take a photo and provide a printed consent form for them to sign (if in-person) or (if remote) remind the interviewee to submit a photo to go alongside the interview and to submit an online consent form: <https://bit.ly/QM-Consent>

Post-Interview

5. Send your interviewee a thank you note! It’s a nice gesture and gives you a chance to remind them that you’ll share the interview recording and transcript once the files are ready.
6. Use our upload form to send us the interview recording (audio or video) and photo of your interviewee, if they are sharing one: <https://bit.ly/QMInterview> Pro tip: Review the submission form ahead of time so you can gather any information from your interviewee that you might not already know.

If your interviewee has other files (such as videos, scanned documents or photos) they

would like to contribute and pair with their interview, they can submit them here:

<https://bit.ly/QM-SubmitPhotos>

7. The next step will be handled by our Processing Team. If your interview is in English, it will be uploaded to Rev, a web-based program that creates a machine-generated transcription. The transcription file will be shared with you to review and correct. If your interview is in a language other than English, Queens Public Library staff may be able to assist you with transcription and translation. Please contact the Queens Memory team at queensmemory@queenslibrary.org if you need assistance.
8. Once you have completed cleaning up your transcription on Rev, please notify the QPL staff member who shared it with you. They will output a document version of the transcript and share it with your interviewee for their review along with a date when the interview will be posted on the library's public website. This gives them an opportunity to correct any misstatements in their interview and correct typos such as the spellings of proper names. This is part of the reciprocity of the oral history process and an interviewee can get additional time for review, if needed.
9. Once the review process is complete, the interview and transcript will be archived and added to the collection. Our team will share links once the interview has been published.