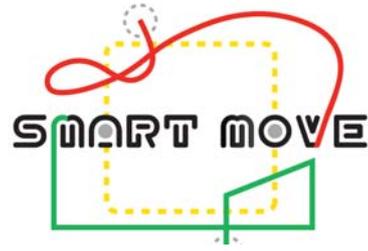# Talking with Experts—
Preparation Ideas and
Sample Interview Questions

Talking with experts who work in the field of the Challenge theme is a great way for your FLL team to learn more about the topic, find out current data, discover potential problems, and learn what is being done about those problems. Experts can include a variety of people like scientists, engineers, community leaders, university professors and students, and anyone whose life or work is affected by the Challenge theme.

Preparing for Your Interview

You should contact your expert well in advance to see if they are able and willing to help on your project. Find out their preferred way to conduct the interview (in person, over the phone, electronically). Set up a time and start getting ready for the interview.

Before the day of the interview, your team should prepare a list of questions. Plan for concise, to-the-point questions that will help you achieve your project goals and make the best use of your time with the expert. Try to anticipate how long it will take for all the questions and answers so you can keep the interview in the scheduled time length. Keep your questions to the topic of your specific presentation.

It is helpful to write down your questions and have them in front of you when you are interviewing. You may even consider sending a list of questions to your expert in advance so they can properly prepare. Decide ahead of time which team member(s) will ask each of the questions.   Always remember to exhibit gracious professionalism during your interview and be respectful of the time given to you by the expert. Treat the expert like a member of your team and remember to thank them for their contribution!

Smart Move Experts and Sample Questions

Transportation Experts

Certain types of experts who work with transportation issues everyday may be particularly helpful to talk with for your project. These may include:

- Information Technology (IT) specialists
- Mayors
- Regional or urban planners
- City or town council members
- Air traffic controllers
- Community leaders
- Lawmakers
- Auto engineers
- Internet service providers

- Import/export business owners
- School bus company employees
- School principals and superintendents
- And many, many more!

Research Questions

There are certain questions you should answer through research prior to interviewing any experts. These will help everyone on your team have an understanding of the basic project and challenge elements.

Some of these questions may include:

- How does our team define our community?
- How do transportation problems affect our lives?
- What forms of transportation are available in our community?
- Which forms of transportation does our team use? Which ones do we wish we could use?
- Who is affected by problems with transportation? How are they affected?

Interview Questions

As your prepare for your interview, you will need to think of questions that specifically address the project topic your team has selected. However, some teams may talk to experts before selecting a specific problem and the questions below are a helpful guide to get you started.

Some *sample* interview questions include:

- How did you get into your career?
- What is the most important transportation question facing our area?
- Do you know of any other areas in the world facing similar transportation challenges?
- How do you improve transportation in your job?
- How could our transportation network be made safer? Or, how could our vehicles be made safer?
- How do you think transportation could be improved in our area?
- Do you think our community's transportation system works well for children? The elderly? Adults?
- What can be done to make our community's transportation network more efficient?
- What advice can you give the next generation about fixing transportation problems?
- What do you think transportation will be like in the future?
- How do you think we will get the things we want and need in the future? How might we get to school? Work? Our groceries? Information?