

Community and Academic Partnership Check List

There is knowledge and experience that both community organizations and university researchers bring to the table. At time starting a partnership between the two can be difficult. Use this checklist to ensure that the important topics are being discussed and that everyone is aware of the agreed upon plan.

Prior to agreeing to work on a project together there should be:

A written mission statement that has been agreed upon by all members of the partnership

Goals of the group are written and have been agreed upon by all members of the partnership

The group identifies measurable outcomes for the partnership

Partners verbally reflect a common mission and goals through interactions with others in the community.

The mission, goals, and outcomes are revisited on a agreed upon time frame to ensure compliance

Developing a Partnership

What is each organization bringing to the relationship? (i.e. training for community organization; knowledge about working with specific community groups)

When there is no active project, how will the relationship be maintained?

Communication

Appoint a point person for each organization through which all communication will be funneled through.

Establish how communication will be maintained (i.e weekly email, written minutes, phone calls, etc)

Have a written plan for the responsibilities, expectations of the project

Grant Writing (if applicable)

Who is responsible for researching funding opportunities?

Provide at least 30 days prior to grant deadline

Who will write each section of the grant?¹

Are dissemination options to the community written into the grant?

Budgetary Guidelines

Budget has been reviewed by point person for all organizations in partnership.

Budgetary restrictions at both the academic institution and community organizations in partnership have been discussed.

If writing a grant, is a financial benefit written into the grant for the community organization?

Skills Training

If financial support is not possible for the community partners, will the academic institution provide skills training?

¹ Be sure to split the sections according to expertise in the area. The community organization should always be given the opportunity to write the community recruitment/partnership section of the grant. If they so choose another appointed member can write the community portion, however the community should always have the final approval over the section that pertains directly to them and their responsibilities.

For Academic Researchers

Know the Community

Academic partners need to consider community demographics, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, attitudes and behaviors when designing a project to submit for funding. Conduct intelligence-gathering to aide planning, decision making, and leveraging resources with a community partner. Members who work in the community every day could be valuable partners to getting this information quickly and accurately. This practice will help to collaboratively achieve anticipated or agreed-upon outcomes with community partners.

Principles of Community Engagement

Before starting a community effort...

- Be clear about the purposes or goals of the engagement effort and the populations and/or communities you want to engage.
- Become knowledgeable about the community's culture, economic conditions, social networks, political and power structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with efforts by outside groups to engage it in various programs. Learn about the community's perceptions of those initiating the engagement activities.

For engagement to occur, it is necessary to...

- Go to the community, establish relationships, build trust, and work with the formal and informal leadership. Seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community.
- Remember and accept that collective self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people in a community. No external entity should assume it can bestow on a community the power to act in its own self-interest.

For successful engagement...

- There should be awareness of the various cultures of a community and other factors affecting diversity must be paramount in planning, designing, and implementing approaches to engaging in a community.
- Identify and mobilize community assets and strengths by developing the community's capacity and resources to make decisions and take action.
- Be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the community.
- Be prepared to make a long-term commitment.
- Take communication seriously, even when it is inconvenient to do so.

Tips for academic researchers to engage and partner with a community organization

Commit to forging trusting relationships and agreements with community agencies as a first priority.

- Create a joint mission or values statement that supports a culture of long-term engagement with the community partner
- Respect and trust community partners as colleagues, not study specimens
- In a partnership resources and control are shared. The academic institution should be prepared to share funds with the community. The community should be the "senior partner" on issues that affect it.
- Be open to additional partners and funding sources.
- The partnership should continue even when there are not funding sources.
- Meet at a community location.

Be aware that there are normally language, background and cultural differences between the academic researcher and the community.

- Integrate cultural knowledge of the community, use community gatekeepers and leaders.
- Build on the strengths and assets of the community of interest.
- Produce mutually beneficial tools and products.

Commit to collaborating about budget matters

- Establish a recognition and reward systems for personnel who effectively perform duties of community information development.
- Information systems to manage collection, storage, analysis, and reporting of data on the capabilities of community partners; technical assistance and training needs for partners to undertake the formation of engagements, planning of initiatives, and implementation; development and maintenance of communication channels and networks; and opportunities to take part in other engagement processes.
- Policies and procedures regarding collection, storage, release, or publication of information, along with privacy and security safeguards.
- Fiscal and Physical Support for: Personnel, contract, computer hardware or budget for providing information services.
- Budget for development and distribution of information materials.
- Office space for staff engaged in information services.

Identify community expectations for a project and maintain transparency about ability to meet those expectations

- Advise community partners about potentials benefits and risks of project
- Identify a variety of means by which research can contribute to the community
- Give bi-directional grant identification with the community
- Share study outcomes with the community

When the proposal is being drafted the academic researcher should be include the community partners

- Have face-to-face meetings, especially when discussing points about which there may be disagreement, such as community recruitment
- Figure out ways to be scientifically sound in locally appropriate ways.
- Acknowledge and discuss power imbalances
- Ensure that ALL partners' voices are heard and listened to, create settings for open and honest discussion, and communicate perspectives clearly.
- Improve communication by having agreed upon deadlines. Even when the timeline is short agree beforehand for feedback during specified time frames.
- Provide community partners with time and opportunity for developing designs for proposals.

For Community Partners

Tips for Community Agencies to Partner and Engage with Academic Research

Successful Partnerships

- Strive for your partnership with the academic research to be built on trust and honesty. Be open to listening to new ideas, perceptions, and suggestions
- Always be constructive
- Stay organized and make sure to identify the community role(s) and responsibility
- Be sure that all members know the main goal of the project
- Maintain constant communication throughout the entire project

Commit to forging trusting relationships and agreements with academic partners

- Create a joint mission or values statement that supports a culture of long-term engagement with the academic partner
- Respect and trust academic partners as colleagues.
- Identify clear guidelines on what each group's timeline is for the project.
- In a partnership resources and control are shared. The academic institution should be prepared to share funds with the community. Be the "senior partner" on issues that affect your community.
- Be open to additional partners and funding sources
- The partnership should continue even when there are not funding sources

When the proposal is being drafted the academic researcher should include the community partners

- Have face-to-face meetings, especially when discussing points about which there may be disagreement.
- Acknowledge and discuss power imbalances
- Ensure that ALL partners' voices are heard and listened to, create settings for open and honest discussion, and communicate perspectives clearly.
- Improve communication by having agreed upon deadlines. Even when the timeline is short agree beforehand for feedback during specified time frames.
- Ask academic partners for the opportunity and time for developing designs for proposals.

Identify community expectations for a project

- Ask academic partners about potentials benefits and risks of project
- Identify a variety of means by which research can contribute to the community
- Ask for full disclosure of study outcomes from the academic partner