

Performance of Community-based Research

Guidance Statement

The University of Minnesota recognizes the importance of research conducted within communities. When conducting or participating in these research activities, the university desires to engage the community, strengthen community linkages, and respect community values. Human research has historically been guided by principles relating to risk and benefits to the individual research subject. Community-placed research has interaction with the community that goes beyond interactions with individual potential research subjects and, therefore, requires consideration of the risks and benefits to the stakeholder community. The following principles are in addition to those principles for all human subject research.

Because there is a continuum of involvement between University researchers and communities, a single set of guidelines is not appropriate. However, all research involving communities should follow best practices for respectful and productive relationships. Appendix 1 contains the typology to be used to determine where along the spectrum between community-placed research and community-based participatory research a particular research project fits. The following Principles then guide the research.

Principles for community-placed research

1. The researcher should be aware and respectful of community interests that go beyond those of individual potential research subjects
2. The researcher should identify stakeholders other than individual potential research subjects
3. The researcher should inform stakeholders in addition to individual potential research subjects about the research
4. The researcher should invite feedback regarding concerns about the research from stakeholders in addition to individual potential research subjects

Principles for basic community partnership research

Principles 1-4, plus:

5. The researcher should respect the community partner's interest in the project and be open to ways that the community might benefit or want to use the information.
6. The researcher should disseminate research findings to stakeholders in addition to individual research subjects.

Principles for close community partnership research

Principles 1-6, plus:

7. Research goals should be co-defined, procedures agreed upon, and grants written collaboratively.
8. The researcher should work on team building for close partnership with the community partner.
9. The researcher should work on capacity building for the community partner so that the partners are stronger because of the collaboration.
10. The dissemination of the research should be used to help build capacity in the community partner and the collaboration.

Principles for community-based participatory research¹

Community-based participatory research has its own set of principles that supplant and go beyond the above principles.

1. The research topic should respond to a community-defined need or question and have as an aim to combine knowledge with action to achieve social change.
2. Academic partners should be open to the guidance of community insights and wisdom.
3. Partners should agree upon mission, values, goals, resources, measurable outcomes and accountability for the partnership. Academic partners are especially accountable to the community with which they are working for the impact collaborative activities may have on it. Partners should each identify their own expected benefits of the project and work to help each other achieve them.
4. The relationship between partners should be characterized by mutual trust, respect, genuineness and commitment. Partners reflect awareness of ways their beliefs, values and personal history may impact collaborative activities and demonstrate capacity to respect, honor, and accommodate other's belief systems, cultural knowledge and customs.
5. The partnership should balance power among partners and enable resources among partners to be shared. Decision-making must be shared. Governance must be shared or be led by the community. Specific plans (principles and processes) for decision-making, governance, and conflict resolution must be clearly defined by the partners at the start of the project.
6. The partnership should build upon identified strengths and assets, but also work to address needs and increase capacity of all partners.
7. Partners should make clear and open communication an ongoing priority by striving to understand each other's' needs and self-interests, and develop a common language.
8. Partners should recognize that race, ethnicity, class, and other aspects of culture matter and talk openly about these issues.
9. There should be feedback among all stakeholders in the partnership, with the goals of continuously improving the partnership and its outcomes.
10. Partnerships can dissolve and should plan a process for closure.

Reason for Guidance

With increased incentives for performing translational research and for building community-university partnerships, there is increased potential for more faculty researchers to become involved in community-based research. It is important for faculty to understand the distinctions along the continuum of community-based research. Just as individual research subjects have the Institutional Review Board to consider individual interests, risk, and benefit; it is desirable for the University to more formally consider the community's interests, risk, and benefit. One potential outcome of this guidance is an increased level of trust by communities that engage with the University.

Definitions

Community²

¹ Principles 3-7, 9 and 10 draw from the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Principles of Good Community-Campus Partnerships, 2006: <https://ccph.memberclicks.net/principles-of-partnership>

² This definition of community is authored by the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) Board of Directors, 2005 <https://ccph.memberclicks.net/faq>

A community is a group that self-identifies by geography, age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, illness or health condition, common interest or cause, a sense of identification or shared emotional connection, shared values or norms, mutual influence, or commitment to meeting a shared need. Community need not be defined solely by geography.

Defining “community” in a community-university partnership is more about the process of asking questions than about a strict definition of who “is” community or “represents” community: “Are those most affected by the problem at the table? Are community members at the table? Are those who have a stake in the issue being addressed at the table? Do they play decision making roles?” The purpose of the research partnership drives the definition - each project must define the community of interest.

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with a community to address issues affecting the well-being of the community.

Community-based Research

This term has different meanings for different people. Here we will use the term to refer to any research that takes place in or involves a community. More precise definitions reflect the degree of engagement of the community in the research, which can take place along a spectrum of engagement and shared governance. Many refer to this research as community-engaged research.

Community-placed research is a researcher-initiated project involving a one time or short-term relationship between the investigator and the community, with limited community involvement beyond being a venue for recruiting research participants or for implementing research procedures.

Basic community partnership research is a project that involves a relationship with a community partner in which the researcher makes the key decisions in the project, but considers the needs and interests of the community in how the research is conducted and how the outcomes are disseminated.

Close community partnership research is an ongoing collaborative project in which goals are co-defined in ways that balance benefit to the researcher and utility of the findings for the community. There is some sharing of decision making between the researcher and the community, but the research methodology is primarily determined by the researcher.

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a project defined by co-creation of project ideas and procedures by researchers and a community, substantive participation by the community in all or nearly all stages of the research, and shared governance (equal sharing of power and decision-making responsibilities). There is an expectation that findings will be used to change systems or solve community problems.

Related Information

Community Campus Partnerships for Health (<http://www.ccpd.info/>)
Research Involving Human Subjects
(<http://www1.umt.edu/regents/policies/academic/HumanSubjects.html>)

Appendix 1. CONTINUUM OF COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

	Community-Placed Research	Basic Community Partnership Research	Close Community Partnership Research	Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
Definition	A researcher-initiated project involving a one time or short-term relationship between the investigator and the community, with limited community involvement beyond being a venue for recruiting research participants or for implementing research procedures.	A project that involves a relationship with a community partner in which the researcher makes the key decisions in the project, but considers the needs and interests of the community in how the research is conducted and how the outcomes are disseminated.	An ongoing collaborative project in which goals are co-defined in ways that balance benefit to the researcher and utility of the findings for the community. There is some sharing of decision making between the researcher and the community, but the research methodology is primarily determined by the researcher.	A project defined by co-creation of project ideas and procedures by researchers and a community, substantive participation by the community in all or nearly all stages of the research, and shared governance (equal sharing of power and decision-making responsibilities). There is an expectation that findings will be used to change systems or solve community problems.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one-time community survey of children's reading ability, Recruitment of study • Participants with diabetes in a particular at-risk community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking children's reading abilities over time in a cooperating school. • A treatment study and follow up of people with diabetes in a cooperating health care clinic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A long-term collaborative project to improve reading scores in a school. • A collaborative intervention to improve diabetes care and outcomes in a clinic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-created initiative of parents, students, school, researchers to improve reading in a school. • A co-created community intervention to improve community capacity for self-care of diabetes.
Principles	Principles # 1-4 apply	Principles # 1-6 apply	Principles # 1-10 apply	CBPR has its own set of principles that supplant and go beyond principles #1-10. CBPR Principles # 1-10 apply.