Preparing for the Courtship

Assessing Your Readiness to Partner

Aziza Lucas-Wright, M.Ed.
Community Engagement Specialist/ Project Associate IV, The RAND Corporation;
Community Instructor, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science,
Program Manager/Research Assistant, Harbor-UCLA/LA Biomed
Over the course of several months, we approached investigators at the following sites to get their recommendations for assessing a community organization’s readiness to conduct research with an academic partner. Their input validates the importance of being research-ready.

1. Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science Community Faculty
2. Healthy African American Families II
3. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
4. The National Community Center for Participatory Research
5. UCLA, Clinical and Translational Science Institute
6. UCSF, Clinical and Translational Science Institute
7. RAND Corporation
How to Determine “Goodness of Fit”

• Screen, screen, screen!!
• Ask questions (more later)
• Treat the invitation to partner as though it were a business, because IT IS!
• Don’t be afraid to “Kick the Tires”
Principles of Community Engagement

• Know where you want to go.

• There are multiple levels of community engagement from community participation in a pre-designed study to community advisory board to using community sites to having community as a full partner.

• Be clear what is most appropriate for your project and be clear and transparent with your potential community partners.
Your Expectations Matter

• Know what your expectations are

• What kind of relationship do you want?

• If Community-Academic Partnered Research, then....
You’re the executive director for a non-profit, social services agency in a medically underserved area. Your clients are low-income, and have little to no access to health resources.
An academic researcher asks you to become a partner on a research project about depression in adolescents. The researcher is submitting the grant in a week, and would like to add you to the project. It seems like an interesting project to you, and you are obliged by the thoughtfulness of a researcher approaching you.

What do you do?
“Kicking the Tires”

When approached by an academic investigator,

– *screen the offer*

– *ask questions related to the:*
  
  • Project
  • Principal Investigators
  • Participants
  • Process of working
  • Products of the collaboration

**What do you **ask**?**
Screening the Offer & Asking Questions

1. What is this study about?
2. Why did you select this issue to study?
3. Who put this study together?
4. How has the community been involved in research questions and designs?
5. At what point was the community included?
6. How can my agency and our community partners share their ideas as you do this study?
7. May we establish a community advisory and/or review committee to provide input in the process?
8. Is the research mode/methodology to be used, specifically matched with the target populations being studied (e.g. ethnicity, urban/rural, gender specific)?
9. Who are the researchers and are they familiar with the community being studied?

10. If the researchers are not familiar with the community being researched, has cultural sensitivity/competence training been done or planned? Who provided the training? Are they willing to engage in cultural competence?

11. Who is going to be in the study?

12. What are the potential risks to the community?

13. How will our agency and the community benefit from this study?

14. May we review the study protocol inclusive of the budget?

15. Exactly what is required of my agency and community partners?
16. Will there be a training on how to access support and other resources at the academic institution?

17. What if we have conflicts between our staff and yours – how is that addressed?

18. Will you consider hiring and training our staff/volunteers to conduct some of the research tasks?

19. How will the results be disseminated?

20. Is there a formal “report-back” event planned?

21. What is going to happen with the collected data?

22. What will be left behind when the study is over?

23. What is the “win-win” for our agency? (e.g. authorship)
The 5 P’s of Collaborative Research

1. Projects
2. Principal Investigators
3. Participants
4. Process & Partnerships
5. Products
Prior to collaborating with a specific research project, it’s important to learn how the project in question was developed and the background to it.
“Project Design” Questions

1. What is this study about?
2. Why did you select this issue to study?
3. Who put this study together?
4. How has the community been involved in research questions and design?
5. At what point was the community included?
6. How can my agency and our community partners share their ideas as you do this study?
7. May we establish a community advisory and/or review committee to provide input in the process?
8. Is the research mode/methodology to be used, specifically matched with the target populations being studied (e.g. ethnicity, urban/rural, gender specific)?
Prior to collaborating with a specific research project, it’s important to learn how the project in question was developed and the background to it.
1. Who are the researchers and are they familiar with the community being studied?
2. If the researchers are not familiar with the community being researched, has cultural sensitivity/competence training been done or planned? Who provided the training? Are they willing to engage in cultural competence?
In order to determine whether your resources will be useful in the endeavor, it’s important to know if those participants being searched for are a population you serve, or if it’s a group with whom you can mediate participation.
1. Who is going to be in the study?
2. What are the potential risks to the community?
These questions will assist in determining whether the researcher has previous experience working with organizations like yours, and what the working plan between the partners will be.
1. How will our agency and the community benefit from this study?
2. May we review the study protocol/inclusive of the budget?
3. Exactly what is required of my agency and community partners?
4. Will there be a training on how to access support and other resources at the academic institution?
5. What if we have conflicts between our staff and yours – how is that addressed?
6. Will you consider hiring and training our staff/volunteers to conduct some of the research tasks?
Research is important not only for what can be discovered, but also for what’s left behind to be used in the future.
“Products” Questions

1. How will the results be disseminated?
2. Is there a formal “report-back” event planned?
3. What is going to happen with the collected data?
4. What will be left behind when the study is over?
5. What is the “win-win” for our agency (e.g. authorship)?
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?
Evaluating Your Readiness

A DREAM COME TRUE?
A NIGHTMARE WAITING TO HAPPEN?
Special thank you to the following contributors:

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<tr>
<td>Felica Jones</td>
<td>8-10, 18, 22, 23</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8-14, 18-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Koegel, Ph.D.</td>
<td>22-23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlene Meeks</td>
<td>6-7, 19-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norma Mtume, MA, MFT</td>
<td>3-7, 19-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Norris, MD</td>
<td>22-23</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth Wells, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pluscedia Williams</td>
<td>11-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aziza Wright, M.Ed.</td>
<td>1-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC &amp; Prevention</td>
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• CTSI, UCSF
• Arleen Brown, MD – Guidance & Oversight
• CERP TEAM – Coordination, Operations, & Technical Assistance
Consider becoming a UCLA CTSI Community Partner!

Complete the Community Partner Survey, for your organization to become a UCLA CTSI Community Partner, and be notified of future events, workshops, and funding opportunities!