

SOP for community-engaged research

Your Community of Interest

Define the community of interest for your study and be thoughtful about how to best develop a group with meaningful overlap and diversity in views and experiences (e.g., providers, people with lived experience, people in leadership positions within community-based non-profits).

- Consider whether subgroups make sense (e.g., providers in one group; people with lived experience in another).

Working with Community Members

Include community members in the grant application development and initial study design.

- Budget compensation of community members into your grant application.

Invite more people to join the community meeting than you would hope to show up. An ideal number to attend is 7-8 people, invite 10-11 people.

Recruit possible community members via: prior participation in research studies, community organizations, flyers posted around PGH, CTSI community engagement studios, departmental sponsored events

Visit community organizations in their spaces, learn about what they do and what they are needing. Ask how you can support them and their mission and follow-up.

- Contact Office of Grants and Contracts and set up your service agreement prior to the event (e.g., 3-4 weeks prior to hosting an event in a community space ensure you have the service agreement in place so the community organization is able to get compensated in a timely fashion)

Provide ongoing updates about how your grant application or study is progressing (e.g., status update, recruitment updates, new findings)

Be thoughtful about who from the research team (e.g., PI, staff, co-I, trainees) should be involved in meeting with community members.

Develop statement of work or service agreement that defines their roles and compensation.

- Review with community members and adjust based on feedback and discussion. This provides opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities (e.g., frequency of meetings, tasks). (See templates)
- Service agreements are not allowed for individuals under the age of 18.

Ask about preferences for contacting people (email, text, phone call). Send reminders and survey links via preferred contact methods.

- Share your contact information to facilitate people reaching out with additional ideas and feedback.
- Anticipate barriers to participation and try to accommodate (e.g., technology; parking; children).

Ask about preferences for when to meet (days, times) and virtual vs. in-person.

- If virtual, encourage the video to be on to facilitate discussion.
- If in person, reimburse for parking and provide specific directions for where to park. Reimburse for transportation. Provide snacks and drinks. Identify neutral or approachable locations as opposed to your office conference room.
- Be prepared to have meetings outside of 9-5. Consider alternating between days/week and times to maximize attendance.

Think about the need to include in the IRB: (See document)

- For community advisors not listed on IRB protocol – PI does CPRET training with individual through CTSI
 - More info on CPRET training: <https://ctsi.pitt.edu/education-training/community-partners-research-ethics-training/>
- Community investigators (who are listed on IRB protocol) need to complete CITI trainings
 - Need sponsored Pitt/UPMC account to do this

Conduct anonymous surveys to obtain feedback from community partners regarding their experiences so that you can continue to improve. (see example items)

Community Meetings

Set and share an agenda ahead of time.

- Ask community members for what they want to cover and what questions they have on the topic of interest at the end of the meeting so you can reflect this and move forward in the next meeting.

Be ready to have Word clouds, anonymous interactive polling/questions, screenshots of your questions, pictures of your lab, pictures of your recruitment materials, and other ways to engage the group that gets them talking and NOT the investigators.

Consider human centered design approaches for community meetings. Pitt's CTSI has trainings and support for this.

Limit your powerpoint slides to fewer than 8 slides.

Work to include everyone in the conversation and be ready to redirect people when they start talking for long periods of time.

Have a study member take notes on suggestions and action items and share those meeting minutes with community partners.

Plan ahead for how to respond to microaggressions. Diverse members will be learning with you so make sure you convey from the beginning that this is a safe space and as host you'll be aiming to support that by creating opportunities for all to share, with respect and courtesy and willingness to learn from one another.

Compensating Community Members

Determine how to compensate community members (e.g., Vincent cards; see statement of work and service agreement templates). Make sure you know the information from each participant to ensure they get paid in a timely (within 1 week) fashion.

- Create a tracking database.

How do you pay community partners that are not U.S. citizens or do not have an SSN?

- Amazon gift cards have been an option for paying people who are undocumented.
 - Limit for Amazon gift cards is \$100
 - However, sending payments to hundreds of participants may trigger rejections on the Amazon side
 - Vincent card or departmental credit card (Office of Grants and Contracts can assist) is used to purchase gift cards or obtain cash for payments (“person-on-the-street” card)
- Vincent exception page: <https://www.hrpo.pitt.edu/vincent-exception-requests>

More information on conducting community partnered research with individuals under the age of 18 will be provided in early 2024.