COALESCE

Research Protocol Checklist

Community partners are often asked to collaborate on research projects given their deep ties and relationships to relevant communities and potential participants.

Typically, these types of research collaborations are spelled out in writing and agreed to by both parties through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Collaboration Agreement (CA). It will be important as a community partner to understand what part you and your organization will play in collecting data, recruiting and consenting participants, and the like. It's OK to ask questions, seek clarification and fine tune the plan before you commit to it; this ensures that your organization will both fulfill the demands of the study as well as the needs of the staff carrying it out.

This check list is designed to help you understand the components of a research protocol and how you might be asked to collaborate on a research project. Make sure that you understand specifically what pieces of the work your organization is being asked to complete and that you feel you have the capacity to carry them out. Ensure that what you are being asked to do is something your organization can do and is consistent with your organization's mission and values.

CAREFUL: Try to iron out all the details in your protocol before the study begins. You can change questions and measures midway through the study, but it may jeopardize the success of the study.

Research Protocol Component	Community Partner Self-Assessment
Eligible Applicants, Funding Agency Information, Award Amount: Many protocol applications (RFAs, "Requests for Applications") begin with a high-level summary of the study being funded, including the study's aims, who is funding the study, what types of organizations are allowed (or not allowed) to apply, and how much money is being awarded and to how many awardees	Is this project a good fit for our organization in terms of: ☐ study aims match our mission ☐ our type of organization is eligible to apply/participate ☐ the work activities are achievable for our organization ☐ our organization has/can hire staff capable of carrying out this work
Application and Project Timelines: Key dates that are important to the application process. This includes when the application opens, dates and times for informational calls when funders will answer applicants' questions about the application process, and dates when proposals are due. They also spell out when the project itself is supposed to begin or end	Is the project timeline achievable for our organization? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
Problem Statement/Background: All research protocols are intended to answer a question or help solve a larger problem, like "Why are more young people dropping out of college?" or "How can we contain air pollution to decrease respiratory illness in our city?" Your job as an applicant is to make sure your proposed research responds to this question and helps solve the problem.	Do the project's aims match the mission of our organization? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If no, why not: _____

Research Purpose/Objectives: The research purpose or objectives clearly state the purpose of your particular study and how it will address the problem statement.	Do the research questions or objectives answer the problem the funder intends to address? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Does our organization have a stake or interest in answering the research questions? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
Allowable/Required Research Activities: Funders often clarify which types of research activities they will allow or require as part of the proposed work and which types they will not allow.	Are the activities our organization asked to complete allowable/required as part of the study? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If no, how can we adjust the activities be allowable/required? _____
Study Methods/Design: This section of the protocol describes in detail what exactly will take place as part of the research study. This includes the research activities, such as: • *Intervention or experiment* • *Data collected* • *Analysis plans*	What parts of the study is your organization expected to participate in? ☐ intervention/experiment implementation ☐ data collection ☐ analyses Does our organization have the capacity to do this (e.g. staffing, training, time)? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
Participants: This section speaks to who is eligible to participate in the study, why this group is being targeted and why certain people are included or excluded from the study. This section also describes how many participants will participate and how they will be selected **Recruitment and Informed Consent** Protocols also outline what types of communication with participants is approved or allowable to invite their participation or communicate about the study (e.g. phone calls, texts, email, in-person) The protocol also explains how informed consent will be obtained from participants. This includes 1) a full description of the study, 2) ensuring that	Community partners are often asked to collaborate on research projects given their relationships with potential participants Does your organization have connections with the proposed participant group? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Do you feel comfortable reaching out to them to participate in the study? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

the participant is competent to provide their own consent or that their surrogate or guardian is, and 3) ensuring the participant knows that their participation is completely voluntary	If no, why? Could the study be altered in increase your comfort level or is it not a good fit?_____ Is your organization being asked to obtain informed consent from participants? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If yes, are you trained/prepared to obtain informed consent from participants? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If no, what training/support would be necessary to be prepared: _____
Workplan/Timeline/Budget: Research funders often ask for a plan of work/timeline in which this work will get done and budget needed to complete the work. Sometimes this is simply a high-level outline for the application and greater details will be requested when you win the research award. It's important for community partners to be familiar with these elements because they will be asked to carry out part of the work in accordance with the proposed timeline and budget. It's important that these elements are a realistic fit for your agency. If not, speak up and discuss with your research partner.	Is your organization capable of carrying out its portion of the research activities within the proposed timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Is your organization capable of carrying out its portion of the research activities within the proposed budget? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure If no, what changes would need to be made to make the work possible for your organization? _____
Applicant Capacity: Research funders may ask research applicants to clarify why they are qualified to carry out the work. This could be in terms of budget, staffing, prior relevant work experience or training, relationships with or access to the study population. Community partners need to consider their capacity to carry out their part of the research study.	Have you done this type of work before? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Do you as an applicant have enough staff, office space, equipment, experience and training to carry out the work? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure Do you have the necessary relationships to recruit potential participants? ☐ Yes

	☐ No ☐ Unsure What training/supports might you need?
Communication/Dissemination of Findings: Finally, once the study is complete it will be important to share out what was learned. Researchers typically do this by writing up findings from their studies as articles in peer reviewed research journals. But there are other ways to share this information and other people to share it with. If you are interested in being a part of this process, let your research partner know. You have a say so as a partner in the research as to who you'd like findings shared with and in what format. You also have a right to be part of the journal article writing team if you are interested. It may be important to you that research findings are shared back with the participants themselves or the community impacted so they can know about the research findings and importance. Speak up and make a plan with your research partner if you want this included as part of the dissemination of findings.	Who do you want research findings to be shared with (e.g. participants, your organization, your community)? _____ How do you want research findings to be shared (e.g. town hall, social media)? _____
Data Security: Research participants have a right to keep the information collected from them (e.g. contact information, statements, specimens) as part of the study private and confidential. Data security refers to what steps researchers take to protect this information from being shared incorrectly. Some of the important parts of data security and protecting participants privacy include *storing participant data separate from any information that identifies who they are.* Data security plans also detail *how electronic data is kept safe* from being shared by mistake. Data security plans also clarify who does or does not have *access to the data*, if data will be available to researchers for future studies, as well as a *timeline for when data or specimens will be destroyed*.	Sometimes community partners are responsible for collecting participant data (e.g. lists of people interested in being contacted about the study, informed consent documents). How, if at all, has your organization been asked to keep participant data secure? Does your organization feel well trained/prepared to do so? If no, what training and support do you need?