

Considering/Developing Your Organization's Research Purpose

This document includes some background on how to develop your organization's research purpose and four examples of community organizations or coalitions and their unique approach to defining and incorporating research into their organization. Building an organization's capacity to consider, develop and research priorities are important first steps to be ready to conduct or participate in research.

Related Directory Resource: Assessing your Organization's Research Environment/Capacity

Developing an Organizational Research Purpose

Developing a research purpose or framework or philosophy or statement for your organization can help prepare your organization to effectively consider and develop research ideas and priorities.

- What it is: a clear, statement about why your organization wants to be/is involved in research
 - Does not have to be topic specific. It is more about how your organization operates...what drives your organization to do things? How can research support that?
 - You know you have one when: Those in your organization at multiple levels (board, leadership, staff, -program participants) can articulate why your organization wants to be/is involved in research.

Ideas to help you develop a research purpose for your organization

Work with others in your organization.

Brainstorm!

- Think about your organization and how it operates.
- What are some possible motivations for the organization to get involved in research?

Consider...

- Understanding causes of a problem
- Improve program/services
- To market program/services
- Assess needs
- To access Re\$ource\$
- To be able to offer new programs/services
- Develop partnerships
- Contribute to scientific knowledge
- Achieve social change

Examples

Maternity Care Coalition: <http://maternitycarecoalition.org/professionals/research/>

What is Maternal and Child Health Research?

Maternal and child health research is dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of pregnant women, mothers, and children



Compiled by the Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities

through scientific study and evaluation of promising programs.

Our research agenda is grounded in the belief that a mother's health and wellbeing has a profound impact on her child.

Maternity Care Coalition's research program contributes to the evidence base* in maternal and child health through:

- Rigorous evaluation of our program outcomes.
- Research studies on the most pressing needs of pregnant women and new moms.
- Collaborations with university researchers.

*Evidence-based interventions have documented proof of their effectiveness after rigorous testing.

Somali, Latino and Hmong Partnership for Health and Wellness (SoLaHmo)

<http://www.westsidetchs.org/programs.php?service=22>. On website find Completed Research, Current Multi-Community Research, Individual SoLaHmo Members' Research, Publications and Presentations.



The SoLaHmo Partnership for Health and Wellness (SoLaHmo) is a program of West Side Community Health Services (West Side). We are made up of Somali, Latino and Hmong community members and health care professionals in partnership with health science researchers. **SoLaHmo** is an example of how community members, researchers and health care providers are working together as equal partners to make a difference in community health by tapping into community strengths and wisdom.

SoLaHmo was founded on the belief that research partnerships between community members, health care providers and academics can provide a strong foundation for maximizing community health. **SoLaHmo's mission** is to build upon the unique cultural strengths of Somali, Latino, and Hmong communities to promote health and wellness through research, education and policy. **SoLaHmo's vision** is dedicated to the reality that Somali, Latino, and Hmong communities have the knowledge, skills and power to participate as equal partners with researchers and health care professionals to maximize community health and wellness.

SoLaHmo's Health Priority Areas are: 1) Prevent Chronic Diseases; 2) Promote Healthy Youth and Families; 3) Improve Mental Health; and 4) Increase Culturally Competent Health Care.

As a community engagement process, CBPAR can actively engage community and lead to action and change via several mechanisms.

- CBPAR research techniques are skills that community members can use to identify information that is relevant to the health of their community.
- CBPAR collaborative and non-hierarchical processes foster social network connections that can support effective action.
- CBPAR connects knowledge with change because the goal of producing the knowledge is to produce action.

Multicultural AIDS Coalition Research Framework

Overview of Multicultural AIDS Coalition

Founded in 1988, the mission of the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC) is to mobilize communities of color to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We work to ensure high quality, accessible prevention and treatment services for people living with HIV, at high risk for becoming infected, or closely affected by the disease, while supporting broader community efforts to eradicate conditions that fuel the epidemic, such as substance abuse, STIs, and lack of health care access.



Research

MAC is committed to initiating research to answer critical questions that could impact our response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Areas of impact include service delivery, public policy, and advocacy initiatives. Our commitment is to ensure that research is done for, by, and with the subject community. MAC supports a community process of defining shared priorities for improving service delivery and relevant public policy, and mobilizing the community to engage in advocacy to effect change. This process involves forging a partnership between academic researchers, community practitioners, and community members. It is our hope that our joint efforts contribute to demystifying scientific research in communities of color and to strengthening the network of people in our community who understand how to use scientific research to help us improve our work.

Framework for Research

As a research framework, MAC employs the Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach, which is a...

“...collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community, has the aim of combining knowledge with action and achieving social change to improve health outcomes and eliminate health disparities.” (WK Kellogg Foundation, Community Health Scholars Program)

MAC recognizes that CBPR operates on a continuum. All partners involved determine the level of engagement necessary to ensure the community voices are heard, respected and needs are met. MAC integrates nine key principles of community-based participatory research that support successful research partnerships and are widely cited. (Israel B, Chulz A, Parker E and Becker A. (1998). Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. Annual Review of Public Health, 19, pp. 173-202)

These principles ensure that any research partnership:

- Recognizes community as an unit of identity
- Builds on strengths and resources within the community
- Facilitates collaborative, equitable involvement of all partners in all phases of the research
- Integrates knowledge and intervention for mutual benefit of all partners
- Promotes a co-learning and empowering process that attends to social inequalities
- Involves a cyclical and iterative process
- Addresses health from both positive and ecological perspectives
- Disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners
- Involves long-term commitment by all partners