Community Review Board Toolkit

A Guide to Plan and Conduct a Community Review Board

Meharry-Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core
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CBPR Community Review Board Toolkit

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1) Introduction and Acknowledgements

After participating in a Community Review Board, researchers often remark that they wished they had done so earlier in the development of their research project. The input they received from community members proved invaluable and in retrospect could have saved them a lot of time and effort in the planning of their community based interventions, in building community partnerships, and in recruiting community members into their study. It is our hope that with the help of the Community Review Board, health researchers will come to view community input as essential to the planning and implementation of their work.

Community members, too value the opportunity not only to learn about research and how it can benefit themselves or their community, but also to contribute to its development and execution in a way that increases the researchers understanding of, and sensitivity to the community. As one of our community experts remarked:

“The Community Review Board presents a unique opportunity to tap into the wisdom of community members. It is a process that empowers community members to contribute to the process of research in ways we have not seen before. We have only begun to see the benefits to both researchers and the community.” –Rev. Neely Williams, Director, Community Partners Network

We are grateful to our community partners at IMF Peniel Initiative and the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Care Center who helped us develop and refine the Community Review Board model; and to the many community members who have served as community experts, making each Community Review Board a valuable learning experience. And none of this work would have been possible without the collaboration of our colleagues at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who secured grant funding to support the development of our new models for community engagement, Charrettes and the Community Review Board.

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2) Overview of a Community Review Board

The Meharry-Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core (CERC) is a component of the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR), and a shared resource for academic researchers, research trainees, and community organizations. CERC’s mission is to bring together academic researchers and community members to improve community health and healthcare through community-engaged research. The Community Review Board is one of the unique services developed by CERC to further this mission.

Community input into research design and implementation plans provide a deeper understanding of a community’s unique circumstances. It has also been shown that community input can increase community trust and strengthen recruitment activities. However, in order to effectively implement a community-engaged research partnership it is essential to clarify the roles and expectations of community members and investigators, enhance the likelihood of mutual benefit to both communities and researchers, and employ culturally sensitive methodologies. The Community Review Board creates a framework for community experts to review and provide immediate feedback to the investigator on specific areas of concern before the research project is implemented.

Recognizing the limitations of traditional approaches to population health and health disparities research, our Community Advisory Council and community partners challenged CERC to develop new models for community engagement. Building on VICTR’s Translation Studio model for strengthening research proposals, the Community Review Board was created to help researchers interested in working in a community setting do so in a way that is culturally sensitive and in keeping with community norms, priorities and values.

A Translation Studio is a guidance session where researchers can present their proposals to a small group of academic content and methodological experts for feedback and refinement. Studios can be developed for any stage of the research process: hypothesis development, design, implementation, data analysis, or dissemination and translation of findings. The Community Review Board is similar in purpose, but brings together community members as experts – persons with extensive knowledge about the community of interest.

A Community Review Board (CRB) provides a structured forum for academic researchers to gain valuable community insight on their community based research and has the potential to transform the way community and academic investigators work together. In a CRB, members of the researcher’s population of interest serve as community experts. The researcher gives a brief presentation about the research project and poses specific questions to the community experts. The discussion that follows is guided by a neutral facilitator to elicit honest and constructive feedback. Advance preparation by the researcher and community experts is
essential for a successful CRB. To optimize community participation, CRB sessions are scheduled at a time and location convenient to community experts, and the experts are compensated for their time. Feedback from researchers and community members who have participated in past CRBs indicates that the experience increases the researcher’s understanding of, and sensitivity to the community, and creates an awareness of community priorities and needs. Participating in a CRB prompts researchers to reflect on the significance and impact of their work. Community experts have indicated that the experience increases their understanding of the research endeavor, including the motivation of the researcher, and how and why research is conducted.

For the research team, the benefits of participating in a CRB include: access to community experts from different settings without the complexity of scheduling multiple meetings; immediate feedback at different stages of project development and implementation; an opportunity to build a relationship with community partners and deepen the understanding of the community of interest; immersion into the community’s cultural nuances and possible historical issues; assessment of the feasibility and appropriateness of the project for the community, and; buy-in from key community stakeholders. If conducted during the earliest stages of project development, a Community Review Board can be an effective tool to develop a strong CBPR partnership. For researchers who are not familiar with community engagement, it can open the door to a more participatory approach to their work.

Researchers from a variety of disciplines can benefit from participating in the Community Review Board process. Past CRB sessions have addressed issues of compensation, the culturally appropriateness of recruitment materials, participant retention strategies, simplifying the consenting process and identifying entry points for community-based recruitment, intervention design, survey design, consent process, ethical considerations and translation.

What is the difference between a focus group and a Community Review Board?

Quite often researchers will ask what makes a Community Review Board different from a traditional focus group. Community Review Boards are not intended as research. They provide a relatively quick way to gain community input on the development or implementation of a research project. IRB approval is not needed to conduct a Community Review Board. The Community Experts are not research subject, but rather experts who are serving in a consulting role. Focus groups are conducted with the use of an explicit interview guide where all questions have been pre-identified. In a focus group, the facilitator is more focused on the subjective experiences of the group as opposed to the individual. Because of the very structured nature of focus groups they are often used for publication. Community Review Boards are utilized to dig deeper into the individual’s experience as it might relate to the group. The experts participating can come from a variety of backgrounds with one shared experience, like a
particular health condition. While there are 2-3 main topics that will be discussed during a CRB, there is no structured interview guide to adhere to. This allows the facilitator to focus the discussion on what is most helpful to the researcher and his/her project. This is important, as issues that may not have been identified prior to the meeting, may turn out to be the most insightful for the research being discussed.

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3) The Basics

One of the first steps to creating a successful Community Review Board program is to identify a staff person with community knowledge and excellent communication and organizational skills. We call this person the Community Navigator (see Appendix g for job description). Key responsibilities include the recruitment and orientation of the Community Experts, managing all the logistics of the Community Review Board, and follow up on any resulting actions and recommendations. The Community Navigator is also responsible for ensuring that the appropriate documentation is completed for each Community Review Board including capturing the expert feedback from each session, the completion of all necessary forms and the entry of survey data for evaluation purposes.

The ideal candidate for the Community Navigator position is someone who has worked extensively in the community. While an understanding of research is helpful, it is critical that the Community Navigator understands the community and has developed trusting relationships with key community leaders. Hiring from the community puts into practice some of the fundamental principles of community engagement such as mutual benefit, respect and community capacity building. A respected community member is likely to have access to networks unknown to someone who works in an academic setting. Likely candidates include social workers, community organizers and community health workers.

After establishing the Community Navigator, you will need to assemble the appropriate documents and forms for a Community Review Board. These will vary depending on the review board type (a meeting should be scheduled with you and your team to discuss the materials that will be distributed or presented). However, for all review boards, a list of specific questions/issues for the community experts to focus on is helpful.
The Community Review Boards normally take place in community settings (e.g. community centers, community health centers, public libraries, etc.) that are familiar and easily accessible to the Community Experts. Please note the Community Review Board rarely takes place in a university setting.

You should expect and plan for a diverse audience. A facilitator should be present who will start the session and lead the discussion, as well as a community navigator. In addition, co-investigators are encouraged to attend. And finally, a community expert panel should be present (on average we have 4-6 experts).

During the review, the facilitator will start by giving a brief overview of the purpose of the Community Review Board. The facilitator will also introduce the researcher and will ask each of the experts to introduce themselves. The researcher will then give a brief PPT presentation describing his or her research project. Following the presentation, the facilitator will lead discussion amongst the community experts while the Community Navigator takes notes. Finally, the community experts will complete a review form/sheet delineating the pros and cons of the project.

Following the Community Review Board, the Community Navigator will compile the responses on the review forms which will then be incorporated into his or her notes. The community navigator will then e-mail the notes along with a hyperlink to the evaluation form within a few days following the community review board process. Hopefully the researcher will take a few minutes to provide feedback through the evaluation, so we can continue to improve the review board process for everyone involved. The Community Navigator will follow up in 3-4 months for feedback on how the Community Review Board impacted your research project. Follow-up Community Review Boards may be scheduled for additional community input.

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4) Getting Started*

The Community Review Board (CRB) is available to the faculty of Vanderbilt University and Meharry Medical College. Faculty, graduate students, and staff of both institutions may request a CRB through an online portal called StarBrite that provides access to research services, consultations, and equipment.

To initiate a CRB request a researcher would go through the following steps:

1. Login to StarBrite at https://starbrite.vanderbilt.edu/login.php?lo=yes with a VUNet ID
2. Once logged in, the researcher will be brought to a face page.
3. A description of the Community Review Board can be found under “Research on Practice and Policy”.
4. A researcher can request a CRB by clicking on the “Funding” tab.
5. When making a “New Request” for a Community Review Board, the researcher provides basic information about their project and the specific concerns they would like to address during the CRB. This process usually takes 10-15 minutes.
6. Researchers will also provide some basic scientific information about their study such as their hypothesis and a summary of the problem that will be addressed by their study.

Once the request for a Community Review Board is approved, the researcher will be contacted by the Community Navigator to schedule their session with the community experts.

*This is the internal process set up by the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research to access all CTSA resources. Different institutions will have to establish their own process for requesting a Community Review Board.

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5) The Community Review Board Process - The Researcher

Preparing for the CRB usually requires two meetings with the researcher and if appropriate, with key members of the research team. In the first meeting, the Community Navigator and CRB facilitator will explain how the CRB works, and what to expect. They will go over the presentation template, discuss specific questions to pose to the experts, identify the community experts and agree on a time and location. At the second meeting, the facilitator and Community Navigator will review the presentation, making suggestions for clarity and brevity. This is also an opportunity to finalize logistics and share information about the community experts who will be participating.

a. Coaching the Researcher

The Community Review Board gives researchers the opportunity to describe their work to a community audience. While their skillset generally includes making presentations to fellow researchers in classrooms, grand rounds, conferences, and other scholarly venues, presenting to non-researchers requires a very different approach. Furthermore, they become accustomed to being the expert. Coaching from the CRB facilitator and Community Navigator can help them get the most out of this opportunity.

Here are the key things to include in coaching researchers:

- The community members participating in the CRB are the experts in the room.
- After making the presentation, the researcher’s role is primarily to listen, asking questions for clarification.
- Avoid using technical terms and acronyms. The nature of the audience must drive the nature of their presentation.
- The researcher should imagine he/she is talking with an intelligent non-researcher (like his/her grandparent).

In designing the presentation, the researcher must remember the community expert needs to know:

- What the researcher is trying to find out, and why it is important
- How the research be done might impact people who would serve as research subjects,
- What kind of advice the researcher needs.
b. The Researcher’s Presentation

*Preparation:* The presentation must be brief. No longer than 15 minutes total. It can be difficult to explain research concepts and procedures in layman’s terms, so it is important that the researcher devote adequate time to prepare. It is not appropriate to use a presentation that was previously prepared for an academic audience.

*Revision:* Language used in the funding proposal or academic summary will probably need to be translated to lay English. Using scientific jargon and acronyms will dramatically reduce the presentation’s impact, as most audiences in this situation will not ask for clarification. Keep text to a minimum and avoid complex tables, formulas and diagrams.

*Practice:* The researcher should share the presentation with a non-academic partner at least once before presenting it, and use the feedback she/he receives.

c. Presentation Template- Community Review Board (See Appendix d for sample presentation)

PowerPoint is a favored method of presentation among researchers. This format can be effective in a Community Review Board, particularly if images or diagrams are used. However, PowerPoint slides, particularly those with a lot of text can also distract from the speaker so we recommend its use with caution. The presentation to Community Experts should include the following elements:

1. Title of Study, Researcher Name, Researcher Dept/Institution, Date
2. Specific Problem Study will Address
3. Describe purpose of study
4. Explain why this study is important to the community
5. Describe potential impact on/benefit to the community
6. Research Questions- ex. What, specifically is the study designed to find out?
7. What population or community is the subject/focus of this study? Why this population/community?
8. Study Design: Who, What, When, Where, How- *Include this only if the study design is relevant to the questions you will pose to the community experts.*
9. Data collection/analysis- *Include this slide only if the Analytical Plan is relevant to the questions you will pose to the community experts.*
10. How will findings be used?
11. Dissemination/utilization plan?

12. Translation for community use

13. Questions? – give experts an opportunity to ask questions about the study or the presentation

14. Questions for the community experts. These represent the specific areas the researcher needs community input on – no more than 2 or 3 questions.

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6) The Community Review Board Process- Community Experts

a. Community Experts Recruiting Process

Community Experts are the key to the success of the Community Review Board model. Community Experts should be recruited in a way that will ultimately create a diverse pool of individuals who share an interest in improving the way research is conducted in their own community, and leveraging research to benefit their community. There are numerous strategies that can be used in the recruitment process but it is important to look beyond the “usual suspects”– those individuals who are commonly called upon to serve on Boards, Coalitions and positions where they are asked to represent and entire community.

The experience and knowledge that Community Experts bring to the research process is a tremendous asset. Experts are compensated $50.00 per CRB session in which they participate.

The basic criteria to be a Community Expert include:

- Member of the population or community of interest and/or extensive knowledge of population or community of interest (by training or service)
- Evidence of leadership or advocacy for the population or community of interest
- Good verbal communication skills
- Good listening skills
- Desire to learn about research

Ideally, the community experts will come from a mixture of backgrounds and are connected to the community in various ways. The different experiences that the experts bring to the CRB help to ensure that the researcher gains insight into the community of interest from multiple perspectives. For example, a resident who was born and raised in a community may give very different feedback than an individual who is new to the neighborhood.

While community based organizations may look very different from cities to city and neighborhood to neighborhood, there are many common points of contacts for recruiting Community Experts:

- Neighborhood leaders affiliated with associations or formalized community groups
- Resident Associations of Public Housing Complexes
- Parent Teacher Organizations/Associations
- Issue-based community coalitions and advocacy groups
- Faith-based institutions that are active in outreach or service in neighborhood
• Health specific support groups or advocacy groups (Sisters Network, National Family Caregivers Association, Autism Society, etc)
• Community-based organizations that serve specific populations (Seniors, Youth, Parents, etc.)

Community expert recruitment may initially focus on the specific needs of the researchers that are requesting the Community Review Board, but the end goal should be to create a core group or pool of experts familiar with and committed to the CRB process. This core group may number between 40-50 experts depending on the community of interest of the researchers that most commonly use Community Review Boards.

b. Community Expert Orientation Training

Each Community Expert is asked to complete a form which includes interests and areas of expertise. Expertise can include knowledge of a particular geographic community, population or health issue. This information is needed when assigning Experts to CRB sessions. The Community Navigator provides the experts with a formal orientation process, either one-on-one or in small groups. All experts would receive an Orientation Manual at this time. The orientation process allows the Community Navigator and the Community Expert to review the manual in detail discussing the purpose of the CRB, the role of the Expert and answer any questions about the process.

The CRB Orientation Manual includes the Community Expert job description, a glossary of common research terms, forms used during the meeting and any additional documentation specific to the research project under review that would be useful. The manual also outlines the purpose of the Community Review Board, the role and expectations of the Community Expert and the specific steps of the CRB. Because many of the Community Experts recruited for this process are not be the “traditionally gate-keepers” or may not be familiar with research, the Community Navigator should be prepared to answer basic questions about the CRB process and purpose.

The following is a listing of common questions and answers during the orientation process:

Q. What makes me an expert?
A. Your expertise is your knowledge of a particular community and/or your experience with a health issue either personally or as a care giver. The researcher that has requested your advice values your opinions and your experience and would like to incorporate your feedback into his/her project in the hopes that it can be more successful.
Q. I don’t know anything about research. Why do you think I can help?
A. There is no prior knowledge of research required to be a Community Expert. The emphasis is on “community” in our expert panel. Participating in the CRB process however will allow you to learn more about research and how it ultimately could affect your community.

Q. Will I be paid for my time? I can’t miss any work.
A. Yes, we always compensate and feed our experts. You will be paid $50 for each CRB session and the Navigator will work to schedule the CRB at a time and location that is convenient to the majority of experts participating.

Q. How often do I have to participate? What happens after the meeting?
A. If you indicate that you would like to continue as an expert, we will contact you anytime a CRB is requested that is a good match to your expertise. You can decline a CRB opportunity or ask to be removed from the list at any time. After each CRB, you will be contacted with an update on the research project that you advised on.
7) The Community Review Board Process - The Moderator

The Facilitator: The facilitator’s job is to maximize the communication between the researcher and community experts. This happens with gentle but strong leadership so that the researcher and community representatives each have ample time to make their points, without making any extra or repeated points. This is HARD to do!

a. Key Tasks of the Moderator

- Lay discussion ground rules (Be concise, don't interrupt, stay on track, maintain confidentiality)
- Listen carefully to presentation and comments, as a way to keep the discussion on track
- Use the predefined questions as the discussion framework
- Watch the clock - 1 1/2 - 2 hours maximum
- Politely move things along if someone is talking too much
- In some cases, you will recognize that more needs to be said. Use probes and follow up questions when needed
- Ask for examples when comments are unclear
- Be comfortable with silence as people consider their answers
- As the moderator, your role is to facilitate the discussion in a neutral way - your opinion and personal observations are not relevant, so do not use group time to share them
8) **Community Review Board Logistics**

Scheduling a Community Review Board can be surprisingly difficult. The time and location of CRBs are decided based on the majority of experts’ availability. When recruiting your panel experts, one-on-one conversations should be conducted to ensure that each expert is clear as to the purpose of the meeting and the research being conducted.

Ideally, a panel of 8-10 Community Experts should be present for each CRB. Sometimes life gets in the way and experts have to drop out. For this reason, it is recommended that a minimum of 10 Experts be recruited to ensure adequate participation. Food appropriate to the time of the meetings should be provided, i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks. Many experts will be coming from work or other activities. It is important that the location be convenient and easy to find for the experts. The room should have the capability of showing a power point and large enough that all of the participants are seated with enough space to eat and take notes during the CRB.

a. **Step-by-step planning process:**

1. Schedule planning meeting with researcher, facilitator, community navigator and any other key people.
2. Identify potential Community Experts that fit researcher’s request
3. Orientation of experts who have not previously participated in a CRB.
4. Determine availability of all parties. CRB is scheduled with Expert availability as priority. Most CRBs are held in the evenings and/or on the weekends.
5. Secure a location that is convenient to Experts that will be in attendance.
6. Meet with researcher/research team a second time to review the presentation to for clear and concise language that is easy for laymen to understand. Make recommendations for improvement if needed. Request the final version prior to the CRB.
7. Mail or email a brief description of research project and questions to Experts in advance of the meeting when possible.
8. Copy complete set of forms for CRB. Include any materials that will be reviewed by Experts, brochures, posters, etc.
9. Confirm the attendance of all experts.
10. Arrange for food and drink to be on location.

b. **CRB Packing List:**

- Flip Charts, Markers, Name Tags, Pens
- Presentation on Jump Drive or CD
• Laptop computer and projector if needed
• Copies of researcher materials if needed. Possible materials that should be included in Expert packets include study brochures, consent forms and recruitment flyers.

c. The Big Event

The process for opening a CRB is welcoming and informal. The Navigator should welcome each Expert as they arrive and assist them with any questions. Once all confirmed attendees have arrived the Facilitator begins the meeting.

1. Welcome, introductions
2. Facilitator sets the context, goes over the ground rules.
3. Community Navigator gives instructions on info an evaluation forms provided to each participant.
4. Researcher or member of research team makes 15 minute presentation
5. Experts ask questions for clarification
6. Researcher presents questions for expert input
7. Facilitator keeps conversation on track, makes sure everyone’s voice is heard.
8. Community Navigator takes notes
9. Facilitator recaps discussion, thanks everyone for their participation.
10. Describe some of the activities that have actually occurred: sharing recruitment materials so experts could comment on language and images; expert and researcher role playing a consent process, etc.

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9) Closing the Loop – following up with academic and community participants

For the researcher: A CRB summary including all notes and comments from the Experts is shared with the researcher within one week of the CRB. See sample CRB summary and appendix c.

For the Community Experts: Notify them of any changes or adjustments made as a result of the CRB. Items shared as follow-up may include updated outreach materials, policy and procedural changes or significant accomplishments of the study due to advice received during the CRB. Depending on the length of the study, it’s good to give the experts periodic updates on the study as well as any findings that are published or disseminated by the research team.

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10) Evaluation

Sources of data for evaluation of the Community Review Board:

- Evaluation surveys completed by research and community participants at end of each CRB.
- Focus groups with researchers, community experts.

Evaluation of the CRB is guided by the RE-AIM framework. The elements of RE-AIM are:

- Reach – How well the target population is served?
- Effectiveness – how effective is the intervention at achieving its goals?
- Adoption – To what extent is the program adopted in the target setting or institution?
- Implementation – To what degree is the program implemented as designed?
- Maintenance – How well is the intervention and its impact maintained over time?

For the CRB, these elements can be defined as:

- Reach – To what extent are we able to make the CRB available to scientific investigators who are doing community engaged research?
- Effectiveness – Do the CRB session provide investigators with useful input that leads to positive changes in study design or methods?
- Adoption – Does the host institution adopt the CRB as a useful tool for enhancing community engaged research?
- Implementation – Are CRB sessions implemented in a consistent and useful way?
• Maintenance – Is there an institutional commitment to continuing to provide CRB as a service to investigators over time?

Results from Evaluation Surveys

What do you feel were the community experts contribution to the research project?

Results from Researcher Focus Group:

A focus group was conducted with principal investigators and/or study coordinators who participated in CRB sessions. A moderator guide was used, and results were from notes taken during the session and review of audio recordings.

Most investigators came to the CRB late in the process of study development and implementation. The most common problem they faced was difficulty recruiting from specific communities, especially low income and minority communities. The following quotes are illustrative of the perceived need for CRB input.

• Help with recruitment, brochures and materials, new tools and new resources.
• Recruitment and advice on how to communicate to community.
• Recruitment ideas for focus groups and ideas for networking,
• How to advertise longitudinal study, and fresh eyes from the community
How satisfied were you with the advice from the CRB?

The investigators were very positive about the input they received from community experts as evidenced by the following quotes.

- Helped dispel misunderstandings about research
- Feedback we got helped us with the marketing materials
- I almost wish I had it 4 to 5 months earlier.
- The materials came from a company that said they know what the age group wanted, but think the CRB was better.
- Designed a poster with more provocative images. The told me to scare people, so the poster was more provocative than initially
- I think to get minorities involved, we should increase the compensation. Removed tag line from professionals and replaced with name of study. Women wanted something to google.
- The group was useful because they had social capital in communities
- Put it on the IRB web site.
- VICTR has advice on study design etc. There should be a prompt in that process to consider a community review board.
- It should be suggested with anyone who is doing clinical trials.
- Whenever an intervention is offered, it is important to speak the language of the community.
- The CRB helps you know the demographic of the population and their social and behavioral characteristics.
- Great experience for doctoral students at VU.
- I am not from Nashville and did not know how to engage the community.
- It was helpful to have the local resources to help.

Take Home Message of the CRB?

When asked to summarize their thoughts about the CRB, the comments largely supported the utility of this method as a way to give timely and accurate feedback to investigators.

- Enrollment is difficult. What makes a trial pass or fail is enrollment.
- It is not a science, it takes a lot of understanding of the population and what people expect and how they understand what you are doing
- We underestimate the difficulty of clinical research and end up with small numbers.
- Make it accessible to the entire community, need to find a way to market the services.
- Promote it by researchers, with a focus on the recruitment.
- It should come from high up. Get leadership to talk about it at a faculty meeting.
• Need to learn cultural perspectives on life and death and birth.
• Need to communicate some of the general findings from these meetings to researchers.
• The pre meeting and preparation was very useful and could be used to screen those who need it more.
• Some people think that because they have a black person as an employee they have the situation covered.
• Showed how important it is to get feedback from the community on materials and language.

Summary

REACH – This appears to be needed by faculty, but we need to be aggressive in advertising the availability of the CRB and making investigators aware of its benefits early in the process of developing a research study with a community engagement component. There are barriers within and between local institutions in making investigators who could benefit from the CRB aware of its existence.

EFFECTIVENESS - The CRB sessions resulted in welcomed changes in materials and protocols based on the focus group interviews. The academic participants were enthusiastic about the effectiveness of the CRB in giving them useful feedback on their research plans and materials.

ADOPTION – The CRB was included as a component of the CTSA renewal application for Vanderbilt University. We are currently in the process of incorporating it into the resources that are available to all researchers through the Vanderbilt Institute of Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR) web site.

IMPLEMENTATION – Implementation at Vanderbilt has been standardized since the same group of people have organized and run all of the CRB sessions to date. This manual is an additional effort to insure consistent implementation when the CRB model is used at other institutions.

MAINTENANCE – In the first three years of testing the model, the costs of the Community Review Board was covered by the CTSA Community Engaged supplement secured by UNC and subcontracted to Vanderbilt. Due to the success of the pilot, the Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR) has committed CTSA funds to pay the consulting fees for the Community Experts. In addition, the Vanderbilt IRB and the VICTR Scientific Review Committee will refer investigators for a Community Review Board if they determine that community input is needed to improve their research proposals.

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11) Marketing

The Internal Review Board is one of the organizations within an academic institution that is likely to have a strong interest in the work of a Community Review Board. Presentations to IRB staff and committees will introduce them to the concept of the Community Review Board as a way to integrate community perspectives into research design and implementation. Building the awareness of IRB staff and committee members in regards to how community experts can inform and assist researchers in avoiding common pitfalls will enable them to refer projects when appropriate to the CRB process.

Other strategies to raise awareness about the Community Review Board and gain support and buy-in include giving talks at department and research center meetings, grand rounds presentations, meeting with scientific review committees that review community engaged research projects, getting on the agenda of community advisory councils of research centers or groups, and including information about the community review board in training sessions on community engaged research.

Use internal communications such as electronic and print newsletters, and institution-wide and departmental publications to announce opportunities to learn about the CRB. You can also work with your institutions internal marketing and communications department to publish a feature story about a successful CRB from the researcher or community expert point of view.

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Expert Orientation Guide:

Dear Community Expert,

On behalf of the Meharry-Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core, we thank you for agreeing to serve as a Community Expert for the Community Review Board. Our purpose is to support academic-community research partnerships that are focused on improving community health and healthcare. We created the Community Review Board to provide a forum for researchers to hear, first hand from community members how to improve their community based research project.

You have been selected to serve on the Community Review Board because of your knowledge of a particular community or interest group, and your interest in research. The Community Review Board is a forum for learning for both researchers and community members, and we encourage you to offer honest feedback and constructive criticism, and serve as an advocate for your community.

We look forward to working with you and hope that the Community Review Board is a positive experience for you.

Sincerely,

Yvonne Joosten
Manager
Community Engaged Research Core

Tiffany L. Israel
Community Navigator
Community Engaged Research Core
a. Community Expert Orientation Guide

What is the purpose of the Community Review Board (CRB)?

The Community Review Board is a guidance session for health researchers interested in working in a community setting. Community members serve as experts who will provide feedback on various aspects of a proposed or on-going research project, including the design, intervention, communication materials, participant recruitment strategies, sharing learning with the community, and applying research findings to practice.

What is a Community Expert?

A Community Expert is an individual who possesses first-hand knowledge of a particular community or health issue. A Community Expert has a desire to learn about research, an ability to provide constructive criticism, and a willingness to be an advocate for his or her community.

Why Community Review Boards are important?

Community Review boards help assure that research meets the needs of people who live in a particular community, or are impacted by a specific health issue. Community Experts are one of the most important tools available to directly guide a research project that will impact the community. Through the Community review Board, the Community Expert:

1) Provides the research team with a deeper understanding of a community and population’s unique circumstances.
2) Increases a researcher’s understanding of and sensitivity to the community.
3) Strengthens academic-community partnerships so that over time, universities become more and more effective in the community setting
4) Helps assess the feasibility and appropriateness of the project for the community
5) Enhances the community-based research project by providing immediate feedback to the researchers.

How do I prepare for a CRB?

- Background material on the research project or research topic will be provided to you in advance, so that you can read about the research project before the CRB.
- Please write down any thoughts, concerns or questions as , so that they can be easily and promptly addressed during the CRB
- Be sure you have a completed and up-to-date 1-page bio sheet on file to match your expertise with researchers needs.
• There is no need for additional preparation. We are matching you to this specific CRB because of your particular community expertise, background or knowledge. Remember, you are already an expert!

**What can I expect?**

• The CRB will take place in a community setting, during hours that are convenient to the Community Experts. It will last no more than two hours.
• Up to seven Community Experts may participate in a CRB session.
• Several members of the research team may attend, including trainees and staff.
• The CRB will be moderated by an experienced facilitator who is knowledgeable about community-based research. In her opening remarks, the facilitator will make introductions and explain the ground rules for the CRB session.
• Following the opening remarks, the researcher will give a brief overview of his/her project and pose specific questions for the Community Experts to consider. Examples of questions include: What might be effective recruitment strategies for the study? How best can the results be replicated in a community setting? Is it realistic to conduct this kind of research in a particular setting?
• The Facilitator will lead the discussion to ensure that it stays on track and it addresses the researcher’s questions.
• At the close of the Community Review Board session, you will be asked to complete a brief comment and evaluation form that will allow you to give additional feedback that might be helpful to the researcher. See the sample that is included in this Orientation Guide.

**What happens following the CRB?**

• The Facilitator will write up the Community Expert’s feedback for the researcher.
• You will complete a Payment Form to receive $50 in compensation for your participation.
• You will also receive a survey form within a few days following the CRB to assist us in improving the process and experience of everyone involved. If you are interested, we will contact you with updates on the study.

As a registered Community Expert we will keep your bio on file and contact you if your area of expertise matches a researcher’s CRB request. If you have any questions or would like to be removed from our Community Expert Resource List please contact, Tiffany L. Israel at tiffany.israel@vanderbilt.edu or (615) 875-5659.
Community Review Board
Sample Forms
# Community Review Board Application

## Contact Information

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Street Address</td>
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<td>Home Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cell Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-Mail Address</td>
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## Demographic Information

<table>
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<th>___Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ethnicity:</td>
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<td>___ African American</td>
<td>___ Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Caucasian</td>
<td>___ Native American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>___ Other:</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

## Availability

During which hours are you available for community review board meetings?

| ___ Weekday mornings | ___ Weekend mornings |
| ___ Weekday afternoons | ___ Weekend afternoons |
| ___ Weekday evenings | ___ Weekend evenings |

## Interests

What health related topics are you interested in or have personal experience with (check all that apply)?
| ___ Access to health care | ___ Health care quality | ___ Heart disease |
| ___ Cancer | ___ Health disparities | ___ Men’s health |
| ___ Community health | ___ Health policy | ___ Mental health |
| ___ Diabetes | ___ Health promotion | ___ Nutrition |
| ___ Genetics | ___ HIV/AIDS | ___ Obesity |
| ___ Health behavior | ___ Maternal/child health | ___ Women’s health |

___ Other (please explain):

**Agreement and Signature**

By signing this application, I understand that the information I provide about myself will be kept confidential. Furthermore, I agree that I will keep confidential any comments made during the Community Review Board by either the other Community Experts or the presenting researchers.

| Name (printed) |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date |  |

☐ Please check this box, if you agree that we may contact you for future community review boards
Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (VICTR)

Community Review Board Comment Form

Date: ____________________________  Principal Investigator: ____________________________

We appreciate your participation and value your time. In an effort to maximize the benefits for everyone involved, we have developed a Comment Form. Please comment on the points listed below during the course of the review board session. The facilitator will collect/review these comments at the end of the session and then summarize the feedback for group. (Please feel free to use the back of the page if necessary.)

1. General thoughts about the project (strengths):

2. What was good about the project?

3. What challenges do you think the project will have in the community (weaknesses)?

4. What would you like to see the researcher do differently (opportunities)?

Additional Comments:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
You have been asked to complete this survey because of your participation the Community Review Board. The main benefit to completing this survey is to improve the effectiveness of the Community Review Board, and the quality of the academic-community research partnerships that result. Your individual responses may be used as part of a research study and will be kept anonymous. There are no known risks to completing this survey, and your participation is voluntary. Refusing to participate will not have any impact on your opportunity to participate in the Community Review Board in the future.

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

1. The scheduling/communications for this Community Review Board session were handled in a timely and efficient manner.
   - [ ] Strongly disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly agree

2. The allotted time for the Community Review Board was sufficient.
   - [ ] Too much time
   - [ ] Enough time
   - [ ] Not enough time

3. The Community Review Board moderator managed the allotted time in order to address my questions and comments.
   - [ ] Strongly disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly agree

4. The relevant experts were present at the Community Review Board session.
   - [ ] Strongly disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly agree

5. I was satisfied with the Community Review Board session.
   - [ ] Strongly disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly agree
6. The Community Review Board process was worth my time.
   □ Strongly disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly agree

7. The researcher’s presentation gave me enough information to provide appropriate feedback.
   □ Strongly disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly agree

8. The feedback provided by the community experts will improve the research project.
   □ Strongly disagree
   □ Disagree
   □ Agree
   □ Strongly agree

9. Would you participate in the Community Review Board again?
   □ No
   □ Yes

10. What do you feel was your contribution to the research project? Please check all that apply.
    □ Increased researcher’s understanding of the community
    □ Increased researcher’s sensitivity to the community
    □ Provided feedback on the feasibility of the project
    □ Provided feedback on the appropriateness of the project
    □ Ideas on recruiting research participants
    □ Ideas on how to inform the community about the project
    □ Ideas on how to use results of project to benefit the community
    □ Other, specify_______________________________________________

11. Please suggest at least one way the quality of the Community Review Board could be improved in the future.

   I.

   II.

   III.
You have been asked to complete this survey because of your participation on the Community Review Board. The main benefit to completing this survey is to improve the effectiveness of the Community Review Board, and the quality of the academic-community research partnerships that result. Your individual responses may be used as part of a research study and will be kept anonymous. There are no known risks to completing this survey, and your participation is voluntary. Refusing to participate will not have any impact on your opportunity to use the Community Review Board in the future.

Please tell us whether or not you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. The scheduling/communications for this Community Review Board session were handled in a timely and efficient manner.
   - [ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

2. The allotted time for the Community Review Board was sufficient.
   - [ ] Too much time  [ ] Enough time  [ ] Not enough time

3. The Community Review Board moderator managed the allotted time in order to address my questions.
   - [ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

4. The relevant experts were present at the Community Review Board session.
   - [ ] Strongly agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly disagree

5. I was satisfied with the Community Review Board session.
6. The Community Review Board process was worth my time.

7. The expert feedback was conveyed to me in an appropriate way.

8. This Community Review Board session improved the quality of my project.

9. Would you recommend a Community Review Board session to a colleague?

10. Would you request a Community Review Board in the future?

11. Would you request studio services again from the individuals participating in this studio?

12. What do you feel were the community experts’ contribution to the research project? Please check all that apply.

   - Increased my understanding of the community
   - Increased my sensitivity to the community
   - Provided feedback on the feasibility of the project
   - Provided feedback on the appropriateness of the project
   - Ideas on recruiting research participants
   - Ideas on how to inform the community about the project
☐ Ideas on how to use results of project to benefit the community

Other, specify__________________________________________

Please suggest three ways the quality of the Community Review Board could be improved in the future.

1.

2.

3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilitator:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Researcher:</strong></td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
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c. Sample Community Review Board Summary

Community Review Board
Meharry Vanderbilt Community Engaged Research Core
Topic: Health Impact Assessment and Transit Oriented Development

**Suggested Focus Group Questions**

1. How do/would you get to the BRT Stop?
2. Compare and contrast the challenge of using personal vehicles vs. public transit BRT model. (traffic, cost, convenience)
3. What would you change about the current BRT system? (Location of stops, number of stops, etc)
4. Discuss the barriers to you riding the BRT?
5. What has been your experience regarding the safety of public transit? Have you felt safe? Heard stories of others’ experiences?
6. What has been your experience regarding the customer service of transit workers?
7. What do you think MTA/MPO’s responsibility to accommodate passengers? Help them on and off; tell them where they should transfer, etc?
8. Are there any cultural barriers to riding the bus?
9. Discuss the health benefits of riding public transit? Discuss the harms to your health that might occur from riding public transit or creating new lines? Does one outweigh the other?
10. Give a frame of reference for community “strengths” as it relates to transit. Concentration of businesses/housing, sidewalks, lighting, etc. Identify some of the strengths in your community.
11. What are your opinions about investing tax payers’ dollars in hybrid public transit vehicles? What could be some of the benefits?
12. Identify some of the key locations where stops should be located because of concentration of riders, density of retail/commercial, large employers, hospitals, etc.
13. What would make you more likely to ride public transit/BRT? What is your cost limit? What if your school or employer covered all or part of the cost?

**Focus Group Participants**

1. Key participants should include people who regularly ride the bus, people who could be persuaded to the ride the bus- “on the cusp”; active seniors, students, recently relocated and maybe used to riding public transit in other cities. Maybe the three groups shouldn’t be geographically divided but divided by background- 1) Regular Transit Riders, 2) Active Seniors 3) People on the cusp
2. Community locales for recruitment included
   a. Senior Centers and high-rises:
      - Madison Senior Center, 301 Madison St, (615) 860-7180,
3. Other strategies for recruitment:
   a. Council on Aging- 95 White Bridge Road, Suite 114, Nashville, TN 37205, (615) 353-4235
   b. Facebook- Transit Alliance site or others- 
      http://www.facebook.com/TAllianceMidTN (356 members)
   c. Hendersonville Community Paper-
      http://www.mainstreetmedia.org/newspapers/hendersonville-standard

### Potential Locales for Focus Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Locales for Focus Groups</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hendersonville Public Library- CRB Experts felt that public libraries were a good resource for meeting space, as well as an opportunity to bring people into the library) 140 Saundersville Road Hendersonville, TN 37075, (615) 824-0656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Amqui Station and Visitors Center- 301 Madison Street, behind the Madison Library, (615) 865-5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gallatin Library- 123 East Main Street Gallatin, TN 37066, (615) 452-1722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. YMCA-102 Bluegrass Commons Boulevard, Hendersonville, TN 37075-2706, (615) 826-9622</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Vol State-1480 Nashville Pike Gallatin, TN 37066, (615) 452-8600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Participant Incentives

1. The $15 incentive would be very helpful, help pay for gas
2. Have individuals “register” before the focus groups to build in a feeling of obligation
3. Call or email reminders with time/location- very helpful
**Additional Suggestions**

- For survey tool, use font 14pt or larger for senior population.
- Translate survey. Large Spanish-speaking population. Contact Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President- Yuri Cunza-530 3rd Avenue South, Suite 5 Nashville, TN 37210- 615- 216-5737

**Other schools not discussed during CRB process:**
Nashville College of Medical Careers-1556 Crestview Drive, Madison, TN 37115 (615) 868-2963
Madison University of Beauty- 207 Gallatin Pike South, Madison, TN 37115-3952 (615) 865-8116
E B Wilson Night School-102 Indian Lake Rd., Hendersonville, TN  37075 (615)264-6085
Union University-106 Bluegrass Commons, Hendersonville, TN 37075 (615)447-0401

**Mid- Large businesses:**
Walmart- 2232 Gallatin Pike North, Nashville, TN 37115 (615) 859-7212
Sumner Regional Medical Center - 555 Hartsville Pike, Gallatin, TN 37066-Angela Alexander, SRHS Director of Marketing & Public Relations Office: (615) 328-5031 (She knows about the project)
Rivergate Mall- 21000 Rivergate Parkway, Goodlettsville, Tennessee 37072 (800) 734-4667
Flowers baking Co.- 106 Tennessee Way, Hendersonville, TN 37075-3158 (615) 865-5315

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>What was good about project?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wonderful forum to talk early about something so important</td>
<td>Great discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This project is seeking feedback from those that are directly affected by the proposed change to the community.</td>
<td>The focus on developing a system that increases health &amp; safety to the community</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What challenges do you think the project will have in the community?</th>
<th>What would you like to see the researcher do differently?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of representation</td>
<td>Use visuals- some are available from the Transit Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good mix of long-term goals and short-term implementation</td>
<td>More clearly explain things in logical order – set context at the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of project- clearly explain project and potential impacts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perception of the transit system, cultural resistance to “green” alternatives, congestion of traffic/construction.</td>
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### Additional Comments:

Project needs to be further defined on front-end before soliciting comments
Specific Problem Study will Address

- Identify indicators (in this case, genetic info) for the early detection of lung cancer.
- Determine who is at greatest risk for developing lung cancer and enroll that population in a screening program.
- Develop a proven test to determine who is at greater risk for lung cancer.
- Develop a bank of samples from at risk individuals and those with lung cancer for future studies.
- Allow providers to screen the people who need it the most, would save lives, time and money.

Glossary of terms:

- Biomarker
- Consenting
- Spirometry
- Low Dose CT
- Bronchoscopy
- Sputum

Recruitment-sites

- Hospital Clinic
  - 80 per year
  - Target electronic records, advertisement
  - 91% Caucasian
  - 5% African American
  - 40% males
  - 60% current smokers

- Community Health Center
  - 80 per year
  - Community recruiter
  - 20% Caucasian
  - 80% African American
  - 70% females
  - 30% current smokers

- VA clinic
  - 80 per year
  - Target electronic records, advertisement
  - 85% Caucasian
  - 15% African American
  - 85% males
  - 15% current smokers

Bank of samples developed for future research
Time line of the study

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
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<td>Sample Collection</td>
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<td>Sample Collection</td>
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<td>Genetic Biomarkers</td>
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<td>Urine</td>
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<td>Urine</td>
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Biological Specimens

Specific Questions to Community Experts

- What are your thoughts on the consenting process - what worked well, what would you do differently?
- What do you think are the barriers to enrollment in this study in your community?
- What do you think the role of the recruiter should be at MWCHC - what types of activities should he/she be involved in?
- Who are the people and organizations that the recruiter should reach out to?
e. FAQ Community Experts (see Expert Orientation Guide)

f. FAQ Researchers

Q. Why would I request a Community Review Board?
A. The Community Review Board allows a researcher to gain feedback from his or her community of interest about issues pertaining to design, implementation, recruitment, retention and other potential barriers to participation.

Q. How much time will this process take?
A. The Community Review Board process requires a small investment of time. In total a researcher spends on average less than four hours of his or her time preparing for and participating in the CRB.

15 minutes online- Submitting initial request
30-45 minute- Planning meeting with navigator and facilitator
30 minutes-1 hour- Preparing slideshow for Community Experts
1 ½ -2 hours - Community Review Board

Q. How much will this cost?
A. The Community Review Board is currently paid for through an institutional voucher system. All expert compensation, facilitator cost, food, supplies and staff time is covered by the voucher. In the future, researchers should consider including the cost of a CRB in their grant proposal as institutional money is never guaranteed. The average cost of each CRB is between $500-700.

Q. Can I recruit the experts for my study?
A. You may not use the Community Review Board to recruit for your study. You may however leave information regarding the study so that an expert can contact you or your research staff for more information outside of the CRB. Some experts choose to participate in the studies and at times recruit others from their community.

Q. Why is there a facilitator? Can I moderate myself?
A. The CRB process utilizes a trained facilitator who has experience working with underserved communities and that understands the principles of community-engaged research. The use of an independent facilitator allows a researcher to listen to feedback and ask for clarification without having the responsibility of leading the process.

Q. Can I pick or recommend specific experts to participate?
A. The Community Navigator is charged with the recruitment of experts. Ideally experts should not have a prior relationship with the researcher or the staff to ensure that feedback is open and honest.
g. Community Navigator Job Description

Basic Qualifications

Education Required: Masters in public/community health, human and organization development, social work or related field.

Experience: Required months in field prior to employment: 24 months minimum

Notes:

Familiarity with local community and experience with academic-community partnerships is required. Qualified candidates will have excellent oral, written and electronic communication skills and a record of accomplishment in community networking and collaboration building as well as demonstrated skill working with diverse communities of health and human service providers and consumers.

Job Summary

The Community Navigator will build and manage core resources to foster Community Engaged Research. This role will provide support for the Community Engagement Core, Community Review Board, and Community Advocates Advisory Council. The Translational Research Coordinator will work closely with academic and community partners to build research collaborations, and assist with the development of an infrastructure to foster innovative community-engaged research by providing education, outreach and trust-building activities.

Key Functions and Expected Performances

1. Identify relevant resources including databases; community needs assessments, and literature that will inform the development of the Community Engagement Core, Community Review Board and Community Advocates Advisory Council.
2. Develop and maintain internal and external mechanisms to access community engagement resources.
3. Organize and support Community Review Board activities, and follow up on any actions resulting in the activities.
4. Manage the flow of community-engaged research projects through the Community Engagement Core and Community Review Board.
5. Coordinate and support the community experts who participate in the Community Engagement Core and Community Review Board.
6. Identify and build professional relationships with community organizations and community advocates who have an interest in building academic-community research partnerships.
7. Develop and maintain mechanisms to communicate with community partners, increase interaction between community partners and academic researchers, and track the development of academic-community research partnerships.
8. Coordinate community education and outreach activities.
### h. Sample Community Review Board Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Experts</td>
<td>400.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 experts X $50.00 per session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refreshments</td>
<td>75.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flip chart, markers, name tags, printing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$600.00</td>
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i. Sample Marketing Materials

The community can help you avoid common research pitfalls!

The Community Review Board is a guidance session for researchers. Community members serve as experts who will provide feedback to enhance the design, implementation, recruitment, translation and dissemination of your research.

What are the benefits of participating in a CRB?

- Access to community experts from various settings, without the complexity of scheduling multiple meetings
- Immediate feedback at various stages of the development of the protocol, program or application of your research
- Opportunity to build a relationship with community partners and deepen the understanding of the community of interest
- Immersion into the cultural nuances and possible historical issues
- Assessment of the feasibility and appropriateness of the project for the community

For more information: www. https://starbrite.vanderbilt.edu/
j. CBPR Spectrum

Community Engaged Research Continuum
(clinical & social/behavioral)

Less Community Involvement

Investigator Driven Research

Community Placed Research

Community Based Research

Complete Community Involvement

Community Based Participatory Research

Community Driven Research
k. Glossary of Terms

**Basic Science Research** is the study of a subject to increase knowledge and understanding about it. Examples include studies of cell signaling, genetic mutations associated with specific types of cancer and how tumors evade the body’s immune system. The majority of medical researchers at Vanderbilt and Meharry Medical College are engaged in basic science research.

**Clinical Research** is research that determines the safety and effectiveness of medications, devices, diagnostic products and techniques, and treatment regimens.

**CTSA** or Clinical Translational Science Award is a consortium of 60 medical research institutions working to improve the way medical research is conducted. The vision of the CTSA network is to reduce the time it takes for scientific discoveries to become treatments, practices or policies to improve health.

**IRB** or Internal Review Board is a committee of physicians, statisticians, researchers, community advocates, and others that ensures that any research done on and about humans is ethical and that the rights of study participants and communities are protected. All human subjects’ research done in the United States must be approved by an IRB before they begin.

**NIH** or the National Institutes for Health is the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting medical research. NIH is composed of 27 different institutes and centers.

**PI** or Principal Investigator is the researcher in charge of an experiment or research project and the person responsible for the overall management and direction of the project.

**Research Core** is a shared resource or facility that offers support to researchers in a particular research area (e.g., cancer, health disparities, HIV/AIDS) or data collection/analysis methodology (qualitative research, biostatistics, cell imaging).

**The Community Engaged Research Core (CERC)** is unique in that it offers its assistance to both researchers and community organizations. CERC helps build community-academic research partnerships by offering training and assistance on the development and implementation of community-engaged research projects. [http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/victr/pub/community/](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/victr/pub/community/)

**Translational Research** transforms scientific discoveries into improved patient care, community-based practices and policies to improve health.
CBPR Charrettes:
Expert-Guided Sessions to Strengthen Community-Academic Partnerships

A Project of

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

NC CARES
(Community Academic Resources for Engaged Scholarship)

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Core

Community-Academic Partnership following their CBPR Charrette Session

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Key Elements

Introduction & Relevance

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) has shown substantial promise for building effective partnership approaches to tackle pressing public health challenges. The last decade has seen growing support for CBPR and increased demand for skills, knowledge, training and strategies to enhance equitable and effective partnership approaches to research. The charrette process provides community-academic partnerships (CAPs) the opportunity to receive intensive guidance and support from highly-qualified academic and community experts who have years of experience as research partners and expertise in all aspects of the CBPR approach.

What is a charrette?

A “charrette” is defined by the National Charrette Institute as a collaborative planning process. It is most often used in the professional fields of design and architecture as a process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties to create and support a feasible plan to bring about community development and transformation (www.charretteinstitute.org). This project draws on the charrette concept to build the capacity of community-academic partnerships to use a partnered approach to address the health needs of communities. Our “CBPR Charrettes” are comprised of focused guidance sessions for CAP teams to address issues or questions identified by the partnership. Each session involves a senior faculty member and two community leaders, referred to as “community experts,” all of whom have extensive of CBPR experience. Together they provide guidance and recommendations tailored to the needs of the research partnership team requesting the charrette.

Who is eligible to apply for a charrette?

We welcome applications from community-academic partnerships at any stage of collaboration or development. The charrette process is ideal for projects that may be early-stage, experiencing challenges, stalled or in need of a strengthened approach. Partnerships may involve not-for-profit organizations, medical schools, other schools or universities, public health departments, small businesses, community health centers, hospitals, city/county/state government offices, agencies, tribal communities or neighborhood associations, or other organizations interested or involved in a research partnership.

What are the innovations needed within the university structure to facilitate the personnel needs of the charrette process?

The process builds on existing community-university relationships, harnessing the expertise of community partners and creating new roles for them. An essential role for this model is the
“Community Research Fellow,” a staff position at the university for a seasoned partner in a CBPR project, and consultant (independent contractor) roles for “Community Experts.”

A “Community Research Fellow” can be hired as a, part-time or full-time, Research Assistant/Associate/Navigator. He or she will have at least 2 years of experience in a CBPR project, and expertise in transferring skills to both university and community partners. The Community Research Fellow’s responsibilities include:

- Assisting with the design, planning and facilitation of CBPR Charrettes
- Assisting with the development and implementation of training modules for academic and community partners
- Assisting with developing plan to disseminate findings and share methods with other partners interested in community engagement
- Meeting with staff weekly to provide a community voice to all project activity developments

A “Community Expert” is a consultant to the university, paid as an independent contractor. A “Community Expert” has at least two years’ experience in CBPR. The crucial qualification for all our experts is that they are familiar with the research process and have partnered with academic institutions. Experts are leaders of community-based organizations or advocacy groups. They have extensive experience using the CBPR approach to address a wide range of health issues with a common focus on health disparities. Community Experts are recruited to help as needed for charrette and workshops. Community Expert responsibilities include:

- Providing advice on partnership challenges and solutions during the charrette process
- Advising on how to establish and maintain collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of research
- Communicating about how research projects can be successfully implemented in real community settings
- Supporting and coaching research teams by conference call following face-to-face charrette
- Helping to plan and conduct workshops on topics related to CBPR

How does the charrette process work?

1. Lead partners from a CAP (one academic representative and one community representative) submit an on-line application** to request a charrette.
2. The project staff (the Community Research Fellow and Project Director) review the application, then identify academic and community experts based on relevant expertise.
3. The CAP is informed that they are approved to participate in a charrette and a date and place (usually in the CAP’s community) is selected for a face-to-face session.
4. Prior to the first charrette session, the CAP is asked to prepare a concise 1 – 3 page document that describes the background of the partnership and identifies specific questions and areas of
concern to be addressed during the charrette session. A template** is provided to the partnership to assist in the development of this document.

5. Prior to the in person session, community and academic partners from the CAP requesting the charrette complete the Multidimensional Assessment of Partnerships (MAP),** a partnership assessment survey developed for this project by a team of community and academic partners. The MAP measures partnership growth and change and is administered a second time 3 months after the session to assess charrette impact and partnership development over time.

6. The charrette face-to-face session lasts between 2-3 hours and includes:
   a. CAP overview of partnership/project
   b. Discussion of CAP strengths/limitations
   c. Focus on specific questions brought by CAP
   d. Feedback/Suggestions provided by academic and community experts

7. Following this session, project staff create a comprehensive summary** of the discussion, outlining strengths, challenges, opportunities and expert recommendations for addressing identified issues, and send it to the CAP.

8. Two follow-up conference calls are scheduled, as necessary, after the face-to-face charrette session to allow CAP teams to seek further advice, clarification, guidance and coaching as they embark on a new phase of participatory research or partnership development.

How is the charrette process evaluated?

Every charrette participant completes a post-session survey** immediately following the face-to-face session. Three months after the last follow-up session, every participant completes the post-charrette MAP. Project staff also conduct follow up interviews with the community and academic lead applicants 3 month post-charrette.

The project uses the RE-AIM framework to guide its evaluation processes and help assess the reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation and maintenance of the CBPR Charrette model.

** Example documents will be provided in the full toolkit.

Evaluation comments from Charrette participants about helpfulness of the charrette process:

- “Allowed our partnership to reflect on our collaboration thus far . . . and the next practical action steps in creating a sustainable project.”
- “Created an opportunity for the community to learn about how university resources can work with communities through CBPR to address community needs and to support community health goals.”
- “A meeting environment in which interested community members [could engage] in open, transparent discussion around practical steps that could be taken to promote health in their community utilizing their unique cultural, geographic, and infrastructure assets.”
- “[Community experts] were helpful because they have experienced what we are going through.”
- “I’m coming out of this meeting lifted, hopeful and excited about the future of [our partnership].”

For questions or further information, please contact Project Director at alexandra_lightfoot@unc.edu.