

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN BIOMEDICAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES RESEARCH STUDY

Research conducted by the Population Health Innovation Lab (PHIL),
a program of the Public Health Institute

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OVERVIEW

The Community Engagement in Biomedical and Health Sciences Research study provided a deeper understanding of the motivations, facilitators, and barriers behind conducting and/or funding biomedical and health sciences research that directly engages underrepresented communities of color.

METHODS

The study draws on 92 survey responses and 19 interviews collected from February - May 2022. First, quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a web-based survey of biomedical and health sciences researchers and funders. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with biomedical and health sciences researchers and funders to expand on survey findings and explore participants' views more deeply.

FINDINGS

Findings revealed that researchers commonly used both passive and active community engagement strategies. Passive community engagement strategies include basic forms of community engagement that are typically one-time activities, such as a researcher informing the community about a research project or sharing the results of the research project with the community. Active community engagement strategies include community engagement efforts that are bi-directional and give more power to the community by including community members in decision-making roles throughout the research process.

Characteristics of Researchers Along the Community Engagement Spectrum

Characteristics of community engaged biomedical and health sciences researchers along the community engagement spectrum, as identified through descriptive and inferential quantitative analysis (see table on next page).



Learn more about the study. Read the report of findings at www.pophealthinnovationlab.org.
Questions? Contact our team at info@pophealthinnovationlab.org.



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Emerging Community Engaged Researchers	Advanced Community Engaged Researchers
<p>≤ 5 years of experience with community engagement or feel more unconfident than confident with engaging community in research.</p>	<p>≥ 6 years of experience with community engagement or feel more confident than unconfident with engaging community in research.</p>
<p>Emerging community engaged researchers were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less likely to use specialized or tailored engagement approaches when engaging underrepresented communities of color. • More likely to use passive community engagement approaches. • More likely to report that hiring a researcher focused on community engagement and/or CBPR facilitated their community engagement efforts. 	<p>Advanced community engaged researchers were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to use specialized or tailored engagement approaches when engaging underrepresented communities of color. • More likely to use a combination of both passive and active community engagement approaches. • More likely to report that leveraging existing community relationships or hiring diverse staff that represents the community and/or identifies with the community facilitated their community engagement efforts.

Five Major Themes

Major themes identified from interviews with biomedical and health sciences researchers and funders.

1. Funders can be barriers to community engagement.
2. Researchers who value community perspectives and experiences are more motivated to do community engagement.
3. Researchers should expand from only doing passive community engagement strategies to a combination of both passive and active community engagement strategies.
4. Relationship building and trust between researchers and communities are critical to preventing harmful community engagement approaches.
5. Academia and funders must increase and improve their own community engagement efforts.

CONCLUSION

Please see the full report at www.pophealthinnovationlab.org/resources for a complete overview of conclusions and recommendations, including actionable suggestions and strategies.

Community Engagement Recommendations for Biomedical and Health Sciences Researchers

- Learn to view and understand community engagement in research as an ongoing process, not an outcome.
- Create opportunities for shared understanding with community partners.
- Build cultural competency and utilize cultural intelligence strategies.

Community Engagement Recommendations for Funders of Biomedical and Health Sciences Research

- Provide access to courses or workshops on principles of community engagement, especially on building relationships and trust, effective communication, and cultural competency.
- Provide technical assistance (TA) opportunities to researchers, including providing strategic planning on community engagement efforts through staff consultations and additional materials.
- Create mentorship opportunities where researchers who need guidance on community engagement efforts can connect with more experienced community engaged researchers.
- Provide researchers with a forum for reflection on community engagement efforts, such as a community of practice.

