



PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Many partnerships develop agreements for how they will work. These agreements can be informal or formal although a large study of US community-based research partnerships found that having a formal agreement was a promising practice that is associated with better resource and power sharing in particular (Oetzel et al, 2018). Agreements can include a variety of features and partnerships need to review what features matter to them. There are a variety of ways and approaches to develop agreements. This file is based on the suggestions of Rodriguez Espinosa and Richmond (2018) and considers a variety of features for formal agreements. Not all of these features have to be included and it is up to the parties to identify the most important features.

Purpose

A purpose statement provides a general overview of the aims of the partnership and what it is trying to accomplish. It may also provide a list of key terms and working definitions to provide clarity.

Mission and vision

A mission and vision statement can be an alternative to a purpose statement or provide further elaboration of it. A mission and purpose are very similar while a vision often provides an aspirational goal for what is a desired outcome (e.g., improved health equity).

Project Values and principles

Another resource in this web site provides an overview of key CBPR principles and encourage identifying key values and principles for the partnerships. Some formal agreements include those principles, while other partnerships leave them out of the formal documents.

Respective Responsibilities

Many agreements include the key responsibilities for each partner or stakeholder group involved in the partnership. These responsibilities provide a scope of work for each partner and help to organise efforts and also reduce misunderstandings about expectations and deliverables. These can be identified as specific deliverables, work responsibilities, key performance indicators or milestones.

This section (or a separate section) should also specify how the resources are going to be distributed





and who is responsible for making decisions about resources including the hiring of project staff. This section can also include the agreement period and specific deliverable dates.

Data-Related Issues

As these types of projects involve research, there are ethical responsibilities in data collection and management. The following are often considered:

Involvement in data collection

Data collection procedures must comply with research ethics protocols and usually are covered in separate documents. However, the formal agreement may specify who is involved in data collection efforts and the procedures they need to follow to adhere to ethical protocols.

Data ownership and data sharing

Data ownership, sharing and data use agreements are especially important for partnerships with multiple teams in order to avoid potential conflicts. Indigenous communities are especially concerned about data ownership and sharing given past misuse of data.

Data storage

Agreements may consider issues about who is going to store the data and how it will be done. This is particularly important for projects collecting identifiable data; agreements should outline steps for protecting participant confidentiality.

Procedures for project modifications

Given the fluid nature of CBPR research, it is not uncommon for changes to the project to occur. Agreements can be used to identify the procedures for introducing and approving modifications (e.g., establishing a committee to review and approve modifications).

Publication, Writing, and General Dissemination

Sharing of research findings through conference presentations, journal articles and reports for the community and stakeholders is a key aspect of partnered projects. Agreements often include elements to describe the process of identifying authorship and approval of publications to ensure equitable collaboration and honouring all who participate. Some of the specific elements that might be included are the following:





General dissemination

This aspect of an agreement might identify key milestones or responsibilities for sharing research findings (e.g., to community groups, to funders, to stakeholders, etc.). These might identify who is responsible for meeting the general dissemination responsibilities as well.

Publications, review processes, and opportunity for collaborative dissemination

This section identifies the process for reviewing and approving publications and other dissemination efforts. This might be done by a subcommittee of the partnership. This section should also specify how people can be involved in writing teams and the means by which information will be shared about ongoing writing opportunities, particularly for junior researchers and community members. Finally, it should also consider the criteria for authorship. Such criteria should likely consider journal publication standards as well, but could include: “a) Individuals who contribute substantially to the manuscripts concept, design, data analysis, or implications; b) Individuals who provide essential expertise for example academic, indigenous knowledge, historical, cultural relevancy; and c) Individuals who review or make substantive comments or edits on at least one draft.” (Rodriguez Espinosa & Richmond, 2018, p. 389). The criteria may also identify ways to identify the order of authors and student authorship around thesis/dissertation.

Publication guidelines acknowledgement

Some people contribute to a project and yet may not meet the criteria for authorship. Others may facilitate and support relationships that the project depends on. These contributions can be specified in an acknowledgement section that is included in all dissemination efforts. The agreement can specify the means by which this acknowledgement will be written.

Resolving grievances

CBPR partnerships often include various forms of conflict and thus a process for resolving grievances is often included. These can specify formal grievance processes (e.g., nominating a person or group for arbitration) or specify a set of principles for how the partnership is going to address conflict.

Termination

Some partnerships may be terminated and the conditions for such a termination should be specified.

Other sections to consider

An appendix listing those parties referred to in the agreement, subcommittee membership, health and safety plans, contingency plans and advisory boards may be helpful.





Example Agreements

For comprehensive example, see Engage for Equity (E2):

<http://cpr.unm.edu/common/new-engage-for-equity-data-publish-agreements-2017-.pdf>

For comprehensive tribal examples, see the Indigenous Wellness Research Institute (IWRI):

<http://health.iwri.org/tribal-colleges-universities-drug-and-alcohol-problems-and-solutions-study/>

See source below for further URLs identifying examples.

Source: Rodriguez Espinosa P, & Richmond A. Partnership agreements: A practical guide to developing data sharing, ownership and publishing agreements. In: Wallerstein N, Duran B, Oetzel JG, & Minkler M. editors. Community-based participatory research for health: advancing social and health equity, 3rd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; 2018. p. 385-392.

