

**Overcoming Challenges of Community-University Research Partnerships:
Exploring Opportunities for Training, Support, and Program Development**

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Background: Effective community-university research partnerships foster trust, research relevance, and application of results. Inherent challenges include competing priorities and potential burden on community partners. University of Minnesota Clinical and Translational Science Institute Office of Community Engagement to Advance Research and Community Health funds community-university partnerships, focusing on underserved populations in research.

Methods: Progress and final reports completed by both partners ask about challenges experienced by partnerships, strategies to overcome challenges, and contributions that strengthened project outcomes. Challenges and facilitators from projects funded between 2013 and 2015 (n=21) were categorized and analyzed thematically. We also explored the dynamic between support and monitoring of funded partnerships which facilitated identification of challenges and approaches to resolve them.

Results: Preliminary findings include challenges in developing and applying research strategies to meet both community and university standards; community partner organizational changes; conflicting priorities (research vs. programming); complex university administrative processes; and cultural and language barriers. While recruitment was often cited as a challenge, community partners contributed to solutions, such as building rapport and providing trusted locations for research interactions. Flexibility in responding to challenges was identified by partners as key to accomplishing their goals.

Conclusions: CTSA funding community-university research partnerships should consider training, support, and program changes that respond to common challenges. Examples include building capacity to address competing priorities and paradigms; cultivating effective communication and partnerships; streamlining institutional processes to reduce community partner burden; and formulating a roster of community organizations to be tapped if funded organizations can no longer participate fully in projects.