**Tips & Strategies for Developing Strong
Community-Based Participatory Research Proposals**

What drives all reviewers crazy?

1. When applicants don't follow the instructions
2. When there are inconsistencies between what's described in the proposal narrative and what's included in the budget
3. When acronyms are used and not explained
4. When numbers in the budget don't add up
5. When there are multiple spelling mistakes
6. When tiny type is used and there is hardly any white space
7. When the data sources cited are old
8. When letters of support don't actually say anything (e.g., they all simply repeat the same language, they are not consistent with commitments described in the proposal narrative and/or budget)

What drives CBPR reviewers crazy?

1. When the argument for the study's significance and relevance in a particular community are based on national data
2. When a community is described only in terms of its needs and not also its strengths and assets
3. When no sound rationale is provided for the composition of the partnership
4. When there is not a clear link between community-defined priorities and the proposed focus and approach
5. When the study design is so specific and detailed that there is no room for a participatory process
6. When no attention is paid to barriers to community participation (e.g., childcare, transportation, interpretation services)
7. When attention is paid to the research methods but not the methods of building/sustaining community partnerships and community participation
8. When a community board is to be established, but no detail is provided about board member recruitment, composition, role, staff support, etc.
9. When there is no evidence of community capacity building (e.g., creating jobs, developing leaders, sustaining programs)
10. When it is not easy to discern how funding is being divided among partners (e.g., show what % is going to the community vs. the university)
11. When it is not clear who was involved in developing the proposal and how it was developed
12. When most or all of the funding is retained by the applicant organization.

Ways to strengthen your proposal

1. Be creative (e.g., use stories, quotes and photos to help make your case)
2. Ask trusted colleagues not involved in the proposal to review drafts and be brutally honest
3. Invite representatives of potential funding agencies to visit your community and see your work in action up-close (e.g., invite to be a speaker at a community forum, to serve on an advisory committee)
4. Take advantage of opportunities to discuss your proposal idea with a funding agency representative before you submit it
5. Debrief on any and all comments received by reviewers
6. Volunteer to be a proposal reviewer – reviewing proposals will make you a better grant writer
7. Review the peer review guidelines for community-engaged research developed by the NIH Council of Public Representatives: http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/3-Peer_Review_Framework.pdf
8. Review the reviewer and applicant guidelines in the appendix of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Evidence Report on CBPR http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/evrptpdfs.htm

Other ideas

Consider a wide range of funding sources. For example, did you know…
   a. The Indian Health Service funds CBPR? http://www.ihs.gov/Research/index.cfm?module=narch
   b. The Administration for Children and Families funds CBPR? http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/project/headStartProjects.jsp
   c. The Sociological Initiatives Foundation funds CBPR? http://www.sifoundation.org/?page_id=2
   d. Funding agencies that say "we don't fund research" do fund community-based participatory approaches to community-building and addressing social justice issues? http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/PM_100705.html#MessageFromExecDirector

Stay on top of CBPR funding opportunities

1. Join the CBPR listserv co-sponsored by CCPH and the Wellesley Institute: https://mailman1.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/cbpr
2. Follow funding announcements posted by CCPH on twitter: http://twitter.com/CCPH2010