

DEFINITIONS FOR INVESTIGATOR APPLICANTS

Box 1. Community Engagement

The National Institutes of Health defines community engagement as “...the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people.” Community engagement can be implemented on a continuum of community involvement in the research, ranging from outreach to shared leadership (Clinical Translational Science Awards Consortium, Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force on the Principles of Community Engagement 2011).

The National Science Foundation (2022) provides the following examples of community engagement activities:

- Holding roundtables and community meetings as well as conducting surveys to understand community member needs and concerns, and to develop and refine the research.
- Incorporating communities into processes for identifying key issues, planning and implementing projects, decision making, and evaluating outcomes.
- Providing data, facilities, resources, and expertise instrumental to the project.
- Conceiving of and supporting research demonstrations, experimentation, proofs of concept, or pilot projects.
- Participating in “living labs” where technological and social advances are staged iteratively through pilot studies in communities.
- Assisting in planning and implementation of evaluations of proposed research, including helping to define or create metrics and support data collection and/or interpretation within the community context.
- Public participation and engagement in research and data collection, including crowdsourcing.

Communities or end users can include some or all the following: local residents, neighborhood or community groups, nonprofit or philanthropic organizations, businesses, and municipal organizations such as libraries, public works departments, health and social services agencies, and schools, as well as regional end users, such as local, county, and state governments and departments and regional cooperative initiatives (adapted from National Science Foundation, 2022).

Sources:

Clinical Translational Science Awards Consortium, Community Engagement Key Function Committee Task Force on the Principles of Community Engagement. 2011. Principles of Community Engagement (2nd edition). NIH Publication no. 11-7782. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services.

National Science Foundation Smart and Connected Communities (NSF 22-529) Program Webinar. 2022. Available at: <https://new.nsf.gov/events/smart-connected-communities-nsf-22-529-program>.

Box 2. Community-Based Organization Definition

HEI has adopted U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s definition of a “community-based non-profit organization” (CBO): a public or private nonprofit organization that supports and/or represents a community and/or certain populations within a community through engagement, education, and other related services provided to individual community residents and community stakeholders. A “community” can be characterized by a particular geographic area and/or by the relationships among members with similar interests and can be characterized as part of a broader national or regional community where organizations can be focused on the needs of urban, rural, and/or tribal areas, farmworkers, displaced workers, children with high levels of lead, people with asthma, subsistence fishers, and other similar groups (U.S. EPA 2023).

The expectation is that the CBO should be driven by community residents in core aspects of its existence, such as:

- The majority of the governing body and staff consists of local residents.
- The main operating offices are in the community.
- Priority issue areas are identified and defined by residents.
- Solutions to address priority issues are developed with residents.
- Program design, implementation, and evaluation components have residents intimately involved in leadership positions. (National Community-Based Organization Network 2023)

Sources:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2023. The Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program (EJ TCGM). <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-grantmaking-program>. Accessed November 2, 2023.

National Community-Based Organization Network. What is a CBO? 2004. <https://sph.umich.edu/ncbon/about/whatis.html>. Accessed November 2, 2023