

CAARN’s goal is to facilitate research partnerships that can take health education interventions through the stages of research, culminating in evidence-based programs packaged for dissemination that are effective and feasible to implement by organizations. Below are **items that are considered essential to the effectiveness of the Community-Academic Aging Research Network (CAARN)** in achieving its stated goal, based on the findings of a modified Delphi process.

<b>Essential Elements</b> <i>(Arranged in descending order of percentage in final agreement)</i>
<b>Overall characteristic of the research network</b>
Connects to a network of organizations, aligns projects with needs of partners, and partners are potentially interested in using the intervention in the future, designs for dissemination, sets a goal of moving things to dissemination, has CRAs, administrator, and community-academic oversight committee, has a relationship with a purveyor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligns research projects with the needs of community partners</li> <li>• Has access to a network of community/local organizations</li> <li>• Usefulness and feasibility of health interventions is tested in the early stages of research</li> <li>• Has a relationship with an organization(s) that want to distribute the research products (i.e. the proven interventions) after research is completed*<sup>‡</sup></li> <li>• Has a Program Manager/Administrator</li> <li>• Have a community research associate (CRA) on staff*</li> <li>• Has a goal to move projects along the research continuum (e.g. Pilot → Small clinical trial → Randomizes clinical trial → Dissemination)</li> <li>• Have a Community-Academic Executive Committee, which is formed by community and academic stakeholders. Its functions include to prioritize studies, oversee identifying and selecting community and academic partners for research teams, and problem solving for research partnerships*</li> <li>• Having a group of individuals who are potentially interested in using the resulting health interventions in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Regarding the academic partners invited to participate in CAARN projects (Principal Investigator or their mentor on the grant if they are junior)</b>
Is committed to take projects to dissemination, considers community partners as equals on research team, has good communication skills, is open to feedback and learning new concepts, is successful in getting funding, has some knowledge of designing for dissemination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has good communication skills</li> <li>• Is open to receive feedback</li> <li>• Is open to learn new concepts (e.g. D&amp;I concepts, Community based participatory research, etc.)</li> <li>• Is committed to move projects along the research continuum (e.g. Pilot → Small clinical trial → Randomizes clinical trial → Dissemination)</li> <li>• Principal Investigator (or their Mentor on the grant, if they are junior) has been successful in obtaining grant funding*</li> <li>• Has good writing skills</li> <li>• Considers community partners as equals in the research team</li> </ul>

- Has knowledge of the principles of dissemination and implementation research (e.g. design for dissemination, reach, fidelity, context, among others)\*

**Regarding the community partners invited to participate in CAARN projects. Community Partners are defined as those in the community working with the researchers/CAARN to implement the intervention/program**

Has to have supportive leadership and enthusiastic staff with capacity to participate in research and strong ties with community; has to be financially compensated by research project; has to be invited to provide input in all phases of study from start to finish

- Have staff who are enthusiastic
- Have capacity (time, staff, resources) to participate in research
- Has a champion for the project within the organization
- Have strong, collaborative, and productive working relationships within community
- Participation in research activities has support from leadership
- Receive financial support from the research project to compensate for time/staff that is dedicated to research related activities
- Has regular communications (e.g. meetings, symposiums, conference calls) with similar agencies to share experiences and current initiatives\*
- Be invited to provide input in all phases of the study (e.g. intervention design, study design, grant writing, data collection, interpretation of results, etc.) \*\*‡

**Regarding the Community Research Associate (CRA)** *(According to the National Institutes of Health, a CRA is a community representative that serves as a primary liaison facilitating communication and collaboration between the academic health center and the local community)*

Has good communication and organizational skills, positive attitude, ability to multitask, strong commitment to facilitating research that is responsive to community priorities, understanding of community organizations' needs; a big picture mentality; experience working with community organizations and disseminating programs with fidelity

- Has good communication skills
- Has a positive attitude
- Has excellent organizational skills
- Has a deep commitment to facilitate research that is responsive to community priorities
- Has understanding of community organizations (e.g. capacity, culture, day-to-day life, needs, etc.)
- Has experience working with community organizations
- Has a big picture mentality
- Has experience disseminating programs with fidelity
- Has the ability to multitask

## CRA Roles and Responsibilities

**With community partners:** explores their interest and capacity to engage in research, identifies community partners, assures their input is considered, model communication strategies to request their input, explain steps in research, meet in person at some point during study, organize sharing of results with community

**With academic partners:** explains steps in community-based research, explain the CAARN network partners and their relationship to community partners; meets them at least once during study

**With both:** explaining what CAARN is and how it works; assist with communication to be sure goals and expectations are clear, communicate pro-actively, troubleshoot problems, explain importance of research

**Other:** provide assistance during grant writing, facilitate and schedule planning meetings before grant is obtained; if needed, participate in team meetings after grant is funded

- Explaining to community and academic partners the steps involved in performing research in community settings
- Meets academic partners in person at some point during the study\*
- Exploring community interest and capacity to engage in research
- Assuring that communities' input is considered in the study design
- Communicating pro-actively with partners to ensure project is on track
- Explaining to community and academic partners the importance of research
- Organizing the sharing of results with community partners
- Troubleshooting issues during project
- Facilitating planning meetings before grant is obtained.
- Explaining to all potential community and academic partners what the research network is (e.g. CAARN)
- Meets community partners in person at some point during the study\*
- Identifying partners (community and/or academic)
- Explaining to academic partners the context on which community organizations operate (e.g. Aging Network)
- Modeling communication strategies to request stakeholder input during planning meetings
- Assisting communications between academic and community members to assure that goals and expectations are accurately understood.
- Decisions regarding the CRA's participation in community-academic team meetings be assessed on a case-by-case basis, depending on functionality of the relationship between the community and academic partners
- Providing assistance during grant application (Budget template, letters of support, etc.)
- Scheduling planning meetings before grant is obtained
- Scheduling research meetings between community and academic partners AFTER the grant is obtained\*

**Regarding the Director of a Research Network like CAARN**

**Soft skills:** Has passion about mission, good communication, listening, writing, and problem-solving skills, is able to mediate conflict;

**Experience, knowledge:** Has experience in getting research funding, CBPR, D&I research, Has knowledge of funding mechanisms and grant opportunities; able to provide input on study design, designing for dissemination

**Function:** participates in planning meetings, and provides assistance in developing grant application and in finding funding opportunities

- Has passion about the mission of the research organization
- Has good communication skills
- Is able to provide input regarding dissemination and implementation strategies\*
- Has good writing skills
- Has good problem-solving skills
- has knowledge of funding mechanisms
- Has experience in dissemination and implementation research
- Is able to provide input on the scientific merits of the study, intervention design, and evaluation procedures\*
- Has experience in grant applications
- Identifies funding opportunities
- Provides assistance during development of grant application
- Has been successful obtaining NIH and other research funding
- Has good listening skills
- Participates in planning meetings
- Is experienced in community based participatory research
- Has the ability to mediate conflict

**Regarding the dissemination organization(s) (i.e. the organization(s) that licenses and distributes the program to community agencies, once the program is proven.**

Is trusted by community partners, its goals align with research network’s goals; it has capacity to disseminate new programs and has experience disseminating and delivering programs, it provides input to the research network on existing needs and on packaging of programs

- Organization’s goals align with goals of the research network
- Has capacity to disseminate new programs
- Is a trusted organization among community partners in the research network
- Distributes programs after they are proven
- Has experience disseminating programs
- Has experience delivering programs
- Provides input on existing needs
- Provides input on the packaging of evidence-base programs

Note: Wording is equal to that used in the round when it achieved consensus

\*Indicates rewording/clarification between round 1 and round 2

¥Indicates rewording/clarification between round 2 and round 3