

Building Innovative Solutions

Presenters

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Thematic Area Innovative Methods of Community Engagement

Abstract

The Community Health Innovation Awards (CHIA), established in 2012, is a competitive grant funding application process developed and circulated widely throughout the greater Birmingham, AL metro area through mailings, web postings through the Center for Clinical and Translation Science (CCTS), and word of mouth. Applicants are responsible for attending three structured workshops, each lasting approximately three (3) hours with emphasis on innovative thinking and idea development, grant writing, and project presentations.

Applicant teams compose draft proposals based on questions that address five criteria areas: 1) innovation, 2) thoughtful understanding of their community or population of interest, 3) community involvement, 4) community strengths or assets, 5) implementation of the idea and results. Draft proposals are reviewed by an external panel of reviewers with written feedback provided to all applicants. Project ideas that strongly demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the awards criteria are invited to participate in the final workshop and move forward in the process to submit a final proposal and give a 10-minute presentation to a panel of judges.

Since 2012, 49 applications have been submitted totaling \$268,500 in allocations, representing 20 funded projects. Awards range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for 12 month projects. Funded projects have resulted in leveraged resources (*social and financial capital*) totaling over \$6.5 million, along with several novel programs that have connected academic and community partners in addressing health disparities and improving overall community wellbeing in the greater Birmingham area.

The CHIA initiative designed an innovative strategy for engaging community members in addressing concerns that were identified by the communities themselves, and encourages participants to think boldly and creatively about solutions to “on the ground” health challenges. The relevance of CHIA to community engaged research is that it offers funding to support ideas that are often viewed as high risk, yet has spawned the creation of unique program offerings and reaches populations that would not otherwise be involved in community-driven interventions.

Learning Objectives

Following the 1.5-hour presentation and demonstration, participants will be able to construct a 30-minute interactive workshop activity to engage community representatives in innovative solution-focused exercises.

Learning Lab Session Schedule

Session Elements	Allocated Time	Materials Needed
<p>Overview/Innovation Examples Presentation</p>	40 minutes	Icebreaker/"Mash-Up" exercise Blank paper, pens, colored markers Video clips, photos coupled with stories
<p>Brainstorming Solutions Activity Participants will break out into groups of between 4-6 people and use materials to brainstorm solutions for this activity. Groups are asked to visualize ways to "improve their communities" using the criteria selected at random on 1 Challenge Theme Card and 1 labeled colored ball. This is a quick, visual & out-of-the-box thinking activity whose goal is to generate different, interesting & fun strategies to improve the community and think differently about existing resources.</p>	30 minutes	Colored post-it notes Pens Toys/Candy Markers Labeled colored balls CHIA Challenge Theme Cards Activity prompt & drawing Balloons
<p>Wrap-Up and Next Steps Each group will present their ideas. The objective is not to leave feeling one's idea was "taken", yet to leave with a surplus of new approaches to a problem.</p>	20 minutes	Group scribe and spokesperson Open attitude