

**CURA**  
**Community-Based Research Program**  
**Orientation Packet**

**2007–2008**



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

A publication of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), an all-University applied research and technical assistance center at the University of Minnesota that connects faculty and students with community organizations and public institutions working on significant public policy issues in Minnesota.

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# CURA Community-Based Research Programs: An Overview

## Introduction

Community-Based Research (CBR) Programs at the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) provide applied research assistance to community-based groups located outside of the Twin Cities area, neighborhood groups within the metro area, and other nonprofit agencies and groups. This research is administered by three separate programs: the Community Assistantship Program (CAP), which works with groups in greater Minnesota; Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR), which works with neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and first-ring suburbs in the Twin Cities metro; and Communiversity, which works with Minnesota nonprofit organizations, particularly those serving communities of color. The goals of these programs are to

- ▶ enhance the capacity of community-based groups in Minnesota to meet their goals by giving them an opportunity to accomplish relevant applied research; and
- ▶ provide students and faculty with useful community-based applied research and learning opportunities.

These community research projects typically place students in part-time research assistantships for one academic semester or over the summer. Students are selected by and report directly to the community organization.

For more information about any of the CURA Community Based Research Programs:

### **Community Assistantship Program (CAP)**

**Focus:** Serves exurban and Greater Minnesota communities

**Website:** [www.cura.umn.edu/cap.php](http://www.cura.umn.edu/cap.php)

**Program Director:** Will Craig, [wcraig@umn.edu](mailto:wcraig@umn.edu), 612-625-3321

**Program Coordinator:** Jeff Corn, [jcorn@umn.edu](mailto:jcorn@umn.edu), 612-625-0744

### **Communiversity**

**Focus:** Serves communities of color

**Website:** [www.cura.umn.edu/communiversity.php](http://www.cura.umn.edu/communiversity.php)

**Program Director:** Tom Scott, [scott001@umn.edu](mailto:scott001@umn.edu), 612-625-7340

**Program Coordinator:** Jeff Corn, [jcorn@umn.edu](mailto:jcorn@umn.edu), 612-625-0744

### **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)**

**Focus:** Serves metro area neighborhoods

**Website:** [www.npcr.org](http://www.npcr.org)

**Program Director:** Kris Nelson, [kns@umn.edu](mailto:kns@umn.edu), 612-625-1020

**Program Coordinator:** Jeff Corn, [jcorn@umn.edu](mailto:jcorn@umn.edu), 612-625-0744

## ***Project Participant Roles and Responsibilities***

### **Student Research Assistant**

Student researchers are hired by communities and are responsible for conducting applied research and providing the community group with the specified product. It is expected that the student will be self-motivated and that he/she will stay in regular contact with the project supervisor. Though the project may entail performing a small amount of related clerical tasks, the focus of the student's activities should be on the research project. The research assistant should keep the needs of the community organization and the purpose of the research foremost in their minds throughout the project. It is expected that upon the project's completion, the student will submit a final report or project summary to the CURA Community Programs assistant.

### **Community Project Supervisors**

Community project supervisors oversee the project. They recommend to CURA their preference for which student researcher to hire, provide ongoing guidance, and make sure they are getting the support needed to successfully complete the project. In some communities the student is accountable to the project supervisor, whereas in others there is a committee or board to which the student reports. It is important to the success of the project to clarify the lines of accountability and support at the outset of the research. No matter how motivated and independent the research assistant may be, it is impossible for them to meet the community's needs without a clear explanation of the history and purpose of the project and the objectives that need to be met.

### **Community and Faculty Mentors**

At the student researcher's request, he/she is matched with a community and/or faculty mentor to assist with the project. Mentors should be considered a resource not only for the student, but also for the community organization, since their input will strengthen the final product. The student is expected to have contact with each mentor at least three times during the project. The faculty mentor offers advice on research design, methodology, and current literature relevant to the topic. A faculty mentor should be considered when the student needs assistance in developing a research methodology and identifying resources. The community mentor is someone who has community-based experience on a similar type of project. They direct the student to resources, and contribute expertise on the issue being researched. This mentor puts the project into an overall context for the student. If a student researcher would like assistance identifying mentors, they should contact CURA community programs staff and we will help make these connections.

## Community Projects Process

### Proposal

1. Community organization identifies an issue or concern
2. Community completes the [CURA Community-Based Research Programs Application](#), consults with CURA program staff, and submits proposal
3. Proposal is assigned to the appropriate CURA program and reviewed by the program review committee
4. Proposal is approved, referred to another CURA program, or denied, and organization is notified of decision

### Hiring

5. If approved, a job description is developed, approved by the organization, and posted
6. Students apply directly to the community organization, or online via the U of M employment system
7. Community organization completes [Student Recommendation Form](#) to recommend to CURA a student for hiring
8. If the community is providing matching funds, commitment needs to be formalized at this point, before the student is hired (See [CURA Administrative Procedures](#))
9. Student is contacted by the CURA administrator and completes hiring paperwork

### Project

10. Program director meets with the student and project supervisor to develop a [work plan](#)
11. At the student researcher's request, community and faculty mentors are recruited
12. [Mid-point check-in](#) is completed and returned to the appropriate CURA Program
13. Student completes [final report](#), presents to organization and sends an electronic copy to the CURA Community Program Assistant

### Wrap Up

14. Report is bound, sent to all participants, placed in the CURA library, and made available on the [CURA website](#)
15. Project participants complete a program evaluation
16. Publicize project results

# Administrative Procedures and Requirements

## *CURA Administrative Procedures*

### Job Description and Selection of Student

The CURA Program Manager or Community Program Assistant will work with the community agency to draft the student job description. The completed job description will be posted on the University of Minnesota's Employment website. Students will apply directly to the community agency, or online through the U of M employment system.

Once an agency has selected a student to be hired, they notify Jeff Corn at CURA via fax or e-mail using the [Student Recommendation Form](#). The community group may notify the successful candidate of its decision, but should make it clear that CURA makes the hiring decisions and that the student does not have a job until he/she has been determined eligible for employment by CURA and has been placed on payroll. In addition, the student cannot begin working until he/she has completed employment paperwork at CURA. This restriction is based on federal law.

### Matching Funds

CURA appreciates matching funds from the community. It helps stretch our limited resources and allows us to fund more projects. There is no requirement for a match, but if two proposals were of equal merit, we would select the one that cost us less.

There are two ways to provide the match: as a gift or through a contract. In either case, this arrangement must be formalized before the student can be hired.

- ▶ **Gift.** A gift is the simplest way to provide a match; simply write a check to *CURA, University of Minnesota*. The community organization formalizes this approach by submitting a written statement saying they are committed to providing \$XX.XX in support of the specified project. Please name the CURA program (CAP, NPCR, or Communiversity) and the title of the project. We expect at least 25% of the gift amount to be paid before the student is hired.
- ▶ **Contract.** Some organizations would prefer to use a formal contract; CURA will provide a standard University contract on request. A signed copy of the contract must be delivered before the student can be hired.

### Hiring Process

CURA's administrator will contact the student to schedule an appointment with him/her to process the appropriate University of Minnesota payroll and human resources paperwork. If the student has not worked at the University in the past 12 months, he/she will need to provide verification of eligibility to work in the United States, such as a Social Security card and

either a passport or driver's license. International students will need to have appropriate visa status. At the meeting, the student will be given timesheets for reporting hours worked.

### **Time Sheets**

The student's agency supervisor is responsible for monitoring the student's time and approving the timesheets before he/she submits them to CURA. Time sheets are due at CURA by 12:00 PM on the day after the pay period ends. Students may deliver, mail, e-mail, or fax the time sheets. CURA will process a time sheet without the supervisor's signature, but we must receive the original or copy of the time sheet with the supervisor's signature before we process another time sheet for the student. The University has a biweekly payroll schedule. Time sheet due dates and payday are listed on the back of each time sheet. Time sheets can be faxed to (612) 626-0273 or e-mailed to [cura@umn.edu](mailto:cura@umn.edu).

### **Fringe Benefits**

For appointments during the academic year, graduate research assistants will receive tuition remission and health insurance premium benefits based on the number of hours they work during the semester. Students must work at least 97.5 hours to qualify for tuition remission and 195 hours to qualify for health insurance premium benefits. Hours worked before or after the semester payroll period will not generate these benefits. For summer appointments, health insurance premium benefits will be covered for those working at least 50% (130 hours during summer), but tuition benefits ordinarily are not supported. For more information, see [www.cura.umn.edu/StudentP/Gradpolicy.php](http://www.cura.umn.edu/StudentP/Gradpolicy.php).

### **2006–2007 Payroll Periods**

- ▶ Fall semester: 8/28/06 to 1/10/07
- ▶ Spring semester: 1/11/07 to 5/27/07
- ▶ Summer semester: 5/28/07 to 8/26/07

### **Maximum Work Hours**

The University of Minnesota and the federal government have a variety of restrictions on the number of hours a student may work each week during the academic year as a total of all of their University of Minnesota jobs. They are as follows:

- ▶ **Undergraduate students:** 40 hours/week (we recommend 10–15 hours/week)
- ▶ **Graduate students:** 30 hours/week (we recommend 10 hours/week; more than 30 hours/week only with written permission of the Graduate School)
- ▶ **International students:** 20 hours/week during scheduled class periods and finals week

Please be aware that, per federal law, we cannot pay international students for hours worked above this limit. A payroll schedule and other useful information for F-1 and J-1 visa holders can be found at [www1.umn.edu/ohr/payroll/international/index.html](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/payroll/international/index.html).

During semester breaks and summer, ALL students may work 40 hrs/week.

### **Final Report Requirements**

CURA Community-Based Research Programs require research assistants to complete and submit a final report to both CURA and the community organization directing the project. This final report assures the project research will be available to other community organizations. The report will be posted on the CURA website and placed in the CURA library for researchers and community organizers to utilize. More information on the requirements for the final report can be found on [page 15](#).

### **Expense Reimbursements**

For Communiversiity and NPCR, the community agency will reimburse student employees for out-of-pocket expenses. The CAP program will pay for two trips during the semester for travel outside the Twin Cities metro area. To request reimbursement, students need to complete a University Employee Expense Worksheet and submit it to Jeff Corn for review and approval. Requests for expense reimbursements should be submitted to CURA on a monthly basis or when expenditures total at least \$25.00. A copy of the [expense worksheet](#) is included in the “Forms” section of this packet.

## University of Minnesota Human Subjects Research Requirements

Student research assistants in a CURA program (NPCR, CAP, or Communiversities) should be aware that their research may involve human subjects. At the University of Minnesota, human subjects' research is overseen by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that projects meet institutional and ethical standards for the protection human subjects. The IRB administration and CURA have worked together to ensure that these standards are being met. What follows is a guide to the CURA/IRB relationship.

### What is human subjects research?

Human subjects research involves collecting and/or analyzing data from people. In a CURA project, human subjects research is involved if the research assistant is conducting focus groups, surveys, or interviews; reviewing reports of focus groups, interviews, or surveys conducted by others; or working with information from an organization's client database.

### What are the issues and concerns for human subjects research?

Although there are a number of legal regulations and ethical guidelines concerning human subjects research, the IRB has two broad standards:

- ▶ subjects must not be placed at undue risk, and
- ▶ subjects must give uncoerced, informed consent to their participation.

Another set of guiding principles for human subjects research comes from the *Belmont Report*, which was released by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1979. The *Belmont Report* identifies three core values for human subjects research:

- ▶ respect for persons: all individuals have autonomy;
- ▶ beneficence: all potential risks and benefits to individuals must be weighed; and
- ▶ justice: no population should bear undue risk from research if they will not also share in the benefits.

*The Institutional Review Board website has links to the regulations and ethical considerations involved with human subjects research, including the Code of Federal Regulations and the Belmont Report. Visit [www.irb.umn.edu/regs.cfm](http://www.irb.umn.edu/regs.cfm)*

*The website also contains an online tutorial on informed consent and several sample consent forms, including some translations. Visit [www.irb.umn.edu/consent/](http://www.irb.umn.edu/consent/).*

*Finally, the website has information about data privacy and confidentiality. Visit [www.irb.umn.edu/topics/hipaa](http://www.irb.umn.edu/topics/hipaa). (See item #7, "Using Data that is De-Identified.")*

Privacy and confidentiality are other major concerns. Information that personally identifies a research subject, or makes it easy for others to identify him or her, must not be included in project reports that will be available to the public. Researchers, of course, also should not share information about their subjects with others outside of the research project.

### **Does my CURA project need to be reviewed by IRB?**

The Regents of the University of Minnesota have established a policy for determining when a project must be reviewed by IRB:

- ▶ if the research is being done by a University student, staff member, or faculty member;
- ▶ if the research involves data collection or data records of human subjects; and
- ▶ if a student researcher is using the research to fulfill graduation or degree requirements.

Although many CURA projects meet the first two criteria, the IRB has determined that most CURA projects do not require IRB review. This is because students working on CURA projects, although employed by the University of Minnesota, are really doing their work for an outside organization. This means that CURA research assistants are generally conducting research as a job for an employer, so the employer is responsible for ensuring the safety and obtaining the consent of the research subjects.

### **How do I know if my CURA project needs to be reviewed by IRB?**

There are two circumstances in which a CURA project may require further consideration by IRB:

- ▶ if the human subjects belong to a population that would be considered “vulnerable”;  
or
- ▶ if, in addition to conducting the research for the community organization, you also plan to use the data you gather in a course paper, a thesis, a journal article, or some other academic application.

At the beginning of each semester and each summer, CURA staff send descriptions of our projects to the IRB to identify any projects that might warrant further consideration by the IRB. The IRB can ask CURA for more information about a project, even if the student research assistant is not planning to use the research for an academic purpose. When the IRB expresses concern about a project, CURA staff provides the IRB with additional information about how the research will be conducted, who will be supervising the research, what qualifications they bring to the work, and so on to build all parties’ confidence that the project will be handled professionally and ethically.

### **Projects Involving Vulnerable Populations**

One of the IRB’s concerns has to do with projects involving a vulnerable population, such as children, the disabled, people of color, people living in poverty, undocumented workers, etc. Even in these cases, however, a project may not require IRB review. If the research questions are about a program serving the vulnerable population, rather than individuals, it probably will not need IRB approval; as a general rule, program evalu-

*To learn more about working with vulnerable populations, visit [www.irb.umn.edu/training/](http://www.irb.umn.edu/training/). This part of the IRB website also has many other informative and helpful training modules.*

ations an organization conducts to assess its effectiveness and improve its services do not require review. The same is true if a research assistant is analyzing data that the organization has already gathered and the organization has deleted all personally identifying information about the participants. If a research assistant is working with personally identifiable information about specific individuals and the IRB determines that the project will require the submission of an application for prospective review, CURA staff will work with the student and the community organization to make sure sufficient time is allowed for this process and to assist in any way we can.

### **Using Research from a CURA Project for Academic Purposes**

A student will always need to submit an application to the IRB for a project if he/she decides that besides providing the requested information to the community organization, he/she would like to incorporate the research conducted through a CURA assistantship into an academic project. This guideline applies whether the student knows at the beginning of a CURA project that they plan to use the research for an academic purpose, or whether they decide to do so sometime after completing the CURA project. If a student decides later to use the project for an academic purpose, he/she can probably apply under “exempt category 4,” for use of existing data.

*To learn how to apply for IRB review, visit [www.irb.umn.edu/studentResearchers/](http://www.irb.umn.edu/studentResearchers/). Also visit [www.irb.umn.edu/applying/](http://www.irb.umn.edu/applying/) for descriptions of the three levels of review: exempt, expedited, and full.*

If a student knows at the beginning of a CURA project that they plan to use the research for an academic purpose, they should be aware that because CURA views its research assistants as employees of the community organization, any academic use students make of CURA-sponsored research is considered to be the student’s own pursuit (that is, it is not part of what the community organization has hired the student to do for them) and thus will not be compensated by CURA. This includes the time it takes to secure IRB approval for the project. However, to keep community work from being delayed while a student seeks IRB review for an academic project, CURA staff will be happy to help facilitate the process in any way we can.

### **What if a student research assistant is not comfortable with the way a community organization is handling the research?**

Although the community organization, as the student’s “employer,” is considered to have primary responsibility for how the research is conducted, student research assistants should still be aware of and committed to the standards of human subjects protection. CURA staff believe students should never have to compromise their ethics as part of their CURA job. If a student is uncomfortable with how the organization is conducting the research or has concerns about participants’ privacy, protection from risk, level of consent, or knowledge of how the information they provide will be used, the student’s first step should be to talk to his or her community supervisor. If the supervisor is not responsive to the student’s concerns, the student should contact the coordinator of the CURA program sponsoring their research assistantship (see contact information below). CURA staff will work with the student and community supervisor to achieve a positive resolution, if at all possible. Students may also contact the IRB with questions about research ethics and they will assist in any way they can.

**What if, while doing research, a student receives sensitive information relating to abuse, neglect, or criminal activity?**

As a general rule, part of protecting the human subjects involved in research includes keeping their information confidential and making sure that information about their personal lives and activities will not be used “against them” in any way. Students are not obligated to report any criminal activity they hear about in their work at CURA—and they may not want to if doing so might harm their research subjects.

In cases of abuse, neglect, or maltreatment of a child or a vulnerable adult, however, a student may want to tell someone who is in a position to help the victim. If a student thinks this subject could

come up during his or her CURA project, he/she should talk to the community supervisor early in the project about how to handle these situations; the supervisor or someone else in the organization may be required to report suspected abuse or neglect under state law. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) website also provides information on how to report such cases to appropriate authorities. An individual’s identity as the reporter is kept confidential by the investigating agencies.

*For information on reporting cases of child abuse or neglect, or maltreatment of a vulnerable adult, visit [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us).*

***Questions? Contact one of the following individuals:***

*Kris Nelson, NPCR Program Director, 612-625-1020 or [ksn@umn.edu](mailto:ksn@umn.edu)*

*Will Craig, CAP Program Director, 612-625-3321 or [wcraig@umn.edu](mailto:wcraig@umn.edu)*

*Jeff Corn, Communiversity Program Coordinator, 612-625-0744 or [jcorn@umn.edu](mailto:jcorn@umn.edu)*

*Jeffery Perkey, IRB Liaison to CURA, 612-626-5922 or [perke001@umn.edu](mailto:perke001@umn.edu)*

## CURA Final Report Requirements

CURA Community Based Research Programs **REQUIRE** research assistants to complete and submit a final report to both CURA and the community organization directing the project. This *final report* assures the project research will be available to other community organizations. The report will be posted on the CURA website and placed in the CURA library for researchers and community organizers to utilize.

If the research assistant completes a report for the community organization as part of his or her research project, this same report will also fulfill the report obligation to CURA. If the project does **not** include a formal final report (for example, a project that involves the creation of a database or web site), the research assistant still must provide a *project summary* in lieu of a final report. A project summary should include a summary of the research assistant's work on the project, outlining the goals and objectives of the project, the tasks and tools that were used, the research findings, and the project's final outcome.

Please observe the following requirements for ANY report or project summary produced as part of a CURA-supported project:

- ▶ **Use of CURA logo:** Please consult and follow the “Guidelines for use of CURA’s Visual Identity” (available at [www.cura.umn.edu/CuraStaff/CURA\\_Identity\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.cura.umn.edu/CuraStaff/CURA_Identity_Guidelines.pdf)).
- ▶ **Acknowledgment and disclaimer:** The following statement **MUST** appear on either the title page, copyright page, or acknowledgements page of any report created as a result of a CURA-supported project:

**This project was supported by \_\_\_\_\_ [choose one: the Community Assistantship Program (CAP), Communiversity, or Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)], a program of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the University of Minnesota, CURA, or \_\_\_\_\_ [choose one: CAP, Communiversity, or NPCR].**

- ▶ **Table of Contents:** Include a table of contents at the beginning of the report. If possible, use the “Format” > “Style. . .” feature in Microsoft Word to automatically generate a table of contents.
- ▶ **Executive Summary:** Include an executive summary that briefly summarize the project’s goals, objectives, and findings.
- ▶ **Section Headings:** Use section headings to distinguish parts of the report. Be sure they are clearly labeled and are used consistently throughout the report.
- ▶ **Page Numbers:** Number pages consecutively throughout the report. Include page numbers on each page—including appendices—and center them at the bottom or top of the page.
- ▶ **Page Size:** Pages size should be 8 1/2 “ by 11”. If you wish to include larger maps on 11 X 17” paper, these pages should be incorporated as foldouts.
- ▶ **Appendices:** The following types of data should be included in appendices: maps, survey instruments, and aggregate data.

- ▶ **Bibliography:** It is the author's responsibility to properly cite the source of all materials referenced in the report, and to include a bibliography of such materials at the end of the report. Authors should follow source citation and bibliographic guidelines from a recognized reference manual, such as the *MLA Handbook*, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- ▶ **Using Copyrighted Material:** It is an author's responsibility to follow fair use standards when citing or reproducing copyrighted materials (including figures, maps, and photographs obtained from other sources) and, where appropriate, to acquire permission to reproduce any such materials. When using photos, graphics, or when quoting another person's work, always use an appropriate credit line or cite the source of the quotation. Those unfamiliar with copyright laws or fair use standards should consult the University of Minnesota Copyright Information and Education Initiative website at [www.lib.umn.edu/copyright/](http://www.lib.umn.edu/copyright/).
- ▶ **Copyrighting Your Report:** It is important to protect intellectual property from misuse by others. CURA suggests that the research assistant or community organization copyright any report produced by adding "Copyright \_\_\_\_\_ [researcher or organization name], 2006" to the title page.

#### **Helpful Hints in Creating a Resource Tool for Community Organizers:**

- ▶ Highlight key findings (what is likely to be most useful information for the community organization).
- ▶ Recommendations for next steps or further research are appropriate.
- ▶ Recommendations for community action should not just be the author's opinion, but rather should be presented as alternatives that may be pursued, with an analysis of the pros, cons, and implications of each alternative.

#### **When sending the final report or project summary to CURA, research assistants should be sure to include the following:**

- ▶ One complete UNBOUND hardcopy of the report.
- ▶ An electronic copy saved as a PDF document (preferred) or a Microsoft Word document.
- ▶ Original (native format) electronic files for any maps, charts, diagrams, photos, or other graphics that appear in the report.

**Send all final reports and project summaries to:** Jeff Corn, CURA Community Program Assistant, 330 HHH Center, 301 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, e-mail: [cura-cbr@umn.edu](mailto:cura-cbr@umn.edu), phone: 612-625-0744.

# Project Resources

## *Publicizing Your CURA Project*

### WHY should I publicize the project?

When your project receives public notice in a newspaper, magazine, newsletter or other media outlet, it gets visibility that gives a boost to all the project partners:

- ▶ As a student or faculty member, you get a nice record of your work to add to your professional portfolio.
- ▶ As a community organization, you draw attention to your work and can thus increase community support and involvement.
- ▶ As the umbrella organization sponsoring and facilitating the project, CURA gets an illustration of the impact our programs have on communities, which helps us raise the funds and increase the goodwill we need to continue our work.

### WHEN should I seek publicity for the project?

At several points during the course of a project, events will likely occur that are especially “newsworthy” or notable. These may include:

- ▶ The project’s kickoff (example headline: “Community Group to Study Important Issue with U of M Assistance”)
- ▶ When you’re seeking input from the community, through surveys, town meetings, focus groups, etc.
- ▶ When a major event related to the project is about to occur (either an event you’re planning, or another community event that relates to the issue you’re working on)
- ▶ When the research findings are to be presented to the community
- ▶ When the issue your project addresses is especially timely or “hot” and is already getting media coverage
- ▶ After the project is complete, when it results in significant outcomes such as additional funds being raised for ongoing work, a shift in public policy on the issue, the development of a new program, etc.

### HOW should I publicize the project?

A wide variety of communication tools and strategies exist for getting the story of your work out to audiences that matter to you. Some of these include:

- ▶ Stories in a community newsletter, or those of your partners and supporters
- ▶ Press releases and articles in local, community, or neighborhood newspapers (don’t forget PICTURES—see below)
- ▶ Frequent updates on your website, and those of your partners and supporters
- ▶ Articles in various University of Minnesota publications
- ▶ Local radio or television coverage
- ▶ Promotional or educational videotapes about the project

### **HOW should I acknowledge CURA's support for the project?**

To properly acknowledge the support CURA is providing for your project, we ask that the following statement appear in all published reports, web pages, press releases, or other publicity pertaining to this project:

**This project was supported [in part] through student research assistance provided by \_\_\_\_\_ [specify the CURA program that supported your project—*Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization, the Community Assistantship Program, or Community*], a program of the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)."**

### **WHAT if I need help with my publicity efforts?**

CURA staff can help you in your efforts to publicize your project, and welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop materials, coordinate releases, and think creatively about public relations. Some of the ways we can help include:

- ▶ Drafting press releases or articles based on information you provide about the project and, where appropriate, interviews of key people involved or interested in the project
- ▶ Identifying media outlets that might have a special interest in your project and a willingness to publish a story about it
- ▶ Connecting you with resources to help you in your own public relations efforts
- ▶ Helping you select and format photographs you have taken that illustrate your project and will be powerful accompaniments to your stories, or, in some cases, arranging for a photographer to come to your community and document your work
- ▶ Coordinating our publicity efforts with yours for maximum impact

To discuss these or any other ideas related to publicizing your project, please contact CURA's Community Program Assistant, Jeff Corn, at [curacbr@umn.edu](mailto:curacbr@umn.edu) or 612-625-0744.

## *Tips from Previous Project Supervisors*

“The student selection process can easily turn out to be more time-consuming than expected. Don’t let this surprise you. Finding the right student for the project is worth a little extra time. For example, asking applicants for writing samples or other relevant materials can often be helpful when you have doubts or questions.”

“Student research assistants are expected to work independently, and most of them find this to be rewarding; however, there are limits to their independence. Even the best students cannot meet the needs of the neighborhood organization without being given clear objectives at the beginning and constructive feedback throughout the project.”

“Projects with realistic expectations as well as clearly defined parameters and goals are the most successful.”

“Be clear about the role and what is expected of the student research from the start.”

“Make sure both you and the student agree that the desired outcome can be achieved in the time available.”

“Do your best to anticipate supports the project will need (computer access, printed materials, mailing lists, etc.). Having them ready can prevent the project from getting slowed down.”

“The students are better able to stay focused on the objective if they understand the context of the research and the intended use of their results. Fill them in on the relevant background as much as you can, and share the organization’s vision with them. If they know why they are working on a project it will result in a better product.”

“If the project needs to be adjusted, always remember to layout clear guidelines for your researcher.”

“Continue to make sure the purpose of the project is understood by everyone. Regular meetings allow the research assistant to ask questions. You will also have the chance to evaluate together the work your researcher is doing and the progress of the project. If you sense confusion - talk about it.”

“Encourage the students to make use of their community and faculty mentors. These advisors are intended to be resource people for the project; consulting with them is part of the student’s job and an important part of the project.”

## ***Tips from Previous Research Assistants***

“Try to develop a good sense of the organization you are working for. Find out what the organization’s goals for the project are and how those goals developed.”

“Make sure you understand why the community organization needs the research and how they intend to use the results. This will help you shape your project.”

“Make sure roles are clearly defined before starting the project. Clearly define what you believe you can accomplish and find out exactly what your community organization wants from you.”

“Don’t be afraid to ask specific questions about what should or shouldn’t be included in your research. Otherwise, you may end up re-doing what you’ve done before, with a slightly different bent.”

“Make sure you know who your mentors are supposed to be and that you will be counting on them to help you out. Use that resource!”

“Plan ahead and manage your time well. Stay in good communication with your supervisor. Try to map out a realistic timeline for your work and stick with it as closely as possible.”

“Though your work will be fairly independent, maintain contact with everyone involved throughout the project. Continue to make sure everyone involved has the same goal in mind.”

“Try to be flexible. Don’t be surprised if the goals of the project change halfway through. This is why it is always important both to keep an open mind and to communicate.”

“You must be self-motivated. Others will help you and give you guidance, but the energy needs to come from you.”

“Be prepared to work independently and to deal with the frustration of not always knowing exactly what the community organization wants. Communication is the key.”

“Use it as an opportunity to build a career network. It is a great opportunity to apply academic work to the real world.”

# Forms

## Student Recommendation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: Jeff Corn, CURA Community Program Assistant

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Re: Student Hiring Recommendation

I have decided to hire the following person to work on a CAP/CMV/NPCR project:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

U of M Student ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

U of M College/School: \_\_\_\_\_  
(or Other Institution if not U of M)

Degree Program: \_\_\_\_\_

School E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### I understand that:

1. CURA will verify that the person indicated above is a student.
2. CURA will contact the student directly to schedule an appointment to process his/her hiring paperwork.
3. The student cannot begin working until he/she has completed the hiring/payroll paperwork at CURA.
4. CURA will send me a copy of the student's signed offer letter.
5. I will notify all other job candidates that they were not selected for this job.
6. I am responsible for monitoring the student's work and approving the time sheets before he/she submits them to CURA.
7. If the research assistant works more hours than the approved appointment, CURA will bill the agency for the cost of those hours.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please return this completed form by e-mail to [curacbr@umn.edu](mailto:curacbr@umn.edu), or by fax to 612-626-0273

## ***Project Work Plan***

Once a student has been hired, the project supervisor, CURA Program Director, and student research assistant will meet to complete a work plan. The purpose of the work plan is to detail steps needed to complete the project within the hours awarded. The work plan should be mutually developed and accepted by both the student and supervisor. Any revisions made to this plan should be made by the student and supervisor together.

Project Name:

Supervisor Name:

Research Assistant Name:

Number of Hours Awarded:

### **PROJECT GOALS**

1. What are the goals of the project?

### **TASKS & TIMEFRAME**

2. What tasks are necessary to meet project goals? (Be as specific as possible.)

<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Estimated Hours</b>
<b>a.</b>		
<b>b.</b>		
<b>c.</b>		
<b>d.</b>		
<b>e.</b>		
<b>f.</b>		
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>		

*(continued on next page)*

(Project Work Plan continued)

3. Target Date for Project Completion:

4. What will be the final product(s) of the project? How will the product(s) be used by the organization?

**ROLES**

5. Please list the roles of everyone involved with the project.

Person	Responsibilities

6. How can CURA assist with the project?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Research assistant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

*Thank you for completing the Project Work Plan! Please return a copy of this form and any pertinent attachments to Jeff Corn, CURA, 330 HHH Center, 301—19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, e-mail: [curacbr@umn.edu](mailto:curacbr@umn.edu), fax: 612-626-0273.*

## Project Mid-Point Assessment

At the project's mid-point, the project supervisor and student research assistant(s) will meet and assess the development, progression, and final product(s) of the project.

Project Name:

Supervisor Name:

Research Assistant Name:

Number of Hours Awarded:

### **PROJECT GOALS**

1. What are the goals of the project? If they have changed since your initial work plan meeting, have they been discussed? (Briefly list the project goals and any changes in the project's focus.)

### **TASKS & TIMEFRAME**

2. What tasks have been completed up to this point and what tasks are remaining?

Tasks Completed	Tasks Remaining
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.
d.	d.
e.	e.
f.	f.

Hours Spent:

Hours Remaining:

3. Target Date for Project Completion

*(continued on next page)*

(Project Midpoint Assessment continued)

4. What will be the final product(s) of the project?

**BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS**

5. What barriers, if any, have affected the project’s development and progression? What actions can the supervisor and research assistant take to reduce these barriers?

Barriers	Actions/Solutions
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	

6. How can CURA assist?

---

Supervisor’s signature

---

date

---

Research assistant’s signature

---

date

*Thank you for completing the Project Mid-Point Assessment! Please return a copy of this form and any pertinent attachments to Jeff Corn, CURA, 330 HHH Center, 301—19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55455, e-mail: [curacbr@umn.edu](mailto:curacbr@umn.edu), fax: 612-626-0273.*





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