

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.