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Alternatively, please refer  
to other resources in the  
Community Engagement  
in Research Toolkit  
available on the Health  
Translation SA website [www.  
healthtranslationsa.org.au](http://www.healthtranslationsa.org.au)

# Embedding community and consumer engagement in grant applications



## What are the benefits of partnering with community members/consumers in research?

The benefit of partnering with community members/consumers in research is well established in the literature and contributes to the improved quality and relevance of research to consumers' needs. More and more funding and grant agencies are pushing for consumer and community engagement to ensure that research projects are aligned with the community's priorities.

*Disclaimer: This advice is general in nature. Please also refer to specific requirements within grant application guidelines to guide your response.*

## What are reviewers looking for in the grant review process?

Different grant agencies will have their own application requirements, depending on the scope of research. In general, grant reviewers want to see that researchers have considered the following:

- Including community members/consumers as active members of the research team with their consent e.g. Consumer Associate Investigators. This helps validate the researcher's commitment to community and consumer engagement and highlights the value they place on the contribution of community members and consumers to the research project.
- Creating opportunities for on-going, regular and meaningful interactions with community members/consumers across all stages of the research cycle.

- Engaging with multiple community members/consumers to ensure a diversity of views and experiences. This can be by engaging more than one community member/ consumer in the research project or by tapping into structured community member/ consumer groups or networks e.g. Cancer Voices.
- Avoided using technical language as there may be community members/consumers reviewing the grant application. Anyone should be able to read and understand the aim and design of the research project.
- Identified any frameworks/ policies/ recommendations to support their consumer engagement activities.

### What to include in the community and consumer engagement section of grant applications?

Grant agencies need to know about how community members/consumers have been, or will be involved, in the research project, for example:

- Has the research team had any previous experience with consumer engagement in research?
- How have the consumers' thoughts, ideas and experiences shaped the research question?
- How did they contribute to the development of the research proposal?
- What will be their ongoing involvement if the grant application is successful?

For this last question, headings can be used to highlight the different ways community members/consumers will be involved, for example:

- Consumer advocacy (ex: For this project we will be recruiting consumers from Cancer Voices in our regular team meetings to represent the views and needs of this community.)
- Proposal development and/or initiation (ex: Consumers will be involved in the development of the research question, selection of methods, and/or selection of methods for dissemination of the results.)
- Participant recruitment (ex: Consumers will be present in clinic to recruit potential research participants according to the study's selection criteria. Consumers will describe the study to the participants and ensure the consent form is understood.)
- Ongoing involvement (ex: Consumers will be invited at each team meeting. Attendees may participate in person or via videoconference. An agenda item will be dedicated to consumer input.)
- Information dissemination (ex: Study results will be presented at conference X. The principal researcher will co-present with one of the consumers. // Consumers will distribute study results via their Association.)

## Definitions

There are a range of commonly used terms to describe the general public's involvement in research.

For the purpose of this factsheet, the following definitions have been used.

A **community member** is a member of the public and/or a subgroup with a common interest.

A **consumer** is a community member who has a lived experience of a specific health condition, either personally or as a family member or carer, and has consequently been a consumer of health and medical services.

**Note:** It is important to ask individuals how they prefer to be identified when describing their involvement in your grant application.

## What to include in the budget section of grant applications for community engagement?

Evidence shows that supporting consumer and community engagement with funding leads to more meaningful engagement. Reimbursement and sitting fees ensure that consumers' participation is not out of pocket and acknowledges consumers and community members as providing a complementary expertise to the research team.

Examples of potential budget items include:

- Sitting fees for meetings (e.g. number of community members/consumers involved x hourly rate x estimated number of hours)
- Travel and out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. car parking and public transport tickets)
- Catering (e.g. tea, coffee and food at meetings)
- Training and support (e.g. consumer advocacy training)
- Conference fees (e.g. registration, travel and accommodation)
- Administration (e.g. printing and postage)
- Communications (e.g. website development, promotional brochures and videos)

As a guide for payment amounts, refer to the [SAHMRI Consumer and Community Engagement Policy for Reimbursement and/or Sitting Fees of Advisory Group](#).

Adapted from:

Butler, L. (2019). Writing Cancer Australia Priority Driven Collaborative Research Grants: Experiences and Insights, presentation at Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer, Adelaide.

Health Consumers Alliance of SA (2014), 'A Consumer and Community Engagement Framework for the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, accessed 21/08/2019. [https://www.sahmri.org/m/downloads/20140606\\_Health\\_Consumers\\_in\\_Research\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.sahmri.org/m/downloads/20140606_Health_Consumers_in_Research_Report_FINAL.pdf)

National Health and Medical Research Council (2016), 'Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research', accessed 21/08/2019. <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research>

Reviewed by:

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