

OMB # 0925-0648
Exp., date 6/30/2024

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RCMI Program Retrospective Evaluation Focus Groups Guides

Introduction

My name is ____, and I work for Ripple Effect. We are working with NIMHD to conduct an assessment of the Research Centers in Minority Institutions (RCMI) Program. Over the next few weeks, we will be speaking with, faculty, and staff at RCMI centers, and community members and external experts engaged with RCMI centers. The purpose of this focus group is to capture your perceptions of RCMI outcomes related to minority health and health disparities research, investigators' careers and research portfolios, institutional research capacity, and communities in sustainable research relationships. We are specifically interested in your perspective as a [stakeholder role] with the RCMI program. We know you are very busy, and we appreciate the time you are spending with us to share your expertise.

This focus group should take about 60-90 minutes and your participation is voluntary. Your name will not be attributed to any responses. Instead, responses will be aggregated, and summary reports will be generated.

During this focus group we will focus on the RCMI program since 2012, when it came under the leadership of NIMHD. Please answer the questions based on your experience with RCMI from 2012 to the present. We will not be discussing the RCMI program prior to 2012 in this evaluation.

We would also like to define a few key terms for the focus groups. For this evaluation, "RCMI program" refers to the activities funded under the NIMHD RCMI funding mechanism. "RCMI centers" refers to implementation of the RCMI program at individual grantee institutions. "RCMI investigator" refers to any researcher receiving funding from RCMI in the last five years. "Early-stage investigator" refers to researchers who have completed their terminal research degree or medical residency within the last 10 years.

With your permission, these focus groups will be audio recorded and transcribed to help the analysis so we can be sure to capture the group's answers to each question. When all of the focus groups are complete, responses will be analyzed to inform recommendations for the RCMI program. This is your opportunity to have a voice in that process.

Do you have any questions before we get started? Do we have your permission to record?

RCMI focus group guide common questions for all stakeholders

Background

- 1) Describe your current and any previous role(s) you've had in relation to the RCMI program.
 - a. How long have you been involved?
- 2) Based on your experience, what are the social, cultural, and financial factors that influence RCMI centers' access to resources and researchers?
 - a. Structural racism
 - b. Institutional resources (e.g., funding, laboratory facilities, instrumentation)
 - c. Investigator experience/training (e.g., grant writing, managing large research studies, research time, teaching load)

Career Development and Workforce

- 3) Describe how the RCMI program has enhanced career opportunities for early-stage investigators and other faculty.

Research Outcomes

- 4) Describe the [RCMI program'/your institution's RCMI] most important accomplishments to date in regard to:
 - a. Basic biomedical research
 - b. Behavioral and social research
 - c. Clinical and health services research
 - d. Community-engaged research
 - e. Sources outside of peer-reviewed publications (e.g., community workshop, conference talks, social media, etc.)
- 5) Briefly highlight how minority health and health disparities research has been advanced through [RCMI program/your institution's] research.
 - a. How has [RCMI program/your institution's RCMI] research contributed to reduced health disparities?

Research Infrastructure

- 6) How has the RCMI program supported [institutional/your institution's RCMI] research capacity? (4c) (e.g., number and type of faculty hired/supported, research facilities, instrumentation, etc.)
- 7) What are some areas or opportunities for improving the RCMI program?
- 8) What are some areas or opportunities for improving institutional support for RCMI researchers?

Community Engagement

- 9) Describe how communities have benefited from engagement with the RCMI program.

Closing (Note: This will be the last question after the additional questions below)

- 10) Is there anything else about the RCMI program you would like to share with us, or anything we have missed? (Closing question)

1. Additional questions for RCMI ESI

Collaborations

- 1) How would you describe the quality of your RCMI centers' collaborations with community partners?
 - a. What are the major accomplishments resulting from these collaborations?
 - b. Describe the sustainability of community collaborations.
- 2) How has inclusion in the RCMI program facilitated your collaborations with non-RCMI researchers and institutions?
 - a. Describe any difficulties you have experienced in establishing research collaborations.
 - b. How can the RCMI program improve research collaborations?

Career Development and Workforce

- 3) How have you interacted with the RCMI program (e.g., have you received training or mentoring through the program, were you able to access resources (including funding and equipment) you needed for research, etc.)
- 4) Describe the RCMI program's mentoring and training activities provided at your institution.
 - a. What kind of formal mentorship and training are provided to support researchers?
 - b. What kind of informal mentorship and training are provided to support researchers?
 - c. How can the RCMI program improve mentorship and training experiences?
- 5) Describe how the RCMI pilot project funding benefits early-stage investigators.
 - a. How could the pilot project funding be improved?
 - b. How does the RCMI center support pilot project PIs?
- 6) How does the RCMI program support retention of early-stage investigators?
 - a. How does the RCMI program support retention of investigators from underrepresented backgrounds?

Research Infrastructure

- 7) What role has the RCMI program played in conducting trans-disciplinary research at your institution?
- 8) Describe how your institution balances RCMI faculty's research and teaching responsibilities.
 - a. Describe the types of support your center provides to RCMI investigators.

Research Outcomes

- 9) In what ways have RCMI investigators changed minority health and health disparity-related policy, programs, patient care, or teaching practices?

Community Engagement

- 10) Describe how your center collaborates with community members to disseminate research findings.
 - a. How do researchers at your institution use social media and other types of media to disseminate research findings?
 - b. What are the lessons learned through collaboration between community members and RCMI investigators?

c. To what extent is your institution seen as a thought leader by these communities?

2. Additional questions for RCMI Community Advisory Board/Committee

Collaborations

- 1) Describe collaborations between your institution and community partners.
 - a. How would you describe the quality of those collaborations?
 - b. What are the major accomplishments resulting from these collaborations?
 - c. Describe the sustainability of community collaborations.

Research Outcomes

- 2) Describe the impact the RCMI center has had on community or population health in your area.
- 3) In what ways have RCMI investigators changed minority health and health disparity-related policy, programs, patient care, or teaching practices?

Community Engagement

- 4) Describe the structure, format, and frequency of the CAB meetings?
 - a. What about the CAB meetings could be improved, if anything?
- 5) How does the Community Advisory Board benefit your local RCMI center?
 - a. Are there ways to better engage the CABs?
- 6) Describe how your local RCMI center collaborates with community members to disseminate research findings.
 - a. How do researchers at your local RCMI center use social media and other types of media to disseminate research findings?
 - b. To what extent is your local RCMI center seen as a thought leader by your community?
- 7) How would you describe the community relationships that your RCMI center has built through the community engagement core?
 - a. Describe the reciprocity of research ideas and findings in those relationships.
 - b. Prompt: Please share some examples of that reciprocity from your experience.
- 8) Describe how communities have benefited from engagement with the RCMI program.
 - a. How is community defined by your local RCMI center?

3. Additional questions for RCMI Steering Committee/Advisory Board

Career Development and Workforce

- 1) Describe how the RCMI pilot project funding benefits early-stage investigators.
 - a. How could the pilot project funding be improved?
- 2) Describe the RCMI program's mentoring and training activities provided at the institution you advise.
 - a. What kind of formal mentorship and training are provided to support researchers?
 - b. What kind of informal mentorship and training are provided to support researchers?
 - a. How can the RCMI program improve mentorship and training experiences?
- 2) Please describe the achievements of the RCMI program related to diversifying the biomedical workforce.
 - c. How does the RCMI program support recruitment and retention of investigators?
 - d. How does the RCMI program support recruitment and retention of investigators from underrepresented backgrounds?

Research Infrastructure

- 3) What support does your scientific advisory board provide to the RCMI center you advise?
 - a. What challenges do you face in advising your SAB's RCMI?
 - b. How does the structure of your SAB support or hinder the group's work?
 - c. How could your SAB be improved in the future?
- 4) Describe how the RCMI Center leadership use the reports and recommendations provided by the Steering Committee.
- 5) Briefly describe how RCMI investigators at the institution you advise have developed or adapted research designs or methodologies.
 - a. What additional research resources have been created through the RCMI program (e.g., consulting services, information dissemination models, etc.)?
 - a. What new programs have been developed through RCMI awards (e.g., training community members on research methods or needs assessments)?
- 6) In what ways has the RCMI program award established a sustainable infrastructure at your institution?

Research Outcomes

- 7) In what ways have RCMI investigators changed minority health and health disparity-related policy, programs, patient care, or teaching practices?
 - a. In your view, what scientific impact have the RCMI's had on the minority health and health disparities research community at large?