



Community Conversations about Health Research

Overview

In an effort to include diverse populations in health research, the Integrating Special Populations Committee of the University of New Mexico supported four community conversations in each public health region of the state: **Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast.**

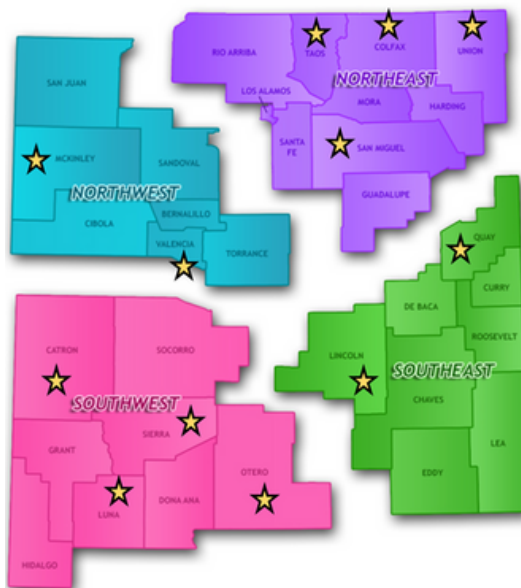
The following main questions were asked:

1. What do communities want to know before agreeing to participate in research?
2. When a study is presented as an opportunity for your community, what things need to be addressed to see if it is a good fit?

Who took part in the conversation

Cynthia Killough, a UNM community liaison, invited a selection of health council members to be part of the community conversations. In total, 31 members from 12 health councils took part in these conversations between March - June 2023 and were given \$80 in merchandise cards as a thank you for their time. Below are the 12 counties (designated with **gold stars** on map) where the health councils are located:

- Catron
- Lincoln
- Luna
- McKinley
- Otero
- Quay
- San Miguel/Mora
- Sierra
- Taos
- Union
- Valencia



What Community Members Shared

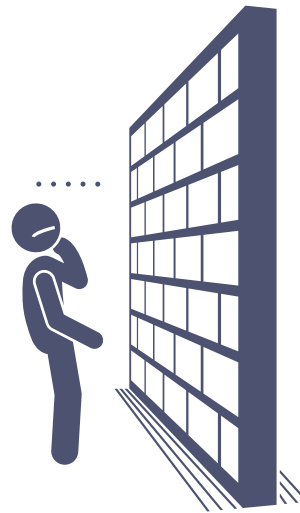
Things that help with research participation:

- When assessing whether a project is a good fit, evaluate the community's interest and capacity to assist and/or be involved in the research
- Provide training and capacity-building for research
- Be transparent about research funding and intentions
- Build familiarity and trust with communities
- Collaborate with community champions and influencers
- Recruit through trusted community members and health councils
- Be available and responsive to community needs
- Bring the results of the study back to the community



Things that get in the way of research participation:

- Geographical barriers
- Internet access limitations
- Capacity issues
- Language barriers
- Time off work for participation
- Restrictions by grant funder
- Misinformation and cynicism in community about research
- Mental health-related barriers to participation e.g. anxiety
- Negative perceptions of research in certain communities
- Trust issues related to politics, the government, and certain topics



Things researchers should *consider*:

- The uniqueness of rural communities
- Cultural aspects of various populations in New Mexico such as Hispanic, Indigenous, Black, Veterans, Elderly, Conservative
- Varying caregiver relationships such as relatives like aunts, grandparents, siblings, and foster parents
- Mental health, medical care, food deserts, and housing issues that could affect research participation