



# Activity 2.1: Developing Research Goals and Questions

## Tools Needed:

Copies of Tool 2.1: Guiding Questions for Developing Research Goals and Questions

## Materials Needed:

Butcher paper  
Markers

## Key Terms:

Research Goals  
Research Question

## Intended Audience:

Community Members

## Time Needed:

1 hour

## Purpose of Activity:

The purpose of this activity is to have participants discuss the goals and purpose of the research project. After you've discussed what the research is trying to accomplish and why your organization is doing it, the participants will come up with research questions that will guide the research process.

## By the End of Activity Participants Will:

- Discuss the social or policy change you want to bring about through your research and campaign work
- Discuss why research is useful or relevant to your organization or campaign
- Determine the overarching questions you want to answer through your research

## Before this Activity Participants Will Need to:

Be introduced to the basics of Participatory Action Research (PAR)  
Decide that PAR is right for your organization

## Part I: What and Why of PAR (20 minutes)

### Facilitator Instructions:

1. Provide a brief summary of your campaign to set the context for the discussion
2. Explain that today we will have a discussion about using participatory action research in our campaign. We are going to try to begin to develop goals and questions that can guide our research.
3. Write "What?" at the top of a piece of butcher paper, and go through the questions below with the participants. Record responses on butcher paper, and keep the paper for later. (If you have 7 or more participants you can break out into small groups).

### What?

- ...is the social or policy change you want to bring about at the end of the day?
- ...are the overarching questions you want to answer through your research?
- ...information do you need to better understand and document the issues you are addressing?
- ...primary question do you want to answer with your research?

4. Once you've answered each "what?" question sufficiently, write "Why?" on a new sheet of butcher paper. Go through each of the questions below with participants. Record responses.

### Why?

- ...is research useful or important for your organization? Will it be used...
- ...internally, to inform and assess needs in the community?
- ...externally, to mobilize and educate community members or elected officials around an issue?



## Part II: Developing Research Goals (20 minutes)

### Facilitator Instructions:

1. Put up a piece of butcher paper that says "Research Goals: What you want to accomplish with your research."
2. Facilitate a discussion based upon your group's answer to the "What" and "Why" questions that leads the group to establish the goals of the research and the research questions.
3. Ask the question: based on the answers to the "What" and "Why" questions, what are our goals for this research? What do we want to accomplish through doing this research?
4. Ask people to popcorn responses and record their responses on butcher paper.
5. Explain that now that we have some research goals, we need to frame those goals as questions in order to conduct research.

## Part III: Developing Research Questions (20 minutes)

### Facilitator Instructions:

1. Frame the activity: explain that part of being a researcher is to ask questions and find answers. To design a research project you need to first figure out what

big questions you want to answer. We will use our list of goals to figure out what questions we want to ask

2. Put up a piece of butcher paper that says: "Research Questions: What big questions do you want to answer with your research." Also write an example of a research question on the butcher paper. For example, if one of our goals is to document rapid development of luxury housing in our neighborhood, our question would be, "What is the current state of housing development in our neighborhood?"
3. Ask the question: based on the answers to the "What" and "Why" questions and the goals we just created, what big questions do we want to answer through our research?
4. Ask people to popcorn responses and record their responses on butcher paper.
5. Explain to the groups that these goals and questions will be the foundation for your research design and implementation.