Central California Area Social Services Consortium

Annual Research Plan

Consistent with its adopted by-laws and Annual Plan priorities, the Central California Area Social Services Consortium (CCASSC) will engage in action oriented research to improve the quality and responsiveness of public human services programs in the Central California region. Research projects will address the CCASSC priorities of child welfare, adult protective services, substance abuse, and/or mental health issues. Where appropriate and applicable, research projects will take into consideration other CCASSC-funded projects in similar or related areas.

All research activities funded by the Consortium will be:

- Based on topical priorities identified by Consortium members;
- Selected through the use of the Research Project Process (Attachment A);
- Initiated upon approval of project-specific description and budget.

Research projects may take the form of Policy Brief, Practice Briefs, or Descriptive Research. Research proposals submitted to CCASSC will, in general, address the significant components of the Essential Research Plan described in Attachment B. Proposals will include a description of the activities/components to be included, based on research type (Attachment C).

In addition to research project elements and activities, each plan will include a proposed budget estimating the full cost of the project, from proposal development to final form and presentation. Budgets will be based on the anticipated cost of resources needed for satisfactory project completion. Costs may include:

- Principal investigator time
- Support personnel time, including research assistant and administrative staff
- Travel costs for project purposes
- Project materials such as office supplies, copying, communications, technology
- Report production expenses.

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CCASSC members/staff identify a problem, issue, or current/emerging trend:

1. Does it have both regional and statewide impact?	**YES**, regional and statewide: CCASSC recommendation to state-level researchers, e.g. CFPIC, CALSWEC, etc.	**CCASSC linkage with state-level resources and/or no further action**
	NO, regional impact only.	Go to **Step 2.**
2. CCASSC defines the type of Information/data needed.	Can the information/data be satisfied by a review of the literature, best practices, models or programs? **Yes**, go to 3a. **No**, Consider 3b.	**If No** to reviews or research, consider alternatives or no further action needed.

3a. Review of Literature/Best Practices/Models/Programs
        Discuss Scope, methodology, practicalities, conceptualization, inclusion & exclusion criteria, cost, product expectations & final report.
	YES: Is external funding Available?
	        YES: Best resource for project completion (county, regional universities, other)?
	
	        NO: CCASSC invest in funding review?
	          YES: Best resource for review(county, regional universities, other)
	
	        NO: no **further action**
		Complete the review/report
		
		If funded, complete the review/report

Final Result	**Yes,** Information/data needs satisfied **NO**	**No further action needed** **Back to Step 2**

3b. Research Needed: CCASSC defines the research question(s)
Discuss Scope, methodology, practicalities, conceptualization, inclusion & exclusion criteria, cost, product expectations & final report.
	YES, Is external funding available?
	        YES: Best resource for research completion (county, regional universities, other)?
	
	        NO: CCASSC invest in funding research?
	        YES: Best resource for research(county, regional universities, other)
	
	        NO: no **further action**
		Complete the research/report
		
		If funded, complete the research/report.

Final Result	**YES,** question answered. **NO,** research still needed.	**No further action.** **Back to Step 2.**

Essentials of the Research Plan[1]

Describe how proposed research will be conducted. Project-specific research plans will include:
A. Research Question
B. Background and Significance
C. Research Design and Methods

The research plan should address the following questions:
*   What is the project intent?
*   Why is the work important?
*   What has already been done?
*   How are you going to do the work?

Research Question

A formal statement of the question to be answered or issue to be clarified. This section clearly and concisely describes what the proposed research is intended to accomplish.
*   Should include specific research objectives.
*   Objectives should be obtainable within the proposed timeframe.
*   Study aims should fit together in an overall framework.
*   Study should be well-focused rather than broad and diffuse.

Background and Significance

States the research problem, including the proposed rationale, current state of knowledge and potential contributions and significance of the research to the field.
*   Critically evaluate existing knowledge, including background literature and relevant data.
*   References should reflect an updated knowledge of the field.
*   Specify existing gaps that the project is intended to fill.
*   Discussion should convey the importance and relevance of the research aims.
*   Highlight potential policy or practice impacts.
*   Highlight why research findings are important beyond the confines of the specific research project (e.g., significance; how research results can be applied).

Research Design and Methods

Describes how the research will be carried out; demonstrates a clear, organized and thoughtful study design. Should provide an overview of the proposed design and conceptual framework.
*   Study goals should relate to proposed study hypotheses.
*   Include details related to specific methodology; explain why the proposed methods are the best to accomplish study goals.
*   Describe any novel concepts, approaches, tools or techniques.
*   Include details of how data will be collected and results analyzed.
*   Consider required statistical techniques.
*   Include proposed work plan and timeline.
*   Consider and discuss potential limitations and alternative approaches to achieve study aims

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[1] Excerpts from *Essentials of the Research Plan*. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD.
http://www.ahrq.gov/fund/esstplan.htm

Research Projects and Activities

Policy Briefs:
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents with lists of tables/figures
- Introduction
- Background/Purpose of Research
- Literature Review
- Identification of Related Policies/Key Legislation
- Presentation of Available Data
- Discussion related to purpose of research
- Implication for Policy/Legislation
- Conclusions/Recommendation
- References

Practice Briefs:
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents with lists of tables/figures
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Identification of related Best Practices Programs/Models
- Presentation of Available Data
- Discussion related to purpose of research
- Implication for Practice
- Conclusions/Recommendation
- References

Descriptive Research:
- Executive Summary
- Table of Contents with lists of tables/figures
- Introduction
- Background (identification of topical areas)
- Demographic/descriptive data
- Results of Analysis
- Limitations of findings
- Discussion of proposed strategies/conceptual frameworks
- Recommendations
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices