Overview of the Research Process Webinar Transcript

Kathryn Colasanti: A little bit of context about today's webinar. This is our second training webinar associated with the Michigan Good Food Charter Shared Measurement Project, and the goals of the shared measurement project are to better align how food systems across Michigan are tracking their progress and tracking the impact of their work and also to better track progress towards the goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter. So we began that project just over a year ago by engaging stakeholders around those ideas, and one of the things we heard back was that there is a desire for overall increased understanding of research and evaluation generally. So to respond to that, we are providing this webinar and a few others to kind of name the foundations. Before moving forward of the Shared Management Project, we had a webinar that provided an overview program evaluation in mid-November, and that's posted to the Center for Regional Food Systems website. So again, this is the second one, which will be an overview of the research, and then in 2016, we plan to provide some webinars more focused on the specific measurement tools and indicators that are priority areas where the Shared Management Project, starting with the new survey tool on healthy food access. So stay tuned for that. That brings me to an introduction of today's speakers. So we'll be hearing first from Ashley Atkinson and Katherine Alaimo, and they have been working together for 15 years, believe it or not, beginning in Flint, and then in Detroit starting in 2003, and their work together has focused on evaluation and research related to fruit and vegetable consumption, social capital, neighborhood satisfaction, and the economics of urban agriculture. Ashley had worked in the field of community guarding, urban drainage, and vacant land reuse for 15 years and served as the director of Urban Agriculture and Open Space Green in Detroit for a decade and now serves as Co-Director of Keep Growing Detroit where they support more than 1400 gardens and farms across Detroit, Hamtramck, and Highland Park, and also want to note that Ashley is a member of our Shared Measurement Advisory Committee.

Next, we'll will be hearing from Katherine Alaimo, and Katherine and Ashley will be going back and forth, I should note, but Catherine is an Associate Professor in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Michigan State University, and her research is aimed at creating safe, healthy, and just community school environments that encourage healthy eating, physical activity, sustainable food systems, and community foods security. Much of her research applies to the community-based participatory research approach that will be talking about today, and she has worked throughout her career with committee-based organizations and community gardeners in Michigan, and then, finally, we'll be hearing from Courtney Pinard, who is a research scientist at the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition, and we've had the opportunity to work with Courtney since starting the Shared Measurement Project. She had led our stakeholder engagement process for that project, and her research focuses on public

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health outcomes, the policies, programs, and practices that impact nutrition and diet, and Courtney has particular interest in rural food access and how regional food systems can strengthen community food security, particularly in more remote and low-income areas. So in today's webinar, we will be covering, oops, first what is research? Why do research in a community setting? Potential risks and pitfalls. And introduction to Community-Based Participatory Research approach, and an overview of data collection and evaluation measures. So again, thank you all for being here. With that, I'll turn it over to Ashley.

Ashley Atkinson: Hi everybody. So first we wanted to start with providing a framework for the difference between what research and evaluation are. So the big picture is that research is contributing to the general body of knowledge, and evaluation is very specific to assessing ongoing or completed projects, programs, and policies, and that's specific to their design implementation and results. So at our organization, Keep Growing Detroit, we do a lot of both research and evaluation, and our entire staff is involved in the process. So they're involved in designing, asking the question, coming up with the design, collecting data, analyzing data, the whole nine yards. We're going to go over that in more detail. So related to research, again, research is, in my mind, the way I look at it, a lot of it is hypothesis testing. So in my work using it as an example, I have a lot of questions related to how different things that we do every day impact each other. So the question is, you know, how does the education and gardening classes that we do impacting the success of gardeners having and sustaining gardens or having productive gardens? So that would be more in the line of research versus program and project evaluation, which helps to both look at the process, examine the process that you're using in program implementation, as well as the outcomes in program implementation. So the process could be something if you're involved in a collaborative, multiple individuals, multiple organizations involved in implementing a certain project, a lot of us are, that you would be examining, if that process of collaboration. So how you're communicating, how you're collecting information, how you're sharing information is either working or not working and how it can be improved. Outcome evaluation is more the outcomes that are the result of whatever project you're implementing. So the number of gardens that are supported or are returning to the program. So we ask ourselves, we do, again, a lot of research and evaluation, and we asked ourselves about what is the benefit? Why is it so important to do research in a community setting, and first and foremost to us is to be accountable to the community that we serve, and it's really important, for example, not only that our organization helps to start gardens but those gardens involved in our work actually return every year, they become stronger. You know, they're more sustainable. That they're actually being successful or getting to the point of being successful and sustainable. Also, to gain new knowledge and insight about our work to help us improve it. So if there's a process, for example, that is less than efficient or not very effective, that it can be identified, pinpointed, and improved. To build the capacity of organizations and people, for our staff, for example, being involved in the process

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of program evaluation or research has been very helpful in developing their skills to kind of examine their work through a critical lens, to take a moment to kind of reflect on what they're doing, what's working, and to, in some cases, deconstruct and reconstruct what they're doing so that it's just more impactful. Also, to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. It's very important for our organization, most likely for yours as well, that we're being very accountable for the, you know, the few dollars that we do have. We do want to make sure that they're being really put in the best places to have the biggest results, and then, definitely, very, very important to influence policy makers and funders, those people that have quite a bit of leverage and power in the community to actually make sure that the policies that support our work or the funds that are necessary for making it happen continue to be put in places where the results are evident and then also to share what we're learning with our communities and other communities. So in our case, we work a lot with other communities from New Orleans, to Baltimore, to Pittsburgh, and because we're able to both document, as well as to kind of share the outcomes of our work. They're a lot more transferable and relevant to those communities than they would be otherwise, but there are definitely some risks and some pitfalls to be mindful of when you're thinking on embarking on a research project or new evaluation project, and I would do these. Highly recommend that you really think about them and you process the following earlier in the process than later. So first is the historical breaches and trust and abuse of power that have been evident in the process of collecting data, doing research, and systemics and doing evaluation. So an example that comes to mind is the Tuskegee Experiment. Many, many, many people in our communities are familiar with this experiment, as well as a million other breaches of trust, and in this particular case, there were a case and control group. Basically, the individuals involved in the study, the researchers knew that they had a communicable disease. They were not told they did, and they were not helped in any way in terms of alleviating the disease, and as importantly, stopping its spread throughout the community that they were in. So, you know, that kind of thing, a lot of people, you know, they are turned off by even the prospect of participating in something like research or evaluation because that historical reference. There's also promotion of white culture and white supremacy, so speaking for my own experience, research is and has been a tool to kind of elevate numbers and statistics above people's stories, and then also, the evidence collected in research about people's experiences, and so a lot of that caring about the evidence, caring about the numbers, it is part of white culture, which, you know, in America we live in a pretty ethnocentric culture, and it's very much dominated by, you know, our white culture, and it has sometimes a very negative impact on the communities that we're serving, and we just should think about the association between research and some of the practices in the foundation of research, and it's helping to further that in our communities, and then lastly, the delegitimization of local knowledge and experience, or the extraction of wealth and knowledge from local communities to, you know, academic communities, which often don't represent the communities that are being researched and examined. There is a lot of knowledge in the communities that we serve, particularly, in my experience, in Detroit, and when we are

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involved in research where the evidence is only important or relevant once a researcher says that it is, and then takes that researcher evidence back to the institution that they're in, it really, it has, or can have the effect of delegitimizing or the local knowledge the people that were really instrumental in creating that knowledge and that experience, it's all of those things should really be considered before embarking on a major research or evaluation project.

Katherine Alaimo: Hi, so one approach that people who are interested in conducting research with communities can take is participatory research or community-based participatory research, and it has processes in mind that can take to the challenges and pitfalls that Ashley just discussed with us, and if you utilize those processes, and are mindful of those potential pitfalls, then the possibility is for elevating the level of research and its ability to do good with the community. So, community-based participatory research is an approach. It's a collaborative approach that enables community residents to actively participate in the research process, and there's different models of participatory research, but the, you know, when you think about the ideal model would be that community residents are participating in the initiation or conception of the research. The design of how and when, and through what means, their research is conducted. Participating in the analysis and interpretation and summarizing those into conclusions and then communicating those results with others, and the goal of this approach is influencing change in community health or social health systems programs and policies, and so what you have is a partnership approach where community members and researchers are actively coming together to combine knowledge and action for social change. Okay, so sometimes people think of CBPR or community-based participatory research as a method, but really what it is is an approach that can utilize any or all research methods to answer research questions. So it's really an orientation and how we approach doing the research, and, the idea, again, is adequately involve all partners in the research process and recognize that when you are working with communities in an equitable manner that the sum is greater than the parts. That more can develop than if you are doing the research on your own. So why CBPR? We have many complicated or wicked health and social problems that are not necessarily going to be well-suited to outside expert research. So that having the local knowledge on the ground and that expertise when asking the right research questions and finding the right approaches can be really beneficial if you're looking to solve a particular problem. As Ashley said, there is a long-standing history of research abuse and mistrust where researchers slip in without consulting the community, do their research, and leave and then report on it without coming back to discuss that research with the community or leaving any legacy. We've also seen oftentimes results in intervention research and that, in some ways makes some sense. That if you're trying to work with a particular community or population then asking them from the get go, you know, "What do you think would work for you?" can be very beneficial before you even get started on your intervention, and increasingly, we have this understanding of this importance of local and cultural context, and also in interest in using research to improve our

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practices or to create best practices, and again, having that local expertise and partnership can be beneficial. So there's values and principles that come with CBPR that are not necessarily traditional when we think about research. It builds on strengths and resources and promotes cohorting, and also promotes capacity building of your community partner so that it's not just, again, creating this knowledge for a university setting, but is building capacity and the ability of community partner is to potentially do their own research or so create their own knowledge, and it seeks a balance between research and action and then disseminates the finding in thoughtful ways that are appropriate for the community, and another value and principle of CBPR, as you can see from the 15-year-long partnership that Ashley and I have had that it involves oftentimes a long-term process and commitment. So this is an over view of the CBPR research process, and you can see on the left of the slide that the first step is engaging stakeholders and forming a CBPR partnership. It's not always possible at the university level to form a partnership at the very beginning of your research project, but the best practice is to form a team as early as possible, so that there can be a shared understanding of each step, and that can help you build forward throughout the research process. The next step is to assess community strengths and dynamics, and this can help you determine which direction you're going to go into, and I'm going to go through each of these in a little bit in more detail in the next slides. Identifying priorities and research questions is critical, and some might feel it's the most important step of the research process, and then designing and connecting the research or evaluation, and Courtney is going to walk us through some of the important steps with that, and then interpreting and disseminating your research, and you can see that the process is circular in that if all is going well, that these steps are all following into a new process for potentially a new research or action project, and finally, in the middle you see sustaining and evaluating your CBPR partnership So taking the time to take stock of your partnership and either formally or informally how things are going throughout the process is very helpful and important. So Ashley's going to start with the first step and talk about who our stakeholder is.

Ashley Atkinson: Okay, so there's some good stakeholders when you're thinking about the design would be participates in a program or those receiving the services being offered. Staffing board, your staffing board, who are on the ground and involved in delivering those programs and services every single day. Other community residents and members, so for example, those that might be eligible for the programs or services, but for some reason are not taking advantage of them or have friends or family involved, may have an interesting perspective partner organization. So people that are associated with or close to the programs and services, local institutions, and extension of partner organizations but could be something like schools, hospitals, et cetera. Policy and decision-makers, and then also funders. So some of the reasons to engage these folks in the design and like Katherine said, as early on as you possibly can, are, you know, pretty easy to come to, but the process and outcomes are

stronger when you include diverse perspectives and experiences. So, and, you know, in the case of the stakeholders we just discussed, if you just include people who are in the programs and in services versus those were eligible but are not taking advantage of them for some reason, you have less of a kind of diverse perspective has to, you know, what's going on there. Also, stakeholders bring valuable insight to the table, oftentimes coming up with, like, and speaking from personal experience, really great ideas that I would've never come to myself. You know, it's the basic premise of, you know, more ideas is better. The inclusion of stakeholders helps to ensure that important issues are not overlooked or, as importantly, swept under the rug. Oftentimes, if you in your gut know that you're skipping a step or that, you know, as inclusive or, you know, any number of things. When you are involving a lot of other people in that process, those things will come to the table and are going to be addressed. Stakeholder participation in analyzing and interpreting findings can be extremely insightful. As a researcher or as a practitioner you think you know what night be going on, but in a lot of cases, there's a lot more going on that you're not aware of, and so it's just a really important moment of reflection to kind of include that perspective, and then stakeholders have access to the communities that you want to be working in, collecting data and involving in the process and a lot of times, those are not only relationships but trust relationships, and so they can go a long way if they trust you, to extend their trust and have other people trust the process and yourselves. This is mine, right? Okay. Ideas to engage stakeholders, I think you have to develop and tend to community relationships. My personal experience is that it's important to me that I live in the community that I work, and that if I ever wanted to work outside of the community where I live, that I have at least a very, very close relationship with multiple organizations or individuals in that community, so that I wasn't just going in blind or parachuting in like Katherine said earlier. Talk to people. Don't start with, "Hey, I have this research question or I want to do this program evaluation." You know, it's talking but mostly it's listening, be there, be present. Have relationships. Talk to people, listen to people. Don't make it all about what your priority is or what your agenda is. Surveys. Surveys are great. They're clean and easy. They can be on paper. They can be electronic. They can be both, but at the end of the day, there's not a lot of back and forth with surveys. Interviews, there's a little bit more back-and-forth. However, they're usually you know, time-limited and you don't often go back to, you know, continuing the conversation once the interview is complete. Focus group is more intense because there's multiple voices and perspectives. They have it in chemistry oftentimes where one thought or idea is building from the next, and you know, they can be a lot more fruitful than say an interview or a survey. Meetings, especially if they're routine and, you know, you're building from one meeting to the next, and then the best practice identified here is perform a research steering committee. We included this slide. I always kept this idea at the back of my mind thinking about research design or designing stakeholder engagement, and this is a ladder of public participation showing basically citizen control at the top of the ladder and manipulation at the bottom of the ladder, bottom rung of the ladder, and to the right side you see degrees of citizen power, degrees of tokenism, and then no power. So in essence,

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when citizens or stakeholders have the most power in making key decisions, very important decisions in what is the research question? How do we collect information? Who benefits from collecting information? How that information will be shared. When they have complete control, then there really is a degree of power there and, you know, you're going to be stewards of those risks we talked about earlier in a more careful way. When there's not that level of control, when the stakeholders are engaged, really are not making any sort of decision, and they're just kind of being informed of the process or kept in the loop, then there is a degree of tokenism, or in the worst case, manipulation, and so we just, are cautioning you to be sensitive and careful about that.

Katherine Alaimo: So now we're going to go through the blue bubble. So the next step is assessing community strengths, stats, and dynamics, and there's many ways to do needs assessments. There's informal ways where your committee has conversations to assess what their priorities are and what it is that they're interested in, and there's more formal ways, and a resource that I really like and wanted to share with you is called the Community Tool Box, and this website has many resources for people who are interested in action research, and so they gave examples of steps like describing the makeup and history of a community to provide a context for your data collection or your current concerns. Thinking about what matters to people in the community when you think about where you're going to be focusing your efforts. Thinking about what matters to stakeholders and as Ashley was talking about. You know, that diverse group of stakeholders, as diverse as you can get the more beneficial is what I found. Describing the evidence indicating whether a particular problem or goal should be a priority issue. So if you've identified something as a priority, why have you identified that as a priority can be helpful for strengthening your case, for example, if you're going to funders, and then thinking about, well, maybe we've identified this is our top priority, but there might be some barriers to addressing that, and maybe we to table that right now because there's something else that we can work on together where we have more resources for, and that's just the reality of, you know, organizations and research too, so thinking about what those barriers and resources are, and then finally, putting all of the pieces together to state your priority issues that you would like to address with your group. So the next steps involve identifying your research questions and working with your partners to choose an appropriate research question is among the most important steps in the research process. So we work at the university level with graduate students very intensely on helping them to frame their research question, because what you design -- what you say with your research question is really the bedrock of where the research is going to go. That you need to make sure your research question is addressing the priority that you have just identified, and that it's exactly matching what you're going to be doing. So your research question should be clear and concise, and it's through your research question that you're going to be able to pick your methods. You methods need to match the questions that you have in mind, and some research is exploratory, where you're

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discovering the lay of the land, but some research has a hypothesis, and so when you are doing research where you feel like you might know where the research might go, it's good to have a hypothesis to assess where you think, what you think you're going to find with the research question, so that when you do the research you can say, "Well, we found what we thought we were going to find or we found something, or we didn't find that." Or sometimes you find something entirely different. So community-based participatory research is an orientation, as I said, but you use traditional research methods to do the research within that orientation, and you're going to use your scientific method to design and conduct your research. So we've already talked about making observations, thinking of interesting questions, and formulating hypotheses and then developing these testable predictions, and what we're going to talk about next is how -- what are different methods to gather data to test these hypotheses that we have or gather data to describe a situation? And so we're going to turn it over to Courtney now. Courtney, are you still with us?

Courtney Pinard: Yep. I'm just going to start my video and unmute myself [inaudible]. So that was a really great background from Katherine and Ashley on how evaluation and data collection can really happen in real communities. So now I'll provide just a quick overview of the different types of data collection methods and when we can use them, the benefits and drawbacks of each, and as Katherine mentioned, these methods can really fit within the overall CBPR approach. So I'll just provide this quick overview, so next slide please. Oop. Can you guys advance the slide? Thanks, okay, so first off, I wanted to differentiate between primary and secondary data. Some of you may already be familiar with this, but secondary data is really data that has already been collected and is typically available already to use. Perhaps, it's often times collected by nationally by government agency, while primary data collection is what we collect ourselves for a specific purpose, and so in a lot of our approaches for both evaluation and more research purposes, we try and maximize the use of secondary data, and in order to answer research questions and help with our evaluation. So this is really because data collection, primary data collection, can be both time-consuming and costly. So anything that's already out there it's great to take advantage of and the Community Commons site was already shown, and that's a great resource for you to gather some of that existing data, and so the benefit of secondary data is that it's readily available and inexpensive, and often times, even free, and some of the drawbacks include you might need a different level of expertise, depending on which resource you're using, in order to analyze and understand and access the data, and so other drawbacks to secondary data is that you're not in the driver seat determining what types of questions are being asked. We're really at the mercy of what's available. So then with primary data collection, we can augment what we found with secondary data and fill any gaps, and in this case we are typically in complete control of it and with, you know, with our partners and our community, of course, but then we need to look at all the -- determine all of the aspects of implementing data collection. So anything from instrument

design to sampling, planning, and caring that out. So those are some of the challenges or expertise that we may need when going out and doing primary data collection, and finally, funding is sometimes a restriction, and depending on what type of data we're talking about and how it will be use, ethical considerations should be brought up. Meaning you may need to go through your institutional IRB, or your institutional review board, in order to have ethics approval. Okay, next slide. Let's see, so really, you kind of have this within primary data collection anything spanning from qualitative to quantitative methods, and the difference between the two is obviously with qualitative, we're diving in much more in-depth and gathering a rich understanding of an experience or a phenomenon, and quantitative is where we can dive in a little more detailed and structured in a systematic way and make generalizations to a population and test a theory and hypothesis, and I like to think of kind of where we are in food systems as a relatively new area of research or evaluation, and that the qualitative piece really is a helpful tool for us when we're getting started in a community in understanding, you know, what the factors are and where we need to be focusing and who the partners are and how we can implement some of these novel approaches, and so, we're kind of at a tipping point with having a lot of rich, qualitative data around food systems work, and then we can move towards that quantitative piece and start implementing more of those in a really thoughtful and meaningful way rather than just diving in with the survey or what have you. So, next slide. And one important note about qualitative methods is that we have to understand ourselves as the researcher is the tool in implementing this. So we're all going to have our own biases and sort of pre-existing notions of things, and that's okay. We just have to acknowledge that when we go out and conduct interviews and interpret them, acknowledge what those are, and, you know, just be open to and you said that you and are very clear, and, you know, just be open to what types of findings might come out of the interviews or focus groups, and you kind of have this intersection between what you have it as a researcher in your mind, what the participants are actually saying, and then the actual phenomenon. So, next slide. And so some quick steps on how to conduct good qualitative studies. As I mentioned, understanding the researcher as the tool and really trying to dive in depth and find something nuanced about the social world, and so we're conducting this in the natural world where sometimes using different approaches can be really structured interview guides are less structured. It could be focus groups, and we're focusing on the context and what's going to emerge from these conversations, and it's really based on our interpretations. So the basic method is to record and potentially transcribe. We don't always transcribe all of our interviews. Sometime just take detailed notes and have that recording to go back to, and then ultimately, try and develop a code system and code themes and categories within that, and so that could be done a number of different ways, but that's kind of the basic overview, and then this can inform, you know, what we do and our interventions or how we want to design further survey tools and what have you. Next slide. So just a run through of what it would take to develop a research question or evaluation question. So a research question is really going to be this clear, concise, and focused question about what you want to be looking at. So this has been, you know, a huge challenge for a lot of

people. I mean, I spent a number of years in university just holding this skill of what's a good research question, and just when you think that you've narrowed it down enough, you need to narrow it down even more. So that's the kind of main strategy there. So the first step is really to identify the topic of interest, and then what do you already know, and so from a research perspective, we always turn to literature. What's the existing evidence? What theories are out there? How can we inform what we know? But in the community setting, this is just as valuable. You know, what is the community saying? What have you experienced? You know, what is the common understanding of this? And so I think the CBPR would be a good way to kind of merge those two aspects, and then narrowing down the focus and adding a specific language to limit ambiguity. So we'll be holding it down. What is the population? What is the idea or constructs that we want to be looking at? So I'll give you a further example on the next slide. So to walk through that in that middle column there, the example, so say we want to look at why there's poor fruit and vegetable consumption in our population. So we have this problem nationally, but we want, you know we're going to maybe be focusing on a specific area, region, neighborhood, low-income, perhaps. So first we would identify what we already know. One of the health behavior theories? What do we know about changing behavior in fruit and vegetable consumption? There might be specific theories that talk about knowledge or self-efficacy with issues like confidence and access issues, and then we want to ask how can we increase consumption and a specific community, and that would be most likely low income and then even further, okay, low income in Michigan. How about what size city? And, you know, what region or what other kinds of definitions, boundaries we can put on that, and then perhaps we're more interested in identifying shopping patterns and behaviors, and the factors that influence those food-related decisions, and so that would kind of lead you to a potential question that would be the important psychosocial factors that influence food shopping, decision-making among low income populations in medium-sized cities in Michigan? So that's detailed and specific enough that you can go out and assess that in some way, and then the last column here is kind of ideas about what types of things you would measure within that? So even within that very specific sentence, what are the types of things that you could go out and assess, and this could be done qualitatively or quantitatively, and could be a marriage of primary and secondary data, as well. Next slide. I don't know there is any more. Let's see. So and, you know, in terms of once we've identified what we want to measure, what are these concepts or constructs that we want to look at, how do we design a survey tool? So this is just kind of a overview, broad, sweeping, sort of tips on what it takes to conduct this type of research. So you would want to look at existing measures that are out there. Where they been tested? The validity and reliability, basically, specific ways of assessing how consistent is this tool in assessing these particular ideas, and how accurate is it? And then you want to consider, you know, if it has been used before, has it been used in the population that you're interested in. So there may be cultural either language differences across different populations, and then you want to potentially modify it, you know, to be more relevant. I think a lot of us do that in our day-to-day work, in terms of how we're using these tools, but I just -- a word of caution that

once you modify it, it sort of takes away how valid and reliable it may have been shown to be in those previous examples. So then you want to kind of go into it with caution, and perhaps tested even further. You can do things like cognitive testing has been really helpful in you sit down with the modified tool and with a participant that's, you know, the target population you're interested in working with and have them kind of go through it and say what their interpretation and understandability, readability of that tool is, because you may say, you know, what's your confidence in eating healthy food? And they may think healthy food is one thing, while you're thinking another so you want to make sure it has the right language in there and those kinds of like pretesting options can help, but we don't always have time or money for that. So the next is just to decide how you're going to sample. So if you're targeting low income people, are you going to focus on a particular farmers market in a neighborhood? Are you going to go door to door in a neighborhood? Are you going to ask participants that are already participating in a program that's may be reaching those low income participants already? So whatever it is, just put some boundaries on it, and then figure out a timeline, and oftentimes, it's a lot longer than what we would anticipate. So always allow for some extra time if possible, and then, you know, moving through the last few steps of entering that data, cleaning it, which really just means looking through and seeing if it's a smaller data set you can just do it visually. You, anything that's outside of the scope of what would be a reasonable response, and making sure that doesn't skew the data in any way, and then, finally, some analyses. So I think I have one more slide, the next slide. Oh, here's a few more tips. So, like I said, reviewing those existing measures. Oftentimes, it's good to pull from the national surveys. So the BRFS, Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, whatever the exact acronym is, but basically, these are things that have been tested nationally. They stand up well in different populations, but also, and added benefit of using those same items is that you can compare your population to other populations, whether it be that national sample or that statewide or county level usually. And so the wording of the questions, like I mentioned with the cognitive testing. We're looking at things like literacy level, understandability, and interpretation, and if you're looking at a survey item with a Likert scale response, which is basically what shown on the screen here. Likert is, you know, usually one through five or one through four, and you know, agreement statements and things like that. You want to not bury more than one question within each response. So that cognitively, the person that's going through it is focused on the thing that's what you're intending, and then response options, we see a lot of community-based work that tends to use a yes/no questions which can provide, you know, a good glimpse at what's going on, but you don't get as much detail, and then when you're left with the data, it kind of doesn't tell you the full story that you want to hear. So that's why a lot of times we prefer the Likert scale, but there is a place and a time for yes/no answers, as well, or you can have different options if you're ranking something. Sometimes you just want to know, you know, one of the top three concerns in this particular issue, and you can have them rank. And then always look at how you will use this data in the end. So before you go and put all the effort in, running out to the community and conducting a survey is what will the scoring look like? How will it look on the end, and how will you interpret

that data? And that will really help you craft, you know, these scripted questions. The next slide. So this is the last slide for me. Just a few resources of where you can find measurement tools that are already out there. It was already mentioned about community comments, and that's a good resource for pulling in secondary data, and there are other tools like that, but these ones on the slide are, you would specify your population, your area of interest, and then it will pull up samples of existing survey tools. So the first one is NCOR. It's the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research. So those tools are going to be mainly relevant to childhood obesity, and then, the GEM database is going to be a little bit more broader but still related to obesity and health, and then there's the food environment measures provided through NCI. So those links, hopefully, you can pull them up later, and if you have any other specific areas, I'm sure there's a way to look up tools out there. These are just a few. So that's it for me. I don't know if we have any more slides or we're going to open it up for questions.

Katherine Alaimo: Just a few more to finish up the process. Okay, so when you're going to the processes that Courtney just explained, you want to make sure that you don't forget about protecting human subjects. So all research with humans should be approved by an institutional review board charged with protecting people against harm, and what do we mean by human subject? We mean a living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains data through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable, private, information. So one of the best ways to avoid some of the pitfalls that Ashley was discussing was -- is to make sure that you're working with an institutional review board that's charged with protecting human subjects to ensure that your procedures are well done, and the city program, I've given you the website has low-cost trading for your organization if you're not already associated with the university. All research universities are going to have an institutional review board that you can participate with. So there's three guiding principles of either of these, and basically, two general rules, which is first do no harm, and second is to maximize possible benefits and minimize possible harms, and when following those rules, you're going to be looking at these rules and respects for persons, [inaudible], and justice. So every person has a right to determine what will happen to them, and so their participation must be voluntary, and that must be spelled out in a consent form that you would have a participant sign that it is their choice whether or not to participate in the research project, and special consideration should be given to potentially vulnerable subjects. Risks should be reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits, and they should also be justly distributed. So whoever is receiving the burdens of the research should also be receiving benefits of the research, and finally, one thing to keep in mind with the kinds of data that you might be collecting or all data that you're collecting on people is to make sure that your protecting confidentiality and thinking about where your data is going to be stored and who has access to that, and the best access is to restrict access to the data only to researchers and staff who completed training, so that they know how to appropriately protect that confidentiality. Having password-protected files or data in locked

cabinets and not storing data on a laptop that can be lost or stolen. So we've collected our data, and the next step is interpreting research findings, and well, analyzing we haven't discussed in much detail, but that analysis and then the interpretation, and in the work that I've done, there's been various levels of state cohort participation in data analysis, basically depending on the resources, and it's primarily the time and resources of the community. Oftentimes, we have we work with students at universities, or we have the resources to do the data analysis, but one thing, so the analysis is being done primarily at the university setting in these types of partnerships. One thing that's extremely important is making sure that before the findings are solidified, that there's a presentation of preliminary findings to team members and that there's iterative feedback between community partners and researchers, so that everyone can participate in that interpretation, and I just have one example from research that Ashley and I did in Flint where we did a community survey and asked people if they participated in a community garden and also had several constructs about crime and fear of crime, and we also asked people if they participated in a block club, and one of the findings that we found was that people who participate in community gardens were less likely to be fearful in their neighborhood of crime in their neighborhood, but non-gardeners, people who participated in block clubs, were not less likely to be fearful of crime in the neighborhoods, and this was curious to me because in some cases the neighborhoods where we were working, people participated more in block club than they did in community gardens, and I would've thought that the participation and getting to know their neighbors which were constructs we found through our qualitative work, would be associated then with reducing the fear of crime. So we took all of those findings back to our team, to our community partners, and we said, "You know, this is this curious finding. What do you think about this?" And they said back to us, "Oh, this totally makes sense to us because when we go to the block club meetings, we hear about, you know, this neighbor got broken into or the police come and give presentations about how we can secure our houses and our fear raises when we go to those block club meetings, but while we're out in the gardens, we're more relaxed and were socializing with our neighbors in this beautiful setting, and we feel more peaceful and calm in that, and we're getting to know more people in the neighborhood than would just come to a block club meeting, and that lowers our fear." So we were able to see that this finding actually made sense to the community through that participation. So I like to use that example as one benefit amongst all the other benefits that we've talked to in terms of equitable participation and fairness and justice, but also, it just makes the research findings that much more valuable and meaningful when you have that kind of participation.

Ashley Atkinson: So then there's disseminating the research findings, and so there are many, many actions and opportunities to disseminate whatever you find. Researchers are very concerned. You'll hear scholarly articles and journal articles over and over and over again, and those are immensely important tools to get information out to the academic world to pique

interest in studying something further, to gain credibility in that setting. There's also politicians and decision-makers who, I think it's weird that they don't understand that gardening increases consumption and access to fruits and vegetables, but, you know, that isn't an assumption everyone has, and there needs to be evidence, and that evidence needs to be shared in a compelling way to decision makers at all levels, so that there are additional resources in our communities and policies that facilitate the things that we know work in our communities. There's also things like newsletters, the media, one time, after we finished a storytelling project and book in Flint, we actually took the show on the road and members of the story time committee flew to JFK and got in a limo and went to the American Community Gardening Association to present the findings at a national conference they were very excited to be a part of, and then also, there's examples like this. One of our most current projects, a story-sharing project where the folks that were interviewed and involved in the work were not only able to read and edit the stories that we would like to share with folks. They were able to decide when they're shared, how they're shared. We offered a professional photographer so that we made sure that the images that were part of sharing their stories were really exciting to them, and I think it's working because this is one of the first stories that has been published, Rufino Vargas's story. Rufino has shared this on Facebook and a number of other outlets, and it's gotten like hundreds and hundreds of positive likes and posts on his Facebook page. So he's really excited about being part of the project, and I feel like that's, you know, an example of when something is working.

Katherine Alaimo: So we're going to do this slide together, and just seeing that story is one of the benefits of being a researcher, to work with community partners because Rufino and I did that interview in March of this year, and so finally I like seeing that whole thing come together, and I didn't know about those like likes and Facebook posts until Ashley just said that so, you know, it's exciting to see the results of your work in that way. So we wanted to end with some lessons from long-standing partnerships and [inaudible]. So we're sharing this slide. So one of the things that has been really helpful is flexibility. When I first moved to Michigan and wanted to work with community gardeners and that Ashley and the group that was working in Flint, and I came in as a nutrition and health researcher and wanted to focus on the benefits of community gardens for health and nutrition, but it turned out that the gardens had been funded through a Violence Prevention Collaborative, and the gardeners were actually interested in neighborhood dynamics, neighborhood development, social capital, violence prevention, crime, et cetera, and they really were not focused on health and nutrition, and so as a researcher I had to be flexible and learn a new literature, and luckily, at that time in my job to do that, and what I found is that flexibility really pays off because it any partnership or any relationship that you have, when you're able to follow the lead of your partner, then at other times, they're able to follow your lead, and so, then going into the next thing, patience and timing, so I maintained my interest in gardening and health and nutrition, and when Ashley

moved to Detroit, I remember getting a phone call from her saying, "You know, we're really interested in gardening and nutrition and health, and would you like to work on a project with us about that?" and so having that patience and understanding that there's a time for everything.

Ashley Atkinson: You know, all things come in good time is helpful. So those of you out there that know me know that sometimes I have issues trusting folks right off the bat, and a lot of that is because of, you know, previous negative experiences, particularly with researchers and folks doing academic work who kind of enter a situation in a position assuming a lot and definitely not being used to being asked questions about who benefits from the work? How will the work be shared? How will it be participatory? And so, over the years, having this long-term research relationship, you know, we've developed trusted relationships that allow for that tension and difficult conversations at times, so that everything can really be laid on the table in a way that, you know, you trust that the other person has good intentions, and that you're not needlessly being -- if you feel like you're being put through the ringer, there's a reason behind it, and the intent is just to kind of make that you're putting everything out there and being careful with the trusted relationships that you have on both ends in the community in the research setting.

Katherine Alaimo: Were you going to talk about curiosity?

Ashley Atkinson: Oh, I was. Oh, curiosity and continuous improvement. So I don't know, for those of you practitioners out there who have been doing this work for a long time, you can kind of get lost in the weeds sometimes, and I think one of the probably the most important benefits of our relationship is that it's allowed me this kind of long view of the work. We've always been careful to document what we're going to evaluate the effectiveness, to change and to, like I said earlier, deconstruct something that's not quite working, to reconstruct it in a way that works better, and I don't know if I would've had the stamina to kind of stick with it or to be excited, you know, in the same way that I am about seeing the -- what's now evident systems or structural change that I'm seeing and appreciating in our work, versus if I wasn't always in engaged in evaluation continuous learning, I don't know that I would be really striving for some of the kind of bigger, interconnected, more complicated things that we're striving for.

Katherine Alaimo: And then lastly, sharing resources. So one of the beauties of having these kind of partnerships is we each have different strengths. So we're able to combine those strengths for a larger whole. For example, Ashley and I are at least very open about looking at sharing the budgets for the grants that we're working on and making sure that everyone is getting what they need in order to accomplish a particular project, and were also really generous with time. So sharing potentially, I have students come to me all the time looking for volunteer or research experience, and so sharing students with Keep Growing Detroit is just

one example of an organization that students have been able to participate with, and then, you know, with all of the access that we have been to the work that's going on in Detroit through our partnerships to make the research better. So those are lessons.

Kathryn Colasanti: Awesome, thank you so much, Ashley, Katherine, Courtney. That's a really great overview, a lot of insights and examples from your experience. So at this point, I would like to open it up for questions for any and all of our speakers. Just give us a minute as we moderate this. So first how do you access the knowledge or how much training is involved to ensure community resident stakeholders understand CBPR before conducting the research?

Ashley Atkinson: Can you do that one?

Katherine Alaimo: So it varies. So how do you access the knowledge or how much training's involved?

Kathryn Colasanti: Say training maybe for the residents?

Katherine Alaimo: For the communities --

So it varies. So we have community team right now with Keep Growing Detroit, and so as part of that team, we needed to develop the research questions and develop the research protocol, and so at the first meetings, I needed to explain the whole process to people. So we had some training about that so that they could understand, you know, where we're starting and where we're going with the research, and because Ashley and I worked together so long, we did that together. It was not something that, you know, I came in as a researcher to do, but we were able to do that training together, and then what we were working on was interviewing gardeners and farmers, and so we collectively decided that some of the steering committee members wanted to do those interviews, and so then I had a training for them on how to do interviews, and we did practice interviews. So the training is kind of based on the needs of the particular project, and it gets incorporated into the process.

Kathryn Colasanti: So we also had a question about is there ever a point where they have too many stakeholders, and is there a point where you'd want to cut off participation?

Katherine Alaimo: Do you want to? I can, I can speak to that.

Ashley Atkinson: Yeah, I can follow up.

Katherine Alaimo: Would you can't to start?

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Ashley Atkinson: You start.

Katherine Alaimo: Okay, so you really have to be thinking about your project specifically, and I've been in projects where there was only one partner, and I've been in projects where there were like 30 different partners, and you really have to be thinking about the scope of what it is that you want to accomplish and also how many partners are needed at the table to accomplish what it is that you would like to accomplish. So it varies considerably. What I like to think about participatory research, and it's an approach versus ideal out there where you have participation by a large team of all the stakeholders in every step of the process, but that's not always a reality in terms of your resources to do, to undertake the process, and so just being thoughtful about what your resources are, and what the project is, and I hope I'm being helpful here, but it's really very specific and I have not ever been in a project personally where there were too many partners. So I -- so again, sometimes you need that many partners and, such as personally, I can imagine that might happen, but personally, that has not happened. Usually, more people participating makes the project more relevant to the community.

Ashley Atkinson: And I'll just chime in and say I think it's a blessing any time anyone wants to participate. I think it's our responsibility to try to figure out, you know, what's at the root of the desire to participate, and figure out a way to make sure that there's opportunities for everybody to participate. So, you know, we went through various levels of participation from being on the steering committee to participating in a focus group or a survey. I agree with Katherine. I find it hard to believe that there's not one or multiple ways to kind of work people who have expressed interest in participating in over time. I would also kind of refer us back to that latter, and I think folks that are struggling to figure out how to be inclusive of people who would like to participate, maybe are working with a time frame or resources, limitations, true, that are not allowing for the community to be the stakeholders that have at least as much decision making power if not more decision-making power than the researchers, or the, you know, the academics involved. So I would say that I would take some time and think about how much flexibility you can really build into something to make opportunities to be inclusive.

Katherine Alaimo: Yeah, I just want to follow-up that participatory research is time-consuming. It's more time consuming than traditional research, and so you want to make sure that you have the time and the resources to do it before you get started with it. So that, you know, knowing what you limitations are essentially the same.

Kathryn Colasanti: So you have a question about have you found the key funders promote any specific agenda to impact CBPR projects or --

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Katherine Alaimo: Any safeguards, potential political funder-intensive issues?

Kathryn Colasanti: Yeah.

Katherine Alaimo: Do you want to take that? It's a challenging --

Kathryn Colasanti: First of all, are there any funders on this webinar?

Ashley Atkinson: Okay, it would go back to one of those pitfalls we talked about earlier, just kind of the culture we're seeped in. I think evaluation is something that funders talk about regularly, and revere. I don't think that's a bad thing, but I, again, think that there are some cultural norms there are rooted in white culture that do not make room for diverse perspectives, and so I think that there is a change in some places and in some foundations to dig into that a little bit deeper, unpack it, be more flexible. I didn't share earlier, 1% of program evaluators, you know, the folks that are funding a lot of times through foundation dollars, you know, to do the evaluation of this work, less than 1% I just learned were people of color. So you know, I think unless we as a community really start to be a little bit more open-minded about what research and evaluation is necessary? When is it necessary? What does it look like? Who is doing it? Who benefits? Then, you know, we'll get more of the same, but I do think there's an openness. In my experience, there is more of an openness now in the nonprofit and philanthropic community, too, to seek the consideration.

Katherine Alaimo: Yeah, I agree with that more openness [inaudible] and, yes, more and more, the funders weigh in and say that they want to see community participation. I was just talking to my grant last week. They want to see community participation up front, and more and more, you'll see that they might offer a planning grant, so that gives you the space to work with your partners to come up with your plan prior to -- you know, because the traditional funding mechanism doesn't really work well for a CBPR because by the time, you know, you have to do all of this work up front. That might be costly to just sketch you the place where you've identified your priorities and have your research question, but funding comes only when you have that research question. So these planning grants are very helpful. Does Courtney -- did you have some things to add?

Kathryn Colasanti: She's on mute.

Courtney Pinard: No, those responses were pretty comprehensive. I agree with the funding response issue, and needing the extra time for CBPR, because I've never personally been able to implement that.

Kathryn Colasanti: Okay, [inaudible] time. So this is our last question here. Why do you think

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that [inaudible] influence in various disclosure statements [inaudible] concerns?

Katherine Alaimo: I'm not sure I understand. That complicate interest is serious concern when addressing --

Courtney Pinard: Did they mean consent forms?

Kathryn Colasanti: Could whoever did that question clarify?

Katherine Alaimo: Does that mean what people would be resistant to signing consent forms? Is that -- did we get a yes? Is what that they --

Kathryn Colasanti: Yeah.

Katherine Alaimo: Yes, okay, so I think that you need to frame your research study appropriately, and again, working with security partners to do that. You know, I've participated in larger projects where the work was not done. That, like, the background work was not done to make sure that the participants that we would be working with would fully understand the importance of the research and why it might be beneficial to them, in which case you're going to get a much lower rate of participation than you would otherwise. So I think that, as Ashley was saying, there really are many communities in the United States, and then, of course, when you're thinking internationally maybe even more so where people are skeptical of researchers because they haven't necessarily had good experiences, and they might not see the benefit of participating for that, and so doing that groundwork early on. Actually, I have this great example with this. You know, this was a long time ago. We wanted to do a survey of gardeners, and so that we found phone numbers matched of people that lived in the neighborhoods of the gardeners so that we would call. Ashley, do you remember this? So we called the gardeners who were participating in the program, and then we called neighbors to ask them the same research survey to see if they would participate, you know, to be able to compare the two. People who are gardeners in the same neighborhood as people who are not gardeners, and we got the large zero- percent response rate of these cold calls, and we got like a 95% response rate of the gardeners, because we just needed to say, "We're working with this organization that they were participating in, and would you like to participate in the survey?" And then when we said the same thing to people who would never heard of the organization and were not participating. "We're working with this organization. Would you like to participate in this survey?" They said no. So we had to find a different method, which we were able to find a different method to find comparisons and carry out the research, but people were skeptical, I think, in certain communities, and in some communities they're not. You know, so it really varies.

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Ashley Atkinson: Yeah, and I'll just add quickly that the language in the consent form can be really intimidating and it seems very legal and just official, and so walking the person through that, so having that groundwork and relationship ahead of time but then when you're consenting with someone, you're explaining, "Okay, this is the highlight. This is what this section means, and this is why we have to status this way," or what have you, so that they're comfortable with signing it too.

Katherine Alaimo: Right and working with your IRB to -- and I've gone back and forth and back and forth [inaudible] many times. Like, people aren't going to understand this. Well, you need to have this in there, you know, back and forest where you finally can get it right.

Ashley Atkinson: And then taking that back, so the committee basically reviews the consent to suggests changes to, you know, make it clear and, you know, more readable, and address all the thing that they would be, because they're peers, be concerned about in a consent form, and then Katherine will have to take if back to the IRB, and they have a certain thing that they're looking -- so then back to the committee, and eventually, we come up with a tool that the committee feels is a strong consent form, and so we'll pass IRB.

Katherine Alaimo: Right. So it sometimes is challenging to work with the IRB, but then my flipside is I thank goodness that we have them, right? Because we do need some people overseeing community research to make sure appropriate steps are being followed.

Kathryn Colasanti: All right, okay, well, we end it there. We're a little over time, but that's because our presenters had so much great information to share with you and you all asked some intelligent, great questions to round out our discussion here. So thank you again for joining us today, and we'll, again, make the recording and slides available. We'll send that out once they are posted, and have a great weekend everyone.

Katherine Alaimo: Thanks, bye everyone.

Ashley Atkinson: Bye.

Courtney Pinard: Bye.