



Implementing an Effective Community-Based Advisory Board (CAB) at New Haven Farms

Akshar Patel¹, Kendra Hanlon¹, Qingying Luo¹, Sheridan Finnie¹, Debbie Humphries¹, PhD, MPH, Marcella Nunez-Smith², MD, MHS, Laura Hansen, MPH³

¹Yale School of Public Health; ²Yale School of Medicine; ³New Haven Farms

Background

New Haven has the second highest poverty and food insecurity rate in Connecticut. New Haven Farms (NHF) has been operating in the New Haven area since 2012, with a mission of using health promotion and community development programs to combat obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases. NHF hopes to re-establish a community advisory board (CAB) to integrate community members into the organization to inform program development and strategy.



Objectives

1. Describe best practices for building an effective CAB within a community-based nonprofit organization
2. Make relevant recommendations for restructuring the CAB
3. Make recommendations for using community based best practices within a nonprofit.



Methods

- Perform review of academic and grey literature on community-based participatory research (CBPR).
- Conduct qualitative interviews with NHF staff and board members, current or past CAB members.
- Analyze qualitative data using grounded theory approach to determine major themes and synthesize conclusions and recommendations.



Recommendations

- Select CAB members from pool of previous program participants and relevant community leaders
- Develop clear CAB guidelines and expectations including term limits and meeting schedule.
- Build CAB structure to reflect:
 - One demographically representative CAB per neighborhood [OR]
 - One CAB with representatives from all neighborhoods [OR]
 - Integrate CAB with executive board (EB) so that EB consists of 50% community members



Key Findings: Key Informant Interview Themes

<i>Themes</i>	Identified Challenges & Barriers to Community Engagement	How to Define a CAB?	Strategies Towards Effective Community Engagement
<i>Code 1</i>	History & Mission of NHF	Qualities of CAB Members	Community Outreach
<i>Code 2</i>	Cultural Differences & Challenges	Defining Recruitment of CAB	NHF Championing
<i>Code 3</i>	Barriers to Entry	Roles & Duties of CAB	Opening up Communication
<i>Code 4</i>	CAB as a non-priority	Structure of CAB	Expansion to New Sites

Illustrative Quotes

History & Mission:

“I mean the community development is part of our mission, and in terms of getting really around this issue about public health issues and health food through agriculture. That is our work. In order to be true to that mission, we need to have voice of our community we are working with and lead our programmatic decisions. So to have the CAB is to put our action to say what we are.”

Community Outreach

“The community advisory board has to be comprised of the people that are in our programs and they need to be telling us what the community needs. We can't tell them how our programs should run; they need to tell us about it. They're the ones that need to tell us - what we can do to increase food security in their neighborhoods. And also they need to be telling us what we can do to increase the health of the neighborhood. And the community. Health in the community itself. So everything has to really pick up from there.”

Key Findings: CBPR Literature Review

The key to developing a successful CAB for NHF will depend on developing effective strategies to engage community members through CBPR and, most importantly, developing trust in order to sustain the relationships formed between community members and NHF.

Acknowledgements:

Russell Moore, Laura Hansen, Liz Marsh, Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD, MHS, Debbie Humphries, Ph.D., MPH, Sheridan Finnie

Resources:

- 1) CDC DPP Program: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/index.html>
- 2) CDC Quick Facts about New Haven County: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/newhavencountyconnecticut/PS/T045216>
- 3) New Haven Farms' Website: <https://www.newhavenfarms.org>
- 4) Corbin, J., Strauss, A. Basics of qualitative research; 2008.