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Detroit Urban Research Center (Detroit URC) Overview

The Detroit URC is an interdisciplinary, community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnership that equitably engages community-based organizations, health service institutions and academia to create research, programs and policies to improve health equity in Detroit and beyond.

For over 28 years, the Detroit URC and affiliated partnerships, building upon community resources and strengths, have enhanced understanding of the relationship between the social and physical environmental determinants of health, and translated the knowledge gained into public health interventions and policies that have resulted in improved health status and reduced health inequities.

CBPR projects have focused on a range of health issues and what contributes to them, including, asthma, heart disease, diabetes, air pollution, violence, access to health insurance, fresh food, and physical activity. The work of the Detroit URC and affiliated partnerships has made substantial contributions in a number of key areas, including: interdisciplinary and action-oriented research; diversity, equity and inclusion; prevention and alleviation of poverty; and community engagement and dissemination – all with a focus on, and in partnership with, community and health practice entities in Detroit.



The Detroit URC aims to:

- **Foster and support equitable CBPR partnerships** aimed at addressing systemic inequities and achieving health equity;
- **Build capacity of academic, community and health and human service entities to conduct and sustain CBPR** as an anti-oppressive approach to research;
- **Disseminate and translate research findings** to promote policy change; and
- **Enhance capacity to engage in policy change** strategies and processes.

See information about Programs & Resources on the next page

Learn more at DetroitURC.org

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Beth Damm, Detroit URC Center Manager at damm@umich.edu



Detroit URC Programs & Resources

The Community-Academic Research Network (CAR-Net)

The CAR-Net includes community-based organizations, health practice agencies and academic researchers interested in conducting and disseminating collaborative research in Detroit.

It facilitates information sharing and expands communications about research interests and opportunities through an online database. CAR-Net members have a profile on the Detroit URC



website. They also receive information about potential partners, funding opportunities, research-related tools, and mentoring and technical assistance aimed at building capacity to conduct collaborative research.

Collaborative Research Support

For the past 15 years, the Detroit URC has facilitated collaborative research through an annual Small Planning Grant program (approximately \$5,000 per grant). In collaboration with the School of Social Work, Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research, Poverty Solutions, the School for the Environment and Sustainability, and the W.T. Grant Foundation, the Detroit URC administers the Small Planning Grant program to help foster new community-academic research partnerships and collaborative research efforts in Detroit. As part of the program, the Detroit URC provides grant recipients with valuable capacity building support and mentoring. Over 3.5 million dollars of additional funding have been acquired by small planning grant recipients.

Capacity Building for Policy Advocacy

The Detroit URC provides training workshops, technical assistance, and ongoing support to adult and youth community groups to enhance the capacity of Detroit residents and beyond to conduct effective policy advocacy efforts. The Detroit URC trainings aim to build and support policy campaigns that address issues identified by the communities involved and establish linkages with and mobilize groups, organizations, community members and policy makers to work in partnership to achieve policy change. Issues that have been addressed through these policy efforts include: neighborhood blight, land use, academic achievement, air quality, and safety in and around schools.

CBPR Capacity Building

The Detroit URC develops and conducts interactive CBPR workshops and an online training course aimed at building capacity within communities and institutions (e.g., academic, health departments, health systems, community-based organizations). The Center also provides technical assistance to new and emerging CBPR partnerships related to developing, maintaining, and sustaining partnerships. For more than ten years, university researchers and Detroit-based partners co-taught a week-long short course entitled, "Methods in Community-Based Participatory Research for Health" as part of the Summer Session in Epidemiology at the University of Michigan. The online course can be accessed through <https://www.mittrainingcenter.org/>. The course is offered for free or paid if you want to receive CE credit.

Advancing Research In CBPR

As an extension of its CBPR capacity-building efforts, the Detroit URC has conducted a six-year, \$2.8 million study called Measurement Approaches to Partnership Success (MAPS): An Innovative Tool for Assessing Long-Standing CBPR Partnerships. Funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR) as part of its "Advancing Science, Improving Lives" Strategic Plan, the MAPS project has developed a clear definition of outcomes and success in long-standing CBPR partnerships, a specific set of factors that contribute to them, and a validated tool for measuring these factors. Others across the U.S. and beyond are able to use this tool and feedback guidelines to assess and strengthen their own partnership efforts to achieve health equity.

CBPR Partnership Academy

The CBPR Partnership Academy is a year-long program designed to enhance participants' knowledge and skills in CBPR, so they may apply this collaborative research approach to address racial and ethnic inequities in health in their communities.

Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Academy has included: a week-long intensive course taught by both U-M academic researchers and Detroit

community partners; one year of structured learning opportunities; and access to ongoing networking and mentorship.

Throughout the year, the newly formed partnerships work together to strengthen their partnerships and develop and implement a joint CBPR project focused on improving the health and well-being of the communities Involved.

