

Technical Assistance for Shakespeare in American Communities/Juvenile Justice Program

DOS AND DON'TS OF RESEARCH

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Examples of Research and Data Collection

- SiAC/JJ subgrantees may be interested in performing their own research in areas such as:
 - Youth perceptions of the programming and its benefits
 - Youth or teaching artist feedback on areas for improvement in programming
 - Program impacts on youth behaviors and attitudes
 - Whether youth find virtual programming to be as effective as in-person
- These are just examples; subgrantees may have other ideas for their own research.



Organizations proposing primary data collection as part of their proposed project and budget are encouraged to review the [National Endowment for the Arts' Responsible Conduct of Research](#). If your project activities include primary data collection, it will require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. If your organization is selected for this award, you will be required to submit a confirmation letter from an IRB regarding the current status of your submission.

[Source](#)

Do

- Determine what your objectives/ research questions are
- Obtain ethics training for human subjects research
- Consult with an Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Develop an IRB clearance package
- Obtain a data-sharing agreement with your partnering juvenile justice institution, if applicable

Don't

- Begin data collection before determining whether you need IRB approval, or before the approval process is complete
- Begin data collection before you have tested and revised your instruments
- Develop data collection instruments before determining your objectives and your research questions/ measures
- Design data collection that is overly time-consuming for research subjects

Data collection activities conducted under an award are the sole responsibility of the recipient organization. Arts Midwest's support of the project does not constitute approval of those data collection procedures. Accordingly, data collected from respondents/participants will be conducted by the awardee or at the awardee's direction, and any Arts Midwest-funded researchers collecting data from respondents/participants may not represent to those subjects that such data are being collected on behalf of Arts Midwest.

 Determine Objectives

- Before doing anything else, determine what the objective of your data collection is. Some example objectives may include:
 - Learn whether students liked the programming
 - Identify areas teaching artists can improve
 - Understand the impact of the program on student behaviors
- If you are interested in more formal research, it is also important to specify clear research questions that you wish to answer.
- With your objectives and research questions spelled out, it is much easier to decide who or what to collect data from, what type of information to collect, when and how often to collect data, and how to analyze and report what you collect.

Obtain Ethics Training

- Although some informal types of data collection can be done without any ethics training or IRB clearance, it is best to obtain training to ensure you understand how to ethically collect data from human subjects.
- This is especially important for SiAC/JJ awardees because you work with a vulnerable population: justice-involved youth.
- There are important ethical considerations when collecting data from youth and especially youth in the justice system. It is important youth do not feel coerced to participate in data collection and to ensure that any potential risks or negative impacts of participation in data collection are mitigated as much as possible.
- If you think you may wish to collect data from human subjects at some point, obtain ethics training. Certificates typically last for several years.



Consult with an IRB

- After you have determined the objectives of your data collection, reach out to an IRB to explain your plan. They can help you determine whether clearance is required, and if so what type (expedited or full).
- Common things that will trigger the need for IRB clearance include:
 - Research using grant funding
 - Research that requires participants to provide sensitive or confidential information
 - Research that takes place within schools, institutions (such as prisons), or with minors
 - Your partnering juvenile justice institution may have a preferred IRB they work with.
- The state department of criminal justice may also have its own policies about research and data collection regarding individuals in the justice system. Be sure to consult with them about their policies and requirements.
- Most universities will have an IRB you can work with. There are also commercial IRBs that are typically more expensive, but can be more responsive.



Develop an IRB Clearance Package, Part 2

- Common elements of an IRB Clearance Package include:
 - The purpose of the proposed data collection, including any research questions or hypotheses you may have
 - A clear plan and timeline for how you will collect the data
 - A description of the subjects you will collect data from
 - A clear rationale for why you will select the subjects you will collect data from (sometimes called a sampling plan)
 - A description of the benefits of the data collection/research to the subjects you are collecting data from and more general benefits
 - A description of any risks of participation in the data collection and how you will mitigate those
 - The process you will follow to obtain informed consent (if collecting data from youth, parental/legal guardian consent required plus assent to participate from the youth required)
 - A description of how you will protect the data you collect and maintain confidentiality of all subjects



Develop an IRB Clearance Package, Part 3

- In addition to the clearance package itself, you will also need to develop supplemental materials, including:
 - All instruments you will use to collect data (e.g., surveys, interview guides, observation protocols, etc.)
 - All consent forms that you will use
 - All communication language that you will use for recruitment and data collection
 - Certificates for all research team members demonstrating ethics training for human subjects research

- Determine what research methods might best help you address your objectives and answer your questions, for example:
 - Observation of arts activities
 - Survey
 - Interviews
 - Focus groups
- Consider what types of analysis you will do when your data has been collected, for example:
 - Descriptive statistics
 - Thematic analysis
 - Trend analysis
- Ensure you have a secure, effective, organized way to store and access your collected data.

- Develop a “cross-walk” between your objectives/questions, research methods, and analysis methods.
 - The cross-walk should link each objective/question to at least one research method and analysis method.
- Try out your data collection instruments before you use them to conduct research
 - Pilot test any questions with possible research subjects to ensure they make sense.
 - Consult with IRB to determine if clearance is required for the pilot test.
- NOTE: Once you obtain IRB clearance you can't change your data collection instruments unless you resubmit them to the IRB for review. If you do that, you must stop all data collection until you have clearance to continue with the revised instruments.

 Obtain a Data-Sharing Agreement

- If you wish to collect data from justice-involved youth or from a juvenile justice institution, the institution may require a data-sharing agreement.
- A data-sharing agreement is a formal contract between multiple parties that clearly indicates data can be shared, what type(s) of data are sharable, how the data will be used, and how the data will be protected.
- Typically, data-sharing agreements serve two purposes:
 1. Protect the agency providing the data and ensure the data will not be misused.
 2. Prevent miscommunication by making certain any questions about data use are discussed up front.

Additional Resources

- Dos and Don'ts of Research
 - [GRANTS FOR ARTS PROJECTS: Responsible Conduct of Performance Measurement, Program Evaluation, and Research | National Endowment for the Arts](#)
- Guidance on IRB Clearance
 - [US Department of Human Services Human Subject Regulations Decision Charts](#)
- Ethics Training for Human Subjects Research
 - HHS' Human Research Protection Foundational Training: <https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/education-and-outreach/online-education/human-research-protection-training/human-research-protection-foundational-training/index.html>
 - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI): <https://about.citiprogram.org/>
- Registered IRBs
 - [Office for Human Research Protections Database \(nih.gov\)](#)
- Sample Data Sharing Agreement
 - [From County DOJ to Local Public Health Department, for booking data.pdf | Powered by Box](#)

