Internal Research and Review Committee (IRRC)
Research Proposal Application Process

Introduction

Persons wishing to conduct research in Hennepin County's Health Human Services Department must make their request in writing. This includes persons employed by the Hennepin County.

"Research" is understood to include all studies of programs or services in which employees, clients, and access to data records, and other Human Services and Public Health (HSPH) facilities are used for the purpose of securing information about HSPH programs or services.

The research must:

a) Be approved by the IRRC

b) Be approved by the researcher's organization and/or institution.

c) Assure that the results of the study are shared with the appropriate HSPH personnel and participants upon request.

Research request forms to conduct research in HSPH are attached and may be downloaded or obtained from the Hennepin County website.

The request will be reviewed, and a written response will be sent to the principal investigator and Co- Sponsor within 4-6 weeks

All applications must be received by the IRRC before the 15th of the month prior to the month in which you wish your application to be reviewed. For example, to be reviewed in November, your application must be received by the IRRC by October 15.

Requests to conduct research must be co-sponsored by HSPH administrator*. The co-sponsor MUST: ,

a) assist with any necessary coordination during the conduct of the study.

b) Be willing to appear before the IRRC with the researcher to discuss research study, if necessary.

*** An example of a HSPH administrator sponsor would be a HSPH Program Manager level employee or above. Direct questions concerning sponsorship to the IRRC.**

Additional Information

a) Persons conducting research in HSPH must guarantee the anonymity of HSPH clients, and HSPH personnel in reporting the results, unless written approval is obtained from the client(s), or the HSPH personnel involved. (See attached data privacy act.)

b) Final approval of any study will not be made until all requested documents have been reviewed and approved.

c) Publications emanating from studies should acknowledge the contribution of the HSPH personnel unless requests to the contrary are made, or unless the identification of the individuals would jeopardize future research efforts.

d) If applicable, HSPH approval will be contingent upon your Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. The IRRC is aware that your institution's IRB may require HSPH research approval prior to granting IRB approval. The review committee will issue a letter stating that the letter can be used as verification of your project's approval. However, researchers may not begin conducting research until the IRRC has received a copy of your IRB approval letter. A current copy of the IRB approval letter must remain on file with the IRRC for the duration of the study.

e) Upon completion of the study, a copy of the final report should be sent (electronically, if possible) by email to the Co-Sponsor and IRRC Chair listed on the bottom of page 5 of the application. If your project spans one year or less, only the final report will be required.

f) For projects lasting more than one year, at the end of each project year, a progress summary report is required. Please submit all reports to the Co-Sponsor and IRRC Chair.

g) Failure to comply with the above stipulations places the researcher at risk for continuing to conduct research within HSPH or approval of future projects.

Internal Research and Review Committee
Research Proposal Review Process

The Internal Research and Review Committee acts as the designee for approving all proposed research studies for Human Services and Public Health. However, as an employer it is also important to ensure that our employees are not subjected to ancillary requests that do not have a direct or lasting benefit to the HSPH.

The Internal Research and Review Committee reserves the right to review each research proposal for the following considerations:

1. Relevance to the current needs and interests of HSPH
2. Disruption of daily operational and administrative duties
3. Potential for violation of participants' privacy & rights
4. the rights and welfare of the clients and HSPH personnel involved,
5. the appropriateness of the methods used to secure informed consent,
6. the balance of risks and potential benefits of the investigation

IRRC Screening Process

All research proposals are subject to a screening process. The screening process evaluates the scope of the project and degree of risk involved. An initial screening is completed within the IRRC to determine scope and whether there is potential for low, moderate or high-risk to employees, clients, or the community. Criteria used to determine scope and risk are listed below:

a. Department-wide in scope (i.e., includes numerous business locations or service areas)
b. Extremely sensitive in nature (i.e., controversial or topic area of concern)
c. Time or labor intensive likely to interfere with daily operations or administrative duties

These criteria are only examples and are not intended to be an exhaustive list of issues related to determining the risk level. Therefore, additional criteria may be used to evaluate level of review such as, whether the research proposal has a HSPH sponsor (department interest, staff, administration, etc.) or investigator's previous record of accomplishment in conducting research within Hennepin County.

The IRRC will make the final recommendations for approval or disapproval. The general turnaround time for proposals internally reviewed by the IRRC is 4-6 weeks

Application to Conduct Research
Internal Research and Review Committee

Submit concise and thorough responses to the following questions via email (all responses must be typed and include page numbers). If you choose to submit your entire research proposal to the committee, you must indicate the page numbers of where each response can be located.

a) Title and purpose of study.

b) When do you plan to start your study? What is the estimated total length of time in months you will be conducting research in HSPH?

c) How will this study benefit the HSPH?

d) Research Design Summary. What do you plan to do? You MUST include detailed information about your research questions, instruments –including sampling and data collection methodologies. Finally, describe any task(s) clients or HSPH personnel will be asked to complete.

e) Describe procedures you will use to secure and acknowledge informed consent of all participants, including active or passive consent. If passive, please provide a rationale. Please attach copies of any letters. Outline how subjects will be identified, and criteria used for recruitment, who will make the initial contact with subjects, and whether inducements will be used to secure participation. **Please be aware that HSPH programs and services are comprised of many diverse cultures, languages, and accessibility. We recommend you have ability to translate all documents, research instruments, consent forms, and provide interpreter services if needed.**

f) List any known risks of the proposed investigation to clients, HSPH personnel, or Hennepin County.

g) Are there any other requests you are making of the HSPH and/or the IRRC (database extractions, training, review, evaluation, provide sample populations)?

h) List all funding sources and budget for your study.

i) Date and copy of IRB approval letter and IRB application. A copy of your IRB application is
necessary if IRB review is in process. The IRRC will not allow study to begin until we have an approval letter on file.

Send documentation to:

Denise Stewart
HSPH IRRC Chair
denise.stewart@hennepin.us
(612) 879-3679 (office)