

Introduction

This brief is a continuation of *Laying the Foundation for an Engaged Community Advisory Board*. In that brief, we spotlighted one method of community-engaged research, community advisory boards (CABs). To reiterate, we define a CAB as a group of community members with relevant life experience and/or whose lives have been—or will be—directly impacted by a study, initiative, program, or focal system who may act as co-conspirators, advisors, thought partners, and champions.

Laying the Foundation for an Engaged Community Advisory Board provides guidance on how to prepare your team for engaging with community members in a CAB. In it, we share the practices we used to bring a people-first orientation to our work of running a CAB

In this brief you will learn:

- Considerations for recruitment and engagement
- Compensation strategies for CAB members
- IRB considerations for CAB members
- Considerations for communicating with CAB members

for the [Neighborhood Opportunity and Accountability Board \(NOAB\)](#) evaluation, including articulating shared values, examining our positionalities, and making power sharing a norm both within our team and with our CAB members.

This brief focuses on processes for establishing, facilitating, and maintaining an effective CAB, including responding to obstacles that can impede meaningful member engagement. As in the previous brief, these recommendations are drawn from the NOAB project team's experiences with designing, convening, and leading a CAB and are supported by real-world examples. Again, the guidance we provide comes from a researcher lens that may apply to technical assistance projects as well.

This brief is organized into three sections based on the phases of CABs: CAB Formation, CAB Operation, and CAB Maintenance. In each section, you will find guidance related to the key steps that occur at each stage.

CAB Processes

CABs typically experience three core phases during the life of a project or initiative:



We present the learnings from implementing the NOAB CAB according to these core phases. Using the phases as an organizing framework allows you to find guidance across the lifetime of a CAB or to dive into guidance that aligns with the current experience of the CAB you are leading.

CAB Formation

The guidance in this section will help you thoughtfully select and recruit CAB members with local expertise and lived experience and establish clear expectations for participation in the group.

Recruit CAB members whose lived experiences align with the focus of the project

At the heart of an effective CAB is a thoughtfully composed team of individuals, each contributing unique expertise and perspectives. The people you recruit to the CAB will depend on the setting and subject matter of the project. Ideally, you will recruit people whose knowledge is gleaned from

their lived experience and deep ties to a focal community. Think through *whose* lives are affected by the program/initiative as well as who will be affected by the research that you are conducting. You should also consider recruiting individuals who have knowledge of and/or experience in systems that are integral to the work of your partners or clients. For example, because NOAB is an intervention focused on juvenile justice, we sought individuals who had experience with that system, even if they were not familiar with NOAB. In the following text box, we describe the composition of the NOAB CAB during Year 1 of the evaluation and the rationale for including each member.

One field-tested approach to CAB recruitment is creating a potential member matrix (Newman et al., 2011). The goal of the matrix is to articulate inclusion criteria (e.g., relevant knowledge) for CAB members and identify potential organizations or people to recruit (See Appendix A for an example). It also gives teams a starting point for whom to contact to

NOAB CAB MEMBERSHIP

During Year 1 of the NOAB evaluation, there were six members on the NOAB CAB—three adults and three young people.

1. The three young people are members of a local youth advisory council focused on improving the lives of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. We chose these young people because they have been affected by the justice system. They range in age from their teens to their early 20s.
2. Two adult members have experience working in organizations that partner with NOAB to provide leadership and development opportunities for young people. We chose these individuals because they have great knowledge of the services that NOAB participants receive, and because of their experience working with and on behalf of young people.
3. The third adult member is a local police officer. We chose this individual because we wanted a law enforcement perspective (local police refer youth to NOAB).

begin recruitment. Keep in mind that, although a well-rounded CAB will have members with diverse perspectives, it is common for members to overlap in their social identities and experiences. They may share a common history, geography, language and/or culture. These commonalities can support trust and relationship-building within the group.

Set clear commitments and expectations to foster mutual understanding

Be transparent and clear from the very beginning about the commitments for being a CAB member. Specifically, explain the time commitment and describe expectations for participating in meetings, responding to communications, and completing activities outside meetings. Being clear about expectations allows community members to make an informed decision about whether they would like to join the CAB, and once involved, whether they can sustain their involvement. We asked NOAB CAB members to commit to attending three or four meetings a year, actively participating during meetings, reviewing

materials as needed before meetings, and responding to CAB-related communications. We strongly believe that community members should be compensated for their expertise. When recruiting CAB members, be explicit about the payment amount, frequency, and process. CAB payment is explained in more detail in the CAB Operation section.

Some community engagement experts recommend developing a partnership model that includes goals, expectations, and agreements. For an example, see Appendix D in the [Resource for Integrating Community Voices into a Research Study: Community Advisory Board Toolkit](#).

Being transparent about expectations for the CAB builds trust and promotes accountability. In the following text box, we highlight how we communicated expectations with our NOAB CAB members. Throughout the project, check in with CAB members about both their experience on the board and the feasibility of continued involvement considering other professional or personal commitments or unexpected life events.

NOAB CAB: SETTING EXPECTATIONS

The role of our CAB members is to share their experiences and knowledge as community members to ensure that the evaluation is attuned to the context of the community NOAB serves. We informed members of their role by:

- Preparing information sheets for the CAB members that outline the purpose of the CAB, how long they are expected to serve, the frequency and length of meetings, the payment schedule and systems, and expectations for participation (e.g., reviewing study materials before meetings, active participation)
- Meeting individually with the adult CAB members to review roles and expectations
- Having one AIR staff member meet with all three youth CAB members to gauge their interest in participation and review expectations

At the end of the first year of the evaluation, some CAB members could no longer serve on the board. We invited the CAB members who could no longer serve in the role to be NOAB Evaluation Champions. The champions will be invited to the presentation of findings and asked to share findings with their professional networks, and they may be invited to consult with the NOAB team on issues pertinent to their expertise.

We have onboarded two new CAB members. One works at a NOAB partner organization and the other is a NOAB board member.

CAB Operation

The guidance on CAB operations addresses compensating CAB members, adhering to necessary IRB requirements, fostering member engagement, being responsive to CAB members' needs, and establishing effective communication.

Ensure CAB members' compensation is just and reflects the complexity of their role

As knowledge workers, we understand that our expertise is a commodity. Community members contribute their knowledge of communities, access to their social networks, lived experiences with systems, and more. We must compensate them fairly for these valuable contributions and use accessible payment methods. Fair and just

compensation signals to the community that their voices matter.

Researchers should thoughtfully determine a payment amount per activity; using payment benchmarks is a sound strategy for doing so. For example, we pay our NOAB CAB members \$200 for a 90-minute meeting, including time to review materials in advance. We strive to pay CAB members an amount that is similar to what we pay research and evaluation experts in a technical or content advisory board. For the youth in our CAB, we offer an amount that would rival or surpass what they may earn with other employers. Project budgets are a constraining factor that will affect the amount of compensation. Consider changing other aspects of the CAB, such as the size of the group and meeting frequency to ensure that just compensation is possible.

When choosing a payment method, consider how accessible it is for CAB members. Find out from CAB members their payment preferences. Do they prefer electronic payments? What do they consider a reasonable amount of time to wait before compensation arrives? Your organization may offer a few different payment methods, such as gift cards, honoraria, and consultant payments among other options. Each payment method will have limitations, especially in terms of timeliness and flexibility of spending. For example, AIR acquires gift cards from select vendors such as Amazon and Starbucks, which confines CAB members to spend their funds at a specific place.

Thoughtfully consider how to meet CAB members' preferences while addressing the limitations of a chosen payment method. It may be necessary to advocate for changes to current payment systems to offer CAB members accessible payment methods. We encourage you to meet with staff who work

in relevant departments (e.g., finance) to explain how specific payment methods affect CAB members and initiate a conversation about potential solutions.

Try to honor CAB members' preferences as much as possible. During the onboarding process, present all payment options to CAB members and ask what would work best for them. Notably, payment options for minors are limited by tax-related requirements. In such instances, gift cards may be the only viable option. One drawback with gift cards is that CAB members may not be able to use the funds for basic life necessities, such as rent. Gift cards also have expiration dates, and funds cannot be transferred to bank accounts. Although gift cards may be the most viable option for minor CAB members, we recommend providing gift cards that can be widely used. We chose to provide American Express gift cards to young people to maximize where they could use their funds.

NOAB CAB PAYMENT STRATEGIES

We pay our youth CAB members in American Express gift cards and adult CAB members in honoraria.

- To maintain continuity of payment source, we pay youth CAB members in gift cards because they are also paid this way for their work on the local youth advisory council.
- We text or email gift card codes to youth CAB members.
- Adults in the CAB prefer direct deposit, so we use honoraria via direct deposit.

Determine whether your CAB will need Institutional Review Board oversight

We recommend checking in with Institutional Review Board (IRB) experts at your organization to determine if IRB oversight is required. If IRB oversight is required, inquire

about any required trainings and forms for CAB members.

To help ascertain whether your CAB needs IRB oversight, we recommend thinking through some IRB-related questions. Consider the following (Arnos et al., 2021):

- What role will CAB members have in the project?
- Will CAB members be asked to analyze any data?
- Do you plan to collect data from CAB members to analyze and add to the literature on community-engaged research?
- How will you and your project team protect confidentiality, both for CAB members and study participants?
- How will you and your project team determine the risks and benefits for CAB members? How will risks be mitigated?

In general, the CAB will likely need IRB oversight if the CAB members become study participants, particularly if the study is related to their involvement in the group. If your CAB members are not study participants and IRB oversight isn't required by your organization, we still recommend establishing a consent process. This process can occur in a one-on-one conversation or, if you prefer, by having members sign an information sheet. If you have minors on your CAB, we recommend creating a parent/caregiver consent form along with an assent form for the CAB member(s). This will ensure that parents/caregivers are properly notified of their child's participation and have a chance to opt their child in or out of the CAB.

Carefully considering the IRB implications for CAB members will ensure that both CAB members and study participants' rights are protected.

Use intentional facilitation strategies to cultivate dynamic engagement

Proactive and thoughtful facilitation is necessary to retain members' involvement and ensure dedication to the project's success. Researchers are often seen as the experts in the room. In a CAB, each person has valuable expertise to contribute. However, power dynamics often exist between those seen as "experts" and the "audience," which can impede knowledge sharing.

To minimize power dynamics during meetings, facilitators can begin by asking CAB members to co-create group agreements that define how they would like to collaborate with one another (group agreements for our CAB are included in Appendix B). It is also useful to lead a mix of small groups, large groups, and individual activities to honor different participation preferences. Similarly, we recommend incorporating multiple ways for members to contribute their thoughts (e.g., verbally, in writing, in person, and asynchronously). Facilitators can also balance power by paying close attention to the quietest voices and making space for those individuals to contribute, if desired. Time permitting, consider having one-on-one check-ins with members to learn how they prefer to engage in a group setting. Using these strategies will help foster an inclusive environment in which all members' voices are valued.

To foster meaningful engagement, it is essential that meetings be thoughtfully aligned with members' lived experiences. By framing questions and activities around their expertise, facilitators position CAB members to make meaningful and relevant

contributions to the project. Many community members may not have a background in research, so avoid framing questions and activities around research methodology. If you are seeking feedback on research methodology or to understand prior research on a specific topic, consider creating a technical workgroup, or a group of subject matter experts.

Another key facet of successful engagement involves ensuring alignment between the focus of the meeting and the design of the activities. Think through the kinds of feedback you need and tailor activities so you can receive that feedback. For example, if you want feedback on the wording of study instruments such as interview protocols or surveys, create an activity in which CAB members comment on specific questions. If you want a broader conversation on how to approach your research, evaluation, or technical assistance, lead a large group discussion with guiding questions or a prompt. Thinking through the kind of feedback you need can help make your CAB meetings feel purposeful and useful. It will also signal to CAB members that their expertise and contributions matter. Before each CAB meeting, we create agendas that describe the purpose of each activity, how much time each activity will take, and the materials needed. We recommend creating meeting agendas to guide your facilitation and ensure that all activities have connect to the purpose of the meeting. An example CAB meeting agendas is included in Appendix C.

Be responsive to the perspectives, experiences, and needs of CAB members

When running a CAB, stay attuned to the needs of the members and allow for different levels of engagement, as needed. We encourage CAB members to bring their whole selves to the board, and we push our team to do the same. To make that possible, we seek to understand perspectives, avoid judgment, be explicit about our positionality, and solicit feedback from CAB members.

A guiding principle is to allow members to do what they need to take care of themselves emotionally, physically, and mentally so that they can tune into the CAB activities. That requires recognizing, accepting, and promoting different forms of engagement. For example, not everyone will be comfortable speaking and, if the situation is virtual, some may not be comfortable turning on their cameras. Don't assume that they are not invested in the group. We encourage focusing on their contributions, not how contributions are made. To accommodate diverse and changing needs, offer multiple methods to engage with content, such as posting questions via Zoom chat and written feedback before meetings. Also, let CAB members know how to reach you if they need to make changes to how they participate. In our experience, this creates a sense of trust between project staff and CAB members and makes it more likely that members will reach out to express their needs.

The text box below lists some specific examples of how we engaged and re-engaged NOAB CAB members.

Use diverse but accessible modes of communication

Clear and respectful communication is the backbone of effective teamwork, collaboration, and community engagement. Offering diverse communication channels can ensure that information is accessible to all CAB members. We have employed automated and personal texts and group and individual emails to keep members informed. Over time, CAB members revealed their preferences for specific modes of communication by how often they responded to outreach. For example, we mostly communicate with youth CAB members via text because we have found that they rely more on text than our adult members. By paying close attention to these preferences, you can become more efficient in your communication.

Be sure to review any policies or guidance that your organization has for communicating with external partners. At AIR, for example, we must use a specific app to text non-employees. By using the app, we can protect

staff and community members and receive help, when necessary.

CAB Maintenance

To maximize the benefits of a CAB, regularly solicit feedback from members about the board's operations, preferably using a method that promotes candor. Members should have opportunities to share their perspectives on multiple aspects of the CAB, including logistics, member satisfaction, group dynamics (e.g., trust, cohesion, shared leadership), impact, communication, and relevance (Kubicek & Robles, 2016; Newman et al., 2011).

We created an anonymous Google Form for NOAB CAB members to share their experience and to provide feedback to the team. At each meeting and in communications, we encourage members to complete the form, which we review often and adjust our facilitation and engagement strategies accordingly. One best practice for long-standing CABs is to have biannual evaluations for the group (Kubicek & Robles, 2016).

NOAB CAB ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLES

- We work with a coordinator who manages the youth advisory council that our youth CAB members participate in. This coordinator had a preexisting, strong relationship with the youth and helped us recruit them into the CAB. At times, some of our youth CAB members become unresponsive to our emails and texts. When we reach the 3-week unresponsiveness mark, we reach out to this coordinator, who checks in with them on our behalf. This usually helps, and youth reengage with the CAB.
- For some CAB meetings, we ask members to review and provide feedback on study materials (e.g., surveys, interview protocols). Before the meeting, we give members the materials to review individually and write down feedback before they enter the meeting. We ask for this kind of review so we can use the meeting time for discussion.
- For review of surveys, we held two meetings with two to three members each to give them more space to share their feedback and discuss their thoughts with our team.

Conclusion

CABs play a crucial role in ensuring that initiatives reflect the communities they serve. They present a unique experience for those who may be impacted by a project to use their knowledge and experience to influence how it is run. In social science research, community members are often seen as data points; however, CABs enable their voices to be heard and valued. The NOAB CAB stands as a cornerstone of the evaluation, representing a commitment to community involvement and investment in youth justice.

The NOAB CAB members have provided insightful and useful feedback, which we have implemented in our evaluation. They helped make the wording on youth and parent interview protocols more accessible and offered rapport-building questions that we used to create trust between interviewers and participant, among other contributions.

As we continue to seek innovative solutions to pressing social issues, CABs offer a powerful means of amplifying community voices, fostering collaboration, and ultimately achieving more inclusive and effective initiatives.

References

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Appendix A. Potential Member Matrix

Competencies	Organizations	Community influencer	Engaged ally
Law enforcement			
Youth-serving organization working with justice-involved youth			
Familiarity with the NOAB program			
Young person impacted by the justice system			

Appendix B. NOAB CAB Community Agreements

- Share the air
- Stay engaged
- Create a brave space
- Be willing to hear the opinions of others even if you may not agree
- Expect and accept that we will not resolve concerns in one meeting
- Assume others have positive intentions
- Commit to confidentiality
- Speak from the heart

Appendix C. CAB Meeting Agendas

NOAB Community Advisory Board Meeting #2

Goal: NOAB CAB to provide feedback on interview questions

AIR prep for prework: Send community partner interview protocol with instructions and guidelines for providing feedback; send parent/guardian, youth, and staff protocols for reading; add copy of community partner protocol to Google drive so CAB members can add their practice feedback electronically.

Pework for CAB Members (45 minutes)

- CAB members will read community partner protocol and provide at least one piece of feedback in a Google Doc.
- The five CAB members who will attend the meeting will read the youth and parent/guardian protocols to prepare to give feedback during the meeting.
- One CAB member is unable to attend the meeting so he will review the staff protocol on his own and provide feedback.
- Feedback guidelines for CAB members:
 - Mark questions that are confusing or unclear and suggest revised wording.
 - Indicate questions that should be bolded or un-bolded.
 - » All interviewees will receive bolded questions.
 - » Un-bolded questions will be asked if there is enough time (interviews will be a maximum of 45 minutes).
 - Recommend additional questions.
 - Mark questions that you think could be removed.
 - Write down any comments or questions that come up during your review.
- Assuming 45 minutes of prework: The community partner protocol may take 5–7 minutes to read. The youth and parent/guardian protocols may each take 10–12 minutes to read. It may take 25–27 minutes to read all protocols and 20 minutes to provide feedback, adding up to **45 minutes of prework.**

Agenda (90 minutes)

Time	Activity	Materials (if needed)	Purpose
10 min	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Building Question: What is something you know or do well? Review purpose and agenda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Doc for protocol feedback PPT 	Everyone gets a warm welcome and is grounded in the purpose of the meeting.
10 min	Introduce Protocol Activity Provide context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share purpose of the interviews, who will be interviewed, and review process for interviews. Share why we chose parent and youth protocols for CAB feedback. Give directions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review feedback guidelines (see above) and directions for the protocol activity. Review the strong examples of feedback from practice protocol. Let CAB members look at feedback and share strong examples and what they thought was strong about their selection. In small groups, provide feedback on either parent or youth protocol according to feedback guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT 	Everyone understands purpose of interviews and why they are providing feedback on interview protocols. Ensure understanding of activity.
30 min	Protocol Activity Round 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split members into two groups (one group of three and one group of two) to discuss either the youth or parent protocols. Groups will discuss their revisions and any additional feedback that comes up. They will document feedback and revisions in the Google Doc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoom breakout rooms for group discussion Google Doc to edit or add additional feedback 	Ensure collaboration and synthesis of ideas
30 min	Protocol Activity Round 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same activity and groups, but groups switch protocols to review and discuss. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoom breakout rooms for group discussion Google Doc to edit or add additional feedback 	Ensure collaboration and synthesis of ideas.
10 min	Whole Group Debrief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you notice across the interviews that was strong? What did you notice across the interviews that AIR may want to address? 		Solicit cross-cutting feedback from CAB members.

Time	Activity	Materials (if needed)	Purpose
10 min	Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank participants for their participation. • Reiterate next steps for interviews. • Introduce pulse check and give them 5–7 minutes to fill out pulse check in the meeting. • Remind them that we will be in touch with the second honorarium. • Remind them of date of next meeting. • Solicit feedback on gift cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT • Pulse check 	

NOAB Community Advisory Board Meeting #4

Goal: To leverage the lived experience of CAB members to help ensure that the NOAB conference observation process feels transparent, voluntary, and noninvasive and minimizes potential harm

General Agenda (90 minutes)

Time	Activity	Materials	Purpose
10 min	Welcome Share meeting objective and agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreaker question- What are one or two choices researchers can make to build trust with community members? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT 	Everyone gets a warm welcome and is grounded in the purpose of the meeting.
20 min	Description of Board Conference <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose • Who is attending • How long it will be • General components • What comes out of it (IAP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT (includes slides describing a board conference) 	Everyone understands purpose and components of the board conference.
10 min	Building Trust during Data Collection Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What potential concerns do you think participants will have about being observed during the conference? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Give 3 minutes for individual reflections. • Encourage participants to share any experiences or thoughts on conducting research in communities, particularly in Oakland or Richmond, that AIR team should be aware of. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Slides for notetaking (AIR staff take notes and share screen) 	Uncover any concerns about research that should be considered when thinking about building trust.

Time	Activity	Materials	Purpose
40 min	<p>Building Trust during Data Collection Part II</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What is important for the observer to know in order to ensure a transparent and comfortable observation process for participants? – What can the observer and NICJR staff do to build trust with participants (e.g., youth, families, victims) and/or ensure they feel comfortable? – What kinds of information could the observer and/or NICJR staff share to ensure that the observation process is clear to participants? – What behaviors should the observer and/or NICJR staff avoid to minimize potential harm to participants? • Discuss questions as a group, prioritizing before and during. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Slides for notetaking (AIR staff take notes and share screen) 	<p>Ensure collaboration and synthesis of ideas.</p>
10 min	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share update on interviews and surveys with a focus on surveys; focus on how CAB input was used. • Share the focus of the next meeting. • Remind participants of feedback form and compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure understanding of next steps. • Everyone understands the impact of their work.

Acknowledgments

The evaluation of the Neighborhood Opportunity and Accountability Board (NOAB) is funded by the [AIR Equity Initiative](#). We are grateful for their generous support of this work.

We want to thank our community advisory board members for dedicating their time and sharing their local expertise and lived experiences to ensure that our NOAB evaluation is culturally responsive and contextually relevant. We are incredibly inspired by their passion for helping young people thrive. Without them, this brief would not have been possible.

We deeply appreciate Sarah Peko-Spicer for her expertise, leadership, and wisdom. It is because of her that we have had such fruitful conversations about values.



1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | AIR.ORG

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