

Overview/Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the Hercules Community Grant program. As you know, you were a part of the 3rd year of Hercules grant funding. Our grant program is currently on hold as we await additional funding, but we intend to continue this community grant funding each year in order to help address environmental health concerns and build community capacity.

The purpose of this interview is to hear your perspective about the community grant program. We are interested in your experiences and how Hercules funding has helped your organization. Your comments are very important to us as we will use this information to assess the overall effectiveness of our community outreach initiatives and make improvements to our community grant program.

This interview will take about 30 minutes and it will be recorded. Your participation is voluntary, there is no penalty for not participating, and you may refuse to answer or stop answering at any time.

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be shared only with members of the HERCULES Evaluation Team. Your responses will be combined with the responses of others who have received HERCULES community grant funds, and your name will not be identified in any written reports.

Questions

Do you have any questions about the interview before we start?

If you do have any questions, please feel free to contact Melanie Pearson at any time. Do you need Dr. Pearson's contact information? [Provide information if needed: _____ or _____]

Consent

Do you consent voluntarily to be in this evaluation? **Yes No** Is it OK if I record this call? **Yes No**

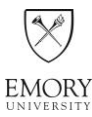
Great! Thank you.

Capacity building

First I'd like to ask you a few questions about what you may have gained from the community grant process. As we touched on earlier, the purpose of the grant funding is to provide the funds for community organizations to conduct environmental health projects and to increase grantees' capacity to conduct such projects.

Knowledge, Skill, and Leadership Development

1. Tell me what you view as your greatest accomplishments during this past year's grant cycle.
2. If you had to rate your project on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1= a struggle and 10= as a huge success, how would you rate your project over the past year and why?



Today's date: _____ Time: _____

3. With the knowledge that you have now, are there any aspects of the project you would change or implement differently?
4. What are the top 2-3 things you learned as a result of conducting your project?
5. What are the top 2-3 things you learned as a result of administering the grant?

Probes: Did this help you with people management, time management, tracking progress, staff/volunteer management, budget tracking/expense allocation, grant application processes)?

6. In what ways, if any, have those [lessons/skills/other things mentioned] strengthened your ability to address specific environmental health concerns?

[If asks:] "your" refers to the ability of either you or your organization.

7. In what ways, if any, has the grant strengthened the community's ability to address environmental health concerns?
8. In what ways, if any, has the grant process helped you do your job better?
9. In what ways has the grant provided you with leadership opportunities?

What about for others in the community?

[If unclear what leadership refers to:] This may include giving presentations, increased visibility for your organization, among other things.

Community Impact and Partnership

Now, I want to ask you some questions about the mini-grant program as it relates to your community involvement and relationships with other organizations.

10. As a result of the grant program have you built a stronger connection with your community? If so, please explain.
Probe: Has interest in or awareness of your organization increased? Has membership increased? Is there a greater participation from the neighborhood residents or larger community?
11. As a result of the grant program, has your network expanded at all? [If yes] Tell me about that.
Probe: Has the mini-grant program been helpful in the creation of new partnerships with other organizations, agencies, or programs? If so, please explain.
12. In what [other] ways has the grant helped you and your organization?

Today's date: _____ Time: _____

Probe: [For each area mentioned] specifically, how did the mini-grant program help you improve in this area?

13. Over the course of a year we have 2 specific occasions when all of the grantees are brought together: at the beginning of the grant cycle awardees give an introductory presentation and at the end of the funding year a final presentation is given. In at least one of these instances, the incoming grantees are introduced to the previous year's recipients and members of the Hercules Stakeholder Advisory Board. In what ways, if any, have these interactions been beneficial to you and your organization?

Grant Administration and Technical assistance

Now I want to ask you some questions specifically about the implementation of the grant program.

As part of the HERCULES Community Grant Program, we try to supplement the limited funding amount that organizations receive with technical assistance or other non-monetary support that organizations may need. This may include one-on-one guidance from a HERCULES staff or stakeholder advisory board member, or connections to additional resources, as requested by the grantee.

14. During this past year, what, if any, type of technical assistance or (non-monetary) support did you receive from the HERCULES Community Grant Program?

[If unclear what we mean my support] Think about things like a referral to an expert on a particular topic, referral to a local resource, one-on-one phone call or meeting with a HERCULES member such as Erin or Dana.

15. Was this support helpful? How so?

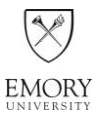
a. *Probe: How did it strengthen your ability to address the community's environmental health concerns?*

16. *[If does not mention the grant-writing workshop in previous response]* Did you attend the grant-writing workshop, or use the materials from the workshop?

[If attended training or used materials:] To what extent did you use what you learned from the [workshop/training materials] when applying for the HERCULES Community grant? What other feedback can you provide about the grant-writing workshop?

17. What else could HERCULES have offered to assist your project?

18. Overall, what did you think about the amount of communication that you received from HERCULES staff?



Funding, Project Sustainability

For the last section of this interview, I have a few questions about the grant funding and your future plans.

19. Without Hercules funding, how would you have been able to implement your project?
20. What are the future plans related to your project?
Probe: Do you plan to apply for additional funding? Are you planning to continue the project?
21. Has the mini-grant program helped you keep or obtain new funding? If so, can you give an example?
22. Is there anything else you would like to share about the utility of the grant program or how it could be improved in the future?
23. What suggestions do you have to help HERCULES do a better job in helping organizations and individuals strengthen their capacity to improve environmental health in their communities?

(If unclear: community capacity = focuses on strengthening the skills needed to help you as a community organization address and overcome challenges)

That is all the questions I had for you today. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you so much for your time!