



**Office of Research and Evaluation**  
Research Grantee Study Summary

# University of Pittsburgh

## Research for Equity and Power

### What is the background for this study?

This study builds on previous work on research for equity and power (REP) and applies key concepts from REP's Equitable Development Playbook, a tool for advocacy and organizing, to identify and act on equity issues. The research team works with current REP communities to apply this playbook to community issues through community projects. The study also connects community residents and leaders from across the region to advocacy and organizing training and supports them as they apply their knowledge to identify equity issues and engage with other community advocates and residents to develop and implement a plan to advocate for policy change.

### What are the research questions?

This study explores how engaging residents in equitable development and equity issues affects their civic engagement and ability to influence changes in equity in their local and regional communities. The study also informs future use of participatory approaches for long-term policy change. The research questions are:

1. In what ways does engaging residents around equitable development and equity issues and training them in advocacy and organizing skills impact their levels of civic engagement?
2. How does strengthening resident civic engagement around equity and equitable development issues increase residents' perceptions of their ability to influence changes in equity in local communities and at a regional level?
3. How does furthering resident civic engagement strengthen networks at a regional level?
4. How can participatory approaches be used for long-term, sustainable, and impactful policy change?

### Who are your community partners?

The University of Pittsburgh partners with UrbanKind Institute, home to Equitable and Just Greater Pittsburgh (EJGP), a hub for networks, organizations, and individuals to connect, learn, collaborate, build power, and create change across interconnected issues and places.

### How are community members engaged in the research to action process?

This study draws on best practices for community-based participatory research (CBPR) and the unique role of UrbanKind Institute as a think-and-do tank. The research team partners with community advisory boards (CABs) in the focus communities, a regional steering committee, a community researcher who is a Homewood resident,

### Study At-A-Glance

#### Study Title

Research for Equity and Power

#### Researchers

Mary Ohmer, PhD

Jason Beery, PhD

#### Grant Cohort 2022

#### Timeline 2022-2025

#### Study Location Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

#### Study Topic Area(s)

Community Development

Social Equity

and a citizen advocate core focused on equity and equitable development. These community members engage throughout the research process, including finalizing the research strategy, recruiting participants, developing the training program, analyzing data, and disseminating results. Training participants and steering committee members then work together to implement the action plan alongside EJGP network advocates and participants.

### What data and methods are used in this study?

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Researchers take detailed notes in meetings, training sessions, and small group conversations; conduct focus groups with CAB and steering committee members and training participants; and interview local advocates. Researchers also administer surveys to collect pre- and post-training feedback and insights on the creation of the action plan and project. Survey measures include social ties, citizen participation and collective action, adult and youth civic engagement, psychological empowerment among youth and adults, sociopolitical control, community empowerment and community capacity, and CBPR engagement.

### How does this research translate to community action?

Through engagement with the CABs, regional steering committee, and training program, this study supports participants’ ability and confidence to build coalitions across communities and equips them with the skills, tools, and knowledge necessary to successfully advocate for policy and sustainable community change alongside other stakeholders, including collaboration, community organizing, and advocacy planning and action.

### What are potential opportunities to apply study findings and/or build on this research?

This study demonstrates how the University of Pittsburgh can best partner with community experts to lend support and resources that build on growing bodies of research on best practices for CBPR, including resident-centered research and involvement, equitable data analysis, and dissemination of results.

#### For more information on the study:

<b>Study Website</b>	<a href="#">Research for Equity and Power (REP)   Center on Race and Social Problems   University of Pittsburgh</a>			
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