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## Galveston Island Research Community Research Advisory Committee (GICRAC)

### Letter of Support Policy and Procedures

#### Introduction:

The Galveston Island Community Research Advisory Committee (GICRAC) is committed to the development of community-based participatory research to address the health and well-being of the African American community of the city and county of Galveston, Texas.

#### GICRAC's Working Mission Statement:

We are gatekeepers for the health and well-being for African Americans in Galveston County, committed to advocating, participating, and endorsing health research. We must participate in the selection, design and results sharing of research.

#### Procedure:

1. A researcher who is interested in obtaining a letter of support and obtaining meaningful and substantial input into the project from GICRAC should contact the GICRAC Proposal Coordinator or Assistant Coordinator.
2. The GICRAC Proposal Coordinator or Assistant Proposal Coordinator will instruct the researcher how to request a letter of support from GICRAC. The requesting researcher should submit the following via hard copy or email to the Proposal Coordinator:
  - A. A copy of the grant announcement.
  - B. A completed *GICRAC Letter of Support Request Form* (Attachment A)
  - C. Address information for letter of support
3. The Proposal Coordinator or Assistant Proposal Coordinator will present the materials to the entire GICRAC. Based on the materials submitted, GICRAC will determine if they are interested in working with the researcher.
4. If GICRAC decides to work with the researcher, an intervention work group (IWG) is formed of those interested in working with the researcher. An IWG Chair is selected, and an initial plan for meeting is determined. The Proposal Coordinator notifies the researcher of this information and the researcher works with the IWG Chair from this point on.

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5. If GICRAC decides against working with the researcher, the Proposal Coordinator notifies the researcher of GICRAC's decision.
6. Using the *Letter of Support Evaluation Form* (Attachment B) and *Questions to Guide Our Review of Research Proposals in the Community* (Attachment C), the IWG meets to review documents presented by researcher.
7. The IWG may meet with researchers to ask questions, suggest changes, and enter a negotiation phase.
8. The IWG determines whether to recommend a letter of support from GICRAC. The IWG Chair drafts a final written response of endorsement or non-endorsement and forwards the final recommendation to the GICRAC Proposal Coordinator.
9. The Proposal Coordinator forwards the recommendation and draft letter to the GICRAC Chair.
10. The GICRAC Chair prepares the final letter, submits the letter to the researcher, and copies a) members of GICRAC, b) the Department Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and c) the Dean of the School with which the researcher is affiliated.
11. The Proposal Coordinator or Assistant Proposal Coordinator keeps a log of researchers' requests for support, IWG recommendations, letters from the GICRAC Chair, and final disposition of proposals (funded or non-funded). See Attachment D.

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Attachment A

## Galveston Island Community Research Advisory Committee Letter of Support Request Form

**Name of Principal Investigator (person responsible for the grant or project):**

**Affiliation:**

**Name of Co-Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators:**

**Address of Principal Investigator:**

**Street:**

**City and State:**

**Zip Code:**

**Phone Number:**

**Fax Number:**

**Email:**

**Title of grant or research project:**

1. Please attach an abstract or brief summary of your project (e.g. purpose of the study, hypotheses, methods, implications, plan for dissemination of research findings, etc.) 500 word limit

Abstract Attached \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

2. Why are you requesting a Letter of Support from GICRAC?
3. If funded, how will your work improve the quality of research to address health issues in the African American or potentially other underserved communities?
4. What efforts have you made to ensure that the research team has the sensitivity to understand the social, cultural, and environmental context of the community of focus?
5. What is the racial and ethnic composition of your community of focus?
6. Are you or anyone on your team a member of GICRAC? If not, how did you learn about GICRAC?

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Attachment B

## Galveston Island Community Research Advisory Committee Letter of Support Evaluation Form

**To be completed by GICRAC Proposal Coordinator and forwarded to IWG Chair:**

Principal Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Target Population: \_\_\_\_\_

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Request submission date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notification date: \_\_\_\_\_

The evaluation score provided by each member of the GICRAC IWG will assist in determining whether a letter of support is appropriate.

**To be completed by each member of GICRAC Intervention Work Group  
Scoring (Scale ranges from 0 to 5)**

**Question #1: How closely is the proposed project matched with GICRAC's  
Mission Statement?**

5-Close match with GICRAC's mission statement.

3-Partial match with GICRAC's mission statement.

0-Inconsistent with GICRAC's mission statement.

Not applicable/Other

Comments:

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**Question #2: Are the reasons for requesting a letter of support convincing?**

- 5-Very convincing
- 3-Somewhat convincing
- 0-Not convincing
- Not applicable/Other

Comments:

**Question #3: Does the research/grant project have the potential to advance the health in the community of focus?**

- 5-Highly likely to advance the field of African American health.
- 3-Likely to advance the field of African American health.
- 0-Probably not likely to advance the field of African American health.
- Not applicable/Other

Comments:

**Question #4: Are efforts to ensure sensitivity to understand the social, cultural, and environmental context of the community of focus convincing?**

- 5-Very convincing
- 3-Somewhat convincing
- 0-Not convincing
- Not applicable/Other

Comments:

**Total Average Score**

Please send your completed forms to Mrs. Sally Coleman at [coleman3129@att.net](mailto:coleman3129@att.net). Scores will be tallied and send to the Chair to guide discussion on projects that were submitted for review.

3.5 to 5.0	Very acceptable
3.0 to 3.4	Acceptable
Less than 2.9	Marginal/Not Acceptable

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## Attachment C

### Questions to Guide Our Review of Research Proposals in the Community

#### **Who?**

Who is asking to do research in our community?

Do any of us know the person(s)?

What is their research interest? What do they want to study?

What have they published, on this issue or other issues?

Can we get copies of their published work?

What school is involved? More than one school?

What is their position at the school? How long have they been there?

What department are they in?

What is their experience working in the community? With what communities (in Galveston or elsewhere)? Do they have a history with this community?

Are any other organizations, churches, or community groups involved? Are we the only ones who got the letter?

How is the study funded? By the school, by the government, by other funders?

Will any community members be involved with planning and implementing the study?

Is there a collaborative? How were they chosen? Are they representative of our community? Are they representative of the people being studied?

Can we have representation on the collaborative?

What are their plans to include community in the study?

Can the group have input in study design and implementation?

What is the study procedure?

What are the expected outcomes?

#### **What?**

What is the purpose of the study?

What do they hope to find out?

Is this of concern to us?

Is it a significant or pressing concern to the community? For example, Dr.

Reifsnider's study is about obesity among children. Is this a concern for us?

What do we think is important to study in our community? Is this issue important enough to study and important enough to study now?

#### **Where?**

Where will they conduct the study? In the home? At the university? Somewhere in the community?

Who decided where the study will be conducted? Did participants or community members have input on the location?

Is it convenient for community members?

Will transportation be a problem? Is there a transportation cost to participants? If so, will the researchers help with the cost of transportation?

Will researchers need to provide child care, car seats?

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## When?

When will the study be conducted?

Does this give us time to review the study?

Is there time for us to become involved, on the study collaborative or on the planning of the study?

Is the time good for the community? Is it a convenient time? For example, is it after school is out or around a holiday, important church dates (such as a pastor's anniversary) or in the evenings?

Do the times of participation effect who can participate in the study, e.g., it is during work hours or at night or on the weekends?

## How?

What do they want to do?

With what group(s)? Parents, women, men, seniors? Why?

How will they do it? By phone? In person? In groups?

Is it a survey or a face-to-face interview or group process?

How long will it take?

Will it be tape recorded? What will be done with the tapes? Who will hear them?

Where will they be kept? Under lock and key?

What questions will be asked? Can we see them? Are we comfortable with them? Is the language understandable? Can we have input on the language and/or questions? Do we know why these particular questions are being asked? Are any of them offensive to us? Are any of them embarrassing? Is there a good reason for asking these questions? Who will be asking the questions? For example, will men be asking men and women asking women? Will the people asking the questions be students? Will they be the same race as the participants?

How and who will be asked to participate in the study? Is anyone excluded? If so, why?

Will their privacy be protected?

Will they be protected otherwise?

What happens to study results? Will they be published? If so, where? Will there be a press release in the local paper(s)? Are community members involved in the writing of the final report or article? Will results be presented to the community? Where and how?

Are participants involved in the presentation? Can they have input on where and how study results are made public?

Will results affect the participants and/or the community? How?

Who else will the results be disseminated to, e.g., city government, local organizations, churches, other interested parties?

What happens after the study is over? Will the collaborative be disbanded? Will there be an intervention? If so, who will do it, where, when, with whom? Will community members be involved? Do community members have input on the design and implementation of the intervention? Will researchers continue to work

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with the community? Do they have plans for more research with the community or other interventions? Will they support the community's efforts if the community continues to work on the research issue or intervention?

## **At what costs?**

What's the cost of participation in the study, e.g., time, convenience, money, comfort zone?

Will participants be made uncomfortable in any way? For example, will they be asked personal questions? Will they be asked questions about money or relationships or health or sex or personal beliefs? Will they be embarrassed if anyone finds out they participated in this study? Will they be embarrassed if anyone sees what they said?

Are they told about questions ahead of time so they can choose to participate or not?

Can they refuse to answer any question at any time?

Can they leave the study any time they want to? If they leave, do they still get incentive?

Is their name and identity protected? Are their words kept private, under lock and key?

Can anyone see their words or know their name? Is their name kept separate from their words? For example, are they assigned a number so that their name isn't used? Will their words be used in any publication or newspaper?

Are incentives offered for their participation?

What kind of incentives?

Is the incentive appropriate, e.g., is it a fair amount of money or is it a gift certificate to a place where they shop? Is it something participants care about or will want?

Is the incentive so much money that a poor person would feel compelled to participate even if they did not feel comfortable participating?

Who decided what the incentive would be? Did community members or participants have a say in this?

Are participants told ahead of time that they must give their social security number to the researcher in order to get the incentive? Can they get the incentive without giving their social security number?

Do people have to give out personal information in order to participate in the study?

(phone number, address, email)?

Will people be treated with respect?

Can they say "no" to anything at any time?