

IDENTIFYING DIMENSIONS OF MONTANA TRIBAL COMMUNITY CAPACITY  
IN RELATION TO THE FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS

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Foundations and government agencies have historically played a critical role in supporting community-based health promotion programs (Easterling, Gallagher & Lodwich, 2003). Despite availability of federal and state funding for health promotion efforts within American Indian reservation communities in Montana, tribal communities in the state are less likely than non-tribal communities to successfully apply for funding for health and social services (Lonsdale, T., personal communication, April 1, 2011). Increased access to health promotion funding may help address significant health issues existing within American Indian communities such as childhood obesity, diabetes type 2, and cardiovascular disease (Ogden, Flegal, Carroll & Johnson, 2002; Brown, Noonan, Friede & Giroux, 2008; Cooper, Andersen, Wederkopp, Page & Frosberg, 2005; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009). Understanding the relationship between the capacity of American Indian (AI) communities to successfully apply for and receive funding and the capacity of funding agencies to effectively receive applications from and partner with tribal communities may serve to increase resources for health promotion efforts within tribal communities in Montana.

This exploratory qualitative study completed 17 semi-structured interviews across three AI reservations in the state of Montana. Dimensions of community capacity within the context of the funding application process and funding partnership with funding agencies were identified, including resources, leadership, community need, networks, and relationship with the funding agency. Dimensions of tribal community capacity were then used to suggest potential capacity building strategies for improved funding partnership between tribal communities in Montana and funding agencies. Capacity building strategies such as strategic planning for organizational change by leadership and community-based organizations, increased opportunities for community member participation and inclusion in expressing needs and concerns, and a monthly meeting for community grant seekers to raise awareness about and prioritize funding opportunities were suggested for tribal communities, while strategies such as the provision of consistent technical assistance, a focus on relationship-building, and making available funding opportunities for the specific purpose of tribal community capacity in the funding application process are examples of changes for on the funding agency side.

These strategies could be further developed in an attempt to build the capacity of tribal communities to secure more funding for local health promotion efforts.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

Foundations and government agencies have historically played a critical role in supporting community-based health promotion programs (Easterling, Gallagher & Lodwich, 2003). Despite availability of private, federal, and state funding for health promotion efforts within American Indian reservation communities in Montana, tribal communities in the state are less likely than non-tribal communities to successfully apply for funding (Lonsdale, T., personal communication, April 1, 2011). Increased access to health promotion funding may help address significant health issues existing within American Indian communities such as childhood obesity, diabetes type 2, and cardiovascular disease (Ogden, Flegal, Carroll & Johnson, 2002; Brown, Noonan, Friede & Giroux, 2008; Cooper, Andersen, Wederkopp, Page & Frosberg, 2005; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009). Understanding how the capacity of American Indian (AI) communities is related to partnerships with funding agencies may help to improve the procurement of health promotion funding for tribal communities, and ultimately serve to increase resources for health promotion efforts within tribal communities in Montana.

While communities throughout the United States work to secure funding for health promotion efforts that address prominent health issues, the Indian health system remains chronically underfunded, perpetuating the health disparities between American Indian communities and all other ethnic groups in the United States (Robideaux, 2002). Given the inequalities in health status of the American Indian population as compared to the U.S. general population (Robideaux, 2002), tribal communities are as deserving of federal health promotion assistance as non-native communities; particularly for efforts concerning child and youth health

(Styne, 2010). Prevalence rates of overweight and obesity in AI children are higher than those in non-Native children in the U.S., with data indicating prevalence rates of overweight and obesity for AI school-aged children to be 12.5% higher than the respective U.S. rates for all other races combined (Ogden et al., 2002). Contributing factors to overweight/obesity in AI youth include poor nutrition, low physical activity, and low socio-economic status (Styne, 2010). Prevalence rates of type-2 diabetes, another disease associated with poor nutrition and low physical activity, are the highest in AI youth as compared to all other ethnicities in the United States (Dabalea et al., 2007). In Montana, AI children make up 11.6% of the public school population, which is twice the state percentage of AIs in the population at large. A recent surveillance study in five Montana Indian reservation communities found approximately 57% of Indian youth ages 5-19 years old to be overweight or obese, and 30% to be pre-hypertensive or hypertensive (Brown et al., 2008). Montana AI youth were also found to exhibit several risk factors for type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, including family history of diabetes and individual and/or parental overweight or obesity (Brown et al., 2008). Increased rates of overweight and obesity, type-2 diabetes and other risk factors for cardiovascular disease in AI children and youth suggests a significant need for health promotion resources and services within tribal communities in Montana.

### **The Need: Tribal Communities and SRTS-Funded Projects in Montana**

A number of community-based health promotion funding opportunities, offered through the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), focus specifically on preventing



childhood obesity and promoting increased physical activity for children (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2009). One exemplary program funded through the federal transportation bill is the national Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. This program provides communities with resources to help create safe, convenient opportunities for K-8th grade children to bicycle and walk to and from schools. An intended outcome of implementing SRTS programs in communities is preventing childhood overweight and obesity through increased opportunity for physical activity. Communities that apply for and receive these funds can use them to improve bicycle and walking paths, increase traffic safety in school zones, and enable community leaders, parents and schools to improve safety and encourage children to walk and bicycle to and from school.

The state of Montana receives \$1 million dollars annually for SRTS funding, which is subsequently distributed throughout Montana communities through an application and granting process. In order to be eligible to apply for SRTS funding, a community partnership, including a K-8<sup>th</sup> grade school district and other community partners, such as community health and social services programs, local law enforcement agencies, or parent groups, must submit an application to the state. Since its inception in 2005, SRTS has received a disproportionate percentage of applications from non-tribal communities (94%) as compared to applications received from AI reservation communities (6%). A total of three tribal communities across two reservations (9% of eligible tribal communities) have applied for funding, compared to 46 from non-tribal communities (43% of eligible communities). The inequality in application

submissions may represent barriers for tribal communities to successfully apply for funding. An examination of tribal community capacity as it relates to a communities' decision to apply and the application process for federal health promotion funding, such as SRTS grants, may help to clarify specific resources and gaps in community capacity related to successful funding application. Community capacity is defined as "the characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems" (Goodman et al., 1998). A deeper understanding of the capacity of Montana American Indian communities to successfully secure funding for health promotion programs may help to illuminate specific barriers or underlying structures that influence successful funding efforts.

### **Funding Application: an Interactive Process**

The funding application process between eligible communities and funding agencies is inherently independent yet interactive. A health promotion funding agency must first make decisions about specific health and social issues to address through funding; this decision may be based upon directives from governing bodies. Funding opportunities must then be made known to eligible applicants through publication and announcement. Communities may progress through a similar initial process in deciding what health and social issues to address within the specific community – these decisions may be founded in community trends, values or directives from leadership. The point where the health promotion funding agency announces an opportunity and the community learns about this opportunity is frequently the initial point of interaction between the funding agency and community. Funding agencies and

community group applicants often bring two different sets of interests and expectations to this interaction (Easterling, Gallagher & Lodwick, 2003). The application guidelines and requirements are then navigated by community applicants, and applicants must proceed through the course of making a decision to apply, communicating with the funding agency in the form of technical assistance or questions, and utilizing available skills, knowledge, and resources to complete an application properly.

This study is part of a broader project addressing both the capacity of tribal communities in the funding application process and the organizational capacity of funding agencies to partner with tribal communities in the process. While this study focuses solely on the tribal community capacity, the organizational capacity of funding agencies is considered of equal importance for a successful funding partnership.

Due to interactive nature of the funding application process, a better understanding of tribal community capacity to successfully navigate and complete the funding application process may serve to provide a framework for enhancing strengths and decreasing barriers to successful application. Knowledge of tribal community capacity as it relates to the funding application process may also help to inform funding agencies on how to include more tribal communities in the applicant pool, and help to establish beneficial change towards improved health equity on the funding agency and tribal community sides of the process. Examples of potential changes within tribal communities could be increased awareness of community values and needs in relation to potential health promotion funding opportunities, improved

understanding of federal funding application expectations, or an established community process for grant writing. The intended outcome of these changes would be increased incidence of successful funding applications from tribal communities for health promotion funding procurement. Examples of potential changes within funding agencies could be an improved process for communicating funding opportunities to tribal communities, or developing cultural competence standards for funding agency staff who may be working with tribal community grant writers and agencies. Such changes may help to increase and diversify applicant pools in Montana. Strategies intended to build capacity for improved funding partnerships could incorporate culturally specific components of tribal communities, and help establish infrastructure on both sides of the funding process with the goal of increasing the number of successful applications submitted from American Indian communities.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This qualitative study seeks to identify dimensions of capacity specific to Montana tribal communities in the funding application process. Gaps and strengths identified within the capacity dimensions will be used in the second, exploratory aim of the study to suggest potential capacity-building strategies for successful funding applications from tribal communities to health promotion funding agencies.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process?

- a. What are the gaps in tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process?
  - b. What are the strengths in tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process?
2. How can the gaps and strengths identified in tribal community capacity be used to suggest potential capacity building strategies for increased success in the funding application process?

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Montana, applications for SRTS funding and allocation of SRTS funding to tribal communities has been disproportionate as compared to non-tribal communities. Increased allocation of federal health promotion funding to tribal communities may help to decrease health disparities, such as prevalence of overweight, obesity and type-2-diabetes, between AI youth and non-native youth. Safe Routes to Schools is a federally-funded health promotion program with state-based funding agencies and provides funding for eligible communities to increase opportunities for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade children to walk and bicycle to and from school. An intended outcome of SRTS programs are increased physical activity in youth, which may help to decrease prevalence of overweight, obesity and risk factors for type-2-diabetes and heart disease. An examination of tribal community capacity as it relates to finding out about, prioritizing, and engaging in, an application process for funding may help to identify strengths and gaps in capacity in relation to the funding application process. Specific tribal community capacity for

successful funding partnerships, as defined by tribal community members, may serve to inform specific capacity-building strategies designed to increase health promotion funding applications, and thereby increase allocation of health promotion funding, not only from the SRTS grant program but more broadly from all health promotion funding opportunities for tribal communities in Montana.

### **Delimitations**

The delimitations of the study are as follows:

1. The study is delimited to adult individuals living on three American Indian reservations in Montana that represent seven federally-recognized tribes. These are the Flathead Indian Reservation (Salish, Kootenai and Pend d' Oreille tribes), Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation (Chippewa and Cree tribes) and Fort Peck Indian Reservation (Sioux and Assiniboine tribes).
2. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews.
3. The study will be further delimited to community members who voluntarily take part in interviews.
4. This study will focus on tribal community capacity only, which is one-half of the funding partnership equation, the other half being organizational capacity of funding agencies.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. The data is limited in that the individuals from selected communities who volunteered to participate in the assessment process may have different issues and concerns relating to capacity elements for successful funding partnerships than those who did not participate.
2. Generalization of the results is limited due to the non-randomness of the selection of participants and the small number of tribal communities participating in the study (i.e., three out of over 564 tribal communities nationwide).

## **Definition of Terms**

**American Indian Reservation Community** - A community located on a territory reserved by tribes as a permanent tribal homeland.

**Capacity-building** - An approach to development where a set of strategies applied within programs and across systems can lead to enhanced capacity of people, organizations and communities to promote health (Heward, Hutchins & Keleher, 2007).

**Community Capacity** - The characteristics of communities that affect their ability to identify, mobilize, and address social and public health problems (Goodman et al., 1998).

**Community** – A commonality linking people; for the purposes of this thesis, the defining commonality is the geographic location of residence.

**Funding Application Process** – The interactive process involving a funding agency and an applicant, including finding out about a funding opportunity, the decision of whether to apply or not, and the capacities that influence the ability of an applicant to apply and a funding agency to attract applicants.

**Funding Partnership** – A partnership between a funding agency and an applicant that has successfully applied and been chosen to receive funding.

**Health Promotion** – Any planned combination of educational, political, environmental, regulatory, or organizational mechanisms that support actions and conditions of living



conducive to the health of individuals, groups, and communities (Doyle, Ward & Oomen-Early, 2010).

**Grounded Theory** – An approach that highlights the importance of empirical fieldwork and the need to link any explanations very closely to what happens in practical situations in the ‘real world’ (Denscombe, 2010).

**Socio-ecological Model** – A model providing a visual conceptualization of the comprehensive approach needed to truly address health for individuals within the context of their environments (Doyle, Ward, & Oomen-Early, 2010).

**Tribal Community** – A community that lies within the geographic boundaries of an American Indian reservation; for the purpose of this thesis, this term will be used interchangeably with American Indian reservation community.

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## Chapter II: Literature Review

### Community Capacity

Community capacity draws upon the notion of emphasizing community assets rather than focusing solely on risks, needs, and deficits of a community. General consensus throughout public health researchers and community and organizational development experts points to community capacity as a central concern for the development, implementation, and maintenance of effective community-based health promotion and disease prevention programs (Goodman et al., 1998). Definitions of community capacity have grown out of related earlier concepts such as *community competence* and *social capital*.

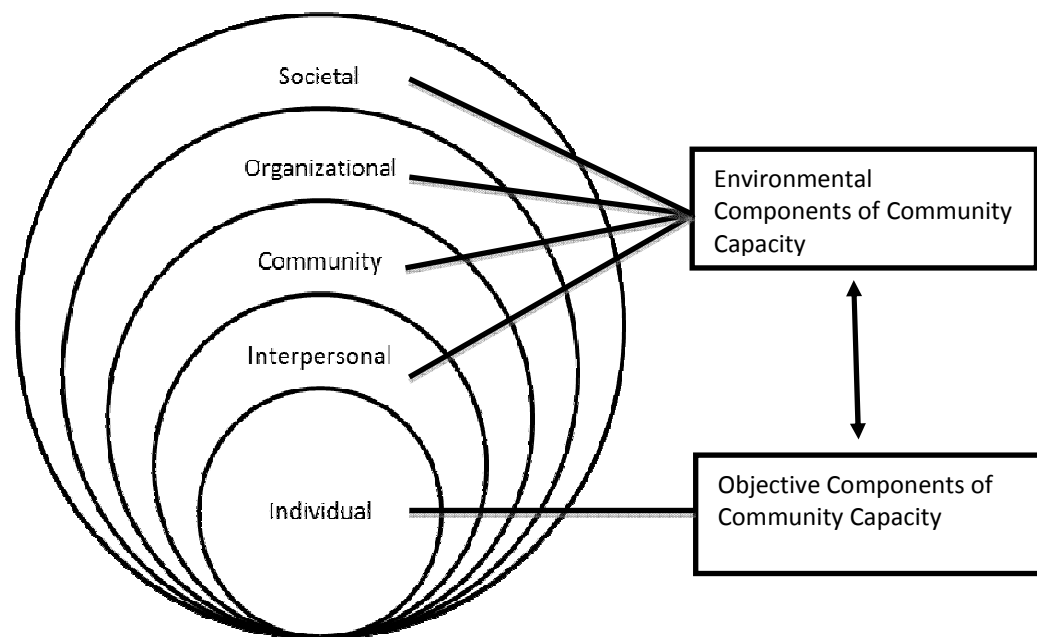
*Community competence*, which was first defined by Cottrell (1976, 1983) as “the various component parts of the community being able to collaborate effectively on identifying the problems and needs of the community; to achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities; to agree on ways and means to implement the agreed upon goals; to collaborate effectively in the required actions”. The specific dimensions of *community competence* include (1) community participation in defining and reaching goals, (2) commitment, (3) community understanding, (4) articulateness of the community in expressing its needs, (5) effectiveness in communicating information and achieving consensus within a community, (6) conflict management, (7) management of relations within the community including the use of outside resources, and (8) representative decision-making. The features necessary for community competence were also explored by social psychologist Iscoe (1972), who emphasized a community’s awareness of and access to resources.

*Social capital* refers to the structure of social relationships, and how these structures facilitate achievement of specific goals within a community (Coleman, 1998). The structure of social relationships may be horizontal between neighbors and community members within local organizations and associations (Kim & Kawachi, 2007), or vertical across boundaries and levels of power or hierarchy (Szepter & Woolcock, 2004). Social capital has also been used to describe specific resources and norms that arise from the existence of social networks (Glanz, Rimer & Viswanath, 2004; Ferlander, 2007). Variables of these social relationships or social networks include trust, reciprocity and civic engagement (Kim & Kawachi, 2007).

Modern definitions of community capacity reflect foundations of community competence and social capital, integrating the enabling, change-oriented features of community competence with the structural and relationship-focused aspects of social capital. Broadly, community capacity definitions emphasize the ability to garner resources necessary to affect change (Alfonzo et al., 2008). Resources, in this view, may be actual or potential; Jackson et al. (1997) define community capacity as 'a holistic representation of capabilities (those with which the community is endowed and those to which the community has access) plus the facilitators and barriers to realization of those capabilities in the broader social environment' (p.11). Chino and DeBruyn (2006) move away from a resource-focused definition and simply define community capacity as a community's potential for responding to health issues; while Fletcher (2008) qualifies community capacity as characteristics that empower a community to affect social change. Across these definitions, community capacity refers to a potential state

that may lead to community action (Goodman et al., 1998). Salsberg et al. (2007) describes community capacity as encompassing both *objective* and *environmental* components; *objective* community capacity refers to community members' tools, skills and knowledge in relation to current and future health and social issues, while *environmental* community capacity refers to the fostering and maintenance of infrastructures and environments in which the objective features can manifest. Figure 1 illustrates how community capacity lies across the ecological domains of a community; from the objective capacity of individuals, to the collective capacity of groups and networks, to the environmental capacity of organizations and culture.

Figure 1. Social ecological model of health and components of community capacity. Adapted from McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler and Glanz, 1998, and Salsberg et al., 2007.



Community capacity has been frequently mentioned throughout recent health promotion and community development literature as both a process towards- and an outcome for- improved community health (Alfonso et al., 2008; Goodman et al., 1998; Masuda et al.,

2011; Oetzel et al., 2011). However, the ecological and multidimensional nature of community capacity necessitates a broad, encompassing, and often vague definition. In order to assess the capacity of a particular community, measurable dimensions must be identified. As with Cottrell's dimensions of a competent community, efforts have been made to distinguish general elements of community capacity. A visual summary of community capacity dimensions defined in the foundational and current literature can be found in Table 1.

**Contextual elements of community capacity.** A landmark symposium hosted by the Division of Chronic Disease Control and Community Intervention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1995 brought health researchers and community specialists from the United States and Canada together to discuss community capacity. This symposium was held with the hopes of solidifying specific dimensions of community capacity to provide a foundation for measurement, assessment and development of capacity within communities (Goodman et al., 1998). Through this collaborative effort, nine distinct dimensions of community capacity were determined; (1) participation and leadership, (2) skills, (3) resources, (4) social and interorganizational networks, (5) sense of community, (6) understanding of community history, (7) community power, (8) community values, and (9) critical reflection.

*Participation and leadership* refers to the dynamic between involvement of individual community members and the structure and direction that is provided to community residents by leadership. Participation is reflective of community values and principles, as well as social infrastructure, such as formal and informal networks, social agencies and mediating structures.

Diversity and pluralism of leadership within a community influences the level of participation, while leadership style, decision-making style, networking and visibility and political efficacy influence dedication and involvement of community efforts.

*Skills* are specific abilities already existing in participants and leaders in a community, and also the ability to gain access to needed skills. *Resources* are also qualified as those pre-existing within a community, such as traditional capital and social capital, and the ability of a community to access resources and utilize them appropriately. Traditional capital includes funding from both community and outside agencies, competent professionals, property for facilities and organizations, mechanisms for citizen voice into decisions, and channels for vertical and horizontal communication across sectors of community. Social capital includes the knowledge and skill of individuals, particularly in relation to cooperation and networking. Fukuyama (1995) suggests that social capital is facilitated by trust; if a high level of trust exists within a community, diverse social relationships are more likely to develop, while communities that lack trust develop social connections solely through rules and regulations.

*Social and interorganizational networks* refer to structural and interactional characteristics of networks in a community. The quantity and quality of linkages across network members and between organizations, as well as the orientation of communication pathways (vertical or horizontal), are included in this dimension. The characterization of network relationships, namely the existence of trust, enables improved capacity within community. Trusting relationships across network members and organizations relates to the

*sense of community*, which is generally characterized by “caring and sharing” (Goodman et al., 1998, p.269) among people in a community, mutual respect, generosity, and service to others. *Sense of community* may help to produce collective action to address local concern and create desired change. Sense of community may be expressed in a variety of ways throughout diverse conditions. McMillan and Chavis (1986) posit four core elements of *sense of community*: (1) membership; (2) influence; (3) fulfillment of needs; and (4) emotional connection.

Closely tied to the *sense of community* are the dimensions of *understanding of community history, community power and community values*. A community’s history includes people and events within social, political and economic changes that have occurred both recently and distally. The way in which a community interprets its history and views its future may influence the way a community views itself within the larger society, and may influence its willingness to engage in a change process. Communities with access to knowledge of history may have better capacity to affect change, drawing on the organizations, community groups and community sectors that have traditionally been involved in change, and acknowledging barriers to change that have occurred in the past. *Community power* refers to where the power lies in a community and how it is utilized; “elements of power relate to who holds power, who wants power, how the power will be used, and who decides how power will be used” (Goodman et al., 1998, p.270). The distribution of power throughout a community is often inequitable, with the agenda of change (or lack thereof), guided by those with disproportionate control over resources. However, community power is also closely linked to community values, where individuals valued within a community, such as elders or youth, may have influence in

engaging a change process. *Community values* underlie all other dimensions of community capacity. A community maintaining a core set of shared values may possess more community capacity, and the process of surfacing shared values of a specific community may enable increased community capacity.

*Critical reflection* is the “lived activity of action and reflection within one’s community for the purpose of challenging assumptions and creating change toward the core public health values of democratic participation and equity” (Goodman et al., 1998, p.273). This dimension includes critical thinking, which is defined by Stephen Brookfield (1987) as the ability to reflect on the assumptions underlying our and other’s ideas and actions and to contemplate alternative ways of thinking and living. This dimension integrates Paolo Freire’s (1970) concept of critical consciousness into a community’s ability to engage in a change process. Critical consciousness, in this context, posits that people’s ability to view themselves within a larger social context, to reflect upon individual roles within a society, and to understand the history and conditions of a social problem, will determine willingness to participate in a collective change. Goodman et al. (1998) hypothesize that communities and community organizations that create mechanisms for self-reflection, for constructing their own identity, and for analyzing social conditions will have greater community capacity to maintain change efforts and improve community health.

These dimensions are comparable to nine ‘domains’ of community capacity identified by Laverack (1999). Overlapping themes of community capacity were identified based on textual analysis of relevant literature including topics of health, social sciences and education. The nine



domains identified are as follows: (1) participation; (2) leadership; (3) organizational structures and; (4) 'asking why'(comparable to 'critical reflection') were identified, however diverging elements such as (5) problem assessment; (6) links with others; (7) role of the outside agents; (8) program management; and (9) resource mobilization. While several of these domains share close similarity with Goodman et al.'s 'dimensions', Laverack's operationalization is decidedly more externally-focused. While Goodman et al.'s constellation of community capacity elements include more internally-focused elements such as shared understanding of community history, community values and sense of community, Laverack's domains are more oriented toward external elements such as links, partnerships and coalitions between the community and others, and the role of outside agents as a catalyst between external resources and communities. Within this project's understanding of community capacity, this divergence of focus for community capacity is not a point of tension or exclusivity, rather it represents the foundational assumption that community capacity should be operationalized based on context (Baker & Teaser-Polk, 1998); an internally-oriented capacity conceptions may be appropriate for one community while an externally-oriented capacity conception may be a best fit for a different community.

The elements identified by the working groups at the CDC and Laverack and are meant to serve as a starting point for increased precision and refinement. Goodman et al. calls for further reflection and reaction from diverse communities to alter, enrich, and build-upon the established dimensions, recognizing that capacity as a construct has different meanings in different contexts. Efforts to generate community capacity elements based on the context of

communities or projects, and efforts to examine and apply established community capacity elements have since been undertaken.

Adaptation of community capacity elements within the specific purpose(s) of a project was initiated by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The PHAC provides project funding and support in program areas such as diabetes, hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS, to enable community groups across Canada to improve individual and community wellbeing (Maclellan-Wright et al., 2007). As a primary step in developing an appropriate community capacity-building instrument for measuring outcomes of funded programs, nine community capacity domains were identified. These domains were selected by a research team representing academic, community, and PHAC sectors, and domains were selected based on the context of the PHAC's community-based programs. A combination of identical or similar elements previously identified by Goodman et al. and Laverack served as the domains applicable within the scope of funded projects: (1) participation; (2) leadership; (3) community structures; (4) sense of community; (5) skills, knowledge and learning; (6) asking why; (7) resource mobilization; (8) links with others; and (9) role of external supports. While context for these community capacity elements resided within the purpose of a specific project, context may also exist in geographic or socio-demographic terms.

A project funded by Health Canada to learn and understand more about community capacity in the David Thompson Health Region in central Alberta identified seven domains of community capacity for this specific region. These domains were first identified through a broad-based literature search, and then refined through the use of participatory action

research methodology to engage each participating community in identifying specific capacities required for health development processes. Consensus for seven community capacity elements are as follows: (1) shared vision; (2) sense of community; (3) participation; (4) leadership; (5) resources, knowledge and skills; (6) communication; and (7) ongoing learning (Bopp et al., 2000). Regional input enabled identification of capacity elements fitting for the geographic, social and political conditions of communities in the David Thompson Health Region of Alberta, creating an appropriate operationalization of capacity specific to those communities.

While elements of community capacity are evidently comparable across community health and development literature, it is also clear that context dictates the elements of capacity most applicable to a community. In an effort to continue the dialogue of community capacity elements originating from the CDC symposium, Baker & Teaser-Polk (1998) considered contextual measurement of these dimensions across communities. They emphasized the importance of defining community capacity dimensions in order to measure these dimensions, while also remaining open to the idea that dimension operationalization may vary across community and within community. This point is particularly poignant with respect to American Indian communities. Tribal culture and rural living may contribute to operationalization of community capacity elements unique to American Indian reservation communities.

**Tribal community capacity.** Literature addressing community capacity of American Indian communities is limited. Given that communities with strong capacity are more likely to

be healthier communities (Smith et al. 2010), examining and identifying elements specific to tribal communities may assist in building tribal community capacity for health promotion. Community capacity dimensions defined within dominant culture may not be appropriate for tribal communities, as specific “indigenous capacities,” centering on culture, language, ceremonies and traditions (Edwards, Seaman, Drews & Edwards, 1995), may not be taken into consideration. Oetzel et al. (2011) developed dimensions of community capacity specific to tribal communities in the Southwest United States. Two tribes were involved, with 500 participants completing detailed community profiles of perceived capacity. The data identified five common dimensions of community capacity, and two unique dimensions, one each from two separate tribes. The dimensions of community capacity validated in this study were: (1) youth; (2) elders; (3) sense of community; (4) culture; (5) communication; (6) women; and (7) leadership. While three of these community capacity dimensions overlap with those found elsewhere in the literature, dimensions of community capacity such as youth, elders, culture and women are distinct, and reflect unique characteristics of tribal communities in the Southwest United States.

Identifying elements of tribal community capacity within the context of specific health promotion programs has been completed for programs such as tobacco control and prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention (Baezconde-Garbanati, Beebe & Perez-Stable, 2007; Thurman, Vernon & Plested, 2007). Constructs of tribal community capacity, as identified through a study completed by Baezconde-Garbanati et al. in 2007, were utilized to establish the components for

Table 1. Community capacity elements in the literature

Author(s)	Cottrell, 1976/1983	Goodman et al., 1998	Laverack, 1999	Maclellan-Wright, 2007	Bopp et al., 2000	Oetzel et al., 2011	Baezconde-Garbanati et al., 2007
Term utilized	Community Competence	Community capacity	Community capacity	Community capacity	Community capacity	Tribal community capacity	Tribal community capacity (tobacco cessation)
Elements/dimensions	<p>Community participation in defining and reaching goals</p> <p>Representative decision-making</p> <p>Commitment</p> <p>Articulateness of the community in expressing its needs</p> <p>Community understanding</p> <p>Effectiveness in communicating information and achieving consensus within a community</p> <p>Conflict management</p> <p>Management of relations within the community including the use of outside resources</p>	<p>Participation and leadership</p> <p>Skills</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Sense of community</p> <p>Understanding of community history</p> <p>Community power</p> <p>Community values</p> <p>Critical reflection</p> <p>Social and inter-organizational networks</p>	<p>Participation</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p> <p>Organizational structures</p> <p>Asking why</p> <p>Links with others</p> <p>Problem assessment</p> <p>Program management</p> <p>Role of the outside agents</p>	<p>Participation</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Skills, knowledge, and learning</p> <p>Sense of community</p> <p>Asking why</p> <p>Links with others</p> <p>Community structures</p> <p>Resource mobilization</p> <p>Role of external supports</p>	<p>Participation</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Resources, knowledge, and skills</p> <p>Sense of community</p> <p>Ongoing learning</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Shared vision</p>	<p>Youth</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Elders</p> <p>Sense of community</p> <p>Women</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Culture</p>	<p>Community collaboration</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Programs and policies</p> <p>Sense of community</p>

HIV/AIDS prevention (Baezconde-Garbanati, Beebe & Perez-Stable, 2007; Thurman, Vernon & Plested, 2007). Constructs of tribal community capacity, as identified through a study completed by Baezconde-Garbanati et al. in 2007, were utilized to establish the components for an effective and sustainable tobacco abuse prevention program in tribal communities. This study completed 21 key informant interviews with adult community members and leaders in a tribe with headquarters outside Oklahoma City. Data from these interviews was analyzed and used to describe and prioritize constructs of capacity most relevant to tobacco control in tribal communities. Results for community capacity constructs included: (1) sense of community; (2) leadership; (3) community collaboration; and (4) programs and policies. Each construct related strengths of the community to issues surrounding tobacco control efforts. In this way, strengths specific to this tribal community were identified and operationalized in a way that could improve the delivery of tobacco abuse prevention programs in the community. The elements of tribal community capacity, as defined through the scope of this tobacco control effort, helped inform the contextual underpinnings of community capacity in a health promotion program setting. Identifying unique community strengths specific to the foundation, infrastructure and delivery of a health promotion program may serve to fine-tune strategies used for increasing community capacity surrounding that program.

The research presented on tribal community capacity reveals a divergence from commonly identified Western community capacity elements. This departure represents a need for further examination of community capacity in tribal communities. Identification of

appropriate elements of community capacity for American Indian communities within Montana, reflecting local, cultural and historical context, may help provide a base for appropriate community capacity assessment, and subsequently community capacity-building toward desired outcomes of social change. An examination of tribal community capacity in relation to federal funding application and procurement may help to identify community strengths specific to tribal communities in Montana, and may ultimately serve as a starting point for improved capacity for obtaining health promotion funding for tribal communities.

### **Capacity building**

Capacity building is an approach to development that builds independence (Eade, 1997), where a set of strategies applied within programs and across systems can lead to enhanced capacity of people, organizations and communities to promote health (Heward, Hutchins & Keleher, 2007). Capacity building is 'context rich', with approaches and strategies founded within the context of application (New South Wales Health Department, 2001). In this way, elements of community capacity may be utilized to create strategies for enhancing existing capacity and improving areas weaker in capacity. Fitzgerald regards a focus on capacity building as especially appropriate for communities lacking in traditional resources, and recognizes capacity building as a 'key-ingredient' for readdressing social exclusion, inequality, and vulnerability within communities (as cited in New South Wales, 2001, p.1). Capacity building takes place within programs or, more broadly, within systems, and may contribute to the building of a generalized capability of organizations or communities to achieve desired health outcomes (New South Wales, 2001; Hawe et al., 1999). Established strategies for community capacity building are

based on the range of community capacity dimensions, such as those identified by Laverack (1999) and Goodman et al. (1998). Strategies include improving community participation, developing local leadership, building empowering organizational structures, increasing community members' problem assessment capacities, improving community resources allocation, and creating equitable relationships with outside agents (Labonte & Laverack, 2001). The established community capacity building strategies, however, have been developed based on Western community capacity definitions. Culture- and program-specific community capacity building strategies for tribal communities may facilitate development of effective and sustainable health promotion resources and infrastructure.

**Tribal community capacity building.** Chino & DeBruyn (2006) acknowledge that while capacity building strategies can be utilized as a means of mitigating health disparities and other local health concerns within communities, Western models for capacity building are unsuitable for tribal communities with distinct indigenous epistemologies. Capacity building is based upon community capacity dimensions identified by a community, and elements of community capacity identified by non-tribal communities may be significantly different from those identified by tribal communities. Current Western community capacity building strategies may not include integral aspects of tribal community capacity, such as the value of culture, language, issues of identity and place, and the need for tribal people to exist in both traditional and dominant cultures (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006). Strategies based on indigenous values have yet to be developed. Cajate (2000) emphasizes the importance of community development



models that go beyond objective measures and honor the importance of direct experience, interconnectedness, relationship and value, while Smith (1999) proposes an indigenous research agenda based on indigenous-centered priorities.

Chino & DeBruyn (2006) assert that a tribal capacity building framework must go beyond the linear, static, time-oriented format typically present in Western frameworks and instead establish a participatory process where mutual learning takes place without the potential for abuses and exploitation; where lines of trust between non-indigenous researchers and tribal communities may need to be repaired. A working example of an indigenous framework for community development was exemplified within this research. The Community Involvement to Renew Commitment, Leadership, and Effectiveness (CIRCLE) was developed by three AI public health and research professionals working for a tribal consortium in the Southwest. The CIRCLE is a 4-step, cyclical, iterative process and philosophy for program design and community development. While Western concepts of community capacity building and community based participatory research are incorporated into the CIRCLE, the philosophy and methods transcend the assumptions and methods of most Western mainstream models. The four steps of the model, (1) building relationships; (2) building skills; (3) working together; and (4) promoting commitment, are flexible and adjustable based on the time and effort needed for each (p.598). While it is acknowledged that these steps may parallel other Western frameworks, operationalization of each step is rooted within Southwest AI tribal cultural context. For example, the amount of time devoted to the first step, building relationships, and

the primary focus on the content of the second step, building skills, are aspects highly specific to the culture of the tribes involved.

**Capacity building for tribal communities and funding agencies.** Indigenous capacity building strategies should reflect modern indigenous resources and challenges, and should include opportunities for non-native partners to be incorporated. Funding agencies are often located outside the communities they fund, and therefore may not fully appreciate the social-political climate within which its grantees operate (Easterling, Gallagher & Lodwick, 2003). Including non-native partners in capacity building strategies for tribal communities may help raise awareness of tribal sovereignty and community issues, and ensure understanding of, and adherence to, tribal guidelines (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006). Three of the previously reviewed community capacity notions for Western and tribal communities include an element emphasizing a connection to partners outside the community (see Table 1). Elements such as ‘community collaboration’ (Baezconde-Garbanati et al., 2007,) ‘role of external supports’ (MacLellan-Wright, 2007), and ‘role of outside agents’ (Laverack, 1999), indicate the significance of relationship between communities and peripheral agencies.

In an effort to further the dialogue regarding application of elements of community capacity, Baker & Teaser Polk (1998) pose the question, “what is the role of outsiders?” (p.281), and examine the potential for non-community partners to enhance community capacity. They assert that there are beneficial roles that outsiders can fulfill to enhance capacity, but point out the necessity for external partners to build their skills in working with communities. This could

range from learning a community's history or language to broadening perspectives to 'understand the holistic nature of a community's experiences', with an ultimate value placed on external partners learning to be flexible with methods and finding 'an appropriate balance between rigor and responsiveness to the needs of the community of interest' (p. 281).

The integration of a non-tribal partner or organization into capacity building strategies for indigenous communities may serve to increase the capacities of both the tribal community and the external agency, and ultimately help achieve a common goal. Coe, Wilson, Eisenberg, Attakai & Lobell (2006) utilized a participatory model for cancer care and research development within American Indian communities that included capacity building for both communities and institutions. Acknowledging that universities, via Federal- and State-sponsored research programs, play a crucial role in facilitating the process of engaging tribal communities in research development, Coe et al. (2006) employed participatory research methods to increase community-level knowledge about public health issues and develop infrastructural relationships between tribal communities and non-native partners. Committed to an interactive style of community research, a partnership among several institutions called the American Indian Oncology Program (AIOP) was developed as a potentially sustainable network for cancer education, care, and research focusing on tribal communities. The AIOP was a result of bidirectional sharing of information and expertise between the grant-funded University of Arizona Cancer Center and its partnering institutions and tribal communities. One development that resulted from this partnership was the formation of a Shared Service for Special

Populations. This service prepared cancer researchers to work in tribal communities using culturally appropriate methods, and provided multiple training opportunities on topics such as research advocacy, cultural competence, and other cultural, political, legal, and ethical issues vital for positive partnering between tribal and non-native agencies. This infrastructural change represented good-will and commitment on behalf of partner organizations, and additionally created a strong mutual awareness between partner organizations and tribal communities. The function of the university, as viewed by the researchers, was as a catalyst rather than a lead; the university, as an institution, used resources to bring “disparate and sometimes contentious individuals and entities together to identify common concerns and strategies, respond to the issues identified, and provide resources to enhance skills and knowledge for ourselves as well as for our partners” (Coe et al., 2006, p. 1985). The researchers concluded that the key to building successful, potentially sustainable research programs that could reduce cancer health disparities in tribal communities is to use participatory methods to build strong relationships and increase mutual awareness between systems and communities. In this example, bidirectional sharing of information and expertise between the university and tribal communities was employed to form effective and potentially sustainable networks and services. One result of this bidirectional partnership included programs for increased cultural competence for non-native partners of tribal communities. This study helps to illustrate the effectiveness of capacity building efforts on both sides of a partnership; an institution or agency may stand to benefit from increased capacity in working together with tribal communities,

while tribal communities may stand to gain from increased capacity in collaborating with outside structures such as non-native institutions or agencies.

**Bidirectional capacity building.** Within the limited literature on community capacity in American Indian communities, consensus indicates that a framework for linking and bridging relationships between tribal communities and non-native partners is needed (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006; Oetzel et al., 2011, Coe et al., 2006; Thurman et al., 2007). Smith, Littlejohns & Thompson (2001) highlight the importance of the interface between community and agency in capacity building and call for inclusion of both community capacity and the capacity of agencies or organizations in capacity building efforts. Further understanding of tribal community capacity and agency capacity in relation to partnerships may help to inform a capacity building model for effective and sustainable interactions between tribal communities and external support structures.

### **Organizational or Agency Capacity**

Most current literature on capacity employs the term 'organizational capacity' when describing the function of a formally joined unit with a common goal or mission. While this thesis focuses on understanding gaps and strengths in tribal community capacity to procure health promotion funding for tribal communities, it is important to provide a brief overview for how agency capacity differs from community capacity. For the purposes of this thesis, the definition of 'organizational capacity' will be used interchangeably with 'agency capacity'; a term denoting a larger or more formally-structured unit.

Organizational capacity refers to the adequacy of inputs (knowledge, financial resources, trained personnel, well-managed strategic partnerships, etc.) necessary to carry out a program and achieve desired outcomes, which include program participant outcomes (Cassidy & Leviton, 2006). Capacity building, in relation to organizational capacity, focuses on the process by which programs and organizations utilize the 'inputs' in optimal ways. Cassidy and Leviton emphasize that simply having resources is not equal to capacity; that programs and organizations must develop essential skills and capabilities, such as leadership and management, and institute knowledge and insight they gain in ways effectively address problems and eventually create change. Masuda, Creighton, Nixon & Frankish (2011) outline domains of organizational competency; (1) governance; (2) management; (3) conflict management; (4) group process; (5) negotiation; (6) knowledge exchange; (7) change agency; and (8) sharing of power. These domains parallel several defined elements of community capacity, and function similarly in that they exist as assets that may be developed to meet the goals and achieve success in the undertakings of an organization. Hawe et al. (1999) considers organizational capacity to be skills and structures; *skills* including competence in program implementation and delivery, and problem solving, and *structures* including networks, decision-making forums, communications, ways of acquiring new information, ways of accessing additional skills, and ways to construct new work processes. The contextual implications of community capacity building may also be applied to organizational capacity building; Heward et al. (2007) describes organizations as richly layered, where change within an organization is

influenced by the environment from its broadest level of structure through to its teams and individual staff members.

### **Literature review summary**

A review of the literature reveals support to identify and build tribal community capacity as means for improving effectiveness and sustainability of health promotion efforts within American Indian communities. Current literature indicates a need for increased understanding of the specific dimensions of capacity of tribal communities and external support structures, such as funding agencies, to work together in partnership. Therefore, an examination of tribal community-defined capacity in relation to process of funding application may help to identify contextually appropriate capacity dimensions, which may serve to inform capacity building strategies for improved funding partnership between tribal communities in Montana and funding agencies, and ultimately increase allocation of health promotion funding to tribal communities.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

The purpose of this study was twofold; the primary aim was to examine tribal community capacity as it relates to the interactive process of health promotion funding application and allocation in Montana, utilizing data to identify contextually appropriate dimensions of tribal community capacity as it relates to the funding application process. Capacity dimensions identified in the primary aim were used in the second, exploratory aim of proposing potential capacity building strategies that may be refined and piloted in future research, with the ultimate goal of improving funding partnerships between tribal communities and health promotion funding agencies, and therefore increasing the amount of funding allocated to tribal communities in Montana. In keeping with the exploratory research goals of this study, qualitative methods were utilized. An iterative, collaborative approach was used to develop and pilot a qualitative, semi-structured interview guide, and data collection was completed through key-informant interviews and field notes. Interviews completed in the field provided rich, community-based data, while field notes served to supplement the interviews with contextual and reflective data. A grounded theory approach was employed to link the empirical fieldwork to tribal community capacity dimensions that may be utilized in a practical, 'real world' setting (Denscombe, 2010).

As previously mentioned, this study is one part of a broader effort examining both tribal community capacity and funding agency organizational capacity. While methods described in this section focus on the research within tribal communities, it is important to mention that similar methods were simultaneously completed with funding agencies during this time.



Matching methods were used for both tribal communities and funding agencies; from the iterative process employed to develop a semi-structured interview guide (based on current literature and characteristics of each respective entity) to the key-informant interviews and interview transcription.

## **Research Setting**

**American Indian reservation communities in Montana.** The seven American Indian reservations in Montana are part of the Northern Plains region of the United States. A map of the state of Montana and the geographic location of the seven AI reservations can be found below (figure 2).

There are over 60,000 American Indians living on and off reservations in Montana, and this number continues to grow as an absolute number as a percentage of the total state population (Juneau, 2009). American Indians comprise 6% of the state's population, comprising one of the largest percentages of American Indian state populations in the United States. Based on the 2000 census data, per capita median income ranges from \$7,326 on Rocky Boy's Reservation to \$14,503 on the Flathead Reservation (Haynes, 2011).

This study partnered with three American Indian reservations in Montana – Flathead Reservation, Rocky Boy's Reservation, and Fort Peck Reservation. Data collection took place in eight separate communities throughout these three AI reservations.

### ***Reservation descriptions.***

*Flathead Reservation.* The Flathead reservation is home to the Selish, Ksanka and Qlispe people, also more commonly known as the Salish, Kootenai, and Pend d'Oreille tribal nations,

and is located in northwestern Montana. There are over 7,000 enrolled members with about 4,000 residing on the reservation, along with 1,100 other American Indians and 10,000 non-Indians. There are five K-12 public schools, numerous public elementary schools, one private tribal school, and one tribal college on Flathead reservation.

*Rocky Boy's Reservation.* The Rocky Boy reservation is home to the Chippewa and Cree tribes in north-central Montana. This is the state's poorest and smallest reservation, with approximately 3,600 people residing on the reservation and a total enrolled membership of just over 5,700 members. There are two K-12 public schools and one tribal college. The reservation has two main school districts; Box Elder and Rocky Boy.

*Fort Peck Reservation.* The Fort Peck reservation is home to the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes in the northeastern corner of Montana. This reservation has 10,000 enrolled members, 6,000 of which reside on the reservation. There are five school districts located on the Fort Peck Reservation; two K-12 schools, two high schools and six elementary schools.

### **Research Procedures**

This study was an interactive process, involving researchers and members of the community throughout the course of the study. Efforts were directed at creating an equal partnership between the research facilitators and community members. Activities such as identification of research questions, interview guide development, development of tribal community capacity dimensions, and the formulation of capacity building strategies were completed in a participatory format.

# Reservations and Associated Tribes of Montana

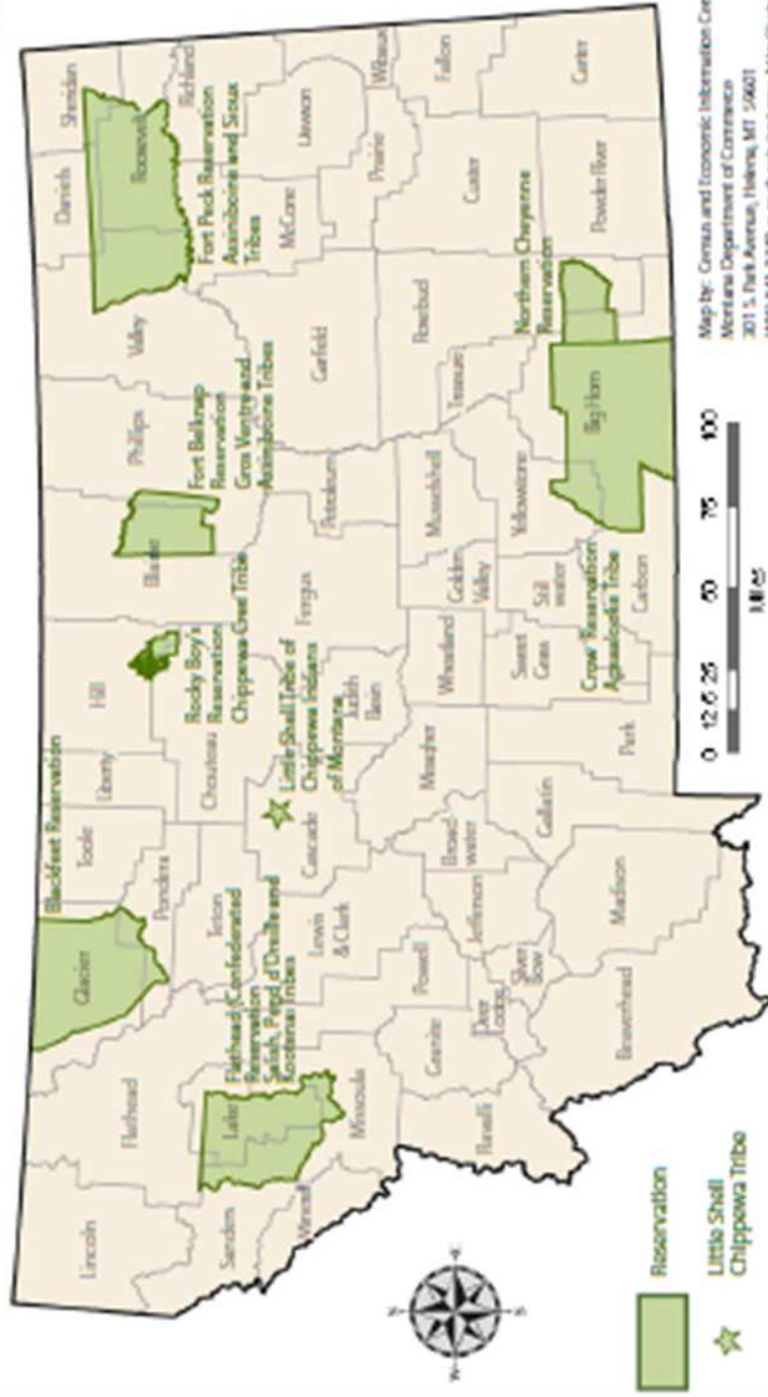


Figure 2. American Indian reservations and associated tribes of Montana

## **Protection of Human Subjects**

The research project in its entirety and consent forms were reviewed and approved by the University of Montana and Montana State University Institutional Review Boards [IRB] (See Appendix A).

## **Theoretical Foundations**

***Socio-ecological model.*** The socio-ecological approach to health posits that health and quality of life are impacted by broad layers of influence (Doyle, Ward, & Oomen-Early, 2010). These broad layers include both individual and social factors, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, community, and public policy (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz, 1988). The socio-ecological model was employed in this study as the orientation to where capacity exists; capacity is viewed as present across the social-ecological spectrum of community, from intrapersonal to public policy.

***Grounded theory.*** Grounded theory is an approach to generating theories (Denscombe, 2010). This approach is particularly useful in ‘small-scale projects using qualitative data for the study of human interaction’, and for ‘those whose research is exploratory and focused on particular settings’ (p.110). Empirical fieldwork was the centerpiece of this approach, with the imperative that theories are ‘grounded’ in the data, or that theories emerge directly from empirical research. Grounded theory methods include data collection in the field, amassing as much detail as possible about particular situations, and to subsequently analyze the data and generate theories directly from the data. This approach differs from research that embarks upon testing a theory, and instead requires that a researcher start out with an open mind,

without any preconceived theory that might dictate relevancies in concepts and hypotheses (Denscombe, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In keeping with the exploratory and 'real world' applicability aims of this study, grounded theory provides a pragmatic approach to addressing real needs of a community.

### **Qualitative Methods**

This study utilized qualitative research methods, which are appropriate based both on the exploratory nature of the study, and the cultural context. Qualitative methods are particularly effective when research questions are exploratory and there is little information and understanding about the subject(s) in question. At this point, elements of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process are unknown. Qualitative methods are also culturally appropriate, accepted, and useful when working with tribal communities (Christopher, 2005; Christopher, Burhansstipanov & Knows His Gun McCormick, 2009; LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009). An iterative process was used to reveal strengths and gaps in tribal community capacity; in this way, knowledge gained at all stages of research can be utilized to inform the research process (Ferreira & Gendron, 2011). Qualitative methods allowed for the people who know their environment and their relationship to that environment best to express their knowledge and values, instilling data with culturally contextual information (Ferreira & Gendron, 2011).

### **Data Collection**

Preferred data collection methods within grounded theory qualitative research are relatively unstructured – this allows the data to be collected in a 'raw' state (Denscombe, 2010). For the

purposes of this study, data collection methods included key-informant interviews and the collection of field notes for added contextual data.

***Participants.*** Participants for key informant interviews were adults over the age of 18. Seventeen participants from American Indian reservation communities were interviewed across the three reservations. Initial contact was made with community members known by researchers due to experience and previous research within communities. Snowball sampling was then used to identify key informant participants, where community members initially contacted by the researchers were asked to identify other participants, and those participants were then asked to identify other individuals appropriate for participation. These community members were individuals holding a position in the community that required grant writing, either by position duty requirement or by financial necessity. Key informants are individuals who know what is going on in a specific community – the purpose of a key informant interview is to gather information from a wide range of community members who have firsthand knowledge about the community or a specific issue (Carroll, 2005). Key informant interviews as a method for data collection provided advantages such as detailed, rich information, and the opportunity to clarify questions and responses if needed. Disadvantages to this utilizing this method included the challenge of reaching and scheduling time with individuals in rural and often remote locations with busy schedules, and the difficulty of generalizing results to a broader population based on the relatively modest number of interviews (Carroll, 2011). Key

informant interviews are appropriate when attempting to gain in-depth, candid information about a community issue.

**Interview setting.** Interviews took place in the community of work for each participant. Each participant chose his or her own preference for interview location; due to the necessity of travel for the participants and/or researchers, this was based on what was feasible for both. Sixteen of the interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participant, while one interview was documented through notes on response and context taken by the researcher due to difficulties with the audio recorder.

**Interview guide.** A semi-structured interview guide was collaboratively developed using an iterative process involving university-based researchers and tribal community members (see Appendix C). A comprehensive literature review on health promotion funding procurement, community capacity, tribal community capacity, capacity building and funding partnerships between communities and funding agencies was developed by two researchers and compiled into one document which served to inform the development of broad categories for interview questions. This process included three university researchers whom individually read the literature review and created her own general framework of broad categories for interview questions; the three frameworks were then compared, and a consensus-based process was used to collaboratively develop one final framework including key categories for interview questions for members of tribal communities. These broad categories included topics such as how tribal community members find out about funding opportunities, motivations and influences for applying for a funding opportunities, and tribal communities and funding

agencies learning about one another. Further collaboration between researchers helped to refine and focus specific interview questions within each broad topic, and develop probes which might help to clarify and deepen responses. After consensus was reached by the researchers the interview guide, it was piloted with four American Indian key-informants to ensure cultural appropriateness, clarity, and identification of potential barriers or gaps. Pilot tests were completed in an interactive format, with one university researcher asking the interview guide questions and a key informant responding to the content and structure of each question, along with answering each question. Modifications were completed after each pilot test, so that alterations from the initial pilot were completed before the second pilot, and further changes from the second pilot were completed before the third pilot test, and so on.

In keeping with the socio-ecological model and core assumptions of community capacity, the interview guide included questions to assess individual (for example, “how do you find out about funding opportunities?”); social (for example, “what community groups exist that currently help in applying for funds?”); organizational (“is there a formal process/protocol that your agency/community has for decided on applying for funds?”); community (“how can your community share funding resources?”); and environmental levels of influence. The three researchers selected to complete interviews attended a collaborative meeting with one another, where interviews were practiced, clarifications were made regarding subtle and overt meanings of terms, and process of interviews were discussed and agreed upon. The interview guide was subsequently employed to complete qualitative key informant interviews with



community members working in funding procurement in tribal communities regarding strengths and gaps in community capacity in relation to successful funding partnerships with funding agencies.

**Field notes.** Field notes were collected by researchers at each of the three communities. Researchers documented the social and political climate of each community visit, details on the context of the interview, and notes from observation of meetings or conferences attended while in each community. Field notes were utilized to provide contextual data to supplement key informant interview data.

### **Data Analysis**

Results from key-informant interviews served to identify themes of capacity dimensions, and main themes within these dimensions, for tribal communities. Audio recorded interviews were transcribed employing a naturalized approach, where the 'real' language of the interview was transcribed in as much detail as possible (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). The naturalized approach to transcription maintains the grounded theory methodological assumptions of this study. Transcriptions were 100% compared to audio recording by a researcher, then analyzed using content analysis described by Guba and Lincoln (1992), Strauss and Corbin (1994) and Patton (1987, 2002). Content analysis focuses on meanings, themes, and patterns that may be manifest or latent in interview data and in this way goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts or interviews. Standard steps of content analysis from preparing the data to writing up the study were followed and are described below (also, see

Figure 5 for a step-by-step visual of data analysis). One interview was not audio-recorded due to technological difficulties; this interview was documented through notes taken by the researcher. These notes were incorporated into the data analysis process described below. QSR International's NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software was used to code transcript (and notes) content.

**First Cycle Coding.** First and second cycle coding were used to organize data and identify prominent dimensions and themes. During the first cycle coding, initial coding in the form of process and in vivo coding was utilized. Initial coding is appropriate for qualitative studies, and consists of organizing qualitative data into related groups and comparing them for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). Initial coding is intended as a starting point to provide the researcher with analytic leads for further exploration, and, particularly in grounded theory, to identify which direction to take the study (Saldana, 2009; Glaser, 1978). Process coding uses gerunds ("-ing" words) to search for patterned actions and interactions, and consequences of actions/interactions, while in vivo coding is meant to "capture behaviors or processes which will explain to the analyst how the basic problem of the actors is resolved or processed" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33).

To complete content analysis for the first cycle codebook, members of the research team (MP, BB and SC) completed a coding and data analysis training session. Responses in the interviews were then analyzed inductively, meaning that themes emerged from the data instead of being decided *a priori* (Patton, 2002). Different levels of the socio-ecological

framework were revisited during this process, and remained a relevant paradigm as dimensions and themes arose from the data. Content analysis was performed in an iterative process, whereby three researchers (MP, BB and SC) read all transcripts and independently created an outline of emergent themes and labels for the phenomena identified, then met to triangulate the results of their separate coding and to establish inter-subjective criteria for coding. Redundancies and semantic equivalencies were eliminated through consensus. The unit of analysis for coding was individual themes. Themes are units of meaning that can be expressed as a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire interview. A first cycle codebook was established, and one researcher (MP) coded all transcripts utilizing the first cycle codebook. Interviews were coded using the constant comparative method which entails ongoing comparison of new instances of a theme with those already coded under that theme (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). A random selection of 10% of the interviews were then read and coded (utilizing the first cycle codebook) by a project researcher (SC), and the coded pages were compared to the previously coded pages. A kappa statistic of 0.85 was reached, indicating sufficient agreement in coding.

**Second Cycle Coding.** Researchers (MP and SC) then employed second cycle coding methods to establish a second cycle codebook. In keeping with the systematic approach of grounded theory, focused coding was utilized as the second cycle coding method. Second cycle coding methods are ways of reorganizing and reanalyzing data coded through first cycle methods (Saldana, 2009, p.149). Examples of second cycle coding reorganization may be

recoding data with more accurate words or phrases, merging conceptually similar codes, and assessing value of infrequent or marginal codes which arose out of the first cycle (Saldana, 2009, p.149). Focused coding is applied to define “the most salient categories” in the data, and “requires decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46, 57). Focused coding was utilized to help reorganize, refine, and condense themes which arose during the first cycle coding.

The second cycle codebook was then applied to the first cycle coded transcripts to ensure accuracy of coding and any coding modifications based on reorganization of codes were completed. The data analysis steps are depicted in Table 2.

**Themes.** QSR International’s NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software was used to facilitate coding, and also served as a database for organizing the coded data. Field notes were employed to support, contextualize, and supplement emergent categories found through the data analysis process. Code prominence was not the sole basis upon which dimensions and themes were given attention; all dimensions and themes identified in the second cycle codebook are acknowledged as noteworthy elements, and incorporated into the results.

Although grounded theory was employed as a foundational approach to data collection and analysis, it is important to mention the role of the semi-structured interview questions in the development of themes and capacity dimensions. As previously described, interview questions were organized into broad topics with specific questions addressing various elements of community capacity identified in the literature across the social-ecological spectrum of

community. Although data analysis and theme emergence was completed outside the confines of the interview guide structure, themes which arose were closely linked to the broad topics addressed in the interview guide and sub-themes were often closely linked to the specific interview questions within each broad topic. Participant response commonalities within broad and specific questions (such as the significance of networks in community awareness of funding opportunities or the prevalence of community need woven throughout the topic of ‘things that influence the community decision to apply’) were, however, viewed as unique to the context of the participant base.

Table 2. Data analysis steps

<b>Data Analysis Steps</b>	<b>Procedures</b>	<b>Description</b>
Step 1	Approach to transcription	Researchers reflected upon the purpose of the study and decided on a naturalized approach to transcription
Step 2	Transcription	17 interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist utilizing a naturalized approach
Step 3	Transcripts 100% checked against audio recordings	One researcher listened to audio recordings and simultaneously read transcribed interviews to check for transcription accuracy
Step 4	Researcher triangulation of themes and establishment of first-cycle codebook	(a) Three researchers read interview transcripts and utilized content analysis to independently create frameworks for emergent themes and labels
		(b) Researchers then met in-person to triangulate themes. Through a consensus-based process, a final

		codebook was delineated. Field notes were incorporated to provide specific community context while coming to consensus on the final codebook.
Step 5	First cycle coding	Utilizing the codebook, one researcher coded each interview transcript using QSR International’s NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software
Step 6	Coding agreement	(a) 10% of the total coded pages were read and coded (utilizing the first cycle codebook) by an additional researcher
		(b) The two separate sets of coded pages were then compared, and a kappa statistic of 0.85 agreement was determined
Step 7	Second cycle coding	The researchers then discussed each disagreement in coding and utilized a consensus-based process to establish a second cycle codebook, reconciling and reorganizing code and text interpretations
Step 8	Final coding for themes	Utilizing the second-cycle codebook, one researcher used QSR International’s NVivo 9 qualitative data analysis software to double-check and, if needed, modify, 100% of coded transcripts to ensure appropriate coding labels

**Capacity dimensions.** Dimensions of tribal community capacity as it relates to the funding application process were identified. Emergent categories were organized based on common properties of themes, then concentrated into core dimensions.

**Capacity building strategies.** The contextual dimensions of capacity, specific actions themed in key informant interviews, and researcher knowledge and understanding of tribal

reservation communities in Montana, along with current literature on Western and indigenous capacity building served as a foundation for suggesting potential basic capacity building strategies. In keeping with grounded theory methodology, suggestions were developed out of the data through a persistent process of comparing ideas with existing data, and, for the exploratory purposes of this study, maintaining an emphasis on discovery (Denscombe, 2010). The socio-ecological perspective of health and community remained a framework for the development of capacity building strategies that may be applied throughout levels of community, from intrapersonal to societal.

**Researcher's role in data analysis.** Grounded theory methodology depends on several key characteristics; utilizing empirical field research as a starting point, developing analysis with constant reference to fieldwork data, employing an iterative process in data analysis, producing explanations that are meaningful for the subjects of research, and adoption of an emergent design. While emergent themes and subsequent theories arise directly from the raw, qualitative data, grounded theory 'accepts that researchers cannot be entirely neutral and that any meaning attached to any data involves some kind of interpretation by the researcher' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 119). Corbin and Strauss (2008) acknowledge as part of grounded theory development the significant role of the researcher and the existence of alternative perspectives and constructions of reality. Because the intentions of this exploratory study were to illuminate and build upon dimensions of capacity contextually specific to tribal communities in Montana, the Western-based researchers (interviewers, transcriptionist, and coders) -

remained mindful of the raw qualitative data collected directly from predominantly indigenous community members. Researchers sustained significant effort throughout the data collection and analysis process to remain true to the data and to let the language speak for itself, rather than apply preconceived perspectives or force Western views upon the data. Despite these efforts, the impact of Western-based researcher bias in this qualitative, exploratory study is acknowledged.



## **Chapter IV: Results**

The purpose of this study was to (1) examine the capacity of Montana American Indian reservation communities in relation to the interactive process of funding application and procurement, and (2) utilize these results to inform specific capacity building strategies to increase successful funding applications from tribal communities to health promotion funding agencies.

The results chapter will provide general results regarding interviews completed and participant demographics. All themes identified in the interview responses through the content analysis process will be addressed. As previously mentioned, these themes were closely linked to broad topics and specific questions presented in the semi-structured interview guide. Each of these themes will be introduced, and quotes from participants will be utilized to highlight each theme. Themes which were expressed as particularly essential to success in the funding application process, or commonalities within and across themes, were subsequently identified and grouped into five dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process.

### **Key Informant Interviews**

Seventeen key-informant interviews were completed within the three designated Montana tribal reservations; Flathead, Rocky Boy's, and Fort Peck. The interviews lasted between 35 and 136 minutes, and each interview took place in a location designated by the participant, such as an office, community hall, or boardroom.

### **Context of reservation visits and data collection**

Field notes served to describe the context of each visit to each reservation for data collection.

The geographic distance from cities, weather, and social and political goings-on in each community are considered to be influential in defining the lifestyle and culture in each community. Therefore, this information is briefly noted in order to provide a local understanding and background of the researchers' experience in each community.

A total of five interviews took place on the Flathead reservation. From a proximity standpoint, the Flathead reservation is the closest reservation to the University of Montana research site. Therefore, day trips were made to four separate communities throughout the reservation during the spring of 2012. Established social connections provided for welcoming visits to each community, and the researcher was included in a community planning meeting for a grant-funded local event promoting alternative transportation.

Another five interviews took place on the Fort Peck reservation. Researchers took two separate several-day trips to communities on the Fort Peck reservation, as a one-way driving distance from the research site at Montana State University to participating communities was at minimum 470 miles. These trips took place during the winter season of 2011/2012, which provided for unpredictable weather conditions. Researchers on Fort Peck were able to attend meetings regarding tribal transportation planning, meet with a variety of individuals despite winter weather obstacles, and were invited to be involved in a sweat-lodge event with welcoming community members.

Seven interviews took place on Rocky Boy's reservation, which also required two separate several-day trips due to significant driving and time commitment (approximately 270 miles one-way from the University of Montana/Missoula site). Interviews on Rocky Boy's reservation took place during the winter season of 2012. A kind welcome and invitations to attend a community fair, listen to stories of veterans over lunch at the senior center, and observe a grant-seekers meeting while on the reservation allowed for generous social and cultural involvement despite temperatures of -38F and winter weather advisories while on the reservation.

### **Participant Demographics**

Participants completed a brief demographic survey. All participants (n=17) were between the ages of 25-64 years. Seventy percent (n=12) of the participants self-identified as Native American, 18% (n=3) identified as White, non-Hispanic, and 12% (n=2) identified as both Native American and White, non-Hispanic. Five men (30%) were included in the study and 12 women (70%) were included. All participants (n=17) reported attending some college, while five participants (30%) held college degrees and ten participants (59%) held graduate degrees. Participants were also asked to identify his or her role in the community. Community role responses included those such as grant writers, health program specialists, health center planners, school board members, program directors, tribal transportation planners, certified diabetes educator, collegiate department chair, health and economic planners, elementary teacher and parks and recreation director.

### Themes Identified Through Key Informant Interviews

Data from the key informant interviews were separated into four overarching themes; (1) communication within the community regarding funding opportunities, (2) community decision to apply for funding, (3) tribal communities and funding agencies learning about one another, and (4) capacity for funding application process. Within each of these themes, prominent sub-themes were identified, and if appropriate, sub-theme elements were identified. Table 3 summarizes themes, sub-themes, and sub-theme element, followed by an explanation of each theme and sub-theme. Direct quotations from participants have been added and bulleted where appropriate to authenticate themes. While a naturalized approach to transcription allowed for nuances in verbal response and context of conversation during the data analysis process, direct quotations exemplified in this section have been modified to remove conversational fillers, such as ‘um’, and unintentionally repeated words to provide the most clear and concise participant response examples possible.

Table 3. Themes, sub-themes, and sub-theme elements

Emergent Theme	Sub-theme(s)	Sub-theme categories
(1) Communication between funding agencies and tribal communities about funding opportunities	(a) Networks	Formal networks
		Informal networks
	(b) Going out to look for funding opportunities	
	(c) Things coming in from funding agencies to tribal communities	

(2) Community decision to apply	(a) Things that motivate/influence the community decision to apply for funding	<i>Sustainability of funding opportunity</i>
		<i>Relationship with funding agency</i>
		<i>Technical assistance available</i>
		<i>Past success with funding agency</i>
		<i>The amount of funding is worth the amount of work to apply and carry-out grant</i>
		<i>Community values</i>
		<i>Community need (including actual need and real impact)</i>
		<i>Equitable distribution of funding</i>
		<i>High dollar grants</i>
		<i>Directive from leadership</i>
	(b) Things that are barriers to funding application	<i>Community participation</i>
<i>Social-political climate</i>		
(3) Tribal communities and funding agencies learning about one another	(a) Things funding agencies need to know about tribal communities	
	(b) Ways that funding agencies can learn about tribal communities	
	(c) Things that tribal communities need to know about funding agencies	

	(d) Ways that tribal communities can find out about funding agencies	
(4) Resources for success in the funding application process	(a) Human and material	
	(c) External relationships	

**Theme 1. Communication between funding agencies and tribal communities about funding opportunities.** There were several responses regarding the interface between tribal community members and funding agencies. Issues addressing the ways in which tribal communities organized to find out about funding opportunities and the ways in which funding agencies made opportunities known were inherent in nearly every interview. Prominent sub-themes include (a) networks, (b) community members going out to look for funding opportunities, and (c) funding opportunity information coming from funding agencies to communities.

**(1) Sub-theme a. Networks.** Networks were the central way in which information regarding funding opportunities was shared within communities and between communities and external entities. This included bringing about awareness of funding opportunities, creating partnerships for funding proposals, and distributing or assigning funding opportunities to the appropriate sectors or individuals. The connectedness of individuals within the community and the value given to sharing information between friends, associates, and co-workers through email, phone calls, face-to-face interaction, or mail, was of particular importance. Networks

were referred to as formal or informal ties between individuals that share information regarding availability of funding opportunities. Thus, networks were grouped into either formal or informal networks.

**Formal networks.** Formal networks refer to a network of individuals who work in the community across various sectors, such as health services, economic development, and social services, who meet and/or communicate on a regular schedule to share information about available funding, decide who is going to apply for what opportunities, and generally distribute opportunities so as to avoid duplication of effort within the community. Across the three American Indian reservations and six separate communities represented in the study, one community maintained a formal network for communication regarding funding opportunities and distribution of effort for application. By those who were part of a formal network, it was seen as a strength within the community, and it increased to ability of the community to match the right community program and grant writer with the right funding opportunity;

- *Yeah, we go through that. Like I said, you know, toss it among us and decide who's gonna, who might be the best, you know, writer.*
- *A formal process...we get it into a formal process of deciding... are we going to apply. If so, what department is going to apply? If so, what uh, grant writer or grant writing team is going to apply. Um, and those're, those're the major decision points that, that, really need to be made, and whether it be a decision by the council or, or some individual, such as planning director, or whether it be a consensus type thing, or whether it be based upon recommendations.*

Another strength of maintaining a formal network was to be able to better share information within the community so that sectors within the community can work together to share funding resources;

- *The first aspect is the information sharing and not so much, I don't wanna say division of labor...there's no reason why... a department A and department B can't work together and share resources that, ok, yes, this particular grant is going to come under this department, but at the same time, we're going to be able to utilize these services and this funding to help out another department, in something similar that they're trying to do.*

The challenge of creating and maintaining a formal network for funding opportunity sharing and distribution across various sectors of the community is fully acknowledged as well, with major barriers to formal networks including staff turnover, the amount of time and effort needed by usually already overworked grant writers to attend and participate in meetings, the tendency of the meetings to be long.

**Informal networks.** Informal networks were social or professional ties between individuals across the community sector that allowed for the spread and knowledge regarding funding opportunities. Participants often mentioned hearing about funding opportunities through coworkers, colleagues, and other tribal members;

- *Different people that I met at school and whatnot, they send me things. There's job, if there's grant programs out there.*



- *Having contacts I think that's, you know for me that's pretty much all I go off of right now, then like I said, you find something and it leads you to other places, other links.*
- *Well, you know lotta times it just, information is sent by email, but it's... you know I think really what, people have personal contacts. And then they can direct opportunities to different people or programs.*

Informal networks also were viewed as a way to connect specific funding opportunities with appropriate community sectors or programs;

- *Other people... who might come across a grant opportunity but doesn't quite fit them but might fit us better? Lots a times will forward, forward opportunities on ta me.*
- *Just other people, yeah. Like tribal, like um, tribal education may see something that comes up and they say oh this might be something you could apply for.*
- *Well... I think a lot of it is just, you know, yeah, whatever information they get from their own, you know, their own offices. Like let's say the school. The superintendent. When he becomes aware of a grant, he'll just route it over ta (name). You know, housing, they'll route it over t'(name). They kind of know what information they come across.*

Similarly, informal communication between community sectors was also viewed as a way to promote sharing of resources within the community – if a specific funding opportunity may not fit one program or sector, sharing that opportunity with another program or sector may help to promote good relations and future collaboration between sectors;

- *So it's putting resources together? We have the funding out there, we just don't know it's there until we start talking to each other and going and, and connecting with 'em.*

- *That um, we've had different entities, or agencies or groups, sort of band together...because sometimes one person's little program isn't enough to actually qualify for all the pieces so we need IHS behind us and we need, you know, the tribes behind us, and we need you know, couple other entities from around the community like the schools partnering with us and whatnot, to be able to actually qualify for something.*

The connection between informal networking for funding opportunity awareness is also understood within the context of specific needs for American Indian tribal communities on reservations;

- *Personal contacts is probably the more... I think appropriate and it influences others an it, an say well geez you know somebody's thinking of us an thinking that there's a opportunity here ta may fit the need that we have and, and 'cause they understand a little bit more of you know the nature of the infrastructure of reservations.*

Concerns were expressed regarding the effectiveness of informal networks, as an informal network, by nature, lacks structure. Therefore, barriers to informal networks were also addressed, such as lack of information sharing;

- *People need to talk and they need to share, but nobody does it.*
- *Once in a while I get something from (name) but that's about it. What I put out there is... more than... an I'm frustrated with it.*

And social and political boundaries that may affect willingness to share information regarding funding opportunities;

- *So I think that's the biggest thing is that some people don't really want others to know. They wanna keep the corner market.*

- *There is, they could do a lot more, it's an unfortunately we have all it takes on a reservation an lotta people're real territorial.*

**(1) Sub -theme b. Going out to look for funding opportunities.** While networks refer specifically to social and professional communication between individuals within the community, another common theme is utilizing tools such as internet websites that allow for searching for funding opportunities and subscribing to email notifications or list-serves that provide notification. Tribal community members reported the convenience and frequency with which they were able to search for funding opportunities on their own on websites such as “grants.gov” and other federal and private foundation funding opportunity databases;

- *It's mainly online. Everybody pretty much goes online.*
- *I go to grants.gov and then look for something specific, because you know how grants.gov is, it's large, you know.*
- *Look at, you know, that's, I used to be a grant writer, I worked in tribal planning for a couple years, so once grants.gov came out, I just made it a habit of doing that. So every week I do that, and then for other things like for Robert Woods Johnson or non-federal sources? I'll just type it in once in a while and check it out.*
- *I review grants.gov. Website, you know at the end a the week, keep track what the latest, grant opportunity. I go to ihs.gov to find out what they have. And emails, I kind of subscribe to foundation center, to emails, and couple others that provide service, you know they have their website, their email, they have their list of opportunities*
- *And so I don't get, I don't get much in the way of the, in the way of mail. And I almost never get a phone call or anything, so it is predominantly Internet, either searches or*

*subscriptions that I get through the Internet. And in this day and age, that doesn't surprise me (laughs).*

Participants felt that going out to look for funding opportunities by utilizing the internet was a method of going out to look for funding that allowed for searches specifically conducive to their own particular community sector or interests;

- *So you have, I feel that my chances for finding grants are better by looking at those specifically those foundations that target or make a special effort to fund programs in rural communities.*

The sentiment of American Indian reservation communities as being rural and needing to be independent was also expressed within this sub-theme, particularly in relation to needing to go out to look for funding opportunities on one's own rather than rely on external agencies making the first contact;

- *A lot of times we're just on our own, so whatever we can find.*
- *And then you start connecting after that, and then you can get there. 'Cause here we're too remote to rely on someone sending us the information*
- *Sometimes you don't know what you're looking for; you're just looking to see if there's any funding opportunities that might be able to apply for and to, that would meet our needs. And sometimes you have no idea what that funding opportunity is. But if you can't find it, then you can't apply.*

**(1) Sub-theme c. Things coming in from funding agencies to tribal communities.** The ways in which funding agencies are able to communicate funding opportunities to members of

tribal communities are varied. The method of communication that was reported most often was emails sent directly from funding agencies to program directors or tribal council members; however several recommendations for more effective methods of advertisement for funding opportunities for tribal communities included notifications on local radio stations and inclusion in the tribal newsletters or newspapers. While many participants actively searched for funding opportunities, many expressed that more direct notification from funding agencies would improve the likelihood of awareness of funding opportunities and therefore instances of application for these opportunities.

- *I don't get on the Internet and look for anything. It's only if it's brought to my attention – I don't have time to go out looking for stuff.*
- *And you can't apply for something you don't know about. I think the federal department transportation probably does a much better job at getting the word out.*

Other responses included an emphasis on the effectiveness of receiving regular emails from funders;

- *ACEI, its American Childhood Education International. And so they send out weekly updates about what grants are available. I get, I have grants now where those funders will write and let us know, here's a new round of grants that we could apply for.*
- *So a lotta those're coming from foundations or funding sources, the old fashion mail it n post it, you know, I don' know if that's the way to communicate anymore. I would say, putting it on the Internet.*

Several participants referred to specific individuals serving as liaisons between funding agencies and communities, and the usefulness of having direct contact with such liaisons;

- *(Speaking about a state coordinator for a federal funding agency) Since he's taken over, he's, you know he's been real actively involved in encouraging other groups...and, in getting the word out there. That there is or was funding available that more communities should apply for that, so.*
- *She's really a wonderful person at, I'm glad we have this stuff. She's the state coordinator... And she'll, she'll contact us'n say hey, fund, this funding is available, you know. So that State Indian Coordinator. That's a, that's a good position to have for communication.*

**Summary of theme 1 results.** The theme of communication was the most comprehensively discussed issue in nearly every interview completed in this study. Based on the data, it is evident that networks, whether informal or formal, are essential to the distribution of information regarding funding opportunities and prioritization of funding opportunities with tribal communities. Direct experience was another major focus within the theme of communication; whether it was community members going out to look for funding or information coming in from funding agencies to community members, an emphasis was made on the appreciation of direct experience with representatives of funding agencies.

Based on the prevalence of data regarding networks within the community and the key mechanism of networks to bring about awareness and prioritize funding opportunities, and

function as a method for group decision making regarding which organization or individual will apply for funding, *networks* was identified as a dimension of tribal community capacity, (see Table 4 for community capacity dimensions).

**Theme 2. Community decision to apply.** Another contributing factor to the funding application process between tribal communities and funding agencies is the various factors affecting the community decision to actually apply for funding. Once a community sector has discovered an opportunity, whether it be through networking, actively searching, or being notified by the funding agency, a host of circumstances influence the decision to apply or not to apply. Within this theme, two sub-themes were identified; (A) things that motivate/influence community to apply for funding, and (B) things that are barriers to funding application.

**(2) Sub-theme a. Things that motivate/influence the community to apply for funding.**

These were a series of elements that influenced the tribal community positively in the decision to apply for funding.

**Sustainability of funding opportunity.** In the sense of providing funds for creating self-sustaining programs and capacity within community programs, and in regards to funding opportunities that may continue to provide additional funding in the future, sustainability motivated participants to apply for funding. For example, in regard to funding opportunities that provide training for increased skills and knowledge for community members;

- *...it's not wasted money and, what you paid for is gonna be there after the funds are gone.*

- *Employment's a big thing up here. You know we need, that definitely affects our decision to apply. If it's gonna bring employment we go after it and keep reapplying, so the needs greatly impact our decision to, to reapply for funding.*

While sustainability was referred to as an important aspect influencing the decision to apply for funding positively, the prospect of continuing services and funding to support those services was presented as a continuous dilemma;

- *We just keep turnin' around and applying because it just seems to happen that it connects and connects and connects, and so it does have bearing on how we proceed into our next, but, the reality is that every cash cow does dry up (laughs) and where, and in, in the back of our minds it's like, ok, where do we go after this is up. How're we gonna, um, manage to get our kids, where we want to without creating too much chaos.*

**Relationship with funding agency.** The direct relationship between grant writers and funding agency representatives was of great value to tribal community members. Based on participant responses, it was clear that direct experience with representatives from funding agencies was a very strong influence on the decision to apply for funding. These valued instances of direct experience – whether by phone call or in-person visit – were linked to a strong positive feeling of relationship between tribal community and funding agency, and increased likelihood of community to apply for funding. Experiences when attending information sessions regarding the funding opportunities and when calling or emailing the funding agency with questions regarding the funding opportunity were also often cited as influential in the decision-making process of whether to apply for funding.



- *It's just nice when they're there and they talk to you and let you know what's going on.*
- *Make sure that you're in good contact and in good stead with those program people in DC or in Helena. Because, you know, they're people too.*
- *It's very important to develop that strong working relationship with the funding agency, and sometimes that helps.*

There was also an emphasis on the helpfulness of representatives from funding agencies coming to visit tribal reservation communities; this kind of personal contact serves to positively influence the decision to apply;

- *I think for somebody living in DC, it's, that's a whole different world than comin' out to a reservation where they're able to see the extreme poverty sometimes that we live in, an plus they're able to see the rural, the ruralness, and the weather! You know.*

**Technical assistance available.** This element also refers to the relationships with the funding agency; receiving consistent, easily-accessed technical assistance from funding agencies was another reoccurring positive influence when applying for funding;

- *It's very helpful especially given – I keep goin' back to the ruralness of us, but there's not as many trained or educated or, whatever (laughing) you might wanna call that in this, in the general area, so it's harder, and then the few that're working who are educated, don't have the time, and so having that expertise and then the time from somebody else to guide you so that you're, what time you do put into it is well spent?*
- *The (funding) organization it really makes it easier for us if they're, they're to give us some expertise in applying in gathering the data, in measurements...*

- *All of that technical stuff, one person might understand how to do that in order to write the grant. But really it's more than that. It, and it costs a lotta money to train a lot of people so that everybody understand how d' do that, so yeah. Training.*
- *I think it's pretty important because... some of these applications are very involved. And you don't want to spend so much time not sure what you're doing is what they need in the application, so um, I think it's pretty big.*

**Past success with funding agency.** In addition to a personal relationship with funding agency representatives, having past success with funding agencies – including receiving funding from an agency, meeting the requirements of the funding opportunity, and maintaining a positive relationship with the funding agency representatives, inspired community members to apply for future funding opportunities through that agency.

- *It makes you want to apply for a continued, to apply and do a good job on, on what they require. Because you say that they've, you're not just another funded program, you're a very... active interest in seeing the results of what their funding has accomplished on your community.*
- *I think for the most part what it does is develop a relationship as well, between the grantor, you know, the grantee an, and so it works out well that way.*

**Amount of funding balanced with the amount of work.** The amount of time and energy to apply for a funding opportunity was often closely tied to the dollar amount of the funding opportunity. Responses included a strong connection between motivation in applying for funding and a perception of balance between the amount of work going into the application and the amount of funding received.

- *So it's a matter of time, like I said how much effort you have to put in to what you're going to be receiving back.*
- *And amounts that are really small make it really easy to try. Because if you try for a grant that's \$2,000 to pay for blood pressure cuffs to you know what a maybe to reduce cardiovascular disease...it would be easy to do, it's easy to meet that goal, spend that money and, and report on it.*

**Community values.** Community values were integral in the decision to apply for funding.

Participants framed incorporation of community values into funding opportunities as fundamental to the decision process; if a funding opportunity aligned well with specific values of a community (in particular, elders, culture, and children), a community was more likely to apply.

- *They (the community) tell us that they want us to focus on youth...We don't have to we plant that idea to them. They already know that and they tell us what they want. So we don't have a, we don't have a problem with not understanding what the community wants. We, we hear it over and over and over again.*
- *(on community values) I think it would be the whole community, from the youth to the elders...*
- *Food is part of our culture and you know, if you're gonna invite any gathering, you better feed 'em! You know, especially your elders, you know, it's part of our culture that's just the thing to feed. So it depends on how creative you are. But your culture does play a big role.*

**Community need.** Closely linked, and almost enveloping the element of community values was the issue of whether a particular funding opportunity was able to match the actual need of the

community and whether the funding opportunity would have a real impact on the community. Participants expressed the appeal of a funding opportunity that will address the actual need of a community. This issue is two-fold, as grant seekers must be in-touch with the actual needs of the community, receiving this information from community members during forums for public discussion, accurate directives from leadership, or through a well-informed department or organization strategic plan, and also be able to find funding that then addresses these needs.

- *And so if it fits the needs of the community... it's worthwhile. But if you're just trying to make it fit just to get the money, then I think those're the ones that people struggle with the most. And that makes sense...because there's no... buy-in from the community possibly, or, or you haven't really thought what are the needs of the community, it's let's just go out n get some money an, and we'll make it work?*
- *There's a list of needs that the council has given us and we try to keep that in mind, and when we do go after grants we try to think of where each part a the money can serve what program. So, you know, as grant writers we're really not in charge of where the money goes, we're just, we just write it. Um, but we don't really oversee so much, we kind of just determine where the highest need at the moment.*
- *Well... I think that's a number one concern, is to see what the needs are.*
- *So you just have to be aware of the community needs, and how to turn that grant in to meet those community needs. All of us grant writers are good at that.*
- *That's when you, when it's written based on a need, not the big dollars.*

In addition to addressing the actual needs of the community was the aspect of whether the funding opportunity would have a real impact on the community. This issue ties in closely to

community values and networking; respondents emphasized that they would be more likely apply for funding if it seemed like the funding opportunity would be able to fit into the community structure and values, and if the funding was able to go to the sectors of the community that had the most need for it.

- *I would rather see a program that has a lot of impact on the communities than a big million dollar grant or something that doesn't fulfill all of the objectives and what purpose is.*
- *If there's some way I can guarantee that it's gonna reach the people that it really needs to reach... I'll do it.*
- *But if it's, you know kind of like if it's self-serving? It, um, it's not as meaningful, but if it's gonna help the community, if it's gonna help community members, then that's key.*
- *And how much is it gonna... improve the community. How much, financially, how much is this really gonna do in the end and how much is it gonna leave them with.*

**Equitable distribution of funding.** Participants described partnering with other sectors or programs in the community when applying for funding, and viewed this as a positive partnership. However, in reference to partnerships with entities external to the tribal community, such as universities and research institutions, a concern for the distribution of funding was expressed. Partnering with external entities was generally described as a positive thing; access to qualified and experienced researchers, technology, etc. was viewed as helpful, however concern was expressed in the distribution of funding between external entities, particularly universities, and tribal communities; a trend recollected by most participants was

the feeling of being taken advantage of by institutions – using data and numbers from the tribal community in order to receive funding, then not giving an equal portion of the funding to the tribal community. Therefore, equitable distribution was a sub-theme element positively affecting the decision to apply for funding if partnering with an external entity.

- *As long as it's accomplishing the same goal, the part of working together doesn't (inhales) um... bother any of us. It's, you know, how's the best way to get what we want. And if we have to split it with somebody in order to get the same goal, I don't think that's a problem at all.*
- *That's a, a big concern...the percentage of who gets what.*
- *We're helping them more than they're helping us. So yes, it really impacts that. You know, especially when a big major university does that, it really impacts whether we're gonna partner up with universities. Whether we get a, our, you know, bigger piece of the pie or at least an equal piece a the pie.*
- *But university relationships, they need to know what their boundaries are, an not just circumvent the tribe's ability to do it for themselves, but defining what that relationship is, that working relationship. An still providing that really good, scientific, or whatever, tech, like if you're gonna do math camp, get some really good math wizzes to come over and help out with it. You know, that's what we need. We need that ability. Not so much the organizational part, you know.*

**High dollar grants.** Although not necessarily presented as a constructive motivator for funding application, and a topic occurring less frequently than other, but still potentially worth mentioned, was the dollar amount. Although community values / need were acknowledged as more ethical motivators, oftentimes high-dollar grants were portrayed as appealing simply

based on the amount of money, particularly in relation to the low-resource state of many communities.

- *I guess again, the big dollar signs really have an impact on what we'll apply for.*

**Directives from leadership.** Responses indicated that community decisions regarding the funding application process in tribal communities are continually under the oversight of community leaders, such as tribal councils, and other members holding positions of leadership in the community. The issue of directives from leadership was presented as an issue that would positively influence the decision to apply, however responses emphasized the importance of informed directives from leadership, such as directives based on real community needs as expressed by community members.

- *This is something I've seen, the council has already made a decision on what t' go after, that, I think that needs t' be revisited too, gives the community more input.*
- *It depends on the county commissioners and where they put their priorities.*
- *You know, I always have to defer to either tribal leadership or organizational leadership to, to tell me.*

As exemplified above, directives from leadership were described as based upon priorities set by community leadership, and the importance of incorporating community input into priorities set by leadership was underlined. A strongly emphasized sentiment within this element was the general lack of community input in priorities set by community leadership; a lack of participation by community members in expressing support or disagreement for funding

opportunities, services, or programs. Participants described that increased participation by tribal community members in such input to community leadership may serve to improve the alignment of actual community needs with the directives from tribal community leadership.

**(2) Sub -theme b. Things that are barriers to funding application.** Barriers were addressed as aspects that prevent the community from applying for funding opportunities; these barriers ranged from the participation levels of the community to specifications of the funding opportunity to the greater socio-political issues in the community that affect willingness to apply for funding opportunities or detract from time and attention for funding opportunities altogether.

**Community participation.** As mentioned above in connection to community leadership, participants expressed that community ‘buy-in’, or at least community input, affects the decision to apply for funding. A general lack of community participation in terms of expressing preference or weighing-in on funding opportunities was a reoccurring issue in tribal communities.

- *That’s a big need here. We need more community input on, on what grants to go after, I know some programs that try public meetings to get their thoughts on what we should be going after, but there’s no participation.*

**Community social-political climate.** A clear barrier in the tribal community decision to apply for funding was the social-political climate; from ‘naysayers’ to community crises, fluctuating



social-political environments affect the time and focus dedicated to the funding application process.

- *If it takes so much resources an so much time and commitment that it makes it very difficult to do? Then we're not gonna... do it. It's just overwhelming enough just to get through life here, in general. It's, it's a rough, tough area.*
- *Because what happens up here in (community name) is, we're so crisis-oriented, you know. When there's a rash of (specific community crisis) then the powers that be, the tribal council will say, hey you grant writers, get us some more funding for (same specific community crisis) prevention. So we have to drop that and go look after (specific community crisis) prevention.*

**Summary of theme 2 results.** While many issues affecting the community decision to apply for funding arose throughout the interviews, analysis revealed the most widely mentioned issues as concerns of sustainability of funding to support community programs and employment, the role community values and community need in prioritizing funding, the appeal of high dollar grants in low-resource communities, and the importance of technical assistance to provide needed service for grant-writers in the community.

Issues that arose under this theme shared the commonality of relating to real community needs - sustainable programs and stable employment and incorporating values into funded programs – and the dilemma of the appeal of high dollar grants even if the funds may not address real community needs and therefore may not have an actual impact on the community. These commonalities were grouped into the community capacity dimension of *community needs*.

**Theme 3. Tribal communities and funding agencies learning about one another.** This theme is closely linked to questions asked regarding how tribal communities and funding agencies might learn more about one another. Participants reflected upon past, current, and potential relations between tribal communities and funding agencies. It was evident that increased dialogue and understanding was desired from the community side. Information that would be helpful for tribal communities and funding agencies to know about one another before engaging in the funding application process, and ways of communicating that information between communities and funding agencies were significant sub-themes.

**(3) Sub -theme a. Things funding agencies need to know about tribal communities.**

Participants were asked what funding agencies needed to know about tribal communities in order to strengthen the funding application process. A frequent desire from tribal community members involved in the grant application process was an increased understanding between the funding agency and potential applicants. From understanding that each American Indian tribe is unique, to an in-person visit from a funding agency representative to better appreciate the social and geographic atmosphere of the reservation, a deeper understanding of each tribal community was viewed as a way to improve funding partnership.

- *Well I think first and foremost they should know that... each tribal community is very different? And each community has... individualistic goals and needs. Whether that be cultural, whether it be financial, and to scope in on a specific tribe an to get to know an it goes back to the question we talked about earlier to get to know what is needed there, would be huge.*

- *I think it's important that they know how... you know, what uh (pause) how much poverty we're living in. How it's so hard to dig your way outta that poverty, you know. Like I said, they don't know unless they come and visit us. We say yeah, our unemployment rate is 60-80%. They don't realize how that impacts a community. And even if they're, if they're federal dollars, it's just a one-time thing sometimes an temporarily. I think federal agencies need to be aware of they need to be aware of our culture and you know, the economic situations we do live in. Otherwise, they don't know where we're coming from when we ask for money for employment or you know, to build up your infrastructure, etcetera.*
- *For somebody living in DC, it's, that's a whole different world than coming out to a reservation where they're able to see the extreme poverty sometimes that we live in, an plus they're able to see the rural, the ruralness, and the weather! You know.*
- *Geographically it's huge. And our programs are spread out all over, all over d' place.*
- *They need to understand, the tribal way of doing things can be different from, say, a city or a county or, or state. They sometimes don't understand the high indirect rates that we have, um, how come you guys have such a high indirect rate? Well, we're a small entity and therefore, the share of keeping the heat and lights on in comparison to the direct services is a higher percentage than, say, at, at some larger institution or, or some city or county. A lot of what they don't understand is budgetary. Other things that they don't understand can be put in, into the category of cultural.*

**(3) Sub -theme b. Ways that funding agencies can learn about tribal communities.**

When posed with the question of how funding agencies might be able to gain a deeper understanding of tribal communities in order to improve funding partnership, common responses placed responsibility on the tribal community to communicate distinct differences

and unique characteristics, in-person visits made by funding agency representatives to reservation communities (preferably with the assistance of a community liaison for improved community integration), and simple phones call to talk informally about the community and funding opportunities.

- *I think the tribal community's responsibility to communicate what are their values, what are their needs, what are their strengths, what's their vision for their community and then how does this funding agency or opportunity meet and match those?*
- *I would say have a person that has a connection. To ease into the situation. A person from here? You know? Or from the community to introduce a person into making those connections. Otherwise people think, you know, a lot of times, I know we had somebody come up that went to the school, and bypassed our kind of our chain of how we worked, and it wasn't well received?*
- *Well, I think it, of course it's always nice to hand somebody a written document. Say here's our community profile, which we do have, you know. But there's nothing better than onsite visits, you know, to say, well let's see what, and even then you're only going to get a superficial, you're not going to get to go into the homes to see how, how they do live. And you're not gonna, jus' judging by abandoned cars in their yard, you're still not gonna get a good glimpse of what, you know. But I think it gives them an idea, you know, when they come to, for example, we had a project officer visit us during the round dance, the veterans round dance. I think it's important to see that you know that, we are a cultural people.*
- *And so I think the best possible way – and, and I realize that, that federal travel dollars for federal employees are very, very limited, but that's the best way for them to understand, is come here, and see for yourself. I guess that, that would be a good way for them to learn.*

- *Why hasn't a funding agency ever called an dsaid, let's have a meeting and let's talk. That's uh, that's how things get done in Indian country. Have a meeting, let's talk. You know, an instead they gotta see this great big long drawn out paper.*

**(3) Sub-theme c. Things that tribal communities need to know about funding agencies.**

Participants were asked what tribal communities need to know about funding agencies in order to strengthen the funding application process; frequent responses included a look at examples of previously funded applications from a particular funding agency and a clear understanding of the priorities of the funding agency. Knowledge of previously funded projects and the fundamental mission of funding agencies would serve to increase understanding of the funding agency, and ultimately help to improve understanding in partnership.

- *Other examples of projects that they funded. So that we can see, does our idea of this application match what other people have had success with.*
- *Maybe what they stand for. What is their purpose. Because I think there are some funding agencies that... the tribes would just say, no we're not interested because this is what you represent and that goes against our values.*

**(3) Sub-theme d. Ways that tribal communities can find out about funding agencies.**

While participants were concerned with having a clear knowledge of the priorities and preferences of funding agencies, methods of learning this information included spending time to read the full request for proposal and information about the funding body (for example, reading the website of the funding agency to better understand the mission and operating principles).

**Summary of theme 3 results.** Every participant interviewed highlighted the significance of the relationship between tribal communities and funding agencies. Responses suggest that better understanding between the two entities may lead to enhanced relationships, which may ultimately increase the opportunity for funding partnerships. Tribal community members recommended that funding agencies broaden understanding of tribal community issues, such as cultural goals and needs specific to each community, the economic condition, and issues unique to rural communities located on reservations. Tribal community members also placed responsibility on community grant writers to learn about the funding agency, particularly the mission of the funding body. Suggestions for methods of communicating this information were those such as in-person visits (tribal community members to agencies and funding agency representatives to tribal communities in Montana), and informal, “check-in” phone calls between tribal communities and funding agencies to improve awareness of funding opportunities and maintain contact throughout the funding application process and even maintain a relationships after the funding process has ended. The dimension of community capacity these themes fit into was *tribal community relationship with funding agencies*.

**Theme 4. Resources for success in the funding application process.** Participants were asked about resources in relation to the funding application process; specifically, which resources currently contributed to success in the funding application process and which resources were needed to improve the funding application process. Responses distinctly addressed human and material resources as a need to improve the funding application process

in tribal communities, and the resource of relationships with entities external to the tribal community. Based on the frequency of response including these two aspects of resources, two categories of capacity for success in the funding application process were (1) resources, such as human resources and material resources, and (2) relationships, or connections, with organizations or networks external to the community.

**(4) Sub-theme a. Human and material resources.** One widely mentioned resource essential to success in the funding application process was able and available individuals to participate in finding opportunities and writing proposals. Participants from a spectrum of human resource positions were interviewed; some individuals shared that there were simply not enough individuals with sufficient knowledge and skill to complete the application process, while others were part of a specifically designated grant-seeking office within a community, and considered this a significant strength. Regardless of position, all participants agreed that human resources are essential for successful funding application.

- *Time. Is huge. That's the big thing is the time.*
- *We don't have money, the only thing that's helped me is what I've learned when I've been involved in writing a grant in the past.*
- *One of the big problems is we don't have just a grants person.*

Access to material resources, such as functional computers, internet, and databases including specific community information such as demographics, health and social trends, or financial

and budgetary information were also common elements considered essential to the funding application process.

- *We really don't have a lot of resources here. I hate to admit that, you know, there's not the technology?*
- *But I always think that what we really lack is people to, to do the technical aspects an when I say technical. I'm talking about um, financial budgets, projections.*

**(4) Sub-theme b. External relationships.** The importance of maintaining positive relationships and open communication with organizations and agencies outside the tribal community is also acknowledged as paramount to success in the funding application process. Key relationships mentioned included those with the state, such as the Office of Public Instruction, and relationships with universities, which provided ideas for funding opportunities or opportunities for partnership.

- *So that's a way we, you know, open communications with federal agency. And some will even visit you.*
- *These conferences you go to cannot be weighed in the cost of the conference. Sometimes they're extraordinary, but the payback in social networking is huge. And so they as an entity – the tribe – has to make sure that they have the educated grant writers or somebody specifically... set up to make sure that they're connecting and, and figuring out how to make that bridge.*
- *As we're moving into you know more of an information, technology area, to stay in touch that way and to work with universities are usually pretty up to speed on the technology and resources and research capability.*



**Summary of theme 4 results.** This theme exposed foundational aspects of the funding application process; the value of individuals who are not only able, but also willing, to engage in the process, and the necessary material resources to support those individuals in a community. This issue transcends intrapersonal resources (computer and writing skills) to organizational priorities (designating grant seekers within departments or schools), to community infrastructural issues, such as internet access and investment in technology and data collection for baseline measures. *Resources*, then, is another multifaceted community dimension in and of itself.

The second aspect of this theme was external relationships. The context provided for external relationships, namely the importance of networking at conferences and networking with universities, shared commonalities with the previously addressed community capacity dimension of *networks*. While this dimension was originally designated to incorporate networks within the community, allowing for an additional tenet of the dimension to address networks external to the community seemed appropriate.

## **Results Conclusion**

The primary aim of this study (research question 1) was to identify dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process. Data indicated five distinct dimensions of tribal community capacity, with specific contextual themes within each dimension. This study also sought to identify community-defined gaps (research question 1a) and strengths (research question 1b), within the community capacity dimensions that relate to

the funding application process. These data were used to develop potential capacity building strategies for improved funding partnerships between tribal communities and funding agencies (exploratory research question 2). Gaps in capacity were identified as minimal community participation in public opportunities to express community needs and lack of human and material resources, while strengths were identified as direct experiences with funding agencies, networking within the community, external relationships, and an understanding of community need. These data are summarized in Table 4 above.

Table 4. Dimensions and themes for tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process\*

Dimensions of Capacity	Community Leadership	Community Need	Networks	Relationship with funding agency	Resources
Main themes identified within each capacity dimension	Community participation (-) Social-political climate Directives from leadership	Community values Actual needs and real impact (+) Sustainability of funding High dollar grants	Networks within the community (formal and informal) (+) Direct experience (+) External relationships (+)	Past success with funding agency Technical assistance Tribal communities and funding agencies learning about one another	Human and material resources (-)

(-) = gaps in capacity dimension or theme

(+) = strength in capacity dimension or theme\*Capacity dimensions or themes without a (-) or

(+) are those not specifically identified as a strength or gap in capacity, but still an essential component of tribal community capacity

## Chapter V – Discussion

The discussion will briefly review our approach to investigating tribal community capacity in relation to funding application processes which included objective and environmental elements of community capacity (Salsberg et al., 2007), and the socio-ecological model of community (McLeroy et al., 1998). The five dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process identified in this study will be incorporated into the objective and environmental elements of community capacity across the social ecological domains of community for the purpose of exemplifying how the dimensions fit into the overall structure of tribal communities.

These community capacity dimensions will then be addressed individually and as they relate to the current literature. Particular attention will be paid to the community-defined gaps and strengths in tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process, and general capacity building strategies will be suggested for each identified gap and strength in tribal community capacity.

### **Objective and Environmental Capacity Dimensions across the Ecological Domains of Community**

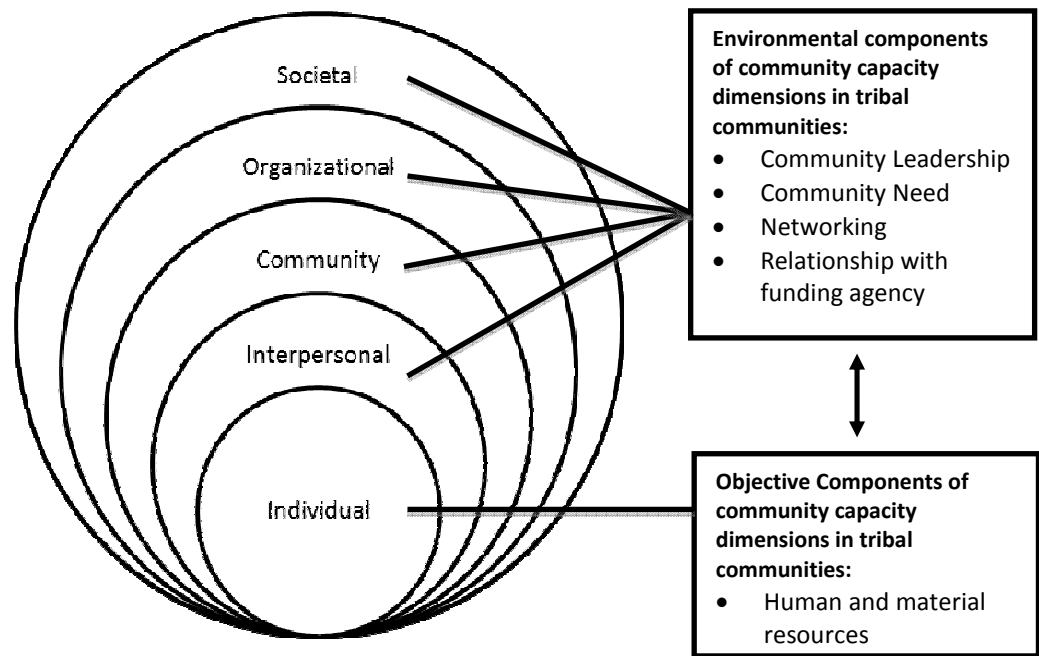
Community capacity refers to a potential state that may lead to community action (Goodman et al., 1998). The current study used this definition of community capacity to explore potential conditions within Montana tribal communities that lead the community to act on improving their funding application processes and partnerships with funding agencies. This study found both objective (*resources*) and environmental (*community leadership, community need,*

*networking, relationship with funding agency*) dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process that lie across the ecological domains of community (Figure 3, page 89). Our findings agree with others who show that community capacity lies across the social-ecological domains of a community, (Chaskin, 2001; Salsberg et al. 2007); from the objective capacity of individuals such as skills and commitment, to the collective capacity of groups and networks, such as the existence of strong social networks which provide a context for support within the community, to the environmental capacity of organizations and culture, such as collaborative partnerships between community-based organizations and institutions. These findings suggest potential for improved tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process. Dimension of community capacity included both gaps and strengths in tribal community capacity. Utilizing capacity building strategies to address these gaps and build upon the strengths within the context of tribal communities in Montana may serve to improve the funding application process and therefore increase funding for needed resources, including health promotion and social services, within tribal communities.

### **Dimensions of Tribal Community Capacity in Relation to the Funding Application Process and Potential Capacity Building Strategies for Tribal Communities and Funding Agencies**

The five dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process identified in this study share similarities with non-tribal (Goodman et al., 1998; Laverack, 1999; Maclellan-Wright et al., 2007; Bopp et al., 2000) and tribal (Oetzel et al. (2011); Baezconde-Garabanati et al., 2007) community capacity reports in the literature (see Table 5). While several of the

**Figure 3. Environmental and objective dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process across the socio-ecological domains of community.**



dimensions identified in this study share similar names and attributes as dimensions in other studies, the specific themes and context of each dimension are unique to tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process. These five dimensions are discussed below.

**Community leadership.** This dimension includes not only directives from leadership in tribal communities, but also community participation and the social-political environment of a community. The funding application process was found to be highly influenced by directives from community leadership, such as the tribal council within each community. These directives affect prioritization of funding opportunities, which in-turn affects grant writers across all sectors of community. Community participation in this dimension is strongly linked to

directives from leadership and includes community members and local organization representatives participating in public mediums to voice their needs and wants to influence strategic planning efforts by the leadership that could prioritize and direct funding applications. Our study revealed that grant writers are positively influenced by directives from leadership, and by applying for funding that fits the actual needs of the community. Thus, if the actual needs of the community are being addressed by community leadership, grant writers may be more motivated and successful in the funding application process.

Community capacity literature demonstrates that leadership is a critical element of community capacity and community competence (Goodman et al., 1998; Laverack, 1999; Maclellan-Wright et al., 2007; Bopp et al., 2000; Oetzel et al., 2011; Baezconde-Garabanati et al., 2007; Chaskin, 2001). The prevalence of leadership as a key component of community capacity in the literature aligns with the findings of our study in relation to the context of the funding application process.

Our study identified community participation as a gap in tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process; interview participants often cited the lack of attendance at opportunities for public comment for funding opportunities. For example, a grant writer for a community health clinic stated that many grant proposals require documentation of a public hearing or public comment session to represent community buy-in, or community support, for the proposed activities or programs. Community participation in these public comment opportunities, in expressing either support or dissent for proposed activities, would help leaders in the community to better understand the needs of the

community, and would therefore affect strategic planning and prioritization of funding opportunities sought after by leadership in the community. Effective leadership is linked to adequate participation of the community, and vice-versa. How people participate is related to the accessibility of social networks, formal health and social services agencies, and mediating structures (such as community groups) within the community (Goodman et al., 1998).

Participation by community members in any organization is dependent on opportunities the organization provides for inclusion (p.262). Addressing the opportunities for inclusion in social networks, formal health and social service agencies, and mediating structures in the community may help to increase participation, which may in-turn better inform leadership in the community of the needs and concerns of the community members. As community participation is an integral aspect of the community leadership dimension, capacity building strategies may be more effective if both are addressed simultaneously.

Community leadership and participation affect the funding application in the beginning stages; prioritization of funding opportunities comes as a directive by leadership, but, according to this study, should be rooted in needs expressed directly by the community. Labonte and Laverack (2001) suggest capacity building efforts for community participation and leadership in the form of organizing events based around local interest for community members, and working with an array of local leaders – from elected leaders to informal leaders. Addressing opportunities for inclusion in a variety of social structures may help to increase community participation. Participation can occur in many different forms, from attendance at a public

forum located in a community center or school, to providing feedback on comment cards located at social services or health agencies.

While each community must determine specific capacity building strategies that best fit the character and condition of the community, a suggested general capacity building strategy for improved tribal community participation in expressing community concerns and needs to leadership could be a two-pronged strategy of providing a series of opportunities for open public comment or discussion, and providing opportunity for suggestion or feedback in the form of comment cards located at local organizations, such as childcare facilities, health and social service facilities, and other community institutions. Events organized for open public comment could be facilitated by informal leaders in the community, such as representatives of community organizations or elders. This event could be based around local interest, such as part of a local tribal cultural event, such as a round dance or a potlatch. Such an event could be part of a series of open public forums designed to engage community members in weighing-in on planned or potential activities and programs in the community. For community members not interested in public exposure, an opportunity for inclusion in community participation and feedback to leadership in the form of written comment cards could maintain anonymity while voicing support or concern directly from community members. As community members feel an increased sense of inclusion and voice in the direction of funding priority directed by leadership, they might be more likely to feel engaged in the community and continue or increase participation.



Table 5. Comparison of community capacity elements in the literature and dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process found in this study

Author(s)	Cottrell, 1976/1983	Goodman et al., 1998	Laverack, 1999	Maclellan-Wright, 2007	Bopp et al., 2000	Oetzel et al., 2011	Baezconde-Garbanati et al., 2007	Current study
Term(s) utilized	Community Competence	Community capacity	Community capacity	Community capacity	Community capacity	Tribal community capacity	Tribal community capacity in relation to tobacco cessation	Tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process
Elements/dimensions	Community participation in defining and reaching goals Representative decision-making Commitment Articulateness of the community in expressing its needs Community understanding Effectiveness in communicating information and achieving consensus within a community Conflict management Management of relations within the community including the use of outside resources	Participation and leadership Skills Resources Sense of community Understanding of community history Community power Community values Critical reflection Social and inter-organizational networks	Participation Leadership Resource mobilization Organizational structures 'Asking why' Links with others Problem assessment Program management Role of the outside agents	Participation Leadership Skills, knowledge, and learning Sense of community Asking why Links with others Community structures Resource mobilization Role of external supports	Participation Leadership Resources, knowledge, and skills Sense of community Ongoing learning Communication Shared vision	Youth Leadership Elders Sense of community Women Communication Culture	Community collaboration Leadership Programs and policies Sense of community	Community leadership Resources Community need Networks Relationship with funding agency

Funding agencies could also support an effort to increase community participation in such events. Providing front-end funding for potential applicant communities to advertise, organize, and implement public forums for weighing-in on potential programs or activities would provide potential applicants with needed resources and motivation to increase community participation. Public feedback from these events could be included into the final funding application, insuring an alignment of proposed activities with community need.

Such approaches by tribal communities and funding agencies could provide an opportunity for open collaboration between community leadership and community member participants to enhance the effectiveness of funding application directives.

**Community need.** Tribal communities apply for funding opportunities to address general and specific needs existing in the community. Whether the funding is to buy technology materials for elementary schools, a grant to complete road construction projects, or funding for a diabetes prevention program, applications for funding to support community programs or address current community issues are directly related to the dimension of community need. The necessity for community leaders and grant writers to have an accurate understanding of community need came through as a strong dimension in tribal community capacity in the context of the funding application process. Participants stated that while regional and national statistics imply attention be given to specific, highly publicized health and social issues in tribal communities - and that often these funding opportunities come along with a high dollar value - attention must also be given to the voices and priorities of community members in terms of which issues to be addressed and how to address them.

Responses revealed that community needs are closely linked to community values. For example, participants stated they would be more likely to apply for a funding opportunity that was in-line with the values of that specific community. Preserving cultural traditions, such as language and practices, upholding principles of sovereignty, supporting valued populations such as veterans, elders, or youth, were the most common values incorporated into the decision-making process for grant writers in the community.

In addition to being rooted in the values of the community, participants also addressed the need for funding sustainability to support programs and employment in the community. Given the rural locations and low-resource circumstance of many tribal communities, there are typically few programs addressing health and social issues, and few jobs available in the community. Therefore, one major community need expressed throughout this study was funding opportunities with plans for sustainability – either through opportunity for renewal of the funding or through a realistic plan to slowly transition from externally supported programs to community-supported programs. The necessity of employment was also a persistent theme within the topic of community need. Several grant writers confided that writing grants to insure funding for continued employment for others in the community was often motivation enough to complete the funding application process. In approaching the funding application process with a clear commitment to the sustainability of funded programs and employment opportunities, community leaders and grant writers may be able to address community needs specific to the rural and economic situation tribal communities in Montana.

Community need as a dimension of community capacity shares similarities with an element identified in Cottrell's community competence; articulateness of community in expressing its needs. Other community capacity studies use the dimension 'sense of community' to convey a community's understanding of and investment in itself (Maclellan-Wright et al., 2007; Bopp et al. 2000; Oetzel et al., 2011; Baezconde-Garabanati et al.,2007). While community need does refer to a community's ability to understand itself, this dimension applies this concept to the ability of leaders and grant writers in the community to have a deeper understanding of needs as they relate to funding opportunities. Incorporating actual community needs into the funding application process was perceived as a strength in tribal community capacity by respondents. This strength in tribal community capacity may serve to support the capacity building strategies identified earlier to address communication lines between leadership and participation in communities.

**Networks.** Networks, or interpersonal relationships within the community or between community members and entities outside the community, were found to be vital to bringing about awareness of funding opportunities, creating partnerships for funding proposals, and assigning funding opportunities to individuals or agencies that might best benefit within the community.

Social ties within the community, particularly between grant writers across organizations, were found to be the most effective method of finding out about funding opportunities. While many grant writers cited using online databases, such as grants.gov, to find out about funding opportunities, most grant writers also depended on social networks to

bring about awareness of pertinent funding opportunities for their respective community, and some grant writers depended solely on these social networks for information regarding available funding. Networks existed as professional or personal relationships within the community that communicated funding opportunities through email notification, phone calls, office visits, or regularly scheduled formal meetings for all community-based grant writers. Respondents often highlighted the meaning of direct interaction with individuals; whether it was phone calls or face-to-face visits. Cajate (2000) focuses on community building models that honor the indigenous values of direct experience, interconnectedness, and relationship. Our findings suggest that these values are also applicable to networks existing within the tribal communities that participated in this study in relation to the funding application process. Other studies on indigenous community capacity also identified dimensions similar to ours such as community collaboration (Baezconde-Garabanati et al., 2007) and communication (Oetzel et al., 2011). Other Western-based studies on community capacity identified dimensions such as social and interorganizational networks (Goodman et al., 1998), links with others (Laverack, 1999), and communication (Bopp et al., 2000). While similar dimensions identified in community capacity research also refer to connections within communities, the dimension of *networks* refers specifically to the meaning and influence of direct experience and interconnectedness of tribal community members involved in the funding application process.

Given that these networks already exist within tribal communities, and that these networks are seen as strengths by grant writers and community members, the direct

experience of formal and informal networks within a community is qualified as a strength in community capacity in the context of the funding application process.

Capacity building maintains a focus on addressing gaps in capacity in a community, while building upon existing strengths for capacity. Thus, the dimension of networks as a strength in tribal community capacity upon which to build. One example of a strong network was having a monthly meeting open to all grant seekers and grant writers in the community and those in attendance would share funding opportunity ideas and updates on grant proposals. This meeting served as a way to spread information within the community regarding funding opportunities, to engage in a shared decision-making process to determine which organizations or which individuals would take-on a funding opportunity, and to maintain relationships and knowledge of interest and needs of various organizations in the community. Given this example, a capacity building strategy based on this network dimension could be to hold monthly meeting models such as this in other tribal communities. An opportunity for grant seekers and grant writers to come together to share, distribute, prioritize, and participate in a shared-decision making process could further strengthen networks within tribal communities, thereby strengthening the tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process. Such a meeting might also provide an opportunity for relationship-building between local grant writers and outside entities, such as funding agency representatives. Engaged funding agency representatives could attend a meeting to give in-person information directly to tribal community grant writers regarding the opportunity and talk with potential applicants on

specific challenges and ideas, which may increase understanding between funding agency representative and tribal community members, which leads into the next dimension.

**Relationship with funding agency.** The relationship between tribal community members and funding agency representatives, including past experience with the funding agency, providing technical assistance, and promoting understanding between tribal communities and funding agency representatives, was found to be a dimension of tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process.

Participants described the impact of relationship with funding agencies quite simply. If the relationship was poor, grant writers and program directors would be less likely to apply for funding from the same agency, while if the relationship was strong, it would increase the likelihood of engaging in the funding application process. Examples of positive relationship between tribal communities and funding agencies most often included an attempt made by the funding agency representatives to increase understanding of the tribal community – whether through a personal visit, regular phone calls to check-up and assist in troubleshooting, or an attempt to gain further insight into the unique challenges and conditions existing in the tribal community.

Not surprisingly, given that the context of this study is based on the funding application process, this dimension is unique to this study. However, two of the previously reviewed community capacity notions for Western and tribal communities include an element emphasizing a connection to partners outside the community (see Table 1). Elements such as the ‘role of external supports’ (MacLellan-Wright, 2007), and the ‘role of outside agents’

(Laverack, 1999), indicate the significance of relationship between communities and peripheral agencies. In the case of the funding application process, the funding agency is the specific 'external support' or 'outside agent'. The value placed on direct experience – of effort made by funding agencies to build a relationship based on direct experience such as phone calls and visits, is a significant piece particularly key for funding agencies to be aware of. Capacity building strategies for both tribal communities and funding agencies based on relationship development may increase the likelihood of successful funding partnerships, since establishing a strong relationship will increase the likelihood of tribal communities applying for further funding from the same funding agency.

**Resources.** Human and material resources were identified as necessary components in the funding application process. While several participants in this study were trained, educated, and experienced grant writers, most expressed a need for increased grant training and resources in their tribal communities. Many participants also identified the need for more individuals in tribal communities to be trained and available to apply for funding opportunities; the limited pool of individuals with grant writing skills and limited availability of jobs presented as interconnected barriers to funding application. While a limited number of participants held positions within organizations dedicated to securing grants, other participants simply applied for grants in addition to the other, often full duties of their a position in order to support programs and services within their divisions. Human resources within this context was



described as the skills and training of individuals involved in the funding process, and an infrastructure of job duties that included time and energy to engage in the process.

While some tribal communities held occasional grant writing education sessions through a tribal college or other community-based organizations, other communities had no training available within the community. Individuals interested in grant writing needed to travel outside the community, and sometimes out of the state, to attend sessions. Webinars were also presented as an option for individuals to gain knowledge and build skills in the funding application process; however awareness of webinars offered was inconsistent and lack of computer availability and internet connections also presented as barriers to webinar trainings.

Grant seeking educational and skill development opportunities, and access to technology and data were identified as material resources. Material resources are those that support and promote the development of human resources. While some participants expressed appreciation for the existence of databases including demographics, financial and budgetary information, or health and other social information on the community, others expressed a great need for such compiled data. Participants described the need for information specific to the tribal community; as each community is unique in its members, location, and social-political environment, and therefore requires data reflecting those specific conditions in order to accurately represent the needs in the funding application. Compiling databases of information, however, is a time and energy intensive task, and must be kept up-to-date in order to reflect the current conditions of the community. Human resources are required to initiate

and maintain such information, and therein lies the issue; deficiency in human resources is closely connected to a shortage of material resources.

Financial resources, although not often mentioned, were basic to the discussion of human resources and material resources; financial capital to create positions for grant seekers and provide training and skill development for inexperienced grant writers, would surely help to address the dilemma of human resources, and financial capital to supply technology and organize or create databases would surely promote success in the funding application process for grant seekers. While a simple increase in financial capital to address these issues was not presented as a realistic solution, a strategic planning process to assess the infrastructure of tribal and community-based organizations to prioritize and establish positions with time to apply for funding that may support training, more positions, and possibly materials for grant seeking efforts, may help to strengthen community resources in relation to the funding application process.

Dimensions regarding human and material resources are most commonly addressed in Western-based literature regarding general community capacity. For example, Bopp and colleagues (2000) refer to 'resources, knowledge and skills', while Maclellan-Wright and colleagues (2007) identify the dimension as 'skills, knowledge, and learning', which refers to skills or access to skills needed for project success and providing community members with opportunities for learning (p. 302). 'Resource mobilization' is another related dimension cited in the literature (Maclellan et al., 2007; Laverack, 1999); this dimension refers to the effectiveness of accessing internal and external resources for project success. Goodman et al. (1998) also

separate the dimensions of 'skills' and 'resources'; in this case, 'skills' are characterized by elements such as group process abilities, data collection and assessment, problem solving and resource mobilization, while 'resources' are characterized by elements such as access and sharing of internal and external resources, social capital, and communication channels within the community. Similar dimensions identified in the literature are accordingly more general than the operationalized elements within the context of the funding application process in this study. To our knowledge, only two studies exist in the literature regarding tribal community capacity (Oetzel et al., 2011; Baezconde-Garabanati et al., 2007) and neither have a comparable dimension to the resources dimension found in the current study. These different outcomes may be attributed to the specific context of our study. Oetzel and colleagues addressed tribal community capacity dimensions in a general sense, and identified two dimensions considered community resources as valued populations within the community (youth and elders), while Baezconde-Garabanati and colleagues assessed tribal community capacity in relation to tobacco cessation and did not define any resource elements related to their study. Our study found that in order for the funding application process to occur, it must include individuals willing and able to initiate the proposal, and skills and access to materials in order to type and send the proposal; these components are essential to the context of the funding application process, and must therefore be addressed specifically in an assessment of needed resources for success in this process.

Resources were identified as a gap in tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process; participants identified a need for skills, knowledge, and training,

positions dedicated to grant seeking, access to computers and internet, and community databases to utilize for funding proposals. Capacity building strategies addressing resources may occur across the socio-ecological spectrum of community; from intrapersonal skill development to strategic planning and infrastructural change at an organization level. A potential capacity building effort to address resources for the funding application within tribal communities may focus on a combination of organizational and intrapersonal levels. A strategic planning process at the organizational level may allow for infrastructural change within tribal and community-based organizations redistributing duties and time to allow for increased grant seeking and funding application process involvement by individuals already experienced in the process. This reorganization process would ideally make new grant-seeking positions available, which would allow for skill development and training on grant seeking to those individuals less experienced in the process. Skills development and training may be tailored to the specific community; while some communities have internal resources for holding such trainings, such as a tribal college or an organization that may provide grant getting skills, other communities may need to bring training sessions into the community or establish a series of webinars on the funding application process offered through an external entity.

Material resources may also be addressed during the strategic planning session. An investment in material resources to support human resources for the funding application process may be presented as an investment in the future of the community; investment in resources for funding procurement may result in increased funding for programs across the community spectrum. A programmatic approach to capacity building for material resources

may also be taken; developing a program to initiate data collection and organization or to organize previously collected community data to establish a useful database specific to the tribal community may provide key pieces to grant seekers within the community to procure funds for specific community needs. Another programmatic approach to capacity building for material resources could be to engage established grant writers in the community to specifically seek funding opportunities to support purchase of updated technology or increased access to internet within community organizations. While this may seem to be a redundant solution (engaging in the funding application process in order to gain funding to support engagement in the funding application process), a formal, structured approach to gaining access to financial opportunities for building material resources to support funding application in the community may serve to multiply gains many times over.

Provision of funding opportunities specifically designated for resources development in tribal communities may serve to increase human and material resources in tribal communities. Organizational change made by funding agencies to support efforts such as strategic planning, purchase of and training on technology, or a sustainable project to develop or organize a local database may serve to greatly increase the capacity of tribal communities in the funding application process.

### **Participant vantage points and tribal community capacity dimensions**

The participant base for this study included a variety of individuals with varying backgrounds, position, ethnic identities, and perspectives. These variances in participant perspectives

provided a thorough and multi-angled approach to tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process; however a few of the differing perspectives must be addressed to fully understand responses provided and conclusions drawn in this study. While most participants identified as Native American, all participants had some level of collegiate education, indicating a Western-based formal education background. While many participants held positions specifically dedicated to fund seeking and grant writing, some participants held positions which did not include grant writing, yet needed to apply for funding in order to sustain employment, programs, or services nevertheless. While these varied perspectives added diversity to the study, and many consistencies and commonalities were found in responses from participants, further interviews with tribal community members may serve to strengthen dimensions identified. Researchers involved in this study were non-Native Americans, which must also be taken into consideration in relation to the responses provided.

### **Funding for community capacity building efforts**

While capacity building is an approach to development that builds independence (Eade, 1997), our study reveals that low resource communities may require significant financial support throughout the capacity building process. Funding agencies may view funding opportunities specifically meant for community capacity building in low resource communities as a way to address social inequalities and develop independence based upon a the specific assets of a community. Recent programs dedicated to community capacity building efforts have in fact arisen as an option; the Strengthening Communities Fund, designated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, seeks to increase project partners' community

capacity, and is available to state, local and tribal governments ( Administration for Children and Families, 2011). The Nonprofit Capacity Building Program, approved as part of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve American Act in 2009, seeks to build capacity in local and national nonprofit organizations to strengthen the services provided by nonprofit sector of communities (National Council on Nonprofits, 2012). These large federal efforts towards building local capacity of communities in the United States reveals a potential shift towards supporting development towards independence in low resource communities.

Tribal communities may stand to gain significantly if community capacity in relation to the funding application process is supported through funding opportunities such as those mentioned above. Funding agencies providing funding for capacity building may also stand to gain from specific knowledge of tribal community capacity strengths and gaps in the funding application process; funding agencies may be better able to attract and successfully partner with tribal communities based on an understanding of specific needs and values.

### **Limitations**

Potential capacity building strategies have been suggested based on identified tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application and development of ideas and context provided in responses. Suggested capacity building strategies have not been piloted within tribal communities or funding agencies, and therefore the effectiveness of these strategies for securing increased funding for health and social services within tribal communities in Montana is unknown.

Another limitation of this study is that it only addresses one side of the funding application process equation; organizational capacity of funding agencies to successfully engage in funding partnerships with tribal communities has not yet been examined. Further examination of the organizational capacity of funding agencies in relation to this process would provide key information to work to improve the funding partnership process from both tribal community and funding agency sides.

### **Future work**

Tribal community capacity dimensions are the foundation upon which to form capacity building strategies. This study identified tribal community capacity dimensions and utilized these dimensions to suggest potential capacity building strategies for addressing strengths and gaps in relation to the funding application process. Next steps could include an assessment of the identified tribal community capacity dimensions in more tribal communities in Montana or other states. This assessment could further validate the dimensions identified in this study and help prioritize these dimensions. Such a study could also be used to identify appropriate capacity building strategies for each dimension based on specific community conditions and characteristics.

This study also acknowledges the impact funding agencies have in the funding application process. Future work could also include a synthesis of organizational capacity of funding agencies in relation to the funding application process with tribal communities (which is a study currently in process) and tribal community capacity dimensions to develop a framework for bidirectional capacity building for improved funding partnership. This examination of the



interactive process of funding application between tribal communities and funding agencies may serve to make infrastructural changes on both sides.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to identify tribal community capacity dimensions in relation to the funding application process, and suggest potential capacity building strategies to address the gaps and strengths identified in tribal community capacity within this context. Identification of dimensions of tribal community capacity in relation to this process is merely the first step towards the goal of increasing funding for health and social services within tribal communities in Montana, and ultimately providing a foundation for improved health outcomes among tribal community members in Montana. The issue upon which this study was based – that tribal communities in Montana are less likely than non-tribal communities to apply for available health promotion funding opportunities – is complex and multifaceted. This study may help to lay the groundwork from which to address this issue; tribal community capacity dimensions represent the culturally unique values and priorities existing in relation to the funding application process. Efforts based within the context of these unique tribal values and characteristics, rather than from within a Western-based context, may serve to improve the overall health and wellbeing of tribal community members across the state of Montana.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Institutional Review Board Approvals**  
**University of Montana and Montana State University**



The University of  
**Montana**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

*for the Protection of Human Subjects*

**FWA 0000078**

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**Date:** February 18, 2011

**To:** Blakely Brown, HHP

**From:** Dan Corti, IRB Chair

**RE:** IRB 25-11: "Participation in Safe Routes to Schools Programs for Montana Native America Communities – Individual Interviews"

Your IRB proposal cited above is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

- (b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
- (b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- (b)(4) Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
- (b)(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- (b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

University of Montana IRB policy does not require you to file an annual Continuation Report (Form RA-109) for exempt studies. However, you are required to timely notify the IRB if there are any significant changes or if unanticipated or adverse events occur during the study, if you experience an increased risk to the participants, or if you have participants withdraw from the study or register complaints about the study.



## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

For the Protection of Human Subjects

FWA 00000165

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Suzanne Christopher and Rebecca Gleason

**FROM:** Mark Quinn, Ph.D. Chair *Mark Quinn Ch*  
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

**DATE:** September 20, 2011

**SUBJECT:** *Improving Participation in Safe Routes to Schools Programs for Montana Native American Communities [SC092011-EX]*

The above research, described in your submission of May 9, 2011, is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

- (b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
- (b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- (b)(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available, or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
- (b)(5) Research and demonstration projects, which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- (b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed, or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the FDA, or approved by the EPA, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the USDA.

Although review by the Institutional Review Board is not required for the above research, the Committee will be glad to review it. If you wish a review and committee approval, please submit 3 copies of the usual application form and it will be processed by expedited review.



**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Project Title:** Improving Participation in Safe Routes to Schools Programs for Montana Native American Communities

**Why are you doing this project?** You are being asked to participate in this project to help us learn about barriers and enhancers that Montana tribal communities experience in getting funding for, and establishing, Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) programs in their communities. SRTS programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. There are not many funded SRTS programs in reservation communities. Your ideas may help increase funding for SRTS programs in other Native American communities in Montana and across the country and develop activities for tribal communities and agencies to help solve health and obesity related issues.

**Why are you asking me to participate in this project?** You were identified to participate because of your interest or work in helping increase physical activity of youth or helping with rural transportation issues.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you agree to participate, we will meet for about 60 minutes in a place that is convenient and comfortable for you. The interviewer will share briefly about Safe Routes to Schools Programs and how these programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. The majority of your time will be spent talking about barriers and enhancers for tribal communities in obtaining funding for, and implementing, SRTS programs. At the end of the meeting the interviewer will summarize your ideas. The interview will be audio taped so we can accurately understand all of the discussion and comments later on. Your name will not be included on any study records after the interview is over. You will receive a \$20 gift card for your participation.

**Are there any risks involved with taking part in the project? Will I feel uncomfortable?** You might have some initial discomfort when opening up to new ideas/ways for improving tribal community's potential to successfully compete for SRTS funding. If you are uncomfortable during the interview you can withdraw from the interview at any time. You can also skip answering any questions during the interview.

**What will I get out of taking part in the project?** You may not receive any direct benefits. Studies suggest that Safe Routes to School Programs not only improve the safety of K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students traveling to and from school, they also increase physical activity in students and provide an opportunities for family members to participate in walking or biking with their children to and from school. You will help to teach us what you know about this topic, which may help more funds come to tribal communities.

**Do I have to participate in this interview?** No. You do not have to participate. Also, you do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There will be no penalty if you decide not to participate in this interview.

APPROVED  
MSU IRB  
09/20/2011  
Date approved  
NA  
Expiration date

**Who is paying for this project?** This project is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Active Living Research Foundation and the Safe Routes to Schools program.

**Will people know that I took part in the project?** To ensure confidentiality, your name will not be put on any information. The information that is put onto a computer will be on a computer with a password that only people working on this project can have access to.

**What if I have any questions about the project or my participation?** If you have any questions about the project please contact Suzanne Christopher 406-994-6321. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Mark Quim, the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee at the Montana State University 406-994-4707.

**Agreement statement:** I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of subject), agree to participate in this project. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX B**  
**Informed Consent Forms**  
**University of Montana and Montana State University**

## **Information and Consent Form –Interview Participant**

**Project Title:** Improving Participation in Safe Routes to Schools Programs for Montana Native American Communities

**Project Sponsors and Tribal Approval:** This project is sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Active Living Research Foundation. The Salish Cultural Committee the Salish Kootenai Tribal Council and the Chippewa-Cree Health Board and Tribal Council have approved and endorsed this project.

**Purpose:** The Flathead Indian Reservation communities of Ronan and Arlee and the Rocky Boy Indian reservation are partnering with the University of Montana, Montana State University and the Montana Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Program to implement a 12-month project that will assess barriers and enhancers that Montana tribal communities experience in getting funding for, and establishing, Safe Routes to Schools programs in their communities. Safe Routes to Schools Programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. You are being asked to take part in the part of the project that seeks to better understand how your community might increase its ability to successfully complete for SRTS funding. Your ideas will also help increase funding for SRTS programs in other Native American communities in Montana and across the country and develop activities for tribal communities and agencies to help solve health and obesity related issues.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the study please contact Blakely Brown at 406-243-6524. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the IRB through the University of Montana Research Office at 406- 243-6670.

**What happens during the interviews:** People who participate in the individual interviews will meet for about 60 minutes in a place that is convenient and comfortable for the person being interviewed. At Arlee and Ronan, Pearl Caye, who is the Montana State University's Center for Native Health Partnerships Community Organizer, Blakely Brown and Maja Pederson from the University of Montana will conduct the interview. At Rocky Boy, Annette Sutherland who is the Montana State University's Center for Native Health Partnerships Community Organizer, Blakely Brown and Maja Pedersen from the University of Montana will conduct the interview. The interviewer will talk briefly about Safe Routes to Schools Programs and how these programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. The majority of your time will be spent talking about barriers and enhancers that your community experiences in obtaining funding for, and implementing, SRTS programs in your community. At the end of the meeting the interviewer will summarize your ideas. The interview will be audio taped so we can accurately understand all of the discussion and comments later on. Your last name will not be included on any study records after the interview is over.

**Payment for participation:** You will receive \$20 for your participation and reimbursement for gas expenses for travel to and from the interview site.

**Risks, inconveniences, and discomforts:** You might have some initial discomfort when opening up to new ideas/ways for improving the community's potential to successfully compete for SRTS funding. If you are uncomfortable during the interview you can withdraw from the interview at any time. You can also skip answering any questions during the interview.

**Benefits:** Participants may not receive any direct benefits. Studies suggest that Safe Routes to School Programs not only improve the safety of K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students traveling to and from school, they also increase physical activity in students and provide an opportunities for family members to participate in walking or biking with their children to and from school. This project will help American Indian communities increase their potential to successfully apply for funding, and implement SRTS programs in their communities.

**Confidentiality:** Research staff will keep confidential research related records and information from this study. If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, information that may identify you will not be used.

**Compensation for Injury:** Although we do not foresee any risk in taking part in this study, the following liability statement is required in all University of Montana consent forms:

*"In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims Representative of University Legal Counsel. (Reviewed by University Legal Counsel, July 6, 1993)"*

**Voluntary participation/withdrawal:** Your decision to take part in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in or you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are normally entitled.

### **Statement of Consent**

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature

Date

**Sign below only if you do NOT want your interview to be audio recorded.**

I agree to take part in the interview but opt-out of the audio recording of my interview.

---

Participant's Signature

**SUBJECT CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN HUMAN RESEARCH AT  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Project Title:** Improving Participation in Safe Routes to Schools Programs for Montana Native American Communities

**Why are you doing this project?** You are being asked to participate in this project to help us learn about barriers and enhancers that Montana tribal communities experience in getting funding for, and establishing, Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) programs in their communities. SRTS programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. There are not many funded SRTS programs in reservation communities. Your ideas may help increase funding for SRTS programs in other Native American communities in Montana and across the country and develop activities for tribal communities and agencies to help solve health and obesity related issues.

**Why are you asking me to participate in this project?** You were identified to participate because of your interest or work in helping increase physical activity of youth or helping with rural transportation issues.

**What will I be asked to do?** If you agree to participate, we will meet for about 60 minutes in a place that is convenient and comfortable for you. The interviewer will share briefly about Safe Routes to Schools Programs and how these programs help K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to and from school safely. The majority of your time will be spent talking about barriers and enhancers for tribal communities in obtaining funding for, and implementing, SRTS programs. At the end of the meeting the interviewer will summarize your ideas. The interview will be audio taped so we can accurately understand all of the discussion and comments later on. Your name will not be included on any study records after the interview is over. You will receive a \$20 gift card for your participation.

**Are there any risks involved with taking part in the project? Will I feel uncomfortable?** You might have some initial discomfort when opening up to new ideas/ways for improving tribal community's potential to successfully compete for SRTS funding. If you are uncomfortable during the interview you can withdraw from the interview at any time. You can also skip answering any questions during the interview.

**What will I get out of taking part in the project?** You may not receive any direct benefits. Studies suggest that Safe Routes to School Programs not only improve the safety of K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students traveling to and from school, they also increase physical activity in students and provide an opportunities for family members to participate in walking or biking with their children to and from school. You will help to teach us what you know about this topic, which may help more funds come to tribal communities.

**Do I have to participate in this interview?** No. You do not have to participate. Also, you do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There will be no penalty if you decide not to participate in this interview.

**Who is paying for this project?** This project is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Active Living Research Foundation and the Safe Routes to Schools program.

**Will people know that I took part in the project?** To ensure confidentiality, your name will not be put on any information. The information that is put onto a computer will be on a computer with a password that only people working on this project can have access to.

**What if I have any questions about the project or my participation?** If you have any questions about the project please contact Suzanne Christopher 406-994-6321. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Mark Quinn, the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee at the Montana State University 406-994-4707.

**Agreement statement:** I have read the above and understand the discomforts, inconvenience and risk of this study. I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of subject), agree to participate in this project. I understand that I may later refuse to participate, and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form for my own records.

Printed Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Date



**APPENDIX C**  
**Interview Guide**

Questions for Capacity Interviews (for community members)

**Topic 1. First we will ask some questions about how people find out about funding opportunities.**

- a) How do you find out about funding opportunities? For example, grants to fund a project or other sources of money.
- b) How about other people in your community – how do they find out about funding opportunities?
- c) How can your community share funding resources?
- d) How could funding agencies better inform people in your community about funding opportunities?

**Topic 2. Next we would like to ask - once people find out about a funding opportunity, what motivates or influences the decision to apply for a particular funding opportunity.**

- a) How does the relationship between yourself or the key people in your community and the people who are in the funding agency affect the decision to apply for funding? Here we are asking about the relationship before funding.
- b) How does past success with a grant application from a funding agency affect the decision to apply for additional funding?
- c) How does being able or not being able to use the funding in a way, that is *best* for the community affect the decision to apply for funding? For example, is the community able to decide what's best to meet the needs of the community?
- d) How does receiving or not receiving help from the funding agency in the application process affect the decision to apply for funds? This is sometimes called technical assistance for writing the grant.

- e) How does the relationship between your community and the funding agency after receiving funding affect the decision to apply for future funding?
- f) How do reporting requirements affect the decision to apply for funding?
- g) If the grant application is able to support existing programs – how will that affect the decision to apply for funding?
- h) If the grant application is able to maintain community values – how will that affect the decision to apply for funding?
- i) How does who benefits affect the decision to apply for funding?
- j) How does what is left after the funding ends affect the decision to apply for funding? This could be physical changes, such as a new sidewalk or path, or community changes, such as the establishment of a new working group or network.
- k) How does the program’s ability to continue services and operate in the community after funding ends affect the decision to apply for funding? This is sometimes called sustainability.
- l) If funding is split with other agencies - for example, a university - how does division of the money affect the decision to apply for funding?
- m) How does the amount of funding affect the decision to apply for funding?
- n) How does the chance of receiving funding affect the decision to apply for funding?
- o) How does who you are in competition with affect the decision to apply for funding? For example, is it for the whole country or just Montana or is it for tribal communities or for everyone?
- p) How does the amount of time and energy it takes to apply for and submit a grant affect the decision to apply for funding?
- q) How does the amount of time and energy it takes to carry out the work of the grant after it’s funded balanced with the funding amount affect the decision to apply for funding? This is sometimes called implementation.
- r) If the funding application is to an agency that the community has received funds from before - how does the program’s past ability to meet the agency’s requirements affect the decision to apply for funding?
- s) How does the turnaround time from when you find out about a grant opportunity to when the grant application must be turned in affect the decision to apply for funding?

- t) Are there other things that we haven't talked about that affect the decision to apply for funding?
- u) Is there a formal process/protocol that your agency/community has for deciding on applying for funds?
- v) What community groups exist that currently help in applying for funds?
- w) What groups exist that could help in applying for funds?
- x) Who or what is involved in prioritizing funding in your community?
- y) Are there examples of groups who have collaborated in the past to successfully apply for funds for community projects?

**Topic 3. Our next questions are about tribal communities and funding agencies learning about each other.**

- a) What should funding agencies know about tribal communities?
- b) What would be the best way to share this information with funding agencies?
- c) What should tribal communities know about agencies with funding opportunities?
- d) What would be the best way to share this information with tribal communities?
- e) What changes need to occur for tribal communities and funding agencies to form better working relationships?
- f) Please share an example of a positive relationship you or your community has had with a funding agency.

**Topic 4. Next, we would like to learn from you what resources and skills would be beneficial for you or others in your community when applying for funds?**

- a) What resources do you or others in your community currently have that help you to apply for funds?
- b) What types of training, workshops, or other opportunities have you attended that have helped you in applying for funds?
- c) What was most helpful about these trainings/workshops/etc.
- d) What resources or training, workshops, or other opportunities would help in applying for funds?
- e) Who else would be good for us to visit with about the things we talked about today?

**Topic 5, Lastly, we would like to ask you some questions about Safe Routes to Schools. SRTS is a program that provides funding and support to help schools, kids, and parents improve safety and encourage more kids to safely walk and bicycle to school.**

- a) How do people in your community find out about SRTS funding opportunities?
- b) What ways could SRTS staff better inform people in your community about SRTS funding opportunities?
- c) What influences the decision on whether or not to apply for the SRTS funding?
  - a. Who are the key partners in your community who would apply for SRTS funds?
  - b. How does the fact that SRTS is a reimbursement program rather than a grant program affect the decision to apply for funds?
  - c. How does the amount of funding affect the decision to apply for SRTS funding? (2012 SRTS grants in MT averaged \$56,900 for infrastructure and \$12,700 for non-infrastructure)
- d) Are there other things that we haven't talked about that affect the decision to apply for STRS funding?
- e) If your community were awarded SRTS funds, who would manage these funds?

- f) What could SRTS staff do to encourage your community to apply for SRTS funds?
- g) Please share what has been your involvement in grant writing or getting grants in your community?
- h) Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic?

We really appreciate the knowledge and information you have shared. The information you shared will help everyone learn how to improve relationships and processes between tribal communities and funding agencies, to increase grant and contract funding that goes into tribal communities, and to increase successful outcomes from that funding. The tribes own the data from this project. This interview will be kept *confidential* and your name will not be on this survey.

**APPENDIX D**  
**Dissemination Materials**

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED FUNDING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND FUNDING AGENCIES IN MONTANA: SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR FUNDING AGENCIES

Beginning in the fall of 2011, The University of Montana and Montana State University partnered with three American Indian reservation communities across the state of Montana and the Safe Routes to School state-based funding agency to examine tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process for community-based health promotion efforts.

This exploratory project was supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the goal of the project was to provide groundwork for increasing funds for health promotion programs allocated to tribal communities in Montana. The primary methods were conducting qualitative interviews with tribal community members involved in grant writing and the funding agency staff and director.

- Identifying dimensions of tribal community capacity was approached as the first step towards building tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process.
- A deeper understanding of the funding application process between tribal communities and funding organizations served to develop potential strategies for action from both communities *and* funding organizations to increase funding allocation into tribal communities.

Results from the project identified specific aspects of the funding application process between tribal communities and funding agencies that, if improved, may increase the success of tribal communities in applying for and receiving funding.



This handout was created to inform funding agencies of potential changes that could be made to improve the funding application process between funding agencies and tribal communities. Below are two broad suggestions for improving the partnership between funding agencies and tribal communities.

1. Emphasis on relationship between tribal community and funding agency.
  - a. Tribal community members unanimously emphasized the value of relationship between funding agency representatives and community organizations.
  - b. Tribal community members were more motivated to apply for funding if a positive relationship with funding agency representatives was established.
  - c. Positive relationships were described as those which included direct experience between tribal community members and funding agency representatives, such as personal phone calls and visits to the reservation community during and after the application process.
2. Provision of funding opportunities for tribal community capacity building in relation to the funding application process.
  - a. A general lack of human and material resources available for funding application efforts was identified in tribal communities. These resources included examples such as:
    - i. Formal training sessions to improve knowledge and skills of tribal community members involved in grant writing
    - ii. Strategic planning efforts to establish positions for designated grant writers for specific community-based organizations
    - iii. Technology, such as computers and internet connections
    - iv. Sources of information regarding community demographics and statistics, such as the establishment of programs to track and document health and economic information in tribal communities

- b. A need for improved community participation in expressing community need was also a common theme across communities.
  - i. Funding support for public comment forums or community gatherings to discuss grant application priorities.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED FUNDING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND FUNDING AGENCIES IN MONTANA: SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Beginning in the fall of 2011, The University of Montana and Montana State University partnered with three American Indian reservation communities across the state of Montana and the Safe Routes to School state-based funding agency to examine tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process for community-based health promotion efforts.

This exploratory project was supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the goal of the project was to provide groundwork for increasing funds for health promotion programs allocated to tribal communities in Montana. The primary methods were conducting qualitative interviews with tribal community members involved in grant writing and the funding agency staff and director.

- Identifying dimensions of tribal community capacity was approached as the first step towards building tribal community capacity in relation to the funding application process.
- A deeper understanding of the funding application process between tribal communities and funding organizations served to develop potential strategies for action from both communities *and* funding organizations to increase funding allocation into tribal communities.

Results from the project identified specific aspects of the funding application process between tribal communities and funding agencies that, if improved, may increase the success of tribal communities in applying for and receiving funding.

This handout was created to inform tribal communities of potential changes that could be made to improve the funding application process between funding agencies and tribal communities. Below are three broad suggestions for action for improved funding partnership between funding agencies and tribal communities.

### 1. Community participation

- Tribal community members involved in grant writing expressed a need for improved community participation in voicing needs.
- Input from tribal community members on needs may serve to improve effective prioritization of funding opportunities and directives from tribal community leadership to grant writers.
- Suggested capacity building strategies for improved community member participation include organizing open public forums or comment sessions regarding community needs around other popular community events, such as celebrations or potlatches.

### 2. Grant writer networking

- Networking between tribal community members involved in the grant writing process may help to increase awareness of funding opportunities and distribution of funding opportunities to the appropriate organizations, and open opportunities for tribal community organizations to partner on funding application.
- A capacity building strategy for grant writer networking is the establishment of a regular (for example, monthly) grant seekers meeting, where all available community members involved or interested in grant writing meet to share opportunities, collaborate, and designate organizations for specific funding opportunities.

### 3. Develop human and material resources

- Tribal community participants reported a lack of human resources (trained individuals with time to apply for funding opportunities) for successful funding application.
  - Organizing training sessions (in-person, webinar, etc.) for grant writers or interested community members may increase the number of individuals with the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully apply for funding.
  - Strategic planning from a leadership or organizational standpoint may help to allow for increased positions with time allocated for grant seeking/writing.
- Tribal community participants also reported a lack of available technology for successful funding application, such as computers and internet connections.
  - A suggested capacity building strategy for improved technology resources is to seek specific capacity building funding opportunities to support purchases of the appropriate technology.