



## A Guide to People-Centered Research: Considerations for Community Stakeholder Compensation

Fair compensation practices for stakeholder partners and community advocates involved in research are necessary and critical in demonstrating the [core values of engagement](#). Investigators often plan for reimbursing stakeholders' direct costs such as project-related transportation and lodging; however, stakeholder partners rarely receive adequate compensation for their time, expertise, and contributions.

While stakeholders frequently report altruistic motivations for participating in people-centered research, fair compensation should be standard in exchange for their time and expertise. These recommended steps can guide the development of appropriate stakeholder compensation decisions:

1. **Evaluate the time commitment** expected of stakeholder partners to complete tasks across the project life cycle. Estimates should account for initial training, meeting preparation, meeting frequency, and follow-up for project deliverables.
2. **Explore and value unique and nontraditional backgrounds.** Invest in stakeholder partners whose expertise is based on lived experience with relevant diseases, conditions, interventions, and/or relationships with their communities to cultivate meaningful participation and transparent feedback.
3. **Establish a starting compensation rate of at least \$50-75 per hour.** Rates for stakeholder partners should be commensurate with their level of experience and parallel to their research staff counterparts. Models could offer a fixed stipend in addition to an hourly fee to account for any additional work needed outside the original scope of work.
4. **Allow for flexibility in negotiation** as you would for staff, consultant, or freelance fees. Patient partners who are working in the field of biomedical research may have greater capacity to participate in scientific discussion and contribute to tasks outside the original scope of work.
5. **Account for variation in local wages** to align with [statewide minimum wage laws](#).
6. **Determine and clearly communicate compensation amount *before* any project work** begins to prevent any confusion or unpaid effort.
7. **Clarify roles, responsibilities, deliverables, and timeline** in a written agreement such as standard operating procedures (SOPs), scope of work, and/or memorandum of understanding between stakeholders and research investigators.
8. **Coordinate with the research institution's billing department** to clarify protocol and schedule for reimbursement and compensation. Stipends may be administered on an hourly, monthly, or annual schedule.

Looking for more information? Check out these additional resources:

[National Health Council's Fair Market Value Calculator Project](#)

[PCORI Financial Compensation Framework](#)