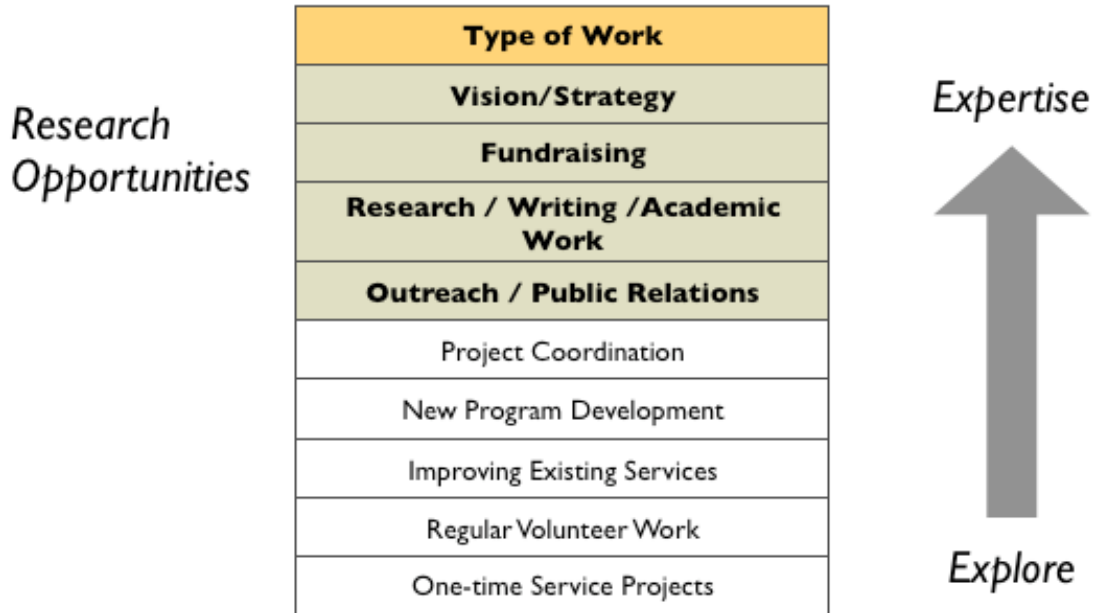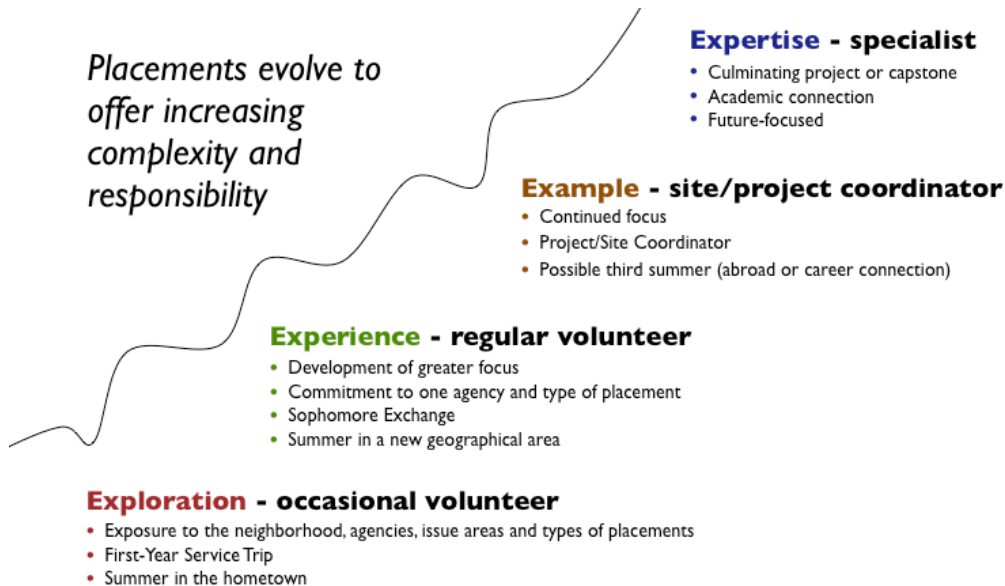# Bonner Program Handout
Community Partnerships: Part 2

Moving to Higher Level Placements

Supported by the multiyear partnership with the Bonner Program, community partners can also engage students in placements that entail more complex projects and build their capacity.

Research Opportunities

Type of Work
Vision/Strategy
Fundraising
Research / Writing /Academic Work
Outreach / Public Relations
Project Coordination
New Program Development
Improving Existing Services
Regular Volunteer Work
One-time Service Projects

Expertise ↑ *Explore*

Focusing on Example and Expertise Levels

Placements evolve to offer increasing complexity and responsibility

Expertise - specialist
- Culminating project or capstone
- Academic connection
- Future-focused

Example - site/project coordinator
- Continued focus
- Project/Site Coordinator
- Possible third summer (abroad or career connection)

Experience - regular volunteer
- Development of greater focus
- Commitment to one agency and type of placement
- Sophomore Exchange
- Summer in a new geographical area

Exploration - occasional volunteer
- Exposure to the neighborhood, agencies, issue areas and types of placements
- First-Year Service Trip
- Summer in the hometown
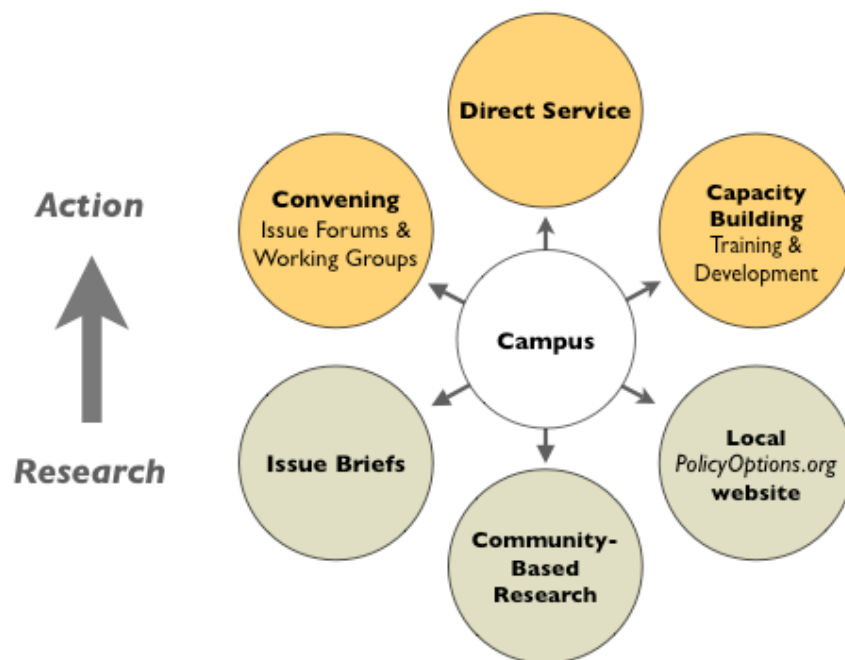
What Is Community-Based Research?

One example of a strategic type of placement is community-based research, or CBR. In CBR projects, agencies identify work they need done that includes academic research or other kinds of work that can be carried out by students and/or faculty.

CBR is a collaborative, participatory research process that embraces:

- **Research**
  - Community agencies have information needs
  - Campus partners have research tools and resources

- **Education**
  - Community members have valuable local knowledge & experience
  - Campus partners have theoretical and technical knowledge

- **Action**
  - Build organizational and community capacity
  - Effect policy change

Research is Part of Broader Campus Action

CBR can be viewed as one of several types of work that a campus can do for a community.

Why Do CBR?

- CBR can positively contribute to building long-term agency and community capacity

- Complex social problems are often ill-suited to "outside expert" research alone

- CBR is about research FOR the community, not research ON the community.

- CBR and other forms of academic connections can help faculty, the center, and institutions build long-term relationship with community partners

- CBR can be a particularly effective method of teaching and learning for all participants

Key Principles of Practice

There are some important principles of effective practice:

- The research need(s) are defined by community (agency or group)

- The research is action-oriented

- All stages of process involve all partners equitably *(faculty, students, and community)*

- The strengths and knowledge of all partners appreciated and utilized

- The research produced and key findings are disseminated in accessible way, often in a product created for the agency or group

Pedagogical Models

There are some key models for practically building CBR options on campus:

- Add a CBR option to a course

- Create CBR-based semester courses

- Create Long-term, course-based projects (some may be over multiple semesters)

- Design interdisciplinary, multi-course collaborative projects

Benefits for Participants

CBR can benefit all parties, as well as the institution:

- **Community**
    - Access to faculty expertise
    - Organizational capacity building
    - Policy change
- **Students**
    - Develop new skills
    - Improve existing skills
    - Connect classroom learning with real-world application
- **Faculty**
    - Enhanced teaching credentials
    - New venues for publishing and presenting
    - Positively impact students and community

Challenges

It's also helpful to be aware of some of the common challenges:

- **Unpredictability**: projects can go in unexpected directions and fail to meet the starting hopes of those involved
- **Calendar conflicts:** projects can sometimes not fit well into the alloted time within a course or within a semester
- **Role confusion:** sometimes students, agency staff, and/or faculty can experiene confusion about their roles, timelines, and what to produce or get done
- **Participant compensation & recognition:** issues about sharing of funding and other resources can present issues, especially if partners do not feel they are benefiting

What Does It Take?

When an institution's staff and faculty embark on CBR, it's helpful

- Time and institutional commitment (to do this longer than one semester)
- Long-term vision
- Open communication
- Flexibility
- Willingness to develop research process with community input and adapt academic plans

Use Bonner's National CBR Network

The Bonner Foundation works with Princeton University to nurture a national CBR networking initiative. With a three-year grant from the Corporation for National & Community Service, the National CBR Networking Initiative supports the development of high-quality community-based research (CBR) as a form of service-learning and create a national networking structure that assists and connects practitioners. This effort aims to move CBR from the margins of the academy to the center through:

- Spreading the practice of CBR by students, faculty, and community partners;
- Providing tools and resources to ensure quality and collaboration at the local, state, and national levels;
- Expanding faculty development and documenting innovative practices; and
- Increasing the organizational capacity of our community partners.

Our individual campus sub-grantees include:

1. Allegheny College
2. Bowdoin College
3. Cabrini College
4. Dickinson College
5. Hamilton College
6. Lafayette College
7. Lynchburg College
8. Macalester College
9. Pitzer College
10. Rice University
11. St. Mary's College of California
12. Stetson University
13. Tougaloo College
14. University of Alaska - Anchorage
15. University of New Mexico
16. University of Notre Dame
17. Washburn University
18. Washington and Lee University
19. Whitworth College
20. Yale University

CBRNET.ORG

As part of this project, the website www.cbrnet.org acts as a repository for sharing news, resources, conference and educational opportunities, tools, and practitioners' examples.

A CBR Example

A course at Princeton University WWS/SOC469 — *Health, Housing, and Employment: What Works for the Poor in Small Cities*

- Partnered Trenton-based Isles, Inc. (non-profit) & Professor Katherine Newman (Woodrow Wilson School of Public Affairs)
- A syllabus was developed collaboratively over the summer & fall prior to the course being offered
- Lectures offered faculty and partners with a chance to be engaged, with a national scope
- Student teams were paired with Isles staff
- A concluding presentation was made to Isles staff

Public Policy CBR

Public Policy CBR is a form of community-based research in which students and faculty conduct public policy research on a given need/issue in order to inform the agency/community's work.

As PolicyOptions.org, Bonner's website to support this initiative explains:

We believe that colleges and universities can more fully realize their teaching, research, and service missions by including public policy research and analysis as part of their civic engagement programming. By tapping into existing or new academic courses in which students write public policy papers and linking those efforts directly to the community outreach centers now found on most college and university campuses, we can mobilize the tremendous intellectual and technical resources of higher education to work in partnership with and in response to requests from local, state, and national non-profit and government agencies working on the front-lines of community problem-solving.

"The very ignorance that confounds society is a call to action for universities. It underscores the other vital social purpose that we possess: to contribute the knowledge that will help society discover how to overcome its pressing problems."
    — Derek Bok, former President of Harvard University, in his final commencement address.

Producing Issue Briefs

Students and faculty engaged in the public policy research connected to PolicyOptions.org produce issue briefs, which *help put community issues into broader context.*

PolicyOptions Issue Brief Template

1. Goal
2. Scope of the Problem

1. Past Policy
2. Current Policy
3. Policy Options / Program Models *(drawn from approaches in other communities nationally or globally)*
4. Key Organizations/Individuals
5. Glossary
6. Bibliography

Building Local, State, and National Information Banks

In addition, campuses can create a strategy for engaging students (especially Work Study Interns) to find information for a **database-powered website** with information for community partners. This information can be organized through a simple template, which the Bonner Foundation will provide to interested campuses.

Such information may include:

- News
- Funding opportunities
- Jobs
- Legislation
- Non-profit resources
- Issue Briefs
- Publications
- Organizations
- Networking opportunities
- and more

Below is an example for Trenton, New Jersey:

Data-Entry Screen for Filling PolicyOptions.org

If your campus wants to be involved, talk with Bobby Hackett. The Foundation can provide access to the template for issue briefs and the PolicyOptions.org database. Below is a screen shot of that database, designed to be simple to use:
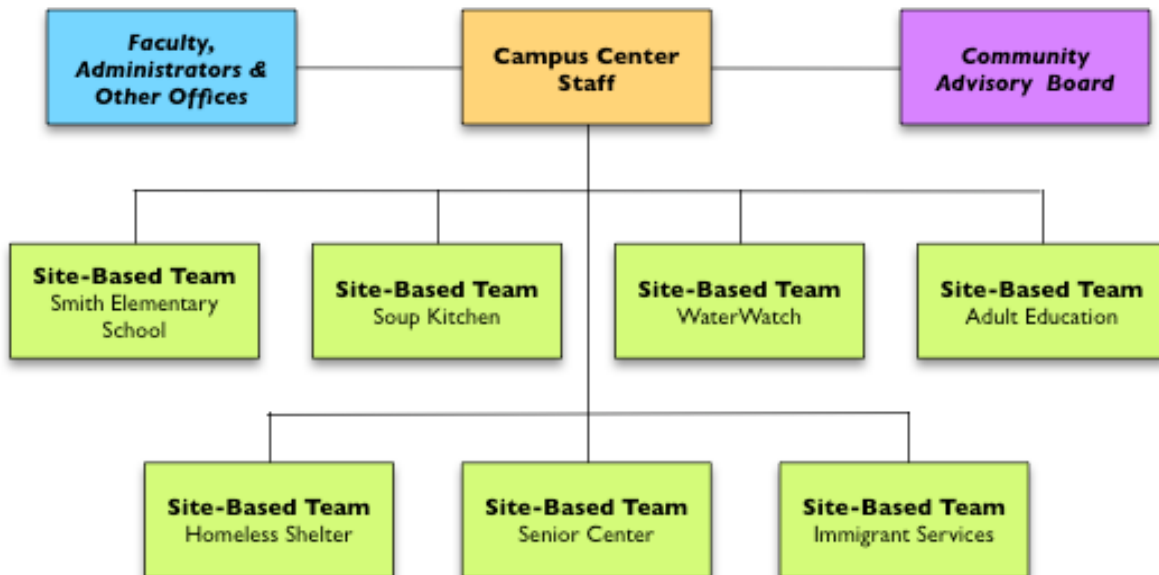

- The student or faculty member simply adds new records for each listing, choosing from drop-down menus.
- After this, the information will show up on the local PolicyOptions.org website.

Start-Up Suggestions

- Meet with select community partners to generate research questions, needs, and potential topics for CBR or PolicyOptions

- Reach out to potential faculty to explain strategies and engage in pilots

- Start with a few courses/projects to learn process

- Build bridges to other departments & centers

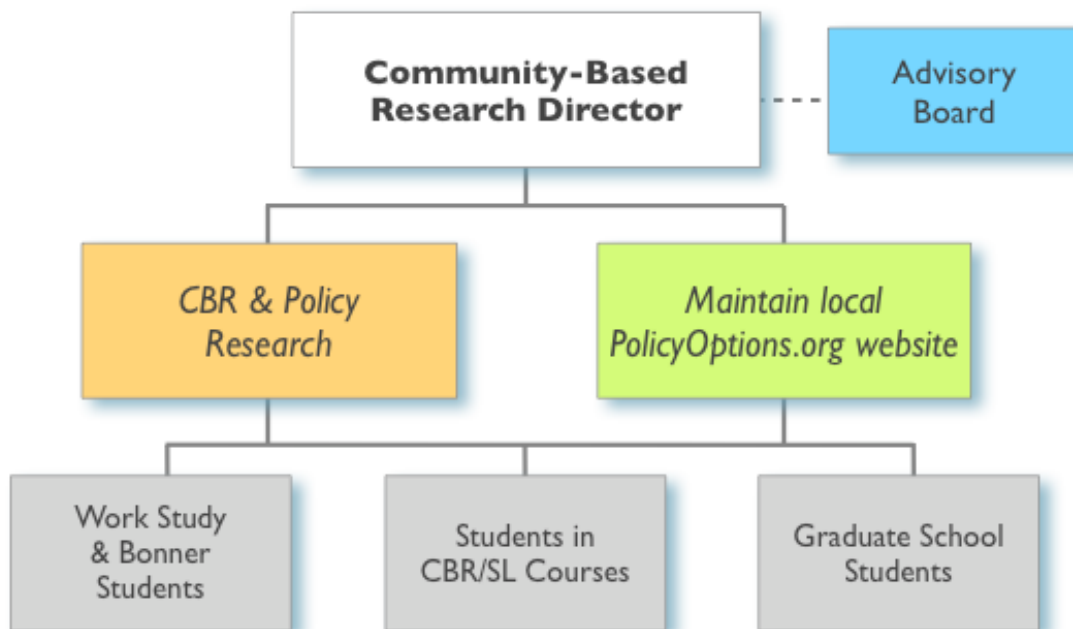- Support CBR & PolicyOptions.org as part of campus-wide center

Link Process with Site-Based Teams

- One key strategy that makes this easier is linking the process with the site-based (or issue-based) team model. Where you have students working on multiple projects or leves, you can more easily work with them and partners to identify CBR research initiatives.

- The chart below highlights the model.

Build a CBR 'Center' or Develop that Capacity

Another key strategy is to build the center's capacity to broker relationships with faculty and partners and support CBR. Or, the institution may want to establish a CBR Center (or institute). A staffing or role schematic for this may be:

Other Resources

These additional resources can be found on bonnernetwork.pbwiki.com:

- **Bonner Handbook**—see the section on the Comprehensive Placement Process
- **Community Partnerships Implementation Guide**; use this for a complete overview, as well as numerous downloadable documents to create a Community Partner Binder and other resources
- Sample documents from various campuses from the **In Good Form** project (located also in the Useful Documents section of the Bonner website)
- **Bonner Web-Based Reporting System (BWBRS)**
- **Recipes for Change;** some examples of campus excellence
- **Community Fund Guidelines**

Here are some highlights from the other resources that you may access on www.cbrnet.org

- National Community-Based Research Networking Initiative *www.cbrnet.org*

- CBR Course and Project Database   *www.bonner.org/campus/cbr/profiles.taf*

- Campus-Community Partnerships for Health   *www.ccph.info*

- *Community-Based Research & Higher Education: Principles & Practices* by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, et. al. *(Josey-Bass)*

- *Institutionalization Checklist,* available on the www.cbrnet.org website, which provides a helpful set of questions to ask as you incorporate CBR and public policy research. See screen shot below.