

SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

Guidelines for Researchers

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) is an Alaska Native-owned and managed regional health corporation operating under the tribal authority of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. SCF review and approval of health research is required when:

- SCF customer-owners are research participants or a population of interest.
 - SCF customer-owners include Alaska Native / American Indian people living in the Anchorage bowl and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley or in any of the 60 villages in the Anchorage Service Unit.
- Recruitment occurs on the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) campus or information is gathered from the ANMC medical record.
- SCF employees are engaged in the research.

SCF review and approval must occur before any recruitment or data collection begins. Review and approval is also required prior to any dissemination of findings. Please reference SCF policies and procedures for more specifics about research approval which are included as an attachment.

SCF's vision is a Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. The SCF mission is working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

In fulfillment of this vision and mission, there are a number of key issues and questions the Southcentral Foundation Research Oversight Committee, Executive Committee, and Board of Directors considers when abstracts, manuscripts, and proposals are evaluated for approval:

I. Alignment with Corporate Vision, Mission, Key Points, Goals, and Objectives

1. Reference SCF's key points, goals, and objectives included as an attachment.
2. The following examples depict research approaches with strong alignment:
 - a. Research on problems and issues of special interest to the Alaska Native community, namely the Family Wellness Corporate Objectives
 - b. Research designed to evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of current health practices and processes.
 - c. Research with the intended use of improving health and systems of care.
 - d. Research using a community-based participatory research approach or methods.
 - e. Research emphasizing wellness and multiple dimensions of health.
3. In addition, the potential benefits and harms are carefully considered as well as the overall importance of the project. SCF works to ensure customer-owners are not overly researched as a population without commensurate benefit and views the time and energy devoted to research as a valuable and limited resource.
 - a. Is this important? Do the results matter? (So what?) To whom?
 - b. Are risks to Alaska Native people considered and sufficiently addressed?
 - c. How will Alaska Native people benefit? Are the benefits accurately described? Are Alaska Native people being used as test subjects without visible benefit?
 - d. What are you (investigators) planning to do with the information? (Propose new treatments? New diagnostic practices?)
 - e. Is there likely to be financial benefit from this research? To whom?
 - f. How are SCF employees and programs which may be impacted by the research involved in the design? Is the effort a good use of SCF and ANMC resources?

Revised 10/26/2010

Approved by the Southcentral Foundation Board of Directors on June 12, 2007

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II. Quality of Research Design

1. Is the design of the study clearly described?
2. Are all the important variables included? Are strengths/protective factors considered in addition to pathology/risks?
3. Are there valid comparisons or controls where appropriate?
4. Are there enough people in the study to show significant results?
5. Do the authors limit their conclusions to the group studied? Are limitations acknowledged and described?
6. Have statistical tests been used when appropriate?
7. Are there enough data and are the data clearly represented?
8. Are consent forms and recruitment materials clearly written?
9. What is the source of funding?
10. How will results be applied and shared? How will Alaska Native/American Indian learn about the results?

III. Depiction and Involvement of Alaska Native People

1. Are Alaska Native people depicted in an inaccurate or stigmatizing light? Are there racial stereotyping or generalizations? Are Alaska Native people described in a paternalistic manner?
2. Is the language regarding tribal affiliations appropriate?
3. How are Alaska Native people involved in the design of the study? Are the contributions of Alaska Native researchers recognized?
4. Does the investigative team include individuals who have worked with Alaska Native/American Indian people?
5. Here are some specific examples of preferred language uses:

We like to see:	Rather than:
Alaska Native people	Natives*
Bacterium or virus	germs
Aleut, Alutiiq, Haida	Eskimo, Indian, Aleut
Tsimshian, Tlingit, Yup'ik	
Inupiaq, Athabaskan	

 - Additional terms, including customer-owner, patient, and Alaska Native community should be used in circumstances in which they are appropriate.
 - Although Alaska Native people is preferred over Alaska Native / American Indian people when referring to studies that take place in the state of Alaska, the use of Alaska Native / American Indian people is appropriate when referring to studies that take place both in Alaska and other states.

IV. Topical Areas Considered Sensitive

1. Descriptions of alcohol and substance abuse, domestic violence, suicide, sexual behavior
2. Specific cultural issues including death and dying, treatment of elders, and historical customs
3. Research involving youth
 - i. Researchers must undergo background checks and finger printing
 - ii. SCF Board of Directors will be sensitive to anything involving child abuse or sexual behaviors
 - iii. Parental consent and youth assent will be obtained.