

# COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH IN EMERGENCY DISPATCH: GETTING A 360° VIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch® (IAED™) is a nonprofit standard-setting organization promoting safe and effective emergency dispatch services worldwide. IAED supports first responder-related research, unified protocol application, and strengthening the emergency dispatch community through education, certification, and accreditation.

As an organization that serves both emergency dispatchers and the public calling them for help, IAED's mission reflects a commitment to build strong relationships with both groups. To this end, IAED began cultivating a relationship with communities more than 12 years ago. Early efforts were not community engaged and lacked adequate community support, access, and collaboration. Recently, IAED partnered with a long-standing community advisory board (CAB) associated with the University of Utah, called Community Faces of Utah, to conduct a community-engaged study. IAED also invited an additional community to participate. The study identified attitudes, expectations, and barriers to calling 911 among the members of these six diverse communities. Those results are forthcoming.

IAED desired to create a culturally-sensitive and appropriate relationship with these communities that would foster long-term effective and respectful partnerships with the CAB members. A recently published study by Dr. Matthews, et al.<sup>1</sup>, provides required competencies and readiness of investigators who plan to engage in community-based research. These impressions of readiness and indicators of competency were identified by a long-standing community engagement advisory board in Illinois. The results inspired IAED to create a survey wherein their CAB members could assess IAED's readiness and competency and open communication for the purpose of feedback and improvement.

## OBJECTIVES

- Provided an opportunity for checks and balances between IAED researchers and their community partners
- Contributed to and developed the best practices and standards for inexperienced researchers who would like to participate in community-engaged research
- Created a survey based on the five impressions of readiness and eight indicators of competency identified by Dr. Matthews' research

## METHODS

- Created a 22-question positively-framed Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) survey using the five impressions of readiness and eight indicators of competency in Survey Monkey
- Each question included a drop-down menu of Likert scale responses and a space for typed comments
- Emailed the survey link to 14 individuals (comprised of the CAB members, community support staff, and University of Utah partners involved in the study planning and implementation)

## ARE YOU READY TO ENGAGE?

The 5 Impressions of Readiness and 8 Indicators of Competency<sup>1</sup>

### Impressions of Readiness

- Community Gatekeeping
- Buy In
- Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Relationship Building

### Indicators of Competency

- Purpose of Research
- Communication
- Openness to Feedback
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Community Presence
- Power Sharing
- Recognizing Partner Contribution
- Developing Community Capacity

## RESULTS

- Out of 14 recruited participants, 7 completed the survey
- 1 respondent supplied only comments for each question. These comments were scored on the Likert scale as follows: "Yes," plus additional supportive comments = Strongly Agree, "Yes" or "True" = Agree, and in the case where a comment deviated from either of these options, researchers used best judgment to reflect intention.

### Examples of questions asked and comments provided:

**Q1:** The researchers included me in the development of all essential study documents. (collaboration, inclusion, buy in)

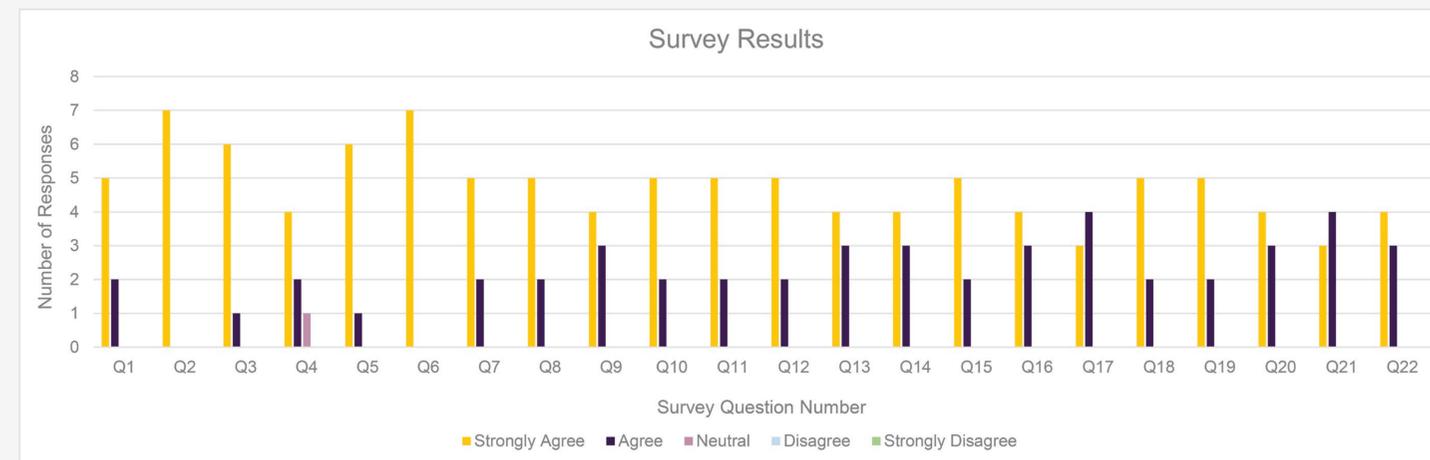
**A:** The researchers always asked for input and feedback, and made changes based on our feedback.

**Q4:** The researchers began the project with an understanding of my group's unique needs and identity. (community gatekeeping)

**A:** Researchers began the project by first, getting to know the community it was wanting to work with and then from there began the project with the groups interest and desire to help where they can.

**Q11:** The researchers did not become defensive when their ideas were challenged. (openness to feedback)

**A:** Sometimes it seemed like they had an initial moment of defensiveness, but then they caught themselves and were more able to listen to differing ideas.



## DISCUSSION

- The survey results indicate that the readiness and competency level of IAED researchers was sufficient to engage appropriately with their community partners.
- The results indicate that the IAED researchers' impression of having created strong partnerships was reciprocated by the community leaders.

## CONCLUSION

The survey IAED created and disseminated was effective in receiving a 360° view. Assessing researchers' readiness and competency is an effective way to measure the perception of a project's impact on and relevancy to the communities involved. The gold standard of community-engaged research should include granting communities an opportunity to provide their feedback on the research process itself.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate and acknowledge the incredible support on this project from our community partners:

- Best of Africa (African Immigrant community)
- Calvary Baptist Church (African American community)
- Equality Utah (LGBTQ community)
- Hispanic Health Care Task Force (Hispanic-Latino community)
- National Tongan American Society (Pacific Islander community)
- Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake (American Indian and Alaska Native community)
- University of Utah Center for Clinical and Translational Science (Collaboration and Engagement Team)

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Listen to the IAED Podcast, "Dispatch in Depth: Come Together Right Now Over Research with Dr. Louisa Stark and Heather Coulter" on [aedrjournal.org](http://aedrjournal.org).

## REFERENCE

1. Matthews AK, Castillo A, Anderson E, et al. Ready or not? Observations from a long-standing community engagement advisory board about investigator competencies for community-engaged research. *J Clin Transl Sci.* 2018;2(3):129-134.