Methods

The Macro evaluation team, PRC Program office staff, and the CEDT developed specific evaluation questions for each study. The evaluators used two data collection methods.

- Document review systematically captured data from program and public documents for all 33 PRCs and their partner communities.
- Telephone interviews captured data that required in-depth exploration of specific topics with people at samples of PRCs.

The methods used for each study are summarized below (Table M-1), followed by details on who conducted the studies, how PRCs were selected, and how the data were handled. The two methods were implemented separately and the results from one method did not inform implementation of the other method.

Table M-1. Overview of Methods, by Study

Study name	Method
Organizational and Community Characteristics	Document Review Interview
Academic-Community Partner Interaction	Document Review Interview
Core Research	Document Review
Training, Technical Assistance, and Mentoring with Community Partners	Interview

Document Review

The document review enabled the Macro evaluation team and the PRC Program office staff (i.e., the study team) to accomplish the following:

- Summarize the reach of the PRC Program across its partner communities.
- Identify the number and types of community committees that exist and the types of guidelines these committees use.
- Assess the contexts in which, and resources with which, the PRCs function.
- Describe the range of organizational structures that characterize PRCs.
- Describe the variety, goals, and contextual factors of the core research projects.

Questions and Response Options

The study team collaborated with the CEDT over several months to develop and refine the document review evaluation questions and response options. The study team pilot-tested the questions and response options with documents from a few PRCs and further refined them (Appendix D).

Selection of PRC Projects for Inclusion in the Core Research Study

The 33 PRCs conduct 55 core research projects. For the PRCs with more than one core research project, the primary one was identified in one of two ways: either a PRC had previously designated a primary core research project or the PRC Program office staff identified the primary core research project based on a PRC's report of current research activities and progress.

Data Collection, Analysis, and Validation

For all 33 PRCs, the study team used a systematic process to obtain and review documents of four main types: (1) documents previously submitted by PRCs to the PRC Program office; (2) documents previously developed by PRC project officers*; (3) national data sets; and (4) Internet Web sites. The documents and data sources used for each study are listed in Appendix E.

The study team organized the documents in two ways. For the Organizational and Community Characteristics and Academic–Community Partner Interaction studies, the Macro evaluation team used ATLAS.ti† software to organize and store information from applications and progress reports. To manage these data, the Macro evaluation team developed a relational database using Microsoft Access†. For the Core Research study, the PRC Program office staff read and compiled information in Microsoft Word† forms.

For all three studies, the database or form presented information in a question and answer format, and as study team members reviewed each PRC's documents, they abstracted data to answer each evaluation question and noted the data sources. For some information, the study team examined multiple sources. Any discrepancies were entered into the database or form for clarification.

After data abstraction, the study team developed PRC-specific reports and implemented a two-step data validation process. First, Project Officers reviewed and validated the data using their knowledge of the PRCs and documents submitted by PRCs. Subsequently, each PRC reviewed and validated its data. The study team corrected the data after each step and noted the source of each correction in the database or form.

Finally, for the Organizational and Community Characteristics and Academic–Community Partner Interaction studies, data were aggregated and analyzed across PRCs using Microsoft Access. Macro evaluation team members transferred the data from Microsoft Access to Microsoft Excel† or SPSS† for calculation of means, standard deviations, and medians. For the Core Research Study, data were aggregated across PRCs using Microsoft Excel.

* Project officers are program consultants who provide a link between CDC and its funded partners. Project officers collaborate with partners, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers to share effective prevention strategies and expertise; are responsive to partners' specific needs and situations; and help partners navigate CDC's procedures, policies, and organizational structure.

† Use of trade names are for identification only and do not imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Telephone Interviews

The in-depth telephone interviews enabled the study team to do the following:

- Explore community partnerships and community involvement in research.
- Describe the organizational structures and university support for community-based work.
- Identify the benefits of participating in the PRC network from both the academic and community perspectives.
- Describe community engagement in and support for training, technical assistance, and mentoring.

The Macro evaluation team conducted interviews for both the Organizational and Community Characteristics and the Academic–Community Partner Interaction studies, and PRC Program office staff conducted interviews for the study on training, technical assistance, and mentoring. These interviews were not conducted to assess individual PRCs, but to gather a variety of perspectives across samples of PRCs.

Interview Guide Development

The study team worked with the CEDT to identify six topic areas that guided the development of seven[‡] separate semi-structured interview guides, as described in Table M-2. The study team reviewed and modified all interview guides iteratively to ensure that questions were clearly worded and accurately captured the intent of the study and the overall topic areas. All interview guides are available in Appendix F.

[‡] The topic "Community partnerships, capacities of community committees, and participation in research by community committees" was developed into two interview guides, each having different questions for academic respondents and community respondents.

Table M-2. Interview guides by study, topic area, respondent, and intercoder agreement

Interview Guide Number	Topic Area	Respondent Category	Respondent Type	Intercoder Agreement %
Organizational and Community Characteristics Study				
1	Organizational structure and resources	Academic	6 Directors 2 Deputy Directors 1 Associate Director	79
Academic–Community Partner Interaction Study				
2	Community partnerships, capacities of community committees, and participation in research by community committees	Academic	2 Directors 1 Co-Director 3 Deputy Directors 3 Research Scientists	94
3	Community partnerships, capacities of community committees, and participation in research by community committees	Community	9 Community Members	92
4	Benefits and challenges of being in the PRC network	Academic	7 Directors 1 Deputy Director 1 Principal Investigator	82
5	Benefits and challenges of being in the PRC network and National Community Committee	Community	9 Community Members	91
Training, Technical Assistance, and Mentoring with Community Partners Study				
6	Diversity of PRC training activities	Academic	4 Directors 1 Associate Director 2 Research Scientists 1 Community Liaison 1 Administrator	84
7	Technical assistance activities and mentoring provided by PRCs	Academic	4 Directors 1 Co-Director 1 Deputy Director 1 Principal Investigator 1 Research Scientist 1 Communications Contact	89

Selection of PRCs and Respondent Type

The study team developed the sampling criteria (Appendix G), which the CEDT reviewed, so that representative samples of PRCs were available for the studies. For each interview guide, the study team identified up to four criteria that guided selection of PRCs and respondents and ensured a range of characteristics in the samples (e.g., length of time since the PRC was first funded or respondent's role in or knowledge of PRC activities). In addition, to limit burden on each PRC, the following parameters guided the overall selection:

- A PRC chosen for interview guides two or three (Table M-2) was not chosen for subsequent interviews due to the length of those interviews.
- A PRC that participated in a Macro staff visit in 2005 or in a Trust Tool Pilot in 2007 was not eligible for selection for interview guides two or three.[§]
- All PRCs would participate in at least one interview, but no PRC would participate in more than three interviews.

To facilitate respondent selection, the study team developed a table that listed PRCs in rows and the interview guides and criteria in columns. PRC Program office staff identified PRCs eligible for each interview guide by applying the criteria. PRCs for interview guides two and three were selected first, by using purposive sampling for the PRCs eligible under each criterion. For all other interview guides, random sampling was used when more PRCs than needed were eligible within a sampling criterion.

Nine people were interviewed for each interview guide. A sample size of nine was large enough to capture some breadth and variability among the PRCs and small enough to keep the studies manageable and permit detailed examination of key issues.

Process of Conducting Interviews

Three members of the Macro evaluation team conducted telephone interviews for the Organizational and Community Characteristics and the Academic-Community Partner Interaction Studies. For each interview, one person conducted the interview and took detailed notes. For the training, technical assistance, and mentoring study, one member of the PRC Program office conducted the telephone interviews which were recorded. Table M-2 indicates the interviewee type for each interview guide.

Each interview lasted 20 to 90 minutes. Interviewers used probes as needed to facilitate in-depth discussion, naturally flowing conversation, and sharing. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to facilitate analysis.

Coding, Analysis, and Reporting

Both the PRC Program office staff and the Macro evaluation team used ATLAS.ti (v 5.2.10) software to organize and retrieve interview data for analysis. From each interview guide, interviewers developed a preliminary set of codes, known as a start list.[1] The start list included overarching categories outlined in the interview guides as well as subcategories or probes (e.g., benefits and challenges of the PRC network, partner types, etc.). The study team arranged the codes hierarchically so that subcodes automatically linked to broader-level codes to facilitate the analysis of related topics.

[§] Macro staff visited selected PRCs in 2005 to learn about the PRC Program before implementing the evaluation. The Trust Tool Pilot studies were completed in 2007 to test a technical assistance tool developed for PRCs to use with their partners. One PRC that participated in a visit in 2005 was selected for interview guides two and three due to a small number of eligible PRCs for those guides.

In addition, the interviewers read each transcript to identify unexpected patterns or themes. This reading allowed the team to capture recurring themes as well as the breadth of responses.

Term used in results	Number of respondents
A couple	2
Few or a few	3
Some	4–5
Most	6–8
All	9

The interviewers met frequently to compare findings and discuss the interpretation of the data. To assess coding accuracy, two interviewers independently coded transcripts for each of the seven interview guides. The team compared codes and calculated intercoder agreement, which ranged from 79% to 94% (Table M-2). In addition, the entire evaluation team reviewed the summary findings and coded data, and the group either endorsed the results or recommended further examination of the data.

Throughout this report, the interview results use the following terms to designate the frequency of stating the same idea among the interviewees for each guide:

Review of Results

The study team summarized initial results from all studies and conducted a systematic review along with CEDT members. The CEDT and study team members provided feedback on clarity of data, areas that needed further validation, and themes or concepts to discuss or highlight in the report. An in-person CEDT meeting in October 2007 provided additional feedback on results.

Reporting of Results

The Macro evaluation team drafted the evaluation report on program context and developed recommendations for the program that emerged during this activity.

References

1. Miles MB, Huberman AM. Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications; 1994.