

PROCESS OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH ON THE COLORADO RIVER INDIAN TRIBES (C.R.I.T.) RESERVATION, ARIZONA

The following research protocol was developed by the University of Arizona, La Paz County Cooperative Extension and approved by the Colorado River Indian Tribes.

Introduction

Conducting research on Native American Reservation lands demands a unique protocol that prospective researchers need to understand and respect in order to proceed in an ethical and culturally sensitive manner. First, and foremost, researchers must recognize that they are working on sovereign lands and that cultural and legal issues may be very different than that of their own upbringing and background.

Approval of research proposals will vary depending upon the Tribe or Nation on whose territory the research will be conducted; therefore, researchers must become informed about the requirements in place on their specific Reservation of interest. In some cases, a letter from the Tribal Council may be sufficient. In others, the approval of a tribal Institutional Review Board (IRB) may be required. No research should be conducted based on verbal approval from one individual. The researcher must insure that the appropriate Tribal representative or group has issued approval, in writing, before proceeding with any research activities.

All Research that involves Tribal individuals must incorporate an 'Informed Consent' form. Informed Consent should be considered an ongoing process that drives open and honest communication between the researcher and the subject throughout the term of the research. The form should be written in language that is easily understood by the subject to insure that the subject fully understands what he is signing. It must include specific statements covering:

- The volunteer nature of the subject's participation
- The project purpose
- Selection criteria for subjects
- Duration of subject participation

- Research procedures
- Risks and benefits to the subject
- Confidentiality measures
- Participation Costs and Subject Compensation
- Project Contacts
- Liability

Guidelines and examples of this form can be found at the University of Arizona site: <http://www.publichealth.arizona.edu/StudentResources/Documents/HIPAAFAQs.swf/>. Other universities have similar sites with Consent Form information. A federal checklist for consent forms can be found at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/assurance/consentckls.htm>. Creation and use of an Informed Consent form is a crucial step that must be undertaken prior to engaging Tribal members in research projects that affect individuals.

The Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation

The Colorado River Indian Tribes (C.R.I.T) does not have its own unique IRB; therefore, prior to working or conducting research on the Reservation, potential researchers must contact the appropriate Tribal Representative or governing board to determine C.R.I.T. and departmental requirements for the conduct of their specific research. All necessary local approvals must be acquired prior to submitting a protocol to the researcher's own governing IRB. Researchers must also contact the appropriate Tribal community members overseeing, or affected by, the proposed research to determine a suitable form of local participation and review throughout the term of the research.

Proposals for research on the C.R.I.T. Reservation should demonstrate that research procedures are appropriate to the culture, mores, and laws of the Tribe and the community. Literature searches combined with personal contacts with a Tribal liaison, Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Agent, and Native American Studies Specialists can guide the

acquisition of this background information. Researchers also need to incorporate the concerns, needs, and expertise of the local community into their research design and practice so that there are benefits to the Tribe as a result of the research. C.R.I.T. will probably require that research conducted on their Reservation provide direct benefits to the local community and that all data and findings are made available to the Tribe.

If the proposed research involves health issues, inquiries should be directed to the C.R.I.T. Indian Health Service facility in addition to the Tribe. Prior to contacting the local center, researchers should be aware that the federal Indian Health Service (IHS) has an established IRB system that is responsible for reviewing research conducted on or through IHS clinics. In addition, IHS also provides training and information materials for researchers working on reservation lands for the first time. If IHS IRB approval is required for a project, a copy of the IHS IRB submission and approval documentation should be submitted to the researcher's IRB and to the C.R.I.T. Tribal Chairman. Additional information about the IHS IRB system can be found at: <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Research/areairb.cfm/>. Working with IHS does not relieve the researcher from obtaining Tribal and Departmental permission.

Research proposal packets must include the following information and format to be accepted by C.R.I.T. for review:

- A. Cover sheet for the IRB Research Protocol Application
- B. Abstract / Executive Summary
- C. Research Project Description
 1. Introduction
 2. Background
 3. Purpose
 4. Methods: including involvement of the local community
 5. Benefits and Risks: including steps that will be taken to protect participants
 6. Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality assurance.
 7. Funding Source and Budget
 8. Timeline for survey or research
 9. Informed Consent form if research involves individuals
- D. Curriculum Vitae of Principal Investigator/Co-Principal Investigator

Contact Information

All proposals should be sent to the Tribal Chairman, the Tribal Council and the affected department. For current department information, access the tribal website at: <http://critonline.com/>. The mailing address for C.R.I.T. Reservation representatives is:

Colorado River Indian Tribes
Route 1, Box 23-B
Parker, AZ 85344

History and Culture

Proposals for access to C.R.I.T. archival information should first be sent to the C.R.I.T. library archives. After following their specific proposal approval process, documents should be sent on to the Tribal Council.

Agriculture and Natural Resource Research Contacts

Agricultural Research proposals should be directed to the Tribal Chairman and Chairman of the Farm Board.

Research involving Natural Resources on Reservation lands should be directed to the Tribal Chairman and the C.R.I.T. Department of Fish and Game.

Research relating to Environmental issues should be directed to the Tribal Chairman and C.R.I.T. Environmental Protection Office.

Human Subjects and Cultural Research Contacts

All proposed research requests that will involve personal surveys regarding lifestyle and cultural information should be directed to the Tribal Chairman. University Faculty must complete a Human Subjects training course prior to conducting research on Tribal lands. The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) is a modular based system customized to meet the needs of both behavioral and biomedical researchers. Researchers can log onto the system at www.citiprogram.org and complete the training on-line. For additional information from the University of Arizona, contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at (520) 626-6721.

Human Subjects and Cultural Research Contacts

After becoming familiar with the federal IHS IRB requirements, researchers should send requests for health related research to the Tribal Chairman complete with the federal IRB approval. Health and direct human subject research requires the most stringent review process in order to protect Tribal member's rights.

For additional information, contact the La Paz County Cooperative Extension Office at (928) 669-9843 or visit the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program website at: <http://www.indiancountryextension.org/> or the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. website at: <http://www.itcaonline.com/>.



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This information has been reviewed by university faculty.
cals.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1463.pdf

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