

Research Consortium Descriptions: A Map and Ramps

Community Revitalization & Empowerment

Background:

Look around you. The McDonalds on University avenue is gone and Allianz Village is on its way up. Will the front door of the hotel that replaces the McDonalds face the community? Will the new park include bathrooms that are handicap accessible? Local community leaders are proud to answer yes to both questions. But legislation and financial resources aside, how do we seed communal wellbeing and sustainability in Hamline-Midway with our bare hands?

Next steps:

What is Hamline University doing to demonstrate our trustworthiness as allies—concretely—in community with Hamline-Midway organizations, businesses, and residents? In times of rapid change, legislative gridlock, and limited resources, we must be committed to developing small yet impactful social change initiatives that do not depend on large sums of money and legislation. How can we build investment models that support local communities without requiring a lot of capital? What everyday patterns and/or annual ritual might we develop to support Hamline-Midway's vitality and sustainability?

Advocacy (Fall '25): What community-led interventions can effectively support community revitalization and empowerment (research on funding models, a block club party, and a think tank on revitalizing the Hamline-Midway community)?

Policy Proposal Toward Structural Change (Fall '25 or Spring '26): Think of “structural change” as changing the game's rules, not just the players. The sustained development and revitalization of the Hamline-Midway community begins with listening to the people who have the problem. In addition to your independent research, draw on community-based research to develop a call for structural change that addresses the following points of focus:

Identify a social Ill that negatively impacts the lives of a community (create a scene that readers can recognize and that helps them visualize a problem)

Acknowledge existing efforts to solve the problem, and show why they are inadequate

Cause

Establish a causal relationship between the Ill and the Blame

State the cause as something that can be avoided or circumvented

Cure

Outline the program or call to action/specific measures of implementation the agent will undertake (the mandate)

Identify the organization/agency responsible for implementing the proposed cure and why they are uniquely qualified to do so (the agent)

Point out ways your proposed solution will work against/mitigate the identified cause of the problem

Point out ways your proposed solution will benefit the at-risk community

Identify plausible alternatives to your Cure, and explain why they are less attractive than your solution

Point out a hidden imperfection or future complication that may arise as a consequence of your cure/proposal's implementation

Acknowledge the conditions that must be set in place to prevent this imperfection, and explain why they will be effective

Equity-Focused Participatory Action Research (Spring 26): Equity-focused participatory action research is a strategy for drawing on unique and overlapping positionalities and situational contexts to develop sustainable solutions to systemic and communal problems.

Housing & Economic Justice

Background:

Lately, big investment companies called private equity firms have been buying up a lot of rental houses and apartments across the country. There's evidence suggesting that after buying these properties, some of these firms have increased rent prices, added new fees for tenants, haven't spent enough on keeping the properties in good condition, and have been very quick to take renters to court for things like late payments.

A recent report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition highlights a serious problem. It found that someone working full-time at the federal minimum wage (or even the higher minimum wage in some states or cities) cannot afford a typical two-bedroom rental anywhere in the U.S. What's even more concerning is that in only a small fraction of counties (about 6%), a full-time minimum wage worker can't even afford a modest one-bedroom rental at the average market price. This shows how difficult it is for many people with lower incomes to find affordable housing.

For a long time, Hamline University has owned some houses and apartments near the campus. This past fall, the university announced that these properties would be managed by Hamline's endowment (which is like a long-term savings and investment fund for the university). The long-term plan is to fix these properties up and turn them into housing specifically for students.

The idea behind this is that by creating more student housing, Hamline can offer better quality, better located, and more accessible living options for its students near campus. Importantly, research from other universities that have done similar things shows that it can actually help attract more students to the university, encourage current students to stay enrolled, and even improve their chances of graduating.

Next steps:

No doubt, the property game is designed to have winners and losers. However, the Hamline-Midway community wants to tackle housing and economic injustice in a new way, where existing business and future residents can win. How can Hamline leverage its unique position and resources to help create an alternative system of property ownership that benefits both existing businesses and future residents? How do we build a local coalition—between schools, faith-based institutions, nonprofits, and businesses—to develop new systems of property ownership in the Hamline-Midway community?

Advocacy (Fall '25): What community-led interventions can effectively challenge housing instability and special segregation (researching food access and systems, building out the

Neighborhood Navigation Program, advertising the Community Mutual Aid Network, and providing education on tenant rights and protections)?

Policy Proposal Toward Structural Change (Fall '25 or Spring '26): Think of “structural change” as changing the game's rules, not just the players. The effective address of the Hamline-Midway community's housing and economic justice issues begins with listening to the people who have the problem. In addition to your independent research, draw on community-based research to develop a call for structural change that addresses the following points of focus:

III

Identify a social III that negatively impacts the lives of a community (create a scene that readers can recognize and that helps them visualize a problem)

Acknowledge existing efforts to solve the problem, and show why they are inadequate

Cause

Establish a causal relationship between the III and the Blame

State the cause as something that can be avoided or circumvented

Cure

Outline the program or call to action/specific measures of implementation the agent will undertake (the mandate)

Identify the organization/agency responsible for implementing the proposed cure and why they are uniquely qualified to do so (the agent)

Point out ways your proposed solution will work against/mitigate the identified cause of the problem

Point out ways your proposed solution will benefit the at-risk community

Identify plausible alternatives to your Cure, and explain why they are less attractive than your solution

Point out a hidden imperfection or future complication that may arise as a consequence of your cure/proposal's implementation

Acknowledge the conditions that must be set in place to prevent this imperfection, and explain why they will be effective

Equity-Focused Participatory Action Research (Spring 26): Equity-focused participatory action research is a strategy for drawing on unique and overlapping positionalities and situational contexts to develop sustainable solutions to systemic and communal problems.

Health & Human Rights

Background:

Social systems and institutions are being dismantled. The more the administrative state is deconstructed, everything we need as a civil society (from the Department of Education and the U.S. Postal Service to our electricity and sewer systems and parking authority) becomes privatized, unaffordable, and ineffective.

Today, insurance is what stands in the way of students receiving the mental health support they need. Racism and classism confound our approaches to drug addiction treatment. It's no secret: "Racism, not race," is responsible for the alarmingly high infant mortality rate among Black college-educated women.

Next steps:

The Hamline-Midway community is not immune from economically and politically constructed public health and human rights crises. For example, Ramsey County received over \$25 million from a nationwide opioid manufacturing settlement. This settlement found that eight companies actively worsened the opioid crisis. However, our corridor reflects that these funds have not been used for effective prevention, treatment, and recovery. Clearly, there is a need to move toward integrative approaches to investigating and addressing this local health and human rights issue. What could a more expansive approach to public health look like in the Hamline-Midway community? How do we join Hamline-Midway's efforts to move beyond the bystander effect neoliberalism promotes?

Advocacy (Fall '25): What community-led interventions can effectively support health and human rights (power mapping, air pollution monitoring, and legislative research on local zoning or industrial facilities)?

Policy Proposal Toward Structural Change (Fall '25 or Spring '26): Think of "structural change" as changing the game's rules, not just the players. The effective address of the Hamline-Midway community's health and human rights issues begins with listening to the people who have the problem. In addition to your independent research, draw on community-based research to develop a call for structural change that addresses the following points of focus:

III

Identify a social Ill that negatively impacts the lives of a community (create a scene that readers can recognize and that helps them visualize a problem)

Acknowledge existing efforts to solve the problem, and show why they are inadequate

Cause

Establish a causal relationship between the Ill and the Blame

State the cause as something that can be avoided or circumvented

Cure

Outline the program or call to action/specific measures of implementation the agent will undertake (the mandate)

Identify the organization/agency responsible for implementing the proposed cure and why they are uniquely qualified to do so (the agent)

Point out ways your proposed solution will work against/mitigate the identified cause of the problem

Point out ways your proposed solution will benefit the at-risk community

Identify plausible alternatives to your Cure, and explain why they are less attractive than your solution

Point out a hidden imperfection or future complication that may arise as a consequence of your cure/proposal's implementation

Acknowledge the conditions that must be set in place to prevent this imperfection, and explain why they will be effective

Equity-Focused Participatory Action Research (Spring 26): Equity-focused participatory action research is a strategy for drawing on unique and overlapping positionalities and situational contexts to develop sustainable solutions to systemic and communal problems.