This is what was found by Rutgers University Pod at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey on Policies for Working with Communities of Color as well as plans for improved processes and/or needed resources. Rutgers University is located on Munsee Lenape and Lenni Lenape land.

One response to the survey has been received so far, but other survey invites are pending. Answers to the questions below are only based on the sole response received.

Summary:
Our pod designed a survey based on suggested URGE questions where participants are invited to rate their efforts in communities of color on a scale from “Most or all of the time” to “Not at all” and strongly encouraged to fill out a long form response. The response received reflected only one perspective, but we were able to identify several places where they succeeded in their efforts and several areas where improvement was needed. In particular our respondent seemed to emphasize collaborations with local university persons for early stages of research development without mention of attempts to integrate local communities or design mutually beneficial goals while conducting studies. Our participant indicated that local persons hired to assist with operations were compensated well.

Audit of previous interactions with communities of color at Rutgers University:
Survey participant, who worked in remote regions in northern Kenya mentioned the following as a notable experience:

“Recently, at the start of a major field project I held a series of meetings to inform local communities, answer questions, and address concerns. While the level of understanding of our research goals was limited, the communities were generally supportive. They were very interested in areas where the research intersected with their daily needs (i.e. water), but were most engaged in how the project would bring jobs and business to the community. We made a concerted effort to ensure jobs went to women as well as men, and in subsequent years our local facilitators and colleagues have made a point of continuing the practice. In this particular context, this is a significant change in thinking.”

What worked well in these interactions?
Survey participant mentioned the following:

“[Local] Research scientists, graduate students and technicians are all involved in development and formulation of proposals;”

“Local collaborators were included in broader project papers, most did not share expertise in subject matter of highly specialized geological reports (they tend to be paleontologists/archaeologists).”

“We employ local community members in most research sites in part to be aware of and respectful of local culture and customs.”

“We make every effort to employ local community members, to spread employment around the community, and to provide very good compensation.”

“We work with both the National Museums of Kenya and an NGO, the Turkana Basin Institute. Both help support research but have a strong teaching/training focus.”

And mentioned that they sometimes acknowledged local communities / Indigenous tribes in their research results.

What did not work well, and how can this be better addressed in future plans?

Survey participant noted:

“On the local level we use local translators to overcome multiple local languages to communicate outcomes, but we have not done this in written formats.”

It is good that attempts are made to communicate results with local indigenous groups, but there is no mention of how locals responded to these attempts.

When it came to considering and prioritizing research questions and research locations based on needs of local communities, in addition to how impactful they are seen within academia, survey participant stated the following:

“Given the focus of our research, which tends towards basic research, local communities are not really a consideration in choosing sites/topics for research.”

Are there ways to improve the outcome of projects already undertaken?

Survey participant noted:
“We recognize [including local communities in our broader impacts in a meaningful way] to be a significant problem and are working to address it. Broader impacts tends to start out strong at the beginning of a project, but the shift in focus as results accumulate, project fatigue, and dwindling funds have left a much smaller focus in this area by the end of the project. Also, actual results lag so far behind the completion of fieldwork that outcomes are not reported back to the community.”

Based on this quote, Rutgers could provide resources to support researchers in their intentions to include communities in their broader impacts. This would include staff designated to support and maintain community contacts and funding to hire more research staff specifically to address this lack of resources and time for critical broader impacts elements of the research being done by our institution.

**Are there specific resources or guidelines that are needed to improve the process for planning ahead and working with communities of color?**

Based on the respondent’s answers it appears that two factors contribute to the researcher’s self-reported or otherwise less than satisfactory responses - a lack of time/personnel and a lack of adequate funding. In addition to funding already secured by the researchers, Rutgers could provide grants specifically to support the addition of further on-the-ground field members and local cultural experts to ensure that the process of planning ahead and working with communities of color proceeds with all necessary resources.

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*The Rutgers University Pod may have members from a range of career stages and involvement in the development and execution of research projects, and pod members may have different experiences or different perspectives when responding to these questions.*

*Work is still ongoing and survey results are being received, so this is an early draft.*