G.R.O.W. + L.I.F.T.
a checklist for commuinty-research engagement

Goal alignment
Good community-research engagement responds to community-identified needs. The first step for academic researchers is to critically evaluate whether their research goals align with the needs of community partners. If goals do not align, academic researchers must either change the research project or reflect on why they have approached the particular community partner of interest in the first place

Relationship-driven practices
Good community engagement is all about relationships. Projects that are built on strong relationships between academic researchers and community partners, and where the work is effectively meeting community partners' needs, are those best suited to move to the next step of research.

Ongoing communication
Clear communication begins with dialogues that focus on community partners' values, needs, ideas, and expectations. Communication should not stop after the grant is awarded or data collection finishes but rather should be an ongoing process.

Work to bridge capacity
Community organizations may need financial resources or training opportunities in order to develop their own capacity to do research. Academic researchers may need to spend time with community organizations in order to learn about the context, needs, and methodologies of communities they intend to work with.

Language, culture, and anti-oppression
Research processes need to be culturally safe, reflecting the practices and values of community organization partners. Researchers should learn about how systems of oppression operate in the daily lives of the communities they are studying, and learn what anti-oppression work looks like in the context of communities they work with. Research outputs should use non-stigmatizing and relevant language that is used by community partners themselves.

Initiate relationships early
Academic researchers should plan to build relationships with community partners early and expect that growing a meaningful relationship can take years. If there is not adequate time to build relationships, researchers should consider a different approach, or work toward a future project. Relationships may also need to be revisited between projects, or when there are changes in staffing.

First, report results to community
Before results are published or shared with academic partners, and especially the general public, academic researchers should present results to community partners (in draft form), to hear from community partners how they interpret the findings and what they think is missing.

Time
Academic researchers need to take time to learn good community-research engagement and its importance within the context of community-defined missions and values. No one is ever finished learning about being a good community partner or ally.

How can I learn more? Visit ***http://cbrc.net/growlift*** for a supplementary report which includes explanatory notes, information about how this checklist was developed, and other resources related to community-research engagement.