REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – NEW INVESTIGATOR & STUDENT PILOT PROJECT GRANT PROGRAM

February 24, 2016

The Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence (HWCE) at the University of Iowa is pleased to announce the availability of funds for new investigator and student pilot projects.

HWCE Mission

The Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence (HWCE; www.hwce.org) at the University of Iowa is funded through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Total Worker Health® initiative. Topics relevant to Total Worker Health® include improving work organization, assessing the contribution of occupational stressors to the burden of chronic health conditions among employees (e.g., obesity, cardiovascular disease, and depression), optimizing return to work outcomes, and injury and illness prevention strategies for a diverse and/or vulnerable worker populations (e.g., older and younger workers, immigrant workers, and those with part time or precarious employment arrangements). For a more comprehensive list of potential topics, visit the website: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/

Pilot Project Grant Program Objectives and Available Funding

The objective of the HWCE pilot project grant program is to encourage development of new and creative research oriented towards prevention/intervention and translation with promise to lead to more comprehensive studies addressing Total Worker Health®. Awards will cover a one-year period and all funding is conditional of the availability of funds to the HWCE. Two types of pilot projects will be considered:

New Investigator Awards: The HWCE will fund at least one (1) new investigator award. New investigators may include junior faculty, post-doctoral trainees, medical residents and fellows, doctoral students, senior scientific staff, and senior faculty new to the Total Worker Health® and HWCE programs. If the principal investigator is a student or trainee, a faculty sponsor must be identified. The maximum permitted budget is $30,000.

Student Research Awards: The HWCE will fund up to two (2) student research awards. Advanced undergraduate students, graduate students, medical residents, and fellows from the health sciences, engineering, or other applicable programs are encouraged to apply. Each student research proposal must have a faculty sponsor who will oversee the research. The maximum permitted budget is $5,000.

Eligibility

Any faculty member, post-doctoral trainee, medical resident or fellow, graduate student, undergraduate student, or senior scientific staff (e.g., research scientists) with an interest in Total Worker Health® at the University of Iowa is eligible to apply. Researchers and students affiliated with other Midwest institutions who have an interest in Total Worker Health® are also eligible. Questions about eligibility should be directed to Dr. Kevin Kelly (kevin-kelly@uiowa.edu; 319-335-4755).

Application Deadline and Procedures

Application deadline: April 22, 2016

Please email the signed cover letter and the full proposal to: kevin-kelly@uiowa.edu
Applicants are invited to contact Dr. Nathan Fethke (nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu; 319-467-4563) or Dr. Diane Rohlman (diane-rohlman@uiowa.edu; 319-384-4007) regarding scientific questions. Contact Dr. Kevin Kelly (kevin-kelly@uiowa.edu; 319-335-4755) concerning administrative procedures relating to the HWCE pilot project grant program.

Individuals considering submitting an application are encouraged to contact Dr. Fethke, Dr. Rohlman or Dr. Kelly to discuss the potential project.
Application Content

Applications should conform to standard NIH guidelines for research proposals and be formatted as follows:

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<td>Biographical sketches (PHS 398 format)</td>
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¹ The Significance and Innovation sections must address the burden of the occupational health problem addressed, the need for the proposed research, and the potential impact of the research. In the Significance section applicants must also address the relevance of research to Total Worker Health®.

Application Review Process

Project applications will be evaluated by a review panel selected from among members of the HWCE Internal and External Advisory Committees and others with expertise relevant to the HWCE and the specific applications. The review process will follow procedures similar to those used by federal study sections with assigned primary and secondary reviewers providing written critiques. Evaluation and selection criteria will address originality, scientific relevance and importance to the region and to the HWCE mission, objectives of this pilot program, National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) research priorities (http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/default.html), validity and reliability of methods, qualifications of investigators, interdisciplinary nature of the project, potential for future funding, plans for dissemination of results, and appropriateness of the budget. All review panel members will score each project proposal according to the NIH priority score method. No reviewer will participate in the evaluation of applications they submit or for which they are a collaborator in another investigator’s application under consideration.

Budget Notes

Investigators from within the University of Iowa should not include indirect costs (i.e., facilities and administrative costs) in their budgets. Investigators outside the University of Iowa are strongly encouraged to contact Mindy Sickels (mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu; 319-335-4411) for guidance in preparing budgets. Salary and fringe support for faculty is not allowed, and no meeting/conference travel can be covered. Funding is available for the usual categories of direct costs, such as salary and fringe for research assistants and graduate students, laboratory supplies, equipment, data analysis, and travel associated with executing the research. Each award will be for a maximum duration of 12 months.
Human Subjects Statement

Applications without a Human Subjects Statement will be considered non-responsive to this request for proposals. Detailed instructions for preparing the Human Subjects Statement can be found at:

http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/SupplementalInstructions.pdf#Part_II (Section 4.1, in particular)

For projects involving human research participants, approval by an appropriate institutional review board (IRB) must be obtained before the HWCE will release funding. The PI of the pilot grant must be identified as the PI on the IRB approval document. Investigators are strongly encouraged to initiate any applicable human subjects approval or certification processes as soon as possible. All investigators engaged in the conduct of human subjects research are required to complete an education program approved by NIH and become certified in human subjects protections.

Awarded funds will not be released prior to receiving proper notification of IRB and/or other governing approvals and certifications.

Planned Enrollment Table

For projects involving human subjects research, the proposal must include the PHS 398 Planned Enrollment Table. A “fillable” version of this table can be found at:

https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html

Reporting Requirements

Each funded investigator is required to submit a mid-year progress report and a final report within 30 days of project completion. These reports shall be submitted according to instructions provided by HWCE and shall include reporting of work and activities relating to the current (and past) project(s) awarded by HWCE to the investigator/eligible institution. Project proposals must include plans to track and report to HWCE subsequent results stemming from each pilot project, including but not limited to grants and contracts developed as progeny of the project, students mentored, MS and PhD dissertations generated, presentations and publications emanating from the project, and interdisciplinary collaborations established as a result of HWCE-supported work. Publications, journal articles, presentations, and similar works relating to HWCE-supported pilot projects are to include the following statement: “This research was supported by a pilot project grant from the Healthier Workforce Center for Excellence (HWCE) at the University of Iowa. The HWCE is supported by Cooperative Agreement No. U19OH008858 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) / National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The contents are solely the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC, NIOSH, or the HWCE.”
Review Criteria for HWCE New Investigator and Student Applications

Significance
- Does the project address an important Total Worker Health® problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field?
- If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved?
- How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

Investigator(s)
- Are the PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project?
- If Early Stage or New Investigators, or in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training?
- If established, have they demonstrated a record of accomplishments that have advanced the field?

Innovation
- Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?
- Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense?
- Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, or interventions proposed?

Approach
- Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses methods well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project?
- Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
- If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?
- If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

Environment
- Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?
- Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?
- Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

Additional Review Considerations
- Is the budget and time to completion justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project?
- Does the proposal have the potential for future extramural funding?
- Does the proposal promote collaboration of researchers in Federal Region VII?
- Does the investigator have plans to disseminate the results and the continued reporting of related work?