



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

November 28, 2016

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

The HWCM is one of six Total Worker Health® (TWH) Centers of Excellence funded through the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). As a regional Center, the HWCM serves the occupational safety and health needs of employees and employers in HHS Federal Region VII (IA, NE, KS, MO). The mission of the HWCM is to protect and preserve worker safety and health through knowledge generation and dissemination of evidence-based TWH practices.

NIOSH defines TWH as “policies, programs and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.” Topics relevant to TWH 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/illness prevention strategies for a diverse and/or vulnerable worker populations (e.g., older/ younger workers, immigrant workers, and those with part time or precarious employment).

For additional potential topics and TWH resources, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/>

Pilot Project Grant Program Objective and Available Funding

The objective of the HWCM 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 TWH. Awards will cover a one-year period and all funding is conditional of the availability of funds to the HWCM. Two types of pilot projects will be considered:

New Investigator Awards: The HWCM 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 TWH and HWCM 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 HWCM 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 junior 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 TWH is eligible to apply. Researchers and students affiliated with institutions within HHS Federal Region VII other than the University of Iowa or Washington University are also eligible. Applications focused on employees within HHS Federal Region VII will receive priority consideration for funding.

Questions about eligibility should be directed to Dr. Kevin Kelly (kevin-kelly@uiowa.edu; 319-335-4755).

Application Deadline and Procedures

Application deadline: **February 3, 2017 by 5:00 PM Central Time**

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, and to contact Dr. Kevin Kelly with questions concerning administrative procedures.

Application Content

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

Required Proposal Sections	Page Limits
Cover letter Signed and on official organization letterhead	1
Front page Date, title, investigator(s) and affiliation(s), research project category ¹ , and abstract (150 word limit for abstract)	1
Research plan Specific aims Significance ² Innovation ² Approach Timeline and milestones	5 (New Invest.) / 3 (Student)
Potential for future funding and plans for dissemination of results	1
Collaboration with HWCM investigators or staff (if applicable)	1
Budget and budget justification (see “Budget Notes” below)	no limit
Human subjects statement (see below)	no limit
Planned enrollment report (see below)	required table
References	no limit
Biographical sketches http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm	5 (per investigator)
Letters of support ³	no limit

¹ Consistent with current NIOSH practices, the HWCM will consider the following types of research projects: (i) basic/etiologic research, (ii) intervention research, (iii) translational research, and (iv) surveillance research. Additional information about these categories can be found in the most recent program announcement for NIOSH Centers of Excellence for Total Worker Health® (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-15-361.html>).

² 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.

³ Letters of support can be useful to demonstrate access to an employer/employee population needed for success of the research. For **student** applications, a letter of support from the faculty sponsor is required.

Application Review Process

Project applications will be evaluated by a review panel selected from among members of the HWCM Internal and External Advisory Committees and others with expertise relevant to the HWCM and the specific applications. The review process will follow procedures similar to those used by federal study sections with assigned reviewers providing written critiques. Evaluation and selection criteria will address originality, scientific relevance and importance to the region and to the HWCM 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:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/general/g.400-phs-398-research-plan-form.htm#Human>

For projects involving human subjects, approval by an appropriate institutional review board (IRB) must be obtained before the HWCM 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

For projects involving human subjects, the proposal must include the “PHS Inclusion Enrollment Report.” A fillable version of this form can be found at:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-d/general/g.500-phs-inclusion-enrollment-report.htm>

When completing the form, be sure to check “Planned Enrollment” as the enrollment type.

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 HWCM and shall include reporting of work and activities relating to the current (and past) project(s) awarded by HWCM to the investigator/eligible institution. Project proposals must include plans to track and report to HWCM 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 HWCM-supported work. Publications, journal articles, presentations, and similar works relating to HWCM-supported pilot projects are to include the following statement: *“This research was supported by a pilot project grant from the Healthier Workforce Center of the Midwest at the University of Iowa and Washington University. The HWCM 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 HWCM.”*

Review Criteria for HWCM New Investigator and Student Applications

Significance

- Does the project address an important 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 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?