Collaborative Health Equity Research Pilot
Research Pilot Awards Program
APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 1, 2017

OVERVIEW

The UW-Madison Institute for Clinical and Translational Research (ICTR) presents a Request for Applications (RFA) for new community-engaged health disparities research projects wherein the PI is an early stage investigator and a senior co-investigator is engaged to ensure a mentored experience and to connect the research team with relevant stakeholders.

One goal of UW ICTR is to foster development of investigator-initiated clinical and translational research to eliminate health disparities and to promote health equity. The UW ICTR programs address this goal by catalyzing health equity and diversity research with a goal of improving health. In addition, ICTR seeks to provide opportunities and resources that support the career development of early stage investigators. Consequently, ICTR announces a Pilot Award funding mechanism for early stage investigators focused on health disparities and equity to gain experience in clinical and translational research that will facilitate their future career development, and provide preliminary data for subsequent funding mechanisms. Specifically, this pilot award program prioritizes support of assistant professors and requires a mentored junior-senior collaboration wherein the collaborators embrace an interdisciplinary approach to research, including those who genuinely engage community partners & stakeholders.

Proposed research for this RFA must address health disparities or health inequities as defined below.

Differences in the incidence, prevalence, mortality, burden of disease, and other adverse health conditions or outcomes that exist between population groups based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, geography, sexual orientation and identification, disability or special health care needs, or other categories. Most health disparities are also considered to be health inequities – disparities that are avoidable, unfair or unjust and/or are the result of social or economic conditions or policies that occur among groups who have persistently experienced historical trauma, social disadvantage or discrimination, and systematically experience worse health or greater health risks than more advantaged social groups.

APPLICATIONS MUST CITE PUBLISHED EVIDENCE THAT THE HEALTH DISPARITY/INEQUITY IS RECOGNIZED BY STATE/FEDERAL AGENCIES AS SIGNIFICANT, AND WARRANTS INTERVENTION.

Successful proposals to this RFA must provide rationale for the current gap in their program of research that precludes a successful extramural application, and how this junior-senior collaboration will alleviate this gap. Examples of activities that would be responsive under this award include:

- Collection of pilot data using sound methodology directed to a topic aligned with this RFA (health disparities) and an external funder's mission, including community/stakeholder engagement methods utilized throughout each phase of the project and, where appropriate, advance understanding about how community/stakeholder engagement can be accomplished in complex research settings.
Proposed research must be translational in nature. Translational research is broadly defined to include the early steps necessary to develop new therapies from basic discoveries; the steps necessary to establish real world efficacy; and the research needed to implement and disseminate improvements in clinical practice, health services, and/or policy.

**AWARD:** Each award includes $50,000 maximum in direct costs for no longer than 12 months.

- Lead applicants may submit only one application as PI per year.
- Informational pre-submission consults are available for lead applicants and their research mentors. Contact Caitlin Scott, Health Equity Outreach Specialist, at cscott8@wisc.edu with any questions regarding this funding opportunity.

**ELIGIBILITY of LEAD APPLICANTS**

- PIs must be a UW-Madison faculty member at the assistant professor level (tenure track or CHS) with a sole or joint appointment (e.g., VA Hospital or UW Milwaukee), or a Marshfield Clinic investigator at comparable rank.
- A senior co-investigator must be engaged to ensure a mentored research experience and to connect the research team to relevant stakeholders. Alternatively, a seasoned investigator in health equity research may serve as PI, with clear commitment to mentor an assistant professor and assure relevant stakeholder engagement.
- Whereas residents, fellows, post-doctoral associates are NOT eligible to serve as PIs, they are eligible to serve as co-investigators.
- Include only one Lead Applicant per proposal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Application Dates</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informational consultations regarding this RFA.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contact Caitlin Scott, Health Equity Outreach Specialist, at <a href="mailto:cscott8@wisc.edu">cscott8@wisc.edu</a></td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandatory Letter of Intent (LOI) Deadline</strong></td>
<td>October 2, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Deadline</strong></td>
<td>November 1, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Review Period</strong></td>
<td>November 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awards Announced</strong></td>
<td>December 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earliest Grant Start Date</strong></td>
<td>January 1, 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**APPLICATION PROCESS and COMPONENTS**

**Mandatory Letter of Intent: DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2017 (5 pm).** Applicants are **REQUIRED** to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). The LOI will not be used for ranking, but will assist staff in identifying potential resources and reviewers for the proposal. The LOI must include the following information:

1. Title of proposed research project.
2. Name, address, telephone number, email address, and UW-Madison/Marshfield Clinic affiliation of the Lead Applicant.
3. Names of other key personnel crucial to the design and conduct of the lead Applicant.
4. Participating institutions, including identification of key stakeholders/community partners.
5. Letter of support (LOS) from the **research mentor**. The LOS should indicate a commitment to assist in the research and career development of the awardee, and explain the mentor expertise in the topic and/or health disparities research, as well as potential for future funding in the proposed area of research.
6. Letter of support (LOS) from **stakeholders/collaborators** to confirm that the investigators have been in conversation with collaborators (academic and non-academic) about the project and are committed to being involved in the project. Note: The letters of support required in the full application stage will require greater detail.
7. A **brief description** of the proposed research or project activities with enough detail to determine project feasibility, programmatic relevance related to health disparities and equity, and to identify proposal reviewers.

The LOI should be submitted as a single document (word or pdf) no later than 5:00 on Monday, October 2, 2017. Send the LOI electronically to Caitlin Scott, Health Equity Outreach Specialist, (cscott8@wisc.edu).

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS: DUE NOVEMBER 1, 2017, AT 5:00 PM**

The pilot award application comprises information arranged into separate components. A completed application in response to this announcement will include the following **9 components** arranged in this order, each **page numbered** sequentially starting with the Face Page. **Important:** See Application Guidance Section for detailed instructions on application components.

1. Face Page*
2. Abstract*
3. NIH Biosketches for key personnel and mentor using the NIH format.
4. Budget pages and Non-Supplanting Form*
5. Project Narrative: Instructions for the 6 page project narrative are provided in the Application Guidance section below.
6. Impact Statement
7. Timeline for completion of the project.
8. Literature citations
9. Letters of Support (LOS): Signed LOS from each of your academic and non-academic collaborators.

*Face page, abstract, and budget templates must be downloaded from the ICTR Funding Opportunities webpage (see Collaborative Health Equity Research RFA section): [https://ictr.wisc.edu/funding-opportunities/](https://ictr.wisc.edu/funding-opportunities/)
Submission of Completed Application: November 1, 2017, 5:00 pm

Submit all applications electronically as a **SINGLE** document, either in Microsoft Word or Adobe pdf format. Applications are **not** processed by UW Research & Sponsored Programs.

Submit completed applications directly to Caitlin Scott (cscott8@wisc.edu) on or before Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at 5:00 pm.

**GUIDANCE: APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

**Face page, Abstract, and Budget Templates** must be downloaded from the Collaborative Health Equity Research (CHER) section on the ICTR Funding Opportunities page: [https://ictr.wisc.edu/funding-opportunities/](https://ictr.wisc.edu/funding-opportunities/)

**Biosketch for key personnel** (please use the NIH bio-sketch format with the “personal statement” section; an example can be found [here](#))

**Budget (up to $50,000 for 12 months of direct support)**

Please use the budget template provided on the ICTR Funding Opportunities page for this RFA

- Budget template is bundled with face page. Please note that “months of effort” for each key personnel must be listed, even if no money is being requested to support their work under this pilot program.
- Budget justification narrative required (maximum 2 pages)
- Matching resources are encouraged and can be monetary or non-monetary. A letter of support is **required** that details matching resources.
- Download and complete the [Non-Supplanting Letter and Questionnaire](#), and obtain necessary signatures.

When creating your budget, please note the following parameters:

- When applicable your budget should include compensation for stakeholder/patient engagement activities, e.g., honoraria for community/stakeholder participation, travel, meeting expenses, etc. A budget template for stakeholder/community engaged research is included in [this guide](#) for your consideration.
  - Funds are available for personnel, supplies and other allowable expenses.
  - Funding of education per se is not allowed under this program. However, tuition remission can be included for students who are budgeted to be paid as UW research or project assistants, whose efforts are integral to the research endeavor.
  - Indirect costs are not allowed.
  - Investigator salary is allowed, but clear justification of why it is necessary should be provided – requested funds should be limited and used principally to directly support the research and effort must be reported even when salary is donated.
  - Only travel funds necessary for project conduct (e.g., participant travel) are allowed.
- No-cost extensions are not allowed for this funding mechanism.

Please contact Caitlin Scott (cscott8@wisc.edu) with any questions regarding allowable costs.
Narrative: Up to 6 pages

The project narrative is limited to 6 pages in length, 8.5" X 11", single-spaced, with margins set at no less than 0.75 inches, each side. Use the font face Arial, 11-point. The narrative must include the following 7 sections in the order presented below:

1. **Specific Aims.** Describe concisely and realistically the goals of the proposed project and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact the proposed research will exert on the research fields involved. Include broad, long-term goals; specific objectives and hypotheses to be tested; summarize expected outcomes; and describe impact on the research field. If the proposed work is part of a larger project, describe how the proposed work relates to the larger project.

2. **Rationale for Funding.** Please explain how this award will facilitate the career development of the early investigator and increase the likelihood of submitting a highly competitive grant application for external funding on the topic of health disparities/health inequities. Describe briefly (2-4 sentences) the relationship of the anticipated work outcomes to the applicant's future career development.

3. **Significance.** Describe the state of existing knowledge, including literature citations and highlights of relevant data; provide a rationale for the proposed research; explain gaps the project intends to fill; and the potential contribution to the scientific field(s) and public health. Describe how the proposed work specifically addresses the mechanism of the health disparity or how the work will impact the health of the specific population group experiencing the inequity in Wisconsin. APPLICATIONS MUST CITE PUBLISHED EVIDENCE THAT THE HEALTH DISPARITY/INEQUITY IS RECOGNIZED BY STATE/FEDERAL AGENCIES AS SIGNIFICANT, AND WARRANTS INTERVENTION.

4. **Investigator.** Explain how the PI and research team are especially suited to this project. Explain how you and your research team have the appropriate experience, training and mentoring capacity. Describe the mentor’s pertinent record of accomplishments in this field (i.e., publications, external peer-reviewed funding, and/or other impact).

5. **Environment.** Will the environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probably of success? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

6. **Approach.** Describe how the proposed project will be carried out. Research design and methods should include preliminary studies, data and experience relevant to the application and design, a description of methods and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Discuss the way in which the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted. If proposing a new methodology, explain why it represents an improvement over existing ones. Discuss potential difficulties and limitations, how these will be overcome or mitigated, and next steps. Describe the mentoring plan for the junior-senior collaboration.

7. **Plans for Collaboration/Engagement.** Who are the stakeholders who will ultimately benefit from, or be affected by your research? Please describe how your stakeholders are involved in your research, and what role they will play in the proposed project. Describe the collaborative nature of the project, including interdisciplinary approaches, and when relevant, the engagement of community partners. Include a plan for disseminating project results to/with your stakeholders. When discussing your stakeholders/collaborators, please identify any UW ICTR resources (e.g., Community Academic Partnerships, Biostatistics, Office of Clinical Trials) or partners (e.g., UW Collaborative Center for Health Equity, Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation) anticipated to contribute to this proposed project, and/or serve as mechanisms/pathways for disseminating your findings. For a definition of stakeholder and other key terms, see here.
See the APPLICATION REVIEW SECTION below for more detail about review criteria to be applied to the Narrative section.

**Impact Statement.** Please respond to **ONE of the three following questions** regarding impact that is best aligned with your research question:

1. Identify the specific metrics that you will use to identify the effects of your research on health outcomes (including physical, mental, and/or social), or the effects of your research on specific, well-established determinants of health (PI must be able to justify determinants chosen).

2. If specific metrics will not be measured in your pilot, describe the metrics that you will use to identify the effects of your subsequent research on health outcomes or on specific, well-established determinants of health.

3. If you are not be able to measure specific health outcomes directly, describe other possible impacts of this pilot or subsequent research, where impact is defined as: any permanent new or revised structures, policies, or processes in the delivery of health care services or community health programs that are the result of this project/collaboration.

**Timeline:** Project must be completed within **12 months of start date.** Please include a depiction of what tasks will be completed during which months and a narrative that addresses how you will address timeline and deadline issues/potential challenges with your community and faculty collaborators. This timeline and description does not count against your 6-page narrative described above.

**Letters of Support (LOS):** Please include signed letters of support from all your collaborators (academic and non-academic), especially the following:

- **Mentor LOS:** A letter of commitment from the mentor directing the proposed research describing mentoring, support, and collaboration. (Letter must include explicit plans for mentor-mentee interactions, and manuscript assistance and review; mentors must also briefly describe accordance of their research portfolio with the proposed research, and a brief description of their mentoring history.)

- **Community Collaborators/Non-Academic Stakeholders LOS:** Provide a LOS from community partners outlining their commitment to the research and their specific role in the project. For guidance on letters of support from community partners, and planning for stakeholder engagement, see this guide developed by the Wisconsin Network for Research Support (WINRS).

**APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

Each proposal will be evaluated using the following three criteria.

- The first will be scientific merit based on the strengths/weaknesses in each of the 5 areas listed below.
- The second will be based on a combination of programmatic relevance and judgment of the ability of funding to advance the career trajectory of the applicant toward a successful federal grant.
- The third will be based on how the proposed work specifically addresses a documented health disparity or how the work will impact the health of the specific population group experiencing an inequity.

Proposals without an actual health equity/health disparity connection will **NOT BE** funded. Please contact Caitlin Scott (cscott8@wisc.edu) with any questions.

All applications will be reviewed and discussed by a selected committee of individuals with relevant scientific expertise. The Review Committee will rank applications and make funding recommendations to ICTR Senior Associate Executive Director, Dr. Chris Sorkness and ICTR Executive Director, Dr. Marc Drezner. All applicants will receive a brief summary statement detailing the evaluation of their proposal, following completion of the review process.
• **Significance.** If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice improve? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

• **Investigator.** Are the PI, collaborators, and stakeholders well suited to the project?

• **Innovation.** 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, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

• **Approach.** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?

• **Resources.** Are the resources needed to successfully complete the project available to the applicant?

**POST-AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

All applicants who receive pilot awards will be required to attend a mandatory investigators’ meeting to discuss administrative requirements. The research mentors are encouraged to attend. Among those requirements are the following:

• Lead Applicant must obtain the appropriate regulatory assurances for all protocols (e.g., IRB committee), and will forward copies of all approval documents to the ICTR grant administrator. Following the expected award dates in January 2018, pilot recipients MUST have their regulatory & IRB assurances submitted by April 2018 in order to maintain appropriate timeline for completion of this 12-month project.

• Brief (1 paragraph) quarterly progress reports outlining accomplishments to date will be required of all awardees, as well as submission of final report upon project completion.

• In addition, awardees MUST acknowledge ICTR funding in all publications and presentations. ICTR Project number will be provided pending notice of grant award.

• All grantees must inform the ICTR grant administrator of any publication submitted/accepted, as well as grants submitted/funded that use pilot data. Furthermore, grantees must adhere to the NIH Public Access Policy and obtain PMCID numbers for every publication utilizing pilot data.

**ICTR Resources Available to Support Your Application**

**Pre-Application RFA Consultations:** We encourage potential applicants to schedule a consultation with Caitlin Scott, Health Equity Outreach Specialist, at cscott8@wisc.edu to discuss the details of the RFA and how to prepare a strong application.

ICTR offers many resources for investigators conducting health equity and community/stakeholder engaged research. Potential applicants who schedule an optional pre-application consultation and/or submit a Letter of Intent will be advised of ICTR resources available that may contribute to a more successful research project.