CALL FOR PILOT GRANT PROPOSALS IN COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH RESEARCH

2024-2025 Funding Cycle

Community Engagement and Research Core (CEAR Core)
of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (ITMAT)

Overview

The Community Engagement and Research (CEAR) Core of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (ITMAT) at the University of Pennsylvania is sponsoring a pilot grant program to fund research with public and community health relevance.

The CEAR Core is seeking proposals that foster community-based research, especially studies that use a participatory framework. This includes research conducted in community settings or using a participatory research framework that actively involves community stakeholders in project conceptualization, design, implementation, and/or evaluation.

Community is defined broadly to include populations in neighborhoods and organizations, including health care settings. **Pilot projects** are defined as research projects that use qualitative and/or quantitative methods to collect initial data, analyze secondary data, and/or test research methodologies with the long-term goal of obtaining funding from external sources and/or conducting larger studies.

We expect to fund 3-5 projects between $5,000 and $20,000. Applications are due on Friday, March 1, 2024 at 5 PM.

Priority themes

This year's priority theme is place-based research (related to geographic neighborhoods or communities) with a health equity focus. We are especially interested in receiving proposals under this theme but will also consider proposals on other topics. *We strongly discourage modifying your proposal to artificially or superficially align with the priority theme.*

Criteria for proposals

This call for proposals is open to faculty and postdoctoral fellows with public health and community health-related experience at Penn and is intended to:
- Foster interdisciplinary research in public health at Penn.
- Assist in securing external support for large-scale studies in the field of public health.
- Encourage additional faculty and staff at Penn to become involved in public health research.
- Identify innovative research methodologies that have the potential to inform local, state, and national health policy and programs.

Highly rated applications will propose projects that:
- Demonstrate how the research will be used to develop a larger grant application to seek external support.
- Present clear, relevant research aims.
- Demonstrate how research outcomes and priorities will be relevant to public and community health.
- Describe innovative methodologies that are feasible and can be completed within a one-year period.
- Include community partners as collaborators or advisors.
- Explain how research results will be disseminated to community partners.
- Use a participatory research framework and/or comparative effectiveness approaches.
- Address the priority theme of **place-based research with a health-equity focus.**

Who is Eligible to Apply?

The PI for the grant must be a Penn faculty member or postdoctoral fellow. CHOP-based Penn faculty are eligible to apply. No more than one grant can be submitted by any one team or PI.

Applicants are encouraged to become members of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutic (ITMAT). Details and the membership application are available at: www.itmat.upenn.edu/membership.shtml.

Key Dates and Administrative Requirements

- **Applications are due on Friday, March 1, 2024 at 5 PM.**
- Awards will be announced by Friday, May 24, 2024.
- The funding period for each award will be from June 1, 2024, through May 31, 2025.
- All funds must be expended by May 31, 2025, unless an extension is granted.
- Final reports for each funded project will be due on July 31, 2025.
- Manuscripts and presentations from research supported through this award should acknowledge the Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA), UL1TR001878, which funds ITMAT and the CEAR Core.
- CEAR Core periodically holds symposia to communicate the results of pilot grant projects. Grantees may be asked to present at future symposia.

Application Components

- Research proposal (5 pages) inclusive of the following:
  - Statement of Purpose. This should include (a) background literature/research and (b) clearly defined research aims with relevance to current public health challenges.
  - Approach. This section should describe the proposed research plan (including a data collection and analysis plan), any underlying theoretical frameworks on which the program is based, methodology, and the expected significance of potential findings.
  - Description of Deliverables. Describe key deliverables and a timeline of key activities and deliverables.
- References/Literature Cited (no page limit)
- Budget Table and Budget Justification for all project costs and expected in-kind support/contributions (itemized). Include proposed staff effort and in-kind faculty effort. (1 page) [See "Use of grant funds" below for allowable budget items]
- Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Biosketches (NIH format, edited to be 2 pages in length each)
- Response to the following questions (5 lines)
  - Has any version of this pilot grant been submitted for review to any other internal or external funding source within the past 12 months?
  - If yes, (a) where was the pilot grant submitted and (b) is it currently under consideration?
- Letters of Support from collaborating community organizations are strongly encouraged. Letters should describe the role of the collaborator in the proposed project and any past work with the applicant. (1 page each, limit of two letters per application). Do not include letters of support from Penn/CHOP collaborators.

Application Format Requirements

- All applications must be submitted electronically using the ITMAT Pilot Grant system: https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/itmat/pg/. You must have a PennKey to access this system.
- Format all documents in Arial or Times New Roman 11pt font and 1" margins.
- Submit the research proposal, references, project budget and justification, responses to funding questions, and any letters of support in a single PDF using the "Research Proposal" document link in the ITMAT system.
- Attach Biosketches on the second page of the application system ("Proposal Participants"). Biosketches for co-Investigators outside of the Penn system can be emailed to Krista Scheffey (contact info below).
- *Do not* include surveys, appendices, or any other supplemental materials.
- Administrative Review and sign off by department are not required prior to submission.
- Your grant may be returned for revision or withdrawn from consideration if these requirements are not met.

Questions can be addressed to Krista Scheffey (krista.scheffey@pennmedicine.upenn.edu) and Emma Soliva (emma.soliva@pennmedicine.upenn.edu).

All proposals selected for funding must receive IRB approval from the Office of Research Administration before data collection begins.

Use of Grant Funds

Funds may be used to pay for project staff salary and benefits, consultant fees, supplies and other direct expenses related to program activities (e.g., travel, incentives for community participants). Funds may not be used to support the salary or benefits of faculty or postdoctoral fellows. The purchase of equipment will only be supported if it is demonstrated that there is no way for the research team to access necessary equipment other than direct purchase.