

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS OF PILOT/SMALL RESEARCH PROJECTS IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health (RMCOEH), University of Utah, invites applications for short-term research project funding in occupational health and safety for the 2020-2021 academic year. Graduate students, junior investigators, and established investigators with new interests in occupational health and safety are encouraged to apply.

This Pilot/Small Projects Research Program is supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the RMCOEH.¹ These 1-year projects are to be completed by July 30, 2022 and are non-renewable.

The purpose of this program is to enhance worksite occupational safety and health (OSH) and builds on the NIOSH “National Occupational Research Agenda” (NORA). Information regarding NORA is available at the NIOSH site: <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/default.html>. Additional information about Regional NORA priorities is provided in the summary of a 2006 town hall meeting on the RMCOEH website at <https://medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh/research/pilot-small-projects-grant-program.php>. Research projects may also support the NIOSH Research to Practice (r2p, <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/r2p/>). The goals of this pilot/small research program are broadly to improve workplace OSH, reduce and/or prevent workplace injuries, improve health, and lower workers’ compensation costs. Novel ideas as well as collaborative, interdisciplinary projects are encouraged. Direct linkage to NORA or NIOSH Research to Practice (r2p) is required. Examples of potential projects include:

- Initial support to develop innovative approaches/lines of investigation in OSH program areas.
- Innovative new directions in OSH sciences.
- Stimulation of investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to OSH issues.
- Development of collaborative partnerships with RMCOEH faculty to address emerging safety and health concerns.
- Initial support for translational/research to practice projects.
- Support for Masters and Doctoral capstone projects (faculty mentor is required).

Pilot projects are intended to develop improvements in OSH and explore or develop new and creative OSH-related innovations and interventions. Projects may be exploratory, interventional or investigational. Pilot Project Principal Investigators (PIs) must be full-time faculty or doctoral students. Faculty and students from outside the University of Utah, but in Region 8 (UT, CO, MT, SD, ND, WY) or in neighboring states (NV, ID, AZ) are especially encouraged apply. We encourage collaboration of investigators from Region 8 and neighboring states with faculty from the RMCOEH at the University of Utah (<http://medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh/>). Project proposals from outside Region 8 or neighboring states must have a collaborative link with the RMCOEH. Master’s trainees may not serve as principal investigators but are encouraged to apply with a faculty mentor. It is anticipated that successful projects will result in at least one peer reviewed publication and submission of additional research grants, particularly resulting in extramural funding. Projects are expected to be one year in duration. Successful applicants are encouraged to present findings of their project at the annual Regional NORA conference at the University of Utah or at the RMCOEH.

Merit Review of Applications:

Each proposal will be reviewed for using the standard NIH review criteria (Significance, Innovation, Approach, Investigator and Environment) and with attention to the following domains when applicable:

1. Relevance to [NIOSH mission](#) NORA ([NORA](#)) or [R2P](#) objectives.
2. Interdisciplinary involvements or potential.
3. Research capacity building for large-scale projects, R21, R01 or similar funding.
5. Innovativeness and scientific merit; adequacy and feasibility of research plans.
6. Appropriateness of budget and budget justification.
7. Participation of multiple stakeholders (employers, employees, academia).
8. Potential impact of a study on OSH with measurable benefits.

For masters and doctoral student projects, adequacy of supervision and the capabilities and track record of the mentor will be factored into the final funding recommendation.

Additional Information and Application Materials: Please see attachment 1.

Application Deadline: June 1, 2021 **Approximate Award Date:** August 1, 2021¹

Electronic applications should be emailed to: Toni.Chambers@hsc.utah.edu and Maureen.Murtaugh@hsc.utah.edu

Questions may be addressed to Dr. Murtaugh

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¹ Funding is contingent on continued funding from NIOSH.

Attachment 1

Pilot/Small Research Projects in Occupational Safety and Health Application Instructions

A. Application Content

1. Proposals should focus on NIOSH priority goals (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/prioritygoals.html>). Emphasis on meeting regional OSH needs is encouraged. Exceptions must be justified (e.g., new and emerging problem.)
2. Applications with greater potential for leveraging external funding will be given priority.
3. Projects will be encouraged that quantify results, including healthcare and/or workers compensation costs and/or claims, if applicable.
4. Master's students may apply for project funding. However, a faculty member must serve as PI. Doctoral students may serve as PI but must have a faculty supervisor identified for a Pilot/Small Project. Faculty without prior extramural funding must have a senior faculty advisor.
5. The faculty member supervising a student is responsible for oversight and management of the project. That faculty member is ultimately responsible for delivery of a final report.
6. Include a cover letter that includes the following.
 - a. Graduate student must identify the faculty mentor and timeline for the project and their graduate program.
 - b. Faculty projects must identify the department emphasis and the planned external funding request (e.g. subsequent R01) that the project is collecting pilot data for. Projects without an identified external funding target will receive lower priority.
 - c. All must outline at least one proposed publication and targeted journal for the work. If no peer reviewed publication is possible, justification must be provided.
7. The application must include an application face page, detailed budget, biosketch, timeline, specific aims page and up to 6 pages of narrative for the project plan. An NIH biosketch of a faculty mentor is required for MS/PhD student projects. PHS 398 <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/all-forms-and-formats.htm#cga>. A Budget Page (PHS398) and Justification is required. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. For budgeting, indirect costs requirements are determined by the investigator's institution, and cannot exceed 8.0% of award.
8. A PHS 398 Resources page is required.
9. Narrative is to be placed on a PHS398 continuation page.
10. PHS 398 forms can be found at: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. Narrative must be limited to **6 pages maximum**.
11. All grantees are required to provide a short progress report **quarterly** to briefly document progress of the awarded project.
12. All projects must have a final report delivered to the RMCOEH by September 1, 2022 using the template we provide.
13. All grantees are expected to deliver research results at one or more conferences. Exceptions must be justified. Presentations at the annual University of Utah NORA conference or at the RMCOEH are strongly encouraged.
14. Future outcomes and impacts must be tracked and reported upon request (e.g., abstracts, presentations, publications, grant applications, extramurally funded projects leveraged from this project, injury reductions and economic impacts).
15. Investigators must acknowledge support from the NIOSH RMCOEH ERC Pilot Research Training Program in all related publications resultant from the pilot grant award.
16. Inclusion of women, children and minorities, whenever feasible and appropriate is encouraged.
17. All approved projects involving human subjects will have Institutional Review Board review and approval prior to initiating research or expensing funds. **NOTE: Although final IRB approval is not required at the time of the proposal submission, the final IRB approval must be submitted to, and reviewed by NIOSH BEFORE the research and use of funds commences.**

Considerable time will be required for such approval and investigators should initiate IRB approval requests prior to the application. Accordingly, funding priority will be for projects with IRB approval or not needing IRB approval.

- B. Funding eligibility.** Any faculty member of any rank from any academic institution in Region VIII is eligible to apply. However, senior, established researchers are ineligible as PIs unless the pilot project develops a new line of research for that investigator. Conversely, senior advisor/mentorship of junior investigators is encouraged. OSH professionals outside of academia, but from within Region VIII may apply, but must have a faculty collaborator who will have primary responsibility for this project. Faculty who are not from the University of Utah must identify a collaborating faculty member in the RMCOEH. This is so that there is an adequate level of coordination of the research project. Graduate students (Masters or Doctoral) are also eligible to apply. Note that Masters students cannot serve as PI. However, all graduate students must have a full-time faculty member identified who agrees to take responsibility for, and accomplish oversight of, the project.
- C. Number of Awards per Year.** The number of awards will depend on the availability of funds.¹ It is anticipated that several awards will be made each year. Most are funded in the \$5-\$10,000 range. Projects for graduate student research may request up to \$10,000. Faculty pilot projects with an identified external funding grant application may request up to \$20,000.
- D. Length of an Award.** Awards will be for one year and are not renewable. Carry-forward is approved relative to progress on the project.
- E. Human Subjects.** In accordance with NIOSH and University of Utah guidance, any Pilot/Small Project that involves human subjects will be submitted to the relevant university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for evaluation. No funds will be dispensed under this award mechanism until IRB approval is forwarded to the RMCOEH and approved by NIOSH. (See Item A. 16 above.)
- F. Animal Welfare.** In accordance with NIOSH and University of Utah guidance, any Pilot/Small Project that involves animals will be submitted to the relevant university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for evaluation. No funds will be dispensed under this award mechanism until IACUC approval is forwarded to the RMCOEH and approved by NIOSH.

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