

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
Harvard Education and Research Center
Request for Pilot Research Proposals

Application Deadline: 10/7/2022 Award Announcement: 10/28/22

A. Background/Purpose

The NIOSH-funded Harvard Education and Research Center (ERC) announces the availability of funds to support pilot projects in Region I. The program will support small research projects conducted by student investigators (trainees) at the pre-doctoral or post-doctoral levels and/or by new/junior faculty investigators. A maximum budget request of up to \$20,000 is allowable.

Projects must be completed and expensed by June 30, 2023. Project extensions are not allowed.

The purposes of the Pilot Project Research Training Program are

- 1) To foster new research at the pilot project level that enhances the research training capacity of the Harvard ERC and other occupational safety and health training institutions in Region I.
- 2) To promote research in one or more of the sector/cross-sector programs as defined in the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA): <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/approach.html>, or the changing nature of work and safety and health of working people as described in this document: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2002-116/pdfs/2002-116.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2002116>, or the research priorities described in the NIOSH strategic plan: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/about/strategicplan/pdf/NIOSH-Strategic-Plan_V4_Oct-2019_1.pdf.
- 3) To promote increased interdisciplinary interaction in the field of occupational safety and health.
- 4) To promote research that addresses regional occupational safety and health concerns.
- 5) To promote collaborative research and training activities among Training Program Grantees and other institutions and entities in Region I that focus on occupational safety and health.

B. Nature and Scope of Projects

Project proposals should address concerns in the occupational safety and health areas of occupational hygiene, occupational epidemiology, occupational health services, and occupational medicine. Proposed projects should promote research in one or more of the NORA sector/cross-sector programs listed below or other research priorities identified in the NIOSH strategic plan:

Sectors

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
Construction; Healthcare and Social Assistance
Manufacturing; Mining; Oil and Gas Extraction
Public Safety; Services
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities
Wholesale and Retail Trade

Cross-Sectors

Cancer, Reproductive, and Cardiovascular
Hearing Loss Prevention
Immune Infection & Dermal
Musculoskeletal Health
Respiratory Health
Traumatic Injury Prevention
Health Work Design and Well-being

Interdisciplinary proposals that couple occupational safety and health with other disciplines such as health and social behavior, epidemiology, and health policy and management are strongly encouraged. In addition, we strongly encourage applications that focus on occupational health inequities, as defined by NIOSH: *Occupational health inequities are avoidable differences in work-related disease incidence, mental illness, or morbidity and mortality that are closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage such as work arrangements (e.g. contingent work), socio-demographic characteristics (e.g. age, sex, race, and class), and organizational factors (e.g. business size).*

Examples of the type of research that is eligible includes but is not limited to:

- Data collection in support of a pending extramural grant application
- Feasibility studies to develop and test new methods, approaches, or applications
- Pilot laboratory or biomarker development or application
- Research with new or underserved populations

C. Eligibility

Investigators eligible for pilot project support will be:

- Pre-doctoral candidates or post-doctoral fellows. Trainees must have a faculty sponsor who will serve as the Principal Investigator and be held responsible for the scientific and fiscal integrity of the project.
- New or Junior Faculty involved in occupational health training at academic institutions in Region I are encouraged to apply but must also include a trainee (pre-doctoral or postdoctoral) in the project.

All applicants must be affiliated with institutions in NIOSH Region I (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island). As it is our intent to address the needs of the New England region and promote collaboration among researchers in the field of occupational safety and health within Region I, proposals from academic institutions and other entities within Region I but external to the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health are strongly encouraged. These proposals must address an issue relevant to the New England Region, and preference will be given to research conducted within Region I.

D. Human Subjects and Laboratory Animals

All projects involving either human or animal subjects must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The IRB must be registered with the DHHS Office for Human Research Protections and have a current Federal wide Assurance Number.

Please make careful note of the following requirements:

1. The project title and PI on the IRB or IACUC application and approval letter must be an exact match to the project title and PI on the pilot project proposal.
2. The letter from the IRB or IACUC must document the names and roles of key research participants. If the project is performed by a pre-doctoral candidate or post-doctoral fellow, the IRB letter must list the faculty member as the Principal Investigator and the student as the Research Trainee.

In situations where the investigator's institution does not have a Human Subjects Committee, a Human Subjects application must be made to the Office of Human Research Administration (OHRA) of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Documentation of IRB or IACUC approval of protocols, as well as copies of approved consent forms, must be provided to Harvard ERC in advance of project funding. **NOTE: Although IRB/IACUC approval is not required at the time of the proposal submission, approval must be submitted before the research and use of funds commences. Investigators should recognize that considerable time will be required for such approval and initiate approval requests at the earliest possible time.**

E. Accounting, Reporting, and Publications Requirements

Each applicant for these pilot project research funds must agree to comply with OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. **Please note that indirect costs are excluded from these Pilot Project Awards.** Pilot projects must be completed by June 30, 2023; expenses incurred after this date will not be paid.

Each investigator will also prepare and present a report describing the project to other scientists and to the non-scientific community. The presentation will take place at an annual pilot project Symposium designed to share results, enhance interactions across institutions, and discuss regional needs. The Symposium will take place in Winter 2024.

Any material published as a result of this research will contain the following acknowledgement: "This investigation was made possible by Grant No. T42 OH008416 from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the NIOSH." Reprints should be provided to Dr. Gregory Wagner at grwagner@post.harvard.edu

F. Budget Requirements and Restrictions

Each application must provide a detailed budget and budget justification using the provided ERC application format. Allowable items include but are not limited to: salary for a research assistant, travel to the field site to collect data (not for meeting or conference travel), printing and reproduction of data collection instruments (surveys), subject incentives, and necessary equipment and project or laboratory supplies.

Budget restrictions - the following items are not allowed:

- Funds for meeting/conference travel
- Faculty/Investigator salary
- Computer/software purchases
- Student stipend and/or tuition

Award Criteria

Pilot project proposals will be evaluated by individuals selected from a panel designated by the ERC Director, Dr. David Christiani, and PPRT Director Dr. Gregory Wagner. The panel will include faculty members chosen from the Harvard-NIOSH ERC cores as appropriate, as well as one or more faculty from a Region I institution with a NIOSH training program grant, and other appropriate professionals external to HSPH.

Panelists with a conflict of interest with a given proposal will recuse themselves from evaluating that proposal.

Evaluation Criteria will include whether the proposal:

- Addresses a scientifically important problem in occupational safety and health,
- Is relevant to NORA sector/cross-sector programs or the changing nature of work and safety and health of working people research priorities, or other research priorities noted in the NIOSH strategic plan,
- Is scientifically sound in design,
- Is ethically sound,
- Addresses a need in the New England region, and
- Enhances the research training capacity in Region I.

In addition, the panel will evaluate whether the investigator:

- Has the appropriate expertise to undertake the project,
- Has access to appropriate resources and facilities,
- Has developed a realistic and appropriate budget, and
- Can accomplish the project by June 30, 2023.

G. Proposal Format and Submission

Deadline for Applications – 10/7/2022. There will be no deadline extensions.

Applicants will be notified of an award decision by the end of October.

All proposals submitted to the Pilot Project Research Training Program must use the ERC Pilot Project Application format:

- Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health ERC Pilot Project Cover page
- Abstract (limit 14 lines)
- Project Description: Aims, Significance, and Method (limit 3 pages)
- References cited in the proposal
- Timeline showing start/completion times of major activities
- Detailed Budget and a Budget justification that provides rationale for each item in the budget
- Biosketch (2 page) for each faculty investigator/PI and Trainee
- Suggested reviewers

Electronic: *Electronic submission of applications is required. Please send an electronic version of the entire application package in a single PDF (Adobe file) to Jo Ellen Mizarz at jemizarz@hsph.harvard.edu*