

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 pilot research project funding in occupational health and safety for the 2022-2023 academic year. Graduate students, junior investigators, and established investigators with new or innovative 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. These projects are to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

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>. 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, improve health, reduce and/or prevent workplace injuries, and/or 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 (see also PAR 15-303 for additional examples) include:

- Provide initial support to develop innovative approaches or lines of investigation in OSH;
- Allow exploration of innovative directions in OSH;
- Stimulate investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to OSH issues;
- Develop new partnerships to address emerging safety and health concerns;
- Provide initial support for a translational or research-to-practice project;
- Obtain preliminary data, mine existing datasets, or pursue critical data gaps; and
- Support trainee research projects (Faculty Mentor for trainees 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 regional states (AZ, ID, NM, NV, CO, MT, SD, ND, WY) are especially encouraged apply. Collaboration with faculty from the RMCOEH at the University of Utah (<http://medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh/>) is encouraged but not required for regional states; collaboration is required for proposals from outside those regional states. Master’s trainees may not serve as principal investigators, but are encouraged to apply with their 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.

Merit Review of Applications:

Each proposal will be reviewed with 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 track record of the mentor will be factored into the final funding recommendation.

Additional Information and Application Materials: Please see attachment 1.

Application Deadline: May 16, 2022 **Approximate Award Date:** July 1, 2022¹

Electronic applications should be emailed to: Toni.Chambers@hsc.utah.edu (801-581-4800) and Maureen.Murtaugh@hsc.utah.edu (801-585-9216)

Questions may be addressed to Dr. Murtaugh

Maureen Murtaugh, PhD, RDN
Director RMCOEH Pilot Projects Research Training Program
Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, U. Utah
250 East 200 South, Suite 100
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Maureen.Murtaugh@hsc.utah.edu

Attachment 1

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

A. Application Content

1. This program will enable investigators to collect sufficient data to pursue subsequent support through other funding mechanisms. Examples of pilot projects include:
 - a. Provide initial support to develop innovative approaches or lines of investigation in OSH;
 - b. Allow exploration of innovative directions in OSH;
 - c. Stimulate investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to OSH issues;
 - d. Develop new partnerships to address emerging safety and health concerns;
 - e. Provide initial support for a translational or research-to-practice project;
 - f. Obtain preliminary data, mine existing datasets, or pursue critical data gaps; and
 - g. Support trainee research projects. (Faculty Mentor for trainees is Required).
2. The applicant should have goals that are relevant to the [NIOSH NORA](#) and should provide a description that includes these elements:
 - a. The process by which pilot projects will be solicited, reviewed, and funded;
 - b. The potential or actual impact of the program on worker health and safety;
 - c. The appropriate IRB review and approval for all projects involving human subjects, to ensure the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects;
 - d. A synergistic approach for the dissemination and translation of research results;
 - e. Promotion of the research funds available to underserved and underrepresented groups or individuals to increase diversity in the field of OSH; and
 - f. Evaluation of the program's effectiveness and impact.
3. Applications with greater potential for securing follow-on external funding will be given priority.
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 research funding should 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:
 - a. The faculty mentor for graduate student proposals must be identified. A timeline for the project and their graduate program must be explained
 - b. Faculty projects should include the projected follow-on external funding (e.g., subsequent R01).
 - c. All proposals should outline at least one projected 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 Page (PHS398) with Justification, 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>. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. For budgeting, indirect costs 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>.
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, 2023 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. Virtual presentations are acceptable.

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 Project 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 must have Institutional Review Board review from the investigator's home institution 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 BEFORE the research and use of funds commences. Considerable time is often required for such approval and investigators may want to 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 the regional states (AZ, CO, ID, MT, ND, NM, NV, SD, UT, WY) is eligible to apply. Senior advisor/mentorship of junior faculty investigators is strongly encouraged. However, senior, established researchers are ineligible as PIs unless the pilot project, e.g., develops a new line of research for that investigator. OSH professionals outside of academia may apply, but should generally have a faculty collaborator. Faculty who are not from the University of Utah should consider identifying a collaborating faculty member in the RMCOEH to assist with coordination of the project. Graduate students (Masters or Doctoral) are also eligible to apply. Doctoral students may serve as PI, however Masters students cannot serve as PI. Regardless, 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.** 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 12 to 18 months and are not renewable.
- E. **Human Subjects.** In accordance with NIOSH and University of Utah guidance, any Pilot/Small Project that involves human subjects must be approved by the relevant university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). No funds will be dispensed under this award mechanism until IRB approval is forwarded to the RMCOEH. (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.

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Maureen Murtaugh, PhD
Director NIOSH Pilot Projects Research Training Program
Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health
391 Chipeta Way, Suite C
Salt Lake City, Utah 84108
801-585-9216
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