Center for Native Environmental Health Equity Research
2021-2022 Request for Pilot Project Applications

The University of New Mexico Center for Native Environmental Health Equity Research is seeking to fund pilot projects submitted by early stage investigators (includes tenure-track, postdocs, junior faculty or other research focused positions) that address scientific, policy and/or community needs and advance Native American environmental health equity. The overarching mission of our Center is to promote resilience through reducing the effects of environmental exposure disparities on the health of Native American Communities. The Center has been successful in characterizing mixed metal exposures and observing differences in exposure/health outcome relationships at a mechanistic level. Additionally, the scientific community has realized the potential environmental and human health toxicity associated with an increasing and ubiquitous presence of microplastics entering the environment as a result of disposal of larger volumes of consumer and industrial plastic waste. As this awareness has increased world-wide, partner communities and our research team have become cognizant of unique conditions in tribal communities associated with infrastructure disparities that may exacerbate these exposures and health disparities.

We will support applications that use the concept of *information to knowledge to action* paradigm to address research questions that respond to community concerns with the ultimate goal of reducing health disparities. *Priority will be given to applications that include individuals from health disparity populations and address the interrelationships between exposure and health disparities.* We will select high quality research that promotes collaboration between the Center and partner communities, and promotes development of early stage investigators as they strive to establish independent research programs in Native environmental health disparities research. Inclusion of students from underrepresented populations is highly encouraged. The number of pilot projects awarded will depend on the number of meritorious proposals received. **Proposals may seek to** 1) explore areas of emerging significance, 2) develop or enhance novel methodologies and approaches, including those focused on social determinants of health, or 3) develop new regional partnerships and collaborations.

Interested investigators from eligible institutions (described below) are strongly encouraged to contact Center Leadership (emails below) prior to submission of the pilot application to discuss research plans and to learn of available resources or potential collaborations.

Dr. Debra MacKenzie (dmackenzie@salud.unm.edu)

Dr. Joseph Hoover (joseph.hoover@msubillings.edu)

Eligibility: Individuals with a postdoctoral, faculty, or research oriented position within an academic institution that is affiliated with the UNM Native EH Equity Center (University of New Mexico (UNM), Montana State Bozeman, Montana State University Billings, or Oklahoma State University), and who are an NIH defined early stage investigator (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/esi-status.pdf). Priority will be given to those ESI's who are a member of NIH-designated health disparity population (NIH-designated U.S. health disparity populations (include Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, underserved rural populations, and sexual and gender minorities; https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-20-031.html).

Budget: Pilot projects requesting funds up to $25,000 per year in total costs will be considered. Pilots may be awarded for a 1 or 2 year period depending on scope and total pilot project budget may not exceed $50,000 in total costs. Salaries for Associate and Full Professors are not permissible. Equipment (>$5,000) may be requested with thorough justification. Travel costs may be requested if appropriately justified as necessary for community-based projects only. All guidelines pertaining to allowable expenses on federal grants will be followed as applicable for these awards. No-cost extensions to spend remaining funds at the end of the approved period may be granted with approval of the Center Directors and appropriate justification. Competitive renewal of projects for an additional year will be allowable if the requirements of the first year of the award have been met and adequate progress has been made. In rare circumstances, a second competitive renewal may be allowed for a meritorious project and with approval of the Center Directors.

Deadline: 5 PM, January 15, 2022 (Off-cycle applications may be considered, depending on available funds-contact dmackenzie@salud.unm.edu).

Instructions for Applicants

Required components (described below) must be received as a single submission file by ***Debra MacKenzie, (dmackenzie@salud.unm.edu), on or before*** **5:00 PM, January 15, 2022.**

Submissions should follow the NIH RO3 format and PHS398 forms (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html

1. **Project Summary/Abstract** -30 lines. The Project Summary must explicitly address how the proposed research will address questions in Environmental Health Disparities and align with the goals and objectives of the Center.
2. **Project Narrative**- 3 sentences
3. **Specific Aims**-1 page
4. **Research Strategy** (not to exceed six pages). Research Strategy should include: Significance (including importance of the work to improve Native environmental health equity), Innovation (to include how the work will improve the understanding and translation of environmental health data and/or incorporate innovative approaches) and Approach. In addition to research methods, the approach section should include the following: Project timeline, Interim milestones, a plan for translation of results to community partners (in collaboration with the Community Engagement and Dissemination Core) and plans for future extramural grant applications.
5. **Detailed Budget and Budget Justification** (using NIH forms).
6. **Listing of Key Personnel** and **Project/Performance Site.** NIH format Biographical Sketch for PI and other Key Personnel only (five page maximum per individual).
7. **Literature Cited** (no page limit).
8. **Letters of Support**. LOS should document a) Commitment from key collaborators (internal and external to the Center) with direct involvement in the project, demonstrating consistency with Native EH Equity Center's goals, and b) Support from anticipated beneficiaries of the work (e.g., communities who would benefit, scientists who might have a future use of technique being developed). Letters of Support should be not provided by any member of the Center's External Advisory Committee unless that member will be a direct collaborator on the proposed project.

For Resubmissions ONLY:

1. **Introduction**. Prior, unfunded applicants are encouraged to include an Introduction page to address prior reviewer comments and to indicate specific changes that have been made to the application in response to reviewer comments (not to exceed 1 page).

For current Pilot Grant Awardees ONLY.

1. **Progress Report**. Current Pilot Program awardees applying for competitive renewal must include a one-page progress report describing the achievements to-date of their current project.

Note: Applications from outside UNM are required to submit a Letter of Intent Form signed by their institution assuring appropriate F&A costs are included in the budget. Applications from inside UNM will be subject to applicable UNM institutional F&A costs and no additional forms are required.

Review Criteria. Proposals from eligible individuals will be peer reviewed by a minimum of two reviewers. Additional ad hoc members with appropriate expertise will be solicited as needed to ensure a fair and comprehensive review of pilot proposals. Applications will be scored on a point value basis using the following criteria.

1. Scientific merit/quality of research plan using NIH standard key scoring criteria (Approach, Impact, Innovation, Investigators) (30)
2. Relevance of research to Native environmental health equity (15)

3. Innovation and novelty of approach; importance of reward/benefit to translational science in Native environmental health equity (15)
4. Partnerships and collaborations (especially community based, interdisciplinary if applicable) demonstrating linkage to Center Research objectives (15)
5. Inclusion of social determinants of health as a secondary or modifying factor (10)
6. Potential for extramural funding and advancement of career opportunities (10)
7. Community support and appropriate community translational plan (5)