

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA): FY19 InCHIP Community-Engaged Health Research Seed Grant

A. KEY DATES

- Friday, October 26, 2018 FOA posted
- Friday, January 25, 2019 **Letters of Intent (required) due by 11:59 PM EST**
- Friday, February 1, 2019 Applicants notified of LOI approval decision
- Friday, March 22, 2019 *InCHIP Affiliate Application due by 11:59 PM EST*
- Friday, April 5, 2019 **Full Proposals due by 11:59 PM EST**
- May 2019 Applicants notified of award decision
- July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 Award period

B. PURPOSE

UConn's Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) is offering a pilot grant program that promotes community-engaged health research with reciprocal benefit to the community and the participating UConn faculty. InCHIP will provide \$15,000 in seed grant funding for a community-engaged health research study that meets a need identified by the community. Eligible studies include research in health behavior or health policy conducted in community settings in Connecticut, using a participatory research framework and actively involving community stakeholders in the conceptualization, design, implementation, and/or evaluation. "Community" is defined broadly to include community-based organizations, populations in neighborhoods, healthcare settings, and other entities within communities. Preference will be given to those studies conducted in Hartford-based community settings.

Eligible pilot studies are those that use participatory-based qualitative and/or quantitative methods to collect initial data, analyze secondary data, develop interventions, and/or test research methodologies in order to attract the support of larger, external funding sources. Funded projects must be consistent with InCHIP's mission and address health through an examination of health behavior or health policy at an individual or population level.

Dual-PI grant proposals are permitted and encouraged when one of the PIs is from a community organization and the UConn PI is an approved InCHIP affiliate by the time the final proposal is submitted. The ultimate goal of the **InCHIP Community-Engaged Health Research Seed Grant** is to fund a community-engaged pilot project that addresses one or more important community health issues and leads directly to a strong external grant application. The external grant proposal should be submitted **through InCHIP** within one year of completing the pilot project.

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

At least one award of \$15,000 is available for this seed grant competition. All grant funds must be expended within two years of the award date. Unexpended funds will revert to InCHIP.

Seed grant funds may only be used for direct costs of carrying out approved projects, such as:

- a. Personnel who are essential for conducting the research project, such as graduate research assistants and student labor. Individuals who are not on the regular state payroll (i.e., consultants and other off-campus assistance) may be hired to perform special research-related tasks as needed.
- b. A portion of the salary of an Investigator (PI, Co-I) who is employed by a community-based organization and not by UConn.
- c. Resources that require fee-for-services within UConn.
- d. Participant incentives for recruitment or study participation.
- e. Travel that is necessary to conduct the research, NOT travel to present the results of the research, or travel to explore future funding opportunities.

- f. Equipment necessary for conducting the research (“equipment” is defined as an article of tangible, nonexpendable, personal property that costs \$5,000 or more).
- g. Project supplies, including drugs and services.
- h. Other specifically authorized expenses that are essential for carrying out the project.

Seed grant funds may not be used for the following:

- a. The salary of the UConn Principal Investigator, UConn Co-Investigator(s), or any UConn faculty member.
- b. Living expenses.
- c. Laptops or desktop computers, unless used exclusively for the project and not for any other activities.
- d. Service/maintenance contracts on equipment.
- e. Laboratory renovations or other infrastructure renovations.
- f. Institutional and/or individual memberships in professional organizations.
- g. Travel to professional meetings to present the results of the research, or any conference attendance.
- h. Indirect costs, including clerical and administrative personnel salaries.
- i. Costs associated with the publication of results of the research, such as publication fees or purchase of reprints.
- j. Investigator training costs, including tuition.

D. PROJECT AND INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY

1. Proposals must be novel and take an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to the study of health and health behavior, and they must be clearly linked to a planned external grant application.
2. The UConn PI and the community partner (who may be a PI) are expected to make appropriate and significant contributions to the proposed research, and to perform new research that could not be achieved without the collaboration and seed grant funding.
3. A UConn PI is required and must meet the following eligibility requirements:
 - a. The UConn PI must have an eligible faculty appointment at UConn, and s/he must be eligible to submit grants through InCHIP. Eligible faculty appointments are tenured or tenure-track faculty, in-residence research faculty, clinical faculty, other research faculty, and research scientists/scholars.
 - b. Ineligible faculty appointments are post-doctoral fellows, lecturers, research assistants and research associates, visiting titles, and adjunct faculty.
 - c. Graduate students are not eligible.
 - d. The UConn PI must be an approved InCHIP Affiliate *by the time the final proposal is submitted*. The InCHIP Affiliate application form and instructions are available [here](#). Please allow at least two weeks for approval.
4. Seed grant proposals must be predominantly the work of the PIs and for the benefit of the PIs’ research programs. Proposals written primarily by graduate students or others in the PIs’ names are not permitted.
5. Two PIs are permitted on the seed grant, if and only if, one PI is a UConn faculty member and the second PI is from a community organization (dual PIs are strongly encouraged). Other individuals may serve as Co-Is or significant contributors, but not as PIs.
6. The proposed research must focus on **health behavior or health policy** and **be consistent with InCHIP’s mission**:
 - a. “University of Connecticut’s Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) provides an interdisciplinary nexus for investigators and Centers across the University to stimulate research collaborations and major newly-funded initiatives that create new scientific knowledge and theoretical frameworks in health behavior at multiple levels of analysis (e.g., individual, family, community, policy). Health is broadly defined and includes physical and mental health, and outcomes with critical implications for health. Work at the intersection of behavior and biology, and at the intersection of science and public policy is encouraged. InCHIP disseminates its research and cutting-edge health behavior change interventions through publishing, structural change, capacity-building, teaching, mentoring, and collaboration at the University, local, state, national, and international levels.” (See [here](#) for more about InCHIP’s mission.)
7. The pilot project does not have to involve intervention development, implementation, or evaluation. A wide range of research is permitted, including but not limited to, natural history studies, observational studies, qualitative research, and correlational studies.

8. The proposed seed grant project should address a novel research question, not a research question that is already being explored as part of an existing, externally-funded project.
9. Changes to the project's objectives and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP staff.
10. The PI(s) must commit in good faith to using the seed grant funds to obtain pilot data to support an external grant proposal that will be submitted **through InCHIP** within a year of completing the pilot project.
11. If the PI has an InCHIP seed grant from a previous fiscal year (with the exception of an *Interdisciplinary Team Building Grant*), s/he must close out that award prior to the start of the award period for the FY19 InCHIP Seed Grant.
12. Each individual may only submit one LOI/proposal for this competition as a Principal Investigator (PI).

E. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Note: InCHIP staff will answer questions about the seed grant application (including the budget), but will not assist applicants with development of the actual budget or budget justification, or with writing the seed grant LOI or proposal.

Stage 1: Proposal Development (Optional)

On **Monday, December 3 at 11 am**, InCHIP will sponsor a webinar that will focus on how to effectively structure a seed grant to support a future external grant submission. Applicants are encouraged to watch the webinar before developing their seed grant proposal. It is essential that the work supported by an InCHIP seed grant is linked to a planned, larger project.

Applicants are also encouraged (but not required) to utilize resources offered by InCHIP's Cores when developing their research ideas and proposals. Seed grant-related services available through the InCHIP Cores include:

- **Community-Engaged Health Research Core:** This Core can help UConn researchers make linkages to community researchers and community-based organizations. For assistance with identifying possible community partners, email boundaryspanners@chip.uconn.edu. For information about this Core, click [here](#).
- **Training and Development Core:** Individual consultations are available by appointment with InCHIP Training and Development Core staff. Additionally, a Grant Proposal Incubator is being offered (on November 28 and March 6) that provides applicants the opportunity to meet with a panel of InCHIP investigators to receive feedback on their research ideas and proposal. More information about this Core can be found [here](#).
- **Intervention Core:** This Core can help researchers identify and develop collaborations with experts who can assist with theory-based intervention development, implementation, and rigorous outcome evaluation and dissemination. To request assistance finding a collaborator with intervention expertise, visit the Intervention Core webpage [here](#).

InCHIP Cores offer more extensive services for those applying for external funding, including pre- and post-award services, as well as assistance with the design, development, implementation, and dissemination of research. A complete description of the Core services can be found on their respective webpages (see links above). Please look for announcements from InCHIP about Core trainings, workshops, and events in the coming months.

Stage 2: Letter of Intent

1. All applicants must submit an online Letter of Intent (LOI) form, available on our [seed grant webpage](#), by the above specified due date/time. The LOI must describe the concept for the future external grant application and how the InCHIP seed grant will support work that will ultimately make the external grant application more competitive. The LOI must also list specific agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, Foundations) that fund the type of work proposed, and if available, links to relevant funding announcements. In addition, the LOI must briefly describe how the faculty researcher and community partner will work together on this pilot project. If assistance is needed in identifying funding agencies and mechanisms or a community partner, please contact InCHIP Boundary Spanning at boundaryspanners@chip.uconn.edu.
1. A budget is not required at the time of LOI submission. LOIs do not require routing through grants offices at UConn Storrs or UConn Health.

2. LOIs will be reviewed by relevant staff from InCHIP to determine the eligibility of the proposed research and applicant team.
3. Applicants must receive written approval of their LOI prior to submitting a full proposal.

Stage 3: Full Proposal

1. Full proposals must be submitted online [here](#) by the above specified due date/time. The application must include the following:
 - a. Project Title (**maximum 81 characters**).
 - b. PI(s) Contact Information.
 - c. Biographical sketch of PI(s), in NIH or NSF format.
 - d. Community partner(s).
 - e. Brief discussion of how the community partner(s) will be engaged in the design and implementation of the proposed research project.
 - f. Roles and functions of project personnel, and the individual responsibilities of the PI(s) (**maximum 1 page**).
 - g. Abstract/Project Summary (**maximum 3,000 characters including spaces**) - This section should describe the concept for the future external grant application and explicitly state how the proposed seed grant will help the research team develop a more competitive external grant.
 - h. Research Plan (**maximum 4 pages**).
 - i. Specific Aims – In addition to information about the proposed pilot project, this section should include information about the planned future external grant application. Include an explanation of how the proposed pilot project will lead to a new externally-funded research project.
 - ii. Research Strategy – Provide a brief description of significance, innovation, and approach. Be sure to include information about the larger research questions that will be addressed by the future external grant application. The approach portion of the Research Strategy should focus on the pilot project that is being funded by the seed grant.
 - i. References (not included in the 4-page limit for the Research Plan).
 - j. Budget with justification for each item (**maximum 1 page**).
 - k. Other Sources of Support for the proposed project (e.g., additional funding, in-kind services, equipment).
 - l. Brief discussion of how the proposed pilot project is related to any current projects being conducted by the PI(s).
 - m. Letter(s) of Support from collaborating community organization(s).
 - n. *Optional*: Other Letters of Support.
2. Proposals must include:
 - a. An identified community partner based in Connecticut. Preference will be given to proposals with a community partner who serves as a second PI.
 - b. The community-defined need the proposal is addressing.
3. Proposals are **not** required to be routed through InCHIP or Sponsored Program Services (SPS).
4. Full proposals will undergo a rigorous review process, with reviewers from InCHIP and the community. Individuals who are Senior/Key Personnel or Other Significant Contributors on a seed grant proposal will be excluded from participation in the review process. Reviewers and InCHIP staff may request additional information from applicants to better evaluate the scientific merit of the application, to clarify any aspect of the proposal, or to assess how the application fits within the strategic priorities of InCHIP.
5. Each PI will be notified via email whether or not his/her proposal has been awarded funding.

F. REVIEW CRITERIA

Priority for funding will be based on the following review criteria, in no particular order:

- Scientific merit of the planned external grant application and the extent to which is it novel or innovative (e.g., testing a new methodology, theory, or understudied research area).
- Scientific premise and rigor of the pilot work to be supported by the seed grant.

- An identified community partner based in Connecticut, with preference given to proposals in which the community partner is based in Hartford. Preference will also be given to proposals in which the community partner serves as a second PI.
- Specification of the community-defined need the proposal is addressing.
- Relevance of the study to InCHIP's research mission and strategic priorities.
- Feasibility of plans to submit an external grant proposal to external funders no later than one year following completion of the pilot project.
- Appropriate and significant scientific contributions by the UConn PI and the community partner(s) towards completing the aims of the study.
- Composition of the research team (preference will be given to diverse teams that include multiple community partners and/or multiple academic disciplines).

G. AWARDEE REQUIREMENTS

If awarded, the PIs are not required to route their seed grant proposal through Sponsored Programs Services (SPS).

The awarded PIs are responsible for obtaining all required approvals for their research from the relevant IRB(s). Please visit the [UConn IRB website](#) for more information about the IRB approval process for research conducted at the UConn Storrs campus, the four regional campuses, and the School of Law. For information about the IRB approval process for research conducted at UConn Health, please visit the [UConn Health IRB website](#).

Awardees will be required to submit a brief summary report of their progress annually and a final report at the conclusion of the project or award period. Changes to the project's objectives, PI(s), and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP staff.

Detailed awardee instructions/requirements will be distributed to seed grant winners when they are notified of the award decisions. All awardee requirements described above are subject to change in accordance with updated institutional procedures (e.g., routing requirements).

H. CONTACT

For questions not addressed in this FOA or on [our seed grant website](#), please contact seedgrants@chip.uconn.edu.