2017 Request for Applications
Community Engagement Research Pilot Awards

Release Date: July 18, 2016
Mandatory Letter of Intent Due: October 12, 2016
Invitation for Full Applications: October 31, 2016
Applications Due: January 2, 2017
Awards Announced: by February 15, 2017
Funding Available: May 1, 2017

The SYNERGY Community Engagement Core, in collaboration with SYNERGY’s Translational Pilot Program, is issuing a call for proposals for pilot projects on community engagement research. The projects must be translational, leading to useful, generalizable knowledge on community engagement; they also require collaboration with a community partner. We expect to fund two to four one-year pilot projects at a funding level of $25,000 to $50,000. The deadline for submission of the mandatory Letter of Intent (LOI) is October 12, 2016.

The goal of this RFA is to support community engagement research that emphasizes the community’s role in developing and translating knowledge into improvements in clinical practice or community programs or social determinants that impact health or health policy. The pilots are not for demonstration projects (i.e., providing new services through a grant without a research question, hypothesis and research methods). If you are uncertain about the goals of community engagement research the SYNERGY office is happy to arrange a mentor consult (please contact community.pilots@dartmouth.edu). In addition, we will offer an information session on community engagement research to provide definitions and answer questions to interested applicants.

Deliverables: The successful applicant must complete the pilot project and submit results in the final report at 12 months. The intent of these grants is to fund initial pilots that will provide data for future externally funded, full-scale studies.

Eligibility of the Principal Investigator:
Investigators at Dartmouth College, Geisel School of Medicine, Thayer School of Engineering, Tuck School of Business, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock and its affiliated sites, including the White River Junction, Manchester and Togus Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospitals, who meet the requirements below, are eligible to apply.

– Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor
– The contact PI must have a faculty appointment OR be collaborating as a co-investigator with appointed faculty
– Should the contact PI be a junior faculty member, the applicant should identify his/her research mentor(s) in the Letter of Intent (LOI).
To foster community engagement, the application must also list the name of the community-based collaborator/organization that will be substantially involved in aspects of study design, execution, interpretation and dissemination.

The investigator must not have been the recipient of a Community Engagement Research Pilot Grant in the preceding two years.

**Community Engagement Research:**
Community engagement research is a collaborative process through which communities and researchers work together to solve mutually recognized health problems. It enables community residents to more actively participate in the full spectrum of research (conception-design-conduct-analysis-interpretation-conclusions-dissimination of results) with a goal of influencing change in community health, systems, programs or policies.

**Funding Priorities:**
Applicants must propose work conducted within a partnership between academic researchers and community organizations or individuals. Applications should focus on Translational Research, which includes research evaluating the translation of evidence-based interventions or practices into real-world, clinical and community sites. The focus may be clinical, and/or focused on health-promotion and disease-prevention strategies.

All proposals are welcome; however, preference will be given to applications that are focused on or responsive to:

- Health needs as identified through published Community Health Needs Assessments or Regional Health Improvement Plans [https://synergy.dartmouth.edu CE-education-training]

AND/OR

- Subpopulations with distinct characteristics, such as pediatric or geriatric populations, pregnant women, people with particular disabilities, “hard-to-reach” groups that are often impacted by health disparities, or populations in which researchers propose to examine the impact of childhood conditions on adult health.

**Review Criteria:**
Letters of Intent will be evaluated according to the potential for the project to proceed to a competitive full application (see full application requirements below). In particular, letters of intent will be viewed more favorably if they demonstrate that the project:

1) Fully employs a community-engaged research approach (see above).

2) Addresses an identified funding priority and includes a translational research question (see above).

3) Have a qualified PI and research team (if the PI is a junior faculty member, he or she must include a highly qualified senior mentor/collaborator) with high potential for future related research and funding.

4) Addresses a clearly stated research question with specific research aims that are highly likely to provide pilot data leading to a successful grant proposal from an external funder.
Important Dates:

- **Letter of intent due:** October 12, 2016
- **Notification of Invitation to submit full application:** October 31, 2016
- **Application due:** January 2, 2017
- **Awards Announced:** By February 15, 2017
- **Start Date:** May 1, 2017

LOI submission (mandatory):

A two-page LOI (please use the LOI Template provided), accompanied by Biosketches for the PI, co-PI and mentor(s), must be submitted to: community.pilots@dartmouth.edu by 5:00pm on **October 12, 2016**.

Please include the following information in your letter:

1. PI or Co-PIs name(s), contact information, and department.
2. Name and contact information of the community-based collaborator/organization.
3. Mentor(s) for the proposed project, if the contact PI is a junior faculty member at the rank of instructor or assistant professor. The mentor must hold a faculty rank of Associate or Full Professor at Dartmouth College, Geisel School of Medicine, Thayer School of Engineering, or Tuck School of Business.
4. Names and roles of key personnel.
5. Title of your proposal.
6. Specific aims, brief overview of research design and methods, and description of the community engagement and translational aspects of your research.
7. Please indicate how the community-based collaborator/organization of this research project will be substantially involved in your research.
9. **Biosketch:** Required For PI, Co-PI, and Mentor(s). If a Community Partner is listed as Co-PI, then their resume or CV may be substituted for the NIH Biosketch.
   - For mentors, earlier NIH versions are acceptable.

SYNERGY administrative staff will acknowledge receipt of your LOI within one business day. The Community Pilot application review committee will review all LOIs, and notify applicants as to whether they have been invited to submit a full application by **October 31, 2016**.

Full Application Requirements:

All invited full applications should be submitted as a single PDF (unlocked) to community.pilots@dartmouth.edu by 5:00pm on **January 2, 2017**.

Format: The narrative section of the application should be written in 11 point Arial font, single-spaced, with 1/2-inch margins.

1. **Face Page:**
   a. Title
   b. PI, all investigators, affiliations
2. **Scientific Abstract (250-word maximum):** Provide a concise description of the proposed research written for scientific audiences. Your scientific abstract must include:
   a. Background: What is the question and why is it important?
   b. Method: How do the design and method involve rigorous science?
   c. Results: When and where will the results be reported?
   d. Conclusions: How will this project change practice?
   e. Next steps: When and where will you apply for external funding on this topic?

3. **Community Abstract (250-word maximum):** Describe to a community audience how you anticipate that this project can, in the long term, impact the health of community residents. Do not reiterate the Scientific Abstract; instead tell a story that addresses the importance of this research, whose lives will ultimately be improved, and why. Your community abstract must include:
   a. The magnitude of the health issue: How many people are affected, what is the scope of this issue in the area, how are costs of health care impacted, etc.?
   b. Knowledge gap: What gap will your proposed research address? What will your results tell us that is not already known?
   c. Community collaborators / organizations: Who are the stakeholders of this research project and how will they be involved in your research? What roles will they play?
   d. Long-term policy implications of your research: How will your research inform/impact community health and organizational or public policies?

4. **Narrative:** The narrative section may not exceed 5 pages and should address each of the following components. (If you are re-submitting a proposal, please include a 1-page introduction responding to previous critiques; this will increase your allowed page limit to 6 maximum pages.)
   a. **Specific Aims:** Be concise and realistic.
   b. **Investigator:** Explain how the PI, community collaborator/organization, and research team are especially suited to this project. If you are a junior investigator, explain how you and your research team have the appropriate experience, training and mentoring. If you are a more established PI, describe an ongoing record of accomplishments that has advanced your field (i.e., publications, external peer-reviewed funding).
   c. **Environment:** Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?
   d. **Background and Significance:** Why is this project important to the field of community engagement research? Describe what is known, what will be new information, and any preliminary studies.
   e. **Methods:** Discuss research design, measures, procedures, analyses, potential problems, and alternative strategies.
   f. **Plans for Collaboration / Engagement:** Who are the stakeholders who will benefit from your research? Please describe how the community collaborator/organization and other stakeholders will be involved in your research and what role(s) they will play. Describe how you will be engaging patients/consumers in the design, delivery, and interpretation of study results (ideally incorporate person-centered design principles).
   g. **Dissemination plan:** Please include a plan that addresses how and when your project results will be disseminated with your community collaborator or organization(s), and other specific stakeholders in the clinical practice, community or policy audiences. This plan should be developed early in the process, in collaboration with your community collaborator or organization. Note: the sophistication
of this plan should match the scope of your project and care should be taken for careful interpretation of results.

h. **Next Steps:** What are the next steps in your research project trajectory and what are your plans for acquiring funding? If you think your research project will have future impact on organizational or public policy, please explain.

5. **Impact Statement: (not included in 5-page limit)** Please respond to one of the three following items:
   a. Identify the specific metrics that you will use to identify the effects of your research on health outcomes (including physical, mental, and/or social outcomes), or the effects of your research on specific, well-established determinants of health (the PI must be able to justify determinants chosen).
   b. If specific metrics will not be measured in your pilot, describe the metrics that you will use to identify the effects of your subsequent research on health outcomes or on specific, well-established determinants of health.
   c. If you are not be able to measure specific health outcomes directly, describe other possible impacts of this pilot or subsequent research, where the impact is defined as any permanent new or revised structures, policies, or processes in the delivery of health care services or community health programs that result from this project/collaboration.

6. **Timeline: (not included in 5-page limit)** The project must be completed within 12 months of its start date. Please include a depiction of what tasks will be completed during which months and a narrative that addresses how you will address timeline and deadline issues/potential challenges with your community and faculty collaborators. We will require a progress report at 6 months and a final report at 12 months.

7. **Protection of Human Subjects (not included in 5-page limit)** If the proposed research involves human subjects, include the following in your application:

   **Risks to Human Subjects:**
   a. **Human Subjects Involvement, Characteristics, and Design**
      i. Describe and justify the proposed involvement of human subjects in the work outlined in the Research Strategy section.
      ii. Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range, and health status if relevant.
      iii. Describe and justify the sampling plan, as well as the recruitment and retention strategies and the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of any subpopulation.
      iv. If applicable, explain the rationale for the involvement of special vulnerable populations.
      v. If applicable, describe procedures for assignment to a study group.
   b. **Sources of Materials**
      i. Describe the research material obtained from living individuals in the form of specimens, records, or data.
      ii. Describe any data that will be collected from human subjects for the project(s) described in the application.
      iii. Indicate who will have access to individually identifiable private information about human subjects.
      iv. Provide information about how the specimens, records, and/or data are collected, managed, and protected as well as whether material or data that include individually identifiable private information will be collected specifically for the proposed research project.
c. **Potential Risks**
   i. Describe the potential risks to subjects (physical, psychological, financial, legal, or other), and assess their likelihood and seriousness to the human subjects.
   ii. Where appropriate, describe alternative treatments and procedures, including the risks and potential benefits of the alternative treatments and procedures, to participants in the proposed research.

**Adequacy of Protection against Risks:**

a. **Recruitment and Informed Consent**
   i. If applicable, describe plans for the recruitment of subjects and the process for obtaining informed consent. If the proposed studies will include children, describe the process for meeting requirements for parental permission and child assent.
   ii. Include a description of the circumstances under which consent will be sought and obtained, who will seek it, the nature of the information to be provided to prospective subjects, and the method of documenting consent. If a waiver of some or all of the elements of informed consent will be sought, provide justification for the waiver.

b. **Protections against Risk**
   i. Describe planned procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks, including risks to privacy of individuals or confidentiality of data.

8. **Literature citations:** Please attach.

9. **Letters of support:** Your application must include (1) a letter from your departmental Chair indicating support for this independent area of investigation, (2) a letter from your mentor if you are a junior faculty member, and (3) a letter of support from your collaborating community organization/entity. Please include signed (can be electronic) letters of support from your collaborators—including those associated with the special criteria that you choose.

Community collaborator letters should indicate support for the project, and must fully describe the role that the collaborator(s) will play in the research, and how they intend to use and disseminate the results of this project towards practice, program or policy changes.

10. **Budget (up to $50,000 for 12 months of direct support):**
   a. Budget page (must use SYNERGY Budget Template), including % effort for all personnel noted, even if no money is being requested to support their work under this pilot program.
   b. Budget justification (maximum of 2 pages).
   c. Matching resources: A letter of support is required for details of matching resources.
   d. Signatures: Please scan necessary signatures.

   **When creating your budget, please note the following:**
   - Funds are available for personnel, supplies and other allowable expenses. Because SYNERGY is an NIH-funded Institute, pilot budgets must follow the same rules/spending limitations as federal grants.
   - Funding of education *per se* is not allowed under this program.
   - Indirect costs are not allowed.
   - Investigator salary is allowed, but should be used principally to support the research. Effort must be reported even when salary is donated.
   - Only travel funds necessary for study conduct (*e.g.*, investigator or participant travel) are allowed.
• Equipment that is essential for the study, and is not otherwise available, may be requested, but large equipment expenditures are strongly discouraged.

11. **Biosketches** For PI, Co-PI, and Mentor(s) are required. If the Community Partner is listed as Co-PI then his or her resume or CV may be substituted for a Biosketch.
  
  • The 2015 NIH format is required: see: ([http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/faq_biosketches.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/faq_biosketches.htm)).

Note: By submitting a LOI or Full Application you thereby grant permission to SYNERGY to use these documents (appropriately de-identified), in part or in their entirety, in its community engagement research training and education programs.

**Please direct any questions about the Community Pilot LOI or application to:**

community.pilots@dartmouth.edu