



The University of Illinois at Chicago
Occupational & Environmental Health & Safety
Education and Research Center (Illinois ERC)
School of Public Health
2121 West Taylor St. (M/C 922)
Chicago, IL 60612-7260

DATE: April 18, 2008

The Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Education and Research Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago (Illinois ERC) is soliciting proposals for the next round of Pilot Project Research Training funds. The funds are intended for new occupational safety & health investigators in Fiscal Year 2008-2009. The availability and amount of funding for this initiative is contingent on the Pilot Project award provided by NIOSH.

The purpose of the awards is to support new, short-term projects that will:

- 1) Develop research expertise and capacity in ERC research trainees and new investigators;
- 2) Support new investigators in establishing new research areas; and,
- 3) Encourage established investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) topics. For more information about NORA, go to: www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/

Examples of pilot/small projects may include, but are not limited to projects that:

1. Provide initial support to develop innovative approaches/lines of investigation in the program areas.
2. Allow exploration of possible innovative new directions in OSH sciences.
3. Stimulate investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to OSH issues.
4. Develop new mechanisms for external or multi-ERC collaborative partnerships to address emerging safety and health concerns.
5. Provide initial support for a translational/research to practice project.
6. Support for trainee capstone projects.

The awards are intended to provide investigators with the resources needed to develop pilot information about a research hypothesis, with the expectation that investigators will subsequently develop fully formed extramural research applications on the basis of this pilot information.

Questions concerning the applications and funding may be addressed to:

Salvatore Cali, Research Coordinator

Illinois ERC

School of Public Health

2121 West Taylor St. (M/C 922)

Chicago, IL 60612-7260

Phone 312/996-5722

E-mail: scali@uic.edu (Inquiries by e-mail preferred).

DEADLINE AND COPIES REQUIRED

Illinois ERC requires ONE ORIGINAL, signed by the department head and principal investigator, PLUS 8 COPIES (of the entire application, proposal, and attachments) AND ONE ELECTRONIC COPY (of the application, budget, budget justification, & proposal narrative). Applications must be received on or before **Tuesday, July 1, 2008** at the address above. Late applications will not be accepted. Application forms and instructions may be **downloaded from the following web site:**

<http://www.uic.edu/spha/glakes/funding.html>

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible: New occupational safety & health investigators, including investigators from other disciplines who have recently begun targeting occupational safety & health topics. Applicants are limited to junior faculty, new investigators or research trainees. NIOSH has traditionally defined research training as being at the doctoral level with the objective of helping to prepare trainees for research careers.

Not eligible: Tenured faculty, RO1 investigators, and non-junior faculty members are not eligible as principal investigators. Previously funded projects are not eligible for renewal.

TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT

Three to five awards ranging from \$6,000 to a maximum of \$20,000 are available per project, with completion of all funded expenditures and substantial completion of project objectives by June 30, 2009 required. Funds must be utilized by June 30, 2009, or they will be forfeited, as there is no mechanism for continuing funding beyond that date. These projects must be on a NORA topic and may not be renewed. The availability and amount of funding for this initiative is contingent on the Pilot Project award provided by NIOSH.

FORMAT OF APPLICATION

The application form provided with these instructions must be completed. In addition, a maximum of ten pages of text for the full research proposal must be attached to the application forms. No more than ten pages of proposal narrative will be accepted. The narrative should be organized as follows:

- Introduction/background;
- Objectives (Proof or disproof of a hypothesis is a recommended way to state or clarify research objectives);
- Methods;
- Expected outcomes/contribution to field/significance;
- Anticipated difficulties and approaches to overcoming them.

The appendix should include:

- Budget (A generic budget calculation spreadsheet is available on this web site);
- Budget justification;
- Timeline;
- Curriculum Vitae of the Principle Investigators and other relevant documentation;
- A certificate of completion of continuing education in a human subjects protection program dated within the last two years;
- A letter of support from a senior-level faculty project advisor will strengthen most applications;
- Applicants must also identify and complete arrangements for a research mentor who will provide guidance for the research. A signed agreement to mentor from a senior investigator is required (see application). Further information on the role of a research mentor is available at:

<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-04-105.html> under the Special Requirements section.

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Among the challenges that new researchers face is the time and effort required to comply with requirements relative to the protection of human subjects. If the proposed project involves research on human subjects, the applicant must comply with the Department of Health and Human Services Regulations (45 CFR Part 46) regarding the protection of human research participants. Assurance must be provided to demonstrate that the project will be subject to initial and continuing reviews by an appropriate institutional review board. Please see Illinois ERC's Research Policy at:

<http://www.uic.edu/spha/glakes/funding.html>

It is strongly recommended that applicants familiarize themselves with the policy statement and with the human subjects review process at their sponsoring organization.

For all proposals, after scientific review is complete, eligible applicants will be ranked in order of overall merit. Proposals that are recommended for funding will be notified, but actual award will not be made until the completion of recommendations or requirements set by the scientific review committee. For proposals that involve research on human subjects, one of these conditions will be a successful review of protection of human subjects protocols by an organization that has an Assurance of Compliance with the Office for Human Research Protections per U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) requirements.

Awards will not be made until Mr. Cali receives documentation of human subjects review or exemption and NIOSH reviews and approves the required documentation, including OMB Form 310. Previous awards under this program have been disallowed or delayed because grantees did not begin their human subjects review application promptly. Therefore, applicants must provide a letter of completed review or review requiring modifications within two months of the notification of funding recommendation, or the proposal merit rankings will be revised and the project funding recommendation will be rescinded. Please contact Mr. Cali if you have questions about requirements relative to the protection of human subjects.

PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH AT FOREIGN PERFORMANCE SITES

Projects involving research at foreign performance sites are discouraged for a number of reasons. These reasons include IRB approvals required at both your institution and in the performance site country, as well as prior Program Grant Official (PGO) approval for foreign travel involved. Review of such projects has proven to be very time-consuming and not consistent with the usual short time frame for pilot projects. Proposed projects also must have a clear justification of the relevance to worker protection issues in the U.S. given the focus of the OSH Act on the U.S. workforce.

OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Research funded by Illinois ERC must also meet DHHS and NIH requirements regarding inclusion of women, minorities, and children, and use of animal subjects, and use of funds for lobbying activities. Please see Illinois ERC's Research Policy at:

<http://www.uic.edu/spha/glakes/funding.html>

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Request the minimum amount of funds that will allow you to conduct the research. Justify each item clearly. Indirect costs will be allowed to a maximum of 8% of each item. A maximum of \$500 of this funding may be requested for equipment costs, with matching funds required for equipment costing more than \$500. Equipment costing more than \$2,000 will not be funded in whole or in part, due to the limited funds available under this program. Applications that include matching funds should detail those funds on the application budget worksheet.

Be sure to include personnel fringe benefits and indirect costs as part of the budget. Check with your employer's business office to confirm fringe rates; indirect costs are capped at 8% for these awards. It is not necessary to add tuition remission charges to the budget for research assistants at UIC for these awards.

All fund awards must be utilized in full by June 30, 2009, the end of the fiscal year. There is no mechanism to extend the award beyond June 30, 2009.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by a subcommittee of occupational safety and health professionals. The full committee includes representatives from Industrial Hygiene, Occupational Health Nursing, Occupational Medicine, and Agricultural Safety and Health. The subcommittee reviewing individual proposals in detail will include representatives most appropriate to the proposal.

REVIEW CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the structure of the proposal applications:

1. Significance: The extent to which the project, if successfully carried out, will make an original, important and/or novel contribution to the relevant field.
2. Approach: The extent to which the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses are properly developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project.
3. Feasibility: The likelihood that the proposed work can be accomplished by the investigators, given their documented experience and expertise, past progress, preliminary data, requested and available resources, institutional commitment (if appropriate), and documented access to other research or technologies.
4. External Funding Plan: A description of how the results will be leveraged into external applications, a time-line for proposal grant submission to external funding agency (specify), and a plan for expanding the work as a line of research.

The following questions may be helpful in addressing the criteria described above

1. Will the information be relevant to the field, represent novel research or have apparent applications?
2. Will results allow the investigator to be more competitive in generating other research funding?
3. Is the rationale easily understood, ideas easy to follow?
4. Are the hypothesis, objectives and experimental approach concise and logical?
5. Is the time frame realistic for the one-year objectives of the investigator?

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Proposal applications must address a NORA priority area and include one or more of the following:

1. Research capacity building in trainees and new investigators;
2. Regional occupational safety & health needs;
3. Participation of multiple stakeholders, including employers, employees, labor unions, professional trade associations, private non-for-profit organizations, and academia;
4. Workplace intervention and intervention effectiveness;
5. Scientific merit; and,
6. Multi-disciplinary approaches.

Preference will be given to proposals from the following states in the Illinois Center's region: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Missouri.

Previous year award recipients may apply for continuation funding by indicating previous award, explaining current project progress, and indicating the purpose of the additional funding. However, priority will be given to new applicants.

ADMINISTRATION OF AWARDS

Proposals that are recommended for funding will be notified, but actual award will not be made until the completion of recommendations or requirements set by the scientific review committee. The amount of prospective funding will be noted in an e-mail. Once recommendations or requirements are completed, an award e-mail will be sent.

UIC will establish award accounts for UIC recipients and subcontracts for non-UIC recipients. Accounts will be managed by award recipients and/or their business offices. Recipients will be required to provide periodic reporting of research progress and expenditures. Prior written approval must be obtained from the Research Committee before modifications are made to the budget or research focus. Allowable expenditures must be incurred only within the project period. **Award decisions will be announced by September 1, 2008 or earlier. It should be noted that in previous years, the official notice of award has been delayed pending notice of award from NIOSH to UIC.**

Please note that progress reports may be requested periodically after projects are awarded, and post-project completion reports on publications, presentations, and other project outcomes will be requested semi-annually.