Request for Pilot Research Project Proposals: 2024

[The Heartland Center for Occupational Health and Safety](#), supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), announces the availability of funds to support pilot projects. The mission of the Heartland Center is to serve Federal Region VII by providing graduate training, continuing education, and outreach in occupational health and safety (OHS).

PROJECT SCOPE AND LOCATION

Research projects must be related to one of the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) sector areas (see: https://www.cdc.gov/nora/comment/agendas/default.html), and pertain to an occupational health or safety issue. The research must be conducted in the United States.

WHO MAY APPLY

This pilot mechanism is limited to faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students (MS, MPH, PhD, MD) conducting research in an OHS area (See Part B of the Research Plan). Proposals submitted by a graduate student or postdoctoral fellow must have a faculty sponsor and accompanying mentoring plan to enhance student training and increase the likelihood of success (See Letters of Support).

We strongly encourage proposals from faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students who are part of underrepresented minority groups in the OHS research field. Applicants from underrepresented groups, including but not limited to, ethnic and racial minorities, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized communities, are highly encouraged to apply.

FY 2024 AWARDS

For the fiscal year 2024, the maximum award for each proposal is limited to a total of $20,000, inclusive of indirect costs. We anticipate funding 3-4 proposals. It should be noted that proposals may be recommended for award in an amount that is lower than the amount requested by the proposers. This decision will be made based on the availability of funds and an assessment of the budget justification provided, which will be carried out by the Director of the Pilot Project Program. Funding will be allocated for the project period spanning from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025; however, applicants may request an earlier start date if necessary.

BUDGET RESTRICTIONS

- If proposals seek funds specifically to support students, those students must be graduate students (MS, MPH, PhD, MD)
- If the PI is a Heartland Center trainee, then the requested salary support for the PI plus PI stipend support provided by the Heartland Center for the 2024-25 academic year, cannot exceed the NIH stipend rate, currently $27,144. A budget that includes trainee funding must be sent to Ms. Mindy Sickels-Sterbenz for approval prior to submission (mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu).
- Funds for meeting/conference travel is not allowed.
- Faculty salary support is not allowed.
- Indirect costs of 8% can be applied for budgets originating outside the University of Iowa.

APPLICATION MECHANISM

Applicants are strongly advised to adhere to the format specified below. The application must include all required components to avoid being disqualified from funding consideration. The research plan should be limited to 5 single-spaced pages. Adhering to these guidelines is crucial for the application's successful evaluation.

APPLICATION FORMAT AND CONTENT

Proposals should include the following sections:

Required Sections:	Page Limit

1) Pilot Training Grant Application Form — No limit

The form can be downloaded from here . Please note that this application form is a macro-enabled file to facilitate the data-entry process. Because of this, your computer may generate a security warning when you open the form.

If you receive a security warning, click on 'Enable Content' or a similar option to proceed. This will allow the macros to run, enabling all functionalities of this form.

Ethnicity disclosure: To foster a more diverse and inclusive research environment, the form requests that each Principal Investigators voluntarily indicate their ethnicity on the application form. Please understand that this information is optional and will be used solely for the purposes of internal demographic analysis. Providing this information will not impact the review or potential funding of your proposal.

2) Front page(s) — 2
- Include the project title
- Rationale for research concept and project's potential impact Project summary (150-word limit)
- A short paragraph describing the proposed project's relevance to occupational safety and health
- The following statement should be posted:

    If I submit this pilot grant application (or an application with similar aims) to another funder while it is under review by the Heartland Center, I will notify the Heartland Center. I understand that failure to comply with this policy is grounds for rejection of the application and withdrawal of any funds that may be awarded.

3) Research Plan — 5
- A) Specific aims
- B) Background and significance to occupational health and safety
- C) Methods or approach
- D) Anticipated benefits to occupational health and safety

    The Research Plan should address "burden, need and impact" as defined by NIOSH (https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/bni.html) and describe how the project aligns with the National Occupational Research Agendas (Sector or Cross-Sector) (https://www.cdc.gov/nora/comment/agendas/default.html).

4) Expected products (conference abstracts, proceedings and peer reviewed journal papers) — 1

5) References — No page limit

6) Budget and budget justification — 2

7) **Research timeline and milestones**   1

8) **Potential for future grant support**- For PI's who are post-docs or faculty, outline a specific   No page limit
path to future funding. Specifically describe grant mechanism (R21, R01, etc.) and funding
agency.

9) **Data Management and Sharing** Applicants must submit a detailed Data Management and   1
Sharing plan as part of their proposal. This plan should provide comprehensive information
on how data will be collected, stored, analyzed, and shared in compliance with the NIH Data
Management and Sharing Policy ([https://sharing.nih.gov/data-management-and-sharing-
policy](https://sharing.nih.gov/data-management-and-sharing-policy)). New Link: Two Page NIH Form
   The plan should address the following key elements:
   - Data Collection: Outline the types of data to be collected and the methodologies
     employed for data collection. If already specified in the method section, state so.
   - Data Storage: Describe where and how the data will be securely stored, including any
     cloud storage solutions or secure servers to be used. Specify the data backup
     processes.
   - Data Analysis: Provide information on the tools and software used for data analysis.
     Explain how data integrity will be maintained during the analysis process.
   - Data Sharing and Accessibility: Discuss whether, how, and when the data will be shared
     with other researchers, stakeholders, or the public. Include any plans for data
     archiving.
   - Data Security: Detail the measures that will be implemented to ensure the security of
     sensitive or confidential data, including encryption methods and access controls.

   Providing a comprehensive Data Management and Sharing Plan that aligns with NIH
   guidelines will ensure the proposal is considered for funding.

10) **Biographical sketch**: Provide a 2-page biographical sketches for all PIs   2-page per PI

11) **Letters of Support**: Collaborative relationships must include a letter affirming the   No page limit
willingness to actively collaborate on the project.

12) **Mentoring Plan**: If the PI is a student/trainee, the application must include a letter of
support from a faculty advisor and a mentoring plan. The Mentoring plan can be
downloaded from here.

13) Appendices: Items may include draft surveys/questionnaires, background information on   10
web tools or smartphone apps, training materials, maps, etc.

HUMAN SUBJECTS

For projects that involve human subjects, pre-approval from an appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) is
not mandatory for consideration for this grant. However, if the proposal describes a study that will include
human subjects, applicants are strongly advised to initiate the IRB submission process early to minimize delays
in securing approval. Upon approval of a pilot application for funding, the funds will be released when either IRB
approval has been confirmed or the project has been declared "exempt" from IRB regulations by a qualified
board. All pertinent IRB documentation should be directed to Ms. Janie Simmons at janie-simmons@uiowa.edu.

Diversity of Subject Populations: The commitment to diversity, inclusivity, equity, and accessibility is a core
value of the Heartland Center for Occupational Health and Safety in its operations and scientific inquiry.
Consequently, all projects should explicitly address plans for involving diverse populations of subjects in their
research.

ANIMAL SUBJECTS LIMITATION:

Projects involving the use of animal subjects will not qualify for funding through this specific mechanism.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Occupational health and safety specialist(s) will evaluate project applications. Proposed projects will be reviewed and scored on the following areas (in order of importance):

- Relevance to occupational health and safety issues
- Scientific merit (originality, validity, and reliability of methods; quality assurance)
- Project feasibility in terms of budget, timetable, and applicant expertise
- Capacity to build the research skills of the PI (Mentoring Plan)
- Potential for future grant support or significance of other grant outcomes
- Appropriateness of the budget and budget justification.

Reporting Requirements

To effectively track the progress and impact of funded projects, Principal Investigators (PIs) are required to adhere to specified reporting timelines. Compliance with these reporting guidelines is essential for both transparency and consideration in future funding opportunities.

1. **Six-Month Report**

Six months from the project's start date, PIs must submit an interim report outlining the following:

- Current status of the project
- Progress in alignment with the research timeline detailed in the application
- Ongoing activities and developments

2. **End-of-Project and Annual Reports**

PIs are required to submit comprehensive annual reports for a total of three years, starting from the project's completion date. These reports should include:

- Progress and final outcomes (for the first annual report)
- Grants and contracts developed as a result of the project
- Number of students mentored, specifying their roles in the project
- MS theses and PhD dissertations generated from the project
- Presentations and publications emanating from the project
- Collaborations established due to the supported work
- Any additional outcome of the project such as: training and education materials, websites, databases, guidance or policy statements, and patents.

All progress reports should be sent to Ms. Janie Simmons at janie-simmons@uiowa.edu.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE, DEADLINE, AND AWARD DATE

Applications for consideration will open on March 19, 2024 and end May 10, 2024. Please note that the review of proposals and funding decisions will begin upon their receipt and continue on an ongoing basis until all funds allocated for the pilot projects are distributed. Consequently, the earlier a proposal is submitted, the greater the likelihood it will be awarded, provided it meets scientific merit during the review process.

Submission Details:

Please send an electronic version of the application with all components compiled into one PDF document to Ms. Janie Simmons at janie-simmons@uiowa.edu.

Notification of Award Decision:

Applicants will be notified of an award decision on an ongoing basis but not later than June 10, 2024.

For any questions regarding the pilot grant requirements or to determine whether a topic is suitable for this funding mechanism, please contact the Pilot Program Director, Dr. Nir Keren, at nir@iastate.edu.