CALL FOR PILOT GRANT PROPOSALS IN COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH RESEARCH
2025-2026 Funding Cycle
Community Engagement and Research Core (CEAR Core)
of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (ITMAT)

Overview

The Community Engagement and Research (CEAR) Core of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics (ITMAT) at the University of Pennsylvania is sponsoring a pilot grant program to fund research with public and community health relevance.

The CEAR Core is seeking proposals that foster community-based research, especially studies that use a participatory framework. This includes research conducted in community settings or using a participatory research framework that actively involves community stakeholders in project conceptualization, design, implementation, and/or evaluation.

Community is defined broadly to include populations in neighborhoods and organizations, including health care settings. **Pilot projects** are defined as research projects that use qualitative and/or quantitative methods to collect initial data, analyze secondary data, and/or test research methodologies with the long-term goal of obtaining funding from external sources and/or conducting larger studies.

We expect to fund 3-5 projects between $5,000 and $20,000.

Letters of intent are due Monday, February 17 at 5pm. Applications are due Monday, March 3rd, 2025 at 5pm.

Priority themes

This year's priority theme is **the science of community engagement research**. For example, comparing methods for community engagement or developing or testing measurement tools. We are especially interested in receiving proposals under this theme but will also consider proposals on other topics. *We strongly discourage modifying your proposal to artificially or superficially align with the priority theme.*

Criteria for proposals

This call for proposals is open to faculty and postdoctoral fellows with public health and community health-related experience at Penn and is intended to:
- Foster interdisciplinary research in public health at Penn.
- Assist in securing external support for large-scale studies in the field of public health.
- Encourage additional faculty and staff at Penn to become involved in public health research.
- Identify innovative research methodologies that have the potential to inform local, state, and national health policy and programs.

Highly rated applications will propose projects that:
- Demonstrate how the research will be used to develop a larger grant application to seek external support.
- Present clear, relevant research aims.
- Demonstrate how research outcomes and priorities will be relevant to public and community health.
- Describe innovative methodologies that are feasible and can be completed within a one-year period.
- Include community partners as collaborators or advisors.
- Explain how research results will be disseminated to community partners.
- Use a participatory research framework and/or comparative effectiveness approaches.
- Address the priority theme of the science of community engagement research**.**

Who is Eligible to Apply?

The PI for the grant must be a Penn faculty member or postdoctoral fellow. CHOP-based Penn faculty are eligible to apply. No more than one grant can be submitted by any one team or PI.

Applicants are encouraged to become members of the Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutic (ITMAT). Details and the membership application are available at: www.itmat.upenn.edu/membership.shtml.

Key Dates and Administrative Requirements
- **Letters of intent are due Monday, February 17 at 5pm.**
- **Applications are due on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 5pm.**
- Awards will be announced by Friday, May 23, 2025.
- The funding period for each award will be from June 1, 2025, through May 31, 2026.
- All funds must be expended by May 31, 2026, unless an extension is granted.
- Final reports for each funded project will be due on July 1, 2026.

Letter of Intent
- Your Letter of Intent must be uploaded to the ITMAT Pilot Grant System and should include PI name and contact information, proposal title, and institution
- Proposal Participants (Principal and co-Investigators) must upload a Biosketch (NIH format, edited to be 2 pages in length each) with the Letter of Intent

Only applicants that submit a Letter of Intent will be invited to submit a full proposal

Application Components
- Research proposal (5 pages) inclusive of the following:
  - Statement of Purpose. This should include (a) background literature/research and (b) clearly defined research aims with relevance to current public health challenges.
  - Approach. This section should describe the proposed research plan (including a data collection and analysis plan), any underlying theoretical frameworks on which the program is based, methodology, and the expected significance of potential findings.
  - Description of Deliverables. Describe and provide a timeline or key activities and deliverables
- References/Literature Cited (no page limit)
- Budget Table and Budget Justification for all project costs and expected in-kind support/contributions (itemized). *Include all proposed effort on the project, and in-kind effort*. (1 page) [See "Use of grant funds" below for allowable budget items]
- Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator Biosketches (NIH format, edited to be 2 pages in length each)
- Response to the following questions (no more than ½ page)
  - Has any version or part of this pilot grant been submitted for review to any other internal or external funding source within the past 12 months?
  - If yes: (a) where was the pilot grant submitted, (b) is it currently under consideration, (c) [if applicable] when will your team learn about final funding status, and (d) [if applicable] how would you handle potential overlapping funding?
- Letters of Support from collaborating community organizations are strongly encouraged. Letters should describe the role of the collaborator in the proposed project and any past work with the applicant. (1 page each, limit of two letters per application). Do not include letters of support from Penn/CHOP collaborators.

Application Format Requirements
- Letters of Intent and applications must be submitted electronically using the ITMAT Pilot Grant system: https://www.med.upenn.edu/apps/itmat/pg/. You must have a PennKey to access this system.
- Attach Biosketches for all "Proposal Participants" (NIH format, edited to be 2 pages in length each). Biosketches for co-Investigators outside of the Penn system can be emailed to Krista Scheffey (contact info below).
- Format all other documents in Arial or Times New Roman 11pt font, single spaced, and 1" margins

Questions can be addressed to Krista Scheffey (krista.scheffey@pennmedicine.upenn.edu) and Emma Adelia Soliva (emma.soliva@pennmedicine.upenn.edu).

All proposals selected for funding must receive IRB approval from the Office of Research Administration before data collection begins.

Use of Grant Funds

Funds may be used to pay for project staff salary and benefits, consultant fees, supplies and other direct expenses related to program activities (e.g., travel, incentives for community participants). Funds may not be used to support the salary or benefits of faculty or postdoctoral fellows. The purchase of equipment will only be supported if it is demonstrated that there is no way for the research team to access necessary equipment other than direct purchase.