

Centers for Health, Work & Environment Pilot Grant Funding

Request for Proposals

Deadline for Proposals is May 12, 2026 – 5 PM MDT

I. Overview of the Pilot Grant Funding

The Centers for Health, Work & Environment (CHWE) is offering pilot grant funding in accordance with our mission to advance worker health, safety, and well-being. This pilot funding is supported by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) - the Mountain and Plains Education and Research Center (MAP ERC). The pilot funding supports projects in occupational safety and health (OSH) and Total Worker Health (TWH). Pilot research grants are designed to enable investigators to establish a track record in OSH and/or TWH research and practice, thereby increasing the likelihood of future funding.

- We fund 2-3 grants per year
- Projects will be funded up to a maximum of \$20,000 total, including indirect costs (8% maximum), over a 12-month period from July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.
- We accept projects that are categorized as one of the following:
 - Scientific research projects
 - Research-to-practice (r2p) projects

Funding priorities

Although any proposal that meets an OSH and/or TWH need will be welcomed and considered, proposals will be particularly encouraged and given priority if they meet the priorities of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) areas (<https://www.cdc.gov/nora/about/index.html>) and CHWE research and practice priorities. Projects that address the following topics will be given special consideration:

- Innovative ways to address the [future of work](#)
- Worker health and hazards, including extreme heat, drought, and wildfires.
- Workplace emergency preparedness
- Mental health in the workplace
- Worker well-being
- Opioid and substance use disorders
- Small businesses
- Regional focus



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Applicant Eligibility

Pilot grants will be awarded to investigators who fit into at least one of the following categories:

1. Applicant's institution must be located in the 5-state MAP ERC region, which includes: Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, and Wyoming
2. Graduate students and junior investigators (less than 7 years from a terminal degree) from any discipline.
3. Investigators who have done research in a related discipline AND who have an interest in developing a future in an OSH and/or TWH discipline; or
4. Experienced investigators who seek to address innovative new research questions or develop innovative methods aimed at improving OSH and/or TWH research, translation, dissemination, or practice.

Finally, if you submit your project as an r2p project, it is strongly recommended that the application **include** at least one **Research Partner** and at least one **Community Partner**. You must include a signed letter of support from the participating partner.

II. Project Types

Research Pilot Projects

Pilot research grants are designed to enable investigators to establish a track record in OSH and/or TWH research and practice, thereby increasing the likelihood of future funding.

Evaluation Criteria

For research proposals, review committee members will provide an overall impact/priority score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained influence on the research field(s) involved, using the following evaluation criteria based on the [NIH simplified review framework](#):

Factor 1. Importance of the Research – scored 1-9

Significance:

- Does the research address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field of OSH?
- Does the research address an important regional problem?
- Does the project address [NORA sector/cross-sector priorities](#)?
- How will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be advanced?
- Does the project address the [burden, need, and impact \(BNI\)](#) of the occupational exposure and hazards that are the focus of the proposed research?



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Innovation:

- Does the application challenge and/or seek to shift current research or practice paradigms?
- Does the research project involve novel concepts, approaches, methods, or interventions (either novel to OSH and/or TWH or novel in a broader sense)?
- Does the application refine or improve existing concepts, approaches, methods, or interventions?

Factor 2. Rigor and Feasibility – scored 1-9

Approach:

- Are the overall strategy, conceptual framework, design (including study population), methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project?
- Does the study involve multiple stakeholders (e.g., employees, employers, and academia)?
- Is there interdisciplinary interaction or potential?
- Does the proposal include graduate students or other individuals who would benefit from training in research methods in occupational health and safety?
- Are potential problems, alternate strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
- Is the timeline feasible for completion within a one-year timeframe?

Factor 3. Expertise and Resources – considered in overall funding, no individual score

Investigator(s):

- Are the Principal Investigators (PIs), collaborators, and other researchers well-suited to the project?
- Does the research team have complementary and integrated expertise relevant for the project?
- If early-stage or new investigators, do they have appropriate experience and suitable mentors?
- If established investigators are new to the field of OSH and/or TWH research?

Environment:

- Does the environment in which the work will be performed contribute to the probability of success?
- Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?

Additional Criteria:

- Does the research project have the potential of obtaining pilot data that may increase the probability of developing fundable larger grants or contracts in the future?
- Is the budget appropriate to complete the scope of the work proposed?

Research to Practice Pilot Projects

Through its [Research to Practice \(r2p\) Initiative](#) NIOSH emphasizes the importance of integrating evidence-based research into “the real world” in order to improve worker and community health. The r2p approach is an



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interactive process in which the OSH and TWH communities – including researchers, communicators, decision-makers, and employer/employee groups – work collaboratively to:

Identify research needs

- Design, plan, and conduct studies
- Translate and disseminate existing knowledge, interventions, and technologies to relevant users for implementation in the workplace
- Evaluate results to determine the impact on OSH and/or TWH

NIOSH uses the Research to Practice Roadmap guidance document and worksheet to plan their dissemination and facilitate the use, adoption, and adaptation of NIOSH knowledge, interventions, and technologies to prevent injuries and illness and promote worker well-being: <https://www.cpw.com/research/research-to-practice-r2p/r2p-library/resources-for-researchers/research-to-practice-r2p-roadmap-tool-and-triage-process/>. You do not need to focus solely on NIOSH knowledge, interventions, and technologies, but their planning road map helps to frame r2p projects.

Applicant Eligibility

It is strongly recommended that every r2p application include at least one **Research Partner** and at least one **Community Partner**. You must include a signed letter of support from the participating partner.

1. **Research Partners** should meet one of the three criteria outlined on page 2.
2. **Community Partners** should meet one of the following descriptions:
 - For-profit businesses
 - Labor unions
 - Not-for-profit organizations with a commitment to workplace safety, public health, disease and injury prevention, and/or sustainable community development
 - Public health professionals with little or no experience in OSH and/or TWH research

Evaluation Criteria

Review committee members will provide an overall score for the project based on criteria developed from the r2p program goals. While it is recognized that pilot funding is limited and not all projects will be able to completely address all goals, applicants should describe the r2p goals they will address, with particular emphasis on their approach to project evaluation. The review panel's overall score will reflect the reviewers' assessment of the project's potential to address as many goals as feasible while also exerting a sustained influence on worker health in the region.

Factor 1. Importance of the Research – scored 1-9

Burden, Need & Impact:

- Does the project address [NORA sector/cross-sector priorities](#)?



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- Does the project have a likely impact on OSH and/or TWH needs in the region?
- If the aims are achieved, how will OSH and/or TWH be advanced in the field?

Innovation:

- Does the application challenge and/or seek to shift current research or practice paradigms?
- Does the project involve novel concepts, approaches, methods, or interventions (either novel to OSH and/or TWH or novel in a broader sense)?
- Does the application refine or improve existing concepts, approaches, methods, or interventions?

Factor 2. Approach, Translation, and Feasibility – scored 1-9

Target Audience:

- Is the target audience clearly defined?
- Is it clear what the target audience will do with the knowledge, interventions, and/or technologies?
- Does the project adapt research results into products tailored to the target audience?
- Are their methods to adapt appropriate and sufficient?

Translate:

- Is the project based on evidence-based OSH and/or TWH research?
- Does the proposal adequately describe how study findings, technologies, and information will be translated/transferred into prevention practices and/or procedures?

Disseminate:

- Does the project use communication, dissemination, and/or implementation science to guide the movement of research into the workplace?
- Does the project describe the communication channels that will be used? This may include, but is not limited to, trade journal publications, websites, reports, informational materials, workshops and conferences, and peer-reviewed journals.
- Does the application outline the project's future plans? Does the project have the potential for partners to continue disseminating knowledge, interventions, and technologies after the project ends?

Evaluate:

- Does the project seek to determine the implementation, effectiveness, and/or cost-effectiveness of a particular strategy to translate/disseminate knowledge, interventions, and/or technologies, preferably applying an established framework?
- Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Can the project be accomplished in the timeline presented?
- Does the proposal include an adequate explanation of how the team will measure short-term success?



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Factor 3. Expertise and Resources – considered in overall funding, no individual score

Investigator(s):

- Are the Principal Investigators (PIs) and other partners and/or researchers well-suited to the project?
- If early-stage or new investigators, do they have appropriate experience and suitable mentors?
- Is it reasonable to expect that the research partner(s) and community partner(s) will effectively encourage the adoption and use of research findings?
- Have the research partner(s) and community partner(s) submitted letters that indicate their commitment to the project?
- Has there been an appropriate amount of input from both parties in the development of the proposal?

Environment:

- Does the environment in which the work will be performed contribute to the probability of success?
- Are the institutional support, equipment, and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?

Additional Criteria:

- Is the budget appropriate to complete the scope of the work proposed?



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II. Application Instructions

A. Disqualifying Characteristics

In addition to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of applications according to the criteria listed above, the Review Committee reserves the right to withdraw an application from consideration if:

- The application is incomplete
- The application is submitted after the deadline
- The applicant does not follow the application instructions outlined here
- The project aims and objectives do not relate to the mission and goals of CHWE or the MAP ERC
- The application does not clearly relate to OSH or TWH
- A member of the review committee has specialized knowledge, suggesting that a given project would be of little merit
- The application refers to participating organizations or collaborators that have not submitted letters of support for the grant

B. Important Dates

- **April 10, 2026, 5 p.m. MDT** - Letter of Intent
 - To assist with planning the review process, potential applicants are encouraged to send a non-binding Letter of Intent via email to Carol.Brown@cuanschutz.edu. Please provide a tentative title for your project and identify if it is a Research or R2P application. Letters are non-binding, i.e., titles may be updated, and proposal types may switch categories without penalty as long as they meet other criteria and due dates. You may still submit a proposal even if you did not submit a letter of intent.
- **May 12, 2026, 5 p.m. MDT** - Application deadline
- **Late June/Early July** - Letters emailed confirming the funding status of the project

Funding will be provided from: July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027

Note: No funds will be disbursed without proof of Human Subjects (or Animal Care) Institutional Review Board approval (as applicable).

C. Application Materials

Please submit the following items as a single pdf:

1. Cover page that includes project title, Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator(s) and Mentor (if applicable)



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2. Abstract – 350 words maximum
3. Detailed Budget and Budget Justification including travel to present the results at an annual research day (will be held in Denver Metro area) (PHS398 Form Pages 4 and 5
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>)
 - a) The budget period covers a 12-month budget period.
 - b) The maximum award is \$20,000 total costs. Projects funded by the MAP ERC are capped at 8% indirect cost rates.
 - c) Grantees cannot receive more than a cumulative total of 2 pilot research or r2p grants as a Principal Investigator.
 - d) Allowable expenses include all relevant project expenses including:
 - a. Support personnel including salary (maximum salary support for a faculty PI or senior mentor is limited to 5% of a 12-month equivalent salary, plus fringe benefits). The percent support of the 12-month equivalent salary for students, post-doctoral fellows, and/or research staff can be higher than 5% as long as the overall budget is within the limit outlined in this RFP)
 - b. Supplies and small specialized equipment
 - c. Domestic travel necessary to conduct the research and to scientific meetings to present results
4. A biographical sketch or resume for each person involved in the project (5 page maximum for each person): <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>
5. A proposal outlining the project. The proposal should be no longer than 5 pages (single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) and it should include:
 - a) Project overview, introduction
 - b) Specific Aims and objectives including, where appropriate, a hypothesis or research question
 - c) Background and significance, specifically, proposals should address burden estimates, the need for the proposed study, and the potential for public health impact
 - d) Project Design and Methods
 - o Target Population
 - o Methods
 - o Data collection methods and plan
 - o Data analysis methods and plan
 - o Expected results and implications of the project
 - o Possible problems and potential solutions
 - e) Future Directions
 - f) Timeline
6. References (do not count against page total)
7. (Where appropriate) IRB approval or copy of submitted application and NIH Certification. Projects involving human subjects are required to obtain IRB approval. Alternatively, a copy of animal care

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committee approval is required if animal research is being proposed. Approval does not need to be obtained prior to applying, but if funded, will be required before funds are released.

8. Letters of Support

- a. Students must include a letter from a mentor or faculty sponsor. This letter should indicate the student investigator's ability to complete the proposed study in the timeline given, the student investigator's potential as a researcher, and the potential for future funding. It should also outline the mentorship that the mentor/faculty sponsor will provide the student.
- b. Applications requiring extensive data analysis should either include a statistician co-investigator on their research team or the applicant should provide a letter of support from someone qualified to conduct or give guidance on the proposed analysis.
- c. If you are proposing to work with community partners, a letter of support to indicate the partners role or willingness to allow access to participants, etc.

D. Submission Process

Submit your application electronically as a single PDF file to carol.brown@cuanschutz.edu by 5pm MDT, May 12, 2026.

E. Review Committee

Complete applications will be evaluated by a review panel, consisting of up to 10 members representing collaborating institutions, including the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, Colorado State University, and National Jewish Health, as well as other members with appropriate expertise. At least two members of the review panel will review each proposal. Meritorious applications will be assigned a priority score based on the applicable criteria for Research and r2p projects.

F. Progress Report

A brief written interim report is due 3 months prior to the end of the proposed budget period. This report should indicate the progress of the study, including preliminary results and any problems encountered. A template will be provided.

G. Final Written Report

A final written report must be submitted 3 months after the end of the budget period, outlining the results. This report should also document all presentations, publications and extramural funds that have resulted, in part, directly or indirectly from this award. A template will be provided.



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H. Acknowledgement of Support

The investigator must acknowledge support from the NIOSH MAP ERC Pilot Research Training Program in all their related publications, which resulted from the pilot grant award. Specific language will be provided if project is funded.

I. Annual Research Day

Investigators will be required to participate and present their project at our Annual Research Day Symposium, date and location in the Denver area for 2027 to be determined. Interested applicants are invited to attend this year's Research Day, which will be on April 15, 2026. For more information about Research Day, please visit our website: <https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/research-and-practice/centers-programs/chwe/events/research-day-symposium>.

J. Resulting Work

Funded recipients will be contacted periodically for 3 years to provide an update about work that resulted from this pilot project.

Publications resulting from this work should meet the NIH Public Access Policy and have a PMCID number associated with them. More information about this is located: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/about/submission-methods/>



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