

Lerner Center
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PROMOTION

Maxwell | Syracuse
University



POPULATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Part of the Social Science Research Institute at Penn State

Population Health and Policy Research Collaboration

Request for Proposals

To promote cross-institutional collaboration in our joint primary research interests, the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University and the Population Research Institute at Penn State (PRI) are joining forces to fund collaborative seed grants to support teams of researchers working together across our institutions. We seek to support research activities (e.g., pilot studies, preliminary data analyses) that will lead to larger external funding. We are seeking proposals that aim to *examine and/or explain social, spatial, structural, and/or policy determinants of population health and health disparities*.

The Population Research Institute at Penn State (pop.psu.edu) has a long tradition of promoting demographic research and training around the world. PRI is working to expand these collaborations even further, creating new networks where synergies between population scientists exist across institutions. The Pennsylvania Population Network (PPN) at Penn State seeks to develop population and policy research of importance to communities in Pennsylvania and beyond. PRI and the PPN are joining this new call for proposals in conjunction with the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University. The Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University (lernercenter.syr.edu) is a population health research center with expertise in the social, spatial, and structural determinants of physical, mental, and behavioral health. The Center annually awards Faculty Fellow grants to SU faculty and is using this year's Faculty Fellows mechanism to encourage cross-institution collaboration on population health research with PRI faculty. Specific target areas for this RFP:

Social Determinants of Population Health and Health Disparities: Studies of the impacts of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, sexuality, families, social networks, migration and immigration status, work, geography, institutions, and/or policies that may pose disparate health risks and/or lead to disparate outcomes across groups and/or communities. Studies of the impacts of COVID-19 on individuals, children and families, and/or communities are also welcome.

Families, Childhood, and Health: Studies that examine demographic changes in family formation, family functioning, intergenerational relations, and reproductive health and their relationships to observed health and well-being disparities.

Communities, Neighborhoods and Spatial Processes: Studies of human population distribution across neighborhoods and communities, the social processes that bring about these spatial patterns, segregation and residential conditions, and their consequences for the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and/or children.

Timeline

January 26, 2021: RFP available

April 20, 2021: Proposals due

May 8, 2021: Funding decisions announced

Proposal Guidelines

This funding mechanism is designed to support research projects with specific research questions and designs for pilot data collection and/or analyses that will lead to an external funding application.

Funding: We anticipate spending a maximum of \$50,000 to be spent over 24 months to fund 1 or 2 proposals. Although a team may request up to \$50,000 for the 24-month period, proposals requesting less than the maximum amount are encouraged. Budgets should propose equitable funding across institutions.

Funds may be used for:

- Graduate student time or hourly support of activities from research staff
- Travel (MUST comply with university rules for travel. Please attend to limitations to travel that may be changing during Covid19 restrictions)
- Course releases. Penn State investigators may request salary of up to \$7,500 (replacement cost for one course buyout or equivalent). SU investigators may request salary that reflects the allowed percentage for the first course according to specific college policy (e.g., 12.5% in Maxwell). All requests for course releases should be made in consultation with the department head and must include a letter of support agreeing to the terms of the course release.
- Summer salary may be requested for research activities conducted during the summer months. Budget should specify activities for summer months specifically if summer salary is requested.
- Data acquisition fees associated with specialized data sources.
- Data collection costs for project collecting data.

Funds are NOT intended to support:

- Projects of individual faculty members or on-going research
- Delivery of outreach programs or services
- Funding for activities supported by departments and colleges (travel to conferences, computer or software purchase unless specific to the proposed study, etc.)
- Publication costs
- Graduate student tuition
- Indirect costs

Eligibility

The goal of this new joint research program is to encourage collaboration. Research teams must include at least one investigator who is affiliated with the Lerner Center or Center for Policy Research at Syracuse University and at least one investigator from the Population Research Institute at Penn State. Research faculty (tenure line and non-tenure line) are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators. Postdoctoral scholars and graduate students may be included on the research team but may not serve as PIs or co-investigators¹.

¹ See: https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/faculty_cpr.aspx, <https://lernercenter.syr.edu/about/our-team/research-affiliates/> and <https://pop.psu.edu/people/associates>.

Criteria for Review

Funding decisions will be made based on the following criteria: The proposed significance of the project for advancing scientific knowledge, policy, and/or practice for improving population health.

- Project innovation.
- The appropriateness and rigor of the research design, data, methods, and other procedures. (Approach)
- Feasibility that the project can be completed within the 24-month project period. If original data collection is proposed, a timely plan for IRB submission is required.
- The likelihood that the research will result in important publications with insights into population health.
- Potential for external funding success.
- Non-academic dissemination plan to ensure findings reach audiences outside of academia (i.e., community members, media, and policy makers).
- The qualifications and experience of personnel and feasible plan for collaboration across institutions.

NOTE: Investigators are expected to prepare and submit the appropriate requests for IRB approval. Funds will not be released without IRB exemption or approval.

Project Reports and Requirements:

Funded investigators are required to provide an annual project status update and a brief (one page) final report upon completing the project. Reports should include documentation of progress towards goals, dissemination products (i.e., articles, briefs, reports), and evidence of any external funding applications submitted. These materials allow us to track and report outcomes as well as monitor the success of this new collaborative enterprise between our institutions.

The PIs are also expected to present their findings at a joint PRI/Lerner colloquium and contribute one or more research briefs to the *Lerner Center Population Health Research Brief Series* (<https://lernercenter.syr.edu/category/pop-health-research-briefs/>) and co-hosted on the Pennsylvania Population Network research briefs page (<https://pop.psu.edu/pennsylvania-population-network>).

Lerner Center Faculty Affiliate Program:

The PIs on funded projects will be automatically granted Lerner Center Faculty Affiliate status. Affiliates have access to Lerner Center events, research resources, and mentoring. It is expected that funded PIs will maintain their affiliate status upon completion of the project, present their findings at Lerner Center research events, and assist the Lerner Center with reviewing future grant proposals. Other key personnel on funded projects may also apply for Faculty Affiliate status.

Population Research Institute Faculty Associates:

All PIs and key personnel on funded projects are encouraged to apply for associate status at the Population Research Institute at Penn State. All associates have access to PRI events, working groups and mentoring.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Please complete all sections below and send entire proposal as one PDF document to Dora Hunter, Project Manager, PRI (dmh63@psu.edu) by 5:00 EST on April 20, 2021. Proposals must be single-spaced, in Times New Roman font size no smaller than 12-point type, left-aligned with one-inch margins. Follow all page guidelines; **The proposal narrative cannot exceed 4 pages.** Do not include appendices beyond the supplemental information requested below.

COVER PAGE (1 page)

1. **Project Title**
2. **Name of MPIs, Title and departmental affiliation of MPIs (there should be at least one PI from each institution)**
3. **MPI address and email**
4. **Names, titles and departmental affiliation of all co-Investigators and other key personnel**
5. **Abstract:** Provide a succinct overview of the proposal summarizing objectives, significance, and data and methods (< 250 words). Assume the reviewers do not have technical knowledge in a specific field. Avoid or explain technical jargon, field-specific terminology, or acronyms.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (4 pages single spaced)

1. **Specific Aims/Purpose:** List the aims of the proposed project. Priority will be given to projects designed to build collaborations involving new cross-institution teams whose research is aimed at attracting external funding.
2. **Significance:** Provide a brief explanation of the research significance and relevance for population health (broadly defined) research and/or policy realms. Describe the state of the current research and literature and the innovation of the proposed activities.
3. **Description of Activities/Methods:** Provide a detailed research design including proposed hypotheses, methods, and data sources. Describe all project activities. For projects proposing new pilot data collection, address proposed recruitment (including feasibility and target sample), data collection procedures, and measures. Identify any community partners involved in the project if relevant. Projects proposing analyses with existing data should describe data availability and analysis plan.
4. **Dissemination plan:** Describe how you will disseminate, communicate, and translate the research findings to relevant stakeholders both inside and outside of academia, including the public, community organizations, media, and/or policymakers.
5. **External funding plan:** Priority is placed on proposals designed to lead to external funding; if relevant, explain how the proposed activities are designed to lead to a proposal for external funding. Identify potential funding agencies/mechanisms.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

1. **Literature Cited:** List publications cited in the proposal narrative.
2. **Collaboration plan and timeline:** Briefly describe the expertise of the MPI(s) and key personnel. Describe individual roles on the proposed project. Please also describe how the team will collaborate across the two institutions (Lerner Center/CPR-SU and PRI-PSU) and the timeline for proposed activities (e.g., frequency and mode of meetings, timeline for reviewing progress and launching data collection or conducting analyses). Include explanation of how resources from each institution will be accessed to meet the research goals (e.g., staff time for data acquisition/analyses, server and computational resources, use of FSRDC or other data infrastructure, etc.)
3. **Budget and Justification:** Provide an itemized budget and budget justification that includes salaries, fringes, and other expenses. Applicants are encouraged to discuss budgets with staff at each center to ensure all proposed activities are appropriately accounted for, budgeted, and available.
4. **Investigator Information:** Include an NIH or NSF biosketch for each of the principal investigator(s), collaborating investigator(s), and other key personnel included in the proposal.
5. **Letters of Commitment:** All investigators should indicate their willingness to collaborate on the proposed project by writing letters specifying: (a) their commitment to participate in the proposed research and (b) their acknowledgement that they have reviewed the full proposal prior to submission. Applications including community partners should include a letter of support from the community partner. Finally, for applications requesting course releases, include a letter of acknowledgement from the Department Chair/Head.
6. **Additional Documentation:** Applicants who have corresponded with Program Officials at potential funding agencies are encouraged to include those emails with their application.

For questions about this RFP, please contact Sarah Damaske (sarahdamaske@psu.edu) and Shannon Monnat (smmonnat@maxwell.syr.edu).