ICTR Pilot Award Program

2022 DISSEMINATION/IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH (D&I) Award

Scientific Review and Scoring Information

Up to three independent and non-conflicted scientific reviewers are assigned to each proposal based on methodological and/or content expertise. Each reviewer independently assigns an **Overall Impact** score using the NIH 9-point rating scale using the Scoring Calibration Guide (p. 4).

**Additional Notes on Assigning an Overall Impact Score:** Considering the review criterion listed below and the constraints of an 18-month $150,000 award, the overall impact score should reflect the reviewer’s assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained and strong influence on the research field(s) involved.

- An application does not need to be strong in all criterion/sections to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. For example, a project that by its nature is NOT innovative may be essential to advance a field.
- Each criterion/section should have its own consideration. We don’t require a score for each section, but we do request bulleted comments for each criterion/section.
- The overall impact score should reflect the merit of the application as a whole. The reviewer comments should validate the score chosen, and the overall strengths and weaknesses should support that score.
- Comments will be shared with applicants and should be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen a future application. Scores are not shared with applicants.

**Considerations Specific to D&I Research Pilot Award**

- The goal of this award program is to support research that addresses how to best ensure that evidence-based*/evidence informed** strategies / interventions / programs are effectively delivered into public health, clinical practice or community settings.
- This RFA seeks proposals that will identify, develop, test, evaluate and/or refine strategies to disseminate and implement evidence-based/-informed practices into public health, clinical practice, and community settings.
- Excellent applications will convincingly and effectively propose evaluating the effectiveness of methods or strategies to implement or disseminate an evidence-based/evidence-informed program. Study constructs might include feasibility for the organizations offering the program and the individual participants, fidelity by the provider to the key elements that made the original intervention effective, acceptability of the program to stakeholders and program recipients, adapting an intervention to a new context, maintenance of the program by organizations, and scale-up of a program across organizations. An application does not need to address all of these metrics/constructs.

*Evidence-based* practices are approaches to prevention or treatment that are validated by some form of documented scientific evidence. This includes findings established through controlled clinical studies, but other methods of establishing evidence are valid as well: registries of evidence-based interventions such as AHRQ, Cochran review, Guide to Community Preventive Services, Guide to Clinical Preventive Services; reported in peer-reviewed journals etc.

**Evidence-informed** practices use the best available research and practice knowledge to guide program design and implementation. This informed practice allows for innovation while incorporating the lessons learned from the existing research literature. Ideally, evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices should be responsive to cultural backgrounds, community values, and individual preferences. Adapted from: [https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/practice-improvement/evidence/ebp/definitions/](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/management/practice-improvement/evidence/ebp/definitions/)

**Application Sections/Review Criterion**

**Background & Significance:** The PI has made a strong case that the research will have public health benefit, provides evidence that there’s a public health and patient need for dissemination and implementation of the program that the aims of this project will advance knowledge about dissemination and implementation, and potential adopters will be able to determine the applicability of the results to their setting.

**Investigator:** Are the PI and research team well-suited to this project? Is there evidence of dissemination and implementation research expertise on the team? If the PI is a junior investigator, does s/he have the appropriate experience, training and mentoring? If the PI is a more established PI, has s/he demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced the field (i.e., publications, external peer-reviewed funding success)? If the PI is a SCIENTIST is there evidence of an independent research career (all scientist PI applicants must provide evidence that the proposed research represents an independent area of investigator via letters from faculty supervisor and department chair/dean expressing strong support for independent academic career trajectory), personal statement in biosketch should include detail on applicant’s independent area of research; associate or senior scientist PIs must show evidence of previous external funding support.
Environment: Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements? Will the environment of the community partners/stakeholders contribute to the probability of success?

Approach: The PI should describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to accomplish the specific aims of the project, and include preliminary studies, if appropriate. The PI should identify and describe the program to be implemented and its evidence base (i.e., publications). A proposal with high scientific quality will identify a conceptual framework/theory/model to inform the design and the outcomes being tested. The key indicators to be measured should correspond to the framework and implementation aims. The PI should describe the implementation strategies to be used. The PI should provide information about the readiness and capacity of the setting to implement the intervention, and identify potential barriers to implementation in a real-world setting and consider alternative strategies to address them (feasibility and contingency). Does the PI explain strategies to collect and analyze data?

Innovation: Is the project original and innovative? For example, does the project challenge existing paradigms or practice? Does it address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Stakeholder Plans: Has the PI sufficiently explained plans for engagement of stakeholders:
- Did the applicant show evidence that the research question is relevant to and sought out by patients/stakeholders?
- Did the project involve the stakeholders most appropriate to the research question and did the applicant make a convincing argument for why these stakeholders were chosen for engagement?
- Does the application show evidence that the applicant undertook strong efforts to include the perspectives, input, and participation from different populations? If not, did the applicant sufficiently justify why these populations were not incorporated into the research process?
- How strong is the engagement plan and does it illustrate genuine involvement of stakeholders (e.g., well-defined roles, shared resources, frequency of engagement)?
- Did the applicant consider potential purveyors, adopters, implementers, end-users? Definitions below.
  - Purveyors: Provides training and technical assistance so intervention can be adopted and implemented broadly with fidelity (scales-up intervention)
  - Adopters: The decision-maker from an organization (community or health system) that takes up an innovation and implements it to benefit its target group (e.g. community members, patients)
  - Implementers: Those who put the intervention/innovation into practice within organization
  - End-users: Those who benefit from/receive the intervention

Scalability and Sustainability: How well did the applicant explain how dissemination/implementation efforts will continue after research funding is completed? Does the applicant consider the factors that influence long-term implementation of effective innovations? Does the applicant address ideas/plans for funding and other resources needed for scale-up and sustainability?

Addressing Health Disparities/Health Equity: While a health disparities/health equity focus may be considered a strength, the overall impact score will reflect the reviewer assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved in consideration of all the review categories. An applicant does not need to be strong in all criterion/sections to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.
- Does the applicant give adequate consideration to issues of health disparities/inequities related to the research topic in the state of Wisconsin?
- If the proposed pilot research does not address health disparities/equity, does the applicant adequately justify?
- If the proposal does address health equity/health disparities, please consider other parts of the application with regards to the following:
  - Has the applicant described how the proposed work specifically addresses the mechanism of the health disparity or how the work will impact the health of the specific population group experiencing the inequity in Wisconsin?
  - Has the applicant cited published evidence that the health disparity/inequity is recognized by state/federal agencies as significant and warrants intervention?
  - Are the PI and research team well-suited to conduct the proposed project? Does the investigator have the appropriate relationships, experience, training, resources and/or mentoring? Are the PI, collaborators, and stakeholders well suited to the project?

Likelihood of leading to new peer-reviewed funding. The intent of this pilot awards program is to support the investigator in her/his efforts to secure larger, external grants; therefore, strong evidence must be offered to show that gathering pilot data is a crucial step towards building a research career. Is this proposal likely to lead to new external peer-reviewed grant submissions?

Future Considerations – Policy Implications: Has the applicant adequately addressed the potential for this research (if successful) to inform organizational or public policies in the future?

Appropriateness of budget request. Is the proposed project feasible under the proposed budget? Is the budget adequately justified? To make sure the available funds benefit as many projects as possible, only essential elements of grant requests will be awarded.
Special Criteria. Each pilot proposal is required to address two special criteria. Do you feel that the research team adequately addressed the criteria they chose? Has the applicant incorporated the special criteria in a manner that strengthens the proposal?

Options for Special Criteria

- New junior-senior investigator collaboration
- UW-Madison-Marshfield collaboration
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- UW-System School/UW-Extension collaboration
- ICTR-CAP program collaboration
- Science of Community Engagement
- Dissemination of UW or Marshfield research
- Topic areas: Contemporary and/or emerging health crises, racial/ethnic disparities in health, rural health disparities, social determinants of health, mental/behavioral health, substance use disorders, pediatrics/geriatrics.

Collaboration Plan. Does the team have a credible collaboration plan?

Overall Impact. Does this study address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the application are achieved, will scientific knowledge, clinical practice, community health programs or health policy be affected/advanced?

Major Strengths of the proposal:

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Notable Weaknesses of this proposal:

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OVERALL IMPACT SCORE: ___________ (whole numbers only)

Notes about Overall Impact Score: Considering the other pilot review criteria and the constraints of an 18 month, $150,000 pilot award, the overall impact score should reflect the reviewer’s assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained and strong influence on the research field(s) involved.

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• Comments should be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen a future application.
Scoring Calibration Guide

Please use the following 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) noting the anchors listed below. Numerically high scores (e.g., scores of 7-9) reflect applications that have major weaknesses while numerically low scores (e.g., 1-3) are associated with very strong applications. Reviewers are asked to utilize the whole scoring range. For NIH guidance on the Overall Impact score see here.

How do reviewers develop the overall score and narrative?
Each criterion should have its own consideration, but the overall score should reflect the merit of the application as a whole. The written critique should validate the score chosen by the reviewer by stating the overall strengths and weaknesses that support the score. The reviewer comments should provide feedback that will be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen their application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Anchor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with only some minor weaknesses*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Strong with numerous minor weaknesses*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths but with at least one major weakness***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses***</td>
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</tbody>
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*Minor weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact
**Moderate weakness: A weakness that lessens impact
***Major weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact