

Pre-Application Technical Assistance Webinar RFA-MD-24-010: P50 Environmental Health Disparities Centers

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Disclaimer

The webinar and accompanying slides are for informational purposes only. They serve as an overview of the P50 Environmental Health Disparities Centers NOFO ([RFA-MD-24-010](#)) and are not meant to be comprehensive in coverage of all required components of an application.

For any submission, applicants are responsible for following the instructions detailed in the NOFO and any related Notices included in the NOFO's Overview Information section.

Please see relevant notices of correction: NOT-MD-25-001 and NOT-MD-25-006

Webinar Tips

Participants will turn off audio and video while listening.

Participants may ask questions using the Q&A feature. Questions will be answered during the Q&A session at the end of the webinar as time permits.

Agenda

- I. RFA Background and Goals
- II. Application information
- III. Peer review of applications
- IV. Timeline for submission, review, and selection of grants
- V. FAQs and questions

Part I:

RFA Background and Goals

Background and Goals

- Purpose: Support the Environmental Health Disparities Centers program (EHD Centers) are focused on understanding and reducing or eliminating environmental health disparities by
 - Supporting multidisciplinary research
 - Engaging in research capacity building
 - Leading community-engaged activities
 - Supporting early career development
- Goal of centers is to generate innovative approaches to mitigate detrimental environmental exposures and improve access to healthy and sustainable environments.

Required Cores For P50 EHD Centers

The following components are required for each Center:

- Overall component
- Administrative Core
- Investigator Development Core
- Community Engagement and Dissemination Core
- Research Project(s): 1-2 Projects

Please submit your application early!

Overall Component

- SF-424 (R&R) Cover
- PHS 398 Cover Page Supplement
- Research & Related Other Project Information
- Other Attachments
- Project/Performance Site Locations: Enter primary site only
- Research and Related Senior/Key Person Profile: Include only the PD/PI and any multi-PDs/PIs for the entire application
- Research Plan: Introduction to Application, Specific Aims, Research Strategy
- Letters of Support
- Resource Sharing Plan
- Other Plan(s)

Administrative Core

- Provides oversight and monitor progress for the center's research and pilot projects
- Foster synergy between all the components occurring within the center through the development of shared resources, tools, common data elements, and/or analytic strategies
- Responsibilities include:
 - Ensure component plans are implemented per proposed timelines
 - Submit annual progress reports to the NIH
 - Monitor progress on research and pilot projects
 - Ensure all center activities comply with Federal policies and regulations
- Expected to become an institution-wide resource for increasing capacity to conduct environmental health disparities and environmental justice research

Investigator Development Core

- Main objectives are to:
 - Train early career investigators, to conduct research examining and addressing environmental health disparities through an environmental justice lens
 - Build research capacity at institutions working directly with communities experiencing environmental health disparities
- Pilot project program must support at least 3 pilot projects annually (typically beginning in year 2) with a **maximum of \$150,000 per year** in direct costs, exclusive of consortium indirect costs.
 - Each individual pilot project has a maximum limit of \$50,000 in direct costs and can last up to 2 years.

Community Engagement and Dissemination Core

- Establish and sustain equitable and collaborative partnerships to promote health equity through bi-directional communication of community concerns with center leadership
- Coordinate engagement activities with community members, partner organizations, and relevant service organizations or policymakers
- Disseminate findings from research projects
- **Required:** Convene a Community Advisory Board comprised of local community members and other strategic partners meeting at least every 6 months

Research Project(s)

- **Research Projects Should:**
 - Address research questions relevant to reducing environmental health disparities and promoting environmental justice for populations and communities experiencing health disparities
 - Be multidisciplinary, build research capacity, and mitigate environmental exposures, and improve access to healthy and sustainable environments
 - Prioritize local intervention research engaging communities and resource limited institutions through equitable partnerships to identify strategies and methods
 - Address health outcomes associated with significant morbidity and mortality amongst the population(s) of interest
 - Leverage existing data sets and NIH/federal resources
- Use of implementation science frameworks and methods is strongly encouraged
- Community partnerships are encouraged

Research Project(s) Continued

- 1-2 research projects may be proposed and may vary in scale and scope and total no more than \$550,000 in annual direct costs
 - Proposed research projects may be full-scale studies or exploratory/developmental projects
 - May include observational studies, exploratory/developmental projects, interventions, or clinical trials
- **If more than one research project is proposed, one project must be an intervention**

Responsiveness Criteria

- **Applications will not be considered as responsive to this RFA if they:**
 - Include animal models
 - Focus on environmental health disparities outside the U.S. and its territories
 - Do not focus on NIH-designated populations experiencing health disparities
 - Do not propose the required cores and at least one research project
 - Do not propose one intervention study if more than one research project is proposed
 - Focus solely on climate change and health

National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Research Priorities

- Studies proposed must focus on populations experiencing health disparities within the US and its territories
 - With a specific focus on racial and ethnic minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations for persons with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, and persons from rural and/or under resourced areas
- Multilevel and multidomain studies encouraged per [NIMHD research framework](#)
- Interested in intervention studies that seek to address or mitigate environmental exposures among communities disproportionately affected

Program Contact: Debbie Linares (Deborah.linares@nih.gov)

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

- NIEHS is interested in moving research from observation to EJ action to address disproportionate exposures contributing to health disparities.
- Applicants are encouraged to propose Centers that align with the new NIEHS strategic plan.
- Authentic community engagement is essential. Applicants should describe clearly on how they will work with community partners to identify and address EJ issues.



NIEHS Strategic Plan Framework

Program Contacts: Liam O'Fallon (ofallon@niehs.nih.gov) & Claudia Thompson (thompso1@niehs.nih.gov)



National Cancer Institute (NCI)

NCI's scientific interests include, but are not limited to:

- Impact of SDoH and environmental exposures, and their interrelationship as contributors and mediators of cancer disparities.
- Intervention research that will address multi-level and/or multi-domain social determinants of health and its interaction with environmental exposures to promote cancer control and prevention.
- Investigating the root causes of health disparities including the role of structural racism and the built environment (e.g., discriminatory housing policies, housing quality, neighborhood disinvestment).
- How climate-related issues impact exposure to air pollutants, and co-exposure to additional chemical and non-chemical stressors.
- Community-engaged approaches and collaborations with inclusion of multigenerational Indigenous Knowledge

*The NCI-awarded Center would enable *capacity building, training of early-stage investigators, and infrastructure support*.

*Community-engaged approaches that expand partnerships (e.g., cancer coalitions) that could lead to actionable changes

Program Contact:
Behnoosh Momin, DrPH, MS, MPH
behnoosh.momin@nih.gov

National Institute on Aging (NIA)

- NIA is interested in understanding the behavioral, biological, chemical, genomic and environmental (GxE), socioecological and toxicological processes related to environmental factors and exposures over the life course that affect the health and wellbeing of older individuals, including those living with Alzheimer's Disease and Alzheimer's Disease Related Dementias (AD/ADRD), as examined in human and/or animal models.
- Applicants are encouraged to consider innovative methods and research designs to facilitate studies examining environmental health disparities within groups (e.g., racial/ethnic) as well as between groups, recognizing that both between and within-group heterogeneity in individuals' access to resources and their lived experiences impact their health and wellbeing. This includes exposures that impact susceptibility and/or resilience to AD/ADRD and their precursors (e.g. mild cognitive impairment, etc.). Applicants should reference the [NIA Health Disparities Research Framework](#) and the [NIH Stage Model for Behavioral Intervention Development](#).
- Proposed centers are strongly encouraged to collaborate with existing NIA-supported research infrastructure, repositories and knowledge portals. Additional NIA-funded data sharing resources can be found [here](#).
- **Program Contacts: Emerald Nguyen (emerald.nguyen@nih.gov) and Richard Kwok (richard.kwok@nih.gov)**

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)

- Research should align with **NICHD's mission** by focusing on:
 - Understanding human development,
 - Improving reproductive health,
 - Enhancing the lives of children and adolescents, and/or
 - Optimizing abilities for all.
- NICHD will prioritize research within the scope of our **Strategic Plan**.
 - See <https://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/strategicplan>
- Program Contact: Randy Capps, Ph.D., 301-827-5423,
randy.capps@nih.gov

National Institute of Nursing Research (NINR)

- NINR seeks to support an EHD Center with a focus aligned with our mission and strategic priorities (see: <https://www.ninr.nih.gov/aboutninr/ninr-mission-and-strategic-plan>) and welcomes applications from eligible PDs/PIs from any discipline
- NINR discovers solutions to health challenges through the lenses of health equity, social determinants of health, population and community health, prevention and health promotion, and systems and models of care
- Drawing on the strengths of nursing's holistic, contextualized perspective, core values, and broad reach, NINR funds multilevel and cross-sectoral research that examines the factors that impact health across the many settings in which nurses practice, including homes, schools, workplaces, clinics, justice settings, and the community.

Program Contact: Leigh A. Willis, PhD, MPH

Email: leigh.willis@nih.gov

Part II: Application Information

Key Information

- Applicant organizations may submit more than one application, provided that each application is scientifically distinct.
- **Types of Applications**
 - New
 - Renewal
- The [OER Glossary \(https://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm\)](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/glossary.htm) and the SF-424 (R&R) Application Guide provide details on these application types. Only those application types listed here are allowed for this RFA.
- FAQs: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/frequent_questions.htm

- **Committed Funds:** NIMHD, NIEHS, NCI, NICHD, NINR, and NIA plan to commit approximately \$9 million to fund 4-6 centers in FY 2025 subject to the availability of funds.
- **Funding Amount:** Application budgets are limited up to \$1,000,000 in direct costs annually, excluding consortium indirect costs
- **Award project period:** 5 years
- **Due date:** January 28, 2025

Core Components and Page Limits

Component	Component Type for Submission	Page Limit	Required/Optional	Minimum	Maximum
Overall	Overall	6	Required	1	1
Administrative Core	Admin Core	12	Required	1	1
Investigator Development Core	Investigator Core	6	Required	1	1
Community Engagement and Dissemination Core	Community Core	6	Required	1	1
Research Project	Project	12	Required	1	2

Data Management and Sharing Plan

- Data management and sharing plan is required within the “Other Plan(s)” field on the PHS 398 Research Plan: <https://sharing.nih.gov/data-management-and-sharing-policy>.
- Data plans should include following elements:
 - Data type
 - Related tools, software, and/or code
 - Standards
 - Data preservation, access and timelines
 - Access, distribution, or reuse considerations
 - Oversight of data management and sharing

More info at: <https://sharing.nih.gov/>

Part III:

Peer Review of Applications

Letter of Intent (LOI)

- Although a LOI is not required, is not binding, and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application, the information that it contains allows IC staff to estimate the potential review workload and plan the review
- Prospective applicants should include the following information:
 - Descriptive title of proposed activity
 - Name(s), address(es), and telephone number(s) of the PD(s)/PI(s)
 - Names of other key personnel. To minimize COI in the review panel.
 - Participating institution(s)
 - Draft version of the Specific Aims. In order to assure proper expertise in the review panel.
 - Number and title of this funding opportunity
- LOI should be sent to: Dr. Yuijing Liu; Telephone (301) 827-7815; email: liuyujin@mail.nih.gov
- **Due December 28, 2024**

P50 Program Peer Review

- Applications will be assessed for **completeness and eligibility** by the Center for Scientific Review (CSR);
- NIH program staff will assess the applications for **responsiveness** based on the responsive criteria in the RFA; and
- NIMHD Scientific Review Officer (SRO) will assemble a panel of expert peer reviewers from the extramural community to **evaluate** the applications.

Preparations for Peer Review

RFA Specific Characteristics & Review Criteria

- Overall program goals
- Mechanism characteristics specific to this RFA
- Review Criteria: Specific to this RFA in Section V
 - Additional Review Criteria/Considerations (e.g. Human Subjects/Budgets, etc.)

Administrative Review of Applications

- **RFA requirements:** determine whether the applications are **complete** as required by the RFA and have the appropriate sections.
- Identify **Key personnel** involved in each application and their institution affiliation, as required for reviewers' assignment and conflicts of interest (COI) avoidance.
- Review the **specific aims** stated in each application, to identify the **expertise** required in the peer review panel.

Special Emphasis Panel Reviewer Selection

Scientific Expertise

- as defined in RFA
- collective content of the applications

Attention to Conflict of Interest

Diverse representation of opinion:

- gender
- demographics
- geography

Review Process

- Pre-Meeting: Reviewers submit the **written opinions/critiques**
- During Meeting: Reviewers discuss the applications and vote for **overall impact/final scores**

Some applications may be “streamlined” -- not discussed (ND)

- Applications may undergo a selection process in which only those applications deemed to have the highest scientific and technical merit (generally the top half of applications under review) will be discussed and assigned an overall impact score.

Peer Review Criteria

Reviewers evaluate a whole **application**'s potential to succeed

Overall impact score: Consideration of scientific merit of Overall Center, evaluations of all Cores as a whole and Research Project(s)...but not always an average of the multi-components.

Administrative Core, Investigator Development Core, and Community Engagement and Dissemination Core: Reviewers will provide their assessment of the likelihood for the Cores to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved. One score for all the cores.

Research Projects: Reviewers will provide their assessment of the Projects to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved.

Criteria for Overall Center and Research Projects:

Overall Impact

- Reflects the likelihood for the Center or Project(s) to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s).

5-Scored Review Criteria

- Significance, Investigator(s), Innovation, Approach, Environment

Additional Review Criteria

(included in the determination of the overall score)

- Study Timeline (Specific to applications designated clinical trial on the electronic cover sheet)
- Protection for Human Subjects
- Inclusion of Women, Minorities, and Individuals Across the Lifespan
- Vertebrate Animals
- Biohazards

Research Projects-- Additional Review Considerations (criteria not included in the determination of the overall score)



- **Select Agents Research**

- https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/select_agent/index.htm

- **Data Management and Sharing (DMS) policy**

- Only review the budget

- **Resource Sharing Plan**

- Reviewers will comment on whether the Resource Sharing Plan(s) (i.e., Sharing Model Organisms) or the rationale for not sharing the resources, is reasonable.

- <https://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2023/03/20/data-management-and-sharing-plan-vs-resource-sharing-plan/>

- **Authentication of key Biological and/or Chemical Resources**

- <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/reproducibility/guidance.htm>

- **Budget and Period of Support**

- You will consider whether the budget and the requested period of support are fully justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed research.

P50 EHD Centers Program Peer Review Meeting

- Final Impact Score based on average of all voting reviewers x 10
 - Scores range from 10 (exceptional) to 90 (poor)
 - The scores will be released 72 hours after the review
 - A summary statement for all applications would be available approximately 30 days after the review meeting

Do not contact the members of the review panel!

Videos on Peer Review Topics

The Center for Scientific Review (CSR) has produced videos with an inside look at peer review for scientific and technical merit and with tips for preparing applications.

<https://public.csr.nih.gov/NewsAndPolicy/PeerReviewVideos>

Resources for using eRA Commons

https://era.nih.gov/era-training/era-videos.htm?q=era_training/era_videos.cfm#iar1

Problems with Submission Processing

Always contact eRA Service Desk.

<https://grants.nih.gov/support/index.html>

Part IV:

Timeline for Submission, Review, and Selection Process

Timeline

- **Letter of Intent Due Date:** December 28, 2024
- **Application Due Date:** January 28, 2025
- **Peer Review Meeting:** June 2025
- **Council Review:** August 2025
- **Earliest Start Date:** September 2025

Review and Selection Process

- Applications will compete for available funds with all other recommended applications submitted in response to this RFA.
- Following initial peer review, recommended applications will receive a second level of review by the relevant NIH IC advisory board.
- **The following will be considered in making funding decisions:**
 - **Scientific and technical merit of the proposed project as determined by scientific peer review.**
 - **Availability of funds**
 - **Relevance of the proposed project to program priorities.**

Part V: Selected FAQs and Participant Questions

Send your questions via the Q&A feature.

FAQ: Eligibility

Question: Can NIH confirm that my institution is eligible to apply?

- **Answer:** No. NIH staff can answer questions you have about the eligibility requirements, but it is the responsibility of the institution to determine if all eligibility criteria have been met.

FAQ: Number of Applications

Question: If an institution submits more than one application, will only one application be selected for funding if they all score well in peer review?

- **Answer:** More than 1 application per institution will be allowed provided that they are distinct. NIH ICs participating in the RFA will make funding decisions based on the following:
 - Scientific and technical merit of the proposed project as determined by scientific peer review
 - Availability of funds
 - Relevance of the proposed project to IC and program priorities

FAQ: Cores and Components

Question: Should Advisory Committee members be named in the application?

Answer: No. The planned roles and expertise of the Advisory Committee should be described in the application, but it is not necessary to provide names of specific members.

Letters of support can be included but should not list the names of advisory committee members.

FAQ: Cores and Components

Question: Are there different page limits depending on the scope of the research projects?

- **Answer:** No, the page limit for each research project is 12 pages. Remember, this is a page limit, not the number of pages required. Projects that are smaller in scope may not require as many pages as larger projects.

Question: Should individual pilot projects be described in the application?

- **Answer:** No. The application should describe the Pilot Project Program (soliciting, selecting, supporting, and monitoring pilot projects), not individual projects, which should be selected after the Center is awarded.

FAQ: Animal Models

Question: Are animal studies allowed for center research projects?

- **Answer:** No, while animal models are considered not responsive for the research project(s), they would be considered permissible and responsive for investigator development core pilot projects. Remember that pilot projects should not be included in the center application.

FAQ: Natural Experiments as Interventions

- **Question:** Would natural experiments qualify as an intervention study for research projects?
- **Answer:** No, the focus of this RFA is on addressing and or mitigating environmental health disparities. Natural experiments would not be considered as an intervention. If you plan to propose 2 research projects, this could be proposed as a non-intervention study.

FAQ: Letters of Support

Question: Do all letters of support, including those for individual projects/cores, go to “Overall” part?

• **Answer:**

- Yes. Applicants must provide a letter from the president, chancellor, dean, or provost to:
 - Indicate the commitment of the institution to the center's specific aims and how the center's activities will be integral to the broad institutional vision for improving minority health and reducing health disparities and promoting environmental justice.
 - Specify any institutional support, at the departmental and higher administrative levels
 - Specify institutional collaborations with local community partners involved in environmental justice efforts.
- All other letters of support, including those for cores and research projects, should be placed together in this section, accompanied by a coversheet that lists each letter, author(s) and their organizational affiliation, and their role on the project. Include letters of support for any collaborative/cooperative arrangements, subcontracts, consultants, community partnerships, etc.

FAQ: Community Advisory Board

Question: Does the community advisory board go in the administrative core section or community engagement and dissemination core section of the application?

- **Answer:** Please put in community engagement and dissemination core section as this is a requirement for this core. Please do not list advisory board member names. Please note that letters of support will go in the overall core.

FAQ: Letters of Intent

Question: Is the letter of intent (LOI) mandatory? Is the letter of intent binding?

- **Answer:** No and no. The purpose of the LOI is to give NIMHD, particularly the review office, a sense of how many applications to expect and what kinds of expertise might be needed to review them. It is possible to submit an LOI and then not submit an application, and vice versa.

FAQ: Funding

- **Question: Do we anticipate any changes in funding availability or EHD center scope post change in federal administration?**
 - **Answer:** The EHD Centers program has been in existence since 2011 and is currently supported by NIH leadership. The renewal is currently operating out of NACMHD Council approval.

When in Doubt Please Reach out to NIH

NIH Contacts are included in this presentation and in the RFA.

Other NIH contacts

NIMHD Scientific Review Officer

Ivan Navarro, PhD

Telephone: 240.255.8335

Email: ivan.navarro@nih.gov

NIMHD Grants Management Officer

Priscilla Grant, JD

Telephone: 301-594-8412

Email: pg38h@nih.gov

Participant Questions



Additional Notes and Questions

Correction to Slide # 10

- A correction was made on slide #10 regarding the direct cost limits for the investigator development core during the webinar. Please note the following updated text in yellow:

Pilot project program must support at least 3 pilot projects annually (typically beginning in year 2) with a **maximum of \$150,000 per year** in direct costs, exclusive of consortium indirect costs.

FAQ: Application Package Forms

- **Question: Should we use FORMS-I application package? When will these be released at NIH?**
- **Answer:** Yes, given the due date is after January 25, 2025, please FORMS-I application package. A FORMS-I application package will be added to funding opportunities at least 30 days and, frequently 60 days or more, prior to the first due date. Until the FORMS-I application packages are available, you will see a temporary message between Key Dates and the Table of Contents where the standard submission options and links are typically found (e.g., [PAR-24-166](#)).

See: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy-and-compliance/changes-coming-2025/updated-forms-i-instructions>

FAQ: Community Advisory Board Members

- **Question: If community advisory members names are not listed, can we still request letters of support from potential members of the community advisory board?**

Answer: Yes, letters of support can be included. We recommend not including names of potential community advisory board members but describing their expertise and experience.