

## *Application Guidelines*

### Pilot Studies

## Innovations in Community-Engaged and Population Health Research to Address Chronic Disease (RFA-HLRC-26-001)

### Application Method

Investigators must submit Letters of Intent and full applications through the [UAB InfoReady system](#). Complete the required form fields, then upload the application documents.

### Letter of Intent Stage

**The letter of intent must be submitted as a single PDF (2 pages or less) and must include the sections listed below.** LOIs that do not address each required section will be considered non-responsive and will not be invited for full applications. LOIs should be single-spaced, with 0.5-inch minimum margins, and 11- or 12-point Arial, Calibri, or Aptos font.

All LOIs must include:

1. Brief overview of the proposed project
2. Importance of the Research – Significance and Innovation
3. General Approach
4. Description of Community Involvement in Project
5. Plan for Collaboration with Healthy Living Center Cores and Programs
6. Brief mentorship plan (if applicant is an early-stage investigator)
7. References (if needed, not included in the two-page limit)

### Eligibility

Applicants must hold a faculty appointment at UAB at the Assistant Professor level or higher. Early-stage investigators (ESI) are encouraged to apply; however, ESI applicants will be required to include a senior faculty mentor with a strong record of NIH funding in the area of the proposed research.

All LOIs and applications must be the original work of the applicant. LOIs or applications that are substantially developed by AI or contain sections that were substantially developed by AI will not be considered responsive.

All LOIs that meet the eligibility and submission requirements will be reviewed by a qualified panel of experienced researchers who will make recommendations for invitations to submit a full proposal. Applications will be evaluated on the scientific merit of the project and its relevance to the scope of the RFA, based on the information provided in the required sections above.

**The LOI is due by 5:00 PM on Monday, May 18, 2026.** No exceptions or extensions will be considered. Invitations to submit a full proposal will be sent by June 1, 2026.

## Full Application Stage

The full application must be submitted as a single PDF. All sections should be single-spaced, with 0.5-inch minimum margins, and 11- or 12-point Arial, Calibri, or Aptos font.

### Application Contents

Applications must include:

1. Project Summary/Abstract and Relevance to Community-Engaged Chronic Disease/Population Health Research (30 lines of text)
2. Project/Performance Sites
3. Key Personnel
4. Community Partner(s) and Contribution to Project (limit to 1 page)
5. Other Significant Contributors (limit to half page)
6. Mentorship Plan – if PI is NIH-defined early-stage investigator (limit to 1 page)
7. Detailed Budget
8. Budget Justification
9. Biographical Sketches for PI, Co-investigators, & Mentor(s), if applicable (follow NIH biosketch requirements)
10. Resources/Equipment/Facilities (1 page)
11. Specific Aims (1 page) – Take care that the aims clearly demonstrate responsiveness to the RFA.
12. Research Strategy (up to 5 pages): (a) Importance of the Research: Significance and Innovation; (b) Relevance to issues in community-engaged chronic disease/population health research; (c) Approach (methods, team, community partners, timeline/milestones, and human subjects protections, if applicable); and (d) Future research direction and potential grant proposals.
13. References/Literature Cited (these do not count toward page limits)
14. Optional: Letters of Support (these do not count toward page limits)

### Funding Restrictions

**Allowable Expenses:** Funds can be used for faculty and non-faculty personnel expenses; materials and supplies; research related expenses (analysis costs, participant stipends, lab expenses, etc.); and project-related travel.

**Unallowed Expenses:** Funds cannot be used for acquiring equipment, other institution-specific limitations on costs or international travel.

### Eligibility

Applicants must hold a faculty appointment at UAB at the Assistant Professor level or higher. Early-stage investigators (ESI) are encouraged to apply; however, ESI applicants will be required to include a senior faculty mentor with a strong record of NIH funding in the area of the proposed research.

All LOIs and applications must be the original work of the applicant. LOIs or applications that are substantially developed by AI or contain sections that were substantially developed by AI will not be considered responsive.

## Full Application Stage Continued

### Review

All applications that meet the eligibility and submission requirements will be reviewed by a qualified panel of experienced researchers who will make funding recommendations. Applications will be evaluated on the scientific merit of the project, its relevance to the scope of the RFA, the mentorship plan (if applicable), and the potential for future funding. It is expected that awarded projects will lead to R01-type applications for extramural funding. Healthy Living Center leadership will make final award decisions. Based on the reviews and recommendations, a pre-award consultation with subject matter or methodology experts may be required.

### Review Criteria

Reviewers will provide an overall impact/priority score (using the current NIH scoring approach) to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project, if successful, to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the direction of community-engaged chronic disease/population health research, in consideration of the five scored review criteria below:

#### 1. Importance of the Research

- *Significance.* Is the project relevant to community-engaged chronic disease/population health research? Does the proposal address an important issue in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice improve? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive the field of community-engaged chronic disease/population health research?
- *Innovation.* Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research paradigms in community-engaged chronic disease/population health research by utilizing, developing, or testing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to community-engaged and population health research or novel in a broad sense? Is exploration of a major refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

#### 2. Rigor and Feasibility

- *Approach.* Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the project involves human subjects, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?
- *Feasibility.* Is the proposed project achievable given the budget and timeframes? Are any recruitment and retention plans reasonable and likely to be successful? Is the analysis plan appropriate and sound?
- *Future Funding Potential.* What is the likelihood that the pilot project will lead to an R01-type application, or similar extramural funding?

## **Review Criteria Continued**

### 3. Expertise and Resources

- *Investigator(s)*. Are the PIs, community partners, collaborators, and mentors well suited to the project? Do they have appropriate experience and training? Does the proposed mentorship plan ensure accomplishment of the project aims?
- *Environment*. Are all needed resources and expertise discussed and available? If the PI is an ESI, is the mentorship plan sufficient and appropriate? Does the project make good use of Healthy Living Center Cores and Programs, as applicable and appropriate?

## **Submission and Deadline**

**All full proposals are due by Monday, June 29, 2026 at 5:00 PM CT. No exceptions to the deadline will be given.** Applications must follow the submission guidelines above and be submitted through [the UAB InfoReady system](#). **Emailed applications will not be accepted.** Applications that do not follow the submission guidelines will not be reviewed.