



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Community Health Innovation Projects: Reducing Risk and Improving Outcomes in Underserved Communities (RFA-CSCH-25-01)

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The UAB Center for the Study of Community Health (CSCH) invites applications for innovative pilot research projects focused on improving community health. Projects should aim to reduce health risks, improve physical or mental health outcomes, and promote well-being in underserved urban and rural communities in Alabama. A University-Wide Interdisciplinary Research Center (UWIRC) since 1997, CSCH offers a unique research environment that involves Center Scholars and community partners dedicated to improving the lives of Alabamians.

The Center will support highly innovative pilot projects in the following focus areas:

- Developing, testing, or implementing strategies to mitigate exposures to environmental health risks, such as indoor and outdoor air pollution, soil or water contamination, sanitation infrastructure, or other toxic or harmful exposures;
- Developing, testing, or implementing strategies that address structural and social determinants of health, such as education, economic opportunity, housing, living conditions, food access, transportation, crime and safety, service and built environment, or other social drivers of health;
- Developing, testing, or implementing school- or community-based interventions to develop life skills, build self-esteem, manage stress, or prevent substance use among youth;
- Increasing access to essential health screenings or preventive services, especially for diseases with high prevalence in the targeted communities;
- Leveraging new technologies and tools to improve public health or disseminate public health information effectively and combat misinformation.

Projects must demonstrate community need and meaningful engagement of community members or stakeholders in the design, implementation, and/or dissemination of the project. Projects that emphasize capacity building and lead to sustainable community health improvements are strongly encouraged.

Available resources: The CSCH will provide access to our Community Scientific Advisory Board for advice and consultation, facilitate collaborations with community partners, and connect investigators to services by the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Research Core, the Survey Research Unit (SRU), the Applied Evaluation and Assessment Collaborative (AEAC), and other institutional resources as needed. For more information, please visit the [CSCH website](#) and join the pre-application information sessions (see dates in Section IV).

II. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must hold a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Early-stage investigators are encouraged to apply. Applicants at the levels of Instructor or Assistant Professor must have a senior faculty as a mentor. Collaborations with community partners are strongly advised.

III. AWARD INFORMATION

Project period: Projects will be funded for 12 months. No-cost extension is available contingent upon progress made.

Project budget: Awards will be made at one of three levels:

- Level 1: \$50,000. One project will be funded.
- Level 2: \$25,000. Up to two projects will be funded.
- Level 3: \$10,000. Up to three projects will be funded.

Applicants should clearly state to which level they are applying. See page limits for each level in Section IV.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Key Dates

- Pre-application Information Sessions: January 9, January 16, and January 23, 2026
- Applications Due Date: March 2, 2026 by 11:59 pm CT
- Project Start Date: May 1, 2026

Applications must be submitted through UAB InfoReady or by email to jrledvina@uabmc.edu by 11:59 pm on March 2, 2026.

Application Content and Format

All applications should include:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Biographical Sketches (5-page NIH format: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>)
- Mentorship Plan for Instructors and Assistant Professors (1 page)
- Detailed Budget
- Budget Justification
- Specific Aims (1 page)
- Research Strategy (6 pages for Level 1; 4 pages for Level 2; 2 pages for Level 3)
 - a. Background and Significance
 - b. Innovation
 - c. Approach
 - d. Plans for future funding
- References/Literature Cited (no page limit)
- Human Subjects Research (if applicable)
- Targeted Enrollment Table (if applicable)
- Letters of Support (if applicable)

Applications should be single-spaced, with 0.5-inch margins, and use 11-point Arial or 12-point Times fonts. Applications should be submitted as a single PDF file.

V. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

The following types of expenditures are allowable:

- a. Salary support for investigators, staff, and community partners
- b. Research supplies, fees, and technical assistance costs
- c. Equipment costing less than \$5,000
- d. Local travel to carry out the proposed research
- e. Stipends for graduate students/postdoctoral fellows if their role is to support the project
- f. Publication costs

The following types of expenditures are **not** allowed:

- a. Foreign travel
- b. Office equipment and furniture
- c. Rental of office or laboratory space
- d. Construction or building maintenance

VI. REVIEW INFORMATION

Applications will be evaluated by both academic and community reviewers. Evaluations will consider the scientific merit of the project, its relevance to the scope of the request for applications, the level and quality of community engagement, and the applicant's potential for future funding. It is expected that awarded projects will lead to extramural funding.

Review Criteria

Overall Impact. Reviewers will provide an overall impact score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on community health, in consideration of the five scored review criteria below:

Relevance and Significance. Is the project relevant to the focus of the RFA? Does the proposal address an important issue? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, community capacity, and/or community health improve? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, treatments, services, or interventions that drive this field?

Investigator(s). Are the PIs, 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?

Innovation. Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research paradigms and practices by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, or interventions? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, or interventions proposed?

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, women, and children justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

Future Funding. What is the likelihood that the project will lead to extramural funding?

VII. CONTACT INFORMATION

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Pre-application information sessions will be held on January 9, 10–11 am; January 16, 2–3 pm; and January 23, 12–1 pm, 2026. To register, click [here](#).