College of Health and Social Services Mini-Grant Program
2014-2015 Call for Proposals

This document provides guidance and instructions for completion of College of Health and Social Services (CHSS) Mini-Grant proposals. The first part of the document provides general guidelines surrounding the purpose of such funds, responsibilities of investigators and review and submission instructions. The second part of the document provides specific instructions for each of the sections that should be included in each proposal. Investigators may address all questions about the program to the Associate Dean for Research (ADR).

I. General Guidelines

A. Purpose:

CGSS Mini-Grants are intended to (a) help junior (i.e., tenure-track) faculty launch their research programs and (b) encourage more senior faculty (tenured and tenure track) to transition their research into a new area or transition back into research from teaching and/or administrative assignments. Faculty may apply for up to $5,000 to support research activities that have the potential to lead to scholarly products and extramural funding. Faculty funded previously via this mechanism may apply again for funding under the condition that they are making a substantial shift in research focus. Applications from junior (tenure-track) and first-time recipients will receive funding priority.

B. Responsibility:

Funded investigators have several responsibilities:

1. Present the results of their project locally at a CHSS Research Brownbag
2. Present the results of their project regionally/nationally at a relevant conference
3. At least one of the following:
   - Disseminate the results of their projects in the form of a manuscript submitted for publication to a peer-reviewed journal
   - Use the results of the study as pilot data for a grant proposal submitted to an external funding agency

C. Application Requirements:

Applications should follow the Instructions for CHSS Mini Grant Proposals that are included below. Applications that do not follow these instructions will be returned for revision.

D. Review Process:

The ADR will review each proposal and make recommendations to the Dean regarding funding. Applicants can expect the review process to be iterative. In other words, applicants should expect to revise first drafts of proposals based on constructive guidance on the technical and scientific merits of each project.
The ADR will provide such feedback in hopes of strengthening the project so that it will be more conducive to future funding or have greater potential for publication.

E. Recommendations for Mini-Grant Proposals:
   1. Applicants should meet with the ADR to discuss their projects before starting them or if they have any questions during proposal development.
   2. Applicants should follow the instructions, outline, page limits, and formatting preferences provided below.
   3. Applicants should propose a project that is realistic in relation to the anticipated funding level of $5,000 maximum per project. Applicants should avoid proposing to do too much and instead consider collecting pilot data that would serve as part of a larger request for funding to an external agency.
   4. Applicants should include as much detail as is needed to explain the project, but also keep the proposal as succinct as possible. Make sure all included text is relevant.

F. Deadlines
   There are no specific deadlines; the ADR will review proposals as he receives them.

G. Proposal Submission
   Submit completed proposals electronically (as a Word document; not as .pdf) to Joe Tomaka at tomaka@nmsu.edu.

H. Contact information
   Address all questions to:
   Joe Tomaka, Ph.D.
   Associate Dean for Research
   College of Health and Social Serves
   Annex 211
   575-646-3525
   tomaka@nmsu.edu
II. Instructions for CHSS Mini-Grant Proposals

Include all of the following sections (A-K). If a section is not applicable to your proposal, indicate as such (n/a).

**Formatting:** In general, this document should follow NIH formatting instructions including at least an 11-point font, single-spaced text, and ½-inch margins. *Do not exceed the page limits below.*

A. **Cover Page (1 page)**

The Title Page should include (a) a descriptive title of the project, (b) the Principal Investigator’s name and department affiliation, and (c) the names and affiliations of any co-investigators.

B. **Specific Aims (not to exceed 1 page)**

Applicants should construct a specific aims page in a manner consistent with guidelines from the National Institutes of Health. The length of the specific aims is one page.

The specific aims should describe concisely and realistically the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact of the proposed research will exert on the research fields involved. Most CHSS Mini-Grant proposals will have 1 to 2 specific Aims

The specific aims should:

- Describe the broad, long-term goals of the research program
- Outline the specific objectives (i.e., aims) and corresponding hypotheses to be tested
- Summarize expected outcomes
- Describe the potential impact on the research field

Suggestions:

1. The Specific Aims section should begin with a brief narrative describing why the project is important or significant, and how the project is innovative.
2. It should list the specific objectives of the research proposed, such as to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.
3. The specific aims and hypothesis should be highlighted as such, clearly stated, and testable.
4. Each aim should consist of only one sentence. Use a brief paragraph under each aim if more detail is needed. As noted, most mini-grant applications will have 1-2 specific aims.
5. Do not be overly ambitious. A small, focused project is generally better than a diffuse, multifaceted project.
6. Include a brief statement of the general methods and the potential impact of the research studies on the field
7. Include a statement regarding directions and potential opportunities for future funding.
8. At NIH, this is often the most important page of the entire application since it may be the only section read by an unassigned reviewer to understand approach, impact, and innovation.
9. Use this page to “sell” others on your ideas.

C. **Research Strategy (not to exceed 4 pages)**

Include separate sections titled Significance, Innovation, and Approach.

(a) **Significance**

- Explain the importance of the problem (or critical barrier to progress in the field) that the proposed project addresses.
- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
• Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

(b) Innovation

• Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
• Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
• Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

(c) Approach

• Describe the overall strategy, measures, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how many participants will be included, any inclusion and exclusion criteria, and how you will recruit individuals to be in the study. Describe the study measures, procedures, and study design. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Include a power analysis, if applicable. (Applicants can contact Dr. Anup Amatya or the ADR for assistance with power analysis.)
• Describe all study-related activities and/or treatments. If applicable, describe what will happen in a control/comparison group and how you will allocate participants to treatment vs. control groups. Describe how long it will take each individual to participate in the study, and how long the period will be for collection of data on all participants.
• Describe the statistical methods you will use to analyze the collected data. Clearly state the independent and dependent variables for such analyses and include a statement of the limits (e.g., alpha or p values) that will guide interpretation of the results. Describe the anticipated pattern of results and how that pattern supports the hypothesis.
• Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
• Include an anticipated timeline for completion of the project.
• If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.

D. Human Subjects (1 paragraph)

Describe any issues related to human participation in research including any potential harms or risks; any potential benefits; and how you will provide informed consent.

E. Budget (1 page)

Include a budget with all anticipated expenses in table or spreadsheet form.

Budgets may include salaries or stipends for research assistants, small equipment (e.g., recording devices), software (e.g., for surveys or data analysis), services (e.g., for transcription), travel ($500 max), participant incentives, or other direct costs that directly facilitate the research. Budgets may not include funds to supplement faculty salaries.

Applicants should strive for a realistic budget and request enough money to do the work. Significant over- or underestimating suggests that the applicant does not understand the scope of the proposed work. To help with this, applicants may consider completing the budget section after having written the research plan, when they have a better idea of anticipated costs. Applicants should consult with their departmental secretary or the college accountants regarding costs for student research assistants.

F. Budget Justification (1 Page)

Describe each budget line, item, or request, and why it is necessary for the successful completion of the project.
G. Literature cited: (No page limit)
Applicants should use APA, MLA, or other appropriate citation and referencing format.

H. Dissemination plans (one paragraph)
Applicants should describe their plans to (a) present their results in a CHSS forum (e.g., research brown bag), (b) to submit the results to a regional or national conference, and (c) their plans for manuscript or grant proposal submission. Include an anticipated timeline for each.

I. Potential for External Funding (one paragraph)
Applicants should discuss how the results might help them apply for or lead to extramural funding. Include possible sources of funding for this area and type of research (e.g., National Institutes of Health, the Con Alma Health Foundation, the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson foundation, etc.)

J. Transition plans, if applicable (one paragraph)
If you are a senior researcher planning to use these funds to transition your research program, or transition back in to research, describe how this proposed projects represents a significant change from your previous activities

K. Appendix
Include any additional materials necessary for evaluation of the project, including instruments.

Note: Portions of this document were adapted from the SF424 (R&R) Application Guide for NIH and Other PHS Agencies (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm) and the Instructions for Pilot Grants distributed by the Mountain West Research Consortium (http://ctrin.unlv.edu/).