New Investigator Program

Request for Proposals
and
Application Guidelines

July 2021
Background
The Wisconsin Partnership Program at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health is committed to improving health and health equity in Wisconsin through investments in research, education and community partnerships. It was established at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health through a gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin as a result of its conversion to a stock insurance corporation.

In collaboration with faculty and community-based organizations, the Partnership Program supports health-improvement and disease-prevention initiatives seeking to reduce morbidity, mortality and systemic disparities in health. The Wisconsin Partnership Program’s vision, mission and values as well as its goals and grant-making strategies are described in the 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan.

Goal and Description
Through the New Investigator Program, the Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC) supports innovative research and education approaches that address Wisconsin’s health issues and span the spectrum of basic, clinical, social/behavioral or population sciences. Proposals should advance scientific understanding and have the potential to improve population health or reduce health disparities through prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or cure of disease. Each proposal must describe the potential to improve the health of the people of Wisconsin and must clearly explain the steps necessary to translate discovery to application in the clinical setting and/or in communities. Evaluation of each proposal will be based on scientific merit; the potential impact on health, health care and/or health equity in Wisconsin and beyond; and the potential to advance the Principal Investigator’s career.

Review Criteria
New Investigator grants are up to $150,000 over two years. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

Review Criteria
All applicants are required to address the following review criteria.

- The project:
  - Shows innovation and has outstanding merit
  - Advances the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework
  - Appears feasible with high likelihood for acquisition or application of useful data
  - Has the potential to advance the career development of the applicant
  - Describes specific metrics to benchmark progress toward the stated goals and objectives and plans to disseminate research outcomes or project results
  - Has a leveraging potential for extramural grant support
  - Describes the process by which successful execution of this project positively impacts or translates to improved health and/or health care in Wisconsin

- The Principal Investigator:
  - Is qualified to successfully execute and oversee the proposed research

As applicable, applicants must address one or more of the following review criteria.

- The project:
  - Has the potential to improve health equity and/or reduce health disparities
  - Enhances interdisciplinary research or education and fosters collaborations among basic, clinical, social/behavioral and/or population scientists
  - Describes community engagement efforts if it is the central component of overall project goal
Eligibility
A Principal Investigator is required and must be a UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) assistant professor with a salaried appointment of at least 50 percent and an appointment start-date on or after the dates below based on their SMPH faculty track. If the applicant has received a track extension, or has an appointment below 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE), please contact Tonya Mathison at tonya.mathison@wisc.edu to verify eligibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMPH Track</th>
<th>Appointment start-date must be on or after:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>August 1, 2017 (within four years of start-date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Health Sciences</td>
<td>August 1, 2015 (within six years of start-date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinician-Teacher</td>
<td>August 1, 2015 (within six years of start-date)</td>
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Eligible faculty in all UW School of Medicine and Public Health departments, including the basic sciences, are encouraged to apply.

Although Collaborators are not required, up to two may be included on the project. Collaborators typically contribute specialized expertise to the project and have more narrowly defined roles than the Principal Investigator. Collaborators may have an appointment, for example, at any UW System campus, Marshfield Clinic, Gundersen Health System, Medical College of Wisconsin, state and local government agencies or community organizations.

Funding Scope and Duration
The maximum award amount is $150,000 over two years. The level of effort of the Principal Investigator should be between five and 20 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) compensation and must be fully justified in the budget justification. The PERC anticipates funding up to four projects.

Submission and Review Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release Request for Proposals</td>
<td>July 14, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary application deadline</td>
<td>August 5, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review preliminary applications</td>
<td>August-September 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notify applicants of status/Invite full applications</td>
<td>September 14, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full applicant information session (by invitation only)</td>
<td>September 28, 2021*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full application deadline (by invitation only)</td>
<td>October 12, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review full applications</td>
<td>October-December 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notify applicants of status/Invite finalists for interviews</td>
<td>December 14, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview finalists</td>
<td>January 10, 2022**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify finalists of award decision</td>
<td>January 14, 2022</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Full applicant information session will take place 4:30-5:30 pm via UW-Madison Zoom
**Finalist interviews will take place 4:30-7 pm in 4201 HSLC, Harting-Mullins Conference Room

Application Resubmission
Applicants are limited to two submissions—an original and one resubmission—of the same proposal. Applicants submitting a revision must respond to the reviewer comments provided by the Partnership Program during the applicable funding cycle, specifically noting how the current proposal differs from the original submission.

Applicants who have submitted two versions of an application and have not been successful may submit a new application. It must be substantially different in content and scope with more significant differences than are normally encountered in a revised application.
Preliminary Application Guidelines
A preliminary application is required and is due by 11:59 pm August 5, 2021. Applicants will receive notification of status and learn whether they are invited to submit a full application to PERC by September 14, 2021.

To start a preliminary application, go to: https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_5637?SA=SNA&FID=35401.

If you’ve already started a preliminary application, access it by logging into the applicant portal: https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_5637?SA=AM.

In addition to providing general information about the project, the preliminary application includes the following components.

Project Abstract
The project abstract provides an overview of the project, including the primary goal, the broader long-term objectives, specific aims, and a description of how the project advances the goals of the New Investigator Program. In addition, the project abstract must contain a brief paragraph that describes how successful completion of this project will advance the applicant’s career development.

The project abstract must be uploaded as a PDF and cannot exceed two single-spaced pages with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font. Footnotes, references and up to three tables and/or figures are not included in the page limit and should be inserted after the project abstract.

Application Resubmission (if applicable)
A response to the reviewer comments is only required if the proposal is a resubmission of a preliminary or full application from a prior funding cycle (see page 2 for more information). Provide in the respective text field and in no more than 200 words: the year the original proposal was submitted, the highest stage of review to which the proposal advanced (either preliminary application, full application or interview), a response to the reviewer comments from the applicable funding cycle, and a description of how the current proposal differs from the original submission.

Personal Statement
In the relevant text field, provide a personal statement for the Principal Investigator and, if applicable, statements for each of the Collaborators describing why each is well-suited for their role on the project (similar to the personal statement in the NIH biographical sketch). Each statement is limited to no more than 100 words.

Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information
The Wisconsin Partnership Program is required to operate in accordance with Wisconsin’s public records and open meetings laws. See the Wisconsin Partnership Program terms and conditions for more information.

Indicate whether the preliminary application includes proprietary and/or confidential information, and using the form provided, identify and request confidentiality for any trade secrets or proprietary information.

Full Application Guidelines
Only applicants invited by the PERC may submit a full application. The Principal Investigator will receive a link to the full application in the invitation. Full applications are due by 11:59 pm October 12, 2021. Applicants invited to make an in-person presentation to the PERC will be notified by December 14, 2021.

In addition to general information about the project, the full application includes the following components.
Abstract
The abstract, which is limited to 500 words in the respective text field, is a succinct and accurate description of the proposed project. The abstract must state the application’s broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, design and methods for achieving the stated project goals, and alignment with the goals of the New Investigator Program. The abstract should be informative to other people working in the same or related fields and understandable to a scientifically or technically literate reader. Avoid describing past accomplishments and the use of the first person.

Impact Statement
The impact statement, which is limited to 500 words in the respective text field, describes how the outcomes of the project will lead to improvements in health, health care and/or health equity, particularly in the state of Wisconsin. This section should include details on the scope and significance of the health issue being addressed. Applicants must provide a brief synopsis of the project in succinct and plain language without scientific and medical terminology that can be understood by a general, lay audience.

Narrative
The narrative describes the project’s specific aims, significance, approaches and expected outcomes. This should include details of data analysis that address rigor and reproducibility and specific metrics to benchmark progress toward the stated goals and objectives. The narrative must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding five single-spaced pages with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font. Footnotes, references and up to three tables and/or figures are not included in the page limit. Tables and figures should be inserted after the narrative.

Proposal Review Criteria
Prepare a statement addressing the review criteria on page 1. This statement must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding two single-spaced pages with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font.

Application Resubmission (if applicable)
A response to the reviewer comments is only required if the proposal is a resubmission of a full application from a prior funding cycle (see page 2 for more information). Provide in the respective text field and in no more than 200 words: the year the original proposal was submitted, the highest stage of review to which the proposal advanced (either full application or interview), a response to the reviewer comments from the applicable funding cycle, and a description of how the current proposal differs from the original submission.

Project Timeline and Metrics
Using the required Gantt chart template, list each project aim and related activities to benchmark progress toward stated goals and objectives.

Project Budget
Using the required budget template, the project budget should clearly indicate how the grant funds will be spent. Expenditures must:

- be fully justified, reasonable and clearly related to the project’s goals
- reflect the activities listed in the proposal
- explain the sources and amounts of any cash match or cost sharing funds

Requests should be made by expense type (salary and fringe benefits, services, travel, supplies, etc.) and should provide sufficient detail for individuals unfamiliar with the project.
**Budget Justification**
A budget justification is required for purposes of describing in detail the major budget line items: salary and fringe benefits, travel, services, and supplies and other expenses. The narrative should provide specific information about why an expense is necessary to achieve the project’s goals and objectives. It must also describe the roles and responsibilities of the PI and Collaborators, even if uncompensated. The budget narrative must be uploaded as a PDF with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font.

**Guidelines for Allowable and Unallowable Expenses**
Guidelines for allowable/unallowable expenses are available for review on the Wisconsin Partnership Program website.

The budget should include at least five percent of the Principal Investigator’s full-time equivalent (FTE) compensation, but it may not include more than 20 percent. If cash-match or cost-share funding is being used to cover the Principal Investigator’s salary and fringe benefits, details about the funding sources and amount are required.

Funds must be used for project-related costs:
- Principal Investigator salary support not to exceed NIH salary limitations
- Support staff expenses, such as salaries and benefits or graduate student tuition
- Travel
- Services, such as consultant or contractual services
- Supplies and other expenses, such as participant support costs and equipment. Equipment is defined as items costing more than $5,000 with more than two years of useful life. The maximum amount allowed for equipment is $50,000.

Funds may not be used for:
- Pre-award costs
- Indirect overhead and administrative costs
- Lobbying
- Institutional Review Board fees
- Supplanting (more information on page 7)

**Biographical Information**
Full applications must include a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator and Collaborators in the new NIH format, including a personal statement, positions, scientific appointments and honors, and contributions to science. Collaborators from state and local government agencies or community organizations may submit a resume in lieu of a biographical sketch. Biographical sketches and resumes, each up to five pages in length, must be uploaded as a single PDF.

**UW School of Medicine and Public Health Department Chair Nomination Letter**
The application must include a nomination letter from the Principal Investigator’s UW School of Medicine and Public Health department chair. This letter is a critical component of the full application content review. In addition to describing the applicant’s (PI) qualifications, the letter is required to:
- provide evidence of compensated protected time for this project,
- address departmental support and resources, such as facilities or other appropriate resources, for the successful applicant, and
- describe the impact that a New Investigator Program award would have on advancing the applicant’s career development.
There is no limit on the number of nominations from each department chair. The nomination letter must be uploaded as a PDF. There is no page limit for the letter.

**Letters of Commitment**
Letters of commitment from the Collaborators are required and must show evidence of the collaboration with specific details about how they or their organizations will be involved in the project. Letters of support may also be provided. The letters must be uploaded as a single PDF.

**Optional Materials**
Reprints or other materials, such as consent forms or laboratory methods, may be submitted for use by the reviewers at their discretion. Optional materials are limited to no more than 10 pages and should not be used to circumvent the narrative page limits. These materials must be uploaded as a single PDF.

**Compliance**
Indicate whether the project requires approval by the Animal Care and Use Committee, the Madison Campus Biological Safety Committee, UW-Madison Institutional Review Board, and/or the University Radiation Safety Committee. See the Wisconsin Partnership Program terms and conditions for more information.

**Nonsupplanting Questionnaire**
Complete the nonsupplanting questionnaire by responding to the questions and providing explanations as necessary. See page 7 for more information on supplanting.

**Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information**
The Wisconsin Partnership Program is required to operate in accordance with Wisconsin’s public records and open meetings laws. See the Wisconsin Partnership Program terms and conditions for more information.

Indicate whether the full application includes proprietary and/or confidential information, and using the form provided, identify and request confidentiality for any trade secrets or proprietary information.

**Review Process**

**Preliminary Application**

**Technical Review**
Partnership Program staff will review each preliminary application to ensure that all requirements are met. Preliminary applications that do not comply with the submission requirements will not be reviewed and the applicant will be notified.

**Content Review**
The PERC Executive Committee, which is advisory to the full committee and includes PERC members, will review the content of each preliminary application to determine if it warrants further development as a full application. This review is based on scientific or educational merit, alignment with the goals of the New Investigator Program, project feasibility and potential to impact the applicant’s career development. The Executive Committee will provide the results to the PERC for review and approval.

Applicants will be notified by **September 14, 2021** whether they are being invited to submit a full application. The notification will include a brief summary of the reviewers’ comments. More extensive comments are provided at the full application stage.
Full Application

Technical Review
Partnership Program staff will review each full application to ensure that all requirements are met. Applications that do not comply with the submission requirements will not be reviewed and the applicant will be notified.

Content Review
The review panel, which is advisory to the PERC and includes UW faculty and community representatives, will review the full applications. Each full application will be reviewed by two reviewers – assigned based on the content and objectives of the proposal – who are University of Wisconsin faculty with expertise in biomedical research, health services research, community-based population health research and/or education. In addition, each full application will be reviewed and scored by one or two community representatives. The faculty experts and community representatives will independently review and score the assigned applications based on the review criteria on page 1. The review panel will discuss the applications and provide a ranked list to the PERC along with a written critique of each proposal. PERC will select the finalists for interviews.

The review panel will assess the project's potential impact on health in Wisconsin.

Applicants will be informed by December 14, 2021 on whether they are being invited to make an in-person presentation to the PERC. A summary of the reviewers’ comments will be provided to each applicant.

PERC Review
The top-ranked candidates will make in-person presentations to the PERC on January 10, 2022. The presentations typically take place between 4:30 and 7 pm. No exceptions to this date will be made.

The PERC will make a final determination of awards based on rank and alignment with the goals of the New Investigator Program. Applicants will be notified of whether they are selected for a grant award no later than January 14, 2022. The committee’s decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

Supplanting Review
Supplanting means to replace, to take the place of, or to supersede. The Wisconsin Partnership Program prohibits any funds from being awarded that will supplant funds or resources otherwise available to applicants from other sources for the proposed project.

PERC’s award decisions are conditional on a review of nonsupplanting by the Wisconsin Partnership Program Assistant Director for Finance in consultation with the UW School of Medicine and Public Health Senior Associate Dean for Finance and the Wisconsin Partnership Program Director. If a determination is made that supplanting will occur, the Principal Investigator and the PERC will be notified. At that time, PERC will decide whether to modify or to revoke the award. The committee’s decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

Grant recipients are required to provide the following information for review by the Wisconsin Partnership Program:
- Nonsupplanting questionnaire (required component of the full application)
- Principal Investigator’s Other Support information in the new NIH format with the following sections: Project/Proposals by status: Active, Pending and Completed; In-Kind Contributions; and Overlap. (required only from PI’s selected for awards)

Terms and Conditions
By applying for a Wisconsin Partnership Program grant, applicants agree to the Partnership Program’s terms and conditions.
Technical Assistance
For more information or assistance, please contact:

Tonya Mathison, Administrative Manager  Jon Thomas, Assistant Director for Finance
tonya.mathison@wisc.edu • 608-265-6688  thomas38@wisc.edu • 608-265-2284