New Investigator Program

Request for Proposals
and
Application Guidelines

July 2023
Background
The Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) is a grantmaking program within the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) committed to improving health and advancing health equity in Wisconsin through investments in research, education and community partnerships. It was established at the SMPH as the result of a generous endowment gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin (BCBS) and approved by the Wisconsin Insurance Commissioner’s Order of March 2000 when BCBS converted from a nonprofit service corporation to a stock insurance corporation. The proceeds from the sale of the company were distributed equally between the SMPH and the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Since WPP began making grants in 2004, its approach to grantmaking has harnessed the power of academic research combined with community knowledge to address some of Wisconsin’s most pressing and complex health challenges. Our principles and practices are integrated with the time-honored concept of the Wisconsin Idea, recognizing the tremendous opportunity to bridge the knowledge and resources of the university with the expertise of communities to improve life within the state of Wisconsin and beyond. Our mission and work are strongly aligned with the SMPH mission to advance health through innovative research, outstanding education, and remarkable service to communities.

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 early-career SMPH faculty as they initiate new, innovative research or education pilot projects to improve health and advance health equity in Wisconsin and beyond.

Proposals must be innovative and advance scientific understanding with potential to improve health or advance health equity through prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or cure of disease. The Principal Investigator (PI) 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 or in communities. The proposal must include clear and measurable benchmarks to track progress toward the overall objectives and the specific aims. The PI must describe how completion of the project will advance their career development, including plans to leverage future funding from federal or other granting agencies.

Eligibility
A Principal Investigator is required and must be a UW School of Medicine and Public Health 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 faculty track. Faculty who receive an administrative extension of their time at the rank of assistant professor or who have an appointment below 1.0 full-time equivalent will be granted a corresponding extension to their eligibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMPH track</th>
<th>Appointment start date on or after:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>August 1, 2019 (within four years of start date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinical Health Sciences</td>
<td>August 1, 2017 (within six years of start date)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clinician-Teacher</td>
<td>August 1, 2017 (within six years of start date)</td>
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The PI must dedicate and maintain a minimum five percent full-time equivalent (FTE) professional effort to the project. The PI is responsible and accountable for leading and advancing the project as specified in the Memorandum of Understanding.
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The PI is limited to submitting one New Investigator Program application each funding cycle.

Eligible faculty in basic science and clinical science departments across the UW School of Medicine and Public Health 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 at any UW System campus or other academic institution; Wisconsin health care system; Medical College of Wisconsin; Wisconsin-based non-profit community organization; 4K-12 school or district; Wisconsin tribal, state or local government entity.

Funding Scope and Duration
The maximum award is $150,000 over two years. The PI must dedicate and maintain a minimum five percent full-time equivalent (FTE) professional effort to the project. This effort must be fully justified in the budget justification. The PERC anticipates funding up to four projects this cycle, depending on availability of funds.

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 12, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary application office hours</td>
<td>July 24, 2023 (1-3 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sign-up here</strong> for a 15-minute consultation with WPP</td>
<td>July 26, 2023 (9-11 am)</td>
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<td>August 1, 2023 (9-11 am)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>August 3, 2023 (1-3 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary application submission deadline</td>
<td>August 16, 2023 at 5 pm CDT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review preliminary applications</td>
<td>August-October 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify applicants of status/invite full applications</td>
<td>October 18, 2023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full applicant information session* (by invitation only)</td>
<td>November 1, 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full application submission deadline (by invitation only)</td>
<td>November 15, 2023 at 5 pm CST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review full applications</td>
<td>November 2023-January 2024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notify applicants of status/invite finalists for interviews</td>
<td>January 9, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview finalists**</td>
<td>February 12, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notify finalists of award decision</td>
<td>February 29, 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earliest project start date</td>
<td>April 1, 2024</td>
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*Full applicant information session will take place 4-5 pm CST on Zoom
**Finalist interviews will take place 4-7 pm CST on Zoom

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 to explain 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

Preliminary Application Submission Deadline: August 16, 2023 at 5 pm CDT

A preliminary application is required and must be submitted in Fluxx by 5 pm CDT August 16, 2023.
The preliminary application is available in Fluxx using the following link: [https://wpp.fluxx.io/](https://wpp.fluxx.io/). All applicants are required to have a Fluxx account to access and submit the preliminary application.

### Important Information for New Fluxx Users

New Fluxx users must register for a Fluxx account by completing the *Education and Research Registration Form* under *Create your Profile*. Once reviewed by our team, which typically takes one business day, new users will receive an email with their username, temporary password and instructions to reset their password. New Fluxx users should register by August 15, 2023 as there is no guarantee that new registrations past this date will be processed before the 5 pm CDT August 16, 2023 preliminary application deadline.

Once logged into Fluxx, start a preliminary application by clicking the “Apply for a New Investigator Program Grant” button.

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

**Preliminary Application Project Abstract**

The preliminary application 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. The project abstract must describe how completion of this project will advance the applicant’s career development, including plans to leverage future funding from federal or other granting agencies. In addition, the project abstract must address whether the Principal Investigator and, if applicable, the Collaborators currently possess or are seeking funding from other funders for the same or a similar project.

The preliminary application 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.

**Resubmission Statement (if applicable)**

The application resubmission statement is 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.

**Biographical Information**

Preliminary applications must include a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator and the Collaborators in [NIH format](https://wpp.fluxx.io/), including a personal statement, positions, scientific appointments and honors, and contributions to science. Collaborators 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.

**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](https://wpp.fluxx.io/) 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

Full Application Submission Deadline: November 15, 2023 at 5 pm CST

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 5 pm CST November 15, 2023.

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

Full Application Abstract
The abstract 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. The abstract must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding one single-spaced page with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font.

Impact Statement
The impact statement 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. The impact statement must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding one single-spaced page with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point font.

Narrative
The narrative describes the project’s specific aims, significance, approaches, limitations, alternative strategies and expected specific measurable 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 or figures are not included in the page limit and should be inserted after the narrative.

Proposal Review Criteria Statement
Prepare a statement addressing the full application review criteria on page 8. 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 Statement (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 milestones for 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, travel, services, and supplies and other expenses) and should provide sufficient detail for individuals unfamiliar with the project.

**Budget Justification**

The budget justification describes in detail the major budget line items: salary and fringe benefits, travel, services, and supplies and other expenses. The justification provides specific information about why an expense is necessary to achieve the project goals and objectives. It must also describe the roles and responsibilities of the PI and Collaborators, even if uncompensated, and of additional support staff. The budget justification 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 on the Wisconsin Partnership Program website.

The budget should include support for a minimum of five percent of the Principal Investigator’s full-time equivalent (FTE) compensation. If cash-match or cost-share funding is being used to cover salary and fringe benefits, details about the funding sources and amount are required in the project budget.

Funds must be used for project-related costs:

- Direct salary support cannot exceed NIH salary limitations
- Support staff expenses, such as salaries and fringe 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 (for more information, see terms and conditions)
- Institutional Review Board fees (for more information, see terms and conditions)
- Supplanting (more information, see terms and conditions)

**Biographical Information**

Full applications must include a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator and the Collaborators in NIH format, including a personal statement, positions, scientific appointments and honors, and contributions to science. Collaborators 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 and consultants included in the project budget are required and must show evidence of the collaboration with specific details about how they or their organizations will contribute to the project. The letters must be uploaded as a single PDF.

Letters of Support
Applicants may include up to five letters from individuals or groups other than the Collaborators and consultants (letters of commitment are required from them), including those impacted by the project, to demonstrate support for the project. The letters must be uploaded as a single PDF.

Optional Materials
Optional materials, such as consent forms or laboratory methods, may be submitted for use by the reviewers at their discretion. Such 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 required nonsupplanting questionnaire by responding to the questions and providing explanations as necessary. See pages 8-9 for more information on supplanting.

Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information
The Wisconsin Partnership Program operates 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 & Criteria

Preliminary Application

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

Content Review
The Preliminary Application Review Panel, which is advisory to the PERC and includes UW faculty and community representatives, will review the preliminary applications. Each preliminary application will be reviewed by at least two University of Wisconsin faculty reviewers who have expertise in biomedical research, health services research, health policy, community-based population health research and/or education. In addition, each preliminary application will be reviewed by at least one community reviewer. The reviewers will independently review assigned applications based on the following criteria. The ranking and written critiques of the preliminary applications by the Review Panel will be provided to PERC to inform its selection of the applications that warrant further development as full applications.

The preliminary applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria.
- Shows innovation and has scientific or educational merit that would predict sustainable external funding beyond the New Investigator Program award
- Appears feasible with high likelihood for acquisition or application of useful data
- Describes the process by which successful execution of this project positively impacts or translates to improved health, health care and/or health equity in Wisconsin
- Has the potential to advance the career development of the applicant

Applicants will be notified by October 18, 2023 whether they are being invited to submit a full application. The notification will include the de-identified reviewer comments.

Full Application

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

Content Review
The Full Application 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 University of Wisconsin faculty reviewers—assigned based on the content and objectives of the proposal— who have expertise in biomedical research, health services research, health policy, community-based population health research and/or education. In addition, each full application will be reviewed by one community reviewer. The reviewers will independently review assigned applications based on the following review criteria. The ranking and written critiques of the full applications by the Review Panel will be provided to PERC. The PERC will select the finalists to present their proposals to the committee.
The full applications will be reviewed based on the following criteria.

### Project Objective and Scientific Quality
- Shows innovation and has rigor and outstanding merit that would predict sustainable external funding beyond the New Investigator Program award
- Advances the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework
- Appears feasible with high likelihood for acquisition or application of useful data, and includes details of data analysis that address rigor and reproducibility
- Describes specific metrics to benchmark progress toward stated goals and objectives
- Describes plans for evaluating and disseminating research outcomes or project results
- As applicable, enhances interdisciplinary research or education and fosters collaborations among basic, clinical, translational, social/behavioral and/or population scientists

### Applicant Qualifications and Career Development
- Applicant is qualified to successfully execute and oversee the proposed research
- Applicant brings expertise central to the project, and if applicable, there is synergistic value added by Collaborator(s)
- Proposal has the potential to advance the career development of the applicant

### Wisconsin Health, Health Care and/or Health Equity
- Describes the process by which successful execution of this project positively impacts or translates to improved health, health care and/or health equity in Wisconsin
- Describes the scope and significance of the health issue being addressed and its relevance in Wisconsin
- As applicable, describes community engagement efforts if it is the central component of overall project goal. Full application includes letters of support from community partners.

Applicants will be informed by January 9, 2024 of whether they are being invited to present their proposal to the PERC. The de-identified reviewers’ comments will be provided to each applicant.

### PERC Review
Finalist presentations will take place at the February 12, 2024 PERC meeting. The presentations by the Principal Investigator typically take place between 4 and 7 pm CST and are fully virtual over Zoom. Collaborators may join to respond to questions. No exceptions to this date will be made.

The PERC will make final decisions on the applications based on the evaluation by the reviewers, PERC committee discussion and the project’s alignment with the goals of the New Investigator Program. Additional information may be requested by the PERC. Applicants will be notified of whether they are selected for a grant award no later than February 29, 2024.

### 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 Finance Associate Director in consultation with the WPP Administrative Leadership Team.

Applicants selected for awards by PERC are required to provide the following information for review by the Wisconsin Partnership Program:
- An up-to-date non-supplanting questionnaire
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- Principal Investigator’s Other Support information in NIH format with the following sections: Project/Proposals by status: Active and Pending; In-Kind Contributions; and Overlap. Principal Investigators must sign their Other Support page.

The committee’s decisions at each stage of the review are final and cannot be appealed.

Terms and Conditions
By applying for a Wisconsin Partnership Program grant, applicants agree to the Partnership Program’s terms and conditions.

Technical Assistance
Our team will hold office hours to answer your questions as you prepare your preliminary application:
- After looking over the Request for Proposals, sign up here for a 15-minute consultation

Please note that our team is not allowed to review a draft of your submission.

For more information or assistance, please contact both WPP Program Officers:
- Aimee Haese at alhaese@wisc.edu
- Kattia Jimenez at kjimenez@wisc.edu