OPPORTUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM
APPLICATION GUIDELINES
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 University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health through a gift from Blue Cross Blue Shield United of Wisconsin as a result of the company’s conversion to a stock insurance corporation.

In collaboration with faculty and community-based organizations, the Wisconsin 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](#).

*Health Equity*: The Wisconsin Partnership Program defines health equity as the attainment of the highest level of health for all people.¹ This requires addressing obstacles to health, such as poverty, discrimination and their consequences (including lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments and health care.)²

Goal and Description

Through the Opportunity Grants Program, which is designed to be strategic, flexible and timely, the Partnership Education and Research Committee (PERC) provides start-up funding in support of high-risk, high-profile, high-impact, state-of-the art education and research projects benefiting the health of the people of Wisconsin.

Opportunity Grants support groundbreaking research and education projects that fulfill two or more of the following criteria:

- have the potential to transform a field of study
- represent a novel application of an established idea or approach
- challenge traditional thought and practice
- engage perspectives and approaches from nontraditional partners
- benefit from an influx of funds to quickly advance the area in significant ways

Proposals must be highly innovative with potential to leverage additional funding sources and align with the desired outcomes of the Wisconsin Partnership Program's [2019-2024 Five-Year Plan](#). Additionally, proposals must address specific knowledge gaps or scientific opportunities, advance novel research methods, or enhance the education of the future health workforce while paving the way to create healthier communities and advancing health equity. Proposals should describe not only how the project will improve the health of the people of Wisconsin, but also explain the path to translate discovery to application in the clinical setting and/or in communities.

Applicants must also address why applying to the PERC [New Investigator](#) or [Collaborative Health Sciences](#) programs is not feasible.

Eligibility

A **Principal Investigator (PI)** is required and must be a UW School of Medicine and Public Health professor, associate professor, or senior or distinguished scientist. Assistant Professors are eligible if they are three or more years past their appointment start-date. The PI must have a salaried appointment of at least 50 percent in the School of Medicine and Public Health.

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The project may include one or two **Co-Principal Investigators** (Co-PI) and a number of **Collaborators** consistent with the scope of the project. The Co-PIs and Collaborators may have an appointment at any UW System campus, Marshfield Clinic, Gundersen Health System, the Medical College of Wisconsin, Aurora Health Care, state and local government agencies or community organizations.

- The Co-PIs will be expected to contribute to project oversight as well as drafting of manuscripts and progress reports.
- Collaborators typically contribute specialized expertise to the project and have more narrowly defined roles than the PI and the Co-PIs.

**Funding Scope and Duration**

No more than three grants will be awarded by the PERC Executive Committee each year. Awards are typically $100,000 to $200,000 over two years. In exceptional cases, awards may be renewed once. The level of effort of the PI and Co-PIs individually should be between five and 30 percent of full-time equivalent (FTE) compensation and must be fully justified in the budget narrative.

**Technical Assistance**

Program staff are available to answer questions about the application submission and review process, applicant eligibility, budget categories and program priorities.

**Wisconsin Partnership Program**

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  - 608-265-6688
- **Eileen Smith**, Assistant Dean and Director
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**Preliminary Application Guidelines**

Interested applicants must first consult with Partnership Program staff to address eligibility criteria, specific aims and approach and alignment with Wisconsin Partnership Program goals and with the objectives of the Opportunity Grants Program. Please email Eileen Smith ([emsmith2@wisc.edu](mailto:emsmith2@wisc.edu)) and Tonya Mathison ([tonya.mathison@wisc.edu](mailto:tonya.mathison@wisc.edu)) to schedule an in-person or telephone consultation.

Following the consultation, if there is mutual agreement to proceed with submission of a preliminary application, Partnership Program staff will email the Principal Investigator a link to the preliminary application forms.

The preliminary application is required and will be considered by the PERC Executive Committee for further development as a full application. Preliminary applications may be submitted at any time; however, the Executive Committee reserves the right to defer review for up to 120 days.

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

**Project Abstract**

The project abstract is an overview of the project, including the primary goal and the broad, long-term objectives and specific aims; the potential impact; and, details on the scope and significance of the health, health care and/or health equity issue being addressed. It also must indicate how the project addresses the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework. In addition, the project abstract must include a statement on why applying to the PERC **New Investigator** or **Collaborative Health Sciences** programs is not feasible.
The project abstract must be uploaded as a PDF with one-inch margins, a minimum 11-point Arial font and line spacing of no more than six lines per vertical inch. It cannot exceed two single-spaced pages. Footnotes and references are not included in the page limits.

**Biographical Information**

Preliminary applications must include a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators and Collaborators, if applicable, in the current format required by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including a personal statement, positions and honors, contributions to science, and ongoing and relevant concluded research support. Biographical sketches in the preliminary application may not exceed five pages.

Co-PIs and Collaborators from state and local government agencies or community organizations may submit a resume of up to five pages in lieu of a biographical sketch.

Biographical sketches and resumes 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 page 9 for more information.

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

**Full Application Guidelines**

Applicants invited by the PERC Executive Committee to submit a full application will receive a link to the application forms from the Wisconsin Partnership Program along with the submission timeline and requirements. In addition to providing general information on the project, the full application includes the following components.

**Project Summary**

Describe in 125 words or less the overall goal and potential impact of the project in plain language without scientific and medical terminology that can be understood by a general, lay audience (enter in online application text field).

**Abstract**

The abstract is a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work when separated from the application. State the application’s broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, making reference to the health relatedness of the project (i.e., alignment with the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework) and its alignment with the goals of the Opportunity Grants Program. Describe concisely the design and methods for achieving the stated goals. The abstract should be informative to other persons 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 using a minimum 11-point Arial font and line spacing of no more than six lines per vertical inch.

**Impact**

The impact statement describes how successful completion of this project will lead to improvements in or directly affect individual health, population health and/or health care in Wisconsin and beyond. This section should include details on the scope and significance of the health, health care and/or health equity issue being addressed. Applicants must provide a 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.
Narrative
The narrative describes the project’s specific aims, significance, approaches and expected outcomes. It must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding five single-spaced pages with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point Arial font and line spacing of no more than six lines per vertical inch. 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
Include a statement addressing the proposal review criteria listed below. This statement must be uploaded as a PDF not exceeding two single-spaced pages with one-inch margins using a minimum 11-point Arial font and line spacing of no more than six lines per vertical inch.

The project:
- Shows innovation and has outstanding merit
- Advances the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework
- Enhances interdisciplinary research or education, and fosters collaboration
- Describes the process by which successful execution of this project will be translated into improved health, health care, and/or health equity in Wisconsin
- Includes an explicit plan for evaluating and disseminating research outcomes or project results
- Has a leveraging potential and is likely to lead to extramural grant support that will ultimately make the project self-sustaining
- Develops or improves infrastructure support to enhance the research and/or education missions of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health
- Describes community engagement efforts if it is a central component of the overall project goal

The Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigators:
- Have an established record of independent scholarship or have experience developing, administering or evaluating research, education or community programs

Project Budget

General Information
The maximum request is up to $200,000 to be expended over two years. Using the budget template provided, 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; and
- 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, supplies, etc.) and should provide sufficient detail for individuals unfamiliar with the project. The project budget must include a list of all other sources of internal or external cash match or cost sharing.

Budget Narrative
A budget justification narrative 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, Co-PIs and Collaborators, even if uncompensated. The budget narrative must be uploaded as a PDF with one-inch margins and a minimum 11-point Arial font.
Use of Funds

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 and Co-PI’s full-time equivalent (FTE) compensation, but it may not include more than 30 percent. If cash match funding or cost sharing is being used to cover the Principal Investigator and/or Co-PI’s salary and fringe benefits, details about the funding sources and amount are required.

Funds must be used for project-related costs:
- PI and Co-PI 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 and 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 useful life. The maximum amount allowed is $50,000.

Funds may not be used for:
- Entertainment
- Indirect overhead and administrative costs
- Lobbying
- IRB fees (on page 9)
- Supplanting (on pages 6 and 7)

Biographical Information

Full applications must include a biographical sketch for the Principal Investigator, Co-PI and Collaborators, if applicable, in the current format required by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including a personal statement, positions and honors, contributions to science, and ongoing and relevant concluded research support. Biographical sketches in the preliminary application may not exceed five pages.

Co-PIs and Collaborators from state and local government agencies or community organizations may submit a resume of up to five pages in lieu of a biographical sketch.

Biographical sketches and resumes must be uploaded as a single PDF.

Letters of Commitment

Applicants are required to include letters of commitment from the Co-PIs and Collaborators (see pages 2 and 3) showing evidence of the collaboration with specific details about how they or their organizations will be involved or support the project. Letters of support may also be provided. The letters must be uploaded as a single PDF.

Nonsupplanting

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.

Nonsupplanting Questionnaire

Applicants are required to complete the nonsupplanting questionnaire as part of the application process. The Principal Investigator and Co-PIs must complete and sign the Nonsupplanting Questionnaire, then upload as a PDF.
Grant recipients also must recertify annually that other funds for the proposed project have not become available or been declined. No grant can be awarded or retained if a determination of supplanting is made.

**Active and Pending Grants**

For the **Principal Investigator** and the **Co-Principal Investigators**, upload a list of all active grants and all pending proposals. The lists for each individual (PI & each Co-PI) must be combined and uploaded as a single PDF. The lists must include the following required details.

**Active grants:**
- UW project number (from WISDM) and name of Principal Investigator
- Funding source/granting agency and related award number
- Title of project (or subproject)
- Overall goal and specific aims of the project, individual’s role and percent effort
- Dates of support for approved project
- Key personnel who are UW System faculty (helps avoid reviewer conflict of interest)
- Total amount of award and direct costs for current year
- Statement on relationship and overlap of the project to the Opportunity Grant application

**Pending proposals:**
- UW proposal number (MSN number from WISPER) and name of Principal Investigator
- Funding source/granting agency
- Title of project (or subproject)
- Overall goal and specific aims of the project, individual’s role and percent effort
- Key personnel who are UW System faculty (helps avoid reviewer conflict of interest)
- Total amount and duration
- Statement on relationship and overlap of the project to the Opportunity Grant application

As part of the technical review for nonsupplanting, Partnership Program staff will review the above information along with WISDM and WISPER entries.

**Compliance**

Indicate whether the project will require review by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC), University Radiation Safety Committee (URSC), and/or the Institutional Biosafety Committee. See page 9 for more information.

**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 page 9 for more information.

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

**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 should not be used to circumvent the narrative page limits. These materials must be uploaded as a single PDF.
Review Process

Preliminary Application

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

Content Review
The PERC Executive Committee will review the content of each preliminary application to determine if it warrants further development as a full application. Evaluation of preliminary applications will be based on scientific or educational merit, innovation, program objectives, alignment with Wisconsin Partnership Program goals, qualifications of the PI and Co-PIs, and opportunities for leveraging. The Executive Committee will make the final decision on invitations to submit full applications.

Full Application

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

Content Review
As part of its review, the PERC Executive Committee may consult with one or two content experts within the University of Wisconsin and, if applicable, a community representative. Members of the PERC Executive Committee will meet to discuss the full application and make the final award decision. Additional information may be requested. Applicants may be required to personally present an overview of the proposal to the committee. The Executive Committee will consider the project’s scientific or educational merit; proposal design; evaluation plan; qualifications of the PI and Co-PIs; alignment with the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s 2019-2024 Five-Year Plan framework; and, its relevance and potential impact on health, health care and/or health equity.

Decisions of the PERC Executive Committee are final and cannot be appealed. Award decisions will be reported to the full committee.

Grant Award Process

Memorandum of Understanding
The UW School of Medicine and Public Health will negotiate the terms of each grant and will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with grantees before funds are distributed. Grantees will participate in project and fiscal monitoring activities outlined in the MOU. The Principal Investigator will have ultimate authority over and responsibility for the project.

The PERC reserves the right to establish award amounts and to authorize budget items, program goals and other terms of the proposal before entering into an agreement with award recipients. Rebudgeting between major budget categories (salary and fringe benefits, travel, services, and supplies and other expenses) in excess of ten percent of the total project budget must be approved by the Partnership Program.
By applying to the PERC Opportunity Grants Program, applicants agree and consent – without reservation, substitution or limitation – to each of the following.

- Application submission requirements and rules
- Proposal review methods, process, criteria and scoring
- The PERC’s sole, unrestricted right to reject any or all applications submitted in response to this Request for Applications.

Successful applicants must provide the Wisconsin Partnership Program with documentation of approval by the appropriate following committees. This documentation will be required before funds are disbursed.

- **Institutional Review Board (IRB):** Approved projects using human subjects in research for any purpose other than as individuals enrolled in a class or program must be reviewed by the IRB. IRB fees for PERC-funded projects are waived and should not be included in the project budget.
- **Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC):** Approved projects using animals in research for any purpose must be reviewed by the ACUC.
- **University Radiation Safety Committee (URSC):** If the use of radioactive materials or equipment that produces radiation is essential for accomplishing the proposed activities in the project, authorization to use radionuclides must be secured from the URSC prior to the initiation of the project.
- **Institutional Biosafety Committee:** If the proposed activities involve the use of biological materials, the activities must be reviewed by the Institutional Biosafety Committee before the project begins.

Successful applicants also must provide the Wisconsin Partnership Program with the following.

- **Progress, Financial and Nonsupplanting Reports:** Grantees must submit written interim progress reports and financial status reports (FSR) on forms provided by the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Interim progress reports, including a FSR and a nonsupplanting questionnaire, are due no later than 30 days after the end of each 12-month period. Final reports, including a FSR and a nonsupplanting questionnaire, are due no later than 90 days after the project ends. Grantees will also be expected to respond to a limited number of evaluation requests from the Wisconsin Partnership Program regarding project results and outcomes for at least two years after the grant period ends.
- **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA):** The federal HIPAA privacy rules protect the privacy of a person’s health information used in clinical practice, research and operations of health care facilities. The rules apply to the use or disclosure of protected health information for research purposes and requires several actions and documentation.
- **Intellectual Property Agreement:** An intellectual property agreement may be required for inventions, discoveries or copyrightable material developed as a result of a project.

**Wisconsin Open Meetings and Public Records Notice**

The Wisconsin Partnership Program is required to operate in accordance with Wisconsin’s public records and open meetings laws. In accordance with the laws, the Wisconsin Partnership Program’s governance committee meetings are open to the public. Information shared in these meetings may also be subject to release.

Under the public records law, applications for funding may be considered public records subject to release upon request. As part of the preliminary and full application processes, applicants will be asked to indicate whether the application includes proprietary and/or confidential information and to identify and request confidentiality for any trade secrets or proprietary information in the application. Grantees will also be asked to identify and request confidentiality of such information in each annual progress report.

**Acknowledgement of Funding**

Award recipients must acknowledge the Wisconsin Partnership Program in news releases, articles or other means of publicizing this project or its results with the following language: “Funding for this project was provided by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.”
Additional Requirements
The PERC reserves the right to negotiate additional requirements concerning conditions for support.