Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA): FY17 InCHIP - Office of Public Engagement Seed Grants for Community-Engaged Health Research
Revised January 19, 2017

A. KEY DATES
- September 22, 2016 Initial FOA posted
- Friday, December 16, 2016 Letters of Intent (required) due by 11:59 PM EST
- Friday, December 23, 2016 Applicants notified of LOI approval decision
- Friday, February 3, 2017 InCHIP Affiliate Application due by 11:59 PM EST
- Monday, February 27, 2017 Full proposals due by 11:59 PM EST
- May 2017 Applicants notified of award decision
- July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2019 Award period
- December 31, 2019 Deadline for resulting external grant submission

B. PURPOSE
The Institute for Collaboration on Health, Intervention, and Policy (InCHIP) and the Office of Public Engagement (OPE) at the University of Connecticut are collaborating on a pilot grant program that promotes community-engaged health research with reciprocal benefit to the community and the participating UConn faculty. OPE and InCHIP will provide up to $15,000 in funding for each of two community-engaged health research studies that meet a need identified by the community. Eligible studies include research in health behavior or health policy conducted in community settings in New England, using a participatory research framework and actively involving community stakeholders in the conceptualization, design, implementation, and/or evaluation. “Community” is defined broadly to include community-based organizations, populations in neighborhoods, healthcare settings, and other entities within communities. Preference will be given to those studies conducted in Connecticut-based community settings.

Eligible pilot studies are those that use participatory-based qualitative and/or quantitative methods to collect initial data, analyze secondary data, develop interventions, and/or test research methodologies in order to attract the support of larger, external funding sources. Funded projects must be consistent with the missions of InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement, and address health through an examination of health behavior or health policy at an individual or population level. Using the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) four focus areas in Culture of Health, proposals may be submitted that address Healthy Communities, Healthy Kids, Healthy Weight, Health Leadership or Health Systems (click here for more details).

Dual-PI grant proposals are permitted and encouraged when one of the PIs is from a community organization and the UConn PI is an approved InCHIP affiliate by the time the final proposal is submitted. The ultimate goal of these InCHIP-Office of Public Engagement Seed Grants is to support community-engaged research that addresses important community health issues and leads to strong external grant applications submitted through InCHIP.

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND REQUIREMENTS
Two awards of up to $15,000 each are available for this seed grant competition. All grant funds must be expended within two years of the award date. Unexpended funds will revert to InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement.
Seed grant funds **may only be used for direct costs of carrying out approved projects, such as:**

a. Personnel who are essential for conducting the research project, such as graduate research assistants and student labor. Individuals who are not on the regular state payroll (i.e., consultants and other off-campus assistance) may be hired to perform special research-related tasks as needed.

b. A portion of the salary of an Investigator (PI, Co-I) who is employed by a community-based organization and **not** by UConn.

c. Resources that require fee-for-services within UConn.

d. Participant incentives for recruitment or study participation.

e. Travel that is necessary to conduct the research, NOT travel to present the results of the research, or travel to explore future funding opportunities.

f. Equipment necessary for conducting the research ("equipment" is defined as an article of tangible, nonexpendable, personal property that costs $5,000 or more).

g. Project supplies, including drugs and services.

h. Other specifically authorized expenses that are essential for carrying out the project.

**Seed grant funds may not be used for the following:**

a. The salary of the UConn Principal Investigator, UConn Co-Investigator(s), or any UConn faculty member.

b. Living expenses.

c. Service/maintenance contracts on equipment.

d. Laboratory renovations or other infrastructure renovations.

e. Institutional and/or individual memberships in professional organizations.

f. Travel to professional meetings to present the results of the research, or any conference attendance.

g. Indirect costs, including clerical and administrative personnel salaries.

h. Costs associated with the publication of results of the research, such as publication fees or purchase of reprints.

i. Investigator training costs, including tuition.

**D. PROJECT AND INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY**

1. Proposals must be novel and take an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to the study of health and health behavior. The UConn PI and the community partner (who may be a PI) are expected to make appropriate and significant contributions to the proposed research, and to perform new research that could not be achieved without the collaboration and seed grant funding.

2. A UConn PI is required and must meet the following eligibility requirements:

a. The UConn PI must have an eligible faculty appointment at UConn, and s/he **must be eligible to submit grants through InCHIP.** Eligible faculty appointments are tenured or tenure-track faculty, in-residence research faculty, clinical faculty, other research faculty, research scientists/scholars, and adjunct faculty. Eligible faculty are not restricted to junior faculty.

b. Ineligible faculty appointments are post-doctoral fellows, lecturers, research assistants and research associates, visiting titles, and extension titles.

c. The UConn PI must be an approved InCHIP affiliate **by the time the final proposal is submitted.** The InCHIP Affiliate application form and instructions are available [here](#). Please allow at least two weeks for approval.

3. Graduate students are **not** eligible to be a PI.

4. Seed grant proposals must be predominantly the work of the PIs and for the benefit of the PIs’ research programs. Proposals written primarily by graduate students or others in the PIs’ names are not permitted.

5. **Two** PIs are permitted on the seed grant, if and only if, one PI is a UConn faculty member and the second PI is from a community organization (dual PIs are strongly encouraged). Other individuals may serve as Co-Is or significant contributors, but not as PIs.

6. The proposed research **must be consistent with the missions of InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement:**

a. “InCHIP provides an interdisciplinary nexus for investigators and Centers across the University to stimulate
research collaborations and major newly-funded initiatives that create new scientific knowledge and theoretical frameworks in health behavior at multiple levels of analysis (e.g., individual, family, community, policy). Health is broadly defined and includes physical and mental health, and outcomes with critical implications for health. Work at the intersection of behavior and biology, and at the intersection of science and public policy is encouraged. InCHIP disseminates its research and cutting-edge health behavior change interventions through publishing, structural change, capacity-building, teaching, mentoring, and collaboration at the University, local, state, national, and international levels.” (See here for more about InCHIP’s mission.)

b. “The mission of the Office of Public Engagement (OPE) is to assist in the development of engaged citizens through coordination, advocacy and capacity building for engagement activities. Civic engagement, service learning, engaged scholarship, university-assisted community schools, strategic partnerships, and communities as partners and collaborators are examples of programs and activities offered by the OPE.” (See here for more about OPE’s mission.)

7. The proposed seed grant project should address a novel research question, not a research question that is already being explored as part of an existing, externally funded project.

8. Changes to the project’s objectives and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP and OPE staff.

9. Eligible studies must address at least one of Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s (RWJF) four focus areas in Culture of Health: Healthy Communities, Healthy Kids, Healthy Weight, Health Leadership or Health Systems. For more information, please see the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation website.

10. The PIs must commit in good faith to using the seed grant funds to obtain pilot data to support an external grant proposal that will be submitted through InCHIP by December 31, 2019.

11. If the PI has an InCHIP seed grant from a previous fiscal year, s/he must close out that award prior to the start of the award period for the FY17 InCHIP-Office of Public Engagement Seed Grant.

12. Each individual may only submit one LOI/proposal for this competition as a Principal Investigator (PI).

E. APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

Note: InCHIP staff will answer questions about the seed grant application (including the budget), but will not assist applicants with development of the actual budget or budget justification, or with writing the seed grant LOI or proposal.

Stage 1: Proposal Development (Optional)

Applicants are encouraged (but not required) to utilize resources offered by InCHIP’s Cores when developing their research ideas and proposals. Seed grant related services available through the InCHIP Cores include:

- **Training and Development Core**: Individual consultations are available by appointment with InCHIP Training and Development Core staff. A workshop series will be offered in the fall to assist applicants in structuring their specific aims and a Grant Proposal Incubator (headed by Blair Johnson and Mike Copenhaver) provides the opportunity for applicants to meet with a panel of InCHIP investigators to present and receive feedback on their research ideas. (More information about the workshops can be found here.) InCHIP will also hold a Q&A session on how to prepare a seed grant budget on February 7, 2017. More information can be found on the Training and Development Core webpage here.

- **Biostatistics and Methodology Core**: This Core can help researchers make connections and form collaborations with statisticians at UConn. To request assistance finding a collaborator with statistical expertise and for more information about the Core, please visit the Biostatistics Core webpage here.

- **Intervention Core**: This Core can help researchers identify and develop collaborations with experts in intervention research. To request assistance finding a collaborator with intervention expertise and for more information about the Core, please visit the Intervention Core webpage here.

- **Community-Engaged Research Core**: This Core can assist UConn researchers to make linkages with community researchers and community-based organizations (CBOs). For assistance with identifying community partners, please contact the Community-Engaged Health Research Core by emailing grace.morris@uconn.edu.

InCHIP Cores offer more extensive services for those applying for external funding including pre- and post-award
services, as well as assistance in the design, development, implementation, and dissemination of research. A complete description of each Core’s services can be found on their respective websites (see links above). Please look for announcements from us about Core Trainings, Workshops, and events in the coming months.

Stage 2: Letter of Intent
1. All applicants must submit an online Letter of Intent (LOI) form, available on our [seed grant website](#), by the above specified due date/time (**December 16, 2017**). A budget is not required at the time of LOI submission. LOIs do not require routing through grants offices.
2. LOIs will be reviewed by relevant staff from InCHIP and CIPEH to determine the eligibility of the proposed research and applicant team.
3. Applicants must receive written approval of their LOI prior to submitting a full proposal.

Stage 3: Full Proposal
1. Full proposals must be submitted online [here](#) by the above specified due date/time (**February 27, 2017**). The application must include the following:
   a. Project Title (maximum 81 characters)
   b. PI(s) Contact Information
   c. Community partner(s)
   d. Abstract/Project Summary (maximum 3000 characters)
   e. Research Plan (**maximum 3 pages**)
      i. Specific Aims
      ii. Research Strategy—brief description of significance, innovation, and approach
   f. References (not included in the page limit for the Research Plan)
   g. Roles and functions of project personnel, and the individual responsibilities of the PI(s) (maximum 1 page)
   h. Budget with justification for each item
   i. Biographical sketch of PI(s), in NIH or NSF format
   j. Other Sources of Support for the proposed project (e.g., additional funding, in-kind services, equipment)
   k. Brief discussion of how proposal is related to any current projects being conducted by the PI(s)
   l. Letter(s) of Support from collaborating community organization(s)
   m. Optional: Other Letters of Support
2. Proposals must include:
   a. An identified community partner based in New England. Preference will be given to proposals with a community partner who serves as a second PI.
   b. The community-defined need the proposal is addressing.
   c. The connection of the proposal to RWJF’s Culture of Health.
3. Full proposals will undergo a rigorous review process, with reviewers from InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement. One or more external reviewers may be consulted as well. Individuals who are Senior/Key Personnel or Other Significant Contributors on a seed grant proposal will be excluded from participation in the review process. Reviewers and InCHIP staff may request additional information from applicants to better evaluate the scientific merit of the application, to clarify any aspect of the proposal, or to assess how the application fits within the strategic priorities of InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement.
4. Each PI will be notified via email whether or not his/her proposal has been awarded funding.

F. REVIEW CRITERIA
Priority for funding will be based on the following review criteria, in no particular order:
- Scientific merit of the research plan.
- Extent to which the project is novel or innovative, especially a proposal testing a new methodology, new theory, or new area in need of pilot data.
• An identified community partner based in New England, with preference given to proposals in which the community partner is based in Connecticut. Preference will also be given to proposals in which the community partner serves as a second PI.
• Specification of the community-defined need the proposal is addressing.
• Relevance of the proposal to RWJF’s Culture of Health.
• Relevance of the study to the research missions of InCHIP and the Office of Public Engagement.
• Importance of the research question to external funders.
• Feasibility of plans to submit a subsequent proposal to external funders no later than December 31, 2019.
• Appropriate and significant scientific contributions by the UConn PI and the community partner(s) towards completing the aims of the study.
• Composition of the research team (preference will be given to diverse teams that include multiple community partners and/or multiple academic disciplines).

G. Awardee Requirements
If awarded, the PI(s) is not required to route her/his seed grant proposal through Sponsored Programs Services (SPS). The awarded PI(s) is responsible for obtaining all required approvals for her/his research. Please visit the UConn IRB website for more information on IRB approval for research conducted at the UConn-Storrs Campus, the five regional campuses, the School of Law and the School of Social Work. For information on IRB approval for research conducted at UConn Health, please visit the UConn Health IRB website.

Awardees will be required to submit a brief summary report of their progress annually and a final report at the conclusion of the project or award period. Changes to the project’s objectives, PI(s), and budget will require prior approval from relevant InCHIP and Office of Public Engagement staff.

Detailed awardee instructions/requirements will be distributed to seed grant winners when they are notified of the award decisions. All awardee requirements described above are subject to change in accordance with updated institutional procedures (e.g., routing requirements).

H. CONTACT
For questions not addressed in this FOA or our seed grant website, please contact seedgrants@chip.uconn.edu.