

## COMMUNITY-TRACK PILOT PROJECT PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) APRIL 2024

### What are the GPCAH and the Community-Track Pilot Project Program?

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) at the University of Iowa is dedicated to protecting the health and safety of farmers, ranchers, farm workers, their families, and agricultural community members in the Midwest and beyond. The GPCAH is funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is a unit of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We conduct basic and applied research, offer education, training, and outreach, and translate research results into effective ways to **prevent work-related injury and illness in agriculture**. Our community-track pilot grant program supports projects that address occupational hazards relevant to farmers and farm workers in our 9-state region (IA, IL, IN, KS, NE, MO, MN, OH, & WI). We especially encourage projects addressing the conditions of work in relation to stress and mental health, the prevention of slips/trips/falls and other traumatic injuries, and chemical safety.

Community-track pilot project directors are typically staff members of organizations *with established connections to agricultural workforces* who propose to develop, implement, and/or evaluate evidence-based agricultural safety and health intervention or outreach/education programs. Recent community-track pilot grant topics include respiratory protection training to prevent COVID-19 among agricultural workers, suicide prevention training within Iowa's agricultural community, and podcasts focusing on mental health and farm stress.

When requested in the Project Concept / Letter of Intent, we will make efforts to link applicant organizations with appropriate academic specialists within the GPCAH to promote collaboration between research institutions and community organizations and to assist in the development of successful applications.

### How Much Money is Available?

Applicants may request **up to \$30,000** to cover direct project costs (salary, supplies, equipment, software, and some types of travel). Overhead costs may also be supported; see the "Budget and Budget Justification" section of the application instructions for details.

All pilot grant awards are conditional on the continued availability of funds allocated by NIOSH to the GPCAH.

### Am I Eligible to Apply for a Community-Track Pilot Project?

All persons with an interest in agricultural health or safety and appropriate knowledge, skills, and resources are invited to collaborate with an "eligible institution" to prepare an application. "Eligible institutions" include:

- for-profit, non-profit, and public or private organizations
- units of local or state government and eligible federal agencies
- units of local and state-tribal government, and
- faith- or community-based organizations

We are accepting pilot project proposals from within our nine-state region (IA, IL, IN, KS, MN, MO, NE, OH, WI). Projects from outside this region will be considered to the extent that they address agricultural safety and health issues of relevance to agricultural workforces within the upper Midwest. Individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups as well as individuals with disabilities are especially encouraged to apply.

### How Do I Apply?

Applicants must first submit a Project Concept, which is a brief Letter of Intent describing their project idea. Applicants may then be invited to submit a full application (see application instructions).

## When Can I Apply?

Project Concepts must be received by **May 10, 2024**. Full applications must be received by 5 pm on **July 5, 2024**.

## If I Receive an Award, When Would it Start and How Long Will It Last?

The earliest anticipated start date for new community-track pilot projects is October 1, 2024. Applicants may request a project duration of no more than 18 months. Typically, the minimum project duration is 12 months.

## How Will My Application be Reviewed?

Pilot project grant applications will be evaluated by internal and external GPCAH Advisory Committee members and others with the appropriate expertise. Reviewers follow procedures similar to those used by federal scientific review panels. Review criteria for community-track projects are appended to this RFP. A critique will be provided to the director of each pilot grant application deemed responsive to this RFP, regardless of funding decision.

An important consideration during review is the proposed project's alignment with NIOSH priorities for the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (AFF) sector (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/prioritygoals.html>) and/or the National Occupational Research Agenda for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (<https://www.cdc.gov/nora/councils/agff/research.html>).

## When Will I Find Out if I Receive an Award?

Applicants will be notified within approximately 60 days of the application due date.

To comply with federal regulations, all awarded projects must be reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before funds can be released. We are available to help funded applicants with this process.

## What Kind of Reporting Will I Have to Do?

The director of each funded community-track pilot project is required to provide the following reports:

- Mid-project – brief written progress report
- Final – detailed final project progress report
- Impact survey – for *four years* following completion of a project, the project director will be asked to respond to a brief survey to evaluate the ongoing impact of the funded project.

Funded project directors will receive detailed instructions for completing the required reports listed above.

Publications, journal articles, presentations, and similar works relating to GPCAH-supported community-track pilot projects are required to include the following statement: *"This [publication, journal article, presentation, etc.] was supported, in part, by grant number U54 OH007548 from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) / National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the CDC, NIOSH, or the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health."*

## Application Instructions

### **Step 1. Submit a Project Concept by May 10, 2024**

Applicants are required to submit a brief Project Concept for review by GPCAH personnel. The document should describe the potential project and be no more than two pages in length. References should be included as needed but do not count towards the 2-page limit. The document should contain the following information:

- 1) Basic information about you and your organization
  - a. Tell us about your organization and the agricultural workforce(s) it serves
  - b. Tell us about your team and expertise
  - c. Do you have key collaborators (e.g., another organization or an academic specialist?)
- 2) Project description:
  - a. What is the safety and health problem, arising out of conditions of work in agriculture, that the project will address?
  - b. What is(are) the objective(s) of the project?
  - c. How is the project something new to your organization and why is it important?
  - d. What are you planning to do to achieve the project objective(s)?
  - e. How will you know if the project has been successful?
  - f. Will the project lead to additional projects or funding opportunities in the future?

Previously funded community-track pilot grants are described on the GPCAH website (<https://gpcah.public-health.uiowa.edu/gpcah-pilot-grant-program/>). When developing a Project Concept, it is a good idea to review past projects to ensure that yours does not duplicate previously funded activities.

Project Concept submissions will be reviewed within two weeks. The outcome of the Project Concept review will be a determination of whether to progress to Step 2. Applicants may also be contacted to discuss the Project Concept with GPCAH personnel. Project Concept submissions should be formatted to PDF and emailed to Nate Fethke ([nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu](mailto:nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu)) and Kim McMichael ([kimberlee-mcmichael@uiowa.edu](mailto:kimberlee-mcmichael@uiowa.edu)). You must:

- Include the phrase “GPCAH Pilot Project Concept” in the subject line of your submission email.
- Check for a confirmation email from the GPCAH Center Coordinator to ensure receipt of your email. If this does not happen within one week, email the GPCAH Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program Director, Nate Fethke, at [nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu](mailto:nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu).

**YOUR PROJECT CONCEPT HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED IF YOU DO NOT GET A CONFIRMATION EMAIL.**

### **Step 2. Submit a Full Application by 5 pm on July 5, 2024**

#### **Application Format and Content**

The required sections for community-track pilot grant proposals are listed below, followed by additional details and instructions for each section.

- 1) **Cover letter** (1 page)
- 2) **Front page** (1 page)
- 3) **Introduction** (required only for revised versions of previously submitted applications, 1 page)
- 4) **Project plan** (5 pages)
  - A) Objectives
  - B) Background and significance to agricultural safety and health
  - C) Prior community-based projects involving agricultural workers
  - D) Approach and evaluation
- 5) **Potential for future funding and plans for dissemination of results** (1 page)

- 6) **References** (no limit)
- 7) **Budget and budget justification** (no limit)
- 8) **Timeline and milestones** (1 page)
- 9) **Resume(s)** (2 pages per project team member)
- 10) **Letter(s) of Support** (no limit)
- 11) **Appendices** (no limit)

## Application Section Details

### 1) Cover letter

The cover letter should include: the project title, the date of submission, and 1-2 sentences about the project's potential impact for preventing agricultural injury and illness. The letter should be signed by an appropriate official and written on your organization's letterhead. Address the letter to Dr. Nate Fethke, PhD, GPCAH Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program Director.

### 2) Cover page (1-page limit)

The cover page should include: the project title, the date of submission, the names of the project director(s) and organization(s), and the project summary. The project summary is a narrative description of the project (up to 150 words) which should include the agricultural safety and health issue(s) the project will address, the project objectives, and the approach. If awarded, the project summary will appear on the GPCAH website (<https://gpcah.public-health.uiowa.edu/gpcah-pilot-grant-program/>).

By submitting this proposal, you agree to the following (**which must appear on the front page of your application**):

*This pilot grant application is not currently under review by any other grant administering program. If I submit this pilot grant application (or an application with similar objectives) to another funder while it is under review by GPCAH, I will notify GPCAH. I understand that failure to comply with this policy is grounds for rejection of the application and withdrawal of any funds that may be awarded.*

### 3) Introduction (1-page limit)

**The introduction is required only if you are submitting a revised version of an application previously submitted to the GPCAH Community-Track Pilot Project Program that was not funded.**

The introduction should include an explanation of a) how the application has been modified in response to reviewers' comments and/or b) why reviewers' comments and/or recommendations have not been or could not be addressed. The GPCAH will accept a *maximum* of two revisions to an original application.

### 4) Project plan (5-page limit)

#### a. Objectives

Describe the project objectives, each written in 1-2 sentences. Typically, pilot grant applications accepted for funding include no more than three objectives. Each objective should have specific and measurable endpoints. For example, "Reduce grain bin engulfment incidents among Indiana farmers" would not be considered an appropriate objective because it does not describe *what* will be done or *how* success will be measured. Alternatively, the following objectives are specific and measurable:

1. Provide grain bin safety trainings for 12 groups of about 10 co-op employees, farmers, and hired farm workers in northeastern Indiana.

2. Evaluate differences in grain bin safety knowledge retention at three-, six-, and 12-months post-training among co-op employees, farmers, and hired farm workers in northeastern Indiana.

## **b. Background and significance to agricultural safety and health**

In this section, provide information about the problem your project is addressing. The successful applicant will explain why the problem is relevant to agricultural safety and health, to the GPCAH, and to NIOSH.

**Describe how the agricultural safety and health problem you are addressing arises out of conditions of work in agriculture.** Typically, this section will include information on the magnitude (or “burden”) of the problem within the target agricultural workforce(s). When describing this burden, it may be helpful to provide information about the number of people in the target group affected by the problem your proposal will address. Consider using information like medical admission records, examples of cases identified in the media, or information on regional injury or illness trends. Sometimes, a search of recent academic literature can provide relevant information. Scholarly papers found in the PubMed Central® database (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/>) are accessible to the public. Focus on the community your organization serves and information collected that show that the hazard you have identified is important to your community.

In addition to describing the agricultural safety and health burden, this section should also include an explanation of how your proposed project will fill an unmet need for safety and health knowledge, skills, technology, or other solutions necessary to address the burden that your project is attempting to address.

## **c. Prior community-based projects involving agricultural workers**

In this section, describe any prior community-based projects your organization has completed that are relevant to your current project proposal. Describe how your organization has been involved with farmers or farm workers in the past. Briefly describe what was done and what you learned. How are you building on the knowledge gained in those projects? Were there projects outside of your organization that addressed a similar issue that you are using to guide your current proposal within your community? If so, describe how they helped to inform your current proposal or helped you identify gaps in knowledge, skills, or technology that will be addressed in your proposal.

## **d. Approach and evaluation**

In this section, include information about: the specific activities proposed to achieve the stated project objectives, the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among project team, and the information to be collected by your team so that you can evaluate the extent to which the project objectives were achieved.

Some important issues that should be addressed include:

**Access.** Reviewers will expect a clear description of how your team has unique access to people or data you need to complete your project. If your approach involves surveying agricultural workers, describe how your organization has this access, how many workers you plan to recruit, and how you will recruit them. If your approach involves analyses of an existing dataset, such as workers’ compensation claims, describe how you will have access to the data. Is there a cost? If applicable, including letters of support is an important demonstration of access.

**Surveys, Questionnaires, or other Data Collection Materials.** Community-track pilot projects are expected to collect information (from questionnaires, surveys, focus groups, interviews, direct observation, or other methods) that will allow an evaluation of the extent to which the project (a) was successful in achieving the objectives and (b) had (or is expected to have) an impact on the problem described in the “Background and Significance to Agricultural Safety and Health” section.

The data collection methods should be fully described. For example, if data collection is to involve focus groups, reviewers will want to know: how individuals will be recruited to participate, the number of participants per focus group, the number of focus groups, how the focus groups will be conducted and who will lead them, and how information from the focus groups will be recorded and analyzed.

It is recommended that applicants provide a sample or draft of all data collection materials in an Appendix. For additional information on how to develop effective surveys, Rutgers University Extension has put together a useful fact sheet: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs995/>.

It is also important to collect descriptive information about people and/or organizations the project engaged, such as the age and gender distribution of agricultural workers surveyed, or the farm characteristics of owners/operators trained. Clearly explain whether/how you intend to include immigrant farmworkers, youth, or other precarious work groups.

**Education and Training.** If the proposed project has an education and training component, then the applicant should include relevant information, including descriptions of: the training content or curriculum, details and background of the individuals developing and/or delivering the training, training format (video, webinar, in-person), materials to be distributed to trainees, and plans to advertise and promote the training. Identify what resources you will be relying on to develop your training materials and highlight how the training is designed to have an impact on the target agricultural group.

**Evaluation.** The goal of evaluation is to demonstrate that the objectives have been met. The evaluation portion of the Approach and Evaluation section should clearly describe how the collected information will be summarized, analyzed, or otherwise interpreted. The evaluation narrative should link clearly and directly to the objectives; if there are multiple objectives, using subheadings to help readers is a good strategy to help reviewers follow along. If the project involves an intervention, the evaluation should also assess whether the intervention was implemented as planned.

**Contingency Plans.** No matter how carefully planned, significant barriers to progress can be encountered. It is important to think about what might go wrong and describe how you might change your approach so that the project objectives can still be achieved.

## 5) Potential for future funding and plans for dissemination of results (1-page limit)

Pilot grant recipients are expected to propose projects that have the potential for future development. In this section, briefly explain how the project outcomes and experiences will be communicated to others. If materials are developed, how will they be available to others? Such information can include the identification of other funding sources for continuation or expansion of the project, efforts by the project team to disseminate their experience or observations to other organizations, or direct media campaigns. The GPCAH is committed to helping organizations in these efforts. Awardees will be invited to participate in GPCAH outreach activities such as webinars, podcasts, and other ongoing communications campaigns.

## 6) References (no page limit)

Provide a list in alphabetical order of all references cited in the pilot grant application. A citation will include author(s), title, publication details, and date. The following web link at the University of Iowa has some useful information about citations: <https://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/citationhelp>. The most important aspect of a citation is that the reader can find the cited document (or internet address) by using only the information provided in the list of references.

## 7) Budget and budget justification (no page limit)

The Budget should account for every dollar requested. Legitimate budget items include staff salary, supplies, necessary equipment, materials, travel required to complete project activities, and other

expenses. The budget justification is a written narrative that explains the purpose of every item in the budget. If the budget item is for salary support, then an explanation of the role of that person should be provided. If the budget item is for materials, then explain why the materials are necessary for completion of the project. As described previously, budgets may include both direct and indirect costs:

Direct costs are those explicitly allocated to the project, including: salary and fringe for project team members, supplies, equipment, data collection and analyses, and travel associated with executing the project. However, no meeting/conference travel can be covered unless attendance is required to perform project activities. Additional information should be provided within the budget justification for select items of cost, including:

Equipment in excess of \$5,000 must be project-specific, fully justified, directly allocable to the project, and necessary for completion of objectives.

Technological/IT equipment (e.g., computers, iPads, phones, wearable devices, and the like) must be project-specific, fully justified, directly allocable to the project, and necessary for completion of objectives.

Software or software licenses must be project-specific and necessary for completion of objectives.

Food/meals must be directly related to completion of objectives; food for meetings/conferences is not allowed.

Indirect costs (also referred to as “facilities and administrative” costs, or F&A) are infrastructure and/or overhead costs not directly related to the project. Institutions of higher education frequently negotiate an indirect cost rate with the federal government. Please use the following guidance:

Project directors affiliated with organizations without a negotiated indirect cost rate should apply indirect costs at a maximum rate of 10% of the project direct costs (i.e., the *de minimus* rate). For example, if the direct costs are \$30,000, then the indirect costs should be at most \$3,000, for a total cost of \$33,000.

Project directors affiliated with the University of Iowa should not include indirect costs.

Project directors affiliated with other institutions of higher education with a negotiated indirect cost rate are encouraged to discuss with institution officials the indirect cost rate that will be applied. Please provide evidence supporting the indirect cost rate to be applied to the project, for example, by providing a link in the budget justification to the institution’s indirect cost guidelines.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Mindy Sickels Sterbenz ([mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu](mailto:mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu)) for guidance in preparing budgets and budget justifications.

## 8) Timeline and milestones (1-page limit)

In a table, list each project activity and the months of the anticipated award period during which they will be conducted. Organizing activities by objective helps reviewers understand how the project will proceed.

## 9) Resumes (2-page limit per individual)

This section should describe the qualifications of each project team member. Standard information includes academic degrees, clinical and/or professional credentials, current employment status and prior relevant employment. If personnel have relevant past experience, it should be highlighted here. Publications, relevant experience as an educator or trainer, and other credentials can be provided.

**Below are some possible considerations for personnel on your project:**

- Ability to recruit agricultural community members: Given how you plan to interact with your community, who among the team has skills to motivate community members to participate?
- Training: If you are developing training materials, who among the team has relevant skills?
- Cultural and linguistic relevance: Do you need an interpreter? Do you need to provide materials in a language other than English?
- Educational materials: If you are planning to develop training or educational materials, you will need to identify who on your team has the expertise to ensure the training materials include evidence-based information. If you don't have that expertise, how will you find it?
- External expertise: If your team is lacking in technical expertise in agricultural safety and health or other skill essential to the success of your project, identify a person who has this expertise and secure their participation in the project.

## 10) Letters of support (optional, no page limit)

Include letters of support from collaborators affirming their expected contributions toward completing the project aims. Letters should specifically state how their expertise is relevant to the project, what their role will be to support the project, and that they have time and approval to commit to the project. Letters of support from persons without a specific, defined role in the project will be removed from the application prior to review.

## 11) Appendices (optional, no page limit)

Provide materials that are important to understanding the application and that were not included in other sections of the grant proposal. Some useful items to include as appendices are surveys/questionnaires planned for use in the proposed project, interview or focus group protocols, background information on web tools or smartphone apps proposed for use, and previously developed training materials. Note that reviewers are not obligated to read appendices and information critical to understanding the proposal should not be included solely in an appendix.

## How Do I Submit My Application?

Email both the signed cover letter and one complete PDF version of your full proposal to [kimberlee-mcmichael@uiowa.edu](mailto:kimberlee-mcmichael@uiowa.edu). When submitting your application, you must:

- Include the phrase "GPCAH Pilot Grant Submission-Community" in the subject line of your pilot grant proposal submission email.
- Check for a confirmation email from the Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program Coordinator to ensure receipt of your email. If this does not happen within one week, email the GPCAH Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program Director, Nate Fethke, at [nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu](mailto:nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu).

### **YOUR APPLICATION HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED IF YOU DO NOT GET A CONFIRMATION EMAIL.**

Ensure that your application was received by GPCAH staff by the close of business on July 5, 2024. Confirmation emails from the Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program Coordinator may occur after this due date.

## **What are the Review Criteria?**

### **Primary Review Criteria**

#### **Background and significance to agricultural safety and health**

1. Does the project address an important agricultural health and safety problem or a critical barrier to the prevention of illness or injury of agricultural workers?
2. Does the project align with NIOSH priorities for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing?
3. Does the proposal clearly demonstrate the need for the proposed project among the agricultural workforce(s) served by the applicant organization?
4. How will successful completion of the objectives enhance the services, approaches, and methods used by the applicant organization to prevent agricultural illness or injury?

#### **The project team**

1. Does the project director have the training and experience necessary to lead the proposed project?
2. Are all skills required for project success represented among the project team?
3. Does the project director and/or the applicant organization have a record of working with farmers or other agricultural workforces on issues of workplace safety and health?

#### **Innovation**

1. Does the application challenge current community-based agricultural safety and health practice paradigms by using new concepts, approaches, methodologies, or interventions?

#### **Approach and evaluation**

1. Are the overall strategy, approach, and evaluation methods well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the project?
2. Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?
3. If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will potentially risky aspects be managed?

#### **Environment**

1. Has the applicant documented access to agricultural workers or data necessary to implement the proposed project?
2. Does the proposal include letters of support from named collaborating individuals and/or organizations?
3. Will the community environment in which the project will be done contribute to the likelihood of success?

### **Additional Review Criteria**

1. Is the budget and time to completion justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed scope of work?
2. Other than GPCAH funding, are other resources available to the project team to allow for successful completion of the project?

3. Does the proposal promote new or strengthen existing collaborations between the GPCAH and agricultural safety and health stakeholders in the Center's region?
4. Do the investigators have a plan for broader or ongoing application of the proposed services, approaches, and methods beyond those funded by the pilot project?