

# 2026 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR GPCAH PILOT/FEASIBILITY PROJECTS

## ACADEMIC-TRACK AWARDS

### MARCH 2026

#### GPCAH Mission and Program Objectives

The Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health (GPCAH) 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 Center's goals are achieved through basic and applied research, education and training, community outreach, and translation of research findings into effective interventions **for the prevention of injury and illness resulting from agricultural work exposures**. The GPCAH is one of 12 National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-funded Centers for Agricultural Safety and Health (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/extramural-programs/php/about/ag-centers.html>).

The GPCAH Pilot/Feasibility Projects Program supports new agricultural health and safety research, prevention, intervention, community outreach, and translation projects likely to lead to more comprehensive projects or activities. We support research projects that address occupational hazards relevant to farmers and farm workers in our nine-state region (IA, IL, IN, KS, NE, MO, MN, OH, & WI). *We especially encourage **pilot projects addressing work-related stress and mental health; the prevention of slips, trips and falls; equipment and tool safety; and chemical safety.***

#### Academic-Track Awards

The GPCAH seeks applications from new academic/scientific investigators, including graduate students, post-doctoral scholars, medical residents, and junior faculty, among others. Experienced investigators (e.g., senior faculty) applying their established research to the agricultural safety and health setting are also eligible. If the principal investigator is a student or trainee, a faculty advisor must be identified.

The review criteria for academic-track applications emphasize scientific rigor, innovation, and the potential to secure additional funding in the future. Academic-track projects should have at least one well-defined research question directed toward the prevention of illness or injury resulting from agricultural work exposures. Many topics and research types (i.e., basic/etiologic, surveillance, intervention, research translation) will be considered. However, applicants must describe how their projects address NIOSH priority goals for extramural research within the [Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector](#) and/or the [National Occupational Research Agenda for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing](#).

#### Eligibility for Academic-Track Awards

All persons with an interest in agricultural safety or health and appropriate knowledge, skills, and resources are invited to collaborate with an "eligible institution" to prepare an application. "Eligible institutions" include 1) for-profit, non-profit, and public or private institutions, 2) units of local or state government and eligible federal agencies, 3) units of local and state tribal government, and 4) faith- or community-based organizations.

We are accepting applications from investigators affiliated with institutions within our nine-state region. Projects from outside our region will be considered to the extent that they address agricultural safety and health issues of relevance to our region. For example, see Injury Trends for Great Plains Farm Workers at [https://www.cdc.gov/nora/councils/agff/pdf/National\\_Occupational\\_Research\\_Agenda\\_for\\_AgFF\\_May\\_2018.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nora/councils/agff/pdf/National_Occupational_Research_Agenda_for_AgFF_May_2018.pdf)

### **Deadlines and Awards**

Complete applications must be received by **8am (central time) on Monday, June 8, 2026**. See “Application Submission Procedure” for additional details.

Applicants may request funding up to **\$30,000 in direct costs**. See “Funding and Budget Considerations” for additional details.

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

Applicants may propose a project duration of **no more than 12 months**. The earliest award start-date is anticipated to be September 30, 2026.

### **The release of funds to applicant organizations is contingent upon compliance with federal regulations.**

Investigators are encouraged to initiate as soon as possible any applicable human subjects research determination and/or review processes with an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please contact Jenn Patterson ([jennifer-j-patterson@uiowa.edu](mailto:jennifer-j-patterson@uiowa.edu)), GPCAH Center Coordinator, with questions regarding IRB procedures.

### **Funding and Budget Considerations**

Each project may request up to **\$30,000 in direct costs**. Indirect costs may be included in the budget according to the detailed instructions below.

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 aims.

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 aims.

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

Research-related food/meals – must be directly related to completion of aims; 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:

If the principal investigator is affiliated with the University of Iowa, indirect costs should not be included.

Principal investigators 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.

Principal investigators affiliated with organizations without a negotiated indirect cost rate should apply indirect costs at a maximum rate of 15% of the project direct costs (i.e., the *de minimis* rate). For example, if the direct costs are \$30,000, then the indirect costs should be at most \$4,500, for a total cost of \$34,500.

Principal investigators are strongly encouraged to contact Mindy Sickels Sterbenz ([mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu](mailto:mindy-sickels@uiowa.edu)) for additional guidance in preparing budgets.

### **Review Process**

Pilot project applications will be evaluated by a review panel of experts both internal and external to the GPCAH. Reviewer procedures are similar to those used by federal scientific review panels. A written critique will be provided to the principal investigators of all pilot grant applications deemed responsive to this request for proposals, regardless of funding decision.

Review criteria for academic projects are appended to this request for proposals.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The principal investigator of each funded project is required to provide the following reports:

- Mid-project – brief written progress report
- Final – detailed final project progress report
- Annual impact survey – for *four years* following project completion, the principal investigator will be asked to respond to a brief survey to evaluate the ongoing impact of the funded project. The survey will ask about (1) long-term outcomes, (2) presentations, publications, or other products resulting from the project not previously reported, (3) professional collaborations established as a result of GPCAH support, and (4) additional grants and contracts resulting from the project (i.e., that project results led to or supported an application for funding)

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

Publications, journal articles, presentations, and similar works relating to GPCAH-supported 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."*

**To comply with the CDC's public access policy, all peer-reviewed manuscripts resulting from GPCAH funding MUST be deposited into PubMed Central using the NIH Manuscript Submission system.**

**Application Format and Content**

Proposals should include the following sections:

<b>Required Sections:</b>	<b>Page Limit</b>
<p>1) <b>Cover letter</b>                      Include project title                      Signed and written on organization letterhead                      Please include 1-2 sentences about the project’s potential impact</p>	1
<p>2) <b>Front page</b>                      Date, title, investigator name and contact information (phone number, email address, and affiliation), and a brief project summary (150-word limit)                      By submitting this proposal, you agree to the following (<u>which must appear on the front page of your application</u>):  <i>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 aims) 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.</i></p>	1
<p>3) <b>Research plan</b> (academic projects)                      A) Introduction (required only for revised applications)<sup>1</sup>                      B) Specific aims                      C) Significance and innovation<sup>2</sup>                      D) Approach</p>	1 (for part A) } 5 (for parts B-D)
<p><sup>1</sup>If submitting a revised application, the introduction should explain how the application has been modified to address reviewers’ comments. Also, please identify substantive changes in parts B-D of the research plan.</p> <p><sup>2</sup>Part C must address “burden, need and impact” as defined by NIOSH (<a href="https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2019/05/07/bni/">https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2019/05/07/bni/</a>) and describe how the project addresses NIOSH priority goals for extramural research in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing (AFF) and/or the NIOSH NORA for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing.</p>	
4) <b>Potential for future funding and plans for dissemination of results</b>	1
5) <b>References</b>	No page limit
6) <b>Budget and budget justification</b>	No page limit
7) <b>Timeline and milestones</b>	1
8) <b>Biographical sketch</b> (applicants should use current NIH biosketch formatting)	5 (per Investigator)
<p>9) <b>Letters of Support</b>                      Include letters of support from collaborators affirming their expected contributions toward completing the project aims. Letters of support from persons without a specific, defined role in the project will be removed from the application prior to review. If the PI is a student/trainee, the application must include a letter of support from a faculty advisor.</p>	No page limit
<p>10) <b>Appendices</b>                      Items may include draft surveys/questionnaires, background information on web tools or smartphone apps, training materials, maps, etc. Note, however, that reviewers are not required to read appendices.</p>	No page limit

## **Application Submission Procedure**

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

- Include the phrase “GPCAH Pilot Grant Submission-Academic” in the subject line of the pilot grant proposal 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 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.**

## **Scored Review Criteria**

### **Significance**

1. Does the project address an important agricultural safety and health problem or a critical barrier to the prevention of illness or injury of agricultural workers?
2. If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, academic technical capability, and/or agricultural safety and health practice be improved?
3. How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, services, or preventive interventions that drive this field?

### **Investigators**

1. If the PI is an early-stage investigator (such as a graduate student) or a new investigator (such as a junior faculty member), do they have appropriate training relative to the project aims?
2. If the PI is a graduate student, does the faculty advisor have a record of successful research mentorship?
3. If the PI is an established investigator but new to agricultural safety and health research, have they demonstrated a record of advancing scientific knowledge in their primary research area?
4. Are all skills required for project success represented among the research team members?

### **Innovation**

1. Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or agricultural health and safety practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions?

### **Approach**

1. Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analysis methods well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims 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 particularly risky aspects be managed?

### **Environment**

1. Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the likelihood of success?
2. Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the investigators adequate for the project proposed?

3. Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

**Additional Review Criteria (not scored but considered with respect to overall project impact)**

1. Are the budget and time to completion justified and reasonable in relation to the scope of work proposed?
2. If the application is revised from a previous version, were the reviewers' critiques adequately addressed?
3. Does the applicant describe potential for future extramural funding?
4. Does the proposal enhance the reach of the GPACH through collaboration with regional stakeholders and/or institutions without prior connections to the center?
5. Does the applicant describe plans to disseminate the results and for continued reporting of related work?