



CENTER FOR ENGAGEMENT IN DISABILITY HEALTH AND REHABILITATION SCIENCES

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

PILOT FUNDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: Advancing Health and Wellness in Adults or Children with Disabilities

Purpose and Objectives

The UAB Center for Engagement in Disability Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (CEDHARS) invites applications for pilot and feasibility studies aimed at advancing innovative research to improve the health and well-being of adults and children with disabilities. Funding may support new projects or expand existing initiatives to incorporate a disability component, generating critical data to bolster subsequent external funding applications.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals led by early-stage investigators, established investigators from other fields who are applying their expertise to disability-related issues for the first time, those utilizing CEDHARS core facilities, and those actively involving people with lived experience.

Sample Projects might include, but are not limited to:

- Interventions (e.g., diet and exercise, mindfulness and stress management) aimed at improving mental, physical and/or emotional health (e.g., reducing social isolation/loneliness)
- Effects of exercise on mechanistic or molecular changes in health
- Secondary condition treatment/management (e.g., pain, deconditioning, depression, weight management)
- Development of new assistive technologies that enhance health and well-being
- Projects that address environmental barriers to health equity (i.e., identifying and mitigating physical and systemic barriers in healthcare facilities or public spaces)
- Development of innovative strategies to recruit and retain adults and/or children with disabilities in health research (e.g., addressing accessibility barriers, cultural considerations, and trust-building within underrepresented communities)
- Secondary data analysis to study rehabilitation outcomes, secondary health conditions, correlates, modifiable factors, and social determinants of health
- Comparative research exploring health disparities between people with and without disabilities, including predictive modeling for rehabilitation outcomes
- Observational research examining key issues in disability health

Eligibility

UAB faculty of all tracks and postdoctoral fellows are eligible to apply as principal investigator(s) (PI). External collaborators, such as those from other universities or community organizations, may serve as co-investigators or key personnel. Current recipients of CEDHARS funding, including those with no-cost extensions, are not eligible to apply.

Letter of Intent

Submission of a letter of intent (LOI) is optional but strongly encouraged, as it helps CEDHARS staff in planning for the application review process. The LOI should be submitted via email to cedhars@uab.edu by 11:59 p.m. CST, February 9, 2025, and include the following:

- Title of the proposed project
- Name, title, and contact info of the PI(s)
- Name(s) of other key personnel
- A brief overview of the project (maximum 150 words)
- Name(s) of individuals whose selection as a peer reviewer could present a conflict of interest due to their involvement in the application development or relationship with the applicant(s).

Application Submission Instructions

By 5:00 p.m. CST, Friday, March 7, 2025, please submit proposal as a single PDF using the UAB InfoReady platform.

1. Cover Page
 - a. Proposal title
 - b. PI name(s), rank, department, address, phone number, email address
2. Proposal (4-pages max; single-spaced; ½ inch margins; size 11 or larger font)
 - a. Specific aims (one page)
 - b. Background and significance
 - c. Preliminary work (if applicable)
 - d. Project design and methods
3. References/Citations
4. Key Personnel
 - a. List of key project personnel, including title, affiliation, contact info, and role
 - b. NIH/NSF biosketches for each
5. Impact Statement (2-3 sentences): briefly explain how the project advances disability health research and its relevance to public health
6. Proposed Budget
 - a. Project-related direct costs may be requested, including salary support and appropriate supplies
 - b. F&A costs are not allowed
7. Mentor Support Letter: required for postdoctoral applicants

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated using the Simplified Framework for NIH Peer Review Criteria:

- Importance of the Research (Significance, Innovation)
- Rigor and Feasibility (Approach)
- Expertise and Resources (Investigator, Environment)

Along with this, reviewers will be asked to give their assessment of the project's potential to secure subsequent extramural funding.

Notice of Award and Terms of Support

1. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by April 4, 2025.
2. As many as six proposals may be funded at up to \$25,000 each for one year.
3. If the project requires IRB approval, awardees must submit their protocol within two weeks of receiving the award notice. Funds will be released upon proof of submission. Continued funding is contingent on obtaining IRB approval. If sufficient and timely progress towards approval is not made, funds may be retracted.
4. Awardees will be required to meet quarterly with the CEDHARS lab director, as well as submit mid-term and final progress reports.
5. A publication submitted to a peer-reviewed journal within six months and an external funding application within a year of project completion are required outcomes of this project.

Contact Us

Prospective applicants are encouraged to reach out if they have questions about the application process, eligibility criteria, or project alignment with the program's goals. Please direct any questions or requests for additional information to cedhars@uab.edu.