

2026 Global Health Pilot Projects Request for Applications (RFA)

PURPOSE: The mission of the Mary Heersink Institute for Global Health (MHIGH) is to address the most pressing global health challenges and promote healthy lives through training and mentorship of global health scholars, conducting innovative scientific research, and promoting groundbreaking service embedded in genuine collaboration and trust.

The goal of the MHIGH Pilot Project is to catalyze innovation in any mission area that involves collaboration between investigators at UAB and international partners addressing a shared major global health challenge. Funded projects will include mentorship of junior investigators or trainees. Projects are encouraged to foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and seek co-funding (e.g., from other institutes/Centers including, University-wide Interdisciplinary Centers and/or Departments and Divisions). These projects are useful to generate preliminary data for larger projects, support promising investigators, and/or to build capacity to improve outcomes over the long term.

DURATION OF FUNDING: 12-24 months

RANGE OF REQUESTED FUNDS: \$5,000-25,000 (additional co-funding is encouraged)

ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF AWARDS: 2-3

TIMELINE:

- RFA Released: October 15, 2025
- Application Deadline: February 15, 2026 (midnight CT)
- Awards Announced: March 31, 2026
- Earliest Funding Start: April 1, 2026

ELIGIBILITY: Applications may focus on research, service, and/or education, including training, in a priority global health area as defined by the World Health Organization's [Sustainable Development Goals #3](#). While all applications will be considered, a special emphasis of this RFA is on themes aligned with Global Health Reciprocal Innovation (GHRI). GHRI can be defined as bidirectional, iterative exchange of technologies, methodologies, interventions, and/or processes between LMICs and high-income countries (HICs) to address **shared** health challenges. There is also recognition that there are common lived experiences between communities within the U.S. and in LMICs, which creates opportunity for collaboration to improve health globally.

While traditional global health projects often took best practices from HICs to LMICs, GHRI promotes the sequential or simultaneous translation of innovations from LMICs to HICs or vice-versa, using fair partnerships to ensure appropriate adaption. This approach can reduce missed opportunities for LMIC innovations to help close gaps in health globally including HIC settings.

To be responsive to this RFA, reciprocal innovation projects may include: taking an "innovation" from an LMIC setting to translate to a HIC setting using appropriate adaptation methods; or vice versa, or a project that simultaneously conducts work to develop and test an innovation in both HIC and LMIC settings.

Please reference the UAB Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) GHRI Scientific Working Group's website for a toolkit regarding conceptualization for and operationalization of GHRI [here](#).

A principal investigator (PI) of the application must be a faculty member (or trainee working with a faculty member) in the UAB Heersink School of Medicine and must include a Multiple Principal

Investigator (MPI) or Co-investigators in partner countries, especially from LMICs as defined by the [World Bank](#). Other MPIs or Co-investigators may be included from any UAB school or partner country. Interdisciplinary teams are encouraged.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS: Submit the following components via [“InfoReady”](#) prior to the application deadline at midnight (Central Time) on February 15, 2026.

1. Cover Page: Include project title, Principal Investigator’s name, title, department, phone number and e-mail address; names, titles and affiliations of other MPIs and/or co-investigators.
2. Specific Aims: Up to one page overview of the proposal that outlines significance, innovation, aims, and future funding plans.
3. Project Strategy: up to four (4) single-spaced pages, 11 point Arial font, and 0.5-inch margins. See **CRITICAL ELEMENTS** section below.
4. Budget: Include the categories of materials and supplies, equipment, and other activities and services needed to complete the project (no page limits). Faculty salaries are not typically covered.
5. Budget Justification: Justify each amount requested and explain what the funds will accomplish (no page limits).
6. Biosketch: All applicants and collaborators should submit NIH biographical sketches (5-page limit) with personal statements adapted to describe defined roles on the project. Use the NIH biographical sketch form approved for use on/after January 25, 2022. Reference the form, instructions, and sample biographical sketches available at the [NIH](#).
7. Submit a single PDF file with application components in the order outlined above.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS THE PROJECT STRATEGY SHOULD INCLUDE (4 pages total):

1. **Significance:** Describe how your proposed work has significance in the context of GHRI, including the importance of the problem to be addressed for health in LMIC and/or HIC settings.
2. **Innovation:** Describe the innovative nature of the proposal and how the proposed project will support MHIGH’s mission in advancing global health research, service, education, and/or partnerships. Describe how the project is unique compared to other efforts and what is new about the approach or the information that will result from the project.
3. **Investigator(s):** Demonstrate that the investigator(s) have background, training, and expertise, as appropriate for their career stage, to conduct the proposed work. MPI applications, including colleagues from LMICs, are strongly encouraged. **Each application must include at least one trainee, who will serve an integral role on the project.** The integration of junior faculty or trainees with other UAB faculty/researchers at various levels is required by MHIGH to advance all pilot projects within the context of a team building approach and the true spirit of global health partnerships. Explain how the team will interact to achieve the goals of the project and secure future funding..
4. **Approach:** Summarize methods, activities, data collection and analysis plans, timeline, as well as any preliminary findings that are proposed to address the specific aims. Provide specific benchmarks for the duration of the study period.
5. **Environment:** Describe the institutional resources available at both the LMIC and HIC institutions to ensure successful execution of the proposed work.
6. **Impact and future directions:** Describe the impact of achieving your project goals and how these achievements will translate to future, larger projects or funding proposals. Note the specific funding sources and mechanisms to be targeted with the results from the proposed project, as well as the timeline for follow-on submissions.

REVIEW PROCEDURES: Applications will be reviewed by faculty at UAB and partner countries with appropriate expertise in global health. The evaluation will follow a scale 1-9 (similar to previous NIH format) to assess Overall Impact and the critical criteria outlined above.

FUNDS AVAILABLE: Final award decisions shall be made by MHIGH leadership. It is anticipated that two to three awards (\$5000-\$25,000 each) will be awarded for this cycle based on scientific merit and promise. Applicants should request only the budget that is reasonably needed to accomplish the stated goals.

AWARD DETAILS: Funding will be awarded from the MHIGH Administrative Office. All questions regarding the awarding of funding should be directed to the contact listed in the notice of award.

- Maximum award is \$25,000. Indirect costs are generally not covered but line items (e.g. IRB, communication, etc.) essential for the success of the project, should be included in the budget. Awards are one to two years in length. One no-cost extension may be requested at the end of the project period only.
- All costs must conform to the NIH Grants Policy Statement (GPS) and applicable U.S. Office of Management and Budget OMB circulars for necessity and reasonability, allocability, conformance and consistency, as well as allowability. Please follow the link below to section 7.2 cost principles section of the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#).
- Prior to the receipt of funding for projects involving human subjects, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from all participating sites and human subjects training certification for all key personnel will be required. Approvals are not required for application submission. For more information about human subjects approval, see [HHS](#) and [UAB](#) resources.

POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS: Awardees will be required to submit periodic progress reports, and will receive email notifications with guidance. Awardees will be expected to present the details of their study at various MHIGH events or activities. This will provide an opportunity to identify additional synergies within UAB and MHIGH, explore other means of support, and gather recommendations to enhance the project.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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