



Call for Proposals

The Center for Race and Social Problems (CRSP) and the Center for Research on Innovations, Services and Equity in Mental Health (RISE-MH) are seeking proposals for pilot research projects that examine or address any aspect of racial disparities in mental health access, services, or outcomes.

We will consider two types of projects:

1. Faculty pilot projects submitted by faculty in the School of Social Work.
2. Dissertation projects submitted by doctoral students in the School of Social Work.

Up to two projects will be funded for up to \$15,000. Should two projects be selected, all projects may be faculty pilot projects, or dissertation projects, or any variation of each type may be funded.

Deadlines

- Proposals due: October 1, 2025
- Funding decisions announced: November 1, 2025
- Funding term: 1 year

Faculty Projects

Faculty members of the School of Social Work are eligible to apply.

Dissertation Projects

Doctoral candidates in the School of Social Work are eligible to apply. Ideally, students will have an accepted dissertation proposal and will have advanced to candidacy. Because it can be challenging to align the timing of this criterion with funding timelines, we will also consider proposals that are supported by a letter from the dissertation chair confirming the membership and support of the dissertation committee, a clear and realistic timeline for the dissertation proposal meeting, and plans for adjusting the pilot project to address committee concerns, should they arise.

Primary review criteria are as follows:

1. Relevance of the project to racial disparities in mental health
2. Feasibility, including the viability of the project and the likelihood of completion in a 12-month time frame
3. Quality and strength of the approach
4. *For faculty projects only:* Potential to generate future external funding

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Additional review criteria that are not required, but will be viewed favorably include:

5. Community involvement and/or relevance to community members and/or community mental health practice
6. Projects that focus on generating solutions to disparities, rather than the identification of disparities

Research Plan Components (2000 Words Total)

Specific Aims (one paragraph – 200 words): Provide an overview of the broad study objectives as well as the specific outcomes that are proposed. Provide two or three clear aims (one or two sentences per aim) to be achieved with the pilot funding. Aims must specify research goals, have the potential to make a clear contribution to knowledge, and for faculty, serve to position the investigator for future research funding.

Significance (one paragraph - 500 words): Summarize the relevant research knowledge base (research and/or community engagement literature) motivating the study. How can this study have potential impact on racial disparities in mental health access and outcomes? Cite available literature to support claims of significance.

Innovation (one paragraph - 300 words): Considering the aims, methods, implementation, and community collaboration, clearly state what is unique and innovative about this application.

Investigator (one paragraph - 200 words): Include a brief description of the expertise of the principal investigator and any key personnel who may be working on the application. Include relevant publications and/or scholarly activity (conference presentations, posters, monographs) and any unique skills or training that the investigator has that could facilitate the proposed activity. *For faculty projects:* Developmental roles and clear support for students will be welcome.

Approach (one page - 800 words): In clear language, describe the steps that will be carried out to accomplish the aims of this application. If pilot research is planned, describe the scope of the research (number of subjects involved, type of measures used, variables investigated, analytic approaches used, and the final product of the study). If this involves completion, or enhancement of ongoing scholarly or grant activity, specifically identify the unique activities supported by this application that will lead to that completed product. If the application involves grant-planning activity, describe the activity in detail.

Timeline (one paragraph): Provide a timeline that specifies when project activities will be completed. A Gantt chart summarizing expected dates and progress is recommended.

Faculty projects specify when a grant application will be submitted. It is expected that an extramural grant application submission will occur within one year after receipt of funding from this year's DIA.

Budget (two pages total): Provide an Excel spread sheet (one page) summarizing the expenditures proposed for this application. Additionally, on a separate page, provide a budget justification (one page) for the items listed in the spreadsheet.

Faculty allowable expenses: Support can be requested for personnel to assist with literature reviews, data collection, data analysis and statistical consultation; funds

can also be requested for subject incentives, software, supporting technology and grant planning-related travel. Support will not be provided for salary, stipends, or computers.

Dissertation allowable expenses: Funds can be requested for personnel to assist with literature reviews and statistical consultation, subject incentives, software, supporting technology and grant planning-related travel. Support will not be provided for salary, stipends, or computers.

Total funding cannot exceed \$15,000.

Racial and Ethnic Equity Perspective: A clear statement of how this perspective is embedded in any key aspect of the study, as noted above, must be provided.

Appendices (up to three relevant items): Appendix items could include: Letters of support from collaborators or consultants; relevant publications by the investigator; measures employed in any planned pilot work.

Review Process: CRSP and RISE-MH leadership, in consultation with the RISE-MH steering committee will evaluate the proposals.

Deliverables: A final report will be due December 1, 2026. Reports will include an executive summary of no more than three pages describing in plain English the research question addressed, its importance, the project's methods and results, and next steps, and additionally, all products completed, underway, and planned based on the project.

Submission Instructions:

Please create one proposal document in PDF and email completed document to Dr. Shaun Eack at sme12@pitt.edu. Submissions are due by October 1, 2025

If you have any questions about this announcement or your submission, please send an email to Dr. Kyaie Conner koc25@pitt.edu