



# Trailblazer Planning Grant

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Community Health Partnerships is requesting applications for awards supporting the development of community-university partnerships that will focus on improving the health of Indiana residents. Awards will be up to \$5,000 to support partnership growth and collaborative grant proposal development.

### **Proposal Deadline**

Thursday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

*Please note that you will be submitting through the Indiana CTSI's grants management software WebCAMP. Please allow enough time to become familiar with this system.*

*The WebCAMP user's guide is also available under the funding announcement here:*  
<https://indianactsi.org/translational-research-development/open-funding-opportunities/>



## Indiana Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI) Community Health Partnerships

### Trailblazer Planning Grant Request for Applications

#### I. Purpose

Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships (CHeP) is soliciting proposals for the development of community-university partnerships to improve the health of Indiana residents, to result in future collaborative research proposals. The award can be used to establish new partnerships or to strengthen/expand existing community-university partnerships to solve critical health problems affecting Indiana residents. This award will not fund research pilot projects; instead, it will fund activities to help develop partnerships between individuals and organizations that have potential to later engage in joint research projects to improve the health of Indiana communities. The expected outcome of this award is the development of a future research proposal for opportunities such as the Community Health Partnerships [Trailblazer Award](#). Examples of partnership development activities we are interested in funding include, but are not limited to: meetings, conferences, travel expenses, interviews, and quality improvement assessments. This RFA accepts applications which propose to serve residents in any of the counties of Indiana. Please note that as the Indiana CTSI is predominately funded by the NIH we must adhere to the unified funding strategy as outlined [here](#).

#### II. Types of Projects

The Trailblazer Planning Grant is intended to fund partnership development through conferences, travel, collaborative meetings, interviews, and other activities that will culminate in a community-engaged collaborative research proposal application to the Trailblazer Award (or other funding mechanism). This award is not designed to fund research studies, pilot studies, or supplies for existing partnership work.

CHeP defines health broadly and is seeking to fund the development of partnerships whose long-term goals are to improve health or address barriers to health and health care access. Intended goals of the partnerships may span various sectors and do not have to be clinical in nature. Examples of such goals could include affordable housing; food security and nutrition; community safety and violence prevention; education and employment; environmental health and access to green spaces; and transportation and mobility. Additional topic areas that

partnerships may aim to address include, but are not limited to: cancer, obesity prevention, infant mortality, access to care, diabetes, mental health, and substance use disorder.

**Examples of past funded projects:**

- IU School of Medicine and the Indiana Department of Corrections developed a partnership with the goal of improving care for incarcerated youth with autism spectrum disorder.
- A women’s health center and the IU School of Medicine developed a partnership with the goal of improving perinatal mental health in rural areas.
- IU Bloomington and a public library developed a partnership with the goal to develop and implement an obesity prevention agenda for children and families in an Indiana county.

**II. Application Requirements**

Applicants must describe the strategies they will use to build or strengthen a partnership and the short-term goals of the partnership. The goals should include plans for co-designing collaborative initiatives and grant applications to improve the health of Indiana residents. There must be at least one university-based lead and one community-based lead. Leads must currently be employed in Indiana-based institutions or organizations.

The university project lead must be a “full-time” ( $\geq 80\%$  FTE) faculty member employed by a college, university, or other academic institution located within the state of Indiana. Postdoctoral students, fellows, residents, adjunct professors, visiting professors, and staff members are not eligible to serve as the university project lead. However, they are permitted to collaborate on the project and may, under guidance from a research faculty member designated as the university project lead, serve in a leadership role for the project.

The community project lead must spend at least 80% of their time working in the community. Community project leads may represent faith-based, cultural or grass-roots organizations, health systems, health departments, or health coalitions. If a community project lead receives salary support from an academic institution, specifically acknowledge and justify their role in the community.

All individuals on the application are required to join the Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnership Network. To join the Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships Network, please complete this [form](#).

**III. Funding**

The Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships will provide up to \$5,000 in funding per partnership. Funding will be made available once a letter of IRB approval or review exemption is obtained. Indiana University-based leads will receive a university account number for their portion of the budget. Other university-based leads will receive a purchase order to invoice for their portion of the budget. Community leads will receive a check for their awarded amount.

Requirements:

1. The proposed budget must be justified, including all planned expenditures.
2. No indirect costs or finance and administration costs are allowed.

3. If equipment is being purchased with award funds, up to \$1,000 of funding can be used to purchase each piece (meaning that individual pieces of equipment cannot exceed \$1,000).
4. Faculty salary support can be covered up to \$1,000 per proposal (including fringe and benefits). There are no limits on non-faculty salary support.
5. Hospitality costs need to be well-justified as a required part of meeting the goals of the proposal.
6. Travel expenses are limited to those that are necessary to achieve the aims of the proposed project. Only in-state travel is allowable.
7. The proposed efforts cannot exceed 24 months from the start date.

#### IV. Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee that includes both community and university representatives. Please see the FAQ page on our [website](#) for more information. Review criteria include:

1. **Engagement of project leads.** Motivation and purpose for partnership from both the community and university perspectives. **[0-5 points]**
2. **Focus on health.** Degree to which the partnership has the potential to solve critical health problems affecting Indiana residents. **[0-5 points]**
3. **Approach for partnership development.** Plan/strategies that will be used to develop the partnership with short-term goals. **[0-5 points]**
4. **Expected outcomes of partnership.** Plans for future collaborations, which will include developing research proposals. We encourage project leads to submit their first joint research pilot to our Trailblazer Award funding mechanism. **[0-5 points]**

#### V. Post-Award Requirements

During the award period, funded recipients will be required to:

1. *(If proposed partnership development activities involve human subjects research)* Obtain IRB approval (if not already approved) or written confirmation from the IRB that the project does not need IRB review. Funding will not be released until one of these is submitted.
2. Attend an orientation meeting hosted by the Indiana CTSI CHEP with other Trailblazer Planning Grant awardees.
3. Submit written progress reports annually during the life of the award describing the work accomplished to date.
4. Complete partnership surveys at the start of the project, 12 months after the start of the project, and at the close of the project. These partnership surveys are for the purposes of our own internal program improvement and are kept confidential.

Once the project is completed, all recipients (via WebCAMP) will be required to:

1. Submit a 1-page report summarizing their experience and future ideas for addressing pressing health issues affecting Indiana residents.
2. Provide a partnership summary statement at project close out.
3. Annually complete status reports for at least five years on the partnership as well as data on projects, publications, extramural funding, or intellectual property that resulted from the project. The Indiana CTSI staff will contact awardees with the link to the online progress

reporting system.

4. Acknowledge Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships support in all presentations, publications, and reports resulting from the project. Acknowledgement procedures will be explained at the initial post-award meeting and outlined in the award agreement.

## VI. Completing the Application

For the highest likelihood of receiving a reviewer with expertise relevant to the topic of the proposal, applicants should complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) no later than Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2026. LOIs should be sent to [chep@iu.edu](mailto:chep@iu.edu). LOIs should briefly describe the partnership and the general topic of the proposal. Applications may still be submitted without a Letter of Intent but may not be reviewed by someone with expertise in the topic area of the proposal.

To start your full submission, use the **Start a Submission** link [here](#) or enter <https://indianactsi.org/funding/opportunities/funding-grants> into your browser and open the Community Health Partnerships Trailblazer section.

1. **Partnership Description:** *(up to two pages, single-spaced, Arial 11-point font, 1-in margins)*
  - a. Describe the motivation and rationale for this partnership and how partners will work together to effectively co-design a collaborative research initiative to improve health. Describe plans for building the new partnership (or strengthening/expanding an established one) and any unique qualifications or resources. *(up to one page)*
  - b. Describe the potential outcomes of the partnership. *(up to one-half page)*
  - c. Describe the health topic or concern you will address through this partnership. *(up to one-half page)*
  - d. Describe short-term goals including future collaborative research proposals. *(up to one-half page)*
2. **Timeline:** *(up to 1 page)* Outline the partnership planning tasks and milestones of the proposal, showing the sequence and duration of the activities. The timeline should not exceed 24 months.
3. **Budget & Budget Justification:** See FAQ page on our [website](#).
4. **Resume, CV, or NIH Biosketch of University Lead and Community Lead**
5. **Response to request to use application for educational purposes.** See FAQ page on our [website](#).
6. **Application Checklist**

## VII. Timeline

RFA Release:	March 1, 2026
Virtual Q&A Session:	April 24, 2026 11:00am
Letter of Intent Deadline:	September 17, 2026
Proposal Deadline:	October 1, 2026
Award decisions:	November 2026
Start date:	December 1, 2026

## VIII. We encourage you to reach out to Sarah Glock with questions:

**Sarah Glock**, Program Manager: [sardowns@iu.edu](mailto:sardowns@iu.edu) / 317-278-8416

If you have further questions, please see our [website](#), view our informational webinar recording [here](#), and register to attend our virtual **informational webinar and Q&A on Friday, April 24, 2026 at 11:00am**.

**Register in advance for this meeting:**

<https://iu.zoom.us/meeting/register/xYtY05rGSseBQNochSU4eA>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Please see [our webpage](#) for more details on our Trailblazer Award (up to \$25,000/project), that focuses on community-engaged research that aims to improve the health of Indiana residents. The Trailblazer Award may be an area of interest for existing partnerships.