



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Community Health Partnerships is requesting applications for collaborative, community-engaged research projects that are designed to improve health equity. Projects will be funded for up to \$25,000.

Now's your time to blaze the trail!

Proposal Deadline

June 2, 2025

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 AWARD FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH
Request for Applications (RFA)**

I. Purpose

The Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships (CHeP) is soliciting proposals for collaborative, community-engaged research projects focused on topics that have potential to improve health, examine social determinants of health (SDoH), or enhance health equity. This RFA encourages and prioritizes projects that have outlined a sustainability plan that incorporates or utilizes existing Indiana CTSI infrastructure (i.e., Connections IN Health, Monon Collaborative, etc.) and/or connections to statewide health initiatives. This RFA accepts projects which propose to serve any of the counties of Indiana, and given the paucity of projects in public health regions 1 (Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, and Jasper counties) and 7 (Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Vigo, Clay, Owen, Sullivan, and Greene counties), we especially encourage projects with a focus on those regions.

II. Types of Projects

Eligible projects will propose to: (1) implement exploratory research that has the potential to identify or reduce health inequities, or impact SDOH; (2) evaluate a program that has the potential to improve health equity or impact SDOH; or (3) implement and do a preliminary evaluation of a health-related program. Health equity, briefly defined, is “the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health” ([CDC, 2025](#)). Projects that propose to achieve their objectives by changing (or demonstrating the potential to change) policy, systems, and/or the environment are encouraged. (See [FAQ](#) page for more on health equity.)

CHeP defines health broadly, and is especially seeking proposals that aim to impact social determinants of health and focus on improving the underlying factors influencing health outcomes and health equity. These projects may span various sectors and do not necessarily have to be clinical in nature. Examples of such projects could include affordable housing initiatives; food security and nutrition programs; community safety and violence prevention; education and employment initiatives; anti-discrimination and inclusion projects; environmental justice and access to green spaces; and transportation and mobility solutions. Additional topic areas that proposals may address include, but are not limited to: cancer, obesity prevention, infant mortality, access to care, mental health, and substance use disorder. Eligible projects should aim to create lasting, positive impacts on the conditions that influence people's health and well-being.

III. Application Requirements

Applicants must address a community-engaged research question that is significant and relevant to both the community and university partners. Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed

project incorporates community engagement and provide evidence of shared control of the research question by both partners. See [FAQ](#) for a description of community-engaged research. Representatives from the community you wish to serve should be included in the project (i.e., patient or community stakeholder representatives).

There must be both 1) a university partner and 2) a community partner for the project. Both partners must currently be employed in an Indiana-based organization. Individuals who have received salary support from Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships (other than previous Trailblazer Award support or Purdue Extension Educator cost-shared support) in the 24 months prior to the submission deadline may collaborate on the project but may not serve as a Project Lead.

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, and visiting professors may collaborate on the project, but are not eligible to serve as a University Project Lead. Staff members are not eligible to serve as the University Project Lead. However, they are permitted to, 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 have $\geq 80\%$ of their work assignment based in the community. Examples of communities include but are not limited to: (a) geographically-based groups; (b) condition-specific groups (e.g., patients with diabetes, hypertension, STDs, etc.); (c) self-characterized communities (e.g., African American, LGBTQ+, Hispanic or Latino, etc.); (d) community-based hospitals, clinics, health departments, or other health facilities; or (e) neighborhoods, grass-roots organizations, faith-based organizations, and community organizations interested in health. If a community partner receives salary support from an academic institution, specifically acknowledge and justify the community partner’s role in the community.

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

IV. Funding

Indiana CTSI Community Health Partnerships will provide up to \$25,000 to support each project. 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. Community leads and university leads outside of Indiana University will register as a vendor and receive a purchase order to invoice for their portion of the budget.

Requirements:

1. Budget allocations must be split between the community and university partners (minimum 25% to each partner). Faculty salary may be supported up to \$5,000 (including fringe and benefits) total per project with appropriate justification. There is no limit to non-faculty salary support. An estimated effort for both supported and in-kind work is expected in the budget, and effort committed cannot be covered by other federal support. (See [FAQ](#) page).

- You may reimburse for personnel time required to complete CITI training, CIRTification training, or equivalent.
2. The proposed budget must be justified, including all planned expenditures. Please indicate if there are other resources committed to the project in the total budget. Total project costs may exceed \$25,000 when other funding entities have committed to the project.
 3. Funds cannot be used to purchase equipment greater than \$5,000 per piece.
 4. All hospitality expenses must be justified.
 5. Travel expenses (in-state only) are limited to those necessary to achieve the aims of the proposed project. Please use the [current state of Indiana reimbursement rates](#) (not the university or federal rates). Out-of-state travel cannot be included in the budget.
 6. The proposed project period cannot exceed 24 months.

Visit our [FAQ](#) page for an example of a successful application or budget.

V. Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee that includes both community and university representatives, and the committee's funding recommendations will be sent to the Indiana CTSI CHeP Advisory Board for review. After review by CHeP Advisory Board, funding recommendations will be made to the Indiana CTSI Strategy Committee. The Indiana CTSI Strategy Committee reserves the right to make final funding decisions based on priorities regarding geographical and institutional diversity as well as project alignment with other Indiana CTSI initiatives. Review criteria include:

1. **Engagement.** Quality and feasibility of community and university partner collaboration on the project. Degree to which community engagement is illustrated in the proposed project at appropriate levels. **[0-20 points]**
2. **Significance.** Significance of the health condition that will be addressed, the potential impact of the project on this health condition, and its potential to change a related policy, system, and/or environmental issue. **[0-20 points]**
3. **Health Equity.** Degree to which health equity is addressed and the potential impact the project will have to improve health equity. **[0-20 points]**
4. **Methods and proposed products.** Use of sound design and methods for (i) a research project or (ii) a comprehensive evaluation. **[0-20 points]**
5. **Sustainability.** Plan for long-term sustainability of the partnership, expansion of the research project, and future funding potential. This RFA encourages and prioritizes projects that have outlined a plan for how to sustain activities through existing Indiana CTSI infrastructure (i.e., Connections IN Health, Monon Collaborative, etc.) and/or connections to statewide health initiatives. **[0-20 points]**

VI. Post-Award Requirements

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

1. 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. Submit progress reports annually during the life of the award that describe the work accomplished to date and related budget expenditures.

3. Attend quarterly meetings with the other current Trailblazer Grant awardees. See our [FAQ](#) page for more details.
4. Present project results at the annual Indiana CTSI CHeP Community Health Partnerships Annual Meeting.
5. Complete partnership surveys at the start of the project, 12 months after the start of the project (approximately halfway), and at the close of the project. These partnership surveys are for the purposes of our own internal program improvement.

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

1. Provide a written summary of the project and major findings for dissemination to the public (one page).
2. Provide a project impact statement with project close out information.
3. Annually complete status reports on the partnership as well as data on projects, publications, extramural funding, or intellectual property that resulted from the project for at least five years. The 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. Acknowledgement procedures will be explained at the initial post-award meeting.

VII. Completing the Application

Applicants should complete a Letter of Intent no later than May 19th, 2025. LOIs should be sent to chep@iu.edu. LOIs should describe the study aims, research questions, or the general topic of the proposal. LOIs should be a maximum of 300 words. This requirement allows us to find reviewers with the appropriate expertise. 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 found here [CTSI Trailblazer link](#) or enter <https://indianactsi.org/researchers/services-tools/translational-research-development/open-funding-opportunities/#TB202506> into your browser.

1. **Cover Page:** The University Lead and the Community Lead must complete and sign the application form. Institutional signatures must also be obtained from both partner organizations. Please indicate whether your research involves human subjects. If an IRB application has already been submitted, indicate the protocol number with the approval date or indicate that approval is 'pending'. On this page, you will also indicate the counties in which your project will take place, and whether this proposal builds on a previous Trailblazer Planning Grant.
2. **Summary/Abstract** (*up to 300 words*): Include the title, partners involved, purpose/aims, methods, geographic area, target population, expected outcomes, and potential impact.
3. **Project Description** (*up to six pages total, single-spaced, Arial 11-point font, 1-in margins*): The guidelines below are to help applicants gauge how much content to dedicate to each section. They represent the maximum length of each section for a maximum of six pages total.
 - a. Project specific aims (*up to one-half page*)
 - b. Project significance and innovation (*up to one page*)

- c. Health equity impact statement (in lay language) *(up to one-half page)*
 - d. Project design and methods *(up to two pages)*
 - e. Ethical considerations to participants and the community at large. *(up to one-half page)*
See [FAQ](#) page.
 - f. Desired outcome, anticipated short-term and long-term impact, and how you plan to evaluate this impact. *(up to one page)*
 - g. Description of partnership. Include how the partnership and project idea came about, the level of commitment for each partner, importance of the project to the community, how the partnership will function, and any unique qualifications and resources. If a community partner receives salary support from an academic institution, specifically acknowledge and justify the community partner's role in the community. *(up to one page)* Please see [FAQ](#) section for the guiding principles of community engaged research.
 - h. As this award is intended to support the work of an existing community-university partnership, describe the method or metric you will use to evaluate the change in quality of your partnership throughout the project. *(up to one-half page)*
 - i. Dissemination plan including how you will share the results of your project with the community you seek to serve. *(up to one-half page)*
 - j. Proposed next steps and plans for long-term sustainability, including extramural funding opportunities and/or intellectual property (IP) that will be pursued. *(up to one page)*
4. **Prior Funding:** If you have received prior Indiana CTSI support/funding (e.g., prior Trailblazer Award, Trailblazer Planning Grant, Project Development Team (PDT) funding, or other Indiana CTSI pilot funding), explain how this project relates to and/or will complement your other Indiana CTSI supported work.
 5. **Proposed timeline** that includes all the major components of the project.
 6. **References/Literature cited.**
 7. **Detailed Budget & Budget Justification.** Example in [FAQ](#) page.
 8. **Resume, CV, or NIH Biosketch of University Lead and Community Lead.** *(maximum 5 pages each)*
 9. **Letters of Support** (if applicable, include with application, not as separate attachment; maximum of 3).
 10. **Response to request to use application for educational purposes.** See [FAQ](#).
 11. **Application Checklist.**

VIII. Timeline

RFA Release:	March 3, 2025
Virtual Q&A Session:	April 24, 2025
Letter of Intent Deadline:	May 19, 2025
Proposal Deadline:	June 2, 2025
Award decisions:	September 2025
Start date:	October 1, 2025

- IX. **We encourage you to reach out to Sarah Glock with questions and/or your regional Community Health Partnerships liaisons (listed below) for help with solidifying partnerships or to discuss project ideas.**

Sarah Glock, Program Manager: sardowns@iu.edu / 317-278-8416

Heidi Beidinger, University of Notre Dame Liaison: hbeiding@nd.edu / 574-631-7636

Silvia Bigatti, Indiana University Indianapolis Liaison: sbigatti@iu.edu / 317-274-6754

Priscilla Barnes, Indiana University Bloomington Liaison: prbarnes@iu.edu / 812-855-4789

Donna Vandergraff, Purdue University Liaison: dvanderg@purdue.edu / 765-494-8538

If you have further questions, please see our [website](#) and [FAQ](#), view our informational webinar recording [here](#), and register to attend our virtual **informational webinar and Q&A on Thursday, April 24th at 1:00pm**.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://iu.zoom.us/meeting/register/4HoQPMdoTzSmub5g6buL8w>

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