**INTERDISCIPLINARY OBESITY RESEARCH SEED Grant Program - FACULTY**

**Program Summary**

The Penn State Center for Childhood Obesity Research (CCOR) in collaboration with the Social Sciences Research Institute (SSRI) announces an Interdisciplinary Obesity Research Seed Grant Program that aims to fund innovative, interdisciplinary research related to obesity and obesity-related health outcomes across the life cycle. This Seed Grant is primarily designed to assist PSU social and behavioral science faculty at University Park, the Commonwealth campuses, and the College of Medicine to advance their research by securing extramural funding. CCOR will offer consultation as faculty develop a proposal, prior to submission. You may do so by contacting Dr. Emily Hohman at [eeh12@psu.edu](mailto:eeh12@psu.edu).

**Key Dates**

**Letter of Intent**

* Receipt of the required letter of intent is due no later than **5:00 p.m. ET on** **April 1, 2024.**
* Invitation for full applications will be sent on an ongoing basis, but no later than **5:00 p.m. ET on** **April 8, 2024.**

**Full Applications *(upon invite, dependent on the number of applications received)***

* Thedeadline for receipt of full applications is **no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on** **May 10, 2024**.
* Final reviews due by **May 31, 2024**
* Awards will be announced **June 14, 2024.**
* Funding will be available by **June 30, 2024.**

**Eligibility**

Eligible Principal Investigators (PIs) and co-PIs are faculty at any level at Penn State. While proposals can include multiple investigators, investigators may only lead a single proposal as PI or Co-PI. Postdocs are not eligible to be listed as PIs but may be listed as co-investigators. Proposals are required to include interdisciplinary investigator teams (i.e., investigators from more than one department). Although research teams can include students, post docs, faculty from other institutions and other external collaborators, our goal is to support interdisciplinary teams from Penn State's faculty. For this reason, team leaders should be tenure track or research faculty with continuing appointments.

Priority will be given to multi-disciplinary teams who plan to develop competitive external proposals that may be submitted through CCOR to obtain external funding, but need not be a CCOR affiliate.

**Proposal Priorities**

Proposals that conduct interdisciplinary research that contributes to the evidence base needed to inform successful childhood obesity prevention programs that can then be disseminated to public health and clinical practice audiences will receive preferential consideration. Proposals on other topics related to obesity including research on the psychosocial, environmental, family systems, genetic, and biological factors that contribute to obesity across the life cycle will also be considered. Specific priority topics include:

* Research that addresses obesity across the life cycle
* Research that addresses rural obesity disparities
* Research that addresses the role of nutrition security and/or food insecurity in obesity and obesity-related health outcomes
* Community-based translational research that addresses obesity and obesity-related outcomes

Proposals should also address translation, and projects that move research from one translational stage (T1 Translation to Humans; T2 Translation to Patients; T3 Translation to Practice; T4 Translation to Population Health) to the next will be prioritized. If you have questions about the fit of your proposal with CCOR’s mission, please contact Dr. Emily Hohman at [eeh12@psu.edu](mailto:eeh12@psu.edu).

**Budget**

One-year awards with budgets **up to $15,000.** We plan to fund up to 6 applications. Timeline should reflect 12 months starting July 1, 2024, and ending June 20, 2025. A no cost extension will be considered with extenuating circumstances but not guaranteed.

The budget may include:

* Participant remuneration, limited to $5,000 of total over the duration of the project.
* Purchase of data and/or software, limited to $3,000 total over the duration of the project.
* Research materials and supplies
* Travel for data collection
* Research staff effort and wage payroll

The budget cannot include:

* Equipment
* Conference travel
* Graduate student stipend or tuition
* Postdoctoral Scholar salary
* Faculty salary
* Publication costs

**Letter of Intent Format**

The goal of the letter of intent is to ensure that proposals meet the eligibility criteria and fit within the scope of the call. Depending on the number of letters received, a limited number of applications will be invited to submit a full proposal to be mindful of both reviewer burden and applicant time commitment.

The letter of intent should be no more than 1 page and should include the following:

1. Proposal title
2. Principal investigator(s) names, titles, department, and contact information
3. List of co-investigators and their departments
4. A brief overview of the project’s specific aims and relevance to seed grant priorities
5. Total budget requested (a detailed budget is not required at this stage)

Letters of intent must be submitted to [pennstateccor@psu.edu](mailto:pennstateccor@psu.edu) by 5 pm ET by April 1, 2024 to be considered for an invitation for a full proposal.

**Structure and Submission of Full Proposal**

Proposals must be submitted as one document via email to [pennstateccor@psu.edu](mailto:pennstateccor@psu.edu) by 5 pm ET on May 10, 2024.

The proposal must include the following:

1. Proposal Abstract (½ page maximum, 12pt Times Roman or 11pt Arial font, 1-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing).
2. Research Plan (3 pages maximum, including figures, tables, and text, excluding references, 12pt Times Roman or 11pt Arial font, 1-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing).
3. References cited (additional 2 pages maximum, 12pt Times Roman or 11pt Arial font, 1-inch margins, 1.5 line spacing).
4. At least one Letter of Support from the PI’s department head, college dean (or designate), or institute director (or designate), including commitment of matching funds, and/or other support (e.g., reduced teaching load, access to specialized core facilities, tuition, etc. (if any)).
5. 2-page NIH Biosketch for the PI and/or each Co-PI.
6. Budget and budget justification, including the availability of matching funds (if any) using the template provided.

The **proposal abstract** should summarize the scientific aims, intellectual merit, and broader impacts of the project. The **research plan** should include: brief background and significance, well-articulated research objectives, research approach (including a description of data sets, methods to be developed or applied), anticipated outcomes/potential for impact, *specific* plan for how the seed grant will lead to a competitive proposal for external funding (identifying existing or anticipated funding opportunities to be targeted, the role of the seed grant in the external proposal, timeline, and whether or not you’ve spoken to a program officer about your proposal).

**Review Criteria**

* Priority is placed on innovative, new ideas for projects that involve cross-department and/or cross-college (interdisciplinary) connections among Penn State faculty
* A well-articulated plan of activities to include appropriate literature review, clear objectives and detailed methodology
* Teams comprised of investigators who range in discipline, seniority, and experience
* Proposals must include a specific product (e.g., external grant proposal; workshop and conference; or training activities) and a timeline for its attainment
* Proposals must provide strong evidence for access to the population of interest

**Post Award Project Progress Reports**

Once the seed grant has been awarded, the PI is required to provide a set of reports with the following timeline:

1. **Interim Report**: six months after the beginning of the project. This report will include a description of the progress made, progress towards submission for external funding, and a brief financial accounting. Non-performance may result in award suspension.
2. **Project Outcomes Report**: a report will be requested one year after the beginning of the project. The project outcomes report will include information on grant proposals that have been or will be submitted as a result of the award, conference presentations, and journal publications enabled by the award, and how many students (Ph.D., graduate, and undergraduate) were involved or supported in the research project. The report should report the award's impacts suitable for uploading to the CCOR website. A template for the Project Outcomes Report will be provided.
3. **Follow-up Reports**: these will be due 1 year and 2 years after project completion. Follow-up Reports will include a list of publications, proposals submitted, and grants received, based on the work done in the seed grant. Researchers should notify CCOR when they have relevant external funding success beyond 2 years.
4. **CCOR and/or SSRI Seed Grant Review:**Serve as a CCOR Seed Grant proposal reviewer in future cycles (maximum of 3 proposals).
5. **External Grant Submissions:** Submit at least one significant external-to-PSU research proposal within one year after completion of the Seed Grant. If a proposal is not submitted, an explanation for the lack of submission needs to be provided. Failure to do so will result in ineligibility for future CCOR funding.
6. **Acknowledgment of Seed Grant Support:**The following acknowledgment of the seed grant in any publications resulting from the funded effort.

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Full instructions and templates for preparing the Interim and Final Reports will be distributed to award recipients when the seed grant is awarded and closer to the report's due dates.