# Smart and Connected Health in Social Science

# Request for Pilot Grant Proposals

The Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) invites proposals for innovative pilot research projects that contribute to SSRI’s strategic aim of ***Smart and Connected Health*** and facilitate building a community of scholars in this domain of research. To advance our strategic investment in Smart and Connected Health, this special call provides a higher level of funding and the option for a longer period of work than our ongoing preliminary development (level 1) and pilot funding (level 2) seed grants. (Of course, our level 1 and level 2 funding mechanisms remain open for Smart and Connected Health projects and have no associated deadlines.)

We see Smart and Connected Health as broadly capturing domains related to mental and physical health promotion and disease prevention and treatment that build on innovative applications of technology for data collection and care/intervention delivery. We seek proposals for novel research by new interdisciplinary teams that focus on approaches that include, but are not limited to, the use of mHealth, social media, ambulatory subjective assessments, wearable sensors, tele- or remote-health, and human-technology systems. In addition, proposals focused on developing theories and/or methodology for the application and/or analysis of multi-modal, multi-time scale data are welcome, particularly those that inform the development and delivery of novel interventions.

We will prioritize applications with a clear social/behavioral component that:

* Propose highly significant research that articulates a clear plan for how it will lead to external funding
* Develop collaborations involving interdisciplinary faculty research teams; we will prioritize new collaborations and those that include junior and senior faculty.

# Eligibility

This mechanism is primarily designed to assist Penn State social/behavioral science faculty to advance programs of research that can address social disparities by securing extramural funding. Although research teams can include students, post docs, faculty from other institutions and other external collaborators, our intent is to support interdisciplinary teams involving Penn State's faculty. For this reason, team leaders should be tenure track or research faculty with continuing faculty appointments. Single investigator proposals will not be considered. Investigators may be PI or MPI on only one proposal; however, investigators may serve as a co-investigator on up to two additional proposals.

**Timeline**

* January 11, 2021: Call for proposals released
* **March 5, 2021: Proposals due by 5pm Eastern Time**
* April 19, 2021: Funding decisions announced

# Proposal and Budget Guidelines

Proposals should broadly follow the proposal development guidance provided for the SSRI level 2 award (<https://ssri.psu.edu/funding/ssri-level-2-funding>; application form also included below), with two notable exceptions: 1) the requested budget may be up to $50,000 in total with no pre-approval required, and 2) the proposed period of work may extend to two years if well-justified. The proposal should also explicitly identify the relevance of the work to Smart and Connected Health, and we strongly advise that you review SSRI guidelines on allowable and disallowed budgetary items (<https://ssri.psu.edu/funding/ssri-level-2-funding>).

Proposals should be single-spaced, in Times New Roman font size no smaller than 12-point type, left-aligned with one-inch margins (see Proposal Submission Form below). Please include a NIH or NSF biosketch for each investigator. To complete your proposal submission, please download, complete, and email the proposal template (also included below); your proposal should be sent as **one** document, including letters of support and biosketches, to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu).

**Criteria for Review**

Proposals will be evaluated by peer review with input from the SSRI Executive Committee and college research deans, broadly following NIH funding criteria. Competitive proposals will clearly articulate how they provide each of the following:

* Clear contribution to social/behavioral science
* Innovative Smart and Connected Health research with potential for impact
* Well-articulated aims and high scientific rigor
* Strong interdisciplinary teams; we will prioritize those with faculty who range in seniority
* Plan for how the work will lead to a proposal for external funding and a timeline for its submission, including evidence of interest by potential funding sources
* For human subjects research, proposals must provide strong evidence for access to the population of interest; for secondary analyses, proposals must describe dataset availability and contents
  + The pandemic may interfere with some human subjects research; please factor potential issues into your proposed timeline
  + SSRI staff will work with you on altering your timeline in this context of changing health and safety concerns
* Investigators are expected to obtain IRB approval as appropriate

**Other issues to consider as you prepare your proposal**

* Questions may be directed to Joshua Smyth, SSRI Associate Director, at [Smyth@psu.edu](mailto:Smyth@psu.edu)
  + If helpful, please feel free to consult with other SSRI Associate Directors who have expertise relevant to your project (<https://ssri.psu.edu/people/directors>)
* Talk with any of the SSRI unit directors (e.g., Survey Research Center and the DREAM initiative, Geographic Information Analysis, QuantDev) about how you might use the expertise of their units to enhance your research
* If you require time and some initial funding to further develop your research ideas and/or team consider applying for a SSRI Level 1 project (<https://ssri.psu.edu/funding/ssri-level-1-funding>)

**Project Reports**

Funded investigators are required to provide an annual project status update and a brief (one page) final report upon completing the project. These materials allow us to track and report outcomes as well as monitor the success of our seed grant program.