

2021 Health Equity Accelerator Pilot Grant Program Overview

Boston Medical Center Health System (BMCHS) is committed to addressing the root causes of racial health inequities. We are launching the “Health Equity Accelerator” to build and deploy resources with the purpose to “Transform healthcare to deliver health justice and wellbeing”.

As part of its portfolio, the Health Equity Accelerator is now accepting grant applications for pilot projects designed to achieve one or more of the following goals:

- (1) Implement known evidence-informed interventions that address racial health inequities
- (2) Develop and evaluate new interventions that address racial health inequities
- (3) Evaluate impact of an existing BMCHS program or intervention that addresses racial health inequities
- (4) Understand underlying drivers of racial health inequities through novel approaches that uncover new insights (e.g., observation of patient-provider interactions, shadowing of patients)

Members of the BMCHS and Boston University Medical Campus communities (including the BU Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, and Public Health) are invited to apply to this request for applications. Projects must be relevant to BMCHS’ patients or members.

Potential Applications of Pilot Data

- Make the case to scale a specific intervention
- Make the case to fund a specific intervention (advocacy)
- Impact inequities beyond our health system through publications

Example Research Areas and Project Types

We have identified the following areas as ones where our patients experience a significant degree of racial health inequity in outcomes. Projects concerning one of these areas will be prioritized, but all projects will be considered:

- Mother-child health (e.g., pregnancy care, pediatric care)
- Infectious diseases (e.g., COVID, influenza, STDs, HIV)
- Behavioral health (e.g., substance use disorders or mental health disorders more broadly)
- Oncology and end-stage renal disease (e.g., cancer screening or treatment)
- Chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, pediatric asthma, cardiovascular diseases, sickle cell disease)

Examples of projects that meet the goals of these grants are:

- **Implement known evidence-informed interventions that address racial health inequities:** acquire mobile technology to enable remote diabetes monitoring
- **Develop and implement a new intervention that addresses racial health inequities:** design and implement a SMS-based ‘Chatbot’ that engages patients in two-way conversation and provides a trusted channel to engage with the health system
- **Evaluate impact of an existing BMCHS program that addresses racial health inequities:** evaluate the impact of remote glucose monitoring to close racial inequities, evaluate efficacy of different community engagement approaches on vaccine hesitancy, evaluate the impact of child tax credits on closing racial gaps in health outcomes

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- **Understand underlying drivers of racial health inequities through novel approaches that uncover new insights:** observing and measuring labor management in black and white pregnant people with pre-eclampsia to identify drivers of inequity

Resources provided to Grantees

In addition to the \$100,000 award, the Health Equity Accelerator, in-kind, will provide assistance to selected projects in the following domains:

- Free access to Clinical Data Warehouse data and prioritized data requests, including statistical and methodological help from health services, clinical researchers, and a biostatistician
- Assistance obtaining claims data for research purposes from the Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan
- Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI): receipt of a voucher for study related resources (e.g., biostatistical consultation/support, REDCap support, use of the General Clinical Research Unit, etc). Please see additional CTSI resources here: <https://www.bu.edu/ctsi/support-for-research/ctsi-offerings-and-resources/>
- Assistance in developing grant proposals for next-step projects
- Assistance with patient recruitment for interviews and/or fielding patient surveys
- Strategy support to develop and refine a sustainable business plan for effective interventions
- Partnership with an executive sponsor (e.g., department chair, administrative director) for operational guidance / support

Funding Levels

The Health Equity Accelerator Pilot Grant Program will support up to three awards of up to \$100,000 each, in addition to the above in-kind resources

Project Duration

Project duration is expected to be between 12 and 24 months. The funding amount requested for the *total* project duration must not exceed the \$100,000 maximum

Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply?

- This request for applications is open to people across the BMCHS and Boston University Medical Campus communities, including BU School of Dental Medicine and BU School of Public Health

What are allowable and non-allowable budget items?

- All budget items must be justified as necessary to execute the project efficiently and effectively
- Travel to professional meetings is not an allowable expense
- Indirect costs are not allowable

What type of commitment is required of applicants' home Departments?

- It is expected that applicant's home Departments will match 25% of requested grant funds with either actual or in-kind support. Examples of in-kind support include the following:
 - Applicant's protected time over and above what the applicant is currently receiving
 - Administrative support
 - Research Assistant time

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- Travel to professional meetings
- Data management and analysis
- Applicants must provide a letter from their Department Chair or Section Chief describing the Department's support for the project

Application Submission Requirements

Researchers interested in applying should complete the application cover sheet (pages 6 of this RFA) along with all required application materials and **send via email to the Health Equity Accelerator at BMCHS.Equity@bmc.org by no later than 5:00 PM ET on Friday, October 29, 2021**

Supplemental materials, including appendices or any material exceeding the specified page limits, will not be considered during the application review process. Applications that do not conform to stated guidelines will be rejected without review. Please follow NIH format guidelines: Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia fonts with font size 11 or larger and ½ inch margins minimum. Proposals should be single-spaced with a double carriage return between paragraphs. Please submit all materials in a single PDF

Completed applications will include:

- Application Cover Sheet (page 6 of this RFA)
- List of all project team members (page 7 of this RFA)
- Specific Aims (not to exceed 1 page)
- A Research Plan (4-8 pages), divided into the following sections: background and significance; preliminary data (if any); methods (including analysis plan, limitations, and plan to address limitations); timeline; statement of sustainability which addresses how the pilot funds will propel the proposed research to more definitive work beyond the immediate grant period; dissemination plan)
- A detailed project budget and a brief budget justification—in particular, plans for any new hires and how their salaries will be sustained beyond the grant period. Please use the budget template (page 8 of this RFA)
- An approach to develop a sustainable business plan, if applicable
- A NIH biosketch or CV for the primary investigator. Biosketches or CVs for all other team members are optional but encouraged
- Letter of support from Department Chair / Section Chief describing support for the project and either actual or in-kind contribution
- Letter of support from collaborators, if applicable. For example, if the proposed project includes using a certain data source, provide evidence that you will have access to those data. If the project plans to recruit subjects from a particular clinical venue, provide documentation that leaders in that venue support the proposed efforts
- In certain circumstances, the Review Committee may request additional materials from applicants during the application review stage
 - **This includes IRB approval, which applicant is responsible for providing in order for grant funds to be disbursed**

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Proposal Review Criteria

The Review Committee will evaluate applications based on the following criteria and points:

Each criterion will be evaluated on whether the application:

- Does not meet criteria
- Meets criteria
- Excels on this criteria

Criterion	Includes:	Total points
1. Project model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aims, goals, and objectives are clear ○ Project focuses on health inequity across one or more of the 4 stated objectives in this RFA (<i>see below</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) <i>Implement known evidence-informed interventions that address racial health inequities</i> (2) <i>Develop and evaluate a new intervention that addresses racial health inequities</i> (3) <i>Evaluate impact of an existing BMCHS program that addresses racial health inequities</i> (4) <i>Understand underlying drivers of racial health inequities through novel approaches that uncover new insights</i> 	25
2. Significance / potential for impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Addresses an area where a high degree of racial inequity has been identified in BMCHS patients 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research hypothesis demonstrates a clear opportunity to create impact on health inequity (e.g., supported by existing research, logic is sound) 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project represents an opportunity to create impact on a significant scale/contribute to the evidence base in a meaningful way 	5
3. Project feasibility/ rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feasibility of project team to thoughtfully implement and rigorously evaluate project within the award period 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget is appropriate for scope of work 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data sources are sound and will effectively support research aims 	5
4. Potential for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feasibility to be implemented at BMCHS given our population mix and operational capabilities 	15
5. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainability of project after award funding period (e.g., potential for reimbursement and extramural funding; potential for learning/replication/scalability; likelihood of subsequent external funding based on pilot) 	15

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Criterion	Includes:	Total points
6. Programmatic support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Letter of support from relevant department(s) and community partner(s) to demonstrate buy-in 	10
7. Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project is not duplicative of current care or operations practices 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal demonstrates creativity, novelty 	3
Total application score	n/a	100

Notification to Applicants

Applicants will receive electronic notification to confirm receipt of their application within 2 business days. Notification of award status will be made via email in November 2021

Terms of the Award

- Award funding will start no sooner than January 2022
- **Human Subjects approval is not required at the time of the application submission; however, awardees will be expected to secure all necessary permissions to conduct their work shortly after receiving notification of funding**
- Brief progress reports will be required twice a year
- Awardees will be expected to meet twice a year, around the time of the progress reports, with members of the Health Equity Accelerator and BMCHS leadership to receive guidance and feedback from hospital leadership
- Final narrative report, including key results and budget reconciliation, will be due within 60 days of the end of the pilot grant award period
- Additional award term details will be provided upon award notification in November 2021

We welcome opportunities to speak with interested applicants. Please contact the Health Equity Accelerator at BMCHS.Equity@bmc.org with questions

2021 Health Equity Research Pilot Grant Program

Application Materials

Application Date:

Principal Investigator

Name, Degree(s):		
Title:		
Department/Division:		
Institution (e.g. BMC, BU School of Public Health):		
Email:	Phone:	Ext:
Name of Department/Division Chair:		

Application Secondary Contact*

Name, Degree(s):		
Email:	Phone:	Ext:

*Secondary contact will be CCed on correspondence pertaining to the grant application materials and award status notification.

Proposed Project Information

Project Title:
Requested Budget Amount (excluding in-kind support/department contribution): \$
Proposed Project Duration (<i>in months</i>):

Application Materials Checklist

Please see Request for Applications for detailed submission requirements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cover Sheet (<i>use provided template</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brief budget justification |
| <input type="checkbox"/> List of all project team members (<i>use provided template</i>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Project investigator biosketch. Biosketches for all other team members optional but encouraged. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Aims | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of support from Department / Section Chair |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of support from collaborators, if applicable. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed project budget (<i>use provided template</i>) | |

Application Submission

Complete this Application Cover Sheet along with all required application materials and send via email to the Health Equity Accelerator at BMCHS.Equity@bmc.org by no later than **5:00 PM ET on Friday, October 29, 2021**

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Principal Investigator Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Dept./Division Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

2021 Health Equity Research Pilot Grant Program
Application Materials

Project Title:

Principal Investigator Name:

All Project Team Members List

Team Member Name, Degree(s)	Title	Department/Division	Organization	Role on Project

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Itemized budget proposal:

Item	Description	Rate	Quantity	Source	Total \$

I understand the terms of the grant, including acceptable fund use, reimbursement timeframes and reporting requirements

Applicant Signature Print name Date