

Center for Health, Engagement, and Transformation (CHET)**Doctoral Student Pilot Grant RFA****Release Date: September 22, 2025****Application Deadline: October 27, 2025****Project Duration: 12 months**

The Center for Health, Engagement, and Transformation (CHET) announces an opportunity for University of Kentucky doctoral students for pilot funding to support meritorious projects that focus on identifying and addressing social contributors to differences in health outcomes and promoting health for all. **All applications must address how the pilot project will (1) directly contribute to improving the health of a population with high need and (2) advance the student's research prospects in terms of publications, pursuit of extramural grant support, and/or job market competitiveness as they move toward independent research careers.** A faculty advisor is required for project oversight. **Eligibility is limited to current doctoral students in any college at UK.** Additional funding is available for doctoral students from **the College of Arts and Sciences**, so applications from the College of Arts & Sciences are particularly encouraged. Pilot award recipients may be asked to share their research findings at a future CHET event. We anticipate that three to four applications requesting **\$5,000-\$10,000** will be awarded for a period of 12 months, with an earliest start date of 1/19/2026. The number of awards made in this funding cycle will depend on the amount of funding requested and the merit of applications received. IRB approval, if appropriate, will be required prior to funds being released. Applications that align with the following UK research priority areas are encouraged (Substance Use, Cancer, Diabetes & Obesity, Cardiovascular, Neuroscience, and UNITE), are encouraged but not required.

Applications will be accepted through the online form at <https://medicine.uky.edu/centers/chet/pilot-grants>. Applications must be single-spaced, at least 11-point font, and adhere to standard grant 1/2-inch margins. Proposal submission through OSPA is not required. Applications must include the following information uploaded as one PDF file through the online application. Please name the file as [Student last name]_[Faculty last name]_DSPilot.pdf

- **CHET Pilot Grant Cover Page (to be filled out online)**
- **NIH or NSF-style biosketch for applicant (5 page limit)** (see PDO Proposal Resources <https://research.uky.edu/proposal-development-office> for guidance on creating a biosketch)
- **Faculty advisor is required to submit:**
 - Letter of support (1 page). As part of this letter please include departmental statement of support for pilot activities and contact information for departmental budget officer who will assist with post-award activities.
 - NIH or NSF-style biosketch (5-page limit)
- **Budget and budget justification (1 page)**
 - Include specific justifications for each budget item or category.
 - If not supported by an assistantship or fellowship for the entire duration of the 12-month award period, graduate or professional student stipends (\$400 week maximum) are allowed with strong justification. Tuition is not an allowable expense.
 - Only travel costs necessary for conducting the aims of the research are allowable (e.g., conference travel is **not** an allowable expense).
 - Purchase of equipment is allowable with strong justification.
- **Abstract (300 words or less)**
- **Specific Aims (1 page)**
- **Research plan (2 pages)**

- The research plan should include a clear description of the research project. The research plan should describe the study objectives, explain the significance of the research, discuss implications for addressing social contributors to health outcomes and effectiveness of reducing disparities across populations, outline the methodological approach, and specify anticipated research products. It is suggested that the research plan include the following:
 - Significance, innovation, and approach, including the implications of the pilot study for addressing social contributors to health outcomes and advancing health across population groups especially those experiencing disparities.
 - Anticipated scholarly products, future research trajectory, and how the pilot supports the student's career development as a researcher who addresses social contributors to health outcomes and advancing health across population groups (e.g., presentations, publications, future grant applications, award applications).
- **Timeline (1/2 page)**
 - Include a timeline with milestones for accomplishments described in the research plan including deliverables. The timeline should span 1/19/26 through 1/18/2027.
- **References (no page limit)**
- **Letter(s) of support (optional, up to 2-3 letters, maximum 1 page each)**, which may include endorsements from community partners, consultants, or confirmation of data or facilities access needed to complete study.

Reporting Requirements:

- All publications, presentations, and other creative activities resulting from this award must include the following acknowledgement: "Funding was provided, in part, by the Center for Health, Engagement, and Transformation (CHET) at the University of Kentucky."
- One (1) page final report due no later than April 1, 2027, detailing study enrollment, results, dissemination, and plans for future funding. In addition, recipients are expected to be responsive to ongoing contact from the CHET to assess progress and outcomes from the award.

Application deadlines and key dates:

- **October 27, 2025:** Applications due
Early December 2025: Selected Applicants notified
- **Project period:** 12 months from project start date (project start date dependent on IRB approval and disbursement of funds, start date no later than 1/30/2026 unless prior approval is granted).

Please address specific application questions to Laurie McLouth, PhD (laurie.mclouth@uky.edu).

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the CHET Research Committee as well as by selected external reviewers. Scoring of proposals will be based on the standard NIH 9-point scoring system (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/review/rev_prep/scoring.htm). Each proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Significance:** (i.e., Does the project address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the study have potential to generate knowledge relevant to addressing health disparities?)
- **Innovation:** (i.e., Does the proposal utilize novel theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation or apply existing concepts to new populations or problems?)
- **Approach:** (i.e., Are the intended research activities well-described and likely to be feasible? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are study limitations acknowledged/addressed?)

- **Investigator(s):** (i.e., Does the PI have the potential to be an investigator in health disparities research? Does the PI/faculty advisor have the required expertise and experience to conduct the proposed research study?)
- **Evidence of future research and funding potential:** (i.e., Does the proposed research show clear evidence of future potential in research to address health disparities?)

The review committee will also assess whether the **proposed budget and timeline** are appropriate for the scope and nature of the project and whether there are any **human subjects' considerations** that may affect study implementation.