



Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship Awards

2025 Call for Applications

The Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences (CCTS) is now accepting applications for the Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship Awards, which will be awarded to four teams, ideally one from each region (El Paso, Houston, Rio Grande Valley/Brownsville, Tyler/East Texas). The CHIRP Fellowship supports collaboration between faculty members and a community-based collaborator/organization to conduct new, unfunded research and pilot studies that will address a community-identified need. Through this program, community-engaged partnerships are expected to develop innovative and impactful research projects that are conducted in community and clinical settings and have the potential to lead to community-engaged research opportunities. Teams will receive community-engaged proposal development training, resources, and mentorship from experts in their field of study to refine a protocol and submit to the IRB. Upon completion of the training and IRB approval, each team will receive \$20,000 to implement their research.

For this program, community-engaged research is defined as the following:

“...the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional, state, national, and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Applicants must propose work conducted within a partnership between community organizations and academic researchers at a participating university. Proposals may focus on clinical research, or on health-promotion and disease prevention strategies, but must be driven by community need. Proposals require involvement of a community partner in all aspects of the study plan, from design and execution to interpretation and dissemination of results. Examples of appropriate projects include, but are not limited to, the following: (1) qualitative (e.g., interviews), quantitative (e.g., surveys), and mixed method studies to learn more about a community health issue(s); (2) development, implementation, or evaluation of a research intervention or community program that will inform future community-engaged research; and (3) health services research projects that utilize community organization databases (e.g., FQHC, schools) to investigate differences in health outcomes.

If you are uncertain whether your project will qualify, please email us at CHIRP@mdanderson.org.

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Prospective applicants are invited to attend a one-hour webinar on “Understanding the RFA” **Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 1 pm CST**. Questions may be submitted in advance of the webinar at registration. To register for the webinar,* please visit: <https://mdacc.zoom.us/meeting/register/x5z0Q4GjQuKrdpvjBGvUkg#/registration>.

Recordings of the webinar and responses to FAQs will be shared upon request.

*Dates and times are subject to change. Please register for the webinar to be notified of any changes.

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Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP)

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to engage community members and academic partners in all aspects of the research process to promote health, reduce the risk of illness and disease, and build community resilience to help transform health care for the benefit of all populations.

Goals

- Incentivize and foster translational research through community-academic partnerships
- Encourage shared identification of community health priorities
- Advance the CHIRP community research co-learning curriculum for academic and community partners
- Promote lasting academic and community partnerships
- Stimulate subsequent research funding, projects, and peer-reviewed publications

Overview and Competencies

The program provides formal training and project funds for teams comprised of a Community member/organizer and an Academic Partner interested in engaging in collaborative community research.

We are accepting applications for the Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship Awards through January 12, 2026 at 5 p.m. CST.

Participants successfully completing the CHIRP Fellowship will have the skills to:

1. Articulate the concepts and components of CHIRP and other methods for community engaged research;
2. Apply CHIRP principles in the conduct of research;
3. Communicate with audiences in both community and academic settings about CHIRP principles and components;
4. Implement a CHIRP project to address a shared community health priority;
5. Incorporate CHIRP principles and approaches in funding applications;
6. Identify three potential funding opportunities for future research in focus area.

Program Requirements & Eligibility

Team Structure

Each team must consist of at least one Community Partner and one Academic Partner. Collaborations with multiple partners across institutions or regions (El Paso, Houston, Rio Grande Valley/Brownsville, Tyler/East Texas) are welcome. The partnership can be new or established.

A Community Partner is defined as an individual(s) who maintains a primary affiliation, whether employee or volunteer, with a community organization. For the purpose of this program, community organization is defined as an organization that has:

- 1) a documented interest in improving the health of the relevant community (e.g., a mission statement); and
- 2) a history of serving the health needs and interests of the relevant community.

These organizations may include, but are not limited to: public schools, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, community-based health provider organizations and/or support groups.

An Academic Partner is an individual(s) with a faculty appointment at CCTS-affiliated institutions including: UTHealth Houston, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, The University of Texas at Tyler, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Rice University, and Texas Tech Health at El Paso. Students and post-docs may be included, but a faculty member will be required to be the Principal Investigator (in collaboration with the community). Faculty members with appointments at CCTS affiliated institutions outside of Houston, Brownsville, Tyler, or El Paso are eligible to apply if one or more community partners is located in one of the aforementioned cities. Applicants will be assessed relative to other in a pool of other applicants based on the location of the community partner.

A minimum of 40% of the funding must be directed to the community collaborator, and the role of the community as it relates to the budget will be a factor in evaluating proposals. A justification is required if faculty salary is supported without salary/time support for the community partner.

Attendance

To ensure each participant has the ability to meet the CHIRP competencies and each team gains the necessary skills to carry out a CHIRP research project, attendance by both the community and academic partners at the Proposal Development Retreat and Monthly Check-Ins are required. The Proposal Development Retreat will be April 9-10, 2026 and Monthly Check-Ins, in accordance with the cohort's availability. Submission of an application is an agreement to attend the retreat and check-ins. Failure to meet program attendance requirements and complete course activities may result in not receiving funding and certification of completion.

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Training

Each member of the teams accepted into the CHIRP must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training before funds are disbursed. Team members must complete the training individually. Teams will receive additional information on how to complete CITI training when they are accepted into the program. Training may vary by institution of the academic partner.

Points of Contact

Applicants must designate the academic department financial point of contact who will manage the CHIRP project funds, if awarded.

Program Details

Time Commitment

Fellowship award recipients (hereafter referred to as 'fellows') will attend the two-day Proposal Development Retreat (described below), the Post-pilot Series, and complete session evaluations. During and after the retreat, Fellows will modify and improve their proposal and IRB application in preparation for the May 2026 IRB submission. Fellows will communicate with the program coordinator and mentors throughout the CHIRP project implementation period and complete annual updates after the award term.

Proposal Development Retreat

The Proposal Development Retreat will be in spring 2026, in Houston, Texas. Travel by aircraft (El Paso, RGV and Tyler teams only upon request), lodging and meals during the retreat sessions will be covered prior to the retreat. Travel costs (e.g., car rental and/or mileage) to/from the retreat and meals during travel and outside of retreat sessions will be reimbursed. The retreat will include team building for Community and Academic Partners and skills building to improve proposals before IRB submission. Please note the retreat is an in-person event.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is offered to assist teams before and after they have collected pilot data. The sessions include Evaluation, Dissemination and Implementation, Grantsmanship, Budgets, Manuscript Development, and Future Funding. Technical assistance will be offered virtually.

Mentorship

Each team will have access to the CHIRP team faculty as mentors to help guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of the CHIRP project.

CHIRP Study Proposal Development

Each team prepares and submits a preliminary CHIRP study proposal and budget as part of the CHIRP application. During the Proposal Development Retreat, teams will receive assistance from CCTS faculty and staff to refine and review the proposal. Teams will refine their CHIRP proposals and are expected to submit final documents for IRB review by May 2026.

CHIRP Project Funds

Once all approvals from reviewers and the IRB are received, each team will be awarded \$20,000 to implement the proposed CHIRP project. CHIRP project funds are intended to inform future grant applications by each CHIRP team for state, federal, foundation and other sponsor funding considerations.

All CHIRP projects must be completed by the end of May 2027, with a final report due on June 23, 2027.

Key Dates

Date	Event Name		Speaker
RFA Release date: September 2025			
Oct 9, 2025	Webinar: Understanding the RFA	Learn about Requests for Applications	
CHIRP University Starts			
Oct 16, 2025	How to Find Community Partners & Be an Equitable Partner	Explore strategies for equitable community engagement	Theresa Q. Tran, MD, MBA, FACEP
Oct 23, 2025	Grantsmanship	Tips and best practices for writing successful grants	Deidra Carroll Coleman, DrPH
Oct 30, 2025	Theoretical Models & Frameworks in CE Research	Understanding CE research frameworks	Lorna H. McNeill, PhD, MPH, FSBM
TBD	CHIRP Partner Match Series	"Speed dating" for community organizations & researchers	TBD
Applications due: Monday, January 12, 2026			
February 2026 - Teams notified of acceptance status			
April 2-3, 2026 - Proposal Development Retreat			
May 2026 IRB submission deadline*			
Following IRB Review and Approval - Grant award disbursement			
Upon receipt of funding Start of CHIRP projects following IRB approval			
At midpoint study completion CHIRP project midpoint summary due			
June 2027 Completion of CHIRP projects			
Scheduled Check-Ins			
June 25, 2027 - Final CHIRP project report due			
OTHER REQUIRED CHIRP ACTIVITIES			
Intermittent	Surveys and activities		
Annually	Brief survey to report outcomes related to CHIRP projects and training such as publications, funding, and partnerships		

Application Process

I. Full Application

Submission Instructions

1. Due date: 5 PM (CST), January 12, 2026
2. What to submit: One consolidated PDF of the application requirements A-D below in addition to the online application
3. To submit, go to the CHIRP webpage (<https://redcap.link/CHIRP1>)
4. Complete the online application form to answer questions on the next page.

Research Application

The research application will be submitted as part of the proposal and used to assess the potential of the project and partnership. Funded CHIRP Fellows will expand upon and refine their research approach during the Proposal Development Retreat.

- I. Project title.
- II. Abstract. (<50 words)
- III. The problem. (≤200 words)
What health* problem are you planning to explore? What community will you be working with? Include national or local data to support this problem when relevant.
- IV. The research question. (≤350 words)
What research question do you plan to explore? What are your research aims? Please include 2-4 research aims. Explanation of research aims can be found at <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/draft-specific-aims>. Please keep in mind feasibility. The research will need to be completed in six months with a budget of \$20,000.
- V. The contribution of the research to the community. (≤250 words)
Why is this research question important to the community? What does it add to our current knowledge? How is it innovative?
- VI. The contribution of the research to science. (≤250 words)
Why is this research question important to the community? What does it add to our current knowledge? How is it innovative?
- VII. How was the research question identified? (≤150 words)
Did the academic or community partner identify it? What was the process for prioritizing this question over others?
- VIII. How will you test your research question? (≤350 words)
What is your research approach? This will include the methods you plan to use (e.g., surveys, focus groups, biomarkers), the number of people to be included, and the analyses you plan to conduct to answer your research question.
- IX. Tell us about the partnership and research team. (≤250 words)
Who are the project directors/principal investigators on the study? What are their qualifications to complete this work? Do the researchers and community partners have an established relationship with this community? How does the community organization engage the community? What population do they currently serve?

X. Timeline. (≤100 words)

This project will need to be completed in six months with no opportunity for extension beyond June 2027. Provide your main study activities and the date of anticipated completion.

XI. Budget justification. (≤150 words)

Briefly describe all costs in the budget and the distribution of costs between the academic and community partner. Please provide a justification if salary time is provided for the academic partner but there is no comparable time for the community partner.

Required Appendices

Budget and Justification

Provide an overview of the budget to ensure the proposal is feasible. Include the Academic Partner's Finance Department contact information.

While it is good practice to use NIH guidelines, for the purposes of this application, you may use Attachment A (below) to generate a summarized budget and budget justification.

Biographical Sketches / Resumes

CHIRP Academic Partners are required to submit an NIH-formatted biosketch. For a template, examples, and more information, please visit <https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application/forms-directory/biosketch>. A biographical sketch, also known as a biosketch, is a standardized format to summarize achievements, skills, education and formal training.

CHIRP Community Partners have the option of submitting an NIH-formatted biosketch or a resume describing their experience, education, accomplishments, and awards.

Partnership Agreement

The Community and Academic Partners must agree to terms of the program participation.

Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed and scored under a two-step process:

1) Eligibility Criteria Screening Process – All applications are screened for eligibility by CCTS staff and leadership. Applications received after the due date and time WILL NOT be reviewed.

2) Panel Review Process – All applications successfully meeting the minimum eligibility requirements will be reviewed and scored by a community-academic review panel based on responses to the questions in the application. These may include:

- Significance and Innovation
- Investigators
- Approach
- Environment
- Overall Potential of Application
- Community Need
- Sustainability
- Community Impact

3) Scoring – Applications are scored using the 9-point NIH scoring system.

Strength Score Descriptor		
High	1	Exceptional
	2	Outstanding
	3	Excellent
Medium	4	Very Good
	5	Good
	6	Satisfactory
Low	7	Fair
	8	Marginal
	9	Poor

Notice of Award

Successful applicants will be notified if they have been accepted into the program by February 2026.

Application Checklist

- Online Application
- One consolidated PDF of the application requirements:
- Draft Budget and Financial Contact
- Biographical Sketches / Resumes
- Partnership Agreement
- Authorized Signing Official (applicable if community partner on the project is not an authorized signing officer)

Please do not submit additional documents (e.g., diagrams, references, other supplemental information, etc.). The reviewers will not receive additional documents, and submitting them may result in your team's application being disqualified.

Contact

For more information about the CHIRP Fellowship Awards, please contact email us at CHIRP@mdanderson.org.

Attachment A: Budget Example

Academic Partner's Finance Department Contact Information (name, email, phone):

Activity	Description	Cost \$
Salary Support	Person X will spend 5% time on the project (salary=\$80,000, benefits= 32%) = \$5,280 Person Y will spend 10% time on the project (salary=\$75,000, benefits= 32%) = \$5,280	15,180
Transportation	Academic/Community1 roundtrips, 2 trips X 98 = \$196	1,376
	Community1/Community2 9 trips X 98 p/trip= \$882 (262 miles X .375)	
	Academic/Community 2 two roundtrips 134 miles=50 roundtrip= \$100 for 2 trips	
	Community1, 2 round trips, 186 miles p/round trip, 186x.375=70; 70 x 2 trips= \$140	
	Mileage for Community2, approx. 5 trips at 20 miles p/trip= \$58	
Working snacks/refreshments; Pre-study pilot testing; and focus groups, results discussion and items assessment	Supplies for 4 focus groups - 40 participants X \$10 each= \$400	1,300
	Pre-meeting pilot testing - 15 people X \$10 each= \$150	
	Results meeting and post survey - 50 people X \$15= \$750	
Incentives	Incentive 4 focus groups, 8 people in each group= \$20x32 people= \$640	1,690
	15 interviewed subjects, \$20 X 15 interviewees= \$300	
	In person interviews completion by organizational partners- 15 interviews-\$50 each= \$750	
Transcription of focus group sessions	Transcription is \$400 p/focus group- \$400 X 4= \$1600	1,600
Child care	Child care - \$25 p/hour for 2 caregivers for 6 meetings approx. 2 hours each- \$25 X 12 X 2= \$600	600
Consultants	Facilitator to conduct focus group and analysis= \$2,250	3,050

	Interview Analysis and final report= \$800	
Materials and supplies	Design and printing of a booklet with study findings to be shared with participant stakeholders= \$200	200
Total		\$24,996

Attachment B: CHIRP Partnership Agreement

Partnership Agreement Between Community Partner and Academic Partner

The purpose of this CHIRP Partnership Agreement is to mutually acknowledge a commitment to a working relationship between the Community and Academic Partner related to activities of the CCTS Community Health Initiated Research Partnership Program (CHIRP).

Each partner is responsible for attending didactic and consultation meetings scheduled by the CHIRP Fellowship. In addition, each partner is accountable for his/her contributions to the development and implementation of a CHIRP project on a health promotion topic. It is expected that each partner contributes 50% of the time necessary for development and implementation. In addition, each partner is committed to the growth and development of the community-academic partnership with the intent to position the partnership for further grant funding upon the conclusion of the CHIRP Fellowship.

This partnership agreement specifically applies to the duration of the CHIRP Fellowship.

Should either partner feel the terms of this agreement are not being met, he/she should contact us at CHIRP@mdanderson.org. Termination of this agreement shall be in consultation with leadership.

Your signature below indicates your agreement to the terms outlined above.

Community Partner*

Date

Printed Name

Academic Partner

Date

Printed Name

*If the community partner on this project is not an authorized signing officer, the signature of an authorized signing official at the organization (e.g., CEO, President, COO, Vice President) is required to sign Form C to confirm organizational commitment to the project.

Attachment C: Authorized Signing Official Form Template

(Only required if community partner on the project is not an authorized signing officer)

Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship Awards Community Health Initiated Research Partnership Authorized Signing Official Consent Form

Purpose and Overview

The Center for Clinical and Translational Sciences (CCTS) is now accepting applications for the Community Health Initiated Research Partnership Community Health Initiated Research Partnership (CHIRP) Fellowship award. This fellowship provides training and research project funds to teams consisting of a Community and Academic Partner who have interests in community research.

The goal of this program is to increase the capacity of community-academic partnerships to conduct community research with mutual ownership of the processes and products, and ultimately, improve the health of our communities. After successfully completing the CHIRP Fellowship, participants will meet the following competencies:

1. Articulate the concepts and components of CHIRP and other methods for community engaged research.
2. Apply CHIRP principles in the conduct of research.
3. Communicate with audiences in both community and academic settings about CHIRP principles and components.
4. Implement a CHIRP project to address a shared community health priority.
5. Incorporate CHIRP principles and approaches in funding applications.
6. Develop a plan for subsequent CHIRP funding.

Participation Requirements

All participants are required to attend the two-day Proposal Development Retreat (April 9-10, 2026). The implementation of the CHIRP project must be completed by June 2027. The funds available for this project do not cover salary support for either of the PIs and are intended to prepare the team to apply for future CHIRP grants.

I give my consent for ____[Insert Participant name]_____ to participate in the Community Health Initiated Research Partnership Fellowship from February 2026 to June 2027.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Title

Organization