ICTR Pilot Award Program
2022 CLINICAL & COMMUNITY OUTCOMES RESEARCH (CCOR) Pilot Award
Scientific Review and Scoring Information

Up to three independent and non-conflicted scientific reviewers are assigned to each proposal based on methodological and/or content expertise. Each reviewer independently assigns an <u>Overall Impact</u> score using the NIH 9-point rating scale using the Scoring Calibration Guide (p. 4).

Additional Notes on Assigning an Overall Impact Score: Considering the review criterion listed below and the constraints of a one-year $75,000 pilot award, the overall impact score should reflect the reviewer's assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained and strong influence on the research field(s) involved.

- An application does not need to be strong in all criterion/sections to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. For example, a project that by its nature is NOT innovative may be essential to advance a field.
- Each criterion/section should have its own consideration. We don't require a score for each section, but we do request bulleted comments for each criterion/section.
- The overall impact score should reflect the merit of the application as a whole. The reviewer comments should validate the score chosen, and the overall strengths and weaknesses should support that score.
- Comments will be shared with applicants and should be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen a future application. Scores are not shared with applicants.

Application Sections/Review Criterion

<u>**Significance:**</u> The PI has made a strong case that the project addresses an important problem or addresses a critical barrier to progress in the field.

<u>**Investigator:**</u> Are the PI and research team well-suited to this project? If the PI is a junior investigator, do they have the appropriate experience, training and mentoring? If the PI is a more established PI, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced the field (i.e., publications, external peer-reviewed funding success)?

<u>**Environment**</u>: Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Will the project benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, subject populations, or collaborative arrangements?

<u>**Approach**</u>: Do the feasibility, conceptual framework, specific aims, study design, methodology, and data analysis and interpretation, exhibit high scientific quality? Has the PI addressed potential problems and alternative strategies if applicable?

<u>**Innovation:**</u> Is the project original and innovative? For example, does the project challenge existing paradigms or practice? Does it address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

<u>**For projects that meet the NIH definition of a clinical trial**</u>: Please refer to the NIH review criteria specific to clinical trials (see <u>here</u>) and comment as appropriate. <u>NIH Definition of a Clinical Trial</u>: A research study in which one or more human subjects are prospectively assigned to one or more interventions (may include placebo or other control) to evaluate the effects of those interventions on health-related biomedical or behavioral outcomes.

<u>**Plans for collaboration / engagement / dissemination**</u>: This RFA requires meaningful engagement of relevant community partners/invested groups/stakeholders. Has the PI sufficiently explained the community partners/invested groups/stakeholders that will benefit from this research and how they're involved in the research? Is there evidence that community partners/invested groups/stakeholders were involved in developing the research question?

➢ For early stage research questions, does the PI show evidence of communicating with logical end-users of the research?

> For more advanced pilots, does the PI involve community-based collaborators in the research design, use community-based study sites, and/or involve the group targeted for an intervention in aspects of the study?
> Does the proposal include a viable dissemination plan that is appropriate for the scope of the project, intended audience and tailors dissemination efforts to that audience?
> Do letters of support confirm collaborator interest in the research question as well as their role in the project (if applicable)?
> If developing/testing an intervention, does the applicant consider potential adopters as stakeholders in this project (see more on this below).

Plans for identifying and maximizing feasibility of adoption: Does the proposal involve developing or testing an intervention? If yes, the RFA states the research team should describe how they will engage potential **adopters** in their research or justify why they're not engaging potential adopters. Engaging potential adopters early in research ensures that interventions being developed and studied will be feasible for large-scale implementation in the future. Applicants are encouraged to engage with more than one adopter organization in the proposal, if possible. A potential adopter is a decision-maker from an organization that could take up an intervention and implement it to benefit its target group (e.g. community members, patients). Decision-makers of adopter organizations would typically include administrative leadership (e.g., Directors usually determine priorities in terms of projects/programs the organization will take on, and identifies resources needed to make them successful).

> Has the PI addressed how the intervention might be adopted by target organizations or groups? Does the PI discuss an approach to engaging potential adopters? Does the PI discuss how they will identify barriers to /facilitators of adoption?

Likelihood of leading to new peer-reviewed funding. The intent of this pilot awards program is to support the investigator in their efforts towards securing larger grants; therefore, strong evidence must be offered to show that gathering pilot data is a crucial step towards building a research career. **Is this proposal likely to lead to new peer-reviewed grant submissions?**

Future Considerations – Policy Implications: Has the applicant adequately addressed the potential for this research (if successful) to inform organizational or public policies in the future?

Addressing Health Disparities/Health Equity: While a health disparities/health equity focus may be considered a strength, the overall impact score will reflect the reviewer assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved in consideration of all the review categories. An applicant does not need to be strong in all criterion/sections to be judged likely to have major scientific impact.
> Does the applicant give adequate consideration to issues of health disparities/inequities related to the research topic in the state of Wisconsin?
> If the proposed pilot research **does not** address health disparities/equity, does the applicant adequately justify?
> If the proposal **does address** health equity/health disparities, please consider other parts of the application with regards to the following:
>   o Has the applicant described how the proposed work specifically addresses the mechanism of the health disparity or how the work will impact the health of the specific population group experiencing the inequity in Wisconsin?
>   o Has the applicant cited published evidence that the health disparity/inequity is recognized by state/federal agencies as significant and warrants intervention?
>   o Are the PI and research team well-suited to conduct the proposed project? Does the investigator have the appropriate relationships, experience, training, resources and/or mentoring? Are the PI, collaborators, and stakeholders well suited to the project?

Appropriateness of budget request. Is the proposed project feasible under the proposed budget? Is the budget adequately justified? There is an expectation that a subset of the award will support community

collaborators/stakeholders. If not paying community/stakeholder partners is it well justified? To make sure the available funds benefit as many projects as possible, only essential elements of grant requests will be awarded.

Special Criteria. Each pilot proposal is required to address two special criteria (options listed in table below). **Has the applicant incorporated the special criteria in a manner that strengthens the proposal?**

Options for Special Criteria		
• New junior-senior investigator collaboration • UW-Madison-Marshfield collaboration	• Interdisciplinary collaboration • UW-System School/UW-Extension collaboration	• ICTR-CAP program collaboration • Science of Community Engagement
• **Topic areas:** Contemporary and/or emerging health crises, racial/ethnic disparities in health, rural health disparities, social determinants of health, mental/behavioral health, substance use disorders, pediatrics/geriatrics.		

Collaboration Plan*.* Does the team have a credible collaboration plan?

Overall Impact. Does this study address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the application are achieved, will scientific knowledge, clinical practice, community health programs or health policy be affected / advanced?

Major Strengths of the proposal:

•

•

•

Notable Weaknesses of this proposal:

•

•

•

OVERALL IMPACT SCORE (See Scoring Calibration Guide on last page): _____ (whole numbers only)

Notes about Overall Impact Score: Considering the other pilot review criteria and the constraints of a one-year $75,000 pilot award, the overall impact score should reflect the reviewer's assessment of the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained and strong influence on the research field(s) involved.

• An application does not need to be strong in all criterion/sections to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. For example, a project that by its nature is NOT innovative may be essential to advance a field.

• Each criterion/section should have its own consideration. We don't require a score for each section, but we do request bulleted comments for each criterion/section.

• The overall impact score should reflect the merit of the application as a whole. The reviewer comments should validate the score chosen, and the overall strengths and weaknesses should support that score.

• Comments should be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen a future application

Scoring Calibration Guide

Please use the following 9-point rating scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) noting the anchors listed below. Numerically high scores (e.g., scores of 7-9) reflect applications that have **major weaknesses** while numerically low scores (e.g., 1-3) are associated with **very strong** applications. Reviewers are asked to utilize the whole scoring range. For NIH guidance on the Overall Impact score see here.

How do reviewers develop the overall score and narrative?
Each criterion should have its own consideration, but the ***overall score should reflect the merit of the application as a whole***. The written critique should validate the score chosen by the reviewer by stating the overall strengths and weaknesses that support the score. The reviewer comments should provide feedback that will be informative and helpful to the applicant to strengthen their application.

Scores	Descriptor	Anchor
1	**Exceptional**	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	**Outstanding**	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	**Excellent**	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses*
4	**Very Good**	Strong with numerous minor weaknesses*
5	**Good**	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness**
6	**Satisfactory**	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses**
7	**Fair**	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness***
8	**Marginal**	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses***
9	**Poor**	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses***

*Minor weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact
**Moderate weakness: A weakness that lessens impact
***Major weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact