

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: MCW-led Seed Grants

Applications Due: September 12, 2022 by 5:00 pm CST

Supporting MCW faculty to develop new approaches, test innovative ideas, and foster greater collaboration to build a foundation to address Wisconsin's leading health challenges



AW ADVANCING A HEALTHIER
WISCONSIN ENDOWMENT

Issued: August 2022

Jessica Herzog
Program Manager
(414) 955-4754
jeherzog@mcw.edu

Contents

Overview **3**

 AHW Overview 3

 Funding Summary 3

 Application and Review Process Timeline 3

Funding Details **4**

 Description 4

 Applicant Eligibility 4

 Budget Requirements 5

 Application and Review Process 6

 Human and Animal Research Protection 10

Application Resources **11**

Overview

Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment Overview

At the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW), we are driven by a vision for a healthier Wisconsin.

As Wisconsin's largest health improvement philanthropy, AHW seeks to propel the most promising work and ideas to improve health and advance health equity in Wisconsin today, and for generations to come. We do that by *investing* in high-impact, promising work; *connecting* people, research, and academic medicine to break down silos and build up relationships across sectors and communities; and *influencing* how ideas and knowledge can become action to inform programs, policies, and practices.

We aim to accelerate innovation, collaboration, and impact by responding to research- and community-identified needs. Learn more about [our story](#), [how we work](#), and [our focus areas](#).

Funding Summary

AHW's *Call for Applications: MCW-led Seed Grants* supports MCW faculty to develop new approaches and methodologies, test innovative ideas, and foster greater collaboration to build a foundation for larger research and healthcare provider workforce development endeavors to address Wisconsin's leading health challenges and produce deeper impact on health and health equity in Wisconsin. Applicants may request up to \$50,000 for projects completed within a 12-month period.

To foster a collaborative approach to award selection, applicants will participate in a peer review process to assess proposals submitted to this funding opportunity by their fellow applicants. For the submitted application to be considered for funding, completion of all assigned reviews by the peer reviewer identified for the application is required.

Application and Review Process Timeline

August-September 2022

Consult with AHW program manager to review proposed project scope and fit with RFA

By August 29, 2022

Share draft application with AHW program manager for feedback

Monday, September 12, 2022 (required)

Applications due by 5:00pm CST via the [online application form](#)

Within three business days of email request for signatures (required)

Electronic signatures due from key personnel by 5:00pm CST via an AHW-initiated DocuSign process

September 26-October 19, 2022 (required)

Engage in peer review process via online review platform

Mid-November 2022

Notification of funding decisions

January 1, 2023

Project Start Date

Funding Details

Description

AHW's *Call for Applications: MCW-led Seed Grants* aims to support MCW faculty to develop new strategies, test innovative ideas, and foster greater collaboration to address Wisconsin's leading health challenges. Seed grant projects will allow applicants to prepare for larger endeavors leading to deeper long-term impact on health and health equity for Wisconsin residents. Applicants may request up to \$50,000 for projects completed within a 12-month period.

This funding opportunity supports planting the seeds for initial exploration to lead to larger and lasting efforts to improve health. Eligible projects may be focused on a variety of activities, such as (but not limited to) exploring novel research strategies, pursuing innovative workforce development and educational initiatives for the current and future health workforce, promoting new approaches to advance health, and gathering and analyzing data to inform future ventures and disseminate novel evidence and findings.

Applicants will clearly identify a health need, an immediate gap in knowledge or practice, and propose research methods to test a new approach to address the gap and inform future efforts to impact the health need. Successful proposals will position the applicant to build upon promising efforts and demonstrate the potential to lead to improved health and well-being for Wisconsin residents. At the conclusion of the award, projects will be poised to continue, scale, or replicate successful approaches and take their efforts to the next level for long-term impact on health and/or health equity.

AHW is committed to supporting new and innovative ideas that advance health equity in Wisconsin. [Health equity \(CDC\)](#) is achieved when every person has the opportunity to "attain his or her full health potential" and no one is "disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances." In addition, AHW encourages projects in alignment with the AHW focus areas of improving heart health, supporting healthy minds, and dismantling cancer, however work outside of these focus areas will also be considered.

Additional Proposal Considerations

- All applications must clearly demonstrate how the proposed project will positively contribute to impacting health and/or health equity in Wisconsin in the long-term.
- Project aims must be distinct from prior or existing funded projects.
- No-cost extensions will not be allowed.
- It is not the intent of AHW funds to be used as bridge funding.

Applicant Eligibility

MCW Principal Investigator

All applications must be led by an eligible MCW principal investigator (PI). The PI must be a full-time or full professional effort MCW faculty member with the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor, and have a primary appointment in the School of Medicine. The PI will be responsible for compliance with fiduciary and reporting requirements, maintaining regular communication with AHW, and ensuring that all project team members receive communications, notifications, and instructions from AHW.

Co-Investigators

Co-Investigators (Co-Is) are optional but encouraged. Co-Is may be faculty at MCW or external institutions outside of MCW.

Collaborators

Collaborators are optional but encouraged and are not subject to the same eligibility requirements as the MCW PI or MCW Co-I. Collaborators may be MCW faculty, staff, students, or experts outside of MCW. Collaborators typically have a smaller role in the project than the PI and any Co-Is (e.g., technical expertise, provide clinical samples), and may or may not receive salary support through AHW funding. Any individual and/or organization listed as a collaborator should be committed to the proposed project and ready to engage in the project based on their specified role, if funded.

Budget Requirements

AHW's investment in this funding opportunity will total approximately \$2 million to support meritorious projects. The exact number of awards will depend on the merit of proposals received. Successful projects will demonstrate an appropriate budget and timeframe for their proposed scope of work. Applicants will be required to provide a detailed budget with justification for all personnel and project expenses. Project budget requests are limited to \$50,000 maximum and project durations are limited to 12-months maximum.

- Project personnel salaries supported by AHW awards are subject to the applicable [NIH salary cap](#) at the project start date.
- The MCW PI must contribute effort to the project for the full award period.
- Award personnel may cost-share their effort. Cost-sharing may support any or all salary put forth. AHW funds may not be used to cost-share effort on any other work.
- AHW awards should not fund relatives/significant others of the MCW PI unless the PI can provide a written justification for how the relative's scientific or technical expertise is required to complete the award/project's aims. It is the responsibility of the PI to disclose the relationships and provide written justification at time of application and request of personnel changes and indicate whether or not an evaluative relationship exists between the PI and relative. MCW PIs are encouraged to refer to [MCW Policy HR.EE.110](#) for further detail.
- All personnel support must be justified, and their specific project roles outlined in the budget justification. AHW funds cannot support general operational activities.
- Equipment costs cannot be more than 50% of the requested AHW budget.

For information on financial compliance and reporting requirements for funded projects, please review the Funded Project Terms and Conditions for MCW-led Seed Grants on the [AHW website](#). By applying for an AHW award, applicants agree to these terms and conditions.

Supplanting Criteria

AHW was established as the result of a generous financial gift made by Blue Cross & Blue Shield United of Wisconsin to the people of Wisconsin, giving AHW the extraordinary responsibility to steward this financial gift on behalf of Wisconsin residents. As such, AHW adheres to requirements as defined in a March 28, 2000 Order of the Commissioner of Insurance which requires that AHW funds (the Funds) "may not be used to supplant funds or resources otherwise available." AHW, via MCW, must report annually on its determination that the Funds do not supplant other resources that may be available to accomplish the same purposes. [Supplanting criteria](#) can be found on the AHW website.

Prior to final funding recommendations and approval, AHW and/or its oversight body, the AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC), will assess whether other financial resources exist or are available for the project, including an assessment of whether the applicants have other financial resources available for the project. Applicants must certify that no financial resources will be supplanted and provide a complete listing of current funding sources for the project or similar other projects.

Allowable Expenses & Funding Restrictions

Funds can only be used for direct project-specific expenses, which include salary and benefits for personnel directly involved in the project and direct expenses including supplies, travel, etc.

Funds may not be used for:

- Projects conducted outside of Wisconsin
- Indirect costs such as ongoing operating expenses for routine functions and principal programs
- Debt reduction
- Entertainment or alcoholic beverages
- Lobbying
- Reimbursement solely for patient care or clinical service delivery
- Publishing fees to benefit education or research in general
- Stipends
- Supplanting

View a complete list of [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#) on the AHW website.

Application and Review Process

AHW's *Call for Applications: MCW-led Seed Grants* uses a one-stage application and multi-stage review process.

Application Process

All applicants that meet the eligibility requirements should submit an application via the [online application form](#) available on the AHW website. Applications must be submitted via the online form by **5:00 pm CST on September 12, 2022**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Please use the following instructions to prepare the application for final submission via the online form by the deadline. Applicants must answer all required fields and follow the restrictions set within the online form. No paper or emailed applications will be considered, and no attachments beyond those specifically requested in the following instructions will be accepted.

When filling out the online form, you may save your progress and resume at a later time by checking 'Save my progress and resume later' in the upper right-hand corner of the form. If saving, please follow the system prompts to save and re-access the form. Only one applicant team member may begin and save the online form by creating a login (email address and password) that will allow that individual to return to saved work. We recommend you designate one individual to enter the completed application information online.

The application includes the following sections:

- 1. Online Form**

The application form provides general project information and must be completed via the [online form](#) accessible on the AHW website. The online form includes:

- Project title and goal statement
- Requested award amount and project duration
- MCW PI contact information and optional demographic information
- Optional Co-I and collaborator information
- AHW alignment information
- Project team member serving as peer reviewer

2. **Narrative** (attachment)

The narrative is the applicant’s opportunity to describe their project in detail. Project narratives must be uploaded as an attachment in the indicated location within the online form. Responses to all sections of the narrative are required, and the narrative is limited to a maximum of four (4) pages, not including citations, using 0.5” margins and 11pt font, single-spaced.

Organize the narrative in the order specified below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading and use lay friendly language as much as possible. We encourage applicants to be clear and concise, and insert graphics, tables, and charts when applicable and within the allowable page limit.

- **Project Need and Intended Impact**
 - Describe the health or health equity need that the project aims to address, why it is a priority in Wisconsin, the target population to be impacted, and the larger vision and impact on health or health equity that this project will contribute towards achieving
- **Project Aims and Approach**
 - Describe the key activities and research methods to accomplish the project aims in alignment with the implementation plan (detailed below)
- **Project Recruitment and Evaluation Strategies**
 - Describe the recruitment strategies for any project or study participants (i.e., research study participants, survey respondents, focus group participants, pilot site enrollment, etc.), if applicable. Study recruitment does not include recruitment of any project staff or team members.
 - Describe the evaluation strategies to assess the project outcomes and demonstrate success to inform future efforts
- **Project Team**
 - Describe the roles and responsibilities of each core project team member, and their experience or expertise that makes them best suited to carry out that role
 - Describe how the project team will ensure a successful collaboration or why a collaboration is not needed to carry out the project and demonstrate that the appropriate team members are engaged
- **Citations** (no page limit)
 - Include all references cited in the narrative. Each reference should include the names of all authors, the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Applicants should be especially careful to follow scholarly practices in providing citations for source materials used in the preparation of the application.

3. **Implementation Plan** (attachment using AHW provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))

The implementation plan summarizes the project's proposed aims and objectives. Applicants must complete the implementation plan using the AHW-provided form and ensure that the specific aims and objectives reflect those outlined in the narrative.

All aims must have at least one objective. Timelines should reflect the requested project period and all listed aims and objectives must be completed during the project period. Timelines of objectives can overlap, but the implementation plan should present a feasible and logical project progression.

Applicants selected for funding will be required to report annually on the extent to which they have met their aims and objectives with respect to the implementation plan and the research methods and anticipated outcomes detailed in the narrative. Reporting on the implementation plan and other project-specific materials will be used by AHW when evaluating the project work.

4. **Budget Workbook** (attachment using AHW provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))
Applicants must complete the Total Project Budget table (tab 2) following the guidelines detailed in the Budget Instructions (tab 1) in the budget workbook (Excel). Please verify that the total budget amount on the Total Project Budget table equals the total amount requested for the project on the online form.

If needed, a separate Subcontract Budget table (tab 3) should be completed for each subcontract. Please verify that the Subcontract Line in the Total Project Budget table (tab 2) reflects the yearly total from the Subcontract Budget table (tab 3). If additional Subcontract Budget tables are needed, please email the AHW program manager listed on this call for applications with the number of subcontract forms needed, and we will provide your project team with a revised budget workbook.

When developing the budget, please refer to the detailed Budget Instructions (tab 1), the complete list of [Allowable and Unallowable Costs](#) on the AHW website, and the Budget Requirements section above.

5. **Budget Justification** (attachment using AHW provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))
Applicants must complete the Total Project Budget Justification section representing the total AHW budget request. The budget justification must include descriptions of all funded positions on the project and all direct expense line items. Descriptions of personnel support must include their specific roles and responsibilities on the project. Applicants should follow the guidelines and descriptions provided in the Budget Instructions (tab 1) in the budget workbook.

If needed, a separate Subcontract Budget Justification section of the budget justification form should be completed to accompany each separate Subcontract Budget table. If additional Subcontract Budget Justification sections are needed, please email the AHW program manager listed on this call for applications with the number of additional sections needed, and we will provide your project team with a revised budget justification form.

6. **Non-Supplanting Attestations** (attachment using AHW provided form accessible from the Forms section of the funding opportunities page on the [AHW website](#))
Non-supplanting attestations are used to identify existing or available funding for the proposed project and to determine whether such existing or available funding would be replaced with financial support by AHW funds. A separate non-supplanting attestation form must be completed by all key project partners, including:

- MCW PI
- Each Co-I included within the online form
- Any additional project partners labeled as investigator within the application

7. Signatures

Following successful submission of the completed application through the online form and technical review, signatures will be required via an AHW-initiated DocuSign process from the following individuals to indicate their awareness and support of the submitted application:

- MCW PI and their respective MCW Department Chair or Center leadership
- Each MCW Co-I included within the online form
- Any additional project partners labeled as investigator within the application and completing a non-supplanting attestation

Following submission and technical review, each of the individuals above will receive an email with instructions to complete and submit their electronic signature. **Required signatures must be submitted within three business days of receiving the signature request**, to complete the submission and advance to the peer review.

Review Process

Technical Review

All submitted applications will undergo technical review by AHW staff to ensure that all requirements are met, including but not limited to eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions.

Peer Review

Peer reviews will be conducted for all applications that pass technical review by a review body consisting of other applicants who applied to this funding opportunity. Each applicant team will identify one project team member in their application to serve as a peer reviewer. The peer reviewer must complete all assigned peer reviews for the submitted application to be eligible for funding consideration.

All applications will be reviewed using the following criteria:

Impact

The proposed project:

- Demonstrates the potential to positively impact health and/or health equity in Wisconsin, either as a direct result of project activities or over the long-term.
- Describes innovative approaches and planned evaluation or assessment to directly inform future efforts to advance health and/or health equity in the long-term.

Feasibility

The proposed project:

- Is led by an eligible MCW PI with optional Co-Is and collaborators to bring the necessary experience and expertise to carry out the project.
- Demonstrates high-quality, rigorous, appropriate research methods to achieve the stated aims.
- Describes a scope which can be completed within the requested project budget and duration.

Peer reviewers will provide scores and written comments for each proposal. The scoring system uses a nine-point scale based on the rating scale used by the National Institutes of Health. The nine-point rating scale is anchored according to the following descriptions:

- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. Exceptional (exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses) | High |
| 2. Outstanding (extremely strong with negligible weaknesses) | |
| 3. Excellent (very strong with only some minor weaknesses) | |
| 4. Very Good (strong but with numerous minor weaknesses) | Medium |
| 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) | Low |
| 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 lessens impact

REAC Review

Following peer review, the AHW Research and Education Advisory Committee (REAC) will review the recommendations from the peer reviewers and approve a slate of proposals to fund. AHW may request that applicants adjust their scope, budget, or timeline based on the outcome of the review process. If necessary, these applicants will be notified and asked to resubmit their adjusted application materials for further review. No negotiations or appeals will be accommodated. Final funding decisions will be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval.

Conflict of Interest

The peer review process follows a Conflict of Interest policy. A conflict of interest is apparent whenever a reviewer's objectivity may be perceived as compromised by the nature of a personal or professional relationship or obligation to an applicant. Reviewers with a conflict of interest pertaining to a proposal's review and/or funding are self-identified and recused from review of that proposal.

Award Determination

Following completion of the review process, notification of conditional award determination are anticipated to be shared with the MCW PI in November 2022.

Human and Animal Research Protection

According to the [MCW Office of Research's Standard Operating Procedure for the Definition And Determination Of Human Subjects Research](#), it is the responsibility of the MCW Institutional Review Board (IRB), staff and committee members to ensure the proper application of the definition of human subjects research and to provide investigators with guidance regarding this definition. Federal regulations define research as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. It is the responsibility of PIs to ensure the proper application of this definition to their human subjects research projects and apply to the IRB for its review. Investigators must submit to the IRB for review prior to initiating the research regardless of whether their activities involve human subjects. Investigators may not independently make the determination whether an activity involves research; the IRB will make the independent determination regarding human research subject involvement.

AHW funding will be contingent upon institutional approvals for the use of human subjects, laboratory animals, or biosafety materials for those projects determined to be research. Research projects funded by AHW must ensure that human and animal participants are protected during the collection of information from award participants and/or the publication or dissemination of award results.

The MCW PI of an AHW-funded award is expected to:

- Confirm with the appropriate regulatory approval offices if IRB, IACUC, or Biosafety regulatory approval is necessary for the proposed project prior to submitting a proposal to AHW.
- Ensure appropriate training and ongoing education necessary to protect the rights and welfare of human participants before and during the award, including maintaining compliance with all human subject policies, regulations, and reporting requirements.
- Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through a Human Research Protection Program at MCW, Froedtert Health, the Veterans Administration, or Children’s Wisconsin or Reliance institutions prior to the award commencing. Each institution has an Institutional Review Board that evaluates awards for compliance with applicable human subject laws and regulations.
- Be accountable for conforming to the basic regulations and policies governing animals at MCW. Obtain approval through Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), if applicable, prior to the award commencing.
- Receive documentation of IRB, IACUC, and/or Safety Committee review and approval prior to the award commencing.

All applicable IRB, IACUC, and Safety Committee protocols must be linked to the funding proposal in the MCW eBridge system (eBridge), which allows MCW researchers to submit, track, report, and archive research activities involving human and animal research conducted at MCW, prior to the completion of account setup and the award number for the project being issued. AHW will initiate the eBridge funding protocol for all projects approved for funding.

Application Resources

Our goal is to support applicants through the application process to the best of our abilities, and we encourage applicants to contact AHW staff with questions throughout the application process.

AHW Online Resources

AHW’s website provides information, application resources, and answers to frequently asked questions related to each funding opportunity and the AHW funding process. Visit the AHW website at www.ahwendowment.org.

A fillable template of the online application form is available for download via the [AHW website](#). The template will not be accepted as a final submission but is designed to be used by the applicant team to prepare their collaborative responses prior to completing and submitting the online form by the application deadline.

Pre-Application AHW Consultation

For an efficient application process, applicants are encouraged to connect with the AHW program manager to discuss their proposed project scope and ensure it is in alignment with the funding opportunity. Applicants are encouraged to connect as early in the development of their proposal as possible. Contact Jessica Herzog at jeherzog@mcw.edu to set up a time to discuss your proposal idea.