



New York and New Jersey (Region II) Education and Research Center  
Pilot projects Research Training Program  
**2023 PILOT PROJECT AWARDS**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

**Overview:**

Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$12,000 are available to occupational safety and health researchers in OSHA/EPA Region II (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Research should be in the occupational safety and health field and should focus on the NIOSH/NORA research priorities (information regarding NORA can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/comment/agendas/default.html>). Furthermore, research topics addressing underrepresented worker populations or occupational health disparities with a goal to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion at workplace and in occupational safety and health research areas are particularly encouraged. Awards will be made for a one-year project period.

The objectives of the ERC Pilot Project Awards are to foster creative and informative research in occupational safety and health, to generate preliminary data for future/subsequent research projects, to enhance career development of outstanding early-stage investigators, to provide supports to investigators seeking new research directions, to encourage trans-disciplinary research collaborations, and to increase opportunities for investigators to recognize the NIOSH/NORA mission and related challenges in this research field. This program provides a pathway for the investigators to turn novel research ideas into fully developed research proposals with the goal of generating preliminary data for larger R01/R03 (or K awards) applications.

**Eligibility:**

- The Principal Investigator (PI) must be affiliated with the institutions within in OSHA/EPA Region II (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), but may

collaborate with researchers outside of Region II with specialties and expertise essential to the project.

- PI must meet one of the following criteria:
  - Trainees (e.g., post-docs, fellows, graduate school students, clinical residents, etc.) interested in advanced training in occupational safety and health research
    - Trainee PI applying for funds must list an advisor/mentor with a faculty position at the same institution. The faculty advisor is responsible for overseeing the progress of the project, expenditure of funds, providing in-depth guidance on research methodologies and implementation, ensuring project completion and the quality of final products/publications, etc.
  - Early-stage investigators and junior faculty needing initial support for innovative research in occupational safety and health who lack support from other sources
    - Junior faculty PIs are also strongly encouraged to identify a mentor at the rank of Associate Professor or higher who can advise on the projects.
  - Investigators working in complementary or non-traditional disciplines who wish to become more actively involved in occupational safety and health research
  - Investigators planning to develop innovative research efforts in collaboration with faculty from Region II ERC
  - Investigators planning to establish new research directions and topics which they had not previously studied
- Stakeholders within Region II are also eligible to apply, provided they are working with a faculty member in the ERC institutes (<http://www.nynjerc.org>).
- Applicants within 7 years of completing their terminal academic degree at the time of application are considered as junior investigators. Trainees and junior investigators will be evaluated with a New Investigator status if they have not previously competed successfully for this ERC Pilot Project Award.
- Previous ERC Pilot Project awardees seeking for new research directions are eligible to apply, but will also be evaluated based on the productivity of the prior awarded project(s).
- Senior faculty and established investigators who have received NIOSH or NIH R01s/R03s or any equivalent grants from other funding sources within the past five years are not eligible to apply as the PI, but are strongly encouraged to serve as mentors.

## **Award Amount and Period:**

Award Amount: The Scientific Review Committee will award grants ranging **from \$5,000 to \$12,000 of total cost** (direct costs + indirect costs with a rate capped at 8% of direct costs). Budget must be directly relevant to the proposed research project. Detailed guidelines of allowed budget types are in the Application Instructions section below.

Award Project Period: **July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 – June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Award Name: New York and New Jersey Education and Research Center, Pilot Projects Research Training Program, 2023 Pilot Project Awards

Federal Award Agencies:

- US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

## **Application Instructions:**

The following materials *must* be submitted by the application deadline **Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 11:59pm EST**. (All applications should include the following contents with the listed order in one PDF document.)

### Format Instructions:

- *Page: 8.5 x 11 inches (letter size)*
- *Margins: 1-inch margins*
- *Font Size: 11-12 point*

1. Cover Page (please use the file "[2023 Pilot Projects\\_CoverPage.docx](#)")

2. Table of Contents

3. Abstract (1-page; 500 words maximum): Provide a summary of the objectives, aims, hypotheses, significance, research plan and expected results. The abstract should also include a brief statement summarizing how the award will enhance the research career of the Principal Investigator (PI), and a description of how the work to be funded by this award will contribute to the development of PI's research career or a new research focus.

4. Biographical Sketch: A concise scientific resume for each person involved in the research (including PI and all mentors/co-investigators, if applicable). Please use the file "[2023 biosketch blank.docx](#)" (NIH PHS 398 biosketch form). A sample biosketch can also be found in the file "[2023 biosketch sample.docx](#)". For more information, see NIH website [here](#).
5. Budget Form: Please use the form "[2023 BUDGET Form ERCmod.docx](#)" (modified version of NIH PHS 398 budget form). Indirect costs are capped at 8% of direct costs. Total cost (direct costs + indirect costs) may not exceed \$12,000.
6. Budget Justification (1 page maximum): Detailed descriptions of each item listed in the Budget Form should be outlined with a justification of its relationship to the proposed work. Budget must be directly relevant and crucial to the proposed research project. Tuitions are not allowed, as the PI (including trainee PI) is expected to already have sufficient knowledge and skill set to complete the project within one year (under the guidance of the mentor of the project, if applicable). Salary for the mentor(s) is not allowed.
7. Research Strategy (within 3 to 5 pages): A single-spaced proposal outlining the proposed research plans, which includes the following sections:
- a) Introduction (background, study purpose, and benefits to the field and region)
  - b) Specific Aims
  - c) Significance/Innovation
  - d) Research Approach (recruitment strategies, data collection methods, exposure and/or outcome assessment, laboratory/analytical methods, statistical approaches, program evaluation, potential pitfalls and alternative approaches, etc.)
  - e) **Plans to overcome any potential obstacles that may occur due to COVID-19**. The proposal *must* be feasible to carry out during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - f) A table/graph demonstrating the proposed timeline from preparation to completion of the project, as well as the PI's plans to prepare for manuscripts to report the findings on research journals. The project should be completed within one year.
8. Career Development and Mentorship Plans (1 page maximum; required for all PIs who are trainees or junior investigators at Assistant Professor or equivalent rank):
- a) Describe PI's career development plans, including short-term and long-term goals, as well as how this proposed pilot project will play a role in enhancing their research career trajectories in the field of occupational safety and health.
  - b) For projects with mentors, describe the mentorship plans that will strengthen the PI's research capability along the course of the project, and detail how the mentor will monitor

the progress of the proposed project in each step, including study design, IRB submission, data collection, feasibility and quality checks, budget tracking, research progress tracking, data analysis, results interpretation, manuscript writings, future grant submission, etc.

Also, describe how the mentorship activities will enhance the PI's career development.

- c) Mentors of the proposed project who had already served in previously awarded PPRTP pilot projects are required to briefly summarize the outputs/productivity of their previously mentored projects as well as career trajectory and status of their past pilot project mentees.

9. List of references/citations: References should be placed at the end of the application document.

10. If applicable, please also attach the documentations which demonstrate appropriate **human/animal subjects protection** and other necessary approvals that have been arranged and received. (Note: All awarded projects should obtain IRB approval before June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Funding cannot be disbursed without such approval in place.)

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Submit the electronic version of the completed application in **one PDF document** by **Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 11:59pm EST** via the following URL link:

<https://bit.ly/NYNJERCpilot2023>

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### **Criteria Used to Evaluate Proposals:**

The following criteria will be used mainly in determining the awards by an independent Scientific Review Committee.

#### **Research/Scientific Criteria:**

- Overall scientific merit: The project should be an original and feasible proposal that demonstrates the applicant's understanding of the field of research. The project should have a great potential to comprehensively address essential and novel topics in the field and provide insights to occupational health implications based on scientific evidence.
- Personnel & Environment: Prior research experience is not necessary. Trainees must list an advisor with a faculty position at the same institution. PI(s) and Co-I(s) should have already received appropriate training and be competent to carry out the study (with their

mentor's guidance, if applicable). Previous awardees of the ERC Pilot Project Awards will also be evaluated based on the productivity of the prior awarded project(s). Trainees and junior investigators who never competed successfully for this Award will be evaluated with a New Investigator status. Institutional supports and resources accessible to the PI's team for conducting the proposed research project should be demonstrated. Individuals already listed as a mentor in a previously awarded PPRTP pilot project should demonstrate productivities and mentorship quality of the previous project(s).

- Significance & Specific Aims: Specific aims and research hypotheses of the project must be clearly listed and defined, and should address important problems or critical barriers to progress in the field. There should be a strong scientific premise for the project. Clear statements and descriptions of the significance of the proposed project must be included.
- Research Strategy / Methods: The methods proposed for carrying out the research must be feasible, innovative, and defined and described clearly. The project should address research gaps and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel and cutting-edge (or a refinement, improvement, or new application to) theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. Statistical and analytic approaches must be appropriate for answering the research questions. In addition, the research plans must be feasible and already have specific strategies to overcome the potential implementation obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Timeline and productivity: The timeline should be clearly presented and feasible for completing the project in one year. The PI and the research team should show strong intentions to publish the results/findings of this project on a scientific research journal.
- Career development and mentorship plans: This section is required for the projects with a PI who is a trainee or junior investigator at Assistant Professor or equivalent ranks. Career development plans should detail the PI's short-term and long-term goals on developing skillsets and capacity for research in occupational safety and health, and how this pilot award would help achieve their goals. Mentorship plans should detail how the PI would receive advice/trainings from the mentor(s), as well as the plans to enhance the PI's research capacity/compatibility and to ensure the progress/productivity of the proposed project under the mentor's guidance.

#### **Programmatic Criteria:**

- Meets NIOSH, NORA, and NY/NJ ERC objectives and regional needs: The research priorities identified in NORA will be used to evaluate the relevance of research proposals to the field of occupational safety and health. Research topics related to or methods addressing underrepresented worker populations and occupational health disparities with a goal to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion at workplace and in occupational safety and health research areas are particularly encouraged.

- Builds research capacity among trainees and new investigators: PI(s) should be trainees/junior investigators or researchers seeking new research directions (senior researchers are encouraged to be mentors but not PIs). Proposals should support the PI's research development, and the PI is expected to become a competent and independent researcher who aims for further research activities.
- Likelihood of publications in peer-reviewed journals and/or subsequent future external funding: Proposed project should have a strong potential (and the research team should demonstrate strong intention and abilities) for publications in peer-reviewed journals, obtaining a subsequent larger research grants (e.g., K23, K99/R00, R01, R03, R21, etc.), or applying the technologies/clinical practice/intervention strategies to a broader population for a longer term, in the near future using the data & results generated from this ERC Pilot Project award.
- Addresses underrepresented worker populations and occupational health disparities: Proposals that seek to address occupational health disparities with a goal to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion at workplace and in occupational health and safety research areas are particularly encouraged.
- Involves interdisciplinary approaches and multiple stakeholders: Proposals that seek to involve multidisciplinary researchers & methodologies as well as multiple interested parties – such as employees, organized labor, employers, state officials, academics, etc. – are particularly encouraged. Similarly, proposals that include the participation of NIOSH-supported health and safety training program grantees or investigators at other academic institutions in Region II are specifically encouraged.
- Appropriateness of budget and evidence that the proposed work is not otherwise funded: Budget must be directly relevant and crucial to the proposed research project. Tuitions and mentor's salary are not allowed. If the project utilizes partial data or products from another existing project, the proposal must clearly describe the uniqueness of this application and demonstrate clear evidence that there are *no overlaps* in study aims.

## **Reporting Requirements:**

Successful awardees will be required to:

- Submit IRB approval documents to ERC before June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Submit a mid-term Progress Report by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024; the report should detail any progressions and changes to the research protocol and report essential findings to date.
- Participate in PPRTP's mid-term awardee meeting (late January 2024) to discuss strategies to keep the projects on track and network/exchange experiences with other pilot project awardees and mentors.

- Submit a Final Report at the end of the Award period summarizing research activities and results upon completion of the project.
- Submit an abstract and give a presentation at the ERC Annual Special Research Webinar in fall 2024.
- Submit annual reports on list of presentations, journal manuscript publications and subsequent larger grant submissions/funding (e.g., K23, K99/R00, R01, R03, R21, etc.) that are based on data & results acquired from this ERC Pilot Award, for at least 2 years after completion of project (up to 5 years).

### **Important Dates for 2023 Applicants/Awardees:**

<b>January 13, 2023:</b>	Q&A Information Session for Prospective Applicants
<b>February 5, 2023:</b>	Deadline for Application Submission
<b>April 30, 2023:</b>	Announcement of Awardees
<b>June 30, 2023:</b>	Deadline of IRB Approvals
<b>July 1, 2023:</b>	Project Start Date
<b>January 15, 2024:</b>	Deadline for Mid-Term Progress Report
<b>June 30, 2024:</b>	Project End Date (all funds <i>must</i> be spent before this date)
<b>July 31, 2024:</b>	Deadline for Final Report
<b>November 2024:</b>	Presentation at the Annual ERC Special Webinar
<b>Dec 2024 / Dec 2025:</b>	End-of-Year Annual Follow-Up Reports (mandatory for 2 years post-project, up to 5 years of tracking)

### **Contact Information:**

#### **Application Materials and Instructions:**

<http://www.nynjerc.org/pilotproject.html>

#### **Application Submission:**

<https://bit.ly/NYNJERCpilot2023>

#### **For Administrative Questions:**

Ms. Giselle Candelario, Program Administrator (Email: [NYNJERC.PilotProjects@mssm.edu](mailto:NYNJERC.PilotProjects@mssm.edu))

#### **For Scientific Questions:**

Dr. Yueh-Hsiu Mathilda Chiu, Program Director (Email: [mathilda.chiu@mssm.edu](mailto:mathilda.chiu@mssm.edu))