Pilot Funding Opportunity
Request for Applications (RFA)

Primary and Secondary Prevention of Eating Disorders

Letter of Intent Due: June 11, 2018 at 5:00pm EDT

I. Key Dates
Opportunity Announced: February 1, 2018
Symposium Date: April 30, 2018
Letter of Intent Due: June 11, 2018 at 5pm EDT
Selection Decisions Announced: June 29, 2018
Required Community Engagement Studio: July 17 or July 18, 2018 (between 12PM-5PM)
Full Application Due: September 14, 2018
Funding Decisions Announced: by November 15, 2018
Anticipated Funding Start Date: January 2, 2019

II. Award Amount
Applicants may request awards up to $50,000, direct costs only, for a period of one year. The actual amount of the award will be determined by considering project details at the time of the award.

III. Overview and Goals
The Harvard Catalyst Health Disparities Research Program increases the prominence and impact of health disparities research at Harvard. The program promotes health equity by facilitating new collaborative research, education, and training opportunities in the biomedical, clinical, health policy, and social sciences to address racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, sexual orientation, and other disparities in health and healthcare. With this announcement, the Harvard Catalyst invites applications for pilot grants to support novel research partnerships with the potential to: (1) generate new evidence or methodologies that foster deeper understanding of eating disorders and health disparities, or (2) evaluate promising interventions to address these disparities.

This pilot grant opportunity seeks to engage a broad range of clinical, public health, public policy, law, education, and other investigators from across the Harvard community, and will provide seed money for cutting-edge, collaborative, interdisciplinary translational research to enhance understanding of eating disorders disparities and primary and secondary prevention efforts that may address these disparities. Through this mechanism, we seek to support teams of investigators that ultimately will be self-sustaining, thus laying the groundwork for an even broader and more robust community of eating disorders and health disparities investigators than exist at present.

LOIs deemed most responsive and with high impact potential will be invited to attend a Community Engagement Studio (Section VII) and submit a full proposal. The funding period is anticipated to begin on January 2, 2019 and should be completed within one calendar year.
IV. Research Priority Areas

This award mechanism is an opportunity to conduct research in primary and secondary prevention of eating disorders and, more broadly, disordered eating and disordered weight and shape control behaviors and symptoms. While this pilot opportunity welcomes a broad range of proposals, four areas of particular interest include:

1. **Effectiveness and Dissemination Studies of Primary and Secondary Preventive Interventions**
   Dozens of preventive interventions have been examined in efficacy evaluations, but very few in effectiveness evaluations and fewer still have been evaluated at the dissemination/sustainability stages of intervention research. Applicants are encouraged to apply the methods of dissemination and implementation sciences to: primary preventive interventions targeting factors contributing to risk of eating disorders or disordered eating or weight and shape control behaviors and symptoms; or to secondary prevention via early detection and referral to care, particularly for underserved populations and for populations across the lifecourse.

2. **Studies Focused on Macro-environmental Factors**
   For many areas of public health, research into macro-environmental influences has been extensively studied and key leverage points for preventive interventions identified. Exemplar areas include alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use and motor vehicle and bicycle safety, to name just a few. Other than those with a focus on mass media and social media, few studies in the eating disorders realm have examined macro-environmental factors -- which may include policy, built environment, industry and commercial markets, or other aspects of the macro-environment -- that may influence eating disorders risk or be leverage points for eating disorders primary or secondary prevention. Applicants may consider, for instance, novel ways to study through an eating disorder prevention lens the effects of: food policy; weight requirements for employment or athletic participation; weight stigma and discrimination in healthcare, education, workplaces, gyms, fashion and apparel, and other settings and industries; diet pill/dieting or cosmetic surgery industries; or colorism/skin bleaching product industry or UV tanning industry. Alternatively, applicants may consider identifying physiologic pathways (e.g., HPA axis, allostatic load) and processes through which weight discrimination affects the health of people living in larger bodies in a weight-stigmatizing society.

3. **Translational Research**
   While a number of screening tools have been validated to assess eating disorders, disordered eating and weight and shape control behaviors, body dissatisfaction, and related concerns, few have been scaled up for implementation in community-based practice networks, health maintenance organizations, accountable care organizations serving Medicaid or Medicare recipients, military or veteran healthcare systems, school- or university-based healthcare, or other settings to reach substantial numbers of people at risk. Furthermore, it is widely recognized that few primary or specialty care providers receive any training in early detection and referral for eating disorders or their subclinical variants. Applicants are encouraged to consider the ways that T1 (Understanding disease processes) may inform screening and intervention strategies, such as by identifying psychological or biological markers or characteristics of people with prodromal or early-stage eating disorders who will be most responsive to low-intensity treatment interventions. Applicants are also encouraged to consider ways to advance investigation in the T3 (From guidelines to routine practice in clinical, community settings) and T4 (large-scale public health impact through preventive health services, multisectoral systems research, policy initiatives and evaluation) domains of the research translation schema. Pertinent study proposals may include, for example, evaluation of: a new screening protocol in a military healthcare delivery system or similar settings; a clinician education module for accountable care organizations on early detection of and referral for eating disorder symptoms; a change in a workplace or collegiate sporting organization policy imposing weight requirements for employment or participation.

4. **Economic and Decision Sciences Research**
   There has been extensive research evaluating numerous health conditions and their determinants in
terms of their costs to individuals, families, healthcare systems, and society and the potential savings that could be gained through prevention. Rarely, though, have economic or decision sciences methods been applied to eating disorders, disordered weight and shape control behaviors and symptoms, or their determinants. Applicants may consider, for instance, novel ways to quantify the costs of eating disorders and their subclinical variants, the beauty industry, or weight stigma and discrimination or the potential cost savings that could be achieved through primary prevention of weight stigma and discrimination or other important determinants or through secondary prevention.

V. Eligibility

This is a two-part pilot grant application. The LOI phase includes submission of a one-page Letter of Intent (LOI). Selected LOIs will be invited to participate in a Community Engagement Studio (Section VII) and submit a full application, which will include a longer proposal, as well as standard administrative grant application documents.

Applicants or their research team member must have attended the Harvard Catalyst 2018 Eating Disorders and Health Disparities Symposium or have discussed the intent to apply with the program leadership and/or staff before submitting LOI. Interdisciplinary and interinstitutional collaborations are encouraged. This RFA encourages applications from junior or mid-level investigators. For junior investigators, appropriate supervision and mentoring must be provided. The proposed project must be collaborative – single-investigator projects are not responsive to the RFA. At least one co-investigator is required, and there is no limit to the number of co-investigators that may be listed. While researchers may submit only one LOI application as principal investigator, they may be listed as a co-investigator on multiple applications.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to:

- Contemplate a focus on a particularly vulnerable/underserved population, such as youth (<18 years), older adults, the LGBTQ community, racial/ethnic minorities, and/or military veterans associations.
- Partner with a community organization (i.e., school/school system, local board of health, community health center, non-profit, or other CBO). For example, Boys & Girls Clubs (wellness coaches in particular), YMCAs, and other youth/community-serving organizations or elder service organizations.
- Engage community members with the development and implementation of the research project (i.e., early detection, preventative strategies, etc.), study recruitment (if needed), and dissemination of findings (both the findings themselves as well as strategies for reaching underserved communities to share those findings).

Principal Investigator (PI) Eligibility

Any faculty member who holds a Harvard University appointment as assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, irrespective of degree or institutional affiliation, is eligible to be the PI. Investigators who hold appointments such as lecturer, instructor, or research scientist/associate are eligible to apply as PI if approved by and with the support of their department chair. Investigators at these ranks must provide a letter from their department/division chief, as appropriate, verifying their appointment title, status at Harvard and departmental/divisional support of the application.

Co-Investigator (Co-I) Eligibility

A Co-I is a substantial contributor who helps conceive of the experimental idea, contributes to the intellectual development of the project, and/or designs the study or part thereof (scientific or technical details), and will be involved in the study throughout the funding year. Co-Is can be from any institution, however if you are a working with a Co-I from a non-Harvard institution, please provide justification of how the external expertise adds to the project. Members of community-based organizations and government agencies (e.g., youth groups, schools, departments of public health, Veterans Administration healthcare) may also serve as co-investigators. Partnering with a community-based organization and/or government agency is strongly encouraged.
While trainees (e.g., students, clinical trainees, post-doctoral fellows, and clinical fellows), visiting and adjunct faculty, and those with pending faculty appointments at the time of submission cannot serve as the PI on an application, they may serve as Co-Is if they make a substantial contribution to the project. Members of community-based organizations and agencies (e.g., schools, department of public health) may also serve as Co-Is. Partnering with a community-based agency is strongly encouraged.

VI. Application Submission Information
The online application form in Apply Hub requires login via Harvard Medical School eCommons username and password, or via Harvard University ID (HUID) number and PIN, or via HarvardKey (http://catalyst.harvard.edu/services/loginfaq.html). If you have forgotten any of these, click on the appropriate password or login recovery link on the login page. If you do not have any of these, please contact Ruslan Nikitin at grants@catalyst.harvard.edu for assistance.

If you have not used Apply Hub before, you will be asked to register on a “My Account” page with your name and your email address.

The online application is a two-part form. Please provide the following information:

Part 1 – The LOI Application and Supporting Documentation

1) General demographic information for the Principal Investigator (PI) and Co-Investigators (Co-Is) and standard information about the project.

2) NIH-style biosketch for the PI (to be uploaded as a PDF).

3) Abstract: Include your abstract in lay language (250 words maximum).

4) Letter of Intent (to be uploaded as a separate PDF): This is limited to 1 page, not including references. Use Arial, black font color, and a font size of 11 points only. The LOI (covering items 1-5 below) should be single-spaced, with 0.5 inch margins. Text beyond the one page limit will not be considered.

   A. Title of Project

   B. PI’s Name and Institution

   C. Scientific Rationale and Significance
      • Describe the background and significance of the proposed research.
      • Describe how the proposed research will address health disparities and affect human health.
      • Describe how the proposed research will fill a gap and advance the field of eating disorders research.
      • Describe how you plan to leverage this award to position yourself for future funding to support continued research in this area.

   D. Describe proposed partnership(s) with community agency/agencies, including previous experience working with agency and how partnership will contribute to the project. (If applicable)

   E. References (limit to 1 additional page)

Part 2 – Confirmation
There will be a confirmation page displaying all information entered. You will then be able to submit the application. All application materials can be reopened and resubmitted before the deadline.
Paper copies of the application or any other accompanying documentation will not be accepted. All application materials must be submitted no later than 5:00pm EDT on June 11, 2018.

Completed submissions will result in an automated email response sent to the submitter and the PI of the application. This email acknowledgement will contain an application ID number that should be used in all future correspondence regarding the application. It will also include a URL that allows the submitter to access the application within Apply Hub.

VII. Review Process and Community Engagement Studios
LOI applications submitted by 5:00pm EDT on June 11, 2018, with all required documents, will undergo an administrative review and a scientific review by Harvard Catalyst Review Panel.

Those deemed most responsive and with high impact potential will be required to attend a Community Engagement Studio; a 45-minute meeting scheduled on July 17 or July 18 between 12pm and 5pm. PIs or other team members are invited to provide a ~12-15 minute presentation about their project to a panel of community members with expertise and interest in the topic of prevention of eating disorders or disordered eating. Community panelists may include school administrators, social workers, students, teachers, parents, and leaders in public health agencies and organizations. Panelists will provide feedback about the importance of the research question, study design, recruitment and data collection plan (if applicable), and dissemination plan. Pilot grant applicants will receive a templated slide deck to assist with their presentation development. The PI (or, in exceptional cases, another member of the team with permission of Harvard Catalyst) is required to attend and present at the Community Engagement Studio. Teams unable to send a representative will not be invited to submit a full application for funding consideration. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate relevant feedback from community panelists in their full proposal.

Applicants will receive instructions on how to prepare for Community Engagement Studio on June 29, 2018.

Following the Community Engagement Studio session, eligible applicants will receive information via email describing how to submit full applications. As a reminder, the full application process will include submission of the standard administrative grant application documents.

VIII. Contact Information
All inquiries related to the application process, eligibility, and/or scientific research areas should be directed to Ruslan Nikitin, Program Manager, Harvard Catalyst (617-998-6815); grants@catalyst.harvard.edu.

Inquiries related to financial or grants management areas should be directed to Lucy Kolessin, Director of Finance and Research Administration, Harvard Catalyst (617-998-6817); lucy_kolessin@hms.harvard.edu.