REACH CENTER

RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE AND HEALTH CENTER

REACH Center Call for Proposals - April 2025

The [Research and Engagement for Action on Climate and Health (REACH) Center](#) is pleased to announce its second annual research seed grant competition. This year we will make available $80,000 for seed grants and will fund multiple grants of $20,000-40,000 in total costs, subject to funding availability.

The REACH Center is a multi-institutional partnership between George Washington University, George Mason University, Howard University, and Environmental Defense Fund. The Center leverages the power of novel geospatial environmental datasets and research co-generation with governmental and nongovernmental partners to co-develop research that explores health resilience solutions from local to global scales. The Center offers unique contributions to health resilience research:

- Health effects research, including discovery and applied research in multiple exposure pathways, producing new knowledge of how climate-sensitive risk factors influence infectious and non-communicable disease and how these associations are affected by strategies that prioritize health resilience.
- Evaluation of variation in community health outcomes associated with climate-sensitive risk factors.
- Intervention research, with a primary focus on broad-scale solutions through policies and other institutional actions that can reduce exposure and protect public health from climate-sensitive hazards.

The goal of the seed grant program is to build capacity so that a new cohort of researchers and community partners will have the skills, connections, and research agendas to apply for National Institutes of Health R-level research grants in these topical areas while also targeting effective interventions to health-protective solutions.

Who Should Apply?

REACH pilot awards are open to multidisciplinary teams led by PI-eligible investigators at George Washington, Howard, and George Mason universities. Teams should be composed of at least two researchers who contribute distinct methods, frameworks, or expertise, in addition to at least one community partner. Cross-institutional collaboration between REACH Center institutions is strongly encouraged. While the overall project should focus on health-protective solutions for climate-sensitive risk factors, individual team members can bring specific skill sets to the project from such diverse fields as Earth and atmospheric sciences, public health,

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environmental health, medicine, public policy, engineering, and social sciences. We particularly encourage applications from early-stage investigators and investigators from gender, racial, and ethnic groups which are underrepresented in the research field.

This pilot grant opportunity is intended to lead to community-engaged research projects that align with Principles of Community Engagement. Community partners may be local, state, or national governments; community-based organizations; and/or other non-academic end-users of scientific research. Proposals may be submitted under one of two community engagement tracks as described below.

What Kinds of Projects Will Be Funded?

Track 1: Research Projects (up to $40,000)

Proposals in this track should come from teams of researchers and one or more community partners that have a history of working together. The research project should be responsive to questions and concerns defined by community partners and employ environmental and/or health data (e.g. geospatial data from Earth system models, statistical models, satellite observations, sensor networks, wearable sensors, etc.) to explore solutions that advance resilience. Research approaches could include:

- Discovery research: Discovery research, including Epidemiology, to establish the evidence for cause and effect that can then be extended to investigate how targeted actions can reduce health damages and improve community resilience.
- Applied quantitative research: Applications of geospatial datasets to generate new knowledge about how health outcomes could be affected by actions that prioritize health resilience, using methods such as Data Integration and Exposure and Risk Assessment.
- Mixed quantitative-qualitative methods: Exploring how geospatial datasets can be used to understand: (1) the degree to which quantitative estimates of health damages and benefits from actions play a role in driving decision-making; and (2) approaches for effectively communicating about the health consequences of climate-sensitive risk factors to enable people to take informed action.

For Track 1 proposals, community partners are expected to co-create the research questions to ensure that they reflect community concerns and participate in study implementation (this could include data collection, development of deliverables, dissemination of results, research translation, etc.).

Track 2: Partnership-Building Projects (up to $20,000)

Proposals in this category should come from researcher/community partner teams that have not yet established strong relationships, and/or do not have a history of working together. Partnership-building projects should focus on strengthening relationships between researchers and community partners and co-creating a research agenda responsive to community priorities or concerns that can form the basis for future research proposals that will explore potential, proposed, or implemented health-protective solutions for climate-sensitive risk factors; include

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application of environmental and/or health data; and be focused on issues related to NIH research priorities. The aim is to lay the groundwork for productive partnerships spanning multiple sectors wherein researchers and community partners understand their mutual research needs.

Examples of projects that have been funded in past cycles can be found on the [REACH Center website](#).

Application Process and Deadlines

Deadline	Submission
June 1, 2025 5 PM EST	1-page Letter of Intent
July 15, 2025 5 PM EST	Full Proposal
August 15, 2025	Decisions announced
September 1, 2025	Project start date

One-Page Letter of Intent (11pt Arial, 1 inch margins)

Each team of applicants should submit a one-page letter of intent. This letter should include:

- Project title
- Identification of whether submission will be under Track 1 or Track 2
- Names, affiliations, and contact information of the lead PI and co-PIs, community partner, and other participants
- Concise summary of the research project, including the problem to be addressed and the type of data and analysis used to further the search for solutions. What existing community need will the project address and how will it do that?
- Any missing components that the research team would like help filling. For example, if the research team has not yet identified community partners, we can help identify potential partners.

Please submit the one-page letter of intent by June 1, 2025, 5pm EST to Rachel Clark at rachelclark@gwu.edu.

Full Proposal (11 pt Arial font, 1 inch margins)

1. Cover page (1 page maximum)
   a. Project Title
   b. Track Number

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      c. Participants: List all project participants and their role(s) on the project (at least two researchers from different disciplines and at least one community partner).

      d. Abstract of the research project written in lay language that can be understood by the general public.

2. Science Proposal
   a. Track 1 (5 page maximum)
      i. Identify the community partner and describe the history of collaboration between the community partner and the research team.
      ii. Describe what community concern the research question is responsive to, how that concern was identified, how community partners contributed to the development of the research questions, how community partners will participate in study implementation (this could include data collection, development of deliverables, dissemination of results, research translation, etc.), and the plan for communicating project results to community members.
      iii. Proposals must describe how the research will add to the literature and how the proposed approach deploys innovative methods to fill identified knowledge gaps.
      iv. Applications should describe the kinds of data that they will work with in their application, showing the linkages between solutions and health outcomes.
      v. Proposals must identify a health resilience solution that they will study.
   b. Track 2: (3 pages maximum)
      i. Identify the community partner and describe prior collaboration between the community partner and the research team (if applicable).
      ii. Describe how the project team will strengthen the relationship between the researchers and community partner during the grant period, including a description of how the research team will collaborate with the partner to identify and understand their mutual research needs, shape a clear research question, and develop community engagement strategies.
      iii. Describe how the partnership will benefit both the research and the anticipated groups interested in or potentially affected by the research
      iv. Where possible, explain how the project will add to literature, work with data, and analyze a solution.

3. References (no page limit)
   a. Include references cited in the Science Proposal using standard citation format.

4. Future plans for NIH grant submission (400 words maximum)
   a. Explain how the project will prepare the research team to apply for a future NIH grant submission, and provide a timeline for when the submission will take place.

5. NIH biosketch of PI and all academic co-investigators

6. Proposed budget and budget justification
   a. Track 1 proposals may request up to $40,000; Track 2 proposals may request up to $20,000.
   b. Indirect costs are not allowed.

c. It is expected that the project budget will be developed collaboratively by the researchers and community partner(s) and will support the effort and expenses of the community partner(s).

7. A Letter of Commitment from the community partner, describing the value of the project to the community and the role the partner will play in the proposed project.

Application Submission and Deadline

Please submit the full proposal in one PDF file by July 15, 2025, 5pm EST to Rachel Clark at rachelclark@gwu.edu. Decisions will be announced by August 15, 2025.

Scoring Criteria

Applications will be scored by the REACH Developmental Score Committee based on following criteria: (1) innovation (20%); (2) research and community engagement approach (40%); (3) project team (10%); (4) significance (10%); and (5) potential for leading to a subsequent successful grant application (20%).

Awardee Requirements

- Pilot awards are expected to lead to R-level NIH funding, including with NIEHS and any other NIH Institutes and Centers. Awardees are required to keep the REACH Center informed of any funding related to the pilot project.
- Any resultant publications must cite funding from REACH (NIH grant #P20ES036775-01). Awardees must follow NIH guidelines for depositing the manuscript in PubMed Central. An electronic copy of all publications should be provided to the REACH Center.
- Awardees automatically become members of the REACH Center and are expected to participate in REACH activities (seminars, workshops and trainings, networking events, and scientific working groups, if applicable). Awardees will be asked to present their research-in-progress at a REACH event at least once during the project period. As REACH Members, awardees are also invited to take advantage of REACH resources, including assistance in grant preparation and career development activities.
- Awardees must supply the following IRB information, if relevant, to the REACH Center Administrator for approval by NIEHS prior to release of funds: study team CITI certification, University IRB approval/exemption letter, Human Subjects Statement, and PHS Inclusion Form and any other NIH requirements, including access to data.
- With guidance from the Developmental Core, each awardee is required to draft a plain language summary of the proposed research for the REACH website.
- Awardees must draft a Data Sharing Plan, where applicable.
- A midpoint project report is due 30 days following the midpoint of the grant funding period and a final project update within 30 days following the completion of the grant

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funding period. Additional follow-up reports and a presentation of pilot results will also be required.

Resources

- REACH Center [website](#)
- REACH Center [overview](#), [Developmental Core](#), [Exposure Assessment Core](#), [Community Engagement Core](#), [Research Project 1](#), and [Research Project 2](#)
- [CAFÉ Research Coordinating Center](#) at Boston University and Harvard University
- [Principles of Community Engagement, 3rd Edition](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), January 2025.

Questions?

If you have one or more components of a proposal, but are missing other bits and pieces, we are here to help! REACH Center staff will be happy to assist you in preparing a full proposal. Please contact Robert Orttung (rorttung@gwu.edu) or Rachel Clark (rachelclark@gwu.edu) with any questions.

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