September 24, 2015

Re: Call for Proposals for NC OSHERC Pilot Project Awards for 2014-2015

Dear Colleagues:

The NC Occupational Safety and Health Education and Research Center (NC OSHERC) has received funding to provide short-term awards for 3-4 pilot research projects. Each award will be for $8,000 - $10,000 inclusive of all costs (direct and indirect), depending on the number of awards made, unless additional funding becomes available. Funding will be awarded to a faculty member or other investigator, or to a current student with a faculty mentor. Preference will be given to the latter. The goal of the pilot project program is to provide seed money for investigators to conduct short-term projects. However, any funds awarded must absolutely be spent within the current award budget period, or by June 30, 2016. Prior to the awarding of any funds, IRB approval must be obtained, after which the project will be reviewed for final approval. Semi-annual reports of not more than two pages in length are required of funded pilot projects.

These projects may be new or creative characterization studies, those that are designed as research translation projects (i.e., research to practice), or those that are testing out a new method or approach to scientific inquiry. In all cases the project will address an important area of research in occupational safety and health in one of the NORA sectors listed at: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora/sector.html, or related to Total Worker Health found at http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/totalworkerhealth/default.html. Please be sure to visit the NIOSH website that discusses Total Worker Health and the NORA sector approach.

Examples of pilot/small projects could include such areas as:
1. Provide initial support for a translational/research to practice project (e.g., testing ergonomics intervention at the worksite).
2. Allow exploration of possible innovative new directions in OSH sciences within program areas.
3. Stimulate investigators from other fields to apply their expertise to OSH issues (e.g., behavioral applications).
4. Develop new mechanisms for external or multi-ERC collaborative partnerships to address emerging occupational safety and health concerns.
5. Develop constructs for what works in integration of health protection/health promotion.
6. Support for trainee research projects.

We see this as an opportunity to extend projects you already have underway or develop new ideas for research that can be accomplished within our budgetary parameters. The deadline date for receipt of the proposal from you is October 23, 2015 and should include:
- A maximum 2-page, single-spaced proposal describing the pilot project concept that details the proposed specific aims and the work required to achieve this within the context of the goal of the pilot project program as stated above.
- No more than 1-page abstract describing the student and/or faculty member’s existing works (if applicable).
- Estimated but detailed total budget (inclusive of direct/indirect costs) not to exceed the total amount available for this award as described above and timeline.
- CV of lead investigator; list of previous research activities (for student investigators).
Please send all pilot project proposals as an email attachment to buckheit@email.unc.edu. Proposals will then be distributed to reviewers. If this is not feasible, please send by fax or hard copy to the address below, so it is received by the deadline date. All proposals, electronic, mailed, or faxed, must be received by the due date of October 23, 2015.

Pilot projects will be reviewed by a panel comprised of individuals with expertise in the field of occupational health and safety and include at least one member of the NC OSHERC Executive Committee. All review panel members will be ineligible to compete in this pilot project application process. Review criteria include:

- scientific merit
- relevance to the goal/objectives of the grant
- creativity related to and innovativeness of the project
- feasibility to conduct the research
- likelihood of leading to future work (developing an R01-like project) for student projects
- relevance to goals/objectives of the student’s academic program

We hope you will be eager to participate in this new endeavor and look forward to receiving your proposal by the due date specified.