UNITE RESEARCH PRIORITY AREA
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RFA

Release date: November 1st, 2021
Application deadline: February 28th, 2022
Project Duration: 18 months

The United in True Racial Equity (UNITE) Research Priority Area (RPA) mission is to support research focused on social and racial justice, racial disparities, and racial health equity that will result in impactful scholarly outputs and extramural funding for sustainability. The UNITE RPA facilitated a community-led discussion on April 15, 2021 designed to advance this objective by connecting university researchers with communities of color across the Commonwealth (areas included: Louisville Metro, Lexington, Owensboro) and allowing their lived experiences to inform impactful research priorities. Please review the summary of the discussion. Community leaders identified several **key priority areas** critical to the wellbeing of their communities such as: **adequate food, housing, healthcare, and education**. Further, UK researchers were challenged to address the needs of marginalized communities by amplifying the voices and validating the lived experiences of community members through research to elevate evidence-based advocacy. Ultimately, the panelists recommended an intergenerational, intersectional, intercultural approach to research projects, as opposed to allowing data findings to undermine the lived experiences of community members.

This notice solicits applications for pilot projects that will utilize theory-driven, evidence-based, and culturally appropriate strategies to address critical needs identified within communities of color. **Projects that are responsive will: 1) address one or more of the identified key priority areas (above); 2) involve an active partnership with one or more community leaders or community-based organizations; and 3) be designed with plans for next steps to seek extramural funding and scale-up the project.** For additional details, please review university resources focused on Community Engaged Research (CER)/Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

Background

Scientific leaders nationally have identified structural racism as a root cause to many disparities that impact communities of color. The National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities defines structural racism and discrimination (SRD) as a macro-level set of conditions "that limit opportunities, resources, power, and well-being of individuals and populations based on race/ethnicity and other statuses".[1] This has been acknowledged by the University of Kentucky as a factor that has "inarguably impacted health and life expectancy, economic and financial standing, the educational attainment and success of Black people and persons of color over centuries."[2]

For marginalized communities impacted by structural racism, community based participatory research (CBPR) functions as a tool for successful engagement with community members and stakeholders.[3] Research demonstrates that community inclusion and participation in implementation of community-preferred solutions mitigate barriers to successful interventions.[3,4] An important component of community participation involves engagement in research relationships through researchers' prioritization of community needs. This engagement allows researchers to identify "strengths and strategies grounded contextually in a community's microsystem" as a means of constructing suitable interventions.[5] Further, research has shown that community participants expressed an interest in engagement strategies that were consistent over time, addressed their wants and needs, and demonstrated interest on the part of

the researcher in the culture and issues of the area being studied.[6] To this end, as a part of the land-grant mission of the University of Kentucky to improve people's lives through excellence in research, the UNITE RPA seeks responsive applications.

Application Information

The number of awards will depend on the type of proposals received. Eligibility is limited to full-time faculty (all title series including regular, research, clinical and special) at the University of Kentucky who are members of the UNITE Research Priority Area. If you are interested in applying and are not a member of the UNITE RPA, please send an inquiry to **unite-rpa@uky.edu**. Investigators in training including residents, post-doctoral fellows, and clinical fellows are not eligible to serve as principal investigators but may be co-investigators. A maximum of **$50,000** will be awarded for a period of **18 months**. Applications are due **February 28th, 2022**. Submit the application as a single (1) PDF file to **unite-rpa@uky.edu**. Applications must be single-spaced, 11-point Arial font, and adhere to standard grant 1/2-inch margins. **Applications that do not adhere to the font size or spacing requirements will not be reviewed.** Proposal submission through OSPA is not required. The UK proposal development office (PDO) is available to assist with internal competitive award proposals.

Applications must include:
- UNITE Pilot Grant Cover Page (form attached)
- Specific Aims (1 page)
- Research plan (4 pages)
    - Briefly describe the significance, innovation, and approach
    - Briefly describe the community engagement, relationship with stakeholders, and expected impact
    - Include a timeline for activities
    - Describe the plans beyond the pilot project, including plans for dissemination, publications, and seeking extramural funding
    - References do not count towards the 3-page total.
- NIH style biosketch for each investigator (5-page limit per investigator) with each investigator's role on the project clearly outlined. Please check here for instructions on formatting an NIH biosketch.
- Budget/justification (1-2 pages)
    - Provide brief justification for each budget item or category.
    - Allowable expenses include: graduate student stipends and tuition, equipment, travel costs associated with the research, up to 1 month of summer salary for those faculty on 9-10-month contracts, participant payments and other standardresearch expenditures.
    - Non-allowable expenses include: conference travel, salary for 11 or 12-month faculty
    - Note: the review committee will make budgetary recommendations that may impact the final award amounts.
- Required Letter(s) of support (e.g., community partners, consultants, data, or facilities access needed to complete study)
- Statement of collaborative support from the PIs department or college (1 page). Examples of collaborative support may include but is not limited to: monetary support for the project, effort from a staff member to assist with project execution, release of duties to execute the project etc.

Reporting Requirements

All publications, presentations, and other creative activities resulting from this award must include the following acknowledgement: **"Funding was provided, in part, by the United in True Racial Equity Research Priority Area at the University of Kentucky."**
One (1) page final report due at project completion detailing study enrollment, results, dissemination, and plans for future funding. Awardees are also required to present findings at UNITE sponsored events.

Application deadlines and key dates

February 28th, 2022: Applications due
April 15th, 2022: Selected Applicants notified
Project period: **18 months from project start date** (project start date dependent on IRB approval and disbursement of funds but must be within 1 month of award notification date). Projects must have IRB and other applicable required regulatory approvals in place before funding will begin. Please address specific application questions to Leah Holton (leah.holton@uky.edu).

Review Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed by the selection committee and possible external reviewers. Scoring of proposals will be based on the standard NIH 9-point scoring system. Each proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
Significance: (i.e., Does the project address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field as outlined in the RFA?)
Innovation: (i.e., Does the proposal utilize novel and applicable theoretical concepts, approaches, methodologies, instrumentation or apply existing concepts to new populations or problems?)
Approach: (i.e., Are the intended research activities well-described and likely to be feasible? Does the strategy involve leveraging existing connections and collaborations? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are study limitations acknowledged and addressed?)
Investigator(s): (i.e., Does the PI have the appropriate experience and training, evidence of productivity and/or potential to lead the project?, Does the PI and research team have the required expertise and experience to conduct the proposed research study?)

      The review committee will also assess whether the proposed budget and timeline are appropriate for the scope and nature of the project and whether there are any human subjects considerations that may affect study implementation.

References:
1. Structural Racism and Discrimination. Accessed October 13, 2021. https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/resources/understanding-health-disparities/srd.html
2. Diversity and Inclusion | University of Kentucky Research. Accessed October 13, 2021. https://www.research.uky.edu/diversity-and-inclusion
3. Kakar R, Combs R, Ali N, Muvuka B, Porter J. Enhancing the design and utilization of asthma action plans through community-based participatory research in an urban African American community. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2021;104(2):276-281. doi:10.1016/J.PEC.2020.08.032
4. Pratt B. Inclusion of Marginalized Groups and Communities in Global Health Research Priority-Setting: *https://doi-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/101177/1556264619833858*. 2019;14(2):169-181. doi:10.1177/1556264619833858
5. Yu Z, Kowalkowski J, Roll AE, Lor M. Engaging Underrepresented Communities in Health Research: Lessons Learned: *https://doi-org.ezproxy.uky.edu/101177/0193945920987999*. 2021;43(10):915-923. doi:10.1177/0193945920987999
6. Way E. Understanding Research Fatigue in the Context of Community-University Relations. 2013;3. Accessed October 13, 2021. https://commons.clarku.edu/localknowledgehttps://commons.clarku.edu/localknowledge/3

UNITED IN TRUE RACIAL EQUITY (UNITE)
PILOT GRANT COVER PAGE

Section A: CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Principal Investigator Name & Title: _____

Department & College: _____
Email: _____ Phone Number: _____
UNITE RPA Member: Yes   No

Section B: OTHER PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S), CO-INVESTIGATOR(S), OR COLLABORATOR(S)

Name, Role on Project, & College: _____
Name, Role on Project, & College: _____
Name, Role on Project, & College: _____
Name, Role on Project, & College: _____
Name, Role on Project, & College: _____

Section C: DEPARTMENT BUSINESS MANAGER (Individual specific to PI's college or academic unit)

Name: _____
Department &/or College: _____
Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Section D: TITLE OF PILOT PROJECT

Pilot Project Title: _____

Section E: BUDGET

Proposed Dates: Start Date: _____ End Date: _____
Amount Requested: _____

Section F: RESEARCH AREA
Which UK research priority area does your proposal address (select all that apply):

Substance Use

Cancer

Cardiovascular Disease

Diabetes and Obesity

Cerebrovascular/neuroscience

Diversity and Inclusion

Energy

Other, please specify _____

UNITED IN TRUE RACIAL EQUITY (UNITE) PILOT GRANT COVER PAGE

Section G: PRIOR REVIEW

➢ **Has this project been previously submitted for internal grant funding?**

        Yes   No

If Yes, please provide:

- Date Submitted: _____
- Grant Mechanism (e.g., IRC, VPR pilot funding): _____
- Score & Summary of Feedback:

    _____

➢ **Has this project been previously submitted for external grant funding?**

        Yes   No

If Yes, please provide:

- Date Submitted: _____
- Grant Mechanism/Funding Agency (e.g., R03, NIDA): _____
- Score & Summary of Feedback:

    _____

Section H: REVIEW/APPROVAL REQUIRED BY UNIVERSITY POLICY & FEDERAL LAW

➢ **Does this project involve the use of human subjects?**

        Yes   No

If Yes, the project MUST be reviewed and approved by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to funding start. Please provide:

- IRB Protocol Number: _____
- Date Approved: _____
- If not approved yet, IRB date submitted _____

Section I. Abstract (300 words or fewer)