

TO: Graduate Students and Faculty of the Divisions of Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology & Community Health, and Health Policy & Management

FROM: Division of Epidemiology & Community Health Research Awards Committee

RE: HIPS Student Research Awards

The Division has established the HIV/ STI Intervention and Prevention Studies (HIPS) Student Research Awards, a small grant mechanism to support student led public health research projects on topics related to HIV, sexually transmitted infection, and sexual health. This is an opportunity for students to obtain funds for their research, gain experience in grant proposal writing, and receive faculty feedback on their ideas. **The deadline for proposal submissions is January 13, 2025.**

ELIGIBILITY

Students currently enrolled in degree programs in Biostatistics, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology & Community Health, and Health Policy & Management. The proposed research must have direct or indirect relevance to public health and related disciplines and be focused on sexual health and health disparities for sexual and gender minorities. Priority will be given to research focusing on HIV, STIs, sexual health, and the GLBTQIA+ community. Further priority will be given to projects pursued in completion of a masters project or doctoral thesis. Those who have received previous funding under this mechanism will not be eligible for further support until they have submitted the required one-page report for their prior award (see below). Funds from this award may be combined with those of other awards or programs.

AWARD AMOUNT

\$3,500 maximum. PhD students working on their thesis or may request a maximum of \$7,500 to support.

PERMISSIBLE USES

The award may be used to support research activities including supplies, equipment, hourly staff including fringe benefits when applicable, and contracting for services. No funds may be used for tuition, stipends or salary for the applicant, computer purchase, publication costs (e.g., page charges, reprints), and presentation costs (e.g., travel to a conference, conference fee). If awarded, the applicant must meet with accounting personnel in the Division to ensure that procedures are followed, and IRB clearance must be documented before any spending may begin.

AWARD DURATION

One-year project.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

You must follow the format or the proposal will be returned without review. Electronic submission is required.

1. Cover Letter

Please indicate in the letter whether or not the project will help support a master's project, master's thesis, Ph.D. thesis, or field experience. Describe the project in 1-2 sentences in the cover letter.

2. Face Page (1 page)

- a. Title
- b. Investigator information, including name, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (Be specific with the address as to where the Awards Committee should send notification)
- c. Your degree program

d. Collaborating investigators (faculty, staff, students), if any

3. **Project Description** (font: 11-point Arial, 2 pages maximum, not including references)

a. Background and Significance:

Describe the background and justification for the study and state the research questions/hypotheses. Clearly state how the project is relevant to public health.

b. Research Methods:

Describe the study design and approach. Be sure to include information on each of the following:

- Study population
- Sample selection and recruitment (justify sample size where relevant)
- Measurement
- Data analysis plan (required for both quantitative and qualitative research)
- Timeline

c. References (no page limit):

Citations for articles referenced in the background and significance and research methods portions of the proposal should be listed after the Human Subjects section of the proposal.

4. **Detailed Budget & Budget Justification** (1 page maximum):

The proposed budget should include precise amounts requested in various categories (e.g., postage, supplies, printing, personnel, etc.). Provide a brief justification for the amount requested in each category stating why these funds are needed to conduct the proposed research. The budget should clearly itemize and justify expenditures. If the request is part of a larger project, the proportion to be supported by this award and the rationale and need for this funding mechanism should be specified clearly.

The following items are NOT allowed: tuition, stipends or salary for the applicant, computer purchase, publication costs (e.g., page charges, reprints), and presentation costs (e.g., travel to a conference, conference fee).

5. **Letters of support from Faculty Advisor and/or Project Advisor** (1 page per letter):

Letters of support should describe the relationship between the advisor and the candidate, the advisor's assessment of the quality and significance of the proposed research, and the advisor's assessment of the candidate's aptitude and skill set as it pertains to the project.

- **School of Public Health Faculty Member: ALWAYS REQUIRED** : A primary or adjunct faculty member in the School of Public Health must provide a brief letter to accompany the proposal, specifically endorsing the applicant's request. The letter should state that the faculty member has read and approved the proposal. The letter should also include the faculty member's opinion of the quality and importance of the research.
- **Research Project Advisor: SOMETIMES REQUIRED** In cases where the faculty member is NOT the applicant's research project advisor, an additional letter is required from the research project advisor. This second letter must include the same elements as the faculty member letter described above.
- **Community Organization Partner: SOMETIMES REQUIRED** (if research is a collaborative partnership with an external organization): If the proposed research is a collaboration with

a community organization or other external partner, a letter of support from that organization is required.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND GUIDELINES

The HIPS grants are intended to support student research. Field experience is generally not eligible for an award; what should be requested in that case is the research component of that experience.

Evaluation of the proposals is in terms of the committee's view of the importance of the inquiry, quality of the research design and methodology, experience of the investigator, relevance of the project to public health or related disciplines, and contribution of the project to the student's academic training.

All proposals must address protection of human subjects and have the project approved by the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to receiving funds. However, a proposal will be reviewed by the HIPS Awards Committee prior to receiving final IRB approval.

SUBMISSION

In the form of a single PDF file, please submit your proposal to kilian@umn.edu. All letters of support can be emailed from the advisory directly to the same email address.

DEADLINE

January 13, 2025.

REVIEW PROCESS

All applications will be reviewed by the HIPS Awards Committee, which includes faculty members representing the major fields. Proposals will be evaluated through a blinded review process. Each proposal will be evaluated according to its scientific and technical merits and public health implications. The most important criteria are (1) importance of the area, (2) quality of proposed research, (3) investigator's experience and resources to accomplish the project, (4) relevance to public health, and (5) strength of letters of support.

SUBMISSION QUESTIONS

If you have general questions regarding the HIPS grants, please contact Gunna Kilian at kilian@umn.edu.

Information regarding the status of human subjects (IRB) applications must be provided to the Committee. Award funds will not be released until Division of Epidemiology & Community Health Accounts Administration has received notification of Human Subjects Committee approval.

FINAL REPORT

A one-page report to the Research Awards Committee on progress and outcome is due on the one-year anniversary date of the award.