

Funding Opportunity Announcement: Community Organization ENGAGE Awards

1. Funding Opportunity Description

The Mississippi IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (MS-INBRE) invites community organizations to apply for the Community Organization Proposal Awards. The Community Organization Proposal Awards are intended to provide funding for community organizations to build community-academic teams that can address the critical challenges imposed by Mississippi's top public health issues.

Topic areas must align with federal funding initiatives and may focus on a variety of health topics, including but not limited to the following areas:

1. Affordable Prescription Drug Access – Initiatives to promote cost transparency, bulk purchasing, or community-led distribution programs to reduce medication costs and quality.
2. Opioid & Addiction Recovery Programs – Community-based interventions for opioid use prevention, treatment, and non-opioid pain management alternatives. Fentanyl addiction treatment, prevention, and education.
3. Veterans' Health & Well-being – PTSD support networks, community reintegration programs, and innovative mental health therapies for veterans.
4. Telehealth Expansion – Implementing digital health tools, mobile clinics, and telemedicine services to enhance access in underserved areas.
5. Rural & Tribal Healthcare Solutions – Strengthening community clinics, mobile health units, and local healthcare workforce training.
6. Mental Health & Suicide Prevention – Community-based mental health first aid training, peer support networks, and crisis intervention services.
7. Pandemic & Public Health Preparedness – Localized emergency response strategies, vaccine education, real food production, and supply chain resilience projects.
8. Market-Based Health Insurance Education – Consumer education on alternative insurance models, direct primary care, and cost-sharing networks.
9. Regulatory Reform & Healthcare Access – Identifying local regulatory barriers and advocating for streamlined licensing and service delivery models.
10. Chronic Disease Prevention & Management – Addressing environmental and lifestyle factors contributing to chronic illnesses through education and advocacy. Environmental exposure and chronic disease. Autism.
11. Alternative & Holistic Medicine Healthcare Integration – Promoting access to non-pharmaceutical treatments such as supplements, diet-based therapies, and traditional medicine. Community-driven wellness programs, including nutrition/metabolic health, alternative medicine, food quality, environmental exposure, and individualized care strategies.
12. Real Food & Health - Promoting the selection of healthier meals through community lead initiatives, food selection and chronic disease, removal of harmful dyes and chemical, nutrition and metabolic health.

13. Vaccine Education & Safety Research – Community engagement on vaccine policies, informed choice initiatives, and research on natural immunity and gut microbiome.
14. Prescription Drug Reform Advocacy – Supporting policy research and local initiatives aimed at expanding access to off-label and alternative drug treatments. Accelerating EPA approval for innovative agricultural products.
15. Medicare & Medicaid Innovation – Piloting community-driven models for cost-effective senior care and Medicaid alternatives.
16. School Based Nutrition and Fitness – Launching of nutrition and school-based programs.

The Community Proposal Awards occur in two competitive phases: the **ENGAGE** Award and **PROPOSE** Award. Awards will support the meaningful involvement of community organizations with our Community Engagement and Training Core and Data Science Core faculty who have grant experience and expertise in lifestyle behaviors (i.e., nutrition, physical activity, sleep) and interventions, integrative care, mental health, body composition and cardiometabolic outcomes assessment, health communication techniques, health promotion/outreach, digital health innovations, statistical analysis and modelling, and cardiometabolic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity and HIV/AIDS.

ENGAGE awardees will create community-academic teams that will participate in trainings and workshops to support the design of a pilot research project and subsequent proposal submission plan. The pilot research plan should focus on secondary data analysis that is an important part of the health issue of interest. As a part of the **ENGAGE** award, funding will be provided to support the development of a research plan for the **PROPOSE** application. The competitive **PROPOSE** award is a two-year award where applicants complete their pilot project and submit a funding application that is intended to continue the pilot work through larger NIH federal funding avenues.

2. Eligibility

Eligible applicants include community organizations. For this award, a community organization is defined as a non-Federal or non-academic organization whose primary purpose is to provide goods, services, support, resources, or advocacy to members of a Mississippi community. Examples of eligible organizations include faith-based organizations, public healthcare systems, school districts, social services agencies, non-federal government agencies (including local, regional, Tribal or state level governments and their respective departments of public health, commerce, labor, transportation, housing and recreation). Community organizations must also have appropriate systems, policies and procedures in place to manage funds and activities.

Academic research centers and academic healthcare organizations *are not eligible* to apply for these awards, however, individual academic researchers can be involved as key collaborators and partners of the community organizations.

Please also note that previous **ENGAGE** Awardees *are not eligible* to apply for the same award.

3. Amounts

Total allowable *direct* costs: **\$20,000/year for 1 year**. Indirect costs (F&A) are in addition to the allowable direct costs. Costs must be germane to participating in training activities to develop the research project, and cannot include any human subjects or data collection activities.

4. Key Dates

- Letter of Intent Due Date: February 13, 2026
- Full Application Due Date: March 16, 2026
- Application Review: March 17-31, 2026
- Finalist presentations to External Advisory Board: May 2026
- Award Notifications Begin: June 2026
- Project Start Date: September 1, 2026
- Project End Date: August 31, 2027
- 4-hour Required Orientation at USM campus: August 2026
- 1-hour Team Meetings and Workshops: Twice per month, August 2026 – May 2027

5. Letter of Intent Requirements due February 13th

A. Submit a one-page letter (“LOI.pdf”) that includes the following:

- i. Community organization mission statement
- ii. Description of population(s) served by the community organization (Tip: Make sure this realistically reflects the population reached by the organization based on existing or past activities.)
- iii. Project topic or health issues that the organization would like to focus on, as well as the databases or data sets that can inform planning and development for the PROPOSE application. These data may include de-identified information already available within the organization or publicly accessible datasets such as NHANES, All of Us, and other national or state-level data sources.
- iv. Name of project principal investigator (leader) and team members, their roles in the organization and proposed project, including any experience with research, and potential faculty mentor(s) (or subject matter expertise area for potential faculty mentor)
 - Must list at least one leader and one team member.
- v. Statement of fiscal management capacity

6. Full Application Submission Requirements – Invited Applicants Only - due March 13th

A. **AOR Letter** (“AOR.pdf”) - Attach a letter signed by your Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) stating they have reviewed and approved the proposal as submitted and approve any organizational commitment. **AOR approval is required.**

B. NIH Research & Related Budget Form (“R&R.pdf”) - Please be sure to attach budget justification to Section L. (“Justification.pdf”; all combined as one document and no more than 3 pages in length per individual)

All items requested in the budget are to be used during the award period. Use continuation pages as needed. Allowable costs and guidance include:

- i. Personnel: Personnel time of the project’s team members who will be participating in workshop and team meeting activities.
- ii. Commodities/Supplies: Laptops, small computer equipment, or other materials needed to participate in the program planning activities and process.
- iii. Travel: Travel for face-to-face meetings to network for project planning and development or for face-to-face team meetings.
- iv. Service Fees: Software fees for tools that may be used to facilitate meeting or project planning activities.
- v. Consultant: Required to include \$4000 for two academic team members (\$2000/each) at a rate of \$50 per hour for 40 hours each. These team members can be assigned at the award acceptance if not already identified by your team; at **least one** has to be connected to a PUI (Predominantly Undergraduate University in the state of Mississippi; referring to any universities in the state **except** the following: Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, University of Mississippi, University of Mississippi Medical Center, or The University of Southern Mississippi.) The role of faculty mentors is to provide guidance and feedback to community organization on the literature review, research design science, and project development.
- vi. Indirect Costs: Indirect costs may be applied at the rate supported by the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). If the organization does not have an official NICRA, then the de minimis rate of 15% applies. Indirect costs are not included in the direct costs total.

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-i/general/g.300-r&r-budget-form.htm>

C. NIH Biographical Sketches, CV, or Resume for Project Personnel (“Senior/Key.pdf”; all combined as one document and no more than 3 pages in length per individual)

D. Award Plan (12-page limit, not including the Project Narrative, Project Summary, Specific Aims page and the Literature cited/References section. Please be sure to limit the Project Summary/Abstract to 30 lines of text.)

- i. Project Narrative (“Narrative.pdf”; limit to 2-3 sentences)– Describe how, in the short or long term, the research would contribute to the application of knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability.

ii. Project Summary/Abstract (“Abstract.pdf”; limit to 30 lines of text) – A succinct and accurate description of the proposed work. Be sure to include the project’s broad, long-term objectives and specific aims, as well as a description of the methods for achieving the stated goals.

iii. Specific Aims (“Aims.pdf”; no more than 1 page total composed of three paragraphs)

<https://www.biosciencewriters.com/NIH-Grant-Applications-The-Anatomy-of-a-Specific-Aims-Page.aspx>

iv. Award Strategy (“Application.pdf”; no more than 3 pages total) should be organized in and include the following sections to facilitate the review process:

a. Significance

1. Describe the health problems the community organization would like to address for this project using local-level data (e.g., state, regional, county, or city data), community health assessment data, and/or other relevant data sources.
2. Describe the specific area (i.e., food insecurity, health care access, etc.) related to the problem that the community organization would like to focus on and why this area is so important to addressing the health problem described in #1, all while incorporating the reflection on the problem in your dataset being utilized.

b. Community Investigators

1. Identify the community organization’s key (or lead) personnel and other personnel for this award.
2. Describe the specific role of personnel on the proposed award (i.e. describe their expertise and experience and explicitly state how they will contribute to the proposed project.)
3. Include any relevant past performance for the team and any prior experience working together on external funding, research or service projects.
4. Describe the team’s prior experiences, research or practice, in addressing the health issues of the target population.

c. Organizational Capacity

1. Describe the team’s experience working within partnerships to address health.

2. Outline the organization's fiscal management processes, including subcontracting and managing external funds.

d. Project Planning Process

1. Describe the target population of interest and geographic area(s).
2. Describe the community organization's potential participant reach.
3. Describe the health outcomes and data or dataset that would be the focus of this project.

e. Timeline of the Project

f. Bibliography/Literature cited/References section (no page limit)

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants-process/write-application>

E. Letters of Collaboration/Support ("LOC.pdf"; if applicable)

- i. Letter of Collaboration/Support from an Authorized Organizational Representative at a relevant community organization/academic institution (if applicable)
- ii. Additional Letter(s) of Collaboration/Support (if applicable)

F. NIH Other Support Page ("NOS.pdf"; if applicable) - List all your current and pending research support using the NIH format

7. MS INBRE External Advisory Board Meeting – May 2026

Invited applicants will be requested to appear at the MS INBRE External Advisory Board meeting to provide a proposal presentation.