MeTRIC Request for Applications for Innovative Team Science Pilot Studies

Overview
The DC Metro Tobacco Research and Instruction Consortium (MeTRIC) is a partnership of DC-based experts in tobacco control. Researchers from three founding institutions, The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, the Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies/Truth Initiative, and Georgetown University are at the core of the consortium. These institutions are joined by a variety of organizational and community partners. Our common mission is to reduce tobacco-related inequities in the DC metro area through innovative interdisciplinary research. MeTRIC contributes an overall vision of health equity such that all DC metro residents have full and equal access to prospects that enable them to lead healthy lives. Chartered by the George Washington University in 2014, MeTRIC includes scientists from the primary institutions with expertise in myriad fields and disciplines. Community and practice partners are also central to MeTRIC’s mission. The underlying rationale for MeTRIC is that racial and ethnic minorities generally, and in the DC metro area specifically, have been under-engaged and underrepresented in tobacco control research, reducing the overall translation of research into meaningful policy and practice that could improve health.

Purpose
To advance its research mission, MeTRIC is initiating a small pilot grant program to foster innovative team science across the MeTRIC members, particularly among the Milken Institute School of Public Health, Schroeder Institute, and Georgetown University, and key community partners. The goal of the pilot grants is to jumpstart collaborative studies across the MeTRIC identified thematic areas that increase likelihood federal funding for multidisciplinary research. Ultimately, studies funded through this RFA are expected to prepare MeTRIC for the submission of a competitive center and program project application (e.g., NIH U or P mechanisms) in FY2017 (fall).

Thematic Priorities (based on DC tobacco health disparities)

- **Targeted geographic area**: DC Metro Area.
- **Targeted population**: NIH-designated US health disparity populations (across the lifespan, no restrictions).* Other priority groups include youth; young adults; pregnant women; LGBTQ; veterans.
- **Scientific approaches receiving priority review**: Studies should include one or more of the following novel approaches—media technologies and communication; policy and regulatory science (inclusive of economic analysis); surveillance (inclusive of GIS or EMA); interventions.
- **Other topics of interest include, but are not limited to the following**: The role of place (retail environments, green space, clean/healthy housing); access to effective treatment and preventive services; social networks; tobacco norms and culture; harm reduction; e-cigarettes; and poly product use.

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*Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, socioeconomically disadvantaged populations and rural populations - See more at: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-MD-15-010.html#sthash.i14iQR81.dpuf*

Eligibility
• Full-time active employment as faculty or research scientist or equivalent (with a terminal degree) at in the Milken Institute SPH, Schroeder Institute, or Georgetown University. At GW or Georgetown, faculty may be regular or research track faculty at the rank of assistant, associate or full professor.
• PIs and all team members must be MeTRIC members.
• Applications must include at least one investigators (PI/Co-Is) from all three primary partners (GW, Schroeder Institute, and Georgetown).
• Applications must include at least one community partner (community members do not have to be MeTRIC members at the time of submission).
• Applications must include one graduate student (masters or doctoral level) affiliated with the primary partner organizations.
• An application may be submitted by a PI with no previous NIH funding, pending NIH funding, or an active or previous NIH award. However, the current application cannot overlap the aims in a funded grant. If a notice of award occurs for a grant with similar or overlapping aims before or during involvement with the grant program, please notify the MeTRIC Director immediately.
• An investigator may not serve as PI on more than one proposal in a given round.
• An investigator may serve as a Co-I on an unlimited number of proposals in a given round.
• Applications must explicitly address of the identified thematic areas of research described above.
• Funds will not be granted for similar projects currently supported by other internal or external funding mechanisms at GW, Schroeder Institute, and Georgetown.
• Funds cannot be requested for continuation of existing funded projects or as bridge funding for research activities or staff.

**Funding and Project Duration**

- 3 projects will be funded in this grant cycle; suggested funding up to $30,000.
- Funding will be limited to 12 months and is not renewable. Projects need to be carefully planned accordingly and applicants should clearly state the feasibility of completing the study in this time frame.
- Unspent funds at the end of the grant year will revert to MeTRIC.
- Funding will be on a cost-reimbursable basis from accounts set up at GW, through the Director’s office. Funding for non-GW awardees will set up using a sub-contract agreement with GW, with billing to occur quarterly. *Additional post award details will be issued to awardees.*

**Allowable and Unallowable Expenses**

- **Allowable direct expenses**: Supplies for data collection and analysis, reasonable travel expenses essential to achieving project aims or to present pilot study data at scientific meetings, equipment, research support staff, Graduate Research Assistants, community engagement, and publication costs. Other costs may be considered. For questions, email [GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu](mailto:GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu). Note: For software/data storage needs PIs are encouraged to use the free resources offered through the GW SPH; refer to: [http://publichealth.gwu.edu/research/shared-data-platform-strong-box](http://publichealth.gwu.edu/research/shared-data-platform-strong-box).
- Protected time support by the PI’s supervisor/Chair is encouraged to allow for more of the funds to go toward other direct costs. *If protected time is not available, up to 5% of salary can be provided by this grant for the PI. This option should be carefully weighed.*
- **Non-allowable direct expenses**: capital equipment, rent, and hospitality charges.
- Indirect costs are not permitted.
Awardee Requirements

- Present brief mid-year and final progress report that summarizes progress and project results. Format to be provided following award.
- Submit at least one publication, to be under review, at the end of the 12-month pilot grant period. Publications must acknowledge MeTRIC and the pilot program funding (language forthcoming).
- At the end of the pilot project, PIs may be asked to present their findings at a MeTRIC seminar.
- PIs will be asked to work with MeTRIC Directors on subsequent center or program project applications planned for 2017. PIs may be asked to serve as Project Leaders building on the pilot work.
- Failure to meet the above requirement may prohibit the PI's application for subsequent rounds of MeTRIC pilot funding.

Application Instructions

- Applications will be reviewed by the MeTRIC leadership team (plus 2 selected ad-hoc reviewers) using the standard NIH scoring criteria and scoring sheet (see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm).
- In keeping with NIH standards, use standard layout size of 8 ½ x 11 with at least 1/2-inch margins.
- Use an Arial typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. Charts, graphs, figures, and so on may be in color with a font size no smaller than 8 points. Text should be single-spaced. SF 424 guidance should be consulted (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/#inst).
- Page limits for each section of the application are stated below.
- Follow the outline below, Sections 1-9, in developing your proposal.

Section 1 Face Page. Required form provided.

Section 2 Cover letter (1 page or less). Applicants must submit a cover letter that provides:

1. A brief description of proposed idea and your expertise.
2. A specific statement of how proposal is consistent with the MeTRIC thematic priorities.

Section 3 Budget Page. Use attached budget template.

Section 4 Budget Justification Page (1 page or less).

Section 5 Biographical Sketch Page. Use the new, standard NIH ‘biosketch’ format, including the “Personal Statement” for the PI and all Co-Investigators. The NIH form and biosketch sample are available at http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html.

Section 6 Research Plan (4 pages, total). The Research Plan must include the following:

- 6a. Specific Aims. List the specific aims for the proposed project and relate them to the broad, long-term goals of the project, and MeTRIC thematic foci.
- 6b. Significance. Describe the rationale for the proposed study. Review relevant prior work (also of team members, if possible) and identify the gaps that the project is intended to fill. The emphasis in this section should be on what the pilot project will accomplish and how
those data will increase the likelihood of external funding and the research may be relevant to a larger center or program project grant.

- **6c. Innovation.** Discuss one to three novel contributions. Clearly state the importance and relevance of the proposed work to MeTRIC mission.

- **6d. Approach.** Describe the research design, conceptual framework, procedures and data analyses that will be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. It should be clear that the project is feasible to complete in 12 months. Also provide sample size justification (power calculations estimates, if possible). Human Subjects Sections and IRB protocols do not have to be provided at this point, but will be requested if awarded.

- **6e. Study Timeline & Future Plan.** This section must include the significant benchmarks for your project, including a timetable for the submission of the at least one publication.

**Section 7 References.** Use the NIH format to cite your literature. The references do not count toward the page limit for the research plan.

**Section 8 Appendix.** Provide letters of support from research collaborators, consultants, community partners, other supporting documents as needed.

*Note: It is recommended that proposals use general NIH guidance to complete sections 1-8, the exception being the page limitations, which have been condensed for this application. For writing guidance, refer to the following link: [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/writing_application.htm).*

**Post Award Requirements**

A brief progress report must be submitted six months after the initiation of funding. A final report must be submitted at the end of the project. The reports should describe unexpected barriers and novel insights. Notification of publication submission and acceptance must also be sent to the Director via email. Note: Publications should appropriately site MeTRIC and the funding mechanism (language forthcoming).

**Application Submission Details and Key Dates**

- **Required Letter of Intent (LOI)** is due **Thursday, April 7, 2016** by 5:00 pm EDT. Include the following: Abstract of research in nontechnical terms, explaining the importance of the proposed work, not to exceed 250 words, then followed by a succinct description of the aims, methods to be carried out, the team and its capacity, and relevance to MeTRIC’s priorities and future potential (abstract and aims not to exceed 1 page total). Full proposals will be invited by the MeTRIC Director/s based on priority LOIs, so it is essential to submit an LOI.

- The **full application** deadline is **Thursday, May 5, 2016** by 5:00 pm EDT.

- Applications, with all parts of Sections 1-8, should be collapsed into a single PDF.

- The PDF should be e-mailed to **GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu** by 5:00 pm EDT.

- Awardees will be notified via email as confirmation from **GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu**.

- Awards will be announced on or before **May 27, 2016**.

- The funding period will be **July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017**.

- Questions regarding the application or submission should be sent to **GWSPHResearch@gwu.edu**.