

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Deadline of June 1st, 2025
Support for Pilot Research Training Projects in Occupational Health and Safety

****Awards are contingent upon the continuation of the federal funding of COHSE for the 2025-26 fiscal year. ****

Description: The University of Michigan Center for Occupational Health and Safety Engineering (UM-COHSE), an Education and Research Center (ERC) supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), invites proposals for Pilot Research Training Projects in the area of occupational health and safety (OH&S) for the period July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. It is anticipated that four projects with awards up to \$20,000 (\$21,600 if the maximum 8% indirect cost rate is requested) each will be funded under this initiative. This program is open to doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, and junior faculty at colleges and universities in HHS Region V (the Great Lakes Region, including IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI). Information on the application process, as well as current and past pilot projects can be found on our: [COHSE PPRT Webpage](#).

Purpose: The principal objective of this program is the support of research training; therefore, all applications must demonstrate that the proposed work will increase the number and/or quality of scientists who will pursue research careers in occupational health and safety disciplines. Consistent with this goal, an individual is eligible to receive only one grant as a pilot project research trainee over the course of their career.¹ The program also focuses on pilot research, i.e., innovative studies that generate preliminary results that will lead to applications for traditional peer-reviewed research grants (e.g., NIH R01, R03, etc.) in OH&S disciplines. Applications proposing support for existing projects without the addition of new research goals will not be funded.

We seek especially to support training for projects that: (1) collect data [exposures, outcomes, program evaluation, etc.]; (2) develop new methods/instruments for data collection; or (3) develop new engineering controls or PPE. Projects should also relate to one or more of the current National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) priority themes (see <https://www.cdc.gov/nora/crosssectors.html> for a list of the priority themes). All projects should, to the maximum extent feasible, be relevant to exposures and risks faced by **workers**—e.g., enrolling employed workers as research subjects, making recommendations that employers can use to benefit their workers, etc.

While projects may focus on any areas of OH&S, in the 2025-26 cycle we encourage projects that:

- study the substantial new steps the Environmental Protection Agency is taking to protect workers using the amended Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA);
- investigate ways to reduce certain occupational fatalities whose rates remain high (e.g., motor vehicle accidents with workers as drivers or bystanders);
- identify communities whose residents work at jobs with the highest exposures to toxicants and stressors, which may or may not be the communities with the highest environmental exposures;
- relate to the NIOSH Total Worker Health framework (see <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/totalhealth.html>); or

¹ This rule does not limit the number of doctoral students or postdoctoral fellows that a faculty member can supervise as research trainees; however, only one award will be made per faculty member per year.

- involve to some extent (as assistants or via classroom outreach) younger investigators (masters' students, undergraduates) who may be interested in learning about OH&S as a field

Deadline: The deadline for applications is **5:00 PM EDT, June 1st, 2025**. *Applications received by Friday, May 19, 2025 will be pre-screened for completeness and compliance with the application guidelines; feedback will be provided for non-compliant applications.*

Submission: Electronic submission of applications is required. Your application packet must consist of two PDF files, sent as attachments to umcohse-info@umich.edu:

- The first PDF file must include your proposal and appendices.
- The second file must contain either documentation that the research trainee has received training in the Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship (RCRS) meeting the NIH guidelines (<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-10-019.html>), or a statement attesting to when that training will be completed during the project period. Next, if this file does not provide full documentation of Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval for the research², it must contain a statement that the required approval(s) will be finalized before any funded research begins, or (if applicable) a statement that the project does not involve human or animal subjects.

Budget Requirements and Restrictions: Each application must provide a detailed budget and budget justification using the PHS Form 398 format ([PPRT Budget Template](#)) If the awarded amount is not sufficient to support the proposed work, the applicant must demonstrate the availability of matching funds to assure that the project goals will be achieved by the June 30, 2026 deadline. June 30, 2026 is the final day for all charged invoices to be submitted to a pilot project account. Invoices for charges incurred after this date will not be reimbursed, and unexpended funds will be forfeited and returned. In no case can the direct costs exceed \$20,000, nor can the total costs exceed \$21,600 (if the maximum 8% indirect cost rate is requested). See [Example Budget](#) sheet.

Budgets are to be used exclusively for research expenses associated with the described research or to support the research trainee in the course of their performing this research. Examples include necessary supplies (respiratory cartridges, consumables for lab analyses, etc.), subject fees, and travel to collect data or present findings. Salary support may be requested for necessary research personnel such as junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate student research trainees, and undergraduate students; however, salary support must be demonstrated to be directly related to the project. Equipment requests are discouraged and may be eliminated outright from proposals (*i.e.*, *equipment* >=\$5,000) and are specifically prohibited on PPRT grants. Salary support requested for the research trainees must be calculated on the current Kirschstein-NRSA predoctoral award level (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-23-076.html>).

Funding will **not** be approved for secretarial support, salary support for senior faculty, hosting costs, graduate fees, tuition, or tuition remission. Please see the following link for a [Sample Budget](#) sheet.

² The IRB must be registered with the DHHS Office of Human Research Protections and have a current Federal wide Assurance Number.

Eligibility: *Research trainees must be doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows (including Occupational Medicine residents), or full-time faculty at institutions within HHS Region V. Faculty research trainees must not be above the rank of Assistant Professor or Assistant Research Scientist. Proposals that support a doctoral student or a postdoctoral fellow as the research trainee must have a faculty sponsor who will serve as the Principal Investigator and who will be held responsible for the scientific and fiscal integrity of the project. The PI is also responsible for submitting all reports in a timely manner. The faculty sponsor must serve on the “graduate faculty” of the applicant’s institution. (A member of the “graduate faculty” has been approved by his/her institution to serve as chair of a doctoral dissertation committee.)*

Mentorship: All research trainees must receive mentorship for their project. Doctoral and postdoctoral trainees may be mentored by any member of their institution’s graduate faculty. Junior faculty research trainees must receive mentorship from a tenured faculty member. The proposal should summarize the mentoring plan.

Proposals involving Research at Foreign Sites or overseas travel will require additional clearances. If an applicant is considering submitting a proposal for research at a foreign site, the applicant **must** contact the PPRT Director, Adam M. Finkel, Sc.D., CIH (adfinkel@umich.edu) at least 4 weeks prior to the application deadline (i.e. by May 1, 2025). Funding for overseas travel requires advance approval from NIOSH, and must be arranged and approved by the PPRT Director in advance.

Proposal Format: All proposals submitted to the Pilot Project Research Training Program **must** conform to the following format in the order specified below. Applications not conforming to these requirements will be rejected.

1. Cover Page which lists the following information (Required Template: [Cover Page](#)):
 - a. Project Title
 - b. Names, email addresses, institutional affiliations, and roles of key investigators
 - c. List of the project titles, key investigators, and application year for all previous successful applications to UM-COHSE’s PPRT program that have been awarded to any investigator participating in the current proposal. (Note: All previous PPRT projects are listed on COHSE’s website at [PPRT Past Projects](#)) If none received, please note “none received.”
 - d. A statement which attests to the fact that the work described in the enclosed pilot grant application is not currently funded by any other grant-administering program.
2. Table of Contents (Separate Page; Template: ([Table of Contents](#)))
3. Abstract (1/2 page maximum)
4. Technical Proposal limited to a maximum of seven single-spaced pages.
 - a. Specific Aims (1/2 page maximum)
 - b. Significance and Impact (1 page maximum)
 - Please include brief statements that specifically address the following:
 1. Which NIOSH Sector or Cross-Sector Programs (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/>) and specific Strategic Goal your application contributes to (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/prioritygoals.html>)
 2. How your project contributes to the OH&S needs of HHS Region V

3. How your project may be useful in developing or changing one or more policies (at the national, state, or local levels) that improve OH&S, and how you will communicate your findings and results to policy-makers
- c. Qualifications of Investigator (includes research/professional experience of research trainee and faculty sponsor as appropriate, 1/2 page maximum; also add *if applicable* any information about the specific university resources (laboratories, datasets, equipment) that will be used to advance the project)
- d. Research Plan—*5 pp. maximum* (must include quarterly milestones and deliverables)
5. Timeline showing start/completion times of major activities
6. Budget and Justification (submitted using PHS Form 398 budget format)
7. NIH Formatted Biosketch for each key investigator (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>) [Note: NIH revised the biosketch format in 2015. This new format is required.]
8. Letter of support from the faculty sponsor/mentor is required for all doctoral student or postdoctoral fellow research trainees. This letter should demonstrate that the research trainee has the appropriate mentoring and advising support necessary to carry out the proposed study and to publish the results of their study findings. Additionally, it should address how this project will aid in the research trainee’s pursuit of a research career in an OH&S discipline.
9. Letter(s) of support from external stakeholder(s) are encouraged if their cooperation is necessary for the completion of the project.
10. References cited in the proposal

Evaluation Criteria: Proposals will be reviewed by the Pilot Research Project Scientific Review Committee and applicants will be notified of an award decision by June 30, 2025. Those that are not awarded a pilot grant will be given a summary of the decision as to why their proposal was rejected. Awards are contingent upon the continuation of the federal funding of COHSE for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Proposals will be scored on a 100-point quality scale, using the following weighting factors:

Relevance to NORA priorities and/or regional needs	15 points
Potential for impact on worker health and safety or the development of effective assessment tools, methodologies, and strategies	10 points
Preparation of the research trainee to perform proposed work	10 points
Adequacy of resources (faculty advisors, laboratories, computers, access to work sites, etc.) required to complete the pilot project	10 points
Innovation	10 points
Scientific and/or policy merit	15 points
Appropriateness of proposed methods	15 points
Building research capacity of the research trainee (likelihood of trainee’s success in obtaining future funding from conventional sources, or for continuing to pursue research in an OH&S field)	15 points

Reporting Requirements: Principal Investigators are responsible for submitting mid-year and final reports on the project by the listed deadlines. Additionally, awardees are required to present their project at our annual Research Symposium held during the University of Michigan’s Winter term.

Funding will be available to defray the travel costs incurred by selected individuals, assuming that the 2025-26 Symposium will be held in person.

A brief mid-project report must be submitted no later than **February 1, 2026**. The mid-project report consists of the completion of the following document: [Mid-Project Report Template](#).

A final report must be submitted no later than **August 1, 2026**. The final report must include the following sections:

- **Final Technical Report** (10-15 double-spaced pages, plus additional pages for references and relevant appendices) that includes the following sections:
 - A non-technical vignette of no more than 300 words regarding the funded research, that can be disseminated to a broad audience of occupational health practitioners, policymakers, and the general public. This statement should address what problem was evaluated, why this problem is important, what the research project showed, and what the practical relevance and ramifications of the research are.
 - Introduction/background
 - Methods
 - Results
 - Discussion/Conclusions
 - Plans for follow-up publications and grant applications
 - Description of how the program increased the trainee's research expertise and capabilities
 - References
 - Appendices (as necessary)

- **Photo(s) or other graphics** with text caption(s) which you will permit us to post on our website.

Final Reports that do not meet these specifications will be sent back for revisions. Please note that the final report, particularly the vignette and photos, will be used on our website (cohse.umich.edu) to promote the program and to help disseminate the research.

In addition to the above reports, copies of all publications resulting from the project must be submitted to the Pilot Research Training Program Administrator. Please note that you will be contacted at least once a year for at least five years following the completion of your project to request this information.

Finally, all publications that result from PPRT funding should include the following acknowledgement: "This publication was supported by the Grant or Cooperative Agreement Number, T42 OH008455, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services."

Faculty sponsors not meeting the above reporting requirements will be ineligible for future PPRT funding.