



## Collaborative in Health Equity Community Investment Fund (CIF)

*2025 – 2026 Request for Proposals*

### COLLABORATIVE IN HEALTH EQUITY

The Collaborative in Health Equity (CHE) at UMass Chan Medical School was established in 2023 as an institutional commitment to advancing the mission of health equity locally, regionally, globally, and systemically and is housed in the Office of Health Equity at the UMass Chan Medical School in Worcester, Massachusetts. The CHE's goal is to become a national model for advancing health equity for vulnerable, underserved, and historically marginalized communities, locally, nationally, and globally. The CHE's vision is to center health equity throughout all aspects of clinical care, research, education, and community engagement. The CHE leverages institution-spanning, community-wide, and global assets that foster and sustain community embeddedness and trust.

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

This competitive funding opportunity seeks to foster, develop, and amplify existing as well as new infrastructure to support the education, mentorship, and scholarly productivity of collaborative and interprofessional research efforts, and that have the best potential for future growth and external funding. Projects supported by this funding will center communities in meaningful, community-driven, community-led and anchored research, educational, and service opportunities which engages learners, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders; with focused attention on employing community-based participatory research principles throughout. To this end we are seeking proposals that utilize a community-based research framework that exemplifies the following principles:

- **Having both a faculty member and a community member as Co-Principal Investigators (Co-PIs):** Proposals must include a co-PI structure, with representation from academia and the community, to ensure a balanced and inclusive leadership approach.
- **Challenging typical models of academic research:** We encourage innovative approaches that go beyond traditional research methods and methodologies, allowing for genuine collaboration and knowledge co-creation throughout all phases of the project, specifically the conceptualization, submission, project period implementation, interpretation and reporting of findings, as well as dissemination (e.g. presentations/publications/community data walks, etc.).
- **Equalizing power dynamics between academia and surrounding communities:** We value projects that prioritize equity in partnerships, where the voices and perspectives of community members are respected and valued.
- **Recognizing the history of extracting knowledge from communities:** We acknowledge historical imbalances in academic research and expect proposals to demonstrate a commitment to addressing this by centering the knowledge and lived experiences of communities impacted by the research topic.

- **Demonstrating how the project will strengthen the relationship between the university and the surrounding community:** We are interested in projects that foster long-term partnerships and create mutually beneficial relationships between the university and the community.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

- Who is eligible: Faculty members of any rank, staff, and learners (students, postdoctoral fellows, clinical fellows, residents) with a faculty advisor who are affiliated with the UMass Chan Medical School (inclusive of the T.H. Chan School of Medicine, the Tan Chingfen School of Nursing, and the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences), as well as the UMass Memorial Health System (including four hospitals and behavioral health services: UMass Memorial Medical Center [Worcester] UMass Memorial Health – HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital [Fitchburg, Clinton and Leominster] UMass Memorial Health – Marlborough Hospital [Marlborough], and UMass Memorial Health - Harrington Hospital [Southbridge]), Baystate Health, and/or Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
- Funding Award: Up to \$50,000. Award amounts will vary based on project needs.
- Project Period: Up to one year
- Letter of Intent Due Date: 7/25/2025
- Full proposal Due Date: 10/10/2025
- Awardees will be required to present their findings at the annual Collaborative in Health Equity Research Conference
- Awardees are expected to submit a grant proposal for external funding based on their pilot project funding from the CHE

## APPLICATION PROCEDURE

**STAGE 1: LETTER OF INTENT:** All candidates must submit a one-page (max) letter of intent (LOI) by 7/25/2025

Completed LOIs should be emailed to [CollaborativeinHealthEquity@umassmed.edu](mailto:CollaborativeinHealthEquity@umassmed.edu)

Each letter of intent should be a one-page .pdf and should include:

- An overview of the project, specifically including details of how this project demonstrates intentional community engagement with a partner organization in Massachusetts. The letter of intent should articulate how the project will advance the mission of UMass Chan and implement best practices of community engagement through community-driven collaboration, participatory action research, and sustainable impact.
- Full name, professional title, institution (UMass Chan or UMass Memorial), department, and email address of academic PI.
- Full name of community co-PI, community organization, and email address of community co-PI.
- For projects that will engage global partnerships, the letter of intent should describe how the project will also engage the relevant global communities residing within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, specifically indicating bi-directional clinical, research, educational and/or service opportunities and partnerships to learn from and build local as well as global capacity and expertise in addressing mutually identified needs.

Letters of Intent will be peer-reviewed, and the most promising projects will be selected to submit a full proposal. Applicants will be notified by August 8, 2025.

**STAGE 2: FULL PROPOSAL:** Candidates who are invited to submit a full proposal must fill out the online proposal form.

## **Local projects**

The full proposal consists of (include all the following):

**Project overview:** Provide a brief description of your project, including the community-identified need/priority it will address, how the need/priority was identified, the community it will serve, and the expected short- and long-term impact.

**Principal Investigators:** List the names, titles, and affiliations of the co-Principal investigators. This should include both an academic faculty member (as PI or faculty advisor)/learner and a community member. Clearly state the roles and responsibilities of each PI. Provide a CV for each of the co-PIs.

**Participating Organizations:** Detail the community-based organizations involved in the project. Describe their track record of community service, how they have been engaged throughout the proposal process, and how they will be involved in all phases of the research project.

**Project Goals and Objectives/Aims:** Outline the main goals and objectives of the project.

**Proposed Research Methodology:** Describe the research methodology to be used and explain how it aligns with the principles of a community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework.

**Community Partnership Collaboration Plan:** Describe how you plan to ensure equitable partnerships with the community organization, respect community members' knowledge, lived experience, individual and collective current, as well as historical/ancestral perspectives, and empower the community involved.

**Addressing Historical Imbalances:** Provide a plan for how your project will address the historical imbalances in academic research by centering the knowledge and lived experiences of the communities impacted by the research topic.

**Project Timeline and Time Commitment:** Provide a detailed outline of the project timeline, including key milestones and the time commitment expected from all project members. Include whether the project already has IRB approval and if not, where the project is in the process of IRB approval (e.g., approved, submitted – awaiting approval, not yet submitted)

**Training:** All awardees and their research teams (anyone who will be working on the project) will be required to take the Collaborative in Health Equity required training prior to working with the community on their project. Designated funds in the amount of \$1,500 must be allocated in the budget for training.

**Budget:** Provide a detailed budget plan for each year of the project. Include all research-related expenses, project implementation costs, and community organization costs.

**Budget Justification:** Provide justification for all expenses listed in the budget.

**Impact and Benefits:** Explain how the project's outcomes will continue to benefit the community beyond the funding period and how it will strengthen the relationship between the university and the community.

**Dissemination, Future Directions and Sustainability:** Provide a dissemination plan that clearly articulates a plan for engaging community partners as co-authors and co-presenters. Discuss your plans for where this pilot funding will lead (e.g., in terms of future research, policy, educational, or other lasting community impact)

**Letters of Support:** A letter of support from faculty or learner's department chair is required. The letter should indicate the Chair's support for the application in terms of time spent on the project. Letters of support from each participating community organization should also be included.

**References:** 1 page

## **Global Health Projects**

The full proposal consists of (include all the following):

**Project overview:** Provide a brief description of the global project inclusive of a description of the global and local partnership, length of partnership, existing clinical, research, educational infrastructure, existing government and/or other stakeholder engagement/support, global site-identified need/priority that will be addressed, how the need/priority was identified, the community it will serve, the local stateside community partnerships that will be engaged, and the expected short- and long-term impact, both locally and globally that promotes health equity.

**Principal Investigators:** List the names, titles, and affiliations of the co-Principal investigators. This should include both an academic faculty member (as PI or faculty advisor)/learner as well as the key local and global community members. Clearly state the roles and responsibilities of each PI. Provide a CV for each of the co-PIs.

**Participating Organizations:** Detail the community-based organizations (both locally and globally) involved in the project. Describe their track record of community service, how they have been engaged throughout the proposal process, and how they will be involved in all phases of the research project.

**Active International Affiliation Agreements:** List any relevant and active Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or International Affiliation Agreement (IAA) and include participating institutions/organizations and expiration dates. Include any previously UMass approved travel to global site including any learner involvement (i.e., Letter of Agreement, etc).

**Project Goals and Objectives/Aims:** Outline the main goals and objectives of the project.

**Proposed Research Methodology:** Describe the research methodology to be used and explain how it aligns with the principles of a community-based participatory research (CBPR) framework.

**Community Partner Collaboration Plan:** Describe how you plan to ensure equitable partnerships, respect local and global community members' knowledge, lived experience, individual and collective current, as well as historical/ancestral perspectives, and empower the communities involved.

**Addressing Historical Imbalances:** Provide a plan for how your project will address the historical imbalances in academic research by centering the knowledge and lived experiences of the communities impacted by the research topic.

**Project Timeline and Time Commitment:** Provide a detailed outline of the project timeline, including key milestones and the time commitment expected from all project members.

**Training:** All awardees and their research teams (anyone who will be working on the project) will be required to take the Collaborative in Health Equity required training prior to working with the community on their project. Designated funds in the amount of \$1,500 must be allocated in the budget for training.

**Budget:** Provide a detailed budget plan for each year of the project. Include all research-related expenses, including international travel expenses including costs of associated visas, relevant vaccinations, safety, project implementation costs, and community organization costs. Of note, any travel associated with this project will have to be approved through UMass including but not limited to ensuring all required paperwork is complete and travel is reviewed by UMass International Support Services and registered appropriately. This may also require submission of Foreign Project Registration Form. For learners, travel approval through OUME (IMEP) or GME will be necessary.

**Budget Justification:** Provide justification for all expenses listed in the budget.

**Impact and Benefits:** Explain how the project's outcomes will continue to benefit the local/global partnership beyond the funding period and how it will strengthen the relationship between the university and these communities.

**Dissemination, Future Directions and Sustainability:** Provide a dissemination plan that clearly articulates a plan for engaging local/global community partners as co-authors and co-presenters. Discuss your plans for where this pilot funding will lead (e.g., in terms of future research, policy, educational, or other lasting local/global community impact)

**Letters of Support:** A letter of support from faculty or learner's department chair is required, as well as from the local and global partner organization/institution. This letter should indicate the Chair's support for the application in terms of time spent on the project. Letters of support from each participating local/global community organization should also be included.

**References:** 1 page

## TIMELINE

Letters of Intent Due	7/25/2025
LOI Finalists Notified	8/8/2025
Full Proposals Due	10/10/25
Earliest Start Date	12/01/25

## QUESTIONS?

Regarding the CIF program or proposal, email:

Sarah Forrester ([sarah.forrester@umassmed.edu](mailto:sarah.forrester@umassmed.edu)) -or-

Domenica Perrone ([Domenica.Perrone@umassmed.edu](mailto:Domenica.Perrone@umassmed.edu))

Regarding application technical details, email

Sammie Doxey ([Samantha.doxey@umassmed.edu](mailto:Samantha.doxey@umassmed.edu))