OVERVIEW
The Community Engagement (CE) Program within the Michigan Institute for Clinical & Health Research (MICHR) at the University of Michigan provides funding to faculty and community partners engaged in clinical and translational research.

Goals of the MICHR CE:
- Impact clinical outcomes and community health
- Drive translation of scientific concepts from the benches of basic scientists to clinical investigators and the community
- Stimulate research projects that address community-identified health priorities
- Establish new research programs and/or collaborations
- Augment the number of clinical/translational research investigators
- Increase extramural funding and publications.

BACKGROUND
The MICHR CE Program is issuing a funding opportunity to support community-engaged research partnerships and projects addressing community health priorities across the state of Michigan. The Statewide Building Capacity for Research and Action (SBCRA) is modeled after and replicates the Flint Building Capacity for Research & Action (BCRA) funding mechanism, a successful partnership between CE and Community Based Organization Partners (CBOP), which funded community-academic research partnerships focused on health issues in Flint over the past four years. The BCRA model was expanded to serve partnerships across the state of Michigan. We aim to enhance and build capacity of community-academic teams to conduct research and utilize the principles of community-engaged research (e.g., shared power, mutual respect), community-based participatory research (e.g., equitable involvement in all phases), and multi-disciplinary approaches involving diverse representation and collaboration. Definitions for these terms are included in the RFP’s addendum.

The goal of this opportunity is to strengthen the capacity of the community to engage in, and benefit from the translational research enterprise.

This funding opportunity will support projects that lead to an increased number of sustainable and equitable community-academic partnerships, address community-identified health priorities, and dissemination of research findings.

AWARD INFORMATION
Applications may request up to $5,000 for partnership development activities; partnership sustainability activities; and dissemination of research project findings.

Examples of activities that can be funded include, but are not limited to:
- Building relationships between partners (e.g., explore the involvement of potential partners, how the partnership will adopt and use CEnR principles)

- Developing a steering committee (e.g., defining roles and responsibilities, developing communication and
decision-making guidelines)

- Conducting community assessment(s) to inform research plans (e.g., collecting perspectives and data through focus groups or community meetings to inform the research question)
- Analyzing existing data to help inform future research (e.g., collaborative analysis, review, and interpretation of previously collected data)
- Disseminating research findings (e.g., creating tools, such as fact sheets and/or policy and advocacy briefs to communicate findings to specific audiences)

Applications must be submitted to UMMS Competition Space by Friday, November 5, 2021, by 5:00 p.m. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions by December 15, 2021.

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS
The MICHRI Community Engagement (CE) Program provides technical support to partnerships interested in submitting an application.

- Technical assistance call via Zoom: Friday, October 1st at 1:00 p.m. ~ RSVP here.
- Partnership Development Training call via Zoom: Friday, October 15th at 2:00 p.m. ~ RSVP here.

Please contact the community engagement team for questions about this funding opportunity. CE provides no-cost consultation services to teams assessing partnership readiness, exploring community-engaged approaches, and developing grant applications. Applicants interested in receiving specific guidance on their application are encouraged to request a consultation.

ELIGIBILITY
Each application must have at least two partners: an academic partner affiliated with a college, school, or university in the state of Michigan and a community partner affiliated with a non-academic community organization or group (e.g. non-profit, a neighborhood coalition, faith-community based organization, etc.). Applicants are encouraged to propose a shared leadership model (co-leads).

~~ Academic partners do not need to be affiliated with the University of Michigan ~~

Community partners must be affiliated with organizations or groups located within the state of Michigan. Community partners who do not have an organizational affiliation may serve as collaborators, consultants, mentors, advisors, and other roles supporting the project.

Beyond members of the project team, partnerships should engage community residents, stakeholders and members of the public who have first-hand knowledge and lived experience valuable to better understand the health issue or priority area in their region.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES
Each application must include the following components:

1. **Face Page**: Include an abstract in the space provided and indicate the application type (partnership or project).

2. **Partnership / Dissemination Plan**: A maximum TWO-page, single-spaced document (Arial 11, minimum of 1.5 inch margins) describing the partnership, or both the partnership and project concisely. Use the following overall format and note the suggested page limits.
a. **Significance and Impact** (up to 0.5 page): Describe the specific priority area and health problem the partnership will address and its relevance to the community involved. Describe how activities will lead to sustained research collaborations and projects.

b. **Partners** (up to 0.25 page): Describe any previous experience partners have conducting community-engaged research, and expertise partners will bring to the project and/or partnership.

c. **Approach** (up to 1 page): Describe specific objectives of the project and/or partnership, and activities partners will conduct to meet the desired outcomes. Include details about the community-engaged research framework and/or approach partners will utilize along with a project timeline. Demonstrate how the project will maneuver and navigate potential COVID-19 restrictions. Outline community benefit from your project and/or partnership.

d. **Impact and Future Plans** (0.25 pages): Describe any potential benefits for the community and/or partners involved and plans for future research collaborations and/or sustained partnership efforts.

3. **References**: Not included in the page limit.

4. **Regulatory Approval (if applicable)**: For partnerships requesting funding to conduct research activities utilizing human subjects, you will be required to provide additional human subjects documentation and Institutional Review Board approval if your application receives a fundable score. Funds will not be released until approval has been secured.

5. **Budget and Justification**: All budget items must be listed and justified. The following items are not allowed: course buy-out more than 50% of the total proposed budget, institution indirect cost, equipment, computers, cost overruns, retroactive funding, grant preparation costs, travel unrelated to the conduct of research (e.g., conferences), renovations, or office supplies. This list may not be all inclusive, and applicants are encouraged to discuss allowable expenses with CE staff if there are questions.

6. **Letters of Support**: The academic Co-PI must obtain a letter of support from their department. Collaborators may document support for and commitment to the proposed project and/or partnership.

Items 2-6 must be combined into one PDF. Templates for the proposal’s face page, checklist, project plan, and budget are available at MICH’s website.

**REVIEW PROCESS AND CRITERIA**
Applications will be reviewed by a committee of community and academic partners with extensive experience conducting community-engaged research. The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

- **Significance**: Does the project address a community-identified health need(s)? Is the project relevant and responsive to this need(s)?

- **Partnership**: Do the partners have complementary experience and expertise? Is there evidence on the equitable involvement of all partners?
**Approach:** Will principles of community-engaged research be utilized? Are the proposed activities feasible within the allotted timeframe? Are the overall strategy and activities appropriate to accomplish the objectives? How will the project maneuver and navigate potential COVID-19 limitations? Outline community benefit from your project and/or partnership.

**Budget:** Is the budget realistic and appropriate considering the work proposed? Is the budget fairly distributed among partners?

**Community Benefit:** Will the project/partnership provide direct benefits to the community involved?

**Sustainability:** What is the likelihood the partnership will be sustained? Do you expect outcomes from the project will facilitate new grant applications or collaborative research efforts and relationships?

The MICHR CE Program is looking to support partnerships that are new to their support.

**AWARDEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each partnership is funded to utilize a partnership tool at the beginning and end of the project to measure concepts such as trust and group dynamics (i.e., Schultz, et al, 2003). A consult with the MICHR evaluation specialist will be offered as part of the award.

Awardees will be required to attend an orientation meeting to discuss funding expectations, project plans, and support services available to partners and teams.

All funds must be spent by the end of the one-year funding period. Awardees are required to provide a six-month progress report and a final report upon completion of the award period. Additionally, we encourage awardees to alert Athena McKay, mathena@med.umich.edu, on any complications that could jeopardize success of your effort.
ADDENDUM

Definitions included in the Background Section

Community-engaged research approaches are built on the premise that the health issues being studied are best understood by the community members living in the environments where the research is taking place, and that communities should be directly involved in the decisions that will affect their lives. This process requires power-sharing, equity, and flexibility in conducting research in a manner that fits the priorities, needs, and capacities of the communities involved.¹

Community is defined broadly as a group of people connected by similar characteristics, such as identities (e.g. social/economic backgrounds), geographic location (e.g. city of Flint), special interests (e.g. coalition to reduce childhood obesity), and/or situations that affect the well-being of that group.⁴

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) is defined as an orientation to research that emphasizes “equitable” participation of partners for “combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities”². CBPR involves authentic engagement of community members and stakeholders in all aspects of the research process, from problem definition through data collection, analysis, and dissemination and use of findings to affect program, practice, and policy changes³.

Multi-disciplinary approaches are one of many forms of collaboration and community engagement. Partnerships should include academic collaborators focused on different disciplines in translational science, and other stakeholders and communities such as patients, their caregivers and families, nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, community-based clinicians, healthcare delivery systems, industry and others.

References


