

The Gund Institute and the Northern New England Clinical and Translational Research Network (NNE-CTR) **Joint Catalyst Award** **Call for Letters of Intent** Due August 1, 2023

The Gund Institute for the Environment and the Northern New England Clinical and Translational Research Network (NNE-CTR) are joining forces to offer a \$100,000, two-year award for research at the intersection of rural health and the natural environment. This collaboration is aimed at better understanding how environmental concerns relate to human health. The Gund Institute and the Northern New England Clinical and Translational Research Network (NNE-CTR) are the co-conveners of this **Joint Catalyst Award**.

The [Gund Institute for Environment](#) at the [University of Vermont](#) is a research center dedicated to understanding and tackling the world's most critical environmental challenges. Driven by the belief that research should inspire action, the Institute takes a cross-sector approach to solving environmental issues with stakeholders from government, business, and broader society.

The [NNE-CTR](#) is a regional consortium composed of partners at the UVM Larner College of Medicine, the MaineHealth Institute for Research, and the University of Southern Maine. The NNE-CTR is funded by the National Institute of General Medical Science (NIGMS); The NNE-CTR seeks to enhance the health of people in northern New England by fostering and coordinating clinical, translational and educational research activities that are focused on rural health across the region.

The Gund Institute's Catalyst Awards support research and scholarship that spans disciplines and addresses critical environmental and sustainability issues. The NNE-CTR funds pilot research awards that target rural health disparities in northern New England. This special **Joint Catalyst Award** will support a team of investigators to build a collaborative program with the promise to grow and attract external support or recognition. Successful programs must focus on rural health and the natural environment and will combine cutting-edge research and scholarship with real-world engagement and impact.

The first step in the process is to submit a **Letter of Intent**. We will review your letter of intent to ensure your proposed project meets our eligibility and programmatic criteria. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, we stand ready to provide you with guidance and support in developing your application. During the course of developing your LOI, please feel free to contact us for assistance in identifying collaborators to reinforce your initiative, and for assistance in developing your concept. To get started, please contact: [Sheila Clifford-Bova, Administrative Program Manager](#), NNE-CTR.

On the following pages you will find information on eligibility criteria and specific instructions on how to submit your Letter of Intent. We appreciate your interest in this collaborative funding opportunity, and look forward to supporting the development of your proposal.

Meredith Niles, PhD

Acting Director
The Gund Institute

Gary Stein, PhD

Co-Principal Investigator
Northern New England Clinical
& Translational Research Network

Description, Eligibility and Expectations for Gund and NNE-CTR Joint Catalyst Award (JCA)

General Information, Eligibility Requirements & Expectations

Thank you for your interest in submitting a Letter of Intent (LOI) for consideration. We encourage you to contact [Sheila Clifford-Bova](#) at the NNE-CTR, with copy to [Bailey Rowland](#) at The Gund Institute, to discuss your project proposal before developing your LOI. They will connect you with one of our experienced Research Navigators, and provide you with advice as to how to best frame your proposal.

Expectations and Priority Topics:

- Proposals must address important issues at the intersection of the natural environment and health, in rural settings in New England.
- Proposals must include a clear description of how the proposed work will lead to broader, longer-term efforts, especially external funding proposals in appropriate fields.
- An individual may serve as a Project PI on one Catalyst Award at a time. (PIs on current Catalyst Awards that end before July 1, 2024 are eligible to apply.)
- Preference will be given to proposals that include collaborative team members from both Vermont and Maine.

Eligibility

- The Project PI must be a Gund Fellow and hold a faculty level appointment at UVM. For purposes of this award, the Project PI must be eligible to apply for independent funding at their home institution and must follow all relevant procedures, including the pre-award process if applicable.
- There should be a Project Co-Investigator/Co-Lead who is a member of the NNE-CTR and holds a faculty appointment at MaineHealth or UVM.
- Project will take place in an IDeA state (Vermont, Maine and/or New Hampshire). No funds from the NNE-CTR can be spent in a non-IDeA state. You may collaborate with investigators at an institution in a non-IDeA state if no grant funds are being expended there. Thus, non-IDeA state partners cannot be included in the budget and would need other sources of funding. Each collaborating institution receiving NNE-CTR funds must be incorporated in an IDeA state; branches or sites of an institution whose parent organization is NOT in the IDeA state are not eligible to serve as a site for a pilot project.
- The Project PI may not concurrently have research funding from other IDeA Program award mechanisms (e.g., INBRE, COBRE).

Funds may be used for the following:

- Research expenses that are easily identifiable, reasonable and necessary to advance and perform the scope of work being funded;
- Equipment costing \$5,000 or more if such equipment was included in the proposal selected for funding, otherwise prior approval is required from the Gund;
- For a Project PI with a 9-month appointment, funds may be used for up to one month of summer salary support and associated fringe at the institutional rate of pay which may not exceed the NIH salary cap;
- Student research assistant support for up to three months of summer salary;
- Travel and workshop costs for project participants.

Funds may not be used for the following:

- Salaries or stipends for faculty, postdoctoral fellows or associates, or students during the 9-month academic year.

After Submitting an LOI:

Letters of Intent will be reviewed by leadership of the Gund Institute and the NNE-CTR. Letters deemed to be eligible based on eligibility criteria and scientific/programmatic criteria, and that further the mission of the Gund Institute and the NNE-CTR, will be invited to submit full proposals. We will inform you of the decision by September 1, 2023. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, we will provide detailed instructions for full applications, and will offer guidance and support as you develop your proposal, including the assistance of NNE-CTR Navigation services.

Funding level and duration

We anticipate funding one project up to \$100,000. The award period is expected to begin July 1, 2024 and end June 30, 2026 (24 months). Note that funding will need NIGMS (National Institute of General Medical Science) approval. No-cost extensions are not typically allowed. A report will be due at end of year 1 and prior to year 2 funding. Final reporting is required and will be outlined in the award agreement.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING THE LETTER OF INTENT

Please follow instructions below and email a final PDF of the LOI to: [Sheila Clifford-Bova](mailto:Sheila.Clifford-Bova@med.uvm.edu), NNE-CTR Administrative Program Manager. LOIs are due on August 1, 2023 at 5pm.

Please note: Project PIs and key personnel on the funded project must register to become members with the NNE-CTR prior to award acceptance. If you are unsure about your NNE-CTR registration status, or have other questions about the LOI submission process, please contact us via nne-ctr@med.uvm.edu.

The Letter of Intent should be no more than two pages. Please use Arial 11 point font with ½” margins all the way around.

Page one should be formatted as follows:

Header: NNE-CTR and Gund Institute Joint Catalyst Award

Date of Submission:

Title of Proposal:

Study Team members (list below, include title, position, email, phone, institution for PI, Co-I and other members of the team)

Project Principal Investigator

Project Co-Investigator

Other Members of Study Team (mentors, collaborators):

Health Relevance: Please describe in 1-2 sentences the health relevance of the project.

Environment Relevance: Please describe in 1-2 sentences the environmental issues or drivers involved in the project.

Do any of the investigators have current or pending awards for this or similar research projects? (Y/N)

Does the Project PI have any grant support from other IDeA programs (COBREs, INBREs)? (Y/N)

Please provide a three to four sentence description of the proposed research that summarizes the focus and relevance of the project to the NNE-CTR and Gund missions in non-scientific terms (that might be used for a general interest announcement).

Page 2: (limit to one page)

Title of Proposal and name of Project PI

Brief statement describing rationale for study and hypothesis to be tested

List Aims of Study. For each aim, indicate the question being addressed, the proposed approach, and the intended outcome

Impact, deliverables and/or other key details

Contacts

General Information nne-ctr@med.uvm.edu

Sheila Clifford-Bova, NNE-CTR, University of Vermont sheila.clifford-bova@med.uvm.edu

Bailey Rowland, Gund Institute, University of Vermont bailey.rowland@uvm.edu