

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Community-Engaged Research Mini-Grant Program

Issuing Organization: The Center for Clinical & Translational Research at the University of South Carolina (ClinTrUSC)

Program Overview

The Center for Clinical and Translational Research at the University of South Carolina (ClinTrUSC) announces the availability of two community-engaged research mini-grants of **up to \$7,500 each** to community organizations serving the Midlands region of South Carolina.

Because ClinTrUSC's focus is on clinical and translational research, we expect the project to be a collaboration between a community organization and an organization that provides academic or clinical services in the Midlands. The community organization serves as the applicant and recipient of funds. The academic or clinical research partner (e.g., a faculty member or clinical researcher affiliated with USC, Prisma Health, VA Medical System, a Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Lexington Health, or another Midlands clinical partner) is identified on the cover sheet, co-signs the application, and is expected to be substantively engaged in project activities throughout the award period. Supporting participant recruitment or other activities associated with conducting ongoing studies in human populations is not the purpose of these funds.

Award amounts are appropriate for small-scale community-engaged projects. Eligible project types include, but are not limited to, focused qualitative studies, needs assessments, community-defined surveys with limited samples, secondary data analyses, partnership development and planning activities, and formative work supporting subsequent external proposals. Projects requiring laboratory infrastructure, extensive recruitment, or extended data collection are outside the scope of this funding opportunity. Applicants are encouraged to discuss project scope during the required pre-application Webinar.

Funding Details

Item	Details
Award Amount	Up to \$7,500 per award
Funding Mechanism	Mini-Grant
Number of Awards	To be determined based on available funding
Project Period	Up to 6 months from date of award
Indirect Costs	Not allowed
Issuing Organization	ClinTrUSC, University of South Carolina

Program Goals & Priorities

The program supports community-engaged projects that:

- Address a community need identified as a priority by the community organization and the population it serves
- Are conducted through an established or developing partnership with a faculty member or clinical researcher affiliated with USC, Prisma Health, the VA Medical System, an FQHC, Lexington Health, or another Midlands clinical partner
- Produce a defined deliverable within the 6-month project period (ex., a community-facing report, an issue brief, a poster or manuscript, or an external grant proposal)
- Are appropriately scoped for a budget of up to \$7,500 over a 6-month period

Examples of Appropriate Mini-Grant Goals Include:

- **Strengthening community engagement** in clinical and translational research across the Midlands of South Carolina
- **Generating metrics** that help assess overall success of ClinTrUSC
- **Building trust and capacity** between community organizations and academic/clinical research institutions.
- **Reducing barriers** to participation in clinical and translational research, Priority will be given to proposals that are responsive to a clearly articulated, community-defined health priority, demonstrate a functioning partnership between the community organization and the academic or clinical research partner, and propose a defined, achievable deliverable within the 6-month project period.

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

The following types of organizations are eligible to apply:

- Nonprofit 501(c)(3) community organizations
- Faith-based organizations with demonstrated community health programming (e.g., a Health Ministry within a Church)
- Community health coalitions and advocacy groups
- Neighborhood associations with established health or wellness programming
- Other community-serving organizations operating primarily within the Midlands region of South Carolina that have a health focus

Geographic Requirement

Proposed activities must primarily serve residents of the **Midlands region of South Carolina**, which is broadly defined and includes but is not limited to Richland, Sumter, Lexington, Fairfield, Newberry, and Kershaw counties.

Partnership Requirement

All applications must identify a USC faculty member or clinical researcher affiliated with USC, Prisma Health, the VA Medical System, an FQHC, Lexington Health, or another Midlands clinical partner. ClinTrUSC's CEO Core can assist in making introductions and identifying appropriate partners. The named partner must have committed, in writing, to participate in the proposed project. The community organization is the lead applicant of record and the recipient of funds. The academic or clinical research partner is identified on the cover sheet, co-signs the application, and is expected to be substantively engaged in project activities throughout the award period.

Ineligible Applicants

- For-profit entities
- Individuals
- State or federal government agencies
- Organizations with no demonstrated presence or programming in the Midlands region

Partner Matching Available

Applicants without an established academic or clinical research partner may request matching support from ClinTrUSC during the pre-application period. ClinTrUSC engagement staff will conduct an intake conversation to understand the proposed project, identify potential faculty partners, and facilitate introductory meetings between the organization and prospective partners. Applicants are advised to initiate matching requests as soon as possible prior to the application deadline. ClinTrUSC will support a limited number of matches per funding cycle and cannot guarantee a match for every request.

Application Requirements

All applications must be submitted in **12-point Arial or a comparable sans-serif font**, with standard one-inch margins. The **proposal narrative must not exceed 4 pages**. Bibliographic references and the budget (including budget justification) do **not** count toward the 4-page limit.

Applications must include all of the following components:

1. Cover Page (*not counted in page limit*)

Provide the following information on a separate cover page:

- Organization name and address

- Primary contact name, title, phone number, and email address
- Federal Tax ID / EIN
- Requested grant amount
- Proposed project title
- Proposed project period (start and end dates)
- Academic or clinical research partner: name, title, institutional affiliation, email, and telephone number
- Authorized organizational representative signature
- Signature of academic or clinical research partner

2. Proposal (*maximum 4 pages*)

The proposal must address each of the following sections. Applicants are encouraged to use section headers for clarity.

a. Project Description (about 1 page)

Describe what you intend to do in clear, accessible language. Make clear the need or opportunity that motivated you to want to conduct the project the 1st place, the relevance of the project to the community served by your organization, and the rationale for addressing it through this project.

b. Research Question and Methods (about 1 page)

State your question and describe how you intend to answer it. You must address each of the following:

- The specific research question(s) to be addressed – why do you want to conduct this project?
- The methods proposed (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys, secondary data analysis, observational study)
- The target population, recruitment approach, and proposed sample size
- Procedures that you will use for data collection, storage, and analysis/evaluation
- If what you propose will involve human subjects research describe how the project will be reviewed (ClinTrUSC can assist with USC IRB submission, reliance agreement, or request for exempt determination, as appropriate)
- Methods should be described with sufficient detail to demonstrate that what you propose is feasible. Highly technical or jargon-laden language is discouraged.

c. The Partnership (about half a page)

Describe the origin and current state of the partnership between the community-based organization and the academic or clinical research partner. Specify the proposed structure for shared decision-making during the project, including the frequency and format of partnership meetings and the process for resolving disagreements. Newly established partnerships are eligible; applicants should describe the steps taken to develop shared understanding to date.

d. Timeline (about half a page)

Provide a month-by-month timeline for the agreed-upon project period. The timeline must reflect realistic time allocations for relevant review, recruitment, data collection, analysis, and preparation of the products you propose to deliver (i.e., deliverables).

e. Deliverable(s) (about half a page)

Identify the deliverable(s) the project will produce by the end of the 6-month project period. Acceptable deliverables include, but are not limited to, the following; applicants may propose more than one:

- A report that you will share with the community
- An external grant proposal informed by the pilot data - for example from an organization like the Duke Endowment
- A pitch to ClinTrUSC leadership to collaborate on future community-based participatory research
- One or more presentations aimed at informing your community partners and educating the public at large
- A policy or practice recommendation grounded in study findings (we have academic partners who can assist with this)
- A presentation or report aimed at legislators

Selected deliverables should be appropriate to the scope of the project and meaningful to the community served. They also should further the goals of ClinTrUSC, which is to promote clinical research that is relevant to the Midlands region of South Carolina,

f. Support from ClinTrUSC (about a quarter page)

Identify specific forms of support, such as mentoring, training, IRB navigation, statistical consultation, or facilitated connections, that would strengthen the proposed project. ClinTrUSC cannot guarantee provision of all requested support but we will do our best to use this information to allocate technical assistance resources.

3. Bibliographic References (*not counted in page limit*)

Include a reference list for any citations used in the narrative. Use a consistent citation format (e.g., APA, AMA). References should be placed on a separate page following the narrative.

4. Budget & Budget Justification (*not counted in page limit*)

Submit a detailed line-item budget and accompanying narrative justification. The budget should clearly account for all requested funds and must align directly with proposed project activities. Allowable budget categories include:

- **Personnel** (salaries, stipends, or honoraria for project staff or community health workers)
- **Supplies & Materials** (educational materials, outreach supplies, printing)
- **Community Engagement Activities** (event costs, participant incentives where appropriate)
- **Travel** (local mileage, transportation for community outreach)

- **Communications** (postage, phone, internet costs directly tied to project activities)
- **Other Direct Costs** (with justification)

Note: Indirect costs/overhead are **not** allowable under this funding opportunity. All funds must be used for direct project activities.

5. Appendices (*optional, not counted in page limit*)

Applicants may include the following as appendices:

- Letters of support from key community individuals or partner organizations
- Organizational chart
- IRS determination letter (501(c)(3) status)
- Relevant data, maps, or demographic information supporting the project rationale

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a panel that includes ClinTrUSC staff, community representatives, and clinical partners. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Criterion	Weight
Significance & community relevance	30%
Organizational capacity & qualifications	20%
Quality & feasibility of evaluation plan / metrics	20%
Clarity & strength of project description	10%
Community partnerships & key champions	10%
Budget appropriateness & justification	10%

Submission Instructions

Complete applications must be submitted electronically to:  satheg@mailbox.sc.edu

Subject Line: *Mini-Grant Application – OrganizationName*

All application materials should be compiled into a **single PDF document** in the following order:

1. Cover Page
2. Proposal Narrative

3. References
4. Budget & Budget Justification
5. Appendices (if applicable)

Key Dates:

Milestone	Date
Notice of Funding Opportunity Released	October 14, 2026
Pre-Application Webinar (Optional)	November 7, 2026, 8:00 AM EST
Application Deadline	November 30, 2026, 5:00 PM EST
Notification of Funding	December 2026
Earliest Project Start Date	February 1, 2027

Questions & Technical Assistance

ClinTrUSC encourages prospective applicants to reach out with questions prior to submission. A pre-application informational webinar will be offered to assist organizations in understanding the program priorities and application requirements. Details will be posted at:

 <http://www.sc.edu/clintrusc>

For questions, please contact:

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