



Center for Health Economics of Treatment Interventions for
Substance Use Disorder, HCV, and HIV

CHERISH Pilot Grants Funding Opportunity - FAQs

Revised on December 5, 2025

Pilot Proposal

What types of research projects do CHERISH consider related to health economics?

We prioritize health economics research as specified by the NIH (see [NOT-OD-16-025](#) entitled, Clarifying NIH Priorities for Health Economics Research). Project proposals are not likely to be funded if the relationship to health outcomes is unclear or distantly removed.

Can I apply with a global health project or should it be a domestic project?

You can propose research that has a global perspective that also has implications for the delivery of services in the U.S. However, the home institution of the principal investigator (PI) must be U.S.-based.

As a NIDA-funded Center, does CHERISH consider projects involving alcohol use?

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is the lead NIH institute supporting and conducting research on the impact of alcohol use on human health and well-being. Nonetheless, research on alcohol use disorder and other substance use disorders often overlap. If your project focuses on the dynamics of alcohol use disorder in relation to other substances, we will consider the project. Read more on NIDA's key takeaways on alcohol [here](#).

Is there a study design (e.g., phase III trial) or method CHERISH seeks in the proposals?

We do not have a specific category expectation of study type or method beyond the project including health economics research as specified by the NIH (see [NOT-OD-16-025](#) entitled, Clarifying NIH Priorities for Health Economics Research). Some applicants use the pilot project to supplement their ongoing research or enhance a clinical trial with an economic component. The pilot project can also be an investigation in which you collect and analyze data for a subsequent grant application to NIDA or another funder. If the project is new and you're not sure how it fits with CHERISH, please reach out to us to discuss more.

Are project proposals using mixed methods allowed? How about exclusively qualitative methods?

Yes to both! For example, read more about Dr. Shimrit Keddem's pilot project, "[Characterizing Injectable HIV PrEP Implementation in Family Medicine](#)," from 2022-2023.

My proposal was not selected for funding, can I reapply?

Yes! A revised proposal, incorporating reviewer feedback, can be submitted for consideration at a subsequent call for proposals. We encourage you to reach out in advance before resubmission.

Eligibility

Eligibility is based on being a trainee of a CHERISH investigator/affiliate or being sponsored by one. How does the nomination process usually work?

You do not need to have a sponsor in place to apply or submit a Letter of Intent (LOI). After reviewing your LOI, we can connect you to a potential sponsor within CHERISH. A sponsor does not have to be at the same institution as you or play a subsequent role in the proposed research (e.g., co-investigator or mentor). If you are not already connected to a CHERISH Research Affiliate or someone from our network, please reach out to us.

Am I eligible to serve as a CHERISH pilot PI if...

I am a U.S.-based researcher but not a U.S. citizen? Yes! Our only requirement is that the PI is an investigator at a U.S.-based institution.

I have a K-award? Yes! Nonetheless, we strongly recommend checking with your home institution about what costs can be included in the budget if you are supported by a K-award as certain expenditures may not be allowable.

I am a postdoc? Yes! Nonetheless, we strongly recommend checking with your home institution as each institution may have different limitations specifying who can serve as a PI. Applying for a CHERISH pilot should be considered in consultation with your mentorship team.

I am a PhD student? Yes! Typically, PhD students have successfully received pilot awards after coursework completion. We strongly recommend checking with your home institution as each institution may have different limitations specifying who can serve as a PI. Applying for a CHERISH pilot should be considered in consultation with your mentorship team.

I am a PhD student in my final year and may change institutions to start a position (e.g., postdoctoral associate, junior faculty, etc.) elsewhere. Can I still apply? Yes! We have funded awardees transitioning into new roles (e.g., from PhD student to postdoctoral associate) before or during their pilot award. We encourage applicants to email us in advance to discuss their expected timeline.

I am a master's student? Master's students are not eligible to serve as CHERISH pilot PI, but they may partner with an eligible investigator to submit a project proposal.

I am a member of the community? At CHERISH, we welcome opportunities to collaborate with community members and people with lived and living experience. If the prospective applicant would like to serve as PI and is not affiliated with a research institution or other institution eligible to receive NIH funding, we encourage them to partner with an individual at an eligible institution who can serve as a PI or a contact PI for a multi-PI team.

Funds

Is the pilot grant awarded to an institution or an individual?

The pilot award is typically administered as a subcontract award between Weill Cornell Medicine and the PI's primary institution for the period of the grant year (May 1 through April 30). Note, the subcontract must be with a U.S.-based institution.

How do you recommend integrating protected time with our department?

Pilot grantees use the funds for a variety of purposes, such as to support investigator or research staff salary or to purchase access to a large database. If you are devoting time that is supported by your institution, you should

reflect this as donated time in your budget and budget justification. We understand that your needs may change, and after you're awarded the pilot grant you may reallocate funds after seeking our permission.

For projects involving human subjects research, is IRB approval required in order for pilot funding to be released?

Yes, proof of human subjects determination must be provided prior to the release of pilot awards but is not required before submission of the applications.

Can I use my entire budget for my salary support or staff?

Yes.

Letter of Intent

How long after submitting my letter of intent will I receive feedback?

We aim to provide feedback within one week.

My letter of intent was approved for full submission, but I have decided to make minor changes, should I resubmit my letter of intent?

No. Minor changes are common and expected, but if you intend to make substantive changes, please reach out to us prior to submission.

CHERISH Sponsor

What should I ask from a sponsor (e.g., letter of support or co-authorship)?

At the minimum, a sponsor can review your proposal and acknowledge in a letter of support that your project is consistent with NIH's priorities for health economics and a good fit for the CHERISH pilot grant. They do not need to specify a time, FTE, or co-authorship commitment.

What role does a CHERISH sponsor typically have?

CHERISH sponsors take on a role that varies from high-level involvement (available to answer questions, may provide feedback on aims, acknowledged when referencing your project, etc) to heavily involved (serves as co-investigator, line-reads research strategy of application and provides feedback). We encourage potential applicants to discuss expectations with their CHERISH sponsor while drafting their letter of intent.

Others

Are there any formatting requirements for the application?

Beyond what we state in the application instructions, you may reference NIH's [how-to-apply application guide](#).

If you have questions not specified here, contact us at pilot.grants@cherishresearch.org.