



Microresearch – Call for Proposals 2021-22

The RTT Collaborative

Building a next generation community of practice and disseminating research in rural health professions education and training

Microresearch in the United States was originally developed under [Rural PREP](#) and supported by the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under cooperative agreement #UH1HP29966, July 2016-June 2021. The year 2021-2022 is a year of transition as The RTT Collaborative (RTTC) assumes direction of this program July 1, 2021, in collaboration with 3 RTTC participating programs: [Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine Rural and Urban Scholars Pathways](#) program (RUSP), the [University of Washington School of Medicine Office of Rural Programs](#), and the [University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Rural Opportunities in Medical Education](#) program (ROME).

Purpose:

To incentivize and reward research in rural health professions education and training

Description:

To improve rural health professions education, we need to engage learners in scholarly activity about their education and practice.ⁱ To encourage learners in rural health professions education and training to pursue scholarly work, [The RTT Collaborative](#) will award up to \$1,500 for research performed by a student, resident, or other trainee in collaboration with a qualified mentor at the same or another institution. Research must be relevant to rural health care, rural population health, or rural health workforce education and training. This program of research support is modeled after the sustainable community health research described by the Canadian/African collaboration entitled “MicroResearch” (MicroResearch, 5850 University Avenue, Halifax, NS, B3K 6R8, canadamicresearch@dal.ca; <http://www.microresearch.ca/how-it-works/>).^{ii,iii,iv} For a description of the program as developed under Rural PREP, see the [webpage description](#) and a listing of [prior projects and awardees](#).

Preference will be given to proposals that are community engaged and/or demonstrate collaboration across health professions. Research teams, especially interprofessional teams, are encouraged but not required. A research project that is conducted across multiple institutions will be considered for multiple awards, one award to the project lead at each institution.

A prepared student and a qualified mentor are critical to the coaching of students through each step and the provision of feedback/quality control on each part of the project. Orientation to microresearch and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) concepts will be included through assigned pre-work and participation in quarterly Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings focused on student and faculty development.

Funding 2021-2022:

For this pilot year under The RTT Collaborative, applications will only be accepted from its participating programs, and in the absence of federal grant funding, projects will be funded and restricted in the following manner:

1. Ohio University – 2 awards
2. University of Washington – 2 awards
3. University of North Dakota – 2 awards
4. The RTT Collaborative – 2 additional awards to learners from any participating program in the Collaborative; for a map and list of participating programs, [click here](#).

Each of the four entities will be responsible for promoting the opportunity to learners in their respective organization and for managing award funds either through their own institution or as delegated to The RTT Collaborative. An Implementation Award applicant may request up to \$1,500 in allowable research expenses. The awarded funds will be paid, not as a grant, but through expense reimbursement.

Procedure:

1. Call for proposals annually with notification of a decision to reject, revise and resubmit, or accept within 2 weeks of the submission deadline
2. Eligibility (Must meet all of the following)
 - a. Learners deemed eligible by one of the funding organizations listed above (i.e., according to their funding institution's rules)

- b. A project lead may be any individual who is:
 - (1) currently enrolled in a U.S. medical school or a nurse practitioner or physician assistant program, or
 - (2) currently a resident in a U.S. **rural** physician residency program,^v or
 - (3) any other health professional trainee currently training in a U.S. **rural** location for practice.

Defining “rural”: We consider a residency or other training program “**rural**” if it meets any two federal definitions (see the web-based tool “**Am I Rural?**”; note that “Census 2010, Percent Rural” does not count for this purpose). If a resident is a trainee in a participating program in the RTTC, the project must be anchored in a U.S. rural place. In other words, something in the proposal must clearly indicate that the learner is training for practice in a rural community, e.g., a study of the rural rotations that a learner’s training peers are experiencing, or an exploration of the community’s perceptions of learners in a rural community.

- c. Commitment to meeting the timeline and deliverables outlined below

3. Criteria for proposal review and award

a. **Eligible** applicant

- b. A **proposal** that clearly articulates its relevance to **rural** healthcare or **rural** population health, or **rural** health workforce education and training in the U.S., with a clear rurally focused research question and methodology. Please ensure that the population of interest is located in the U.S. and meets the rural criteria under 2.a(3) above. Please consult with the Microresearch director listed at the end of this document if you are not sure.

- c. A **faculty mentor** named in the application and documented by a brief letter of support from the mentor. This is required for implementation awards; only encouraged for design awards.

- d. **Two types of awards** will be given, and applicants are given opportunity to indicate their willingness to accept one or either:

- i. **Design Award:** A project that is under development, with a plan to complete the study within 2 years. These projects will be included in all microresearch learning community activities in 2021-2022 but without funding. With mentoring to fully develop a compelling, feasible research idea and strong plan for execution, successful recipients of the Design Award will complete their research design and achieve IRB approval during 2021-2022 and, with a full implementation award application next year, will receive preference for funding in 2022-2023.

- ii. **Implementation Award:** A fully-designed project with a plan to complete the project and expend all funds by June 20 of the academic year the award is made (an academic year runs from July through June) and that can realistically be disseminated within two years of notice of award. Applications for this award may be approved, but without funding, and awarded in the Design category.

- e. **For implementation award applicants:** A **budget** of up to \$1,500 for allowable expenses, with justification (template provided with examples of allowable expenses). Registration for short training courses, travel for community engagement and data collection, and cash incentives for research subjects are examples of allowed expenses. Funding for faculty salary is not allowed.

4. Preference will be given to research that is:

- a. Community engaged, including a commitment of in-kind contributions from the community. For a description of community engaged research and partnerships visit [Community-Campus Partnerships for Health](#).
- b. Collaborative across health professions or institutions

5. Timeline

- a. The applicant submits a proposal through The RTT Collaborative’s [REDCap application portal](#) during the open application period April 5 through May 10, 2021. All applications must be received no later than 12:00 Midnight Eastern time.
- b. The proposal will be reviewed by the Microresearch team and the applicant will be notified by June 1 of a decision to accept, revise and resubmit, or reject.
- c. If revisions are requested, the applicant must submit (1) a letter addressing reviewers’ comments; (2) a revised proposal with edits in track changes; and (3) if applicable, a revised budget.

6. Requirements for All Awardees

- d. The student and mentor complete pre-work and regularly participate in quarterly Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings devoted to research mentoring and development, project sharing, feedback, and problem-solving. At least one of the pair is required to participate in quarterly sessions for the duration of the project.
- e. The project lead submits quarterly progress reports, with the mentor's assistance, to The RTT Collaborative.
- f. A final reflection on what their experience has taught them and how we might improve our microresearch projects in the future will be required of all grant awardees.

7. Requirements for Implementation Awardees:

- a. Recipients of Implementation Awards shall submit expenses as incurred with receipts for reimbursement monthly through June 20 of the academic year of award, i.e. June 20, 2022, this implementation award cycle.
- b. Reimbursement is contingent upon submitting quarterly progress reports and participation in quarterly Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings. Recipients will be reimbursed for expenses promptly within one month of submitting appropriate documentation.
- c. Reallocation of funds between budget categories of greater than \$250, or expenses not included in the original budget, require prior approval from RTTC.
- d. The research shall be completed within one year or less, and disseminated (presented at a conference and/or published) within two years of notice of award, i.e. June 30, 2023, this implementation award cycle.

Questions and Clarifications:

Any questions or requests for clarification should be directed to [Dr. Sharon Casapulla](#), Director of Microresearch or [Dawn Mollica](#), RTTC Administrative Director. Please indicate your full name, the name of your education or training program, and your status (e.g., 2nd year medical student, resident, or other learner).

The Microresearch team:

- Sharon Casapulla EdD, MPH, Director
- Dawn Mollica, Administrative Director
- Randall Longenecker MD, Advisor
- Davis Patterson PhD, Advisor
- David Schmitz MD, Advisor

ⁱ Burk-Rafel J, Jones RL, Farlow JL Engaging learners to advance medical education. *Academic Medicine*, 2017;92(4):437-440.

ⁱⁱ MacDonald NE, Bortolussi R, Kabakyenga J, Pemba S, Estambale B, Kollmann K, Odoie Aome R, Appleton, M. MicroResearch: Finding sustainable local health solutions in East Africa through small local research studies, *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health* (2014);4:185–193

ⁱⁱⁱ Microresearch: Addressing Barriers to Improved Community Health in East Africa, <http://www.canwach.ca/microresearch-addressing-barriers-to-improved-community-health-in-east-africa/> (Accessed 2-16-2017)

^{iv} 16th Rural Family Medicine Café – Rural Research, a YouTube video describing MicroResearch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdP53gewijU> (Accessed 6-15-2017)

^v Longenecker R. Rural medical education programs: a proposed nomenclature. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 2017;9(3):283-6.