

CALL FOR MCW ACADEMIC PARTNERS FOR COMMUNITY-LED SEED GRANTS

Applications Due: Monday, Aug. 3, 2026, by 5:00 p.m. CT

**Seeking eligible MCW faculty to serve as academic partners on funded
Community-Led Seed Grant projects**



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Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment Overview

At the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW), we are driven by a vision for a healthier Wisconsin.

As Wisconsin's largest health philanthropy, AHW seeks to propel the most promising work and ideas to improve health and advance health equity in Wisconsin today, and for generations to come. From urban centers to rural and agricultural communities and self-governed tribal nations, we are committed to maximizing the health of ALL Wisconsinites. We do that by providing funding and resources to researchers, organizations, and communities devoted to the health and well-being of the people they serve.

We accelerate innovation, collaboration, and impact by fueling research- and community-identified opportunities. Learn more about [our story](#) and AHW's [areas of focus](#).

MCW Academic Partner Opportunity Description

AHW's Community-Led Seed Grants support community-led project teams to address community-identified and community-prioritized health needs through conducting initial exploration and testing innovative ideas to serve as a foundation for future sustainable efforts to improve health and health equity in Wisconsin's communities. Community-Led Seed Grant applications are submitted independently by eligible community partners and projects approved for funding will be completed during a 12-month period, beginning Jan. 1, 2027, with an optional six-month no cost extension.

Community-Led Seed Grant projects should align with AHW's community-based areas of focus:

- The **Public and Community Health** area of focus supports implementation and evaluation of health improvement interventions to address community-based health needs, inform policy and practice, improve health outcomes, and reduce disparities in the long-term, deepening understanding of the drivers of the public's health in Wisconsin to affect measurable improvement in targeted health indicators beyond the project period.
- The **Health Workforce Education and Development** area of focus supports development, implementation, and evaluation of programs and resources to better recruit, retain, and advance community-based health workforces that are responsive to Wisconsin's health needs, including peer support specialists, community health workers, school nurses, public health professionals, and others whose day-to-day work aims to improve the health of their communities.

Call for MCW Academic Partners

To effectively support strong community-MCW academic partnerships to carry out funded Community-Led Seed Grants, AHW is seeking eligible MCW faculty ready to serve as MCW academic partners with pre-defined key roles on funded Community-Led Seed Grants based on the community-identified need for the academic partner and the MCW faculty member's interest and expertise. MCW academic partner key roles may include:

- Implementation partner – supporting on-the-ground project implementation, engaging closely with the community partner to carry out the community-driven implementation plan included in the approved community-led proposal.
- Health-related content expert – lending expertise in a specific health-related area in alignment with the focus of the community-led project. Expertise and insight shared may support the community to more effectively implement, evaluate, and sustain their work.
- Evaluation-related partner – supporting the community partner to develop evaluation plans and materials for the community-driven work included in the approved community-led proposal to demonstrate success of their efforts.

- Data collection and analysis partner – actively engaging in data collection and analysis in alignment with the community-driven work included in the approved community-led proposal, such as by leading focus groups or survey efforts.
- Policy and systems change partner – serving as a thought partner to the community, supporting idea generation and non-lobbying advocacy efforts to inform policy and systems change beyond the project period and as a result of the community-driven work included in the approved community-led proposal.

MCW Academic Partner Eligibility

In addition to the selected pre-defined key role(s), the MCW academic partner is responsible for the fiduciary and reporting requirements of the MCW portion of the project and MCW budget and shares the responsibility with the primary community partner for transferring all communications, notifications, and instructions from AHW to all members of the project team. All MCW academic partners are expected to implement collaboration best practices when engaging with community-led projects.

Eligible MCW academic partners must be a full-time or full professional effort MCW faculty member with the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. The MCW faculty should be able to commit 10% or 20% FTE at the time of funding to engage with one or two Community-Led Seed Grant projects.

Application and Review Process

Application Process

Eligible MCW faculty should submit an application via the online form available on the [AHW website](#). Applications must be submitted by **5:00 p.m. CT on Monday, Aug. 3, 2026**.

Applicants must answer all required fields and follow the restrictions set within the online form. No paper or emailed applications will be considered, and no attachments beyond those specifically requested in the following instructions will be accepted.

When filling out the online form, you may save your progress and resume at a later time by checking “Save my progress and resume later” in the upper right-hand corner of the form. If saving, please follow the system prompts to save and re-access the form.

The online form includes the following sections:

- Contact information
- Brief bio, including primary health-focused interest areas and experience working with community-based organizations and projects
- Core interest areas in alignment with the pre-defined key roles for MCW academic partners on Community-Led Seed Grant projects
- Alignment with AHW’s areas of focus and geographic areas of interest
- Available level of commitment (FTE) to engage with one or more Community-Led Seed Grant projects during the project period of Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2027, and current base salary (to be used to develop the MCW portion of the project budget if selected to work with community-led project approved for funding)
- Any community partners that are planning to apply for the Community-Led Seed Grant funding opportunity and that you have engaged with in the past and would be interested in working with, if funded. Please note that a connection with existing partners is not guaranteed and will depend on the slate of funded Community-Led projects and approved MCW academic partners.

Following successful submission of the completed application through the online form and technical review, signatures will be required via an AHW-initiated DocuSign process from the MCW academic partner and their respective MCW Department Chair or Center leadership to indicate their awareness and support of the submitted application. **Required signatures must be submitted within three business days of receiving the signature request** to complete the submission. AHW will send DocuSign requests as soon as possible, but please note that it may not be sent immediately. Any delays in AHW initiating the DocuSign process will be accommodated for when considering signature deadlines.

Review Process

Technical Review

Submitted applications will undergo technical review by AHW staff to ensure that all requirements are met, including but not limited to eligibility criteria and adherence to the guidelines and restrictions. AHW will follow-up with all applicants as part of the technical review process. Applicants should be prepared to respond quickly to communications from AHW following the application deadline.

Merit and Programmatic Review

Applications that pass technical review will be reviewed for alignment with the call for applications and AHW funding requirements to ensure that funded projects are set up for successful efforts.

Successful applicants will meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrate relevant experience or a commitment to gaining experience in working with community-based organizations and communities on community-led efforts
- Provide convincing demonstration of an understanding of and appreciation for best practices in community-academic partnerships
- Alignment with the call for MCW academic partners
- 10% or 20% FTE to commit to engaging with one or two funded Community-Led Seed Grant projects

Final recommendations will be shared with the MCW Consortium on Public and Community Health (Consortium) for their consideration and conditional approval. No negotiations or appeals will be accommodated. Final funding decisions will be advanced to the MCW Board of Trustees for approval.

Community-Led Seed Grant Connections

Following funding approval of Community-Led Seed Grants by the Consortium, AHW will support a collaborative matchmaking process with insight from the MCW academic partner and primary community partner on the community-led project. AHW will make a formal connection between the selected MCW academic partner and the funded project.

Following connection with a project, the MCW academic partner on the project will work with AHW to finalize a budget for their effort on the award and begin engaging as a formal member of the funded project team in collaboration with the community partner organization. In addition to the MCW academic partner's pre-defined role on the project, the MCW academic partner is responsible for obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) determination for the project. The MCW project budget can include salary and fringe for the MCW academic partner at 10% FTE per project and travel necessary to engage with the funded community partner.

Human Research Protection

According to the [MCW Office of Research's Standard Operating Procedure for the Definition And Determination Of Human Subjects Research](#), it is the responsibility of the MCW Institutional Review Board (IRB), staff, and committee members to ensure the proper application of the definition of human subjects research and to

provide investigators with guidance regarding this definition. Federal regulations define research as a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge. It is the responsibility of MCW academic partners serving as the principal investigator to ensure the proper application of this definition to their human subjects research projects and apply to the IRB for its review. Investigators must submit their proposed research projects to the IRB for review prior to initiating the research regardless of whether their activities involve human subjects. Investigators may not independently make the determination whether an activity involves research; the IRB will make the independent determination regarding human research subject involvement.

AHW funding will be contingent upon institutional approvals for the use of human subjects for those projects determined to be research. Research projects funded by AHW must ensure that human participants are protected during the collection of information from award participants and/or the publication or dissemination of award results.

The MCW academic partner serving as the principal investigator of an AHW-funded award is expected to:

- Confirm with the appropriate regulatory approval offices if IRB regulatory approval is necessary for the proposed project prior to submitting a proposal to AHW.
- Ensure appropriate training and ongoing education necessary to protect the rights and welfare of human participants before and during the award, including maintaining compliance with all human subject policies, regulations, and reporting requirements.
- Obtain Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through a Human Research Protection Program at MCW, Froedtert Health, the Veterans Administration, or Children's Wisconsin or Reliance institutions prior to the award commencing. Each institution has an Institutional Review Board that evaluates awards for compliance with applicable human subject laws and regulations.
- Receive documentation of IRB review and approval prior to the award commencing.

All applicable IRB protocols must be linked to the funding proposal in the MCW eBridge system (eBridge), which allows MCW researchers to submit, track, report, and archive research activities involving human research conducted at MCW, prior to the completion of account setup and the award number for the project being issued. AHW will initiate the eBridge funding protocol for all projects approved for funding.

Application Resources

Our goal is to support applicants through the application process to the best of our abilities, and we encourage applicants to contact AHW with questions throughout the application process.

AHW Online Resources

AHW's website provides information, application resources, and answers to frequently asked questions related to each funding opportunity and the AHW funding process. Visit the AHW website at www.ahwendowment.org.

A fillable template of the online application form is available for download via the AHW website. The template will not be accepted as a final submission but is designed to be used by the applicant to prepare their responses prior to completing and submitting the online form by the application deadline.

Pre-Application AHW Consultation

For an efficient application process, applicants are encouraged to connect with AHW to discuss their application and expertise, and ensure it is in alignment with the funding opportunity. Applicants are encouraged to connect

as early in the development of their application as possible. Complete the consultation request form on the [AHW website](#) to set up a time to discuss your academic partner application.

Catchafire Access

AHW has teamed up with [Catchafire](#) to provide support to AHW applicants by matching them with professional, skilled volunteers ready to lend their expertise on general projects related to marketing, IT, finance, design, fundraising, human resources, and more. Within five minutes, you can post a project and get connected to a global network of professionals looking to use their skillsets to directly support causes they care about. You'll also have unlimited access to nonprofit experts, with coaching and professional development opportunities to help you along with the way.