



Request for Applications - 2026 Partnership Development Grant

Small grants to support the development of new partnerships between researchers and community organizations working on environmental health issues together in Michigan

Deadline: June 15, 2026

What is the Partnership Development Program?

The Partnership Development Program (PDP) is a program of the Community Engagement Core of the M-LEEd Center. The PDP provides support for new partnerships between community members and researchers (*see below for eligibility*). We can also support existing partnerships taking on new or expanded collaborative research efforts. We estimate that 2-3 awards will be made per year, each of up to \$5,000.

Applicants should be community-academic teams working together to address research questions related to causes of, and solutions to, environmental health issues facing community residents. Proposed projects should be responsive to the concerns of participating *community partners*. All successful grantees will participate in a 2-hour, in-person orientation workshop to build knowledge and skills for creating successful partnerships. They will have opportunities to share examples of their work with other grantees.

What is the Michigan Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease (M-LEEd) Center?

The [Michigan Center on Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease \(M-LEEd\)](#) is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. M-LEEd focuses on improving our understanding of the contribution of environmental exposures to chronic diseases and conditions like asthma, neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease, metabolic disorders such as diabetes and birth outcomes such as low birth weight or premature birth.

The [Community Engagement Core](#) within M-LEEd works to increase awareness and understanding of environmental health research among decision makers and community members, including youth. A goal is to encourage scientific collaboration among University of Michigan environmental health researchers and community residents.

The [Stakeholder Action Board](#) serves to strengthen communication between the M-LEEd Center and community stakeholders. This includes sharing community and decision-maker priorities with Center researchers and disseminating research to multiple audiences. The SAB is made up of community leaders with extensive experience in environmental and health, collaborative research, and translation and dissemination of research.

The main environmental priorities identified by the SAB include:

- Access to Clean Water
- Improving Air Quality
- Environmental Exposure & Birth Outcomes
- Addressing Natural Hazards
- Large Scale Chemical Contaminations
- Impact of Environmental Exposure for Education and Learning
- Implications of Gentrification and Displacement for Environmental Exposures

Who is eligible to apply?

Applications must be submitted on behalf of *at least two partners*: an academic partner and either a community group, community-based organization or government agency in Detroit, Southeast Michigan or other Michigan communities experiencing environmental health challenges. There may be additional partners on the team. The lead academic researcher must be based at the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor, Dearborn, or Flint campus.

M-LEEd is funded by NIEHS and prioritizes research that is responsive to NIEHS priorities. M-LEEd can only support projects that align with federal priorities. If it would be helpful to have a conversation about your topic of interest prior to submitting your application, please contact CEC Lead Amy Schulz (ajschulz@umich.edu). Proposals that are not aligned with these priorities will not be considered.

We will prioritize work in Southeast Michigan communities. If you are in other parts of Michigan or nearby that are impacted by emerging environmental issues, you are also welcome to apply. Feel free to reach out to Alison Walding (walison@umich.edu) with any questions about whether your project may be eligible.

What Types of Projects Will This Program Fund?

Your team may propose objectives and activities such as (but not limited to):

Objective	This might look like...
Build relationships between partners	Hold meetings to learn more about each other, as well as to discuss other potential partners and how they will work together
Develop a partnership structure (e.g., Steering Committee)	Develop policies, procedures, and decision-making strategies
Identify priorities and capacity	Conduct a team assessment
Share existing research findings	Develop fact sheets and policy briefs for diverse audiences
Plan future research collaborations	Identify and respond to potential funding opportunities
Evaluate the partnership process	Assess to what extent the partnership is achieving its goals; identify future partnership directions based on that assessment

What CAN'T be funded by this grant?

The following items may not be charged to these projects:

- Faculty salary support
- Equipment
- Computers
- Cost overruns
- Renovations
- Academic Publications
- Subcontracts
- Grant Preparation costs
- Graduate student research assistant costs
- Retroactive funding (i.e., funding work that has already happened)
- Foreign travel/ conference travel

Questions about eligibility, proposed expenses, or this application?

Contact: CEC Project Manager, Alison Walding walison@umich.edu

Note: Research is not allowed, including studies that contain foreign components or entail clinical trials. Projects that involve quality improvement questions or program evaluation are not considered research and are allowable, potentially including literature reviews to inform partnership priorities, obtaining feedback from community representatives regarding priority health issues, or soliciting feedback on the partnership processes.

There may be other ineligible expenses. Please reach out to discuss if you have any questions about your proposed budget items.

How do we apply?

Applications should be submitted electronically as a *.doc* or *.pdf* document to Alison Walding walison@umich.edu by **June 15, 2026**. All applications must include the following (see below for cover page, budget, and timeline templates).

1. Application Cover Page (1 page - ***see template below***) Project title and partnering organizations.

2. Proposal Narrative (2-4 pages for new partnerships, 3-5 pages for established partnerships)

- For all Proposals, please provide a brief description of:
 - The issue you want to work on and why it matters locally
 - Who the partners are and what each will do
 - Any history of working together (if any)
 - What you will do during the grant period (activities + expected outputs)
 - How you will make decisions together and communicate
 - What you hope to do next after this grant (future project/funding plan)

For Established Partnerships, in addition to the information provided above, provide a brief description of your collaborative research partnership, including:

- The partners involved and how they work together (e.g., principles, procedures, infrastructure)
- The history of your partnership
- Current projects being conducted
- Relevance to the communities involved

3. Budget and Justification (up to 2 pages - ***see template below***)

Budgets should be prepared with an anticipated start date that corresponds to the grant date.

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Grant due date	Anticipated budget start and end date
June 15, 2026	July 15, 2026 - February 28, 2027

4. Timeline (*see template below*) Please include a project timeline for all activities.

5. Letter(s) of Commitment (up to 2 attachments)

Include letters from each main partner (community and academic). The letters may be brief, but they should explain interest in the proposed work and specific ways each partner is committed to engaging in this work together, if funded.

6. Additional Items (Optional) You may include up to 5 additional items that illustrate the intent to establish a participatory collaborative research partnership or the degree to which such a partnership is already established (for example, letters of support from additional potential partners, draft principles for equitable collaboration) as appendices with the application submission.

Application Cover Page

GENERAL INFORMATION		
Project Title:		
Host Organization (e.g. U-M Ann Arbor, Flint, Dearborn):		
Street Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:		Fax:
Employer Identification # (EIN):		
Website (if applicable):		
LEAD COMMUNITY CONTACT		LEAD ACADEMIC CONTACT
Name:		Name:
Title:		Title:
Organization:		Organization:
Phone:		Phone:
E-mail:		E-mail:

Budget and Justification Form

Budget Category	Support Requested (Amount)
*Personnel	
Lead Community Partner (if applicable)	
Lead Academic Partner (if applicable)	Faculty support is not allowed. Leave this line blank!
Other Partners	
<i>Sub-total: Personnel</i>	
*Non-Personnel	
Supplies	
Copying & Printing	
Hosting	
Travel	
Other (please specify below)	
<i>Sub-total: Non-personnel</i>	
TOTAL Requested	
Justification (Personnel/Non-Personnel):	

*Indirect Costs cannot be included

Timeline Templates

The two timelines below are intended as guides as you develop your own. Please use either one, or another format of your choice—but note that all of the information below should be included (year, month, objectives, activities, and proposed occurrence).

TABLE X: Sample Timeline; July 2026 - February 2027

	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
Objective 1								
Activity 1.1								
Activity 1.2								
Objective 2								
Activity 2.1								
Activity 2.2								
Objective 3								
Activity 3.1								
Activity 3.2								

TABLE X: SAMPLE TIMELINE	July 2026 - February 2027							
	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
Objective 1								
Activity 1.1	X	X	X					
Activity 1.2		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Objective 2								
Activity 2.1					X	X	X	
Activity 2.2						X	X	X
Objective 3								
Activity 3.1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Activity 3.2			X			X		

Questions about eligibility, proposed expenses, or this application?

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