

Request for Proposals
Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC)
University of Minnesota

Application Submission Deadline: 8:00 PM, Monday, October 23, 2023

We are pleased to announce the availability of funding through the Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) to support departments that wish to develop or strengthen research-- or teaching-focused *university/community engagement initiatives* for faculty and students.

Grants of up to \$15,000 will be awarded to three tenured-track or tenured faculty members at the University of Minnesota to support one 0.25 FTE graduate research assistant (GRA) to help plan, establish, implement, and evaluate strategic initiatives that advance UROC's research priorities (Community Healing and Wholeness; Systems and Systemic Racism; Individual, Family & Community Financial Wellbeing) and the urban core of the Minneapolis-St. Paul region.

PURPOSE

The University of Minnesota Robert J. Jones Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) is an off-campus academic research and outreach-engagement center located in North Minneapolis. Our mission is to link the University in vital public partnership with urban communities across the Twin Cities to advance learning, improve quality of life, and discover breakthrough solutions to critical problems. To achieve our mission we also seek to transform how communities and universities work together. The work of UROC is rooted in relationships forged through shared vision, love of community, well-intentioned mistakes, unexpected triumphs, long-term commitment, and hard-earned trust. Since opening in 2009, UROC has fostered hundreds of research partnerships between urban communities and the University through affiliated projects with University researchers and staff-led “signature” projects. We have unique expertise in creating research processes rooted in respect, transparency, inclusion, and shared action.

In the spring and summer of 2019, UROC engaged more than 50 of its stakeholders—including Northside residents, non-profit leaders, government officials, and young people as well as University of Minnesota faculty, staff and students—to help identify research topics and questions for a new UROC Research Agenda that will help guide UROC's collaborative research focus for the next three to five years. The purpose of this new Research Agenda is to inspire and attract new projects, improve outcomes with our community through robust partnerships, and create a framework for measuring impacts and outcomes related to collaborative research at UROC. The new UROC Research Agenda focuses on a set of timely opportunities and questions that are vital to a thriving North Minneapolis and other urban communities to guide collaborative research in UROC signature projects over the next three to five years.

UROC RESEARCH AGENDA PRIORITIES

From the workgroups, UROC stakeholders identified three critical research areas for the new Research Agenda: **(1) Community Healing and Wholeness; (2) Systems and Systemic Racism; and (3) Individual, Family, and Community Financial Wellbeing.**

1. Community Healing and Wholeness

Urban residents today are faced with many challenges and difficulties (e.g., historical trauma, marginalization) that have a tremendous effect on the community. The existing research on community healing and wholeness has primarily focused on the development of community healing models and frameworks, and to a lesser extent, the assessment and effectiveness of those models. Over the years, a wide range of community healing and wholeness models have been proposed.

Sample research questions and initiatives that should guide proposed projects include:

- *What constitutes community healing and wholeness? How do these conceptualizations change or stay the same when using an educational, health, and/or economic lens? How do these conceptualizations change when defined by different types of stakeholders (e.g., scholars, community members, etc.)? Relatedly, how do these concepts change or stay the same across various community contexts (urban vs. rural)?*
- *What community healing and wholeness models work for various types of communities in the Northside? How do these models guide the identification and application of community assets to address community healing and wholeness?*
- *Does the specific tailoring of an existing model work to meet the needs of a particular community? Or is an entirely new model needed for that community?*
- *What is the impact of certain community healing and wholeness models in addressing health outcomes and how does it impact such outcomes (i.e., understanding how mechanisms and pathways for healing operate)?*
- *Similarly, what is the impact of community healing and wholeness models in addressing educational disparities and how do these models impact such outcomes (e.g., what mechanisms support a robust educational pipeline for marginalized communities)?*
- *If shown to have some impact, how will these models be shared, scaled, and sustained?*

2. Systems and Systemic Racism

Urban communities are complex entities that historically have been shaped by planners and policy makers. At the root of many of these planning and policy practices is racism, and therefore, modern urban communities have had to bear that legacy of discrimination. One of the most salient issues that was voiced by UROC stakeholders was a lack of critical research from UROC that focuses on addressing systems (that perpetuate racism) and systemic racism.

Research on systems and systemic racism has been long-standing and its genesis is rooted in many disciplines (e.g., organizational leadership, business, sociology, psychology) and sectors (e.g., for-profit, academic, government). Most studies from these fields, however, have generally focused on identifying and characterizing racism at the individual level (e.g., implicit association test, perceived racism scale). However, the manifestation of racism and its impacts exists at multiple levels of social ecologies (e.g., individual, community, organizational, policy). Hence, a clarion call to do more rigorous, interdisciplinary and multilevel research around the measures and impacts of racism and systemic racism is warranted.

Related questions that should guide proposed projects include:

- *Are there existing frameworks that address and explain how racism at various levels (individual, organizational, systems) interact and influence one another? How can these frameworks be applied to create more multilevel, comprehensive approaches to tackling racism?*
- *Are there community-based asset tools available to reverse the impact of institutional discriminatory practices, such as redlining, predatory lending and targeted divestment? How are these tools being used in urban communities and what are their impacts (e.g., economic, health, educational) on such communities?*
- *What is anti-blackness? How does anti-blackness impact all cultures? Conversely, what is white supremacy and how does that impact cultures and structures/systems in the United States? How do these impacts look for urban communities versus rural communities?*
- *How are we measuring the impact of anti-racist initiatives and policies? Are there established equality indicators or metrics that can be applied to urban communities?*
- *In what ways are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, particularly in the Northside, being systematically disenfranchised (right now and historically)? How have these strategies worked to undermine their political voice and power?*

3. Individual, Family, and Community Financial Wellbeing

Over the years, conversations about whether our nation is on a sustainable economic path have multiplied and emerged across various disciplines and sectors. Central to this debate is the growing concerns around wealth inequality and the increasing racial wealth gap, particularly in urban communities (i.e., gentrification).

Similar to racism, research on individual, family, and community financial wellbeing cuts across many sectors and disciplines (e.g., housing, higher education, employment). Much of the research in this field, however, has been descriptive studies assessing individuals' subjective and self-reported experiences of economic wellbeing. Ongoing research on individual, family, and community wellbeing, therefore, should move beyond

these subjective measures and incorporate more active solutions to address and sustain economic wellbeing within individuals, families, and communities.

Sampler research questions that should guide proposed projects include:

- *What economic opportunities and barriers are shared between urban and rural contexts? Is there a potential synergy between the two that could be leveraged for mutual benefit?*
- *How are family dynamics affected when youth are employed while the adults in a family unit are unemployed?*
- *What constitutes financial wellbeing, for either a family, an individual, or community?*
- *Are there policies or programs (e.g., educational) that could insulate a community from becoming financially unwell?*
- *Are there any intergenerational models that currently exist for the transference of wealth and equity among minority communities? What assets can be leveraged in a family unit to introduce and sustain intergenerational equity?*

*For a more extensive list on sample guiding research questions, please refer to the [UROC Research Agenda](#).

FUNDING PRIORITY & CRITERIA

Priority for funding will be given to proposals that address one of the three research priorities in UROC's Research Agenda and have not received funding through this process previously (NOTE: Please address or specify only **ONE** research priority in your proposal).

Proposals will also need to demonstrate:

- A track record of community partnership or a detailed plan to do so
- A commitment to participating in a cohort with other grantees
- A history of working with UROC or a plan to work with UROC; and
- Dean support (letter of support from college dean)

SELECTION & REVIEW CRITERIA

The review committee will consist of **six to eight** individuals representing both community and university members. Each committee member will score the proposals individually in November and convene over Zoom in early December to discuss scores and select the final awardees. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their grant application by **mid December, 2023** whether they are awarded or not.

Each funding criteria have been allocated the following specific weights:

- Addresses one of UROC's research priorities - 50%
- A track record of community partnership - 20%
- A commitment to participating in a cohort with other grantees - 20%
- A history of working with UROC or a plan to work with UROC - 5%
- Dean support (letter of support from college dean) - 5%

RFP TIMELINE

September 11 2023	RFP Announcement & Application Opens
October 23, 2023	RFP Application Closes
November 2023	Review Committee Scores Proposals
First Week of December 2023	Review Committee Selection Meeting/Panel
Mid-December 2023	Notification to Selected Awardees
Mid-Late January 2024	Official Announcement of Awardees

HOW TO APPLY

PROPOSAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- Proposal Face Page (required)
- The proposal is 1000 words or less excluding the executive summary, budget and budget narrative, biographies, and CVs/resumes (required).
- The proposal includes an executive summary of the proposed project not to exceed 350 words (required).
- The proposal includes a work plan with a specific timeline using months or quarters to identify work to be done and completion dates (required).
- The proposal includes a 1-2 paragraph biography & CV of the faculty applicant (required).
- The proposal includes a 1-2 paragraph biography & resume of the community partner(s) (optional).
- Letter of Support from College/Department Dean (required)

EXPECTATIONS, DELIVERABLES, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

It is expected that each awarded faculty member/grantee will:

- Affiliate the proposed project with UROC
- Submit an external grant proposal by November of 2024
- Assign a project team member (**preferably a GRA or other student**) in a cohort with other grantees in quarterly check-in meetings (i.e., to connect and troubleshoot project ideas and concerns);
- Agree to cohort meeting norms;
- Publish two dissemination (academic- and community-focused) pieces (e.g., journal article, newsletter, respectively) about the proposed project; and
- Submit a final report of your project by February of 2025.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE & SUBMISSION

All typed documents must be Arial 12 pt font, ½ inch margins, and single-spaced. Complete and submit the attached application (including the proposal face page) by **8:00 PM, Monday, October 23, 2023** as a Word or PDF document to: uroc@umn.edu with a subject header addressed to “Research Agenda Project Selection Committee”. Only those applications received by the deadline will be considered for funding.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their grant application by mid **December, 2023** whether they are awarded or not.

QUESTIONS

Please direct questions to Kai Ecker, haman165@umn.edu, UROC graduate research assistant.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
ROBERT J. JONES URBAN RESEARCH AND OUTREACH-ENGAGEMENT CENTER
(UROC) 2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

PROPOSAL FACE PAGE

Project Title: _____

Applicant Name:

Full Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Department: _____

College: _____

Dean: _____

Dean's e-mail: _____

Proposed Amount: _____

Project Timeline: _____

Research Priority Area(s): _____

Is this a new or ongoing project? _____

PROPOSAL ELEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (Maximum 350 words)

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (Maximum 1000 words)

- **Project Background & Aims**
 - *Specify which research priority will be addressed with the proposed project and cite existing literature to support the problem and approach.*
- **Project Significance & Innovation**
 - Describe the significance and innovation of the proposed project. How will this project lead to changes within urban communities?
- **Community-based Approach**
 - Describe how you have worked with community members either in your past or current work. Discuss challenges and solutions for any of these experiences.
 - Describe potential community partners and internal resources to support the proposed project. Ideally, these community partners should be locally-based in Minnesota. *Provide a plan to work with community members in the first 1-3 months of the proposed project timeline and describe how community involvement or input will be captured throughout the project lifespan.*
- **Project Limitations/Alternative Plans**
 - Discuss potential problems (e.g., pandemic, civil unrest) that may arise and provide alternative plans for how to address these.
- **Project Timeline & Work Plan**
 - Provide a work plan with a specific timeline using months or quarters to identify work to be done and completion dates, including plans and activities to submit proposals for additional external funding.
- **References**

PROPOSED BUDGET & BUDGET NARRATIVE (Maximum one page)

BIOGRAPHY & CV OF FACULTY APPLICANT (Required)

Provide a 1-2 paragraph summary of the faculty applicant and attach a CV.

BIOGRAPHY & RESUME OF COMMUNITY PARTNER (optional)

Provide a 1-2 paragraph summary of the community partner and attach a resume; if multiple partners, please provide a summary and resume for each partner.