The MVCERC Mini-Grant Program provides support for the development of mutually beneficial research partnerships between community organizations and academic researchers at Meharry Medical College, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, or Vanderbilt University. The long term goals of the Mini-Grant Program are to foster sustainable research partnerships that will improve community health outcomes, decrease health disparities, increase access to health and health related services, enhance the quality and effectiveness of health interventions, or inform more equitable health policy.

Two types of mini-grants are available: Partnership Development Grants of up to $2,500 to support the development or strengthening of partnerships between community-based organizations and academic researchers, and Community Engaged Research Grants of up to $10,000 to enable the partnerships to undertake pilot research activities. Both grants require the active participation of each partner in the development of the proposal and expect that the projects proposed will result in benefits to all the partners involved. These guidelines describe the Community-Engaged Research Grant.

Community-Engaged Research Grants are intended to engage academic and community partners in a well-planned pilot research project that will foster sustainable, long-term collaboration and address important community health issues. Priority will be given to partnerships with a well-defined research question that can produce preliminary data for a larger grant application, or test out an intervention on a small scale for later scale up, or otherwise lead to continuing research. Examples include:

- Introducing an evidence-based health services innovation in a new practice setting and comparing patient clinical outcomes before and after the innovation was introduced
- Gathering qualitative data from structured focus groups in order to develop an item pool for a larger survey
- Testing alternative health education strategies or data gathering methods to demonstrate that increasing self-efficacy among a targeted population will improve clinical outcomes
- Assessing how understanding about new health insurance coverage options impacts health-seeking behaviors

Funding up to $10,000 is available to support research activities, including data collection and analysis, recruitment and compensation of study participants, and dissemination of study results. Training and consultative research support services may be included. Funding may not be used for operating support for existing programs or salaries for existing staff. Awards will be made to the community partner. If some of the research support being requested can be provided through shared research core services at either Vanderbilt University Medical Center or Meharry Medical College, you may be asked to consider these options. Funded projects must be completed within 18 months of award.

Review criteria will include responsiveness to the application criteria, involvement of each partner in the proposal development, mutual benefit to each partner, potential for sustaining the research partnership, alignment of research question with health needs in community, soundness of research design, clarity of each partner’s role, capacity of partners to fulfill roles, and potential to impact important health concerns. Award decisions are made by a review committee consisting of four community representatives and four community health researchers from Meharry Medical College and Vanderbilt University.

Who may apply?
Community partners with non-profit status (501(c)(3)) are eligible to apply. This includes community service organizations, advocacy groups, neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, or coalitions. Public agencies and private organizations without 501(c)(3) status may also be collaborators. The lead academic partner must be a faculty member from either Meharry Medical College or Vanderbilt University and demonstrate a commitment to developing expertise in ongoing, community-engaged health-related research. Collaborations of multidisciplinary teams and with faculty and researchers from other academic institutions are encouraged. Graduate students may participate as part of the research team.

Additional information for applicants:

- Attendance at an informational session or participation in an informational webinar by both community and academic partners is required prior to submission of a proposal. A list of scheduled dates for these informational sessions can be found below.
- In addition, a brief letter of intent to apply that indicates names of community and academic partners and whether you are applying for a Partnership Development Grant or Community Engaged Research Grant must be sent in an email to clare.sullivan@vanderbilt.edu by September 25th, 2015.

How does one apply?

Application Format: Your application should include the following sections, plus two required appendices described below. The application itself (not including appendices) should NOT EXCEED 6 PAGES in 12 point type. Additional appendices of up to 4 pages in addition to the required appendices may be added as explained below.

1. Title of Partnership Project

2. Brief statement of purpose and intended impact: Why are you undertaking this research? What is the community health concern you ultimately hope to address through this partnership? How will the findings of this research project contribute to improving the health concern you are addressing?

3. Research design. The description of your research design needs to include these component:
   a. statement of your research question
   b. research methods (quantitative/qualitative/mixed; observational/formative/experimental/evaluative)
   c. data you plan to collect, how it will be collected (e.g., record review from existing sources, personal interviews, focus groups, on-line or in-person surveys) and from whom it will be collected.
      i. If using an existing data source, please indicate that source and document source willingness to share the data through a letter of support or data use agreement that clarifies protections for personal health information, consenting concerns, etc.
      ii. If obtaining data from human subjects provide inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study group(s) (and comparison group if used), recruitment plan, consenting plan, compensation plan.
      iii. Clarify plans for/status of IRB submission. (The academic partner is responsible for meeting all IRB requirements).
   d. methodologies that will be used to analyze data and define results. If biostatistical or methodological consultations have taken place or are needed please indicate that here.
   e. measures you will use to determine whether this project was successful in accomplishing its research goals

4. Academic and Community Partner roles: list all collaborating organizations and/or key individuals. Describe how each partner has been involved in the development of this project, what their roles will be during implementation, and what in-kind resources they will contribute to this project.

5. Benefits to partners and partnership: How will each academic and community partner benefit from this project? How will this project contribute to sustaining your community-academic research partnership? How will benefits to partners be measured? Please provide this information in the form of a GIVE/GET GRID* as shown here:
## Expected Contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What community partner plans to “give” to partnership</th>
<th>What community partner hopes to “get” from partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What academic partner plans to “give” to partnership</td>
<td>What academic partner hopes to “get” from partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


## 6. Outcomes/Products:

**Briefly describe**
- the outcomes/products (aka “deliverables”) of the proposed activity,
- the plan for disseminating results of the project to stakeholders, and
- the next steps your partnership will take to move forward on your long-term research goals.

If a tangible product is proposed—such as a manuscript, presentation abstract, or white paper—a copy of each product should accompany your final report or be submitted when published/presented if this is at a later date. **NOTE:** All publications and posters need to state that the work was “supported in part by the Vanderbilt CTSA grant UL1 TR000445 from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences/ National Institutes for Health”.

## 7. Timeline:

**Indicate the sequence of steps in implementing your project over the project period.** Pilot research projects may extend to 18 months if needed. Please be sure to plan time for IRB approval if needed, and to disseminate your work to stakeholders. For your planning purposes, please note that it may take up to 2-3 months for contracting and funding to be completed after the mini-grant award is announced. This could be time used to complete the IRB process. The official start of the grant period will begin on the date the funds are received.

## 8. Budget and justification:

**Indicate how the funding will be used and how you arrived at the budget numbers.** Note that funding may not be used to support existing program operations or salary, or activities unrelated to the development of research partnerships or the research being proposed. If persons are being asked to contribute time for interviews, surveys, or focus groups for example, budget adequate compensation for their time. Please reference in-kind donations from the participating partners (such as staff time, use of facilities). Grant funds will be awarded to the community partner who will be responsible for sound accounting of the funds and may be subject to random audit by the VUMC Office of Contracts Management.

**Please note that if Vanderbilt Institute for Clinical and Translational Research funds can be identified to support certain aspects of the proposed research, MVCERC staff will talk with Mini-Grant recipients about leveraging this funding and will work with recipients to apply for these funds.**

## 9. Appendices:

- **Two appendices are REQUIRED:**
  - **Appendix A: Community Partner.** 1-2 page description of applicant organization’s mission, history and current work in the subject area of this proposal. If there are other collaborating agencies include letters of support from each that acknowledge their role in the partnership in this Appendix.
  - **Appendix B: Academic Partner.** 1-2 page biosketch of the lead academic partner. If there are additional collaborating academic partners also include a one to two paragraph description of the experience and interest of each.

- **Additional appendices:**
  - **Up to 4 pages of additional material** may also be included as appendices if the material helps explain elements of the proposal and has been referenced in the text of the proposal (e.g., outline of questions that will be used in interview or survey).
Application Requirements and Process:

- A letter of intent (LOI) to apply must be emailed no later than September 25th to clare.sullivan@vanderbilt.edu. The LOI needs to indicate the partners and whether you plan to apply for a Partnership Development or Community Engaged Research Grant.
- The application must be submitted on-line. More detailed information will be provided at informational sessions offered at the times and places listed at end of these Guidelines.
- Your application and appendices must be combined in a single PDF or WORD format.
- Completed applications must be submitted electronically by midnight October 5th, 2015.

Go to [http://j.mp/1FWiDGi](http://j.mp/1FWiDGi) or scan the QR Code on next page to enter information about the lead community and academic partner, and upload your application. If you have any questions about submitting this way or if electronic submission is not possible, please email clare.sullivan@vanderbilt.edu or call her at 615-322-0593 to discuss options.

When will awards be announced?
You should hear back from the Review Committee within 4-6 weeks. If you are awarded a grant, our staff will then alert VUMC Contract Managements team who will send a contract to the lead community partner (sample contract can be made available upon request). Once that contract is finalized, it may take another 3-4 weeks to process the funds, which are awarded in one lump sum to the lead community partner. Please factor this start-up time into your implementation timeline. A realistic start date for this cycle would be February 1, 2016.

What type of grant reporting is expected?
We hope that your team will consider MVCERC a partner in your work, and maintain a close connection with MVCERC staff during the implementation of your project, particularly if any problems surface. MVCERC staff will touch base with you about 6 months into your implementation cycle to find out if all is going well and ask you to complete a brief midway update report. At the close of your research, if you have proposed a tangible outcome(deliverable) for your research project (e.g., an abstract for submission to a conference or a manuscript submission to a peer-reviewed journal or an article for a newsletter), include a copy of each product with your final report. The final report itself will be brief and focus on whether you were able to accomplish the goals of your research and strengthen your research partnership. It will also include completion of another Give-Get Grid that will help us understand how each partner actually contributed and what each partner learned from the experience. See example of a completed Give-Get Grid on next page.

What if we have additional questions?
If questions arise during preparation of your proposal that have not been answered by these Guidelines or by the informational session you attend, please feel free to email Clare Sullivan or call 615-322-0593. Clare may also be able to connect you with a CERC staff or faculty member for consultation on methodology, partnership building, or other needs, and is available to facilitate the mechanics of the application process.

Example of completed GIVE-GET grid from a final report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Expectations (Gave)</th>
<th>Actual Benefits (Got)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic partner gave:</td>
<td>Academic partner got:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New curriculum to be tested</td>
<td>- Training location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student time</td>
<td>- New service area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Faculty expertise</td>
<td>- National recognition for curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Opportunity to recruit/expose students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community partner gave:</td>
<td>Community partner got:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Permission, time and energy</td>
<td>-New, strengthened services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Access to population and collaborators</td>
<td>-Expanded funding for services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Space for meetings</td>
<td>-New partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Teaching curriculum</td>
<td>-Interdisciplinary experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where can we find more information?**

The MVCERC Mini-Grant Guidelines, copy of contracting template, link to submission site, and upcoming schedule for Informational Workshops and submission deadlines are available on the MVCERC website ([http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/victr/pub/community/](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/victr/pub/community/)) and the Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance website ([http://www.meharry-vanderbilt.org/](http://www.meharry-vanderbilt.org/)).

An alternative way of accessing the Mini-Grant Submission Website is to use the QR Code below:

![Scan the QR Code](http://example.com/qrcode.png)

The survey link has been converted into a QR code, which can now be scanned by a device that has an app capable of reading QR codes. Once the QR code below is scanned, it should take the respondent directly to the survey in a web browser.