



Center for Appalachian Research in
Environmental Sciences

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Call for Applications

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About

The University of Kentucky Center for Appalachian Research in Environmental Sciences (UK-CARES) is now accepting applications from full-time early-stage investigators (ESI), as well as established investigators transitioning to environmental health related research areas, at the University of Kentucky (UK) for the Career Development Program. One of the goals of UK-CARES is to promote the growth in environmental health science at UK by supporting the development of early stage and established investigators. The purpose of this funding mechanism is to provide new opportunities and resources to enhance UK investigators' research capacity as they develop innovative environmental health research projects.

I. Eligibility

Career Development Awards are limited to full-time faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor (all title series are eligible including regular, research, clinical and special) at UK, and are intended to support early career investigators as they build their capacity to design and implement innovative, studies in environmental health sciences that will lead to NIEHS pilot and extramural funding. Established investigators who are transitioning to a new environmental health-related research area are also eligible to apply. Post-doctoral trainees are not eligible for this award.

II. Dates

The UK-CARES Career Development Program will accept applications for Career Development Awards according to the following schedule:

- **Call for Applications: February 27, 2026**
- **Full Application due: March 27, 2026, no later than 5:00 PM (EST)**
- **Anticipated dates of award: May 1, 2026-April 30, 2027**

Please note: If selected for funding, the College Grant Officer (CGO) in the Principal Investigator's college/department will need to initiate an e-IAF for the UK-CARES Career Development proposal.

*Enrichments are not given for Career Development Programs. Enrichment distributions flow from the prime account.

Please submit these proposals directly to: Dr. Kevin Pearson, Leader, UK-CARES Career Development Program: Kevin.Pearson@uky.edu.

III. Funding Information

The Career Development Awards are up to \$25,000 in total direct costs, plus 53% (rate at the time of the award) for Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A) for one year and will be made on a competitive basis to support activities designed to grow the faculty member's EHS program of research. It is anticipated that funds will be available for 1-2 awards depending on the number of meritorious applications and needs of the specific project.

Allowable costs: Funding is allowed for: (1) Principal Investigator effort for partial salary support (*the preferred use for the funds*); (2) a small percentage of salary support for mentor(s) as long as the mentor's role is clearly defined, and they are a [UK-CARES Center member](#); (3) technical support (e.g., biostatistics

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staff support, external review of grants, continuing education costs, training costs, research assistant support); and (4) equipment.

Non-allowable costs: Funds cannot be used for supplies or for activities such as, but not limited to: (1) bridge funding or supporting independent research projects (supplies, animal costs, etc.); (2) conference travel and registration; and (3) Other Costs deemed unallowable per the Parent FOA and federal guidelines (for example, publication costs).

IV. Review Process and Criteria

All applications will initially be administratively reviewed. Incomplete applications will be returned without further review. All complete applications will be reviewed and ranked by the UK-CARES Executive Committee. The review committee members will be asked to disclose any relationships to the award applicant and identify Conflict of Interest. Complete applications will be subject to a standard NIH-type study section assessment. The reviewers will then provide written feedback addressing the merits of the application. The final award decision will be made by Drs. Haynes (Director) and Swanson (Deputy Director). Dr. Kevin Pearson will notify the applicants of the outcome. The general criteria for review include:

Part I - Career Development Plan:

- Will the plan contribute substantially to the continued scientific development and productivity of the candidate's independent research career (or the transition to an environmental health-related career for established investigators)?
- Are there adequate plans for monitoring and evaluating the candidate's research and career development progress by the mentor or mentoring team (established investigators must have a mentor or mentoring team that will focus on the environmental health-related research aspects)?

Part II - Research Plan: The Career Development program **will not** fund the research specifically, but the Research Plan provides the review committee a summary of the investigator's research priorities and future funding potential.

- **Overall Impact (1-9)**
- **Significance**— Is the study relevant to the goals and research mission of UK-CARES? Does the study support new and novel areas of investigation in areas of environmental health sciences?
- **Innovation**—Are the aims original and concepts novel? Are novel methodologies proposed?
- **Approach**—Do the specific aims test the hypotheses? Are statistical considerations provided? If the project is community focused, is the outreach and dissemination plan appropriate to the aims and feasible given the scope of the project?
- **Investigators**—Does the investigative team including the mentor(s) have the training, expertise, and experience to conduct the proposed study?
- **Environment**—Is the environment strong? Do the investigators take advantage of available expertise at UK and in the community?
- **Feasibility**—Is the career development plan feasible from the perspective of the availability of resources?

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- **Potential**—Will the proposed study generate new knowledge that can be published? Will completion of the study lead to external funding or development of a novel or translational methodology? Is there commercial potential? Is there potential to grow community engagement in environmental science? Importantly, will the completion of the career development plan and proposed research lead to the development of an extramural environmental science grant application, such as R03, R21, or R01?

Part III – Budget and Justification (See Appendix)

V. Awardee Responsibilities

1. Awardees, with support from their mentor(s), will be required to provide a final written report at end of reporting cycle and periodic updates when requested.
2. Awardees will be expected to submit an abstract to relevant UK-CARES events, including but not limited to: NIEHS EHS Core Centers annual meeting, State of Science, Town Hall, as well as the annual UK-CARES External Advisory Board (EAB) meeting.
3. The UK-CARES is evaluated by the NIEHS on its effectiveness in stimulating new research findings and publications. **The following support acknowledgment must be included on all publications that result from UK-CARES support:**

"This **publication** was made possible in part by Grant **P30 ES026529** from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)."

or

"The **project described** was supported in part by Grant **P30 ES026529** from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)."

and

"Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)."

VI. Submission of Applications

All applications shall be submitted via e-mail to: Dr. Kevin Pearson, Leader, UK-CARES Career Development Program: Kevin.Pearson@uky.edu.

Submission deadline: March 27, 2026, no later than 5:00 PM (EST)

VII. Application Package and Guidelines

Each Career Development Award application includes three parts:

- Part I—Career Development Plan
(2-page limit + up to 5 additional pages for the [NIH Biosketch](#), excluding letters of support)
- Part II—Research Plan
(2-page limit, excluding references and letters of support)

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- Part III – Budget and Justification
(2-page limit, use PHS 398 Form: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/398_forms.docx)

Part I: Career Development Plan

1. **Applicant Information:**
 - a. Name, Degree, Rank, Title Series, Department, College
 - b. Contact information: Email, Telephone, Campus Address
2. **Collaborators and Mentors**, including a brief statement of how they will contribute to your career development
 - a. Name, Degree, Rank, Title Series, Department, College
3. **NIH New Investigator Status (yes or no)**
4. **Career Goals and Objectives**
5. **Biographical Sketch** using the NIH Format
(Must use <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch-blankformat.docx>)
6. **Letter(s) of Support** (Required for named mentor(s))

Part II: Research Plan (following the NIH heading guidelines)

1. Summary of research goals, mission and how your proposed research advances the field of environmental health sciences and addresses the NIEHS Strategy Plan
2. Research Strategy
 - a. Significance
 - b. Innovation
 - c. Approach
 - d. Referenced Cited
3. Description of Institutional Environment and Support (such as, how much funding available for the research and what is the source?)
4. Summary of externally submitted grants; scores, and timeline for future NIEHS grant submissions.
5. A note concerning institutional review board approvals for the following: Vertebrate Animals and or Human Subjects Protection. If you have IRB approval, please provide the number.

Part III: Budget and Justification

(Use PHS 398 Form: https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/398_forms.docx)

1. One budget must be submitted ***These funds cannot be extended:
 - a. Up to \$25,000 in direct costs, plus 53% (rate at the time of the award) for F&A, for one year.
2. Categories
 - a. Personnel

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1. Career Development Awardee. ***It is preferred that the majority of the funds be allocated for salary support.*** PI must at least have one percent (1%) effort on the award. **Mentors must be a UK-CARES member.** Mentor can be considered an 'Other Significant Contributor' with no measurable effort on the project or can include a small amount of funded effort.
 2. Key Personnel or Technical Support
 3. Research Assistant
 4. Biostatistician
- b. Equipment
3. Written justification must be provided for each of the categories listed above.