



RAPID RESPONSE MINI-GRANTS

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Introduction

The UK Center for Appalachian Research in Environmental Sciences (UK-CARES) has an open call for Rapid Response Awards. The mission of UK-CARES is to discover and translate research on how the environment affects the health of people in rural Appalachia. UK-CARES is aligned closely with the [NIEHS Strategic Plan](#). For more information about UK-CARES, visit our website at <https://research.uky.edu/uk-cares>.

The overall goal of the Pilot Project Program (PPP) is to support the mission of UK-CARES and NIEHS by supporting innovative and high impact environmental health sciences research, early-stage investigators and those new to environmental health sciences, and foster collaboration between environmental health scientists and community partners to address emerging environmental health issues, particularly in Appalachian communities. **All proposed pilot projects MUST use at least one UK-CARES Core.** For consultation and core support questions, contact our UK-CARES team through the [Research Support Portal](#).

Award Description

UK-CARES Rapid Response Mini-Grants

These awards are open throughout the year to enable researchers to respond to emergent environmental health issues, such as disasters. Funds can also be requested to support rapid data collection or analyses to respond to reviewer feedback for manuscript publication or grant resubmission. This funding is open to any UK faculty member who is addressing an emergent environmental health issue or needing support for rapid response to enhance publications or grant proposals. Funding can also be used to support development of tools, technologies or design concepts that can be used to help those affected by extreme weather events or disasters. Investigators may request up to \$5,000 in direct research costs. Projects must be completed by April 30, 2026. This award is intended to stimulate innovation and to support pilot studies that will lead to extramural funding. Submissions will be reviewed and awards granted as applications are received; applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible because program funds might be depleted. Because of the short duration of these proposals, the required documentation such as IRB, IACUC, etc., must be in place at the time of submission. **This mechanism will not fund clinical trials** ([NIH definition](#)).

Applications must address the award priorities described below.

Required Documentation

Short research description (2-page max) including the following, combined into one PDF:

Significance

- Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the Environmental Health Science field that the proposed project addresses.

- Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, environmental health in Appalachia, technical capability, and/or clinical/public health practice in one or more broad fields.
- Include information on Preliminary Studies. Discuss the PI's preliminary studies, data, and/or experience pertinent to this application. Priority will be given to those applications that require preliminary data to address reviewers' comments for an extramural application or a manuscript under review.

Approach

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- Address how the completion of the pilot will address reviews and/or lead to the development of extramural environmental science grant applications, such as R03, R21, or R01.

Future directions

- Explain how the proposed research will enhance disaster response or address an environmental health issue faced by communities impacted by a disaster.
- Explain how the current research will contribute to/strengthen an external research application or address reviewer's comments on a manuscript.
- If these rapid response grant funds are being requested in response to a critique related to a previously reviewed extramural grant, please include a copy of the summary statement from the extramural grant review. If these funds are being requested in response to a critique related to a previously reviewed manuscript, please include a copy of the reviewers' comments.
- IRB/IACUC approval letter(s) must be in place for this award and submitted with the application. All projects that include human subjects must be reviewed and approved by NIEHS. Delays in project implementation may occur.
- NIH biosketch for faculty listed as study personnel
- Budget and budget justification (\$5,000 maximum per proposal).
 - The use of the following form is REQUIRED: PHS 398 Form Page 4 "Detailed Budget for the Initial Period" found [here](#):
- An appendix of other relevant information such as references.

Award Priorities

The main priorities for funding are to: 1) address an emergent environmental health issue, such as a disaster, 2) help strengthen applications for extramural research grants or to address reviewers'

comments for a manuscript, 3) improve the scientific merit of the project, and 4) increase the likelihood that funding will result in submission of a competitive application for extramural funding. Award priorities will be consistent with the mission of UK-CARES. Where appropriate, priority will be awarded based upon the strength of the research team including citizen scientists or, for early career investigators, the mentorship team and citizen scientists. Other priorities for funding include:

- Significance of the clinical and/or translational work in terms of potential environmental health impact.
- Relevance of the clinical and/or translational work to the health of Appalachian Kentucky
- Scientific rigor and novelty of the proposed approach.
- Experience and productivity of the investigators.
- Multidisciplinary research teams representing the basic, clinical and/or population sciences with an emphasis on bridging the divisions between basic and population scientists.
- Pilot studies, which generate critical preliminary data that will lead to subsequent external funding and/or commercial development.
- Health topics of interest to NIEHS (<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/index.cfm>)

Key Dates

- Applications Due: Open Call for Applications
- Project Start Date: No later than one (1) month from receipt of the Notice of Award.
NOTE: If you do not have an approved IRB/IACUC, the start date could be delayed.
- Project Completion Date: April 30, 2026

Funding Details

Budgets for awarded **UK-CARES Rapid Response Mini-Grants** will include direct costs. Sufficient justification and detail should be provided to validate the costs. Successful applicants can receive up to \$5,000 in direct costs to be used for the conduct of the project. Funds must be spent by April 30, 2026.

Allowable Costs

- Material and supply costs associated with the analysis of existing biological samples or environmental sampling with existing populations.
- Travel funds needed for study execution are allowed, if essential.

Non-Allowable Costs

- Travel to conferences
- Equipment (including alterations, renovation costs, and computers)
- Personal service contracts, subcontracts, and consultant costs
- Publication costs
- Costs deemed non-allowable per the Parent FOA and federal guidelines.

Project Requirements

Successful applicants agree to complete the project requirements as a condition of funding:

- 1) Develop and implement a project that contributes to environmental health science

<https://www.research.uky.edu/uk-cares/funding-opportunities>

- 2) Provide a brief end-of-project progress report
- 3) Share the outcomes of the project at a statewide or national meeting (e.g., UK-CARES annual meeting; Center for Clinical and Translational Science poster session, Appalachian Research Day, Partnerships in Environmental Public Health annual meeting)

Questions

For scientific questions regarding this funding opportunity, contact:
Joel Thompson, PhD, CCTS Chief Scientific Officer & Pilot Funding Administrator

For budget questions, contact:
Jennifer Moore, UK-CARES Administrator

Please submit your application using the following application link:
[UK-CARES Rapid Response Grants 2026](#)

Required Documents Checklist

Before submitting your proposal online, please ensure all required documents listed below are **combined into a single PDF** in the following order:

- Short research description (2-page maximum)
- Summary statement from extramural grant or manuscript review (if applicable)
- IRB/IACUC approval letter
- PI, Co-PI, Study Personnel Biosketch
- Budget (use [NIH template PHS 398](#))
- Budget Justification
- Appendix (references)

The format of the application should follow the NIH guidelines outlined below:

- Margins must be no smaller than 0.5" at all points.
- Use an Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface, a black font color, and a font size of 11 points or larger. (A Symbol font may be used to insert Greek letters or special characters; the font size requirement still applies).
- Type density, including characters and spaces, must be no more than 15 characters per inch. Type may be no more than six lines per inch.
- Each page** should provide the applicant's name in the upper right hand corner.