

**Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities/  
Northwestern University Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute  
Announcing ARCC 2020 Seed Grants- Research Pilots & Partnership  
Development Cycle 2  
Community-Academic Research Collaboration to Improve Health Equity**

The [Alliance for Research in Chicagoland Communities](#) (ARCC)/Northwestern University Clinical & Translational Sciences Institute (NUCATS), in partnership with Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) announces the recipients of seed grant funds that support the development of partnerships that engage communities and stakeholders in research collaboration with Northwestern research teams. ARCC believes that using the tools of science to achieve health equity can best be done when community knowledge and experience is centered and communities and academic researchers work together. The goal of these awards is to support the development and increase the number of community-academic partnerships that are prepared to collaborate to design and conduct community-engaged research projects to improve health equity. This is ARCC's thirteenth round of seed grant funding and includes Research Pilot and Partnership Development Seed Grants. Both types of grants support a partnership that includes a community lead from a local community organization and an academic lead from Northwestern University. Research Pilot awards (up to \$25,000, up to 24 months) advance the work of existing partnerships that have prior collaborative experience to collect and analyze data and conduct other research activities together. This is the second cycle of Partnership Development Seed Grants. Each award (up to \$5,000, up to 12 months) supports newly developing partnerships in relationship building, creation of partnership structure, exploration of shared areas of interest, and research capacity development. Also learn more [here](#) about the three partnerships supported in Partnership Development- Cycle 1. Priority was given to applications that focus on addressing health inequities in Chicagoland communities identified by [Healthy Chicago 2.0/2025](#) and/or address priority health needs identified by the Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) 2019 [Community Health Needs Assessment](#).

Over 13 years of seed grant funding, ARCC has distributed over \$1.125 million to over 80 community-academic partnerships. The funded partnerships have led to increased community and academic capacity for engagement and research, new health improvements and policy changes, more than \$18 million in subsequent grant funding, and almost 40 peer-reviewed publications. Grants are supported by funds from Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH) and the Northwestern University Clinical & Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute.

### **ARCC 2020 Research Pilot Seed Grant Summaries**

#### *A Youth-Led Response to COVID-19: Research and Public Health Focus*

Chelsea Ridley, Mikva Challenge, and Tara Gill, Psychiatry, Feinberg School of Medicine and Lurie Children's Hospital

A research pilot focused on Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in collaboration with youth from Mikva Challenge, researchers from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and psychologists from the Center for Childhood Resilience at Northwestern University will explore equity and social determinants of health (SDOH) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically with youth in communities disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. The Mikva

Teen Health Council will serve as junior researchers in a year-long program to apply knowledge learned through YPAR and public health courses. Specifically, the junior researchers will use a quantitative measure to assess the impact of the pandemic on various life domains among a sample of young people. The junior researchers will adapt and enhance the COVID-19 pandemic-specific measure using a Health Equity Measurement Framework to include cultural and socioeconomic factors generated from the youths' lived experience. Findings from this study will be disseminated by the junior researchers to youth and community audiences, and will inform the development of a youth research advisory board within Mikva to sustain programming for youth-led research. The implications of this study will center and elevate youth voice to promote health equity during the pandemic.

### *Connecting communities with pediatric focused bereavement support resources*

Kristin James, Greater Illinois Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition, and Kelly Michelson, Pediatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine and Lurie Children's Hospital

This project will support people impacted by the death of a child and children impacted by the death of a loved one through improved access to care. Ms. Kristin James, executive director of the Greater Illinois Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition (GIPPCC), and Dr. Kelly Michelson created Missing Pieces. Missing Pieces is a coalition of people and organizations interested in enhancing efforts that support people impacted by perinatal through young adult deaths, including deaths from medical problems, trauma, suicide, homicide, or overdose. Missing Pieces partners identified the need for a centralized pediatric bereavement support referral center, accessible to the general public and healthcare providers. We developed such a referral system. Our long-term goal is to assess the impact of our centralized referral system. The goal of this award is to refine and pilot our system. We have three aims: 1) refine and implement the referral system using quality improvement methods and stakeholder input; 2) obtain input and feedback from system users; and 3) characterize users, as well as type and availability of resources requested. Completion of this project will allow us to collect information needed to develop large-scale research that will evaluate the impact of our referral system.

### *Project Hustle Mommy: Examining the Emotional Wellness of Chicago's Inner City Mom*

Ariel DeNey Rainey, Hustle Mommies, and Inger Burnett-Zeigler, Psychiatry, Feinberg School of Medicine

Project Hustle Mommy is a research project aimed at helping the urban/inner city mom demographic heal so they can heal their families and communities. Emotional trauma is one of the many socioeconomic issues that has affected Chicago's inner city communities on the South, West and North sides where Black neighborhoods are faced with issues such as inner city violence, poverty, health challenges and poor school systems. As a result, the Black, urban family has experienced stress, depression and other mental health triggers that have impacted inner city households. The Hustle Mommies nonprofit organization was created as a response to these issues as mental health related topics have shown up via moms they have serviced over the past 7 years. This research partnership was designed to examine how their mom demographic can learn to identify their traumatic triggers, learn/understand the different types of mental health conditions, and learn how to not pass those triggers to their children. This research will be used to create a comprehensive URBAN MOM REPORT as well as relaunch their signature program "The Mom Who Grew from Concrete" that focuses on the mental health of the Hustle Mommy demographic through the Chicagoland area.

## **ARCC 2020 Partnership Development Seed Grant- Cycle 2 Project Summaries**

### *Engaging recovery communities of color: a partnership promoting health equity through addressing co-morbidity disparities*

Mary Roberson, Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization, and Maryann Mason, Emergency Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine

Conditions such as hypertension and diabetes are leading causes of death in the US. Communities of color are at disproportionate risk for these conditions. Further, substance misuse has ravaged US communities of color for decades and increased in recent years with the opioid epidemic. In its 2016-2021 Community Health Improvement Plan, Lake County, IL identified these chronic conditions and behavioral health conditions such as substance misuse as priorities for action with a focus on reducing health inequities. There is scant information on the intersection of chronic physical health conditions other than HIV/AIDS and long term substance misuse recovery. This partnership between the Northern Illinois Recovery Community Organization (NIRCO) and Maryann Mason in Department of Emergency Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine, aims to bring together community organizations, government representatives, policy makers, service providers, academic researchers, and persons with lived substance misuse experience to identify community priorities for reducing chronic health condition-related barriers to recovery from substance misuse disorder for persons of color in Lake County. The project year will culminate with the launch of a research agenda for reducing health disparities' impact on substance misuse recovery among persons of color in Lake County, Illinois.

### *Partnership to Explore and Address Equitable Access to Big Marsh Park*

Paul Fitzgerald, Friends of Big Marsh, and Adam Becker, Pediatrics, Feinberg School of Medicine and Lurie Children's Hospital

Chicago's Big Marsh Park Advisory Council, Friends of Big Marsh (FoBM), Northwestern University faculty, and Lurie Children's Hospital staff will develop a community-engaged research partnership focused on Chicago's Big Marsh Park. According to the Chicago Park District (the District), "Big Marsh" is a 297-acre property on the southeast side of Chicago in the Calumet Area Reserve. Once an industrial property, the District acquired the site in 2011 and opened it as a new public park in 2016. Because the park is separated from the surrounding communities by I-94 and the Calumet River, concerns have emerged among the park's supporters about equitable access for those who rely on public transportation and walking. This partnership will (1) establish principles of community engagement and apply them to the developing community-academic relationship, (2) engage with local community-based organizations and residents to understand park-related opportunities and challenges, (3) review academic and community knowledge about the actual and potential health, social, and other benefits of Big Marsh Park, and (4) formalize a community-engaged research relationship that will serve as the foundation for one or more future research pilots and projects to address equitable access to Big Marsh Park and its benefits for the surrounding communities.

*Mind Wellness Compass Program: Understanding mental health stigma and increasing access to mental health services among African Americans and Black immigrants in Chicago*

Nancy Asirifi-Otchere, United African Organization, and Aderonke Bamgbose Pederson, Psychiatry and Behavioral Science, Feinberg School of Medicine

This partnership development application supports the collaboration between the United African Organization, a well-established community resource that serves Black immigrants across Chicago and Dr. Pederson who has expertise in mental health and in working with Black immigrant community organizations. The partnership goal is to assess barriers to accessing mental health services with an emphasis on how stigma may influence access to and utilization of mental health services. From preliminary research completed through this partnership as well as the current literature, stigmatizing views among Black immigrants impacts access to and utilization of mental health services. Low utilization of mental health services and lower quality of care among black immigrants has been reported. In summary the proposed partnership goals will a) Assess the content and characteristics of mental health stigma among Black immigrants b) Assess how stigma impacts utilization of mental health services and if this relationship is mediated by discriminatory experiences within the health field c) Expand partnership between UAO and Dr. Pederson to other community based organizations and faith based communities.

*Filling the gaps of institutional and communal sexual health resources and services in Chicago*

Angela Townsend, Sexexpectations Chicago, and Claire Coyne, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine and Lurie Children's Hospital

Sexexpectations Chicago, the Potocsnak Family Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and the Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing (ISGMH; represented by co-investigator Kathryn Macapagal) at Northwestern will partner to refine comprehensive, LGBTQIA inclusive, culturally-competent, sexual health education community-based programming for youth and emerging adults in the city of Chicago. As a community collective, Sexexpectations Chicago is seeking to learn how to build sustainability in their programming, foster professional development to support activism for healthy sexual lives of Black and Latinx youth, and integrate a robust LGBTQIA sexual health agenda in their programming. Lurie and ISGMH are committed to leveraging clinical and research expertise with sexual and gender minority youth to expand the reach of community-based sexual health education and programming, and develop a research plan to assess the preliminary effectiveness of the Sexexpectations program. By working with one another, each partner is committed to growing, learning, and filling the gaps of institutional and community-based sexual health resources and services in Chicago.

*Technology-Enabled Prevention Service for At-Risk Youth: Community-Academic Partnership and Advisory Board*

Robert Simmons, Oak Park Public Library, and Ashley Knapp, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Feinberg School of Medicine

The teen services program at the Oak Park Public Library is a program specifically designed for teens, and by teens, that focuses on the social-emotional and academic development of youth in communities in West/Near West Chicago neighborhoods and Western Suburban Cook County. Through a recent initiative to extend the library's social services to include mental health services, a community-academic partnership has begun to cultivate between Community Lead Mr. Robert

Simmons, Director of Social Services and Public Safety at Oak Park Public Library, and Academic Lead Dr. Ashley Knapp, Research Assistant Professor at Northwestern University. Mr. Simmons and Dr. Knapp share the mission of provision of accessible, evidence-based mental health services to Chicagoland youth, and in particular those youth who most experience health inequities. The main goals of their project are 1) to create a strong and sustainable community-academic partnership focused on provision of highly accessible prevention services for anxiety to Chicagoland teens aged 12-17 years from West/Near West neighborhoods and Western Suburban Cook County and 2) to form and convene a diverse advisory board with varying perspectives to oversee and provide feedback on the delivery, implementation, community impact, and scale-up of a technology-enabled prevention service for youth anxiety.

[ARCC](#) is a program of the [Center for Community Health](#), serving the Northwestern University Institute for Public Health and Medicine ([IPHAM](#)) and the Northwestern University's Clinical and Translational Sciences ([NUCATS](#)) Institute. ARCC strives to grow community-engaged research partnerships between Chicagoland communities and Northwestern University to improve health and health equity and supports communities and research teams by providing partnership facilitation, capacity-building, seed grant fiscal support, and advocacy for supportive institutional policies that fulfill our commitment to a culture of engagement and equity. ARCC's goals and objectives are jointly defined by a [steering committee](#) comprised of community and faith-based organizations, public agencies, and Northwestern University faculty.

Community-engaged research is an approach to conducting research in a collaborative way involving partnerships between communities and academics in an exchange of expertise between communities, as local, cultural, and lived experience experts, and academics, as scientific experts.

For more information, [www.ARCCOnline.net](http://www.ARCCOnline.net) or [ARCC@northwestern.edu](mailto:ARCC@northwestern.edu)

ARCC Steering Committee members:

Community Organizations: Access Living, Apostolic Faith Church, The Blue Hat Foundation, CALOR, Cambodian Association of Illinois, Chicago Youth Programs, CJE SeniorLife, EndeLeo Institute, HANA Center, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, The Night Ministry, Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Renz Addiction Counseling Center.

Public Agencies: Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Public Schools.

Academic & Clinical Partners: Inger Burnett-Zeigler PhD, Rebecca Carl MD, Tara Gill PhD, Prakash Jayabalan MD, Lisa Kuhns PhD MPH, Tarneka Manning MPH, Holly Manprasio MPH, Matthew O'Brien MD, J.D. Smith PhD, Theresa Sukal-Moulton DPT PhD, Sarah Welch MPH.