



## Military Service Knowledge Collaborative

# 2020 Seed Funding Program: Call for Proposals

The Chez Veterans Center (CVC) is a one-stop service center maximizing the academic, career, and psychosocial potential of our nation's veterans, military-connected members, and their families as well as a growing epicenter for Military/Veteran-centric research at Illinois. The CVC serves approximately 250 military-connected students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through academic, career, health and wellness, as well as Veterans Health Administration services. Additionally, the CVC contains a residential floor, housing 14 student-Veterans to aid in their transitions from military service into higher education.

In addition to services, the CVC facilitates and catalyzes Military/Veteran-focused research across campus through its Military Service Knowledge Collaborative (MSKC). The MSKC is a framework for collaboration to create and apply research *with* Military/Veteran communities and is guided by the mission to advance research that positively impacts well-being and quality of life during and after military service for Service Members, Veterans, and their families. The MSKC is a framework designed to unite Military/Veteran research and services and encompasses:

- *Strategic Partnering* between Military/Veteran organizations and researchers to facilitate access for recruitment and to ensure the needs of this community are central to project development.
- *Community Events* that create spaces for researchers and Military/Veteran stakeholders to network and engage with each other on timely topics impacting this community.
- *Educational trainings and workshops* tailored to fuse the societal military-civilian divide and help researchers develop necessary cultural competencies for effectively engaging with this community in research.

The MSKC is founded and operates on community engagement and was created as a response to barriers Illinois faculty experience trying to access this population for research recruitment. Community Veteran-Serving Organizations are “gatekeepers” to where Veterans are at and thus, through working within the MSKC to advance Military/Veteran research, Illinois researchers overcome barriers of recruitment and likewise, Military/Veteran communities benefit from

engaging in research projects designed with their input to specifically address their unique needs. The MSKC Seed Funding Program provides support for MSKC researchers to establish and develop such partnerships with Military/Veteran communities. The purpose of these partnerships is to create mutually-reciprocal relationships that result in innovative design and implementation of research projects, which 1) positively impact health and well-being of this unique population and, 2) facilitate the development of proposals capable of attracting external funding.

**Three grants in the amount of \$15,000 will be awarded** in response to this call. Proposals will be rated on the ability to develop and sustain pre-established partnerships and/or the potential to attract Military/Veteran community stakeholders (i.e. Veteran Service Organizations and/or DoD components/organizations) for partnership. Grantees will receive support from the MSKC to assist with developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with stakeholders throughout the project lifespan. Community partners can be any Veteran Service Organization or DoD military component. Community partnerships will be mutually-beneficial for researchers and stakeholders in that stakeholders will provide access to target sample population and inform development of project recruitment protocol and alternatively, stakeholders will receive identified project deliverables (identified with researcher at project onset) that supports their organizational mission and objectives. All investigators on the awarded projects will be required to attend an MSKC “How to Engage Military/Veteran Communities in Research” upon award receipt.

Activity	Deadline
Complete “Intend to Apply” Form	April 3, 2020
Proposal Deadline	April 17, 2020
Award Notification and Start of Funding	May 29, 2020

### Program Aims

1. **Build Sustainable Partnerships:** Develop research ideas that are appealing either to Veteran Service Organizations and/or DoD military components to establish reciprocal and sustaining relationships for research development and implementation.
2. **Generate Applicable Research:** Create research projects that result in data translatable to the application of service, program, and/or policy development relevant to the health and well-being of Military Service Members, Veterans, and/or family members.
3. **Facilitate Data Collection:** Employ seed grant funding to pursue the generation of preliminary data to support the development of competitive extramural proposals.
4. **Develop Competitive Proposals:** Garner external funding for interdisciplinary research projects, using MSKC support as a catalyst.

Proposals should identify a problem impacting a Military/Veteran community and articulate in the proposal how the development of research addressing such problem may translate into actionable solutions for the community affected. Proposals that address a high priority problem impacting Military/Veteran (M/V) communities and thus exemplify potential for community partnership will be prioritized. Proposals that have existing partnerships in place should explicate how this project will foster the development and maintenance of a sustainable partnership with the community stakeholder. Projects that include interdisciplinary/cross college partnership will be preferred. Proposed projects must address a problem related to the health and well-being of Military Service Members, Veterans, and/or family members. Currently, some of the top health and wellness challenges affecting M/V communities include (but are not limited to): suicide, military to civilian transitions, musculoskeletal injuries and pains, Traumatic Brain Injury, polytrauma, Post Traumatic Stress, Military Sexual Trauma, moral injury, hazardous/chemical exposures, Substance Use Disorders, Veteran employment, media representations of Military/Veteran identities and experiences, and homelessness.

### Eligibility

The MSKC Seed Funding Program is open to all ranks of the University of Illinois faculty. Faculty must be a member of the MSKC to apply. Faculty can learn more about the MSKC [here](#) and join the MSKC through completing [this form](#). Previous Chez Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education (2016) seed grant recipients are eligible and encouraged to apply. Current Chez Veterans Center MSKC Seed Grant recipients (2019) are not eligible to apply for this new award cycle. The aim and organization for this seed grant program is for award recipients to work within the MSKC to initiate and develop sustainable partnerships with M/V stakeholders in order to develop and implement projects collaboratively upon grant receipt. MSKC support includes 1) cultural awareness training for engaging Military/Veteran communities in research, 2) assisting faculty in identifying and initiating contact and relational development with Military/Veteran community stakeholders (i.e. making contact, coordinating and leading meetings, translating needs of Military/Veteran community, brainstorming outcomes/deliverables for community partners), 3) advising on the development of all project recruitment materials and select IRB application sections, and 4) helping to disseminate recruitment materials through the CVC/MSKC network.

### Funding Guidelines

Proposed projects will be for a one-year period, **May 29, 2020 to May 29, 2021**. Project budgets may request up to \$15,000 in direct costs to support activities that directly relates to the successful conduct of the project. There are no indirect costs paid on the MSKC seed grants. Budget items may include support for recruitment, data entry, interviews, data acquisition, access to restricted-use data, travel costs related to data collection or meetings with collaborators, and graduate research assistance. Unspent funding at the end of the one-year project period will revert back to the MSKC Seed Grant pool unless a request for a time extension is approved through the MSKC.

**The following expenses are not allowed:**

- Salaries for faculty, post-doctoral research associates, research technicians, or computer programmers are not supported.
- RA tuition
- Full-time appointments of any kind
- Graduate research assistantship appointments for greater than 50% time, more than two months in the summer session, or persons not currently enrolled as graduate students at the University of Illinois
- Dissertation project research costs which are not clearly also faculty research costs
- Construction and remodeling of facilities
- Equipment purchases
- Non-research costs
- Travel to scientific meetings/conferences

## Proposal Presentation & Submission

### Join the MSKC

You are required to be a member of the MSKC in order to apply for this seed grant program. Membership means you join the MSKC network and will be included on our email listserv to receive monthly newsletters and may be contacted by MSKC administrators for specific research opportunities that arise and match your expertise. Join by completing [this form](#) (if you received this announcement via email, you are already a member).

### 'Intend to Apply' Form

Complete [this form](#) by March 2, 2020. This is not a standard "Letter of Intent" and faculty will not receive feedback on the idea they submit in this form. Rather, the purpose of this form is solely to inform the program administrator (Dr. Jeni Hunnicutt) of the number of applicants for the purpose of review committee planning. Faculty are welcome to contact Dr. Hunnicutt at [jeni@illinois.edu](mailto:jeni@illinois.edu) to discuss and receive feedback on project ideas prior to submitting this form.

### Proposal Format

Proposals should not exceed seven pages (single space, 0.5-inch margins, Arial 11-point font, including figures and tables).

### Proposal Content

*Coversheet/Title Page:* This page must include the study title, names, contact information and unit affiliations of the research team members, indication of the lead PI, and keywords/terms that indicate area/topic to attract Military/Veteran community stakeholders.

*Project Abstract (1 page):* Must not exceed half a page of text. Must include brief descriptions of project rationale/justification, aims, research design and methodology, and ideas for final project deliverables that could benefit Military/Veteran community stakeholders. Abstract should be written in plain language so that individuals/stakeholders outside of academia can understand the significance and importance of the project.

*Project Narrative (3-4 pages):* Considering the review criteria listed below, the project narrative should describe the research project aims, methods, and outcomes. Of note, this section should explicitly describe how this project has potential to positively impact the health and well-being of Military/Veteran populations as to exemplify potential for community partnership. This section should clearly highlight Military/Veteran community partnership potential (listing potential organizations to partner with, for example). If already partnered, a plan of how this project will engage the community partner and develop a sustainable relationship should be outlined.

*References Cited (1 page)*

*Budget and Budget Justification (1 page):* Provide a budget estimate that does not exceed \$15,000 over a 1-year duration. Indirect costs are not permitted.

*Investigators CV or biosketch (include as separate attachment/s from proposal):* must highlight each individual's qualifications for a specific role in the proposed project.

### **Proposal Submission**

Please submit your completed proposal and attachments to [this form](#). For questions, please email Dr. Jeni Hunnicutt at [jeni@illinois.edu](mailto:jeni@illinois.edu) or call at (217) 300-2814.

### **Review Criteria**

Reviewers will evaluate each criterion on a scale of 1-9 as done for NIH applications.

- a. Potential for Community Partnership:** Does the project address a problem of high importance to Military/Veteran communities? Does project have potential to attract Military/Veteran stakeholders? Does the proposal identify potential community partners of interest or include already established partnerships? Does the project outline what potential benefit and deliverables could be outcomes for involved community stakeholders? Does the project exemplify adaptability for Military/Veteran stakeholder input?
- b. Significance:** Does the project address an important problem or address a critical barrier related to Military/Veteran health and well-being? Is there a strong rationale established for the project? If project outcomes are achieved, is there likely to be a lasting and applicable impact for M/V health and well-being and for the community stakeholder(s)?
- c. External Funding Potential:** Based on project topic and projected outcomes, how likely is it this project will facilitate the creation and submission of a project application to a funding agency? Is there potential for development of funding applications to limited or multiple sources?
- d. Cross Campus Collaboration:** Does the project involve multiple PIs from various disciplines? Does the project involve cross-campus and interdisciplinary collaboration? Are the PIs well suited for the project topic? Does the study encompass more than one area of study?
- e. Quality of Research Project:** Does the study outline innovative and appropriate strategy and methodology to accomplish aims of the study? Does the study exemplify potential for outcomes both in theory and application?

## Monitoring and Grantee Obligations

Grantees must agree in the proposal to attend a workshop on *Best Practices for Engaging Military/Veteran Communities in Research* upon receipt of the grant award (if not previously attended one); workshop will be scheduled in accordance with recipients' availabilities. Grantees will be expected to submit a six-month progress report on the development of the study as well as a final progress report at the end of the one-year funding term.

## Contact

For questions or inquires, contact: Jeni Hunnicutt at [jeni@illinois.edu](mailto:jeni@illinois.edu) or (217) 300-2814.