



Preparing for rural practice

## Rural Primary Care Health Professions Education Microresearch Awards

Building a next generation community of practice and disseminating research in rural primary care education and training

### Purpose:

To incentivize and reward research in rural primary care health professions education and training by the learners themselves

### Description:

To improve primary care education, we need to engage learners in scholarly activity about their education and practice.<sup>1</sup> To encourage learners in rural health professions education and training to pursue scholarly work, the Collaborative for Rural Primary care Research, Education, and Practice (Rural PREP) will award up to \$4,000 for research performed by a student, resident, or other trainee in collaboration with a qualified mentor at the same or another institution. Microresearch awardees may also later apply for an additional \$500 in travel support (<https://ruralprep.org/research-scholarship/travel-support/>) to share completed research results. Research must be relevant to rural primary health care, rural population health, or rural health workforce education and training.

Preference will be given to proposals that are community engaged and/or demonstrate collaboration across health professions or institutions. Research teams, especially interprofessional teams, are encouraged but not required. A research project that is conducted across multiple institutions will be considered for multiple awards, one award to the project lead at each institution. This program of research support is modeled after the sustainable community health research described by the Canadian/African collaboration entitled "MicroResearch" (MicroResearch, 5850 University Avenue, Halifax, NS, B3K 6R8, [canadamicroresearch@dal.ca](mailto:canadamicroresearch@dal.ca); <http://www.microresearch.ca/how-it-works/>).<sup>2,3,4</sup>

A prepared student and a qualified mentor are critical to the coaching of students through each step and the provision of feedback/quality control on each part of the project. Orientation to microresearch and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) concepts will be included through assigned pre-work and participation in quarterly Rural PREP Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings focused on student and faculty development.

### Funding:

An applicant may receive up to \$4,000 for allowable research expenses. A total of \$30,000 will be available annually for Microresearch awards. Up to three individuals per project (students/residents/trainees, not faculty) may apply for an additional \$500 each for travel and meeting expenses to present completed scholarly work (<https://ruralprep.org/research-scholarship/travel-support/>). Funds provided for these projects are also subject to 45 CFR 75 (see in particular the Cost Principles in sub-part E: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=pt45.1.75>).

### Procedure:

1. Call for proposals annually and more often as needed, with notification of award within 2 weeks of completed application.
2. Eligibility
  - a. An eligible project lead is any individual who is:
    - (1) currently enrolled in a U.S. medical school or a nurse practitioner or physician assistant program, or
    - (2) currently a resident in a U.S. **rural** physician residency program,<sup>5</sup> or

<sup>1</sup> Burk-Rafel J, Jones RL, Farlow JL Engaging learners to advance medical education. *Academic Medicine*, 2017;92(4):437-440.

<sup>2</sup> MacDonald NE, Bortolussi R, Kabakyenga J, Pemba S, Estambale B, Kollmann K, Odoie Aome R, Appleton, M. MicroResearch: Finding sustainable local health solutions in East Africa through small local research studies, *Journal of Epidemiology and Global Health* (2014);4:185–193

<sup>3</sup> Microresearch: Addressing Barriers to Improved Community Health in East Africa, <http://www.canwach.ca/microresearch-addressing-barriers-to-improved-community-health-in-east-africa/> (Accessed 2-16-2017)

<sup>4</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> Rural Family Medicine Café – Rural Research, a YouTube video describing MicroResearch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdP53qewijU> (Accessed 6-15-2017)

<sup>5</sup> Longenecker R. Rural medical education programs: a proposed nomenclature. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 2017;9(3):283-6.

(3) any other health professional trainee currently training in a U.S. **rural** location for primary care practice.

**Defining “rural”:** We consider a residency or other training program “**rural**” if it meets any two federal definitions (see the web-based tool “**Am I Rural?**”; note that “Census 2010, Percent Rural” does not count for this purpose). If a resident is part of an urban “**rurally focused**” residency, then the project must be anchored in a U.S. rural place and meet the criteria “other health professionals training for primary care practice in a rural location.” In other words, something in the proposal must clearly indicate that the learner is training for primary care practice in a rural community, e.g. a study of the rural rotations that a learner’s training peers are experiencing, or an exploration of the community’s perceptions of learners in a rural community.

b. Commitment to meeting the timeline and deliverables outlined below

3. Criteria for proposal review and award

a. Eligible applicant

b. A proposal that is relevant to **rural** primary healthcare or **rural** population health, or **rural** health workforce education and training in the U.S. Please ensure that the population of interest is located in the U.S. and meets the rural criteria under 2.a(3) above. Please consult with Rural PREP if you are not sure.

c. A faculty mentor – either assigned by Rural PREP from a cadre of trained mentors or approved as requested by the student

d. A budget of up to \$4,000 for allowable expenses, with justification (template provided). Funds may be requested for equipment, supplies, and other bona-fide project expenses. Registration for short training courses, travel for community engagement and data collection, and cash incentives for research subjects are allowed. Funding for faculty salary is not allowed. Funding for travel and meeting expenses to disseminate the findings is not allowed but may be applied for separately (see “Funding” above).

e. A project with a plan to expend all funds by June 20 of the academic year the award is made (an academic year runs from July through June), that can be completed within 1 year from notice of award, and that can realistically be disseminated within 2 years of notice of award.

4. Preference will be given to research that is:

a. Community engaged, including a commitment of in-kind contributions from the community

b. Collaborative across health professions or institutions

5. Timeline

a. Student submits a research proposal through Rural PREP’s online portal.

b. The proposal is reviewed and the student is notified of a decision to accept, revise and resubmit, or reject.

c. If revisions are requested, student must submit 1) a letter addressing reviewers’ comments; 2) a revised proposal with edits in track changes; and 3) if applicable, a revised budget.

d. Rural PREP, in communication with the student, assigns or accepts a research mentor.

e. The student and mentor complete pre-work and regularly participate in quarterly Rural PREP Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings devoted to research mentoring and development, project sharing, feedback, and problem-solving. At least one of the pair is required to participate in quarterly sessions for the duration of the project.

f. Students submit quarterly progress reports, with the mentor’s assistance, to Rural PREP.

g. Student project lead shall submit expenses with receipts as incurred for reimbursement monthly through June 20 of the academic year of award.

h. The research should be completed within 1 year or less and disseminated (presented at a conference and/or published) within 2 years of notice of award. Awardees are encouraged to later apply for \$500 for travel support (<https://ruralprep.org/research-scholarship/travel-support/>).

6. Requirements for receipt of funding:

Recipients will be reimbursed for expenses promptly within one month of submitting appropriate documentation. Reimbursement is contingent upon submitting quarterly progress reports and participation in quarterly Rural PREP Microresearch Learning Community tele-video meetings.

Reallocation of funds between budget categories greater than \$250, or expenses not included in the original budget, require prior approval from Rural PREP.

Each year, non-financial awards will be given for the best projects, as judged by a group of peer reviewers, and will be announced and potentially presented at The RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting.

A final reflection on what their experience has taught them and how we might improve our microresearch projects in the future will be required of all grant awardees.