Key Dates:
Virtual Research Consortium: June 1, 2022 (2:00 PM-4:00 PM EDT)
Deadline for Letter of Intent: June 15, 2022
Deadline for Application Submission: July 15, 2022
Earliest Anticipated Award Date: November 4, 2022

Overview and Goals:
Enacted through state legislation in 2016, the New Jersey Integrated Population Health Data (iPHD) Project is designed to enable and promote population health research that leads to improvements in the health, safety, security, and well-being of New Jersey residents as well as improvements in the cost-efficiency of state government programs in these areas. The overarching concept of the iPHD is that programmatic data are much more informative when they are linked across program areas (e.g., health, social services) than when they remain in isolation from one another. Under the direction of a ten-member Governing Board, the iPHD Project is in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Health. The Project is administered by Rutgers Center for State Health Policy.

Research Priorities:
The iPHD Governing Board adopted four (4) research priorities based on input from representatives from New Jersey’s research universities, state agencies, and other organizations for the purpose of advancing population health and the efficiency of government programs in New Jersey. The Governing Board will accept for review, and consider for approval, high-quality research applications that: (1) advance the purpose of the iPHD to improve public health, safety, security, and well-being of New Jersey residents and the overall cost-efficiency of government assistance programs, (2) address one or more of the research priorities described below, (3) use valid research methods, and (4) comply with the provisions of the applicable statutes.

Research Priority #1: Informing New Jersey’s integrated approach to addressing the opioid epidemic
Combating the opioid misuse epidemic is one of New Jersey’s highest policy priorities, involving multiple state programs and agencies. Analysis of integrated data within the iPHD can contribute to addressing the epidemic by illuminating patterns of opioid prescribing, examining other drivers of opioid misuse and overdoses, identifying potential policy solutions, and recommendations, and evaluating prevention and treatment program outcomes, including addressing disparities in care.

Research Priority #2: Improving maternal and infant health
Improving infant and maternal related outcomes and reducing rates of infant and maternal mortality and disparities are very high priorities for New Jersey. Analyses of health system, community, and other factors influencing infant and maternal outcomes can inform and support improved intervention strategies and public policy. Research projects that assess opportunities to improve infant and maternal outcomes by adapting best practices from other states or countries are encouraged.

Research Priority #3: Assuring access to physical and behavioral health services and addressing social determinants of health
New Jersey devotes extensive resources across multiple state programs, including Medicaid and charity care, to provide access to vital physical and behavioral health services (mental health and substance use disorders) for underserved populations across the lifespan. Coordination of services across sectors of the delivery system, especially medical and behavioral health as well as care at the end of life, are challenges that can be informed by analysis of services across programs. Further, deeper understanding of how social and physical environments impact health and of the relationships between health-related and other publicly supported services, such as housing assistance, criminal justice, and public transit, can inform more efficient and effective use of state supported healthcare services.

**Research Priority #4: Supporting New Jersey’s response to COVID-19 and other public health emergencies**

On March 9, 2020, Governor Phil Murphy declared a public health emergency in New Jersey as part of the state’s coordinated response to contain the spread of COVID-19. Data-driven insights are essential to better understand the impact of COVID-19, prevent future public health emergencies, and enable preparedness for early action should they occur. ipHD can support these efforts by facilitating analyses of linked data across a range of topics including, but not limited to, disparities and inequities across race, ethnicity and socio-economic status, access to and utilization of healthcare, and the impact of technologies on health outcomes.

For more information about the iPHD Project please visit [iphd.rutgers.edu](http://iphd.rutgers.edu).

**Eligibility:**

New Jersey academic and non-academic research institutions are eligible for data access and pilot funding, provided the institutions comply with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Human Subjects Protection guidelines for conduct of research with human subjects (i.e., has a Federalwide Assurance Number (FWA)). Students with appropriate faculty supervision are eligible to apply. Investigators from institutions outside of New Jersey are eligible for data access, and to participate in pilot funded projects as long as they serve under subcontract or other appropriate arrangement with the New Jersey institution receiving the award. Pilot funding will be provided only for projects with research aims that align with the approved purpose and research priorities of the iPHD ([visit the iPHD website for more information](http://iphd.rutgers.edu)). The iPHD project seeks a diverse pool of applicants; researchers from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

**Pilot Funding:** Limited funding will be available to support approximately four (4) pilot projects in Year 1 of the iPHD Project. Awards for each pilot project will total between $30,000- $40,000 for 12 months. Applicants for pilot funding must include at least one (1) principal investigator (PI) from a New Jersey research institution. Collaboration with a non-New Jersey institution will be considered ONLY if the project leadership and a substantial portion of the project activities and budget rest within the New Jersey institution. Primary recipient of pilot funding must be a New Jersey institution. Support for pilot funding and fee waivers are provided by the New Jersey Department of Health and are contingent on the continued availability of funds.

For non-pilot funding requests only, the Governing Board, in limited circumstances, may also approve projects that fall outside the approved research priorities provided they: (1) serve the purpose of the iPHD, (2) draw on the datasets assembled for the purpose of addressing the iPHD research priorities, and (3) are deemed by the Governing Board to be of high priority to New Jersey.
Letter of intent (LOI) guidelines:
LOIs are required and should include the following information:

1. Project title;
2. A brief description of the proposed research and specific aims (no more than three sentences);
3. iPHD research priorities addressed by proposed research;
4. Data set(s) requested for research; and
5. Name, title, institution and contact information of the proposed principal investigator (PI).

LOIs should generally be limited to one page and submitted in a PDF format. The LOI is not binding and is not considered in the application review process. LOIs should be submitted via email to iphd@ifh.rutgers.edu.

Full application guidelines:
The application should be saved as PDF files before uploading. If you are applying for funding, complete the budget template before uploading. All files must be uploaded to the iPHD website (iphd.rutgers.edu/application-process).

To submit an application, please complete all sections that are described below. All forms are available on the iPHD website (iphd.rutgers.edu/application-process). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Cover Page: On the cover page, include 1) project title; 2) length of the project (up to 12 months for pilot funded awards); 3) names, titles, and institutions of PI and all other co-investigators/collaborators/mentorship team; and 4) the PI’s contact information (phone number and email address).

Abstract: Provide an abstract description of the proposed research project in layman’s terms (250 words or less).

Research Proposal: The proposal should describe the research plan and should include the following:

1. Concise statement of proposed research aims;
2. Background and significance, including how the project is expected to address the purpose of the iPHD and applicable iPHD research priority(ies);
3. Research design and methods;
4. Funding source (federal/ non-federal)
5. Study limitations; and
6. Post research dissemination plans

The Research Proposal is limited to five (5) pages, including figures & tables, but excluding references. Appendix material will not be accepted. Proposals should be submitted using 11-point Arial font, 1.5 line spacing, and no less than 0.5” margins.

Curriculum Vitae (CV): Include the CV of the Principal Investigator (PI).

Data Request Form: Please complete the iPHD data request form.

Budget: If requesting pilot funding, budget request should be submitted on the budget template in Excel format. Total budgets may not exceed $40,000. Applicants should also submit a brief (no more than one
A budget justification explaining planned uses of funds in each budget category (personnel, supplies, etc.). Funds may be utilized for research expenses only. Project funds may not be used to purchase equipment or pay rent, or equivalent expenses. Facilities and Administration (F&A) indirect costs is not permitted for pilot projects.

**IRB approval**: IRB notice of approval will be required prior to funding or data release (but not required at the time of application). Indicate the governing IRB on the Data Request Form.

**Format**: All items must be saved as PDF files, except for the budget spreadsheet. Please number each page.

**Submission**: Applications should be submitted electronically via the iPHD website (iphd.rutgers.edu/application-process). Upon submission, you will be redirected to a “thank you” page acknowledging receipt. Please contact us (iphd@ifh.rutgers.edu) if you have any questions in the process.

**Proposal Review Criteria:**

Applications will be reviewed by the iPHD Research Advisory Committee (RAC), which will make recommendations to the iPHD Governing Board. The iPHD Governing Board will make the final award decisions. Rutgers University will be responsible for contracting with awardees and may impose additional contractual requirements. The RAC will evaluate the proposals based on the following review criteria:

**Significance**: Will the project advance the purpose of the iPHD and address one or more of the approved iPHD research priorities? Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in addressing one or more of the iPHD research priorities? Will successful completion of the project aims directly inform population health concerns and priorities in New Jersey or lead to important new knowledge that has potential to inform existing or future population health priorities, including projects that generate preliminary studies with a high likelihood of leading to larger term projects of significance? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

**Investigator(s)**: Are the PIs, collaborators, and other researchers well suited to the project? If Early Stage Investigators (as defined by NIH) or others in the early stages of independent careers, do they have appropriate experience and training and sufficient support from experienced investigators? If established, have they demonstrated an ongoing record of accomplishments that have advanced their field(s)? If the project is collaborative or multi-PD/PI, do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise; are their leadership approach, governance and organizational structure appropriate for the project?

**Approach**: Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? Does the approach include an effective strategy to solicit input from subject matter experts? If the project is in the early stages of development, will the strategy establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed?

**Environment**: Will the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Are the institutional support, equipment and other physical resources available to the
investigators adequate for the project proposed? Will the environment adequately ensure data security and privacy?

In addition to the above criteria for project approval and funding, the Governing Board will also consider the diversity and balance of proposals across the four (4) iPHD research priorities.

Following initial review, applicants may be asked to provide additional information, clarification, or to modify their proposed research approach. Such inquiries should not be taken as guarantees that an award will ultimately be made. Awards are contingent on availability of funds.

Applicant inquiries and Letters of Intent should be submitted via email to iphd@ifh.rutgers.edu. Completed applications should be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the iPHD website: iphd.rutgers.edu/application-process. We recommend that you submit your application early as we anticipate a high volume of applications.

Approval of Awards:
In accordance with NJSA: 52:14B-3(3), all applications will be deliberated upon by the Governing Board in public session and voted on by the Governing Board in public session with the exception of any legal advice from counsel, which will be discussed in executive/closed session. The applications and reviews will be subject to the provisions of the NJ Open Public Records Act.

Please note the NJ iPHD Governing Board reserves the right to reject, in whole or in part, any or all applications, to advertise for new applications, to abandon the need for such services, and to cancel this request for applications (RFA) if it is in the best interest of the iPHD, as determined by the Governing Board.

Applications may be rejected for any of the reasons listed:
• Application submitted in a manner other than specified in the RFA;
• Application received after the deadline;
• Applicant failed to include required information;
• Applicant provided misleading or inaccurate answers; and/or
• Applicant failed to respond to Board’s request for additional information.

Because there is no statutory or constitutional right to access the iPHD data, there is no right to a contested hearing if your request for data is denied. This is a final agency decision. You have the right to appeal this final agency decision within 45 days of receipt of denial letter to the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, P.O. Box 006, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0006.
Appendix: Project Requirements Checklist

Application Documents to Complete and Submit

- Complete all required documents in full by deadline
  - Letter of intent (submitted via email to iphd@ifh.rutgers.edu)
  - Cover page and abstract (250 words or fewer); save as a PDF
  - Research proposal (maximum 5 pages, 11-point Arial font, 1.5” spacing, and no less than 0.5” margins, excluding bibliography); save as a PDF
  - PI’s CV
  - Data request form; save as a PDF
  - Budget (if requesting pilot funding)
  - Budget justification (if requesting pilot funding); save as a PDF

- Zip and upload completed documents to the iPHD website (https://iphd.rutgers.edu/application-process)

Submitted materials will be reviewed by the iPHD Governing Board.

Documents to Be Completed After Approval by the iPHD Governing Board

Upon project approval, the following documents will be required prior to data transfer:
- Executed Data Use Agreement (DUA)
- Copies of all IRB documentation, including initial and continuing review approvals with FWA#
- Executed subcontract (if requesting pilot funding)

Proposal Review Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated by the iPHD Governing Board for the following criteria:
- Completeness of application information;
- Adequate qualifications of the researcher;
- Scientific merit and methodologic rigor as assessed by the iPHD Research Advisory Committee;
- Approval by the partner agency contributing the data sets;
- A research aim(s) consistent with the NJ iPHD legislation, i.e.,
  - To improve the public health, safety, security and well-being of NJ residents
  - To improve the cost efficiency of government assistance programs

Obligations of Authorized iPHD Data Users

Following approval by the Governing Board, all authorized data users must agree to the following:
- Compliance with security requirements;
- Compliance with all applicable conflict of interest rules;
- Compliance with state/federal/privacy laws;
- Approval by an IRB and data use in accordance with the IRB;
- Execution of, and adherence to, all applicable DUAs;
- Adherence to iPHD data policies; and
- Adherence to acceptable use restrictions
Reporting Requirements

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<th>Data Only Applications</th>
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<td>Quarterly invoice</td>
<td>Annual report</td>
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**Annual Report:** Authorized Data Users must submit an annual report to Rutgers Center for State Health Policy (CSHP) within 30 days following the end of each project year. CSHP will provide guidance on the content of the report, which will include, but may not be limited to:
- Certification by the project principal investigator that all uses of the data are in compliance with applicable data sharing and use agreements and IRB approvals;
- A brief summary of progress and findings to date;
- A bibliography of all reports, publications, and presentations under development and made using iPHD data; and
- Copies of all publications, reports, and presentations.

**Final Report:** Authorized Data Users must submit a final report to the CSHP within 60 days of the conclusion of the project. The iPHD Project will provide guidance on the content of the report, which will include, but may not be limited to:
- A brief summary of project findings;
- A bibliography of all reports, publications, and presentations under development and made using iPHD data; and
- Copies of all publications, reports, and presentations.