



Request for Applications:

Implementation Strategies to Increase Physical Activity among Adults with Osteoarthritis

Email of Intent due: May 6, 2016 at 11:59 pm ET

Applications due: May 31, 2016 at 11:59 pm ET

Background:

Osteoarthritis (OA), the most common form of arthritis, is a leading cause of disability and is an under-recognized public health crisis. Currently, more than 27 million adults of all ages, races, and ethnicities have OA. This large number of people with OA is increasing dramatically, due to two important OA risk factors: the aging of 78.2 million Baby Boomers and the obesity epidemic. Thus, it is critically important to reduce disability by preventing the progression of OA and related losses in physical function and overall wellbeing.

Physical activity is an important strategy for reducing the burden of OA. Physical activity is effective and safe, yet most adults with OA do not engage at recommended levels. Many do not understand or believe that an active life is within their reach, and others may feel that physical activity is not possible with painful joints and impaired function. To address this issue, the Osteoarthritis Action Alliance (OAAA), Arthritis Foundation (AF), and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Arthritis Program began an initiative in response to recommendations contained in *A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis (2010; <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/docs/oaagenda.pdf>)*. As a blueprint for action, the OA Agenda identifies physical activity as one of 4 recommended interventions for OA and encourages expanded delivery of evidence-based interventions in communities and workplace environments and among individuals with OA nationwide. The subsequent 2011 report, *Environmental and Policy Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Adults With Arthritis (http://oaaction.unc.edu/files/2014/10/OA_Physical_Activity_Rpt_508_v1_TAG508.pdf)*, focused on the benefits of physical activity and ways to make physical activity more convenient and accessible to people with arthritis. The strategies in this report were designed to be implemented by organizations that work in and influence six key sectors that have the potential to reach adults with arthritis: 1) community and public health; 2) health care professionals; 3) transportation, land use, and community design; 4) business and industry; 5) park, recreation, fitness and sport; and 6) mass media and communication (more detail below). To facilitate such implementation, the report was developed into an online toolkit, called the Physical Activity Implementation Guide (<http://oaaction.unc.edu/implementation-guide/>), which included population-based statistics about

arthritis prevalence and economic burden, implementation strategies, and examples of successful programs and resources tailored to each sector.

The six sectors of the Physical Activity Implementation Guide are defined as follows:

1. **COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH:** Includes national, state and local public health agencies; aging services; schools of public health; volunteer and non-profit organizations that work with communities and constituencies on arthritis and other issues of aging; faith-based institutions; and governmental and non-governmental organizations that could promote physical activity among their constituencies in a way that is safe and effective.
2. **HEALTH CARE:** Includes licensed health care professionals working with or serving adults in a variety of settings as providers; public and private insurers; and health care administrators and managers.
3. **TRANSPORTATION, LAND USE, AND COMMUNITY DESIGN:** Includes national, state, and local organizations, agencies, boards and governing bodies that address transportation, development patterns, built environment, public spaces, public works and community design and planning issues.
4. **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY:** Includes public and private employers, large and small, as well as worksite wellness programs, including those that provide access to fitness facilities and activities.
5. **PARK, RECREATION, FITNESS AND SPORT:** Includes public and private organizations invested in promoting, supporting and providing recreation and fitness opportunities for children and adults.
6. **MASS MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION:** Includes organizations that develop health communications or engage in public and private marketing of messages on the importance of physical activity for adults and available evidence-based interventions.

Purpose and Goal of Request for Application:

The OA Action Alliance is soliciting applications for **projects to implement and evaluate one or more** environmental and policy strategies in the Physical Activity Implementation Guide for adults with osteoarthritis in at least one of the six sectors defined above. The purpose of the program is to engage community organizations and to advance the objectives of the 2011 report through its online Physical Activity Implementation Guide. In order to achieve this, successful applicants will implement one or more strategies outlined in the Physical Activity Implementation Guide.

Projects should measure implementation outcomes (i.e., what worked and didn't work) and should not conduct effectiveness research or test a new intervention (i.e., not a clinical trial). OA Action Alliance funds will support the implementation of evidence-based physical activity programs but will not support the development of new physical activity programs. The approaches utilized by grantees to enhance physical activity will assist the OA Action Alliance in establishing exemplar methods for implementing priority strategies in the future. The expectation is that results from this work funded by the OA Action Alliance will serve as initial data to lead to future actions, such as the continuation and expansion of these programs in the community or as pilot data for larger grant applications to implement physical activity strategies for OA.

Funding:

The OA Action Alliance will fund up to four awards for no more than \$5,000, for a project period of up to one year. Funds may **not** be used for construction costs, equipment, food, lobbying activities, providing

clinical care, or reimbursing pre-award costs. Indirect costs are not allowed in this program. Expenditures must be spent within 12 months, and no extensions beyond the 12 months will be considered. OA Action Alliance staff will work closely with you during the grant period to monitor progress and provide guidance as necessary.

Eligibility Criteria:

OA Action Alliance funds will not be awarded to individuals; rather, funds will be made to employing entities, including community organizations, state/local/tribal health departments, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, professional organizations, colleges, universities, and private corporations—each of which will be represented by the signatory authority (name and title) for that entity (e.g., a Dean of a College within a university, a chief executive or financial officer, or a president). Entities may only apply for one award. Entities that are not based in the United States may be awarded grants as long as the primary service area for work performed under the grant is located in the United States.

Guidelines for Scope of Proposed Project:

- Timeframe to complete grant activities: up to 12 months
- The proposed project must include:
 - Selection of at least one priority strategy to implement and evaluate from the Physical Activity Implementation Guide (<http://oaaction.unc.edu/implementation-guide/>)
 - Collaboration with one or more additional community partners (in addition to the OA Action Alliance)

There is not a required format for the project because we recognize that project proposals may vary based on a number of factors (e.g., choice of implementation strategy, community partners, target group). If you are interested in viewing an example project, please refer to the Employee Wellness Policy from Partners in Care Foundation – San Fernando Site: <http://oaaction.unc.edu/implementation-guide/business-and-industry/>.

Email of Intent Content:

Prospective applicants are required to submit an email of intent to allow the OA Action Alliance staff to plan the review process and to avoid potential conflicts of interest in the review. This is not binding and is not a part of the review of the full application. Please include the following information in your brief email:

- Descriptive title of proposed project
- Name of the lead applicant(s) and organization
- Chosen sector(s) among the six sectors targeted in the Physical Activity Implementation Guide (described above in Background and at <http://oaaction.unc.edu/implementation-guide/>)

Application Content:

Applicants MUST identify in the application how their proposed project fits within the chosen sector(s) and/or how it addresses a stated need or objective for the sector(s) in the Physical Activity Implementation Guide. The project plan must be no more than 5 pages, including tables and figures. Font must be no smaller than Arial 11, with 1.5 line spacing and 1-inch margins. The page count does not include cover letter, staff bios, budget justification, work samples, letters of support, or references/bibliography.

- Cover letter
- Staff bios
- Background and need (250 word maximum)

- Project Plan: must include work plan and objectives, timeline, evaluation plan / follow-up measures, and a statement of future plans after the completion of this project
- Budget
- Budget justification (provide rationale with realistic estimates of costs)
- Work samples (examples of brochures, programs, ads, etc., that your organization has developed or implemented previously to demonstrate your ability to carry out the proposed project)
- Letters of support (if applicable)
- References/bibliography

Review Process:

All proposals funded through the OA Action Alliance will undergo a peer review process in which proposals are ranked according to merit. An online review mechanism is used to assign an initial priority score. Each application will be evaluated and scored by at least three experts in the field. Each application will be evaluated on the following **Evaluation Criteria**, of which some reflect the RE-AIM framework (www.re-aim.org; Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance):

- Reach: relevance of the proposed project to increasing physical activity among adults with arthritis
- Effectiveness: quality of evidence base for intervention; engagement of key stakeholders and strength of partnerships, including OA Action Alliance; description of measureable implementation outcomes
- Adoption: ability of the team to carry out the proposed project; experience and expertise of employees assigned to project; quality of work as demonstrated through submitted work samples; addresses potential barriers to adoption
- Implementation: program can be consistently delivered as intended by staff representing a variety of positions, levels, and expertise/experience of the organization; flexibility of program; tracking of program
- Maintenance: sustainability of project; development of enduring products
- Feasibility of completing stated project goals during the proposed timeline
- Ability to leverage existing resources/funds

Reporting Requirements:

The OA Action Alliance requires a short progress report (1-2 pages) at the mid-point of the project period (e.g., 6 months for 12-month project). It should include an accounting of funds expenditures and progress toward accomplishment of project aims. A final report is due no later than 60 days after the end of the funding period, including an accounting of funds expenditures and achievement of project aims. There is no specific format required for mid-point progress or final reports.

Timeline:

- Request for Application released: April 1, 2016
- Letter of Intent due: May 6, 2016 at 11:59 PM ET
- Application due: May 31, 2016 at 11:59 PM ET
- Notification of awards: July 15, 2016
- Project start date: September 1, 2016

Sources of Funding:

The OAAA 2016 Small Grants Program is funded through contributions from:

Alliance for Aging Research
American College of Rheumatology

*American Council on Exercise
American Medical Society for Sports Medicine
Arthritis Foundation
Thurston Arthritis Research Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

OA Action Alliance Contacts and Additional Resources:

Questions about this application should be directed to Grant Program Manager, Yvonne Golightly (golight@email.unc.edu). The email of intent, full proposal and progress reports should be submitted electronically to Program Manager Kirsten Ambrose (kirsten_ambrose@med.unc.edu).

Osteoarthritis Action Alliance: <http://oaaction.unc.edu>

Physical Activity Implementation Guide: <http://oaaction.unc.edu/implementation-guide/>

For resources and tools to help guide evaluate implementation:
<http://portals.tracs.unc.edu/index.php/d-iportal/d-i-portal>

A National Public Health Agenda for Osteoarthritis: <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/docs/oaagenda.pdf>

Environmental and Policy Strategies to Increase Physical Activity Among Adults With Arthritis:
http://oaaction.unc.edu/files/2014/10/OA_Physical_Activity_Rpt_508_v1_TAG508.pdf