2026 Moritz Center for Societal Impact (MCSI)
Projects for Societal Impact (PSIs)
Request for Proposals

Up to $50,000 per project

Submission Deadline: January 31, 2026 11:59PM

Submission Portal:

Mission of The Moritz Center for Societal Impact
To improve health and well-being by conducting interdisciplinary research, investing in community-engaged projects, and implementing innovative programming with local organizations.

With a central focus on how social determinants of health impact people's quality of life, the Moritz Center's work is grounded in the assumption that solutions to societal problems come through research with intersecting focus areas.

Founded in 2022, MCSI provides grants through its Projects for Societal Impact (PSIs) Program, to help pilot or test promising research related to intersecting focus areas of housing, behavioral health, and health, social work and technology. The Center is also interested in research that addresses ethics, digital health and artificial intelligence applications, global health and health and social support that integrate the arts and humanities.

Projects for Societal Impact
MCSI is seeking to fund UT Austin PI-eligible researchers from any college, school, or unit (CSU) to conduct research focused on one or more of the areas listed above. Projects are strongly encouraged to submit proposals that focus on the intersection of at least two focus areas and that include collaboration with community partners, including government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or for-profit businesses helping address societal challenges. The goal of the PSI funding is to allow researchers to conduct original research, apply previous research findings in real-world settings, or focus on replicating, testing, or implementing innovative ideas that community partners can adopt.

Applicants are required to include students and community partners on their research teams. Funding can support student and/or financial support for community partners. Academic credit and tuition support may be used for students involved in projects.

Proposal Description

The following information is requested in the MCSI PSI proposal application for completion in Qualtrics.

1. Description of the proposed research project in narrative form (a-g below)
   a. Purpose, specific aims, project focus area(s), significance of the project and how it addresses the mission and focus areas of MCSI. (1-2 pages)
   b. Project plan and methods, data collection and analysis, collaborative activities and working arrangements with students and community partners, expected results, and publication plan. (1-2 pages)
   c. Relevance and anticipated impact. Describe how impact will be monitored or measured. (1 page)
   d. Timeline using a Gantt chart. (1 page)
   e. Budget in table form. (1 page)
   f. Interdisciplinary collaborative activities of the proposed study, if applicable. (1-2 paragraphs)
   g. Describe how this funding will support ongoing research in the project's focus areas, e.g., pilot data collection for larger research grant. (1 paragraph)
2. CVs/resumes of students or community partner team members.
3. Reference list of sources cited in the proposal.
4. Biographical sketch for researchers. (1-5 pages each)

Funding

Four applications will be awarded grants in amounts up to $50,000 in April 2026 for implementation in May through March 2027.

Eligibility

UT-Austin PI-eligible researchers, including all faculty and research staff, are eligible to apply. Inclusion of community partners and UT-Austin students in the project is strongly encouraged.

Review Criteria

PSI applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of UT faculty and researchers selected for their expertise in MCSI focus areas. Applications will be reviewed based on:
1. purpose of the project, including its pertinence to the mission of MCSI to alleviate critical societal problems,
2. project design and details about the plan of work,
3. anticipated outcomes of the project,
4. expected impact of the project,
5. addresses more than one focus area and
6. an interdisciplinary team that includes community partner(s) and student(s).

Budget
- Budgets should be itemized, and all items listed must total no more than $50,000. Any changes over 25% of a budget category will need to seek MCSI approval.

Allowable Costs
- Tuition for UT students.
- Salary effort for UT researchers.
- Fringe costs.
- Financial support for community partners, where needed for project completion.
- Travel to research site(s) for the members of the team, including researchers and students.
- Purchase of required software, supplies and/or materials for proposed project.
- Consulting fees or honoraria for external collaborators who directly contribute to achieving the project's objectives.

Unallowable Costs
- Any expenses related to manuscript preparation or book publication.
- Entertainment expenses (e.g., refreshments etc.) unless specifically required for a proposed project.
- Expenses before the award issue date.

Award

Disbursement of Awarded Funds
PSI award notifications are planned for mid-March 2026, with effective date April 1, 2026. If applicable and an award is made, applicable IRB study approval for human subjects should be shared with Erin Swearingen, MCSI PSI program coordinator, at erin.schumacher@austin.utexas.edu. PSI funding should be used by March 2027. Carryovers and extensions may be possible.

Administration of Awarded Funds
- Any changes to the funded budget included in your proposal must be requested in advance if they are over 25% for any one budget category (e.g., salary support). Please submit requests to modify with specific dollar amounts and justification via email to erin.schumacher@austin.utexas.edu.
- PSIs are not cash awards. Funds are made available through an internal UT account established by MCSI.
- Reimbursement for items purchased with personal funds is not permitted from PSI funds, except travel expenses. Travel expenses paid from PSI funds are subject to UT travel policies and guidelines.

- Employment of research assistants, technicians, and other support staff must follow established University regulations.
- Production of fiscal documents (purchase orders, requisitions, travel vouchers, personnel appointment forms, vouchers, etc.) and accounting for the grant is the responsibility of the award recipient and their departmental accounting contact.

Deliverables
- Grantees will submit progress reports in October 2026 to share progress to date and plans for completion of projects by March 2027. Final reports will be submitted by March 31, 2027.

PSI Grant Program Contact
Erin Schumacher, PSI Program Coordinator, Moritz Center for Societal Impact: erin.schumacher@austin.utexas.edu.