

## **Transdisciplinary Cluster Hiring Initiative: Healthy People and Populations**

### **What is the Transdisciplinary Cluster Hiring Initiative and Why This Approach?**

UWM is recognized by the **Carnegie Foundation** as both a **Research 1** and **Community Engaged** university. Our mission as an urban research university aligns with this dual designation and is key to our shared, aspirational purposes reflected in our 2030 Strategic Plan to advance student success, the employee experience, research impact and innovation, as well as fiscal sustainability and economic growth. This **Transdisciplinary Cluster Hiring Initiative** **aims to** bring together knowledge from different fields and includes collaboration with community organizations and other non-academic partners to address societal problems. Additionally, this approach will help support a cluster hire of strong researchers and scholars who have demonstrated success with external funding supporting their research who can quickly bolster and advance the work that is already being done in this area.

The **Healthy People and Populations** theme was identified as one of the five priorities and strengths in the **2024 Research Task Force** report, which highlighted UWM's work in this area for "*enhancing quality of life by improving physical and mental health interventions, disease prevention strategies, and public health policies.*" This research focus aligns with UWM's mission and 2030 Strategic Plan priorities to serve the needs of Milwaukee and Wisconsin. By investing in this area, we will strengthen our ability to address complex health and well-being challenges locally and globally, while expanding research capacity and increasing community impact.

Colleges are invited to submit collaborative proposals for the Healthy People and Populations research initiative, established by the UWM Office of the Provost. This initiative seeks to recruit strong, externally funded, and research active faculty who will collaborate across disciplines to address complex health and well-being challenges. Its goal is to enhance UWM's research efforts and strengthen community engagement. **The initiative will provide supplementary funding to support hiring in this area, focusing on building faculty clusters that will address real-world challenges in Milwaukee and expand UWM's research capacity** through cross-disciplinary expertise and transdisciplinary approaches.

### **Program Elements**

- **Funding.** The program provides up to \$200,000 in total per faculty hire, which includes \$50,000 per year for three years to supplement the salary of new faculty hires. In addition, start-up fund supplements of up to \$50,000 per hire will also be provided, which can be used for research assistants, equipment, or other resources to establish the new hire's research program. A total of up to four new hires are expected to be funded through this initiative.
- **Eligibility.** Recruitment will focus on hiring tenured associate or full professors with a strong research record and a history of securing external research funding. However, assistant professors whom the appropriate committees believe would be able to join UWM as a tenured associate professor may also be considered. Faculty will be hired through a national search. Participating units must agree to one posting for the cluster hire that will include the following:

**Minimum Qualifications:**

- A strong record of research and scholarship, teaching, and service accomplishments comparable to those of a tenured associate professor.
- A proven record of securing external research funding, preferably federal, in the area of the proposal that directly aligns to advancing healthy people and populations, particularly issues in urban populations.
- Demonstrated experience and track record in fostering inclusive environments and supporting the success of students, particularly those who have been historically underrepresented in the academy (e.g. first-generation students, Pell-eligible students)

**Preferred Qualifications:**

- Evidence of the ability to collaborate across disciplines.
  - Demonstrated experience with community engagement research collaborations and partnerships with local organizations.
  - Commitment to addressing critical gaps. Candidates should demonstrate how their work addresses underrepresented areas within their field or research that focuses on critical health or well-being challenges affecting marginalized populations.
  - Demonstrated critical consciousness and understanding of systemic issues impacting urban populations, including challenges and opportunities and demonstrated experience supporting and/or advancing community engaged research including the use of emancipatory approaches in advancing their community engaged research efforts.
- **Collaboration.** Proposals must involve collaboration between at least two colleges across at least three different departments/schools to promote interdisciplinary research focused on health and well-being.
  - **Community Engagement.** The initiative requires mutually beneficial partnerships with at least two community organizations to ensure that research addresses the specific needs of Milwaukee. Proposals should include a plan for engaging community partners and sustaining these collaborations over time to ensure long-term impact. Community partners may include nonprofit organizations, government agencies, or businesses with a focus on community development and public well-being.
  - **Onboarding and Transition Support.** Proposals must outline a plan to ensure a smooth onboarding process and support new hires' transition to UWM and the Milwaukee community.
  - **Recruitment Plan.** Colleges are expected to present a comprehensive recruitment strategy that ensures the quality and competitiveness of the candidate pool, clearly detailing how they will attract highly qualified candidates. The strategy should also include specific efforts to recruit faculty whose personal and professional experiences reflect the backgrounds and needs of the student population we serve, including those from historically underrepresented groups.

**Colleges interested in participating in the cluster hire initiative** should submit the following to Office of the Provost ([provost-office@uwm.edu](mailto:provost-office@uwm.edu)) by November 22, 2024:

- **Specific Aims (1 page):** Summarize the proposed cluster's scholarly focus, its alignment with UWM's research priorities, and the expected impact on UWM and Milwaukee. Please follow NIH's current guidelines for Specific Aims.

- Alignment with Review Criteria (2 pages): Include impact on UWM's research mission and collaborations, and external funding potential.
- List of sponsoring colleges and departments/schools
- List of sponsoring community partners
- List of any existing UWM faculty and their expertise related to the proposed area

**Review Process.** Proposals for new faculty hires will be reviewed by a committee based on the criteria outlined below. Individuals from the units submitting proposals are not eligible to serve on the review committee. The committee will then make recommendations to the Provost, who will make the final selection.

**Review criteria:**

- Alignment with the Healthy People and Populations Theme. Proposals should show how the hires will support interdisciplinary research on health and well-being.
- Collaboration. Proposals should create clear and sustainable collaborations across UWM and with community partners.
- Impact on UWM's Mission. Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate strong potential for securing and sustaining external research funding, support UWM's research goals, enhance community engagement, and increase the university's visibility. Proposals should also outline how the hires will contribute to enhancing UWM's academic environment through diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Impact on Milwaukee. Proposals should address how the hires will contribute to addressing health and well-being challenges in Milwaukee and enhance the university's role in serving the community, with particular attention to underserved populations.
- Commitment to Representation. Proposals must explain how the hires will contribute to increasing representation within UWM's faculty, improving diversity of thought, and supporting an inclusive research and teaching environment.
- Quality of the Recruitment and Onboarding Plans: Proposals will be evaluated on the strength of their recruitment plan, focusing on attracting a highly qualified and competitive candidate pool that reflects the backgrounds of UWM's student population, including those from underrepresented groups. Additionally, the onboarding plan should ensure a smooth transition, supporting new hires holistically.