

Webinar for Potential Applicants to the RFA 24-3 WALTER A. ROSENBLITH NEW INVESTIGATOR AWARD

Health Effects Institute

December 12, 2024

The meeting will begin shortly.

A few logistics before we start:

- You can turn on **closed captioning** for the event at the bottom of your screen to the *right* of the Q&A button
- Please put questions about the RFA or application process in the **Q&A** box
- The recording is for internal purposes only
- After the webinar, HEI will post the webinar slides and all questions and answers to the HEI website



Today's Agenda

- Introduction to HEI
- Overview of the RFA and Expectations for Research Proposals
- Question and Answer Session

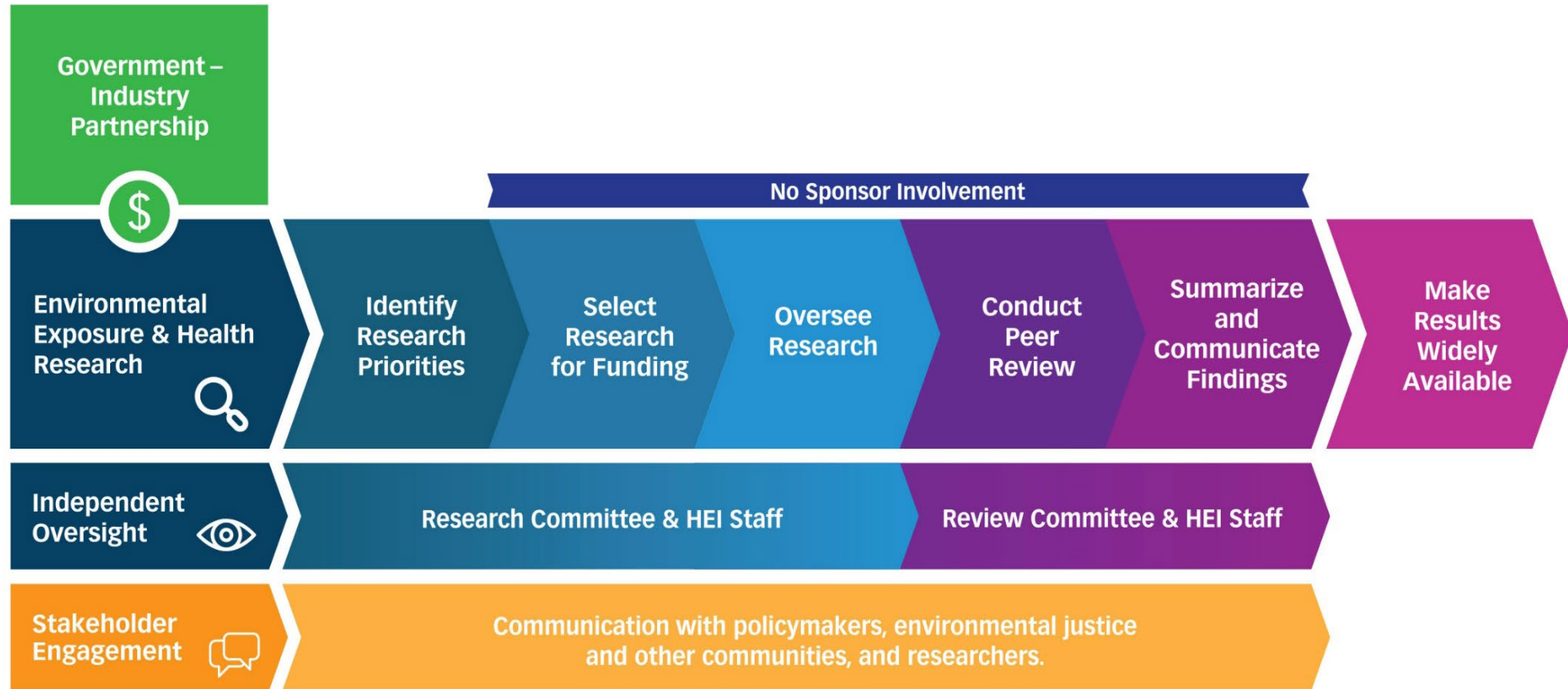
Introduction to HEI

The Health Effects Institute

- An independent, nonprofit corporation chartered to produce *policy-relevant, high-quality, and impartial science*.
- Funded jointly by government and the worldwide motor vehicle industry and, occasionally, private foundations.
- Funds research that is selected, conducted, overseen, and reviewed independently of HEI's sponsors.
- Does not take policy positions.

How HEI Works

to Provide Impartial Science for Decision Making and Public Understanding



HEI's Research Committee works with staff on:

- Strategic planning
- Defining research needs in Requests for Applications (RFAs)
- Selecting and overseeing funded studies



Alexandra M. Schmidt

Professor of Biostatistics, School of Population and Global Health, McGill University



Neil Pearce

Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine



David A. Savitz, Chair

Professor of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Pediatrics, Alpert Medical School, Brown University



Christina H. Fuller

Associate Professor, School of Environmental, Civil, Agricultural and Mechanical Engineering, University of Georgia College of Engineering



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Associate Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Utah



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Professor of Epidemiology and Medical Statistics, Department of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Medical Statistics, School of Medicine, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece



David C. Dorman

Professor, Department of Molecular Biomedical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine, North Carolina State University



Marianne Hatzopoulou

Professor, Civil and Mineral Engineering, University of Toronto; Canada Research Chair in Transport Decarbonization and Air Quality



Neeta Thakur

Associate Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco



Gregory Wellenius

Professor, Department of Environmental Health, Boston University School of Public Health and Director, BUSPH Center for Climate and Health



Benjamin Barratt

Professor, Environmental Research Group, School of Public Health, Imperial College London

Walter A Rosenblith

The award is named for Professor Walter A. Rosenblith (1913-2002), who served as the first Chair of HEI's Research Committee (from 1980 to 1989) and as a member of the HEI Board of Directors from 1990 to 1996.

The purpose of this award is to bring new, creative investigators into active research on the health effects of air pollution.



Eligibility requirements

Scientists of any nationality residing anywhere in the world and holding a PhD, ScD, MD, DVM, DrPH, are eligible to apply.

By the date that preliminary applications are due (January 24, 2025) you must be appointed at the Assistant Professor (USA), University Lecturer (UK), or equivalent level at an academic or research institution.

You cannot have held such a position for more than five years (60 months) by that date.

Eligibility requirements

- Applicants must hold a permanent position at an academic or research institution.
- The position must include responsibilities similar to an Assistant Professor.
- Tenure-track is not necessary, but it helps convince HEI that you are a promising researcher who is supported by your institution.
- The position can be a research position and does not have to include teaching responsibilities.

Two-stage process

1. Preliminary applications

- Research Committee reviews proposals and invites some applicants to submit a full application.

2. Invited full applications

- Reviewed by external reviewers and the Research Committee. The Committee recommends studies for funding.
- HEI Board of Directors makes final funding decision.

Priorities for funding

1. Promising applicant

2. Innovative study

- likely to generate important, useful, and interesting results
- achievable within the time and budgetary constraints

Evaluation criteria:

The Applicant

- **Experience, competence, and diversity of the research team**, including principal investigator, mentors, scientific staff, or consultants.
 - Note: All HEI studies require that a biostatistician be involved during study design and analyses.
 - Applicant's qualifications and research potential.
 - Consistency of the research plan with the applicant's career goals.
- **Evidence of strong institutional support**, for example:
 - Start up package for equipment, lab space.
 - Protected research time with lower teaching requirements.
- **Adequacy and appropriateness of the mentoring plan.**

Evaluation criteria: *The Proposed Study*

Topics of interest include (see HEI Strategic Plan):

- evaluating the effectiveness of air quality actions
- air pollution mixtures
- transportation and urban health
- air quality and the changing climate
- reducing environmental inequities
- air toxics

A draft of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 is available at www.healtheffects.org/sites/default/files/hei-draft-strategic-plan-2025-2030.pdf; please note that this is a draft and is likely to change.

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Evaluation criteria:

The Proposed Study

- **Scientific merit** with respect to study design, data collection and analysis methods, modeling approaches, data evaluation, and overall quality assurance.
- **Adequacy of facilities**, including (1) access to study sites, instrumentation, and relevant data sets; and (2) adequacy and validity of facilities to implement the proposed research.
- **Reasonableness of the proposed budget.**
- **Well-developed plan for research translation** to inform decision-making.

Budget

Each study is a maximum of three years in length.

Maximum of \$600,000 (total budget) per study.

Indirect costs are capped at 30% (cannot be waived). Can be used for personnel, equipment, supplies as needed.

Funds can be used to pay salary for the PI and to hire staff (students, postdocs, technicians). No support for senior faculty or mentors (a biostatistician can be on the budget as a consultant for a set number of hours).

Applicant should be leading the project and spend a minimum of 25% of their time on this research.

Includes preparation of the final report.

Recent winners

Rachel Nethery, Harvard University. Designing optimal policies for reducing air pollution-related health inequities.

Yoshira Ornelas Van Horne, Columbia University. What's in the air? Engaging Native American youth in the Northern plains to reduce air pollution.

Lucas Henneman, George Mason University. Air pollution source impacts at fine scales for long-term regulatory accountability and environmental justice.

Heresh Amini, University of Copenhagen. COUPH: Copenhagen Ultrafine Particles and Health.

Joseph Antonelli, University of Florida. Robust statistical approaches to understanding the causal effect of air pollution mixtures.

Raphael Arku, University of Massachusetts–Amherst. Urban air pollution in sub-Saharan Africa: A study of prenatal exposures, birth outcomes, and lower-respiratory infections in infants.

Investigator Commitments

- HEI issues cost-reimbursement contracts (not grants).
- Requirements for Quality Assurance / Quality Control and data sharing.
- Biannual progress reports; informational site visit or webinar to ensure quality of work.
- Present a poster at HEI's Annual Conference.
- Changes to proposed work or budget require Research Committee approval to ensure the study stays true to its original goals and the RFA.
- Prepare a Final Report.

PLEASE REVIEW HEI'S PROCESS BEFORE APPLYING:
<https://www.healtheffects.org/research/investigators/commitments>

Important Dates

January 24, 2025: Preliminary applications due

February 2025: HEI Research Committee reviews preliminary applications

June 6, 2025: Invited full applications due

July 2025: HEI Research Committee reviews full applications

Fall 2025: IRB approval and contract negotiations

Early 2026: Study initiation

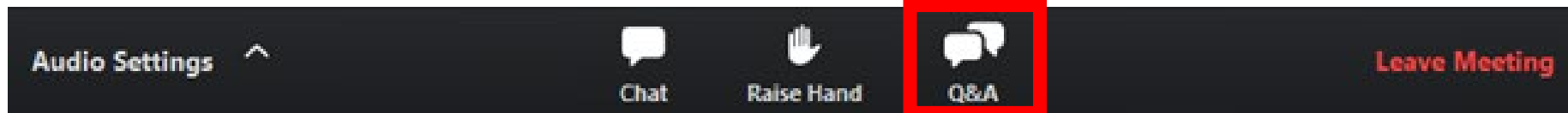
Save the date!

HEI Annual Conference: Austin, Texas, May 4 – May 6, 2025



Question & Answer Period

Please type your questions about the RFA and application process via the Q&A function.



If you have additional questions, please contact Dan Crouse: dcrouse@healtheffects.org

For general questions related to the HEI application process, please visit: <https://www.healtheffects.org/faqs>