

Native Collective Research Effort to Enhance Wellness (N CREW) Program: Addressing Overdose, Substance Use, Mental Health, and Pain

Native Research Resource Partners

- 1 [Review the opportunity.](#)
- 2 [Get ready to apply.](#)
- 3 [Prepare your application.](#)
- 4 [Learn about objective review.](#)
- 5 [Post-submission procedures.](#)

Note: Simplified Research Opportunity Announcement (ROA) Format

In alignment with HHS efforts to simplify and streamline research announcements, this ROA uses a slide format. The simpler ROA format is intended to:

- Use plain, simple language
- Remove unnecessary information
- Make critical information easier to find
- Improve navigation
- Reduce the average time to apply

1. Review the Opportunity

Native Research Resource Partners (NRRPs)

Phase II OTA-26-002

The Native Collective Research Effort to Enhance Wellness (N CREW) Program is part of the NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-term® (HEAL) Initiative, established to aggressively speed scientific solutions to the opioid public health emergency. Research led by Native communities is essential for enhancing culturally grounded, strengths-based, effective, and sustainable intervention strategies. Thus, N CREW aims to improve wellness for Native Americans by supporting community-driven research focused on reducing opioid/drug overdose through the study of substance use, pain, and related factors such as mental health. Using NIH's Other Transactions Authority (OTA), N CREW supports innovative, flexible approaches that respond to the urgent, complex, and evolving needs, strengths, and priorities of research led by Tribes and Native Serving Organizations (T/NSOs).

This ROA (OTA-26-002) invites applications from T/NSOs and Ally Organizations to serve as Native Research Resource Partner (NRRP) sites that provide support to the N CREW Program; **applicants are encouraged to also review companion ROA (OTA-26-001) which will fund T/NSO led research projects.**

Navigate to ROA Sections:

- Deadlines and Contact Information (5)
- Key Definitions (6-7)
- Other Transactions Award Definition (8)
- HEAL and N CREW Program Goals (9)
- NRRP General Description (10)
- Key Functions of the NRRP (11-13)
- NRRP Critical Areas of Expertise (14)
- Required Activities & Deliverables (15-16)
- Eligibility (17)
- Get Ready To Apply (18)
- Application Components (19-26)
- Objective Review (27-31)
- Post Submission Procedures (32-33)

1. Review the Opportunity

Native Research Resource Partners (NRRP)

Phase II OTA-26-002

Eligible Applicants	See the Eligibility section of this opportunity for further details
Type	Other Transactions (OT2) Award, governed by 42 U.S. Code § 282 (n)(1)(b) - see link for definitions
N Crew Overall Program Expected Funding (T/NSO and NRRP)	<p>Up to \$217 million over five years for the entire N CREW program, but total program funds are subject to change.</p> <p>HEAL funding is designated specifically to support substance use and pain research, with separate allocations for each area. The funds expended will depend on NIH appropriations and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications in each research area. In FY27, for the N CREW OVERALL Program costs (T/NSO, NRRP and any other activities), NIDA intends to commit up to \$18.4M in total costs for substance use research and capacity building, and NINDS intends to commit up to \$18.4M for pain-related research and capacity building. If fewer competitive applications are received in either research area, these planned commitments may be adjusted. Funding in future years will depend on annual appropriations.</p>
Expected NRRP Awards	NIH intends to fund approximately 5 awards for this ROA to support NRRPs
Budget	No budget limit, recommended annual range: \$400,000 – \$2.5 million per year in direct costs. All costs must be well justified in accordance with the activity proposed.
Application Due Date	7/31/2026
Earliest Start Date	3/1/2027
Performance Period	Up to 5 years
Related Notices	OTA-26-001
Participating Organization	National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Components of Participating Organization	National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)

1. Review the Opportunity: Deadlines and Contact Information

KEY DATES	
Post Date	March 2, 2026
Informational Webinars Dates (optional)	There will be informational webinar(s). Webinar details, including the specific dates and registration links, will be posted online at: https://www.nih.gov/heal/research/ncrew
Application Due Date	July 31, 2026, at 5:00pm in the applicant's local time zone
Anticipated Review	August, 2026
Anticipated Earliest Start Date	March 1, 2027

AGENCY CONTACTS	
Scientific/Research Contact	Kathy Etz NCREW@nih.gov National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)
Financial/Agreements Officer Contact	Jennifer Cho NCREW@nih.gov National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS)

1. Review the Opportunity: Key Definitions

- **Ally Organization:** Organizations with the ability to document a track record of partnering successfully with Native American communities.
- **Milestones:** Objective, measurable events that indicate progress towards proposed specific aims.
- **Native Americans:** For the purposes of this ROA, Native Americans are defined as people who are members of Indigenous Tribes and communities, irrespective of where they live or reside, that have been recognized as having a special political and trust relationship with the United States, including those Tribes, bands or groups terminated since 1940 and those recognized now or in the future by the State in which they reside. This includes members or up to second generation descendants of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes (U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8, Clause 3; Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, 30 U.S. 1 (1831); Worcester v. Georgia, 31 U.S. 515 (1832); 25 U.S.C. § 5301(a)), and state recognized tribes and Urban Indians as described in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (Public Law 94-437, 25 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq., as amended by Public Law 117-58, November 21, 2021)). Also included for purposes of this ROA are Native Hawaiian communities as described in the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. § 11701 et seq.).
- **N CREW Network:** This refers collectively to Tribes and Native-Serving Organizations (T/NSOs), the Native Research Resource Partners (NRRPs), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), who collaborate to advance Native community-led research.

1. Review the Opportunity: Key Definitions continued

- **Other Transactions Authority (OTA):** A unique type of authority that allows an agency to enter a legal agreement (OT Agreement) with a recipient organization that is not a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement. Policies and terms for individual OT awards may vary between awards. Each award is therefore issued with a specific governing agreement, negotiated with the recipient and may be expanded, modified, partnered, not supported, or later discontinued based on program needs, changing landscape, performance, and/or availability of funds. [Learn more about OTA.](#)
- **Principal Investigator(s):** The lead individual responsible for the scientific, technical, and budgetary aspects of an NIH funded project. The PI is responsible for overall conduct, reporting, compliance and scientific integrity of the research.
- **Research Opportunity Announcement (ROA):** Used to solicit applications for programs using Other Transactions Authority.
- **Tribe or Native Serving Organization (T/NSO):** This refers to federally or state recognized Tribes or organizations with a core mission to serve Native Americans and a track record in meeting this mission.

1. Review the Opportunity: Other Transactions (OT2) Award Mechanism

This funding opportunity uses the Other Transactions Authority (OTA), governed by 42 U.S. Code § 282(n)(1)(b). Each OT award has its own negotiated agreement and may be expanded, modified, partnered, or discontinued based on program needs, performance, and/or availability of funds.

Because T/NSO research is community-driven, involves needs that may emerge over time, varies widely in capacity and goals, and requires coordination across NRRP sites, an agile and flexible mechanism is needed to ensure NRRPs can respond effectively to growing T/NSO and NRRP needs, including:

- Real-time responsiveness to support the distinct needs, resources, and research pathways of different T/NSOs
- Tailored ongoing engagement to community-driven research priorities
- Tailored milestones and activities as work evolves, including the ability to renegotiate activities and expectations over time
- Accommodation of Tribal governance and decision-making processes for the design and conduct of research

By using OT authority to support the NRRP, N CREW aims to leverage the flexibility needed to promote community-led research that is responsive to community needs in real-time.

1. Review the Opportunity: HEAL and N CREW Program Goals

NIH's HEAL[®] Initiative Goals

N CREW is part of the NIH HEAL Initiative[®], which is an effort to speed scientific solutions to stem opioid misuse, addiction, and overdose by bolstering research to improve:

- Prevention and treatment for opioid misuse and addiction
- Management, treatment, and understanding of pain

More information about the NIH HEAL Initiative[®] is available at: <https://www.nih.gov/heal>.

N CREW Program Goals

The Program Goals were developed based on Tribal Consultations ([2018](#) and [2022](#)) and Native community input:

- Enhance capacity to conduct locally prioritized HEAL related research.
- Support T/NSOs to lead community prioritized research projects, including those elevating and integrating Indigenous Knowledge and culture.
- Improve access to and the quality of data on substance use, pain, and related health and wellbeing factors to maximize their potential for use in research and to improve health outcomes.

A fourth goal was added in response to community input and working with sites in Phase I:

- Foster a collaborative network that advances Native community-led research and use of data by supporting the development of relationships and the provision and sharing of knowledge, tools, and resources

I. Review the Opportunity: Native Research Resource Partners General Description

This ROA invites applications from [T/NSOs](#) and/or [Ally Organizations](#) to collaborate as agile, strong **Native Research Resource Partners (NRRP)**, comprised of multiple organizations, to provide comprehensive support in culturally responsive ways to T/NSOs as they lead community-prioritized research projects and to also support the overall N CREW Program. See slides 11-13 on Key Functions for more details on anticipated NRRP activities.

Due to the significant variability across T/NSOs in existing research capacity and research aims, **no single organization is likely to meet the needs of all T/NSOs**. Thus, NIH anticipates multiple NRRP awards will be required. NRRPs should have the agility and expertise to successfully meet existing and burgeoning T/NSO needs and support the N CREW Network.

Applicants can apply to conduct activities in **one or more key NRRP functions or propose other functions** they deem important to support T/NSOs to conduct HEAL research and meet N CREW Program goals.

Submitted applications will serve as examples through which applications can be evaluated, but final activities to be performed will be determined by the needs identified in the T/NSO research applications (via ROA OT-26-001), other NRRP applications, and in real-time over the life of the N CREW Program, in collaboration with NIH.

If awarded, NRRP sites could be required to work collaboratively and integrate workplans. These plans may vary from what was proposed in applications.

1. Review the Opportunity: NRRP Key Functions

Applicants may propose activities across any number of Key Functions and/or other functions to support N CREW Program goals. Applicants do not need to propose to cover all functions. However, because all Key Functions are essential, NIH will ensure all key functions are supported through the final combined NRRP awards. All functions should center T/NSOs.

Key Function	Description
NRRP and N CREW Network Coordination Management	<p>Coordinate NRRP sites and the entire N CREW Network, including T/NSOs and NIH, using flexible and adaptive approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop, maintain, and iteratively refine policies, procedures, and structures to coordinate, integrate, and ensure efficient NRRP operations across NRRP sites. This will include developing, in partnership with other sites and NIH, an integrated workplan clearly delineating a vision, lead roles, and a governance structure that aids with decision-making across NRRPs (due in Q1 of the award and may change over time).• Gather information across T/NSOs as needed, e.g., to identify needs and priorities, track research outcomes, collect reports, and respond to NIH/HEAL requests as appropriate.• Provide logistical, technological, and administrative support for all N CREW Program Network operations. This includes supporting a website, other shared workspaces; collecting and disseminating information or resources; identifying and implementing communication platforms and strategies; and coordinating logistics for N CREW Network meetings (e.g., scheduling, materials, and documentation).
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)	<p>Develop and deliver flexible, timely, virtual and/or in-person TTA to support T/NSOs in building research capacity and implementing community-prioritized research projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide subject-matter expertise aligned with HEAL research focus areas (e.g., overdose and substance use/pain prevention and treatment), including mechanisms to rapidly engage additional experts as needs emerge.• Deliver high-impact, site-specific, and cross-site TTA to advance research, including (but are not limited to) Indigenous methodologies, study design, data sources, analysis, implementation, sustainability and scalability of interventions and research infrastructure, and promote compliance with award, financial, and reporting requirements.• Identify efficiencies for delivering TTA across sites and make tools and resources readily available to Native communities, as appropriate.

1. Review the Opportunity: NRRP Key Functions continued

Key Function	Description
Assessment	<p>Assess the effectiveness and impact of the NRRP and the overall N CREW Program in achieving program goals, supporting continuous learning and adaptation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and implement an evaluation approach, including defining metrics, timelines, and data collection and analysis strategies, to assess progress toward goals and inform iterative program improvements.• Track and assess progress against N CREW goals, including learning from diverse approaches to research capacity building and research implementation across T/NSOs.• Identify effective strategies to address overdose (e.g., prevention and treatment for opioid use, approaches to management, treatment, and understanding of pain), as well as promising models of research capacity building and implementation, with attention to scalability and sustainability.
N CREW Data Initiatives	<p>Support, develop, and lead data-related efforts across the N CREW Program, consistent with Indigenous data sovereignty and the flexible authorities of OTA, including (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead application of Indigenous data sovereignty principles across the N CREW Program, including consideration of emerging uses of data and artificial intelligence.• Facilitate discussions among T/NSOs on the benefits, risks, and conditions under which data sharing may occur; develop acceptable approaches; and establish or identify appropriate repositories for shared data, when applicable.• Assess the need for, and support identification and integration of, relevant common data elements across N CREW activities.• Support strategies to strengthen the quality, usability, and relevance of administrative and other data sources.

1. Review the Opportunity: NRRP Key Functions continued

Key Function	Description
N CREW Network Vision and Collaboration	<p>Advance the N CREW Network, providing vision and fostering and sustaining partnerships and relationships, including (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common goals and opportunities for synergy and collaboration across N CREW-funded projects and actively leverage them through coordinated activities and meetings. Establish and implement a Network-guided governance structure for N CREW decision-making. Support and contribute to the development of an N CREW Network strategic vision, ensuring incorporation of T/NSO ideas and priorities, and support other needed strategic visioning and planning, (i.e., understanding how to scale and support T/NSO-led research long-term). Planning and facilitating N CREW Network collaboration meetings/activities (i.e., Teaming Meetings, Special Interest Groups, Workgroups, and other partnerships between T/NSOs, NRRP organizations, and NIH); and other emerging needs.
Other Proposed Key Function(s)	<p>NIH invites applicants to propose other functions not covered by the previously described key functions that are needed to meet N CREW Program goals. Examples include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through subawards, applicants may propose to support T/NSO research development projects—which are smaller scale research projects—as a method to create pathways for T/NSOs to engage in innovative research and enhance foundational research skills, expertise, and infrastructure. Other functions deemed important to support T/NSOs as they conduct HEAL research.

Note: Application competitiveness is *not* based on the number of key functions proposed. Proposing multiple functions (or all functions) does not inherently strengthen an application, and the number of functions proposed is not an objective review criterion (see Slides 27-28 for more information on Objective Review criteria).

1. Review the Opportunity: Critical Areas of Expertise

Critical areas of expertise anticipated to be needed for a successful NRRP, include (but are not limited to):

- Topical expertise in HEAL research focus areas (i.e., overdose, substance use, pain). Examples include:
 - Developing non-addictive pain treatments
 - Improving pain management
 - Improving opioid/drug addiction prevention and treatment
 - Addressing and preventing overdose
 - Enhancing recovery strategies
 - Related factors such as well-being, mental health
 - See [HEAL strategic plans and research priorities](#) for more details on research areas
- Technical areas of expertise including (but are not limited to):
 - Intervention Science
 - Big data (e.g., Secondary Analysis, AI, Electronic Health Records)
 - Award management (including financial and reporting)
- Regional or cultural expertise working with specific Native populations
- Indigenous research methods
- Skill in developing and delivering Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)

NIH will prioritize applications with proposed activities and areas of expertise that are likely to benefit greater numbers of T/NSOs. All NRRP applicants must document strong Native cultural expertise and prior experience of successful collaboration with Native communities.

1. Review the Opportunity: Collaboration & Partnership Requirements

N CREW promotes innovation and advances collective knowledge through sustained partnerships across the program. Success depends on active collaboration among participating individuals and organizations to achieve shared goals. Accordingly, all recipients are expected to engage consistently with partners across N CREW.

NRRP sites, in particular, are expected to collaborate and partner with other funded NRRP sites and NIH, also partnering across all N CREW sites to support a shared strategic vision, coordinate activities, and actively foster partnerships. When complementary work is proposed across sites, recipients will be asked to collaboratively align and refine activities post-review. See slide 32 for more information.

Applicants should factor in time and budget for partnership activities including:

- ✓ Travel to at least three in-person meetings per year, including two **Teaming Meetings** (collaborative gatherings where N CREW recipients and NIH staff share updates, hold program relevant discussions, and plan next steps) and one **NRRP Meeting**, where sites will advance the NRRP strategic vision, review and update the Integrated Workplan, and conduct other relevant business
 - ✓ At least one Principal Investigator or approved designee per site is required to attend
- ✓ Optional travel to the annual HEAL Investigators meeting (if held)
- ✓ Ongoing meetings and engagement with NRRPs, NIH staff, and awarded T/NSOs (e.g., site visits, TTA meetings, Special Interest Groups, Workgroups)

Beyond these planned meetings, it is expected that all N CREW program recipients will actively engage in ongoing collaboration with partners across the N CREW Program.

1. Review the Opportunity: Data Management and Sharing, Reporting & Other Federal Requirements

Applicants should also **factor in time and budget** for the following N CREW activities and deliverables:

Data Management & Sharing Requirements

While the primary goal of the NRRP is to support T/NSOs, not to conduct research, the NRRP could encounter scenarios which require data management & sharing considerations, such as (but are not limited to):

- ✓ Consolidating information across sites
- ✓ Collecting data at the request of T/NSOs or NIH
- ✓ Collecting data as part of evaluation/research on the N CREW network itself
- ✓ Partnering with Individual T/NSOs to support their data management or sharing

Applications should include a Data Sharing Plan outlining initial plans for how scientific data will be managed and shared, taking into account any potential restrictions or limitations including those related to Tribal policies or preferences: [NOT-OD-22-214: Supplemental Information for NIH DMS Policy - AI/AN Data](#)

***Note.** If a repository is developed, it must be set up to accommodate requirements of the NIH Data Management and Sharing Policy

HEAL Data Ecosystem

The NIH HEAL Initiative supports a **HEAL Data Ecosystem**, which aims to provide virtual open access to HEAL research data, findings, and publications to establish secure data access and computing infrastructure.

Recipients must, at a minimum, register their study/project, to include the title and a description, and should consider other ways they might engage with the ecosystem. Applicants can find more information on the HEAL data ecosystem here: <https://www.nih.gov/heal/heal-initiative-requirements/data-sharing-policy/about-heal-data-ecosystem>

Reporting & Other Federal Requirements

The terms and conditions of award will address the reporting requirements; however, NRRPs **must** prepare for the following reporting and regulatory requirements:

- **NIH:** Financial & progress reports, interim progress updates, and closeout documents.
- To engage in **human subjects research**, recipients must:
 - Obtain [Federal Wide Assurance \(FWA\)](#) from the DHHS Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP; note FWA only required for non-exempt clinical research).
 - Comply with [45 CFR 46](#).
 - Provide the # of participants they plan to recruit - NIH will monitor progress made toward recruiting that number.
 - See [NOT-OD-22-001](#) for more information about NIH's implementation of the revised Common Rule provision regarding public health surveillance activities deemed not to be research.
 - [Exempt human subjects research](#) in NIH-supported studies involves low-risk activities that, while exempt from the full Common Rule IRB review, still require formal determination of exemption by an IRB, Human Subjects Education Training, and Inclusion Monitoring.
- Clinical trials must also comply with any relevant NIH and HHS regulations governing clinical trials. Refer to the [NIH Division of Human Subjects Research](#) website for NIH human subject policies and guidance, and to the [HHS Office for Human Research Protections](#) website for the Protection of Human Subjects regulations and related regulatory guidance.

1. Review the Opportunity: Eligibility

T/NSOs and Ally Organizations funded under this ROA are expected to represent a range of missions and entity types, but all **must** document strong Native cultural expertise and prior experience of successful collaboration with Native communities.

Local Governments

- State Governments
- County Governments
- City or Township Governments
- Special District Governments
- American Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Federally Recognized)
- American Indian/Native American Tribal Governments (Other than Federally Recognized)

Non-Profits (Other than Institutions of Higher Education)

- Non-profits with 501(c)(3) Status
- Non-profits without 501(c)(3) Status

For-Profit Organizations

- Small businesses
- For-Profit Organizations other than small businesses

Eligible Organizations

Higher Education Institutions – Includes all types:

- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs)
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNHs)
- Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)
- Public/State Controlled Institutions of Higher Education
- Private Institutions of Higher Education
- Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

Other Research Entities

- Independent School Districts
- Public Housing Authorities/American Indian Housing Authorities
- Native American Tribal Organizations (Other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- Faith-based or Community-based Organizations
- Regional Organizations

Non-domestic (non-U.S.) entities (Foreign Applicants) are **not eligible** to apply. Non-domestic (non-U.S.) components of U.S. organizations are **not eligible** to apply. Foreign consultants are permitted.

2. Get Ready to Apply

Register your organization in eRA Commons

The Principal Investigator (PI) and Signing Official (SO) **must each be registered in eRA Commons before submitting an application**. Please start the registration process early (six weeks prior to the application deadline) to allow time to address any unforeseen challenges:

<https://public.era.nih.gov/commonsplus/public/registration/initRegistration.era>

Steps to Register:

1. On eRA Commons home page (linked above) click *Register Organization*
 1. Select NIH Other Transaction Authority (OTA) Opportunities
 2. Complete registration form
 3. Submit registration request
2. Once the registration request is submitted, you **must verify your email within 8 days**, or the registration request will be cancelled. Check spam folder if you do not receive a request to verify email.
3. After email verification, NIH will review the registration request and follow-up with additional instructions.

Additional assistance on the registration process can be found here:

- [Initiating an OTA Application](#)
- [OTA Form Screen](#)

Please note that:

1. For applications with Multiple PI's, the contact PI must be employed by or affiliated with the applicant organization.
2. It is strongly recommended that two different people hold the roles of PI and SO. However, if one person serves as both the PI and SO, they will need two sets of credentials (email address, username, password).
3. While the PI and SO must be registered, you are encouraged to also register other key personnel prior to application, though they can instead be registered prior to award.

3. Prepare your application - Overview

Applications must be submitted by the applicant’s Signing Official (SO) using [NIH ASSIST](#). The SO’s signature certifies that the applicant will provide appropriate administrative and scientific oversight of the project and agrees to be fully accountable for the appropriate use of funds awarded.

For best consideration, applications should be submitted on or before July 31, 2026 using the following formatting guidelines:

- Submit as text-recognizable, searchable (not scanned) PDF (Adobe) format
- Minimum 11-point font with 1” margins, single-spaced
- Combine all sections and upload as one attachment with file name: NRRP_PILastName_OrgName.pdf
- Upload as a "flat file." To create a flat file, navigate to File > Print, select a "PDF" printer (e.g., "Adobe PDF"), click Print and name the file. This will “print to a PDF” and the file will be flattened.
- In addition to the single pdf submission, applicants will be required to enter the abstract and specific aims sections into specified fields within ASSIST.

Key Dates:

Register in eRA Commons
Submit Application

If possible, begin process by May 1
By July 31, 2026

Application Components (details on slides 20-26):

Component	Requirement
Title Page	Required, 1 page limit
Abstract	Required, 1 page limit
Specific Aims	Required, 3 page limit
Planned Activities & Approach	Required, 12 page limit
Anticipated Challenges	Required, 2 pages
Key Personnel	Required, No Page limit
Multiple PI Plan	Required for applications with multiple PIs; No Page limit
Data Management & Sharing Plan	Required, 2 page limit
Budget	Required, No page limit
Fiscal Management Information	Required, 1 page limit
Experience Working with Native Communities	Required, 2 page limit
Letters of Support	Recommended, no page limit or maximum

3. Prepare your application: Components

Section	Page Limit	Description
Title Page	1	The title page should include: Title; Applicant; Organization address & contact information; Contact PI name and contact info (Commons ID, Email, Address, Phone) and name/contact of any MPIs or key persons; Name and contact information of Applicant's Signing Official; Year 1 total costs (direct and indirect costs); and Total project cost (sum of direct and indirect costs per year) requested for the entire project period (up to five years).
Abstract	1	The abstract should include a short summary of the application. There is no required format but recommend including: Background information demonstrating expertise in supporting T/NSO led research addressing opioid/substance use and/or pain; specific aims linked to key NRRP or other proposed functions; and a description of readiness to partner with NRRPs, NIH, and T/NSOs.
Specific Aims	3	The specific aims should concisely summarize: (A) the overall objective; (B) the background and importance of the work; (C) the gaps addressed for T/NSO communities and Native populations; and outline clear aims that describe the proposed key and/or other functions and main activities. Applicants should have one aim per each proposed NRRP key/other function. The aims should also describe the subject matter expertise in scientific research on overdose, substance use, and/or pain, as well as the approach to collaborating across the N-CREW Network and subject matter expertise for the proposed activities.

3. Prepare your application: Components continued

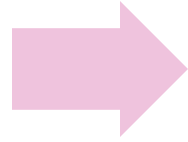
This section is limited to 12 pages and should include the following subsections:

Section	Description
Planned Activities	<p>Describe the planned activities, organized around one or more functions (e.g., five key functions or other proposed functions). For each proposed function, describe the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Coordination Management – Describe the approach to coordinating NRRP sites and the overall N CREW Network, developing and refining policies, governance structures, and workplans, and providing logistical and administrative support. • Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) – Describe the approach to delivering flexible, timely TTA (virtual and/or in-person) on HEAL-aligned topics, Indigenous methodologies, research methods, and award/financial/reporting requirements, and to developing and sharing tools and resources. • Assessment – Describe the approach to implementing an evaluation strategy (including metrics and data collection/analysis) to track progress toward N CREW goals and to identify scalable, sustainable strategies. • N CREW Data Initiatives – Describe the approach to leading data efforts consistent with Indigenous data sovereignty; supporting data sharing approaches; promoting the use of common data elements; and improving administrative and other relevant data sources. • N CREW Network Vision and Collaboration – Describe the approach to fostering a shared vision, governance, and collaboration across N CREW; elevating T/NSO priorities; and planning, convening, and supporting Network meetings and joint activities. • Other Proposed Key Function(s) – Describe how the proposed additional NRRP function(s) will align with and advance N CREW program goals; address gaps or specialized and culturally relevant needs not covered by the five key functions; and include a clear plan for adapting activities to evolving priorities identified by T/NSOs and NIH. <p>Ensure the Planned Activities description clearly demonstrates the subject matter expertise required to successfully carry out proposed functions and outlines how scientific subject matter expertise in pain and/or substance use will be utilized and incorporated within proposed functions. Discuss the potential for planned activities to yield long-term, sustainable benefits for, and scalability of, T/NSO led research potentially beyond the sites that receive funding as part of the N CREW Program.</p>
Milestones	<p>Applicants must identify a set of high-level milestones (objective, measurable accomplishments that will indicate progress towards proposed specific aims). In addition to the list of milestones, you will submit a milestone-based budget plan (see Budget section - not included in page limit).</p>
Management, Staffing, and Partnerships	<p>Describe how the applicant will provide the project administration, organization, and staff to ensure successful execution of the project. Applications including partnerships should outline how partners will work together to accomplish activities in a partnership plan in an efficient and timely manner. In addition, applicants must document willingness to partner across the N CREW Program, including with a diverse group of T/NSOs, other members of the NRRP, NIH, and others as needs arise.</p>

3. Prepare your application: Relationship between Key NRRP Functions, Specific Aims, & Milestones

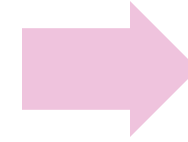
Key NRRP Functions

Identify the key/other NRRP functions you are proposing to perform.



Specific Aims

Each key/other NRRP function should have an associated Specific Aim.



Milestones

Each Specific Aim should have associated milestones. Also include the required milestone: [N-CREW Partnership & Collaboration](#).

3. Prepare your application: Components continued

Section	Page Limit	Description
Anticipated Challenges	2 pages	All applicants must provide a thoughtful description of potential challenges and strategies for addressing these challenges and any relevant prior experiences that inform their approach. Applicants are encouraged to describe how past projects, professional expertise, or collaborations have shaped their understanding of potential obstacles and solutions.
Senior/Key Personnel and Disclosure Requirements	No page limit	<p>Document via <u>Biosketches</u> (5 pages or less) the experience of key personnel, including experience working with Native communities or Tribes and subject matter expertise. Provide Biosketches for PIs and all key personnel. Biosketches should be submitted as an appendix within the application.</p> <p>In addition, as required by 42 U.S.C. § 6605, all senior/key personnel identified in an application must submit and certify information about current and pending research support via Other Support. For a full list of the types of activities that should be disclosed in your Biosketch or Other Support form, please see the <u>NIH Disclosure Table</u>.</p>
Multiple PI Plan	No page limit	For applications with more than one PI, submit a leadership plan which also includes a Conflict Resolution Plan, specifying in detail how conflict among PIs will be resolved.
Data Management & Sharing Plan	2 pages	Per NIH requirements, include a plan outlining how data will be managed (e.g. stored, protected) and shared. NIH encourages data sharing; however, there are justified exceptions to sharing data, including NIH recognition of Tribal Sovereignty in deciding if and how data will be shared (NOT-OD-22-214).

3. Prepare your application: Milestone Based Budget

Section	Page Limit	Description
Budget	No Limit	<p>Two separate budget documents should be included:</p> <p>(1) An estimated milestone-based budget for the entire project period (up to 5 years), broken down by quarter, to reflect work described in the milestone-based work plan (see details here);</p> <p>(2) A detailed and well-justified budget that includes all expected costs for year one of the award, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel, equipment, travel, partners (sub-awards, contracting fees), and other direct costs • Indirect (F&A) costs • Total cost (with direct costs included) <p><i>Note: for applications that include partner sites (subawards), a separate detailed budget must be provided for each partner, consistent with the overall budget and work plan.</i></p> <p>Budget estimates should account for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs for a PI and at least one other team member (or as many are anticipated as needed) to attend 4 Teaming Meetings (2 in-person, up to 2 virtual) and one in person NRRP meeting per year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget 3 days and 2 nights per in-person meeting. Location of meetings will be decided based on the geographic location of recipients and NIH but assume one trip on the East Coast, one in the Midwest, and one on the West Coast. • Staff time for participation in cross-program workgroups and meetings, at a minimum expected to include the 4 Teaming Meetings, the NRRP meeting, 2-3 ongoing special interest or cross-site workgroups, and N CREW governance meetings (minimum once per month). • For manuscripts published in journals that are not immediately open access, applicants should include costs to pay for immediate open access. • Travel costs for the PI(s) to attend annual HEAL Investigators meeting (if interested) <p>The proposed budget is subject to change through negotiation with NIH prior to award.</p>

3. Prepare your application: Milestone Based Budget

For each project year (up to five years), provide a milestone-based budget plan. This plan should estimate your costs **by milestone** and **by quarter**.

- Identify one high level, measurable milestone for each key function proposed in the application
 - You may include a minimum of one, and up to six milestones, depending on the number of key functions proposed in your application.
 - These milestones should reflect major benchmarks toward addressing each key function.
- Include an additional **required** milestone on **N CREW partnership and collaboration**.

Clarification on milestones vs. planned activities

- Milestones** represent indicators of progress toward your aims (i.e., the key or other functions)
 - Note: Prior to award, recipients must adapt and submit a final Year 1 milestone and quarterly budget table, negotiated with and agreed upon by NIH staff.
- Planned Activities** provide a more detailed description of the work required to achieve each milestone, but they are not themselves milestones.
 - Applicants do not need to list Planned activities in the milestone table

Example Table	Estimated Costs per Award Quarter			
Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Key NRRP Function-Related Milestone – 1				
Key NRRP Function-Related Milestone – 2				
N CREW Partnership & Collaboration (Required Milestone): Complete and implement plans to (1) develop an NRRP Integrated Workplan with partner sites in Quarter 1, (2) share activity updates with T/NSOs, other NRRP’s and NIH, and (3) develop, maintain, and share with NIH a list of planned activities to advance on all milestones, with a timeline indicating when these activities will occur				

3. Prepare your application: Components continued

Section	Page Limit	Description
Experience Working with Native Communities	2 pages	Describe your experience working with T/NSOs. Highlight your demonstrated Native cultural expertise. Provide brief examples of successful, culturally responsive collaborations and, where applicable, describe how your efforts have contributed to the long-term sustainability of research initiatives and meaningful data outcomes for Native communities.
Fiscal Management Information	1 page	Describe the Applicant's organizational capacity and fiscal experience, and/or expertise available, particularly with managing program costs of over \$1 million (see the NIH Evaluation of Financial Management Systems Questionnaire for guidance).
Letters of Support	No Limit	Note: Applications involving Tribal government or proposing research on Tribal lands will need an executed Tribal resolution, executive order, or letter of commitment from the Tribal authorized representative sanctioning the project <u>at the time of the award</u> . Letters of support from organizations, consultants, or community leaders, should be included in the application as relevant. As each situation will be unique, applicants should carefully evaluate what letters of support will be most helpful for evaluating their application.

4. Learn about Objective Review

Responsive applications will be reviewed with a process called Objective Review, which may include the following:

- Reviewed by subject matter experts, including NIH Staff, federal employees, and/or external experts
- Reviewers will use the [review criteria](#) (described on slides 28-31) to guide their assessments of applications
- Applicants **will not** receive written feedback on their application
 - If resources allow, NIH staff will meet by phone with applicants to discuss review if requested by the applicant
 - NIH will not accept an appeal of the objective review or funding decision outcomes

Applications that do not meet the intent of the ROA will be considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed. This includes:

- Applications that do not document strong Native American cultural expertise
- Applications that do not document experience successfully working with Native populations

4. Learn about Objective Review – Review Criteria

Individual subject matter experts will review and assess each application taking into account the following review criteria:

- Criterion 1:** Likelihood of meeting N CREW program needs (via proposed NRRP key functions and/or other proposed functions)
- Criterion 2:** Likelihood of contributing research or data expertise that will support T/NSOs to make advances in research that will improve substance use and/or pain-related outcomes for Native Americans
- Criterion 3:** Likelihood of maintaining effective collaborations and partnerships with NRRPs, T/NSOs, and NIH

For each, reviewers will indicate a rating of:

- (a) Highly likely, (b) Moderately likely, or (c) Unlikely

The following slides provide examples of questions reviewers should address to determine their rating for each criterion.

4. Learn about Objective Review – Review Criterion 1

Criterion 1: Likelihood of meeting N CREW program needs (via proposed NRRP key or other proposed functions)

Note: Applications will be evaluated only on the proposed NRRP functions and expertise required for successful implementation

Key NRRP function	Questions to guide assessment for review criterion 1
NRRP and N CREW Network Coordination Management	Is the proposed coordination management strategy likely to support effective policies, procedures, information-sharing, communication platforms, and logistics that meet N CREW coordination and management needs and enable efficient NRRP and N CREW operations across sites?
Training and Technical Assistance (TTA)	How likely is it that the proposed TTA plan will strengthen T/NSOs' ability to culturally responsively plan, carry out, and manage research projects and ensure that tools and resources are accessible to Native communities?
Assessment	How likely is it that the proposed evaluation framework will effectively and meaningfully track progress towards N CREW goals and identify effective, scalable, and culturally relevant strategies and models of research capacity building and implementation and/or approaches to reduce overdose?
N CREW Data Initiatives	How likely is it that the proposed data approach will support T/NSOs and N CREW level data needs, integrate Indigenous data sovereignty principles and emerging issues, and improve the quality and utility of key data sources?
N CREW Network Vision and Collaboration	How likely is it that the proposed strategy will advance a vision for the N CREW Network, foster and sustain effective partnerships and collaboration, and support governance, N CREW collaboration meetings, and cross-site activities?
Other Proposed Key Functions	How likely is it that the proposed "other" NRRP function(s) align with and advance N CREW program goals, address gaps or specialized/culturally relevant needs not covered by the five key functions, and will be responsive to evolving T/NSO needs?

4. Learn about Objective Review – Review Criteria 2 & 3

Criterion 2: Likelihood of contributing research or data-related expertise that will support T/NSOs to make advances in research that will improve substance use and/or pain-related outcomes for Native Americans

Questions to guide assessment for review criterion 2

How likely is it that the applicant will be able to provide the proposed scientific subject matter expertise in substance use and/or pain research, or other critical areas of expertise, as well as research and data resources to support and/or contribute to research projects?

Does the applicant document prior experience collaborating with Native American communities to conduct research?

How likely is the applicant to use approaches that are culturally grounded and responsive to T/NSO preferences?

Criterion 3: Likelihood of maintaining effective collaborations and partnerships with NRRPs, T/NSOs, and NIH

Questions to guide assessment for review criterion 3

How likely are proposed partnership plans to facilitate:

- Efficient, nonredundant, and collaborative work in performing functions?
- Working within a governance structure, participating in decision making, resolving conflict and ensuring communication/information flow?

How likely is the applicant to carry out proposed collaboration activities in a way that promotes relationships of mutual trust and respect?

Overall Impact

Reviewers will assess whether the proposed activities are likely to overall have a **high, medium** or **low** potential impact on advancing T/NSO led research to address:

- Overdose, substance use, and/or pain, in Native American Communities
- May also assess impact on related factors, such as mental health and wellness

Components

Reviewers will identify laudable proposed activities within applications that independently have the potential to achieve N CREW Program goals

Areas for Improvement

Reviewers will identify how applications or independent proposed activities might be improved

5. Post Submission Procedures – Next Steps After Review

After review:

- NIH may contact applicants, request additional information, and/or conduct site visits.
- Sites may be asked to modify milestones, budgets, include/exclude certain application components, or add partnerships.
- If NRRP sites propose complementary work or activities that would benefit from integration with other NRRP work, they will be asked to collaboratively partner with one another and NIH to develop integrated workplans and a shared strategic vision; the Integrated Workplans must be finalized within the first quarter of the award period.

Final award decisions will consider:

- Reviewer ratings and comments (e.g., overall impact, components, areas for improvement)
- Programmatic needs
- Available budget
- Negotiations
- Timely submission of any needed information

If a limited number of responsive applications are received and/or there are significant gaps in the research areas proposed, NIH may invite additional organizations to submit an application for consideration after the posted due date. Invited applications will undergo an internal review process based on the criteria specified above.

5. Post Submission Procedures – Post Review Activities

Applicants may be contacted after review to provide more information and/or arrange site visits to discuss the following activities:

- **Negotiations: Other Transaction Awards require negotiations on project parameters prior to award.** NIH will select a subset of applicants with whom to negotiate award terms. **NIH maintains the right to:**
 - Award applications as proposed or negotiate awards to modify milestones, budgets, or include/exclude certain components. This could include new components not proposed.
 - Combine or reorganize applications to ensure expertise in all identified and emerging NRRP functions.
 - Remove applicants from award consideration should the parties fail to reach a finalized, fully executed agreement, or the applicant fails to provide requested additional information in a timely manner.
 - Consider prior approval requests to incur obligations and expenditures to cover costs up to 90 days before the beginning date of the initial budget period of a new award, always at the recipient's own risk
- **Financial Risk Assessment:** All applicants will be subject to financial analysis and risk assessment conducted by NIH staff. Any identified risks or financial concerns must be addressed in a timely manner during the negotiation for an Other Transactions Award to be made. Applicants are encouraged to investigate their audit status and clear any outstanding audit reports.
- **Special Award Terms:** The complete terms & conditions, which describe what is required, of each Other Transactions award issued under this ROA are subject to negotiation and will be contained in the OT Agreement entered between NIH and the recipient. OTA mechanism also allows significant ongoing involvement of NIH Program Staff and allows NIH to alter projects in real time to meet overall N CREW Program Goals.
- **Addition of Partners:** With mutual consent of the applicant and NIH, successful recipients may be asked to establish partnerships with entities identified (e.g., academic research partners) to provide the support necessary to complete the proposed project. If initially submitted partnerships are not sufficient to meet program goals, NIH will actively engage with potential applicants to discuss identifying and introducing potential partners with all partnerships subject to final NIH approval.
- **Payment:** NIH OT recipients receive payments through the [Payment Management Services \(PMS\)](#) operated by the DHHS Program Support Center.
- **Reporting:** The terms and conditions of an award will specify required reports, including ongoing financial and progress reports and other reports as required throughout the project period, and, at the end of the award period, a final federal financial report, final progress report, and final invention statement.