THE REDSTONE GLOBAL CENTER ANNOUNCES THE 2026 PILOT AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention & Wellness (RGC) is thrilled to announce the 2026 Pilot Award recipients. These awards recognize outstanding research teams whose innovative projects have the potential to make a significant impact on disease prevention and climate adaptation research and practice.

The RGC is dedicated to fostering healthier communities by addressing the critical intersections of chronic and infectious disease prevention, public health, and climate change with an emphasis on marginalized populations. Over the past decade, the RGC has advanced this mission through research, community-driven initiatives, policy analysis and advocacy that address health promotion and climate change. The RGC envisions a future where communities—especially those most at risk—do more than react and survive climate-related health hazards, they adapt and thrive.

About the Pilot Grant Award Competition

The RGC's Pilot Grant Award Competition supports the center's vision of healthy and thriving communities adapting to climate-related health hazards and challenges, and its renewed mission to promote equitable adaptation among communities most at risk from climate-related health hazards and challenges by cultivating research, education, and collaboration. This year's pilot funds were available for investigators whose proposals focused on climate adaptation interventions and disease prevention, both communicable and noncommunicable.

The RGC is providing $122,500 in funding for four awards. These grants support the RGC's goal to build multi-disciplinary teams so that a cohort of researchers and community partners will have the skills, connections, and research agendas to apply for sponsored research grants while also targeting effective interventions to advance disease prevention and climate adaptation.

Selection Process & Criteria

In this round of the Pilot Award Program, we received eight letters of intent and six full applications from talented researchers. A selection committee consisted of experts from the RGC's Internal Advisory Group and their appointees. Review criteria included significance, innovation, research approach, and potential for pilot work to lead to a successful external grant application.

Meet the 2026 Pilot Award Grantees

*We are honored to recognize the following PIs as **2026 Redstone Global Center Research Fellows**:*

Project title: ***Understanding the Impact of Climate Variability on Dengue Outcomes in Brazil***

PI: Kelvin Fong, Associate Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health Department

Co-I: Christopher Mores, Professor, Department of Global Health

Collaborator/Community Partner: Weeberb Réquia, Associate Professor of Fundação Getulio Vargas University

Description: *El Niño is a recurring climate pattern that affects temperature and rainfall and could help health officials prepare for disease outbreaks, but it is rarely used this way because its local health impacts are not well understood. This project focuses on dengue in Brazil by mapping how the El Niño-Southern Oscillation affects local weather and linking weather patterns to dengue cases and deaths, helping public health officials better anticipate and reduce future outbreaks.*

Project title: ***Community-Based Approach to Sustaining Nutrition Security During Extreme Heat Events in Washington, DC***

Lead PI: Michael Long, Associate Professor, Prevention and Community Health Department

Co-PI: Erica Gralla, Associate Professor, Engineering Management and Systems Engineering

Collaborator/Community Partners: Food Policy Council Resident Advisory Board and DC Heat Ambassadors

Description: *The rising threat of climate-driven extreme heat events is forcing communities to change how they operate to continue to sustain safe and thriving populations. This project uses participatory*

systems science methods to strengthen climate adaptation governance to support nutrition security during future extreme heat events in Washington, D.C.

Project title: ***Testing Solar-Powered Climate Adaptation Interventions to Improve Women's Health and Livelihoods in Heat-Vulnerable Communities in Pakistan***

PI: Nitasha Nagaraj, Associate Teaching Professor, Prevention and Community Health Department

Co-I: Jordan Kuiper, Assistant Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health Department

Collaborator/Community Partners: HERA & Khwendo Kor

Description: *This project will evaluate a community-driven climate adaptation intervention designed to improve women's health and resilience in heat-vulnerable communities in Pakistan by examining how solar-powered cooling, heat-health education, and livelihood support can help women adapt to rising temperatures and inform future large-scale climate-health interventions.*

Project title: ***Community-Based Solutions to Address Extreme Heat in Bamako, Mali***

Lead PI: Nino Paichadze, Associate Research Professor, Department of Global Health

Co-Is: Paul Ndebele, Assistant Director-Office of Research Excellence & Professorial Lecturer, Department of Global Health; Heather Rosen, Senior Research Associate, Department of Global Health

Collaborators: Housseini Dolo, Associate Professor; Seydou Doumbia, Professor, University of Sciences, Techniques, and Technologies of Bamako (USTTB), Mali

Collaborator/Community Partners: Association de Santé Communautaire (ASACO), women associations (Kafo), National Youth Association (CNJM), Mali

Description: *This pilot project aims to utilize local, indigenous knowledge to co-design sustainable, community-led cooling strategies in Mali.*

Pilot grants offer a valuable opportunity for researchers to explore new ideas, experiment with innovative approaches, and establish meaningful foundation for future partnership and collaboration.

We are excited to support these impactful projects and to uphold the longstanding tradition of advancing research through pilot grant funding.

Acknowledgments

We extend our deepest gratitude to the review committee for their time and dedication in reviewing applications. Lastly, we want to celebrate all applicants for their inspiring proposals and commitment to advancing research to promote equitable adaptation among communities most at risk from climate-related health hazards and challenges.

Stay Connected

Visit the RGC website and follow us on LinkedIn/**Instagram** for updates on the progress of the pilot projects. If you are interested in applying for the next round of Pilot Awards, sign up for our mailing list to stay updated.

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