Driven to Discover Research Facility at the Minnesota State Fair

Request for Applications (RFA)

RELEASE DATE
January 18, 2017

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

We invite University of Minnesota faculty, research staff and students to take advantage of this unique opportunity to quickly and efficiently recruit research participants for on-site human-subjects research at the Minnesota State Fair. A brief online application to reserve research space in the Driven to Discover Research Facility (‘D2D’) for the 2017 fair is due March 17, 2017. For more information, go to: d2d.umn.edu.

The primary mission of D2D is to increase the pace, efficiency, and diversity of enrollment in new or ongoing human subjects research at the University, by bringing projects and researchers into closer contact with the Minnesota community. D2D provides access to approximately 1.9 million fairgoers each year. Many attendees return to the fair year after year, making longitudinal studies possible. Further, the fair attracts individuals from across Minnesota and so offers an efficient means of enrolling a more diverse group of participants from outside the metropolitan area.

Since the D2D facility was established in 2014, numerous researchers have benefited from the opportunity to bring their research to the fair:

- Total studies conducted on-site: **102**
- Total subjects enrolled for on-site studies: **37,400**
- Total number of fairgoers estimated to have passed through the building: over **100,000**
- Average enrollment in on-site studies per hour, per study: **16 (range 3-46)**

D2D researchers surveyed indicate high levels of satisfaction with conducting research at the Fair, with most expressing interest in future participation. In summary, bringing your study to the Minnesota State Fair affords you the potential to reach a large, diverse, untapped population of potential research subjects, facilitating rapid and high enrollment.

ELIGIBILITY

University of Minnesota faculty, students, and research staff at any campus are eligible to apply. Collaboration with other Universities and outside agencies throughout Minnesota is encouraged. Staff and students with no previous experience as a principal investigator must have a faculty co-investigator. Students must provide the name and signature of their academic advisor.
RESEARCH FOCUS

Research from a broad array of disciplines is encouraged. The focus of the review is not on the field of research, but rather on whether the research project is engaging and interactive with the public, involving human subjects by collecting data through surveys, focus groups, biospecimens, measurements, tests, or other means. Research studies should be appropriate for conduct within the fair environment. Projects must be minimally invasive, pose minimal risk, and require no more than 30 minutes of a participant’s time during the fair. Preference will be given to projects designed for on-site data collection. However, projects that are solely recruiting for off-site studies are encouraged to apply (there is a reduced fee of $250/shift for these projects). Multiple-year projects are accepted.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Grant funding is available to offset shift fees and other costs for Masonic Cancer Center members, studies with a pediatrics focus, and student-led projects. Recipients of these grants will automatically be granted space at D2D. Please contact Pat McKee, D2D Manager, at d2d@umn.edu for information about these funding opportunities.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO RESEARCHERS THROUGH THIS RFA

A new D2D building will be built this year and will open at the 2017 fair. Estimated square footage of research space in the new building will range from 100-240 square feet per study, depending on protocol requirements and equipment needs. Projects will be scheduled in two shifts each day of the fair, from 9am-2pm and 2:30pm-9pm. Up to ten projects will be scheduled per shift. Research space and shifts will be allocated once applications have been accepted.

A flat fee of $806 will be charged for each shift (or $250/shift for recruitment only). In addition to research space, the following resources will be included:

- Subsidized admission to the State Fair for researchers and their staff (4 tickets per shift)
- iPads linked to consent forms and survey instruments;
- U of M Secure high-speed wireless and hardwired internet access;
- Furnishings, basic anthropometric equipment, and supplies;
- Refrigerator and freezer space for on-site sample storage;
- Consultation with D2D staff on maximizing your recruitment goals, obtaining IRB approval, determining staffing needs, setting up your research area, subject recruitment, working in the State Fair setting, and more;
- Assurance of compliance with State Fair rules and regulations.

APPLICATION

Please submit your application as a single pdf attachment via email to d2d@umn.edu. The use of lay language is encouraged. Your application should include the following components (maximum two pages, excluding cover page and references):

1. Cover Page
   - Provide project title and investigator(s) name, department, and contact information.
• For student researchers, please also provide the name of your degree program, your academic advisor, your advisor's signature with date, and your advisor's email address and telephone number.

2. Aims
   • Provide a concise description of your research goals and specific aims for this study.

3. Significance/Rationale
   • Briefly describe the potential impact of the proposed research on your field of study.

4. Study Design
   • Briefly describe your research design.
     o Consider the research environment when designing your project. The building and fairgrounds can be crowded and noisy. Privacy is limited. The research area is a large, open building with mobile partitions between research bays. Standard folding tables and chairs are provided. There is no vehicle access to the building during fair hours. Restrooms are across the street.
   • Describe inclusion and exclusion criteria for participants.
   • Provide your desired sample size for each group of participants.

5. Data Collection Methods
   • Briefly describe data collection tools to be used (standardized questionnaires, biospecimen collection methods, etc.). If necessary, clarify how these methods are feasible and/or appropriate for the fair.
   • Describe any large or sensitive equipment requiring special storage, set-up, or delivery.
   • Estimate the length of your protocol, including consent.

6. Number of Shifts Requested
   • Estimate the number of shifts you will need to reach your enrollment goals:
     o Enrollment for studies with on-site data collection has averaged 16 participants per hour (range 3-46). Many factors influence enrollment, including the protocol (length, methods and topic), inclusion/exclusion criteria, incentives, and recruitment efforts. The weather, day of the week, and time of day can also affect fairgoer traffic through the building.
     o To estimate the number of shifts your study needs, start with the following formula, then adjust up or down, based on your budget and the above factors:
       \[ \text{Number of shifts} = \text{enrollment goal} \times \text{protocol length} / \text{number of staff (or iPads)} / 300 \text{ (the number of minutes in a 5-hour shift)}. \]
   • Additional information on incentives options:
     o Individual incentive: You are required to give the same incentive, or choice of incentives, to each participant. Hence, you must be prepared with additional incentives in the event you overshoot your enrollment goal. UMN string backpacks are a popular incentive; D2D places a group order at $1.70/each.
     o Prize drawing (e.g. iPad or gift certificate): A good option for those with a large enrollment goal and limited budget. You will be required to hold the drawing during the fair and report the winner to State Fair administration.
     o No incentive: Some D2D studies have not given incentives and still reached their enrollment goals.

7. References
• Please include no more than 20 references.

SUBMISSION AND TIMELINE

Applications will be accepted starting **January 18, 2017** and are due by **5pm on March 17, 2017**. Applicants will be notified of acceptance no later than **March 24, 2017**, allowing researchers five months to coordinate their projects in time for the 2017 Minnesota State Fair, held **August 24 - September 4**. A complete calendar of events is available on the D2D website.

REVIEW PROCESS

Reviewers will evaluate eligible applications according to the following:

- Does the study qualify as a minimal risk study?
- Is the study interactive, engaging to the public?
- Is subject participation kept as brief as possible (no more than 30 minutes)?
- Is the study design appropriate for the Minnesota State Fair venue?

The D2D team will not conduct a full scientific review of your project. It will be expected that research projects have undergone adequate peer review through applicable mechanisms.

Researchers will be responsible for obtaining protocol approval (or exemption from review) from the U of M Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB will hold a special session to review all D2D applications, including studies with currently-approved IRB applications and/or studies conducted at D2D in previous years. Researchers will be required to submit their applications by the deadline set forth by the IRB. If this deadline is missed, researchers will not be allowed to conduct their projects at the 2017 fair. Copies of IRB approval must be provided to the D2D staff by July 31, 2017.

FUTURE TRACKING OF SELECTED PROJECTS

Success of the Driven to Discover Research Facility is measured by the number of research projects using the space, the number of fairgoers enrolled, and the number of peer-reviewed manuscripts published and grant applications submitted using data collected at the building. If your project is selected for participation, you will be asked to provide this information.

CONTACT US

Thank you for interest in D2D. Please contact Pat McKee, D2D Manager, at d2d@umn.edu with questions regarding this RFA, or to be placed on our mailing list for announcements and updates.

D2D DIRECTORS

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