ROUND 2: Research Opportunity Announcement for D2D at the Minnesota State Fair
Aug 22 - Sept 2, 2024

Release Date: February 1, 2024
Due Date: February 29, 2024

We invite faculty, students, and staff from the University of Minnesota, other colleges and universities, and public and private institutions, to take advantage of this unique opportunity to quickly and efficiently recruit fairgoers as participants in minimal-risk, human-subjects research at the Driven to Discover Research Facility (D2D) at the Minnesota State Fair from August 22 – September 2, 2024.

D2D APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Apply online by February 29, 2024 at this link: https://redcap.link/4ltx05rh. You will be prompted to upload the following information as a single PDF or Word document. Please limit your submission to 1-2 pages. Briefly describe:

1. Study goals and aims;
2. Study design, including eligibility criteria and desired sample size;
3. Data collection methods, including length of protocol with consent.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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 2 million fairgoers each year. Many attendees return yearly to the fair, 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.

D2D established a presence at the 2014 fair and in 2017 a new building was constructed in order to better accommodate more research teams and fairgoers. Since then D2D annually attracts tens of thousands of visitors per year with 2019 setting both fair and D2D attendance records. The COVID-19 pandemic brought changes to the 2021 fair with safety precautions forcing reduced operations and a roughly 40% reduction in overall fair attendance. Post-pandemic fairs are bouncing back, 2022 saw much of a return to normal regarding vendor participation and attendance. The 2023 fair saw only one state fair attendance record (Day 2) and temperatures were hot, humid and oppressive with seven days over 90 degrees and Labor Day approaching triple digits. Overall, approximately one in every three people who enter the D2D building choose to enroll into a study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Studies</th>
<th>Bldg Foot Traffic</th>
<th># Ppts Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>21,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61,600</td>
<td>25,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36,600</td>
<td>10,879</td>
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<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49,200</td>
<td>16,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>17,260</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D2D@umn.edu
@D2DMNStateFair
In 2023, over 17,000 fairgoers participated in at least one of the 47 on-site studies. Studies enrolling adults averaged 187 participants per shift (5-6.5 hours), with a range of 38-375. Studies enrolling youth averaged 51 participants per shift (range 22-87).

When D2D researchers were surveyed about their experience, 98.7% of respondents from the past five years indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied with conducting research at D2D, and most expressed interest in future participation. In summary, bringing your study to the Minnesota State Fair affords you the potential to reach a large, geographically diverse population of potential research subjects, facilitating rapid enrollment.

WHO MAY CONDUCT RESEARCH AT D2D?

Faculty, students and staff from all UMN campuses, other colleges and universities, and public and private institutions across the state are eligible to apply. Collaboration is encouraged. Projects led by students and staff must have a faculty member as principal investigator or co-principal investigator. Students must provide the name and signature of their academic advisor.

RESEARCH FOCUS

There is no specified research focus to which projects must adhere. Research from a broad array of disciplines is encouraged. The focus of the D2D application review is not on the research question, but rather on whether the research project is:

- interactive with the public, involving human subjects by collecting data through surveys, focus groups, biospecimens, measurements, tests, or other means,
- appropriate for the state fair environment,
- minimally invasive, posing minimal risk,
- requires no more than 30 minutes of a participant’s time during the fair.

Multiple-year projects are accepted.

RESOURCES PROVIDED AND FEES

The D2D Research Facility accommodates up to ten studies at a time, in curtained-partitioned bays approximately 10’ wide by 12’ long. Studies are scheduled in two shifts, from 9am-2pm and 2:30pm-9pm, providing a maximum of 240 shifts over the 12 days of the fair. Research space and shifts are assigned after application determinations are made and participation confirmed. The average number of shifts per study in 2023 was 3.6 (mode = 2, range = 1-9).

In addition to research space, the following resources are included in the fee:

- Free admission to the State Fair for researchers and their staff (up to 4 tickets per shift);
- iPads linked to consent forms and survey instruments;
- UMN eduroam high-speed wireless and hardwired internet access;
- Tables and chairs, 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, recruiting subjects, working in the State Fair setting, and more;
- Compliance with State Fair rules and regulations.
D2D is a self-supporting Internal Service Organization housed in the School of Public Health, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health. Fees support rent, facility maintenance, state fair licensing, admission tickets, furnishings, equipment & supplies, and staff support to organize the program. Fees are as follows:

- Studies with a UMN principal investigator: $700 per shift.
- Studies with no UMN principal investigator: $1350 per shift.

A Facilities Page for inclusion in grant proposals is available for download on the D2D website.

SHIFT ESTIMATION AND INCENTIVES

Many factors influence enrollment, most notably eligibility criteria, but also incentives (giveaways), protocol (topic, length and methods), staffing, recruitment methods, the mix of studies in the building, and weather can also affect fairgoer traffic through the building.

In 2023, average enrollment per shift for on-site data collection was 187 (range 38-375) for adult studies with no other eligibility exclusions, and 51 (range 22-87) for youth studies with no other eligibility exclusions. To estimate the number of shifts your study needs, use the 2023 ranges, adjusting up or down based on your budget and the factors described above. Alternatively, you may start with the following formula, and then adjust as described:

\[ \text{Number of shifts} = \frac{\text{enrollment goal} \times \text{minutes participants spend engaged with study}}{\text{number of participants (or iPads) your staff can manage at one time}} \div 300, \text{ i.e., the number of minutes in a 5-hour shift.} \]

Two staff are required per shift, but most studies use more people (e.g., 3-4) in order to accommodate more participants. We recommend you recruit students as additional staff as they benefit greatly from the hands-on research experience. However, keep in mind space limitations.

As mentioned, incentives can affect your enrollment. Your options include:

- Individual incentive: With this option, you are required to give an incentive of equal value, or a choice of incentives, to each participant. It’s a good idea to order extra incentives in the event you overshoot your enrollment goal.
- Prize drawing (e.g., gift card, electronics): This is a good option for those with a large enrollment goal but a limited budget. You will be required to hold the drawing during the fair and report the winner(s) to State Fair administration.
- Prize-wheel giveaways for participation: fairgoers love a prize wheel!
- No incentive: Some D2D studies have not given incentives and still reached their enrollment goals. Keep in mind, however, the competition that comes with 10 studies in the building and the giveaway environment at the fair, thus getting people to engage with you may prove to be difficult without an incentive.

REVIEW PROCESS

Round Two applications will be accepted on a rolling (first come-first-served) basis. Applicants will be notified of acceptance no later than March 4, 2024. A complete D2D calendar is available on the D2D website.

Applications will be screened to confirm eligibility based on the criteria above. A review team will then evaluate eligible applications using the considerations outlined in “Research Focus,” above. 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.
Driven to Discover Research Facility at the Minnesota State Fair (D2D)

Researchers will be responsible for obtaining protocol approval or exemption from review, from the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (or another IRB, for applicants not affiliated with the UMN). The UMN IRB will hold a special session to review D2D applications. Studies with currently approved IRB applications and studies conducted at D2D in previous years must also be approved. Researchers will be required to submit their applications by the deadline to be set forth by the IRB (on or about May 1, 2024).

FUTURE TRACKING OF SELECTED PROJECTS

Success of the D2D 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 for two years following your participation.

CONTACT US

Thank you for your interest in D2D. Please contact Annie Hotop, D2D Manager, at d2d@umn.edu with questions regarding this Announcement, or to be placed on our mailing list for future announcements and updates. For more information, go to the D2D website at http://d2d.umn.edu.

D2D DIRECTORS

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