Driven to Discover (D2D) Research at County Fairs in Greater Minnesota
2024 Request for Applications

Release Date: March 5, 2024
Due Date: April 5, 2024

We invite faculty, staff, and students from the University of Minnesota to take advantage of this opportunity to engage rural voices in research via the Driven to Discover research infrastructure expansion to Minnesota county fairs (D2D-County) throughout summer 2024.

BACKGROUND & AIM
With the support of the D2D Research Facility at the MN State Fair, researchers have enrolled nearly 150,000 individuals in innovative research projects since 2014. However, we know 75% of these participants are from the metro area, representing a disproportionately high percentage of urban residents. Research that supports the needs of rural Minnesotans is of paramount importance in fulfilling the University’s land grant mission and demonstrating our value beyond the metro area. Thus we are expanding D2D’s reach to include county fairs.

D2D-COUNTY APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
Apply online by April 5, 2024 at this link: https://redcap.link/pm2jdeep. You will be prompted to upload the following information as a single PDF or Word document. Limit your submission to one page. Briefly describe:

1. Aims: your research goals and objectives
2. Study design: include eligibility criteria, data collection methods, & length of protocol with consent
3. Rationale: briefly describe why engaging with rural Minnesotans is important to your study

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. As stated above, enrollees at the state fair are largely made up of urban residents; the purpose of the expansion to county fairs is to:

- increase access to research opportunities for residents of rural MN,
- reduce urban/rural health disparities,
- build collaboration opportunities with local communities,
- enhance outreach, engagement, & dissemination opportunities, and
- deliver on the UMN mission.

The county fair arm of D2D is separate from the state fair. You may participate in the state fair AND/OR county fairs. Every effort will be made to ensure communications are clear throughout the summer regarding this distinction.

WHO MAY CONDUCT RESEARCH AT D2D-COUNTY?
Faculty, staff, and students from all UMN campuses. 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-County application review is not on the research question itself, 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 a fair environment,
- minimally invasive, posing minimal risk,
- requires no more than 30 minutes of a participant’s time during the fair,
- engaging for a rural audience.

RESOURCES PROVIDED
Facilities will vary depending on the fair. Indoor booth space will be secured to bring up to four studies to each fair. Booths (1 booth per study) range in size from approximately 8’ x 8’ to 10’ x 12’. Tables and chairs will be provided.

In addition to research space, the following resources will be provided:

- Parking passes, when necessary (1 per study);
- iPads linked to consent forms and survey instruments;
- Internet access;
- Office & cleaning supplies;
- Other equipment may be obtained upon request;
- String backpack incentives;
- Compliance with fair rules and regulations;

FEES
Fees for D2D-County 2024 are $500 per fair. Researchers are also asked to cover their own travel costs which may include mileage, lodging and meal per diems. If study-specific equipment is required you may be asked to cover that cost; we will work with you on case by case needs. D2D needs a minimum number of research teams to sign up for county fairs in order for the budget to reach break-even. Applicants will be notified in mid-April if we reach this minimum requirement.

COUNTY FAIR DATES & SHIFTS
D2D-County will attend three county fairs in summer 2024. Event selection was based on previous year’s attendance, facility quality, fairgoer foot traffic and overall engagement success. Each of the fairs had strong fair board interest in hosting D2D again and provides geographic diversity across the state.

The three fairs for 2024 are as follows:

1. Rock County Fair – July 24-27
2. Stevens County Fair – Aug 7-11
3. Beltrami County Fair – Aug 7-11

Shift hours will vary by fair as they each determine their own hours and each fair has varying rules around exhibitor hours. In general, shifts at the county fairs are longer than at the state fair; study staff should be prepared for longer days but lower traffic volume than at the state fair.

1. Rock County Fair
   o Wednesday, July 24 6:00 – 8:00pm
   o Thursday, July 25 12:00 – 7:00pm
   o Friday, July 26 12:00 – 7:00pm
Driven to Discover Research Facility
2024 County Fair RFA

You are required to staff your shifts, two staff are required per study. This will allow for staff breaks periodically throughout the day.

INCENTIVES
D2D-County will provide backpacks to studies who wish to give them away to fairgoers as a ‘thank you’ for their time and energy for study participation. If you choose a different incentive, you are responsible for the cost and transport of those items.

- Individual incentives: you are required to give an incentive of equal value, or a choice of incentives, to each participant.
- Prize drawing (e.g., gift card or electronics).
- Prize-wheel giveaways for participation.
- No incentive: Some D2D studies have not given incentives and still reached their enrollment goals. Keep in mind, however, the fair is a giveaway environment and people like to take something home at the end of the day. Getting people to engage with you without an incentive may prove to be difficult.

REVIEW PROCESS
A review team will evaluate eligible applications using the following considerations:

- Does the study qualify as minimal risk?
- 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 a fair venue?
- Is there a compelling reason for rural engagement?

Inclusion and exclusion criteria for a study may also be taken into account in the review process. The aim is to offer variety for fairgoers, have research teams be successful in their recruitment, and have studies that appeal to a rural audience and address rural issues.

In the online application you will be asked to select which fairs your team is interested in and available to attend. You may indicate you wish to attend one or more than one fair. You may also indicate which days of the fairs you are available for and the review team will consider this to ensure variety at each fair. Fees will be assessed per fair; a minimum number of applicants are needed to meet budget requirements.

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 University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board. The UMN IRB will hold a special session to review D2D applications, both county and state fair apps. Studies with currently-approved IRB applications and studies conducted at D2D at the state fair either in previous years or in 2024 must also be approved. Researchers will be required to submit their applications by the deadline to be set forth by the IRB (see table below, dates subject to change):

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<tr>
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<th>County Fairs</th>
<th>State Fair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Submission</td>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>May 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB Pre-Review &amp; Notification</td>
<td>May 31</td>
<td>May 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studies Respond by</td>
<td>June 24</td>
<td>June 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB Complete by</td>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>July 31</td>
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**Please begin your short title with “D2D” so that it is easily routed to our IRB liaison.**

EVALUATION OF D2D-COUNTY
You will be asked to participate in an evaluation of this new branch of D2D. More information to come later in the summer.

FUTURE TRACKING OF SELECTED PROJECTS
Success of D2D 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 your interest in D2D-County. Please contact the D2D Manager, Annie Hotop, 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, visit the D2D website, http://d2d.umn.edu.

D2D DIRECTORS
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