

## **2025 Mentored Pilot Study Program**

### **Applications Open**

The School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, Baltimore County sponsors an annual *Mentored Pilot Study Program* in the field of retirement, health and disability research through their Retirement and Disability Research Center (RDRC). This RDRC program provides grant support to doctoral students to pursue pilot studies focused on retirement, health and disability, with funding from the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA). The goal is to encourage doctoral students to conduct pilot studies that could lead to external funding to conduct further research focused on disability, retirement and health.

The Mentored Pilot Study proposal must address one of SSA's 2025 research focal areas:

Focal Area 1: Understanding Service Needs and Improving Service Delivery

Focal Area 2: Studying Causes and Inequities of Overpayment and Underpayment

Focal Area 3: Addressing Barriers to Disability and SSI Programs Participation and Processes

Focal Area 4: Understanding and Improving Communication

Focal Area 5: Identifying Disparities by Race, Ethnicity, and Sex

Focal Area 6: Examining Economic Security of Program Applicants and Beneficiaries

Focal Area 7: Addressing Employment Barriers for People with Disabilities

FY 2025 SSA focal areas can be found here:

<https://www.ssa.gov/policy/extramural/index.html#rdrc>

### **Pilot Study Funding**

Two \$8,000 grants will be awarded to doctoral students to conduct disability, retirement or health pilot studies, intended to lead to external funding support. They will be matched with a mentor from among the UMBC RDRC research faculty.

### **Submission**

Applicants should submit a one-page concept paper that provides a brief outline of the pilot study, the target funder for the pilot study, and a timeline. The proposed work should be completed within a 1-year time frame. The submission should also include a discussion of what the grant funding will support.

The Training and Education Committee will review applications – assessing for relevance to the RDRC and SSA goals, overall feasibility and within the proposed timeline and likelihood of a high-quality data for a grant submission.

Applications and supporting documents should be emailed to Melanie Keys at [mkeys3@umbc.edu](mailto:mkeys3@umbc.edu) before the deadline of March 3, 2025.

Additional information

Please contact Melanie Keys ([mkeys3@umbc.edu](mailto:mkeys3@umbc.edu)) with any questions about the Mentored Pilot Study Program.