



DEVELOPMENTAL PILOT GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT: 2009-2010

The Johns Hopkins University NIMH Center for Novel Therapeutics of HIV- associated Cognitive Disorders is pleased to announce two separate funding mechanisms this summer for innovative **NeuroAIDS DEVELOPMENTAL PILOT GRANT AWARDS**. The Center, which opened in 2006, is part of the Department of Neurology and has as a main objective, funding new investigators (including cross-disciplinary) interested in collaborating with the Center faculty to generate preliminary data that will lead to future NIH funding. The grant awards are particularly designed to stimulate new projects and encourage new investigators to generate data that would be used for future grant applications. The two funds are described below.

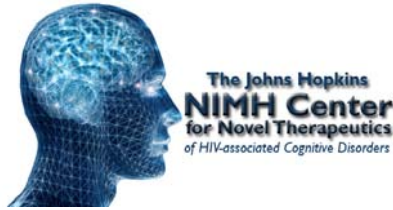
First, our **Center Developmental Pilot Grant fund** will award 2-4 pilot grants of \$25,000 to \$45,000 in direct costs for approximately a one-year period. Faculty members of any rank are encouraged to apply, and collaborations with other academic institutions or international sites are allowable. Last winter, we funded five projects out of seven selected finalists. Three were outside of the School of Medicine demonstrating an interest we have in building new collaborative research relationships. This year we want to encourage female applicants, currently under-represented in our awards. Of course, we encourage collaborations with any JHU faculty researcher. Prior to last year, two funding cycles resulted in six awards to JHU faculty with innovative proposals.

Our second mechanism will fund four students enrolled in our diversity-focused **R25 Grant funded course**, entitled **Translational Research in NeuroAIDS and Mental Health**. Students from racial or ethnic minority groups and non-ethnic minorities doing diversity-related research are eligible for up to \$20,000 for developmental pilot research.

The application process is streamlined to require one submission in a five page R01 grant format, detailing hypotheses, background and introduction, preliminary data, and methods. Align the proposal with the scoring criteria used by the reviewers, along with an NIH-style biosketch. Submit your proposal by **May 31** to Carol Scott, M.S. Program Administrator at cscott28@jhmi.edu. A national and independent JHU research review committee will score the proposals providing feedback about each project. Award announcements will be made **June 15, 2009**. Contact Carol Scott for a copy of the **Instructions for Pilot Grant Proposal Submissions to JHU NIMH Center**, which includes the scoring criteria used by the reviewers. You may also visit the JHU NIMH Center website at http://hopkinsneuro.org/research/jhu_nimh/ for a copy of the instructions.

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the NIMH Center with any questions or to discuss their projects. Please contact Carol Scott at cscott28@jhmi.edu or by telephone at 410-955-0956. We look forward to hearing from you.

PLEASE NOTE: THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS ARE FOR TWO SEPARATE FUNDING MECHANISMS. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR AWARDS 1 OR 2



JHU NIMH Center Developmental Pilot Grants: (two funding mechanisms)

- 1) Center Developmental Pilot Grants**
 - 2) R25 Course Grant: Translational Research in NeuroAIDS and Mental Health**
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1) Center Developmental Pilot Grant Award Mechanism

These pilot grants are primarily designed to support innovative faculty research, which has not yet reached a point in development where NIH funding is likely. Thus, it is expected that proposals will outline a plan that will generate sufficient preliminary data to make NIH funding likely. Indeed, the success of the program will be judged, in part, by the number of pilot grants accomplishing this goal. The eventual availability of non-NIH funding sources is, of course, recognized, as is the difficulty of getting governmental funding for highly innovative work. Therefore, successful attainment of subsequent long term funding is only one criterion of the program's success. Equally important is providing the seed money for innovative and cross-disciplinary research for publication in peer reviewed journals. Proposals are expected to address at least one area of thematic importance to the JHU NIMH Center: ***Detection of early neurological disease; Neuropathogenesis; Neurological treatments; Development of biomarkers or animal models; Assessment of the impact of cognitive dysfunction on everyday function; Behavioral or psychological aspects of HIV-associated cognitive disorders; The impact of co-infections or confounding illnesses on HIV-associated cognitive disorders.***

Junior investigators, women, and those not previously involved in HIV research are particularly encouraged to apply. The goals of the Pilot Grant program are reflected in the attached scoring system below.

1) Center Grant Award Mechanism: Who May Apply?

Any faculty member at the Johns Hopkins University or at other institutions (including international sites) in which the applicant will be actively collaborating with a JHU NIMH Center faculty investigator will be eligible to apply for a Neuro-AIDS pilot grant through this Core. That includes research associates and instructors (or the equivalent rank), in addition to more senior faculty. Undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows, will **not** be eligible to apply as Principal or Co-Investigators for pilot grants, but can participate in funded research with a faculty PI.

Recipients of pilot grants will not be eligible to apply for another pilot grant in the year following their award. They may apply for another grant after two years, even if they have received a no-cost one-year extension. Unsuccessful applicants may apply in consecutive years. Investigators who have applied to but not been funded by CFAR will be permitted to apply for Neuro-AIDS development funds. However, investigators who have had **applications funded by CFAR will not be permitted to receive additional funding for the same study** by the Neuro-AIDS program.

1) Center Grant Award Mechanism: Funding and Time Lines

Two to four pilot grants per year are expected to be awarded in the range of \$25,000-\$50,000 in direct costs. No indirect costs are included, as these are covered by the NIMH Center grant. Funds may be used for faculty or fellow salary support, **but not for stipends paid to undergraduate or graduate students, or for tuition.** Funds may be used for travel essential to the conduct of research, but not for travel to established meetings or conferences. The review committee recognizes the high per diem costs of some international sites, but expects investigators to exercise ingenuity and judgment in budgeting for overseas room and board. Funds may not be used for equipment.

Funding will be for one year with the possibility of a one-time, no-cost extension upon written request and evaluation by the Executive Committee (listed below). The request for a no-cost extension must be received within the 12-month period of the original award.

Beyond the 1-2 year period of funding, successful applicants are required to update the Center operations office on continued progress in the funded area of research. It is crucial that we monitor successes in areas for which pilot funding was provided, as this will be the ultimate measure of the Center's value to the Hopkins HIV community and beyond. Any publications of work funded in part by a JHU NIMH Center pilot grant should acknowledge this funding source.

2) R25 Course Grant: Translational Research in NeuroAIDS and Mental Health Award Mechanism

These pilot grants are designed to support innovative research related to diversity issues in NeuroAIDS and Mental Health from students enrolled in our R25 course grant. The primary purpose of our course grant is to increase the number of racial and ethnic minority and non-minority NeuroAIDS investigators interested in diversity-related research. Thus far, we have five universities participating in this innovative course through online and onsite webcast didactic research training. The mentored research component of the course is two-fold. Students may apply for mentored research training at JHU and/or developmental pilot proposals based at their home institutions. Mentored research training with selected faculty at JHU will provide guidance for identified training needs. The proposals will help trainees develop a research project with pilot data for potential future NIH funding. Proposals should address at least one area of thematic importance to the course's didactic lectures: **HIV-associated neurocognitive disorders, Clinical research techniques and cultural competence, Cultural sensitivity in neuropsychological scales for HIV dementia, Pathology of neuroAIDS, Statistical issues in NeuroAIDS research, Surrogate and host genetic markers, Imaging techniques in NeuroAIDS, Animal models for HIV dementia and drug abuse, Viral genetics and reservoirs, Pathophysiology of neurodegeneration with HIV infection, Drug development for HIV dementia, or Ethics in NeuroAIDS research in minority populations.** Other relevant topics of interest are acceptable if cleared first through your home university course faculty and the JHU course directors.

2) R25 Course Award Mechanism: Who May Apply?

Students who are formally registered for the course (# ME:200.701) are eligible to submit a proposal with the consent of their home university instructor and the JHU course directors and lecturer.

2) R25 Course Grant: Funding and Time Lines

Four pilot grants are expected to be awarded in the \$20,000 range for direct costs. The grant will also cover your departmental indirect costs. Only students enrolled in the course are eligible for funding. Funds may be used for travel essential to the conduct of research, including travel to JHU for training purposes. Funds may not be used for equipment.

Funding will be until March 31, 2010 with the possibility of a one-time, no-cost extension upon written request and evaluation by your home university and course directors. The request for a no-cost extension is due by February 1, 2010 in anticipation of the March 31 deadline.

I & 2) Submission Deadline and Start Date of Awards (both award mechanisms)

The application process for both award mechanisms is streamlined and requires the submission of an abbreviated grant application. This should be in an ROI format, with details of hypotheses, background and introduction, preliminary data, and methods. Further details are included below. This will be submitted electronically **IN PDF FORMAT** and due in the JHU NIMH Center Operations Office, CRB, II, Rm 353, by 11:59 PM, May 31st, 2009. The NIH-style biosketch of investigators should accompany the document. You may email your proposal if you wish. Carol Scott will acknowledge receipt of the proposal.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the NIMH Center to discuss proposed projects: cscott28@jhmi.edu or 410-955-0956.

We anticipate announcing the awards by June 15th.

The following are the instructions for both pilot grant proposal submissions:
Instructions for Pilot Grant Proposal Submissions to JHU NIMH Center

1) Center Developmental Pilot Grant

2) & R25 Course Grant

Grants must be submitted as PDF files containing:

- I. Title of Proposal, names and departmental affiliations of all investigators, name(s) of Principal Investigator(s). Funding can be divided among more than one PI, but this must be reflected in the budget with clear justification.
- II. NIH format Biographical Sketch and Other Support page for all investigators
- III. Itemized Budget (does not need ORA review) with justification, including salary, supplies, equipment, travel, etc.
- III. Research Plan ~ ROI format abbreviated.

General Format: The Research Plan should be no longer than 5 single-spaced pages, including figures, using a font of 11 point. Figures may be integrated within the text or included as a separate appendix, but the total number of pages must be 5 or fewer. References may be attached on separate, additional pages, and should be carefully chosen, not to exceed 30 in number. References are not included in the 5 page limit. The name of the PI(s) should appear in

the right top corner of each page. The Research Plan comprises the following components within the 5 page limit:

Brief Introduction or Abstract: This section is recommended, and is intended to help the author orient the reviewer with respect to the sections, which follow. It may be in the form of a comprehensive abstract or a more limited introduction. Any new collaborations or highly innovative aspects should be succinctly noted. Relevance to the NIMH Center Grant theme of Therapeutics should also be indicated.

Specific Aims: Aims should highlight specific hypotheses to be tested. If new techniques, new populations, or new collaborations are utilized to test these hypotheses, they should be emphasized.

Background (including Preliminary Results if available), and Significance: In addition to scientific background and significance, this section may indicate how success of the pilot grant will affect subsequent research and funding. The section on Significance should indicate relevance to the NIMH Center Grant theme of Therapeutics. This section should clarify how answers to the questions asked will advance the field.

Experimental Design: Experiments should be related to the hypotheses or questions addressed, Methods should be brief but sufficiently detailed to convince reviewers of feasibility and validity, with details focused on the novel aspects of the project rather than published or standard techniques. Statistical approaches to data analysis should be outlined where applicable, including consideration of adequate statistical power. Reviewers have often noted that proposals lack addressing statistical issues.

Anticipated Problems and Possible Solutions: Any anticipated experimental or interpretive problems should be addressed, with alternative approaches when possible. Risks and drawbacks of this approach should be addressed, especially if human subjects are involved

Letters of collaboration as needed may be submitted as PDF documents as well. Other appendices are not permitted

Scoring System

Scoring System (maximum possible points awarded for each category):

1. Scientific merit, including feasibility and experimental design (10 points; faculty reviewers)
2. Scientific impact and novelty (10 points; faculty reviewers)
3. PI new to Neuro-AIDS research (3 points Executive Committee reviewers)
4. New collaboration between investigators (1 point Executive Committee reviewers)
5. New area of research for PI (1 point's Executive Committee reviewers)

Total: 25 points

Executive Committee Members

Justin McArthur, M.B.B.S.; Center Director

Avindra Nath, M.D., Center Co-Director & Surrogate Markers Core Director

Ned Sacktor, M.D., Clinical Core Director

Joseph Steiner, Ph.D., Therapeutics Sub-core Co-Director

Amanda Brown, Ph.D., Development Core Director

Carol Scott, M.S., Program Administrator