

Call for Applications for Collaborative Pilot Project Grants

Nebraska Center for Cellular Signaling

Years 4-5 of Phase III

This notice represents our official request for the next round of collaborative applications. This funding is available to support collaborative projects amongst current and past NCCS CoBRE investigators and their collaborators.

One of our major goals is to support projects where it is judged likely that the investigators will submit meritorious, multi-investigator proposals to external agencies within 6 months after the completion of the NCCS pilot project. Another goal is to promote appropriate application and use of NCCS core technology, especially the UNMC Advanced Microscopy Facility. More mature collaborations that utilize this core facility will have an advantage over less developed partnerships.

Awards will be made for **1-2 years** with funded amounts up to **\$100,000 per project**.

Budget Guidelines:

The budget must not exceed \$100,000 total.

Earliest possible start of funding: August 15, 2016

No more than 5% salary/fringe benefit support for each investigator.

Salary/fringe benefit support for no more than two research personnel (one per laboratory) up to the current starting salary of a Technologist I.

The balance of funds is to be shared for a common supply budget between the collaborating laboratories. Supplies may include costs of core facility usage and lab operating expenses.

Timelines:

Please direct all questions to Keith Johnson at kjohnsonr@unmc.edu or 559-3890 or Rick MacDonald at rgmacdon@unmc.edu or 559-7824. Applications must be submitted electronically to Michele Griebel at michele.griebel@unmc.edu **no later than May 16, 2016**.

Proposals will be evaluated for scientific merit by our External Advisory Board. As in the past for internal review mechanisms such as this, we will not be providing detailed critiques of proposals that are not recommended for funding.

Application Instructions:

- Format: NIH R21 format for length, including a complete cover page and budget pages. *Note these applications are not required to meet the normal R21 criteria for translational or high-risk/reward projects.*
- The core components of a typical R21 proposal (specific aims, research strategy, narrative, abstract, etc.) need to be included. Please be aware that we must forward the proposals that we select for funding to the NIH for their approval, so NIH format is required.
- It will be advantageous to include preliminary data and other evidence of ongoing collaboration.

- The proposal should include clear plans stating when grant applications will be submitted and to what agencies they will be submitted.

Eligibility and Requirements:

- All past and current NCCS investigators and mentors at any of the collaborating NCCS institutions are eligible (a list of current NCCS investigators is appended to this RFA).
- The goal of the NCCS Pilot Project Grant Program is to assist teams of investigators in acquisition of external NIH R01-type funding. Thus, investigators who currently have NCCS pilot project funding that would continue past August 15, 2016 are also eligible to apply for this round. However, already holding current NCCS funding will be taken into consideration in the review of new proposals.
- Teams of investigators on successful proposals will be made up of Co-PIs; ***teams composed of a single PI plus Co-Investigators do not meet these criteria***. At least one of the Co-PIs must be a member of the NCCS or meet the early-stage investigator criteria (below). Eligible investigators must hold appointments leading to tenure or be tenured already. In any given funding cycle, an investigator will be limited to one application in which he/she is a Co-PI.
- **Early-stage investigators are strongly encouraged to apply and, upon receiving pilot grant funding, will automatically be considered NCCS investigators**. For purposes of the NCCS Pilot Grants Program, early-stage investigators are defined as those who have been in a tenure-leading position for less than five years and who have not yet acquired NIH-derived or other similar external funding as an independent scientist. During the Pilot Project funding period, such early-stage investigators will be supervised by Professional Development Teams (PDT) to be assigned by the NCCS. Details of the duties, responsibilities and benefits of the PDT are available upon request.
- Individuals with transient commitments to or from their institutions will not be eligible. Thus, post-doctoral fellows and visiting professors and investigators with no more than adjunct appointments are not eligible.
- It is our intention to fund those projects most likely to result in meritorious multi-investigator applications being submitted to external funding agencies such as the NIH. Past history of scientific cooperation between the collaborating investigators is thus a plus.
- Applications will be considered from investigators currently participating in multi-PI projects whose funding has lapsed or whose funding is in no-cost extension. It will be an advantage if the investigators have submitted a renewal application and the renewal application was scored but not funded.
- NCCS members are encouraged to consider projects involving collaborations with clinical researchers or projects with clear clinical implications.
- We will accept applications seeking support for projects that already have seed grant support from other sources. However, such applications must make it unambiguously clear how NCCS funds will add to the likelihood of a meritorious multi-PI proposal being submitted.
- We expect that applicants will submit a proposal to an external agency within six months of completing funding of these pilot grants. We ask that investigators state what external agencies they have in mind and outline a reasonable strategy for submitting proposals that utilize and build on the data you are obtaining with pilot grant support.
- We ask that applicants verify that all regulatory affairs requirements are being satisfied and, if applicable, provide IRB or IACUC protocol numbers. If such protocols have not yet been

approved, the investigators will be obligated to provide evidence of protocol approval (protocol numbers) before funding can commence.

- **For projects with one year of funding, we require a final progress report sent to the NCCS no later than 30 days after the end of pilot grant support.** For projects that are funded for two years, we will require that principal investigators provide the NCCS with a mid-stream progress report April 25, 2017 as well as a final report that is sent to the NCCS no later than 30 days after the end of pilot grant support. The reports will contain a summary of progress and scholarly activities such as presentations and publications. These annual/final reports will be reviewed by the Coordinator of the Pilot Grants Program to verify that investigators are complying with these requirements and then the reports will be included as part of our annual progress report to the NIH.
- Investigators who have funding as a project leader on another COBRE are eligible to apply for NCCS pilot funding, so long as it can be demonstrated that the pilot project is clearly distinct from that funded by the other COBRE. During the review process and final deliberations for pilot project funding, the applicant's career stage, productivity, and history of productivity will be taken into consideration.

Review of Applications:

We will have proposals evaluated for scientific merit by our External Advisory Board. As in the past for internal review mechanisms like this, we will NOT be providing detailed critiques of proposals that are not recommended for funding.

If you have any questions, please ask.

Good luck.

NCCS Investigators, as of January 1, 2015:

Director: Keith Johnson

Assistant Director: Rick MacDonald

UNMC College of Dentistry

Ali Nawshad

Aimin Peng

Tom Petro

Greg Oakley

Jim Wahl

UNMC Eppley

Hamid Band

Jixin Dong

Rob Lewis

Xu Luo

Mayumi Naramura

Amarnath Natarajan

Rene Opavsky

Pankaj Singh

Joyce Solheim

Jing Jenny Wang

UNMC College of Medicine

Erika Boesen

Steve Caplan

Kaustubh Datta

John Davis

Shantaram Joshi

Parmender Mehta

Justin Mott

Naava Naslavsky

Steve Rennard

Myron Toews

Cheng Wang

Ying Yan

Creighton

Laura Hansen

Yaping Tu

UNL

Deb Brown

Melanie Simpson