



Pilot Grants Available in the Environmental Health Sciences

Information Session: October 14, 12:00-1:00 pm

Register [here](#) for Zoom information

The HERCULES Exposome Research Center (NIEHS P30 ES019776) is pleased to announce the 2021 Pilot Project Program in Environmental Health Sciences. HERCULES will fund six pilot awards at \$30,000 (direct costs) each. Awards of up to \$40,000 (direct costs) will be considered in exceptional circumstances. Additional funds are available through the Winship Cancer Institute partnership described below.

A major focus of HERCULES is to advance the science of the exposome (the comprehensive analysis of environmental exposures over a lifetime); however, the Pilot Project Program supports any research in the environmental health sciences that aligns with the [mission of NIEHS](#). Pilot projects must focus on the role of the environment in human disease, and may include basic (cellular and animal), biomedical, translational, clinical, epidemiologic, behavioral projects, or community engaged research, e.g., studies on specific environmental toxicants, mechanisms of environmental toxicant damage, gene-environment interactions, or social determinants of environmental exposure or risk.

Through a partnership with the Winship Cancer Institute, additional awards that focus on the role of the environment in cancer biology, cancer prevention, and cancer outcomes will also be supported. Applicants interested in funding from the HERCULES-Winship partnership should include at least one investigator who is a member of Winship.



The central goal of HERCULES is to build the capacity of investigators at Emory and Georgia Tech to successfully compete for NIEHS-funded research awards and to support NIEHS-funded investigators. Specifically, ***the Pilot Project Program supports developmental projects aimed at competing for NIEHS R21 or R01 research grants, and it is expected that an application for such a grant will be submitted subsequent to the pilot funding.*** It is critical for pilot applicants to consider the [research priorities of NIEHS](#) in their pilot project plans to ensure alignment with Center goals.

Applications that propose to utilize one or more of the [HERCULES Facility Cores](#) are especially encouraged. The Facility Cores are designed to provide investigators with state of the art technologies, tools, and approaches that can be applied to environmental health studies to ensure that the most impactful, rigorous, and innovative research is being undertaken by Emory Investigators. Awardees will receive subsidized Core services. Applicants planning to use a HERCULES Core are *required* to consult with Core members regarding feasibility and costs



before submitting a full application. Applicable Core consultation meeting times will be provided upon receipt of a letter of intent.

- Environmental Health Data Sciences: Expertise in statistical approaches in environmental health research, data management, and systems biology.
- Targeted Exposure Analysis: A unique suite of multiple types of mass spectrometers allows for measurement of any chemical in multiple biological matrices.
- Metabolomics: A standardized high-resolution protocol is used to obtain a global view of metabolism and environmental exposures.
- Clinical/Population Research Services: Expertise in translation of basic science concepts into practical clinical and population research designs and provide opportunities to connect with appropriate population resources including the GA-CTSA.
- Community Engagement Core (CEC): Applicants planning a community-engaged pilot project are required to consult with the CEC, which offers expertise in community partnerships and assessing the feasibility and scope of community-engaged research projects (see guidelines for community-engaged research projects below).

Projects with translational relevance (clinical or population-based), community-based participatory research projects (see below for guidelines), and collaborative and interdisciplinary projects are particularly encouraged.

Application Guidelines:

Eligibility to Apply:

- HERCULES pilot awards are open to all investigators at Emory and the Emory-Georgia Tech Department of Biomedical Engineering who are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators on NIH R-level grant applications. Faculty in other departments at Georgia Tech are eligible to apply if their proposal includes collaboration with an Emory faculty member.
- HERCULES Pilot PIs funded in the previous two pilot cycles are not eligible to apply.
- Only one application per PI may be submitted.
- Applications must be focused on the role of the environment in human health and disease and align with the [mission of NIEHS](#).

Recommended Guidelines for HERCULES Community-Engaged Research Projects:

- Applications for community-engaged research projects designed to address local environmental health concerns are encouraged.
- Applicants planning a community-engaged pilot project are required to consult with the CEC prior to submitting an application.
- Community members/partners are expected to participate meaningfully in the development of the research questions and research design, as well as study implementation (e.g., data collection), with resources shared (e.g., compensating partner's time). As such, community-engaged projects should carefully consider the

scope of the project.

- Community partners and researchers are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding. A template can be provided by the CEC.
- CBPR projects should carefully consider the scope of the project, including time and budget for project and partnership coordination.

Letter of Intent due by Monday, November 2, 2020 at 5:00 pm to katehodgins@emory.edu.

The letter should include a descriptive title of the proposed research, overall aim/hypothesis of proposed research, names of key personnel, and any anticipated use of [HERCULES Facility Cores](#) (Environmental Health Data Sciences, Targeted Analysis, Metabolomics, or Clinical/Population Research Services). If planning to request more than \$30,000, *a justification for this exceptional circumstance must be included in your letter*. Letters should not exceed one page. Applicants will be notified if they are selected to submit a full application by Friday, November 6th.

Application due by Friday, December 4, 2020 at 5:00 pm to katehodgins@emory.edu.

1. Cover page:
 - Include a paragraph summarizing the proposed research and its environmental health relevance.
 - Describe immediate or future relevance to local communities, if applicable.
 - Include a sentence explaining how the research will advance exposome research, general environmental health research, or cancer science, as applicable.
 - List all project participants and their roles on the project.
2. Science portion (4 page maximum length, 11 point Arial, 1-inch margins):
 - Should be written in the style of an NIH R grant, with specific aims, significance, innovation, and approach.
 - Include a sentence describing your consultation with [HERCULES Facility Core\(s\)](#) (including meeting date and attendees), if applicable.
 - References and cover page are not included in the page count.
3. Future Plans for NIEHS-relevant grant submission (300 word limit): Describe how findings from the proposed research will help ground a future NIEHS grant application. Include an outline of the remaining experiments or data collection, if any, that will need to take place before an R-level application may be submitted, and a timeline for when the submission will occur. The content of this section will carry considerable weight on review.
4. Data Sharing Plan. All applications must contain a Data Sharing Plan, where applicable. This should be provided on a separate page.
5. NIH Biosketch
6. Full NIH budget & justification on PHS 398 form (pages fp4 and fp5)
 - Consult with your RAS pre-award manager to develop your budget.
 - Funding up to \$30,000 direct costs may be requested. Funding up to \$40,000 direct costs will be considered in exceptional circumstances with advance approval.



- Funds budgeted for HERCULES Core services should be adjusted to account for services provided free or on a discounted basis to pilot awardees. Budget details should be discussed at the required Facility Core consultation meeting.
- Indirect costs should not be included in budget. Budgets are administered in RSPH, are not subject to the Emory Collaboration policy, and F&A is not shared with the collaborating department.
- Faculty salary support up to a maximum of 5% effort may be requested (combined effort of all participating faculty, NIH salary cap limit applies).
- All federal and university rules and regulations regarding the administration of grants apply to these funds. Costs subject to CAS approval, such as computers, general purpose equipment, office supplies, etc., may not be budgeted. Any travel must follow Emory University travel policies and procedures.
- Email a compiled electronic version (PDF) of the application to: katehodgins@emory.edu
- Decisions made in early February 2021. Funding starts April 1, 2021 and ends March 31, 2022.

Awardee Requirements:

- Pilot awards are expected to lead to R-level NIH funding, preferably with NIEHS. Awardees are required to keep the HERCULES Center Administrator informed of any funding related to the pilot project.
- Any resultant publications must cite funding from HERCULES (NIH grant P30 ES019776) and must follow NIH guidelines for depositing the manuscript in PubMed Central. An electronic copy of all publications should be provided to the HERCULES Center Administrator.
- Awardees automatically become members of the HERCULES Center, and must agree to participate in HERCULES activities (Retreats, Seminars, Data Clubs, Workshops, Stakeholder and External Advisory Board Meetings). As HERCULES Members, awardees are also welcome to take advantage of HERCULES resources, including assistance in grant preparation and career development activities.
- Awardees must supply the following IRB information, if relevant, to the HERCULES Center Administrator for approval by NIEHS prior to release of funds: study team CITI certification, University IRB approval/exemption letter, Human Subjects Statement, and PHS Inclusion Form.
- A midpoint project report is due December 4, 2021 and a final project update by April 30, 2022. Additional follow-up reports and a presentation of pilot results will also be required.

Questions?

- Visit the HERCULES FAQ page: <https://emoryhercules.com/pilot-program/funding-information/>
- For HERCULES questions, contact Dr. Edward Morgan, email: etmorga@emory.edu
- For Winship questions, contact Kim Kerstann, email: kfkerst@emory.edu