



Infectious Diseases Clinical Research Consortium

IDCRC Mentoring and Career Development Committee

2022 Request for Applications Early Career Investigator Pilot Awards

RFA Release Date	April 18, 2022
Letter of Intent Due Date	May 16, 2022
Application Due Date	June 30, 2022
Review Date	July 29, 2022
Project Period Begins	September 1, 2022

Please read the entire RFA.

Pilot Award RFA

1) Overview

Purpose

Mentored Pilot Research Project awards (similar to K08, K23, and K99 awards) provide 1 year of funding to support research projects and career development activities that will enhance the applicant's ability to compete successfully for an independent R- or K-series award (e.g., acquisition of preliminary data, training in grant preparation).

Applicant Eligibility

1. Scientists (MD, PhD or equivalent) nearing completion of postdoc or in early faculty positions (Instructor or Assistant Professor)
2. Must not have served as Principal Investigator (PI) or MPI on an R-grant other than an R03 with NIH. Serving as PI on a K-series or other mentored career award does not preclude eligibility.
3. Strong preference will be given to mentees who are in the IDCRC Mentoring and Career Development Committee's Mentorship Program.
4. Investigators from under-represented groups in medicine and science as defined here: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/underrepresented-person-definition> are encouraged to apply.

Note that applicants are required to have an MD or PhD or equivalent terminal degree in order to be eligible to apply and must be eligible for NIH K or R awards. Applicants may only submit one application to this program per cycle. Applications must have a single PI (no Co-PI or MPI applications will be accepted).

Types of Projects

The projects can address a variety of topics, including vaccinology, therapeutics, laboratory studies, and statistics. We encourage but do not require projects that are value-added (including secondary analyses) to existing VTEU projects. Projects addressing diversity and equity in clinical trials are also encouraged but not required.

Funding

- Awards **up to \$100,000** (direct + indirect costs) depending on scope of project. Funds are non-transferable.
- Matching funds by the applicant's local institution/department/division/VTEU are encouraged, and applications with a clear commitment to matching will be given preference.
- Awards to the institutions will include indirect cost at the institution's rate.
- All costs must conform to the NIH Grants Policy Statement (GPS) and applicable U.S. Office of Management and Budget OMB circulars for necessity and reasonability, allocability, conformance and consistency, as well as allowability. Please follow the link below to section 7.2 cost principles section of the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#) for more information.

Human Subjects and Animal Care Approvals: Animal Care and Institutional Review Board approvals, if applicable, **must be obtained prior to receipt** of award funding, but are not required to submit an application.

2) Pre-Submission Process

Letter of Intent: Submit a non-binding "Letter of Intent" listing proposed Principal Investigator, Project Title, Mentor(s), and names of collaborators by **May 16, 2022**. Complete the LOI at

<https://form.jotform.com/220824345765055>

3) Post-Award Requirements (if funded)

Prior Approvals (use of human or animal subjects, international sites): Prior to funding, a copy of all Institutional Biohazard, Animal Care and IRB approvals (if applicable) must be forwarded to Anna Wald (annawald@uw.edu) and Kellei Johnstone (k.johnstone@emory.edu).

Mentoring Committee and Agreement: Awardees will draw up a brief written agreement with their mentor and identify members of their mentoring committee.

Reporting and Presentation Requirements: Awardees will be required to submit a 12-month progress report to the MCD committee and may be asked to make an oral presentation at the annual IDCRC meeting.

IDCRC Support:

IDCRC support (UM1AI148684) must be acknowledged in all publications and presentations derived from IDCRC funding. Publications supported by this award must have PMID numbers in order to comply with the NIH Public Access Policy.

4) Review Criteria

The evaluation criteria for proposals include:

- i) **Applicant**
 - Commitment to a research career
 - Academic record and accomplishments to date
 - Potential to become an independent investigator
- ii) **Career Development Plan**
 - Appropriateness of the plan for achieving scientific independence
 - Consistency with candidate's prior training and career goals
- iii) **Mentor/Co-mentors**
 - Mentor's research qualifications in the area of the proposed project
 - Quality and extent of mentor's proposed role in providing guidance to the candidate
 - Previous mentor success in training early career investigators
 - History of research productivity
- iv) **Research Plan (Significance, Innovation, Approach)**
 - Scientific merit of the research question, design, and methodology
 - Relevance of the proposed research to the applicant's career objectives
 - Appropriateness of the research plan to the applicant's stage of research development
 - Appropriateness of the research plan for advancing the career development plan

Other considerations:

Impact of Project on Pathway to Independence – Will the project help prepare the applicant for a career as an independent researcher? Will the proposed mentorship aid in the investigator's career development?

Please also refer to the NIH's Rigor and Reproducibility Guidelines: Does the project take the NIH guidelines on rigor and reproducibility into consideration?

Diversity – the applicants will be asked to provide information on how they contribute to diversity in biomedical sciences.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

After completing all pre-submission requirements, submit the following in one PDF (preferred) or MS Word file by 5:00 p.m. EST June 30, 2022. Please note all of the items listed below must be included for successful submission of your application.

The proposal should be written on [PHS 398 forms](#) and should follow a modified NIH investigator initiated grant application (R01) format. The Research Plan (Specific Aims through Approach) is limited to 4 pages (Bibliography and References Cited section do not count toward the page limit). No appendices are allowed. Do not submit Targeted/Planned Enrollment Tables. Submit a detailed budget, not a modular budget.

1. **First Page** (PHS 398 Form page 1). Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#)) Institutional sign-off for non-Emory applicants is required.
2. **Project Summary Page:** (PHS 398 Form page 2 - Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#))
3. **Detailed budget and justification** for the 12 month period: (PHS 398 Form page 4 - Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#)) and (PHS 398 Form page 5 - Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#))
4. **Resources page** (PHS 398 Format - Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#); maximum length 1 page)
5. **Biographical Sketch** for the pilot grant applicant (PHS 398 Format - Download: [MS Word](#))
6. **Biographical Sketch for primary NIA mentor** and any other mentors.
7. **Applicant Background and Career Development Plan, including ½ page on the applicant's contribution to diversity** (1 ½ page)
8. **Research Plan** (Maximum 4 pages for a-d below). Use PHS 398 Continuation Format pages (Download: [MS Word](#) or [PDF](#)).
 - a. Specific Aims (suggested length 1 page)
 - b. Significance (suggested length ½ page)
 - c. Innovation (suggested length ½ page)
 - d. Approach (suggested length 2 pages)
9. **Bibliography and References** cited (as needed)
10. **Protection of Human Subjects** (if applicable; maximum 1 page)
11. **Vertebrate Animals** (if applicable; maximum 1 page)
12. **Mentor's Letter of Support** (should include the statement "I have read and discussed this application with [applicant name] and am supportive of its submission"; maximum 1 page). The letter should also reference the mentor's previous success in mentoring and should include a mentoring plan that describes the method and frequency with which the mentor and applicant will communicate.
13. **Division or Department Chair Letter of Support** describing the commitment of financial support, if any secured.

Additional Information Required

- Lay Language Summary
- Suggested Reviewers (Required: 2 non-conflicted senior investigators)

Additional Information Requested in the Online Submission Form but Optional

- Demographics (including gender)

Please send any questions to: Dr. Kathryn Edwards (kathryn.edwards@vumc.org) and Dr. Igbo Ofotokun (iotok@emory.edu), IDCRC Mentoring and Career Development Committee Co-Chairs.

Letters of Intent to be submitted at <https://form.jotform.com/220824345765055> and Completed Applications may be submitted via email to Kellei Johnstone, k.johnstone@emory.edu.