

PILOT FUNDING IN AGING RESEARCH

University of Rochester School of Medicine & Dentistry (SMD) Strategic Plan Pilot Award Program

Release Date: June 12, 2014

Modified Update: July 3, 2014

The Rochester Aging Research Center (www.urmc.rochester.edu/RoAR-center/) and the Office for Aging Research and Health Services (<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/aging-research-health-services.aspx>) in collaboration with the Center for AIDS Research invite applications for Strategic Plan Pilot Grants in Aging Research.

The purpose of the SMD Strategic Plan Pilot Award Program is to promote the research goals of scientific programs of excellence in biomedical research with the potential to enhance the national and international reputation of the School of Medicine and Dentistry and the University. Funded pilot projects are envisioned as innovative research directions with the potential to give new life to the overall scientific portfolio of the UR and keep the institution abreast of, and even ahead of today's fast-paced and competitive scientific landscape. Multidisciplinary and multi-investigator proposals are strongly encouraged.

Program Details

Eligibility for the Aging Research Pilot Program: The principal investigator (PI) on all proposals must be a full-time tenure-track faculty member of the University of Rochester. Each faculty member can participate in only one application in any capacity.

Pilot Projects in HIV and Aging: Special funds for HIV related projects will be available, and such applications will be reviewed with the other submissions.

Eligible Research: Subjects will be considered for funding from basic aging research across the translational research spectrum to the study of health services delivery and policy:

- Basic mechanisms of aging.
Areas of interest include but are not limited to:
 - Comparative biology of aging
 - Drugable regulators of aging
 - Stem cells and aging
 - Stress and aging
 - Systems Biology of aging (genomics, metabolomics, epigenetics).

- Translation to practice.
Areas of interest include but are not limited to:
 - Geriatric syndromes: highly prevalent in old age, multifactorial, and associated with substantial morbidity and poor outcomes.
 - Multi-sensory impairment – vision, hearing, balance deficits in later life
 - Intervention development and clinical outcomes research
 - Health services research – practice, service system levels
 - Health technologies
 - Population-level outcomes and social determinants research

- HIV and aging.
Projects will be considered responsive if they propose to study HIV infection, HIV-associated conditions, HIV treatment, and/or biobehavioral or social factors associated with HIV/AIDS in the context of aging and/or in older adults. Research approaches of interest include clinical translational, observational, and intervention studies. Areas of interest include but are not limited to:
 - Cellular and molecular mechanisms of HIV in aging.

- Co-morbidities occurring in older individuals with HIV infection (eg. cardiovascular, neurologic, inflammatory complications).
- Biomarkers or clinical indices of HIV-associated pathology.
- HIV-Associated Neurocognitive Disorders (HAND).
- Interventions aimed at older individuals with HIV infection.
- Frailty / Vulnerability in individuals with HIV infection.
- Social, behavioral, and mental health studies in older individuals with HIV infection.

See NIH PAR-12-175 for additional details of responsive areas of science (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-12-175.html>)

Projects will receive the **highest priority** if they:

- Use innovative approaches to study mechanisms of aging and related processes. Proposals to investigate age-associated diseases as such are not encouraged.
- Build on existing strengths of the University that may, or may not, currently be related to aging research.
- Foster multidisciplinary collaboration.
- Have strong potential follow up funding by national, state or private agencies.
- Hold promise to accelerate the rate of translation of science to practice in the care of older adults.

Review Criteria:

- 1) **Innovation:** Projects should not be “more of the same,” i.e., they should not be extensions of ongoing research. This type of research should be funded by the conventional sources, NIH, foundations, etc.
- 2) **Strategic Impact:** Projects should move into areas that are expected to grow in significance. Projects that consolidate or expand areas of particular local strength will be favorably considered.

Funding levels

Up to three proposals will be funded with up to \$50,000 for 12 months.

One of these proposals has to relate to HIV and Aging.

Permissible expenses include supplies and salaries, except PI salaries. Rolling over of funds beyond 12 months requires permission by the funding committee.

Review Process

Submitted applications will be reviewed by a panel of experts, chaired by Vera Gorbunova, Yeates Conwell and Dirk Bohmann

Important Dates

- **September 1st, 2014 at 5:00 PM** - Applications will be due.
- **November 1st, 2014** – Notification of award will be made.
- **December 1st, 2014** – Anticipated start date. Note: All animal and human subject protocols must be approved prior to the start date. No funds will be released until these approvals have been documented.

Submitting a Proposal

Online submission: Proposals must be submitted electronically to Daina_Bullwinkel@URMC.Rochester.edu

Application Format:

The application should use Arial 11 pt font with 1" margins and include the following:

1. Cover page:

- a) Title of the Project
- b) Contact PI's name and contact information
- c) Name and contact information of co-investigator(s) and/or key personnel, if applicable
- d) Amount of money requested
- e) Involvement of human subjects or vertebrate animals

2. Specific Aims -one page

3. Research Plan: Not to exceed 3 pages – including any figures, as needed. This should incorporate the following components:

- a. A succinct description of the proposed research, in sufficient detail to allow evaluation of the research concept.
- b. A short statement explaining the relevance of the proposed research to aging.
- c. A brief explanation of how this work will lead to future extramural funding.

4. Literature cited

5. NIH biosketch for the PI, co-I, key personnel containing a brief personal statement describing current research.

Notes:

- a) *Include the page number and name of the contact PI in the footer of all pages of the proposal.*
- b) *No letters of support are permitted.*