

UR Aging Institute

2025-2026 Pilot Award Program in Aging Research

Request for Proposals: Pilot Studies in Aging Research

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

The University of Rochester Aging Institute (URAI) is soliciting grant applications to support up to two aging research projects, with a focus on basic or clinical aging research topics. It is anticipated that one award will be in basic aging research and one in clinical aging research. Pilot research that falls anywhere along the translational research continuum is welcome. The award level is up to \$50,000 for one year, per award.

The goal of this pilot program is to fund new collaborative research studies that will support future applications for funding from NIA or other extramural sources. Collaborative projects that involve multiple PIs, as well as projects from investigators who have not previously worked in aging research are encouraged. Awards will be based on scientific merit, innovation and responsiveness to this RFA. See the URAI website for information on our mission, vision & priorities.

Full time UR faculty will qualify only once as a principal investigator and once as a co-investigator and may only hold a single URAI pilot award as a PI at any given time.

Funding through this mechanism will be for a single year. No-cost extension and renewals are not allowed.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Letter of Intent: Friday, January 17, 2025
- Notification of Invitations to Submit Full Proposals: Friday, February 7, 2025
- Full Applications Due: Monday, March 10, 2025
- Award Notification: Week of May 5, 2025
- Project Start: July 1st, 2025
- Final Progress Report Due: July 3, 2026

ELIGIBILITY

Full time UR faculty will qualify only once as a principal investigator and once as a co-investigator and may only hold a single URAI pilot award as a PI at any given time.

BUDGET

Up to two (2) awards will be made for up to \$50,000 for one year in direct costs. Funds may be used for research costs only, and may not support faculty salaries or administrative staff, travel to professional meetings or equipment. All costs must be justified. Indirects are not allowed. No cost-extensions are not allowed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process will take place in 2 stages. Stage 1 requires only a statement of intent that provides a brief summary of the proposed project, along with the other details outlined below. It is critical that research ideas are expressed in such a way that the reviewer can understand the ideas and appreciate their significance and potential impact.

- Please consolidate all items into a single PDF and upload that document. Please use the following filename convention: [contact PI's last name]_URAI_2025.pdf
- Please email your application to LauraM_Robinson@urmc.rochester.edu
- This is an internal award program. Applications should not be routed through the ORPA sign-off process.

Stage 1 statements of intent will be reviewed, and those applicants selected to submit full applications will be contacted shortly thereafter.

Stage 1 - Letter of Intent

- Maximum Length 2 pages
- Content. The statement of intent must include the following:
 - Project Title (Limited to 200 Characters)
 - Contact PI Name and Department
 - Other PI Name(s) and Department
 - Lay Abstract: State the project's broad and long-term objectives
 - Specific Aims: Describe research design and methods for achieving stated goals
 - Intended Outcomes: For example, knowledge and experience gained through the pilot, and planned grant applications that will follow pilot project completion
 - NIH Biosketch

Stage 2 – Full Application Requirements

- Modified PHS 398 Face Page (Form provided)
- Lay Abstract (Limited to 10 lines)
- Specific Aims Page (1 Page)
- Project Proposal (3 Pages) – Include Background, Significance, Innovation and Approach
- Bibliography (No Limit)
- Plans regarding the use of vertebrate animals or involvement of human subjects (No Limit)
- NIH-format biosketch for PI, Co-Investigators, and Mentors (5 Page Limit Each)
- Updated Other Support for PI or co-PI only
- Budget (PHS 398 Form provided)
 - Limited to \$50,000 direct costs
 - Provide a detailed description of supplies and other expenses within the form page
 - Unless exceptional circumstances, funds may not be used to support faculty salary or administrative staff, but the budget must identify the proposed effort.
 - Funds may not be used for travel to professional meetings or equipment.
 - Funds may be used to support research supplies and expenses, travel to collect data and other nonfaculty salary.
 - If applicable, identify other sources of support that will be used to complete the pilot project.
- Budget Justification (PHS 398 Form Provided)

SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Stage 1

The review panel will confirm eligibility and review statements of intent. The most competitive and responsive projects will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Stage 2

Full proposals will be reviewed by a faculty committee and will be assigned a priority score in accordance with these 6 categories:

- Significance (including scientific premise and hypothesis)
- PI, Scientific Team & Environment
- Innovation and Multidisciplinary Approach
- Experimental Approach
- Responsiveness to the terms of this RFA
- Probability of future funding

A summary of the reviewers' comments will be provided once the review process has been completed

AWARD INFORMATION

Selected investigators will be notified via email the week of May 5, 2025. Funding will not be released until all needed RSRB and UCAR approvals are provided. Upon receipt of all required documentation, a formal internal Notice of Award will be issued.

Funding through this mechanism will be for a single year. No-cost extension and renewals are not allowed

Investigators will be requested to set up a new OP2 account, which will be funded at the end of the award period, up to the amount awarded, based on actual expenses incurred.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

An annual report is required, due 60 days after the end date. The report should cover spending relative to budget, scientific progress with reference to planned specific aims, and activities and plans related to dissemination of findings (e.g. presentations, posters, and manuscripts prepared, submitted and published), as well as an update regarding plans for future funding resulting from the project

OTHER TERMS

A copy of all grant applications that benefit from the pilot program must be provided to UR Aging Institute Administration

University of Rochester Aging Institute: Pilot Studies in Aging Research. Support shall be acknowledged in all project-related publications or presentations by including the following language: "Supported in part by University of Rochester Aging Institute: Pilot Studies in Aging Research."

Must present at a UR Aging Institute annual conference.

CONTACTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions related to the program or application, please contact:

Laura M. Robinson, MPH

Email: LauraM_Robinson@URMC.Rochester.edu

For questions related to scientific matters, please contact:

Kathi Heffner, PhD

Associate Chief of Research, URM C Division of Geriatrics and Aging

Director, Elaine C. Hubbard Center for Nursing Research on Aging

Professor of Nursing, Medicine, and Psychiatry

Email: Kathi_Heffner@urmc.rochester.edu