

University of Rochester Medical Center
Scientific Advisory Committee
Request for Applications for the Incubator Program
Release Date: October 3, 2016

SAC Incubator Program

The SMD Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) sponsors a “superpilot” award with a maximum funding level of \$125,000 per year for each of two years. The purpose of the SAC Incubator Program is to foster the establishment of extramurally-funded, nationally-recognized centers of excellence in biomedical research with the potential to generate new strategic directions for the School of Medicine and Dentistry and the University. Funded projects are envisioned as innovative, multi-investigator research projects with the potential to advance 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. A funded pilot grant that results in the establishment of a new center of excellence that becomes part of the next strategic plan would be an ideal outcome.

For information about previous awards please refer to
<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/scientific-advisory-committee/pilot-award-program.cfm>.

Important Dates

Release Date: October 3, 2016

Deadlines:

- **November 14, 2016** - Initial abstracts of proposals must be received.
- **December 16, 2016** - Applicants will be notified if they are invited to submit full proposals
- **March 15, 2017 at 5:00 PM** – Full proposals will be due.
- **April/May, 2017** – Proposal presentations to SAC.
- **June 2017** – Notification of award will be made.
- **July 1, 2017** – Anticipated start date. Note: All animal and human subject protocols must be approved prior to the start date. No funds for research project costs may be released until all required human subjects and animal welfare approvals have been received.

Submitting a Proposal

Each SAC Incubator proposal must involve a team of two or more co-principal investigators. Faculty from all UR schools are eligible to apply.

Online submission: Proposals must be submitted electronically via email to Anne Reed (anne_reed@urmc.rochester.edu).

Application Format: The following information must be provided with the initial application:

- (1) Application information
 - a. Title of the Incubator Project
 - b. Contact PI’s name and contact information.
 - c. PIs, and co-investigators (names and contact information)
 - d. Amount of money requested
 - e. Indication as to whether the application is new or a revision
 - f. Involvement of human subjects or vertebrate animals

- g. Name and contact information for department administrator or grants administrator
- (2) Abstract (limited to 2 pages, font size no smaller than 11 point) which includes the following:
 - a. Project title and lead PI name
 - b. A description of how the proposal is responsive to the Incubator Program RFA
 - c. Overall goals of the Project
 - d. A brief description of the specific aims, research plan and timeline for each sub-project
- (3) A signed attestation statement from the contact PI that the project is not funded through another mechanism. A template for this attestation statement is available at <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/scientific-advisory-committee/pilot-award-program.aspx>
- (4) A signed statement on letterhead indicating that the Department Chair and/or Center Director is supportive of the application.
- (5) Notes:
 - a. Include the page number and name of the contact PI in the footer of the abstract.
 - b. No additional pages are permitted for a bibliography. Bibliographic information must be included within the two-page abstract.
 - c. No letters of support are permitted.

Details of the full proposal application procedure will be provided at the time of notification of invitation.

Selection Process

A 2-page abstract describing the Incubator Project, and other materials as described above, will be submitted as the first phase of the application process. The abstract should clearly identify short- and long-term goals, highlighting innovative and if appropriate multidisciplinary aspects of the proposed research. SAC members and other selected experts will evaluate, score and discuss all preliminary applications. Applicants with the most meritorious proposals will be invited to submit full proposals. Detailed instructions concerning the format of full applications will be provided at that time. All applicants at both the abstract and full proposal stages will receive feedback comments from the review committee to help them in improving proposals still under consideration, improving potential future submissions, or changing research directions.

Note: Only highly competitive abstracts will be invited to the full proposal stage of the process; therefore, if abstracts fail to meet the goals of the program, no invitations for full proposals will be offered.

SAC members and other selected *ad hoc* experts will subject full applications to rigorous scientific review. Following the review process and a formal study section-style discussion and scoring meeting, funding recommendations will be made to the Vice Dean of Research for funding of the most meritorious project.

Program Details

Eligibility: Two or more sub-projects linked by a scientific theme will be required, with faculty PIs for each project, and identification of the overall Incubator Project leader. The proposal

should explain how combination of multiple subprojects is expected to generate “added value” and may lead to the establishment of a sustained innovative research direction.

At least one of the PIs must be a tenure-track faculty member with a primary appointment at the School of Medicine and Dentistry, since this pilot program is being funded by the SMD. All principal investigators of proposals must be tenure-track faculty at the University of Rochester, and must have written consent of their Department Chair and/or Center Director. Each faculty member can participate in only one application in any capacity, with the exception of faculty who participate in a proposal as methodological experts only (e.g. biostatisticians or core lab staff) who may participate in more than one application. Funds may not be used for investigators outside the UR.

Review Criteria:

1. Scientific merit
2. Innovative potential
3. Fit to the strategic plan of the University (<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/news/strategic-plan/research.cfm>)
4. Demonstrated investigator expertise and commitment to the research program
5. Likelihood of sustaining the proposed research program through other resources before and after the SAC award is complete

Progress Report: SAC Incubator Program awardees are required to submit a progress report at 6 months and a mid-term progress report 12 months after the start of funding. The 6-month progress report should be one page in length, organized by specific aim, and should detail progress made toward each of the specific aims. The mid-term progress report must be in 11 point font, and must be two to three pages in length. The report must contain three sections: (1) A description of the studies directed toward the project’s specific aims, and the positive and negative results obtained. If specific aims were modified during the course of the project, the report must describe the reason for modification. If applicable, the report must address any changes to the innovative potential of the project. If problems were encountered in carrying out the project, the report must describe how the approach was modified. (2) The significance of the findings to the scientific field and their potential impact on health. (3) A summary of plans to address the specific aims during the next year of the award. Include any important modifications to the original plans, including changes in key personnel.

Second Year of Funding: Incubator Program funding for the second year of the project is contingent upon the submission of an acceptable mid-term progress report and completion of specific aims for year 1. Note that in order for completion of specific aims to be evaluated, specific aims need to be divided into those for year 1 and those for year 2. Funding may not be renewed for a second year if (a) key project personnel are not able to continue their commitments to the project in the second year; or (b) findings in the first year of the project indicate that the original aims of the project are not attainable within the originally planned timeframe.

Funding level: Applicants may request up to \$125,000 per year for each year of funding.

Allowable Costs: The SAC Incubator Program will support costs normally allowable for NIH-funded research projects. Faculty salaries are generally not allowable and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Facilities and administrative costs or “indirects” are not an allowable cost. Subcontracts with outside institutions are also not an allowable cost.

Resubmissions: Only one resubmission of a previously submitted Incubator proposal is allowed. New proposals must include substantial changes in all aspects of the proposal, including especially aims, methods and outcomes to be examined.

Contacts

If you have questions regarding this RFA, please contact one of the following.

General and logistical inquiries:

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