2022 Pilot Grant Award Cycle

Applications due **May 25, 2022**, notice of intent to apply should be emailed to Jessa Darwin (jcd79@pitt.edu) by **May 11th**.

The University of Pittsburgh/UPMC Rehabilitation Institute (RI) announces a small grants program to fund focused pilot research and research capacity building opportunities. The overall priority for this announcement is to fund proposals that will lead to successful external funding applications and/or increase the experimental research capacity of the lab. The 2022 Pilot Grant Funding initiative has two target areas:

1) Focused content proposals – While all proposals focused on rehabilitation research will be considered, special consideration will be given to proposals focused on addressing disparities, comparative effectiveness, and implementation and dissemination pilot studies to improve the delivery of rehabilitation services in post-acute care. These proposals should demonstrate how pilot data collection will support future NIDILRR, NIH/NCMRR, or PCORI applications.

2) Rehabilitation Research Capacity Building proposals – Proposals for funding that takes current research efforts in a new direction and/or to provide training (coursework, sabbatical opportunities, travel to receive training at another lab, etc.) to increase technical skills and research capacity of the lab.

Background

Rehabilitation encompasses a wide array of techniques and therapies used in clinical practice such as: exercise, splinting and bracing, language, cognitive, and memory training, assistive device implementation, biologics and pharmaceuticals to enhance regeneration, and functional activity retraining, among others. The Rehabilitation Institute recognizes the need to evaluate and validate many accepted rehabilitation techniques and therapies rooted in implicit theoretical bases. A gap exists between existing knowledge and clinical practice and we recognize that evidence-based rehabilitation interventions are not routinely administered in rehabilitation settings, and often require research in implementation in addition to development and discovery to realize improved outcomes for patients with musculoskeletal and neurological conditions.

Goals

The goals of this funding initiative are to:

- Promote rehabilitation research at the University of Pittsburgh
- Build research capacity of SHRS and PM&R investigators in order to increase success rates in competing for external funding.
- Foster interdepartmental and interdisciplinary collaborations in rehabilitation research and create collaborative research networks within the RI, while encouraging the inclusion of non-research clinicians in research teams when appropriate.
- Increase the prominence of RI locally and nationally

Mechanism for Funding

There will be two mechanisms for funding:

1. <u>Pilot Award</u> – Will provide funding for direct costs up to $30,000 for a one-year period to support research in the announced focus content area or in an unsolicited area but which represents a new direction with the potential to expand the research knowledge and future funding portfolio of the proposing lab.
2. <u>Capacity Building Award</u> – Will provide funding for direct costs up to $5,000 for investigators and/or lab personnel to obtain training on a specific technique or in a new related area of research that will further the research capacity for the home lab.

Proposed costs may include:

- Compensation for support personnel including, but not limited to, laboratory personnel, research coordinators, research assistants, etc. Compensation for external consultants will be considered.
- Subject costs, including remuneration, transportation, parking, etc.
- Costs related to data management and biostatistical support.
- Supplies and Equipment. Capital equipment (cost > $5,000) will be considered but must be strongly justified. Justification should include value to current projects as well as future projects.
- Publication costs
- Travel costs/subsistence allowance for training at another site

- Course fees.

Costs that will NOT be supported are:

- Salary support for the PI—*unless PI is a post-doc, in which case 10% may be covered*
- Conference travel costs, unless necessary for proposed training in a capacity building proposal.

Notice of Intent to Apply – <u>DUE BY May 11</u>

Send an email to Jessa Darwin (jcd79@pitt.edu) including the following:

- Project Title
- PI and Co-Is with Department affiliation

Application <u>DUE BY 11:59 PM EST ON May 25</u>

- Each PI may submit only a single grant
- Investigators currently funded by the program will not be eligible to submit.
- Proposed PI must be appointed in SHRS or PMR. Junior faculty are strongly encouraged to submit; however, all investigator ranks (Post-doctoral Fellow through Professor) will be considered.
- All applications must be accompanied by a letter of support by their Department Chair.
- Current NIH R03 review criteria will be used with the following additional factors considered in scoring.
    - Adherence to listed priority areas
    - Potential to lead to a successful external funding application
    - Collaboration between departments within SHRS and/or with PM&R and inclusion of clinicians not required but will be viewed favorably
    - Junior investigators will receive special consideration
- A second round of competition in the absence of strong proposals may occur

Application materials must be submitted here:
https://pitt.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9vt0K5G4qKx06Ka

Pilot Grant application will consist of the following (forms and samples available at
http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html):

1. Title page (*FORM PAGE 1*)
2. Budget (*FORM PAGE 4*)
3. Budget Justification
4. Biosketches of key personnel (Biographical Sketch Format Page; do not exceed 5 pages)
5. Other Support of key personnel
6. Research Plan (see *FORM PAGE 3:* Research Grant Table of Contents)

   - Specific Aims - limited to 1 page.
   - Research Strategy, including tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, and charts - limited to 5 pages.

   (a) Significance

     - Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.
     - Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields.
     - Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.
     - A clear and concise statement of need should be included, supporting how the work will be leveraged into future work.

   (b) Innovation

     - Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.
     - Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
     - Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.

   (c) Approach

     - Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Unless addressed separately (see Form 3 Research Plan, item 15), include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate. For capacity building proposals, please address how the proposed activities will result in actionable next steps.
     - Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
     - If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high-risk aspects of the proposed work.

- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and precautions to be exercised. A full discussion on the use of Select Agents is expected (see *FORM PAGE 3* Research Plan item 11)
- Provide a clear plan for the subsequent grant submission(s) that will be supported by the work completed.

- If an applicant has multiple Specific Aims, then the applicant may address Significance, Innovation and Approach for each Specific Aim individually, or may address Significance, Innovation and Approach for all of the Specific Aims collectively.

- Preliminary data are not required but may be included within the above sections, if available.

7. Concise plan for leveraging RI Pilot/capacity building funds to secure external funding.

Questions related to the application process should also be directed to Ms. Darwin.

Grant Review and Scoring

The research plan for each pilot grant submission will be reviewed using the NIH scoring method that uses a 9-point scale (1 = exceptional; 9 = poor) where an *Overall Impact* score is given along with individual scores for Significance, Investigator(s), Innovation, Approach, and Environment. For a more detailed explanation of the scoring system, see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-09-024.html. Applicants will receive bulleted feedback related to each category.

Funding decisions will be made by **June 20** at the latest with funding starting **July 1, 2021.**

RI Pilot Award FAQs

Are multiple PIs allowed on a project? *Yes.*

What are the formatting requirements? *Follow the directions for NIH grant submissions: Arial size 11 with margins of at least ½" is recommended.*

What documents and attachments are required for the application? *Refer to the list of required components at:* https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html

Can I submit a proposal that is currently submitted/being reviewed by another funding source? *Yes, however the two applications should be written in such a way that they could be carried out independently. The two applications must have two separate and unique budgets, budget justifications, and scopes of work.*