THE PERRY & RUBY STEVENS PARKINSON'S DISEASE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE
In collaboration with
The Institute for Integration of Medicine & Science (IIMS) and
The Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR)

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS – PILOT PROJECTS
Deadlines: March 30, 2018 (Letter of Intent) & April 30, 2018 (Full Proposal)

Overview

The Perry & Ruby Stevens Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence is soliciting proposals for pilot project awards. The primary goal of this program is to accelerate PD-focused research at the UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) by funding innovative projects aimed at slowing, stopping, or reversing the progression of Parkinson's disease (PD) and/or developing improved therapies for those living with PD. The aim is to fund promising projects that are in the early phase of research to allow for initial data collection that will lead to competitive external grant funding.

The program is supported by an award from The Perry & Ruby Stevens Charitable Foundation, as well as by IIMS and VPR funds. IIMS serves as the administrative home of the program.

Eligibility

Applicants as Principal Investigator must hold full-time UTHSA appointments as either faculty members or senior postdoctoral research fellows (i.e., at least three years beyond their doctoral degree as of June 2018). **Note:** the budget guidelines differ between faculty and postdoc PIs (see below). Collaborative projects involving co-investigators within UTHSA or from other regional institutions are encouraged. Career development of junior investigators is a major goal of this pilot program, although more established faculty are eligible if the project is a novel departure from currently funded programs.

Submission, terms, and conditions

Applicants must adhere fully to the guidelines and formats stipulated in this RFA, as non-complying applications may be administratively inactivated. **An individual faculty or postdoctoral fellow may be a participant in no more than one project during a given application cycle.**

A required letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted by Friday, March 30, 2018. The LOI should include the title of the project, principal investigator (PI), a very brief overview of the project and a list of 3 to 4 potential reviewers from UTHSA or other institutions, but not from the same department or research group as the PI **(Click here for LOI template)**. Note that the LOI is required for planning purposes, but will not serve as a screening tool for proposal submission (i.e., all PIs submitting the LOI should proceed to full proposal preparation). The deadline for receipt of the full application is **Monday, April 30, 2018.** Both the LOI and the full proposal should be submitted electronically as explained on the form. Pilot application forms can be found **here**. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Russel (russel@uthscsa.edu) at 210-562-4010.

Awards will be made for a one-year project period starting on or about July 1, 2018. Progress

reports will be required six months (brief) and 12 months after the initiation of funding. In addition, a follow-up survey of related grants and publications will be solicited at 24, 36, and 48 months. Recipients who fail to submit timely progress reports will be deemed ineligible for future funding cycles. For projects involving the use of human subjects or vertebrate animals, no expenditures will be permitted until IIMS is provided with a copy of the official letter of approval by the appropriate Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), respectively. Investigators are encouraged to submit IRB and IACUC protocols early in order to avoid significant delays in project initiation. A delay of more than 60 days in meeting these regulatory requirements may result in withdrawal of the award. Applicants must also be up to date on compliance with institutional research training and conflict of interest disclosure policies.

Budget and financial policies

The maximum budget for these one-year awards is $50,000 for faculty PIs or $15,000 for postdoctoral PIs, although proposals with smaller budgets will be considered and reviewed under the same criteria. Facilities and Administrative (F&A, indirect cost) expenses will not be reimbursed. Funds cannot be used to support faculty salaries. Although the PI (and Co-PI/Co-I, if applicable) should be listed in the personnel section of the summary page, there is no minimum effort requirement. If salary support is requested for a postdoctoral research fellow serving as PI, a specific level of effort and commensurate salary should be stated. Salary (plus associated fringe benefits) may be requested for support staff. Other allowable expenses include: equipment essential for the project (maximum $10,000 for faculty PIs or $2,000 for postdoc PIs, including computer hardware); PI or Co-PI travel to relevant scientific meetings (maximum $1,500); consumable laboratory supplies; animal purchase and per diem; core facility fees; consultation fees (maximum $5,000); computer time; software; publication / presentation expenses; costs related to human subject enrollment and management (listed as "Patient Care Costs" on budget page); and other expenditures that can be justified as being essential for the completion of the project. Note that for projects making use of an IIMS Clinical Research Unit (CRU), a budget for these expenses **must be developed in advance** and submitted with the application (contact Deborah Mote – 567-4612, mote@uthscsa.edu). Tuition is not an allowed budget item. Account management will be centralized within IIMS with expenditures and encumbrances being committed as they are incurred. For projects involving expenditures at a non-UTHSA site, funds will be disbursed at appropriate intervals, based on the receipt of invoices for budgeted expenditures.

Application requirements and format

Applications should be prepared using the templates provided. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point, preferably Arial or Times New Roman. The font size for figures, figure legends, charts, and tables may be smaller, but must be clearly legible. Margins all-around should be at least 0.5". Pages should be numbered sequentially. The length of the Research Plan (narrative with illustrations and tables included) is limited to 4 single-spaced pages. The organization of the proposal should be as follows:

- Link to application form (here)
- Project Summary
- Budget and Budget justifications (p. 3 and 4, plus CRU budget, if applicable – see above)
  Biographical sketch for PI (maximum 5 pages; for NIH template, format, and sample see
  https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm)
- Biographical sketches for other key personnel (maximum 5 pages each)
- Research plan (maximum 4 pages)
  - Hypothesis and specific aims
  - Background and significance
  - Preliminary data
  - Work proposed (including statistical analysis, power calculations, pitfalls, alternatives)

- <u>Literature citations</u> (maximum 1 page – use continuation page)
- <u>Additional information</u> regarding the project (maximum 1 page) to include:
  - Specific plans for seeking downstream outside funding based on completion of the pilot project research
  - Pending or planned scientifically related applications to other **pilot project programs** (e.g., Clinical and Translational Science Award, Nathan Shock Center, Pepper Center, School of Medicine), including a statement on potential overlap
- Letters of support (brief) from core directors (if applicable)
- Letters of collaboration (optional)
- Appendices are **not** allowed
- A UTHSA Certificate of Proposal (COP) is **not** required at the time of submission

Review process and criteria

Applications will undergo a two-tiered system of review. The first phase, or scientific review, will be performed by appropriate content experts from UTHSA and other research institutions. Scientific merit will be scored by these reviewers based on the following criteria:

- Significance
- Novelty / innovation
- Strength of the study protocol, including:
  - Design
  - Feasibility
  - Preliminary data (to the extent available)
  - Integration with ongoing research
  - Quality of the investigative team
- Likelihood of future NIH or other competitive external funding
- Contribution to career development of participating scientists
- Extent of meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration and / or community engagement
- Potential for ultimately improving health outcomes of Parkinson's disease patients
- Protection of human subjects and experimental animals

A programmatic review will then be performed by the PD Center of Excellence leadership group to assess program relevance, potential impact, and contribution to the goal of building a strong portfolio of PD research at UTHSA.

Funding expectations

Funds are available to support two to four projects through this solicitation.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator

The principal investigator of funded projects is required to:

- Abide by program rules and regulations, as well as institutional policies
- At the time of funding provide a complete list of other support, including other pilot project mechanisms, along with explanations of any potential scientific or budgetary overlap
- Submit complete and timely progress reports
- Acknowledge support from The Perry & Ruby Stevens Parkinson's Disease Center of Excellence in all publications and reports generated with pilot project resources (details to be provided at the time of funding)