



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: January 4, 2021 (Letter of Intent) & February 1, 2021 (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 Parkinson's disease (PD) research at UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) by funding innovative projects aimed at slowing, stopping, or reversing the progression of 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 January 2021). **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 their 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.**

All applications (both letters of intent and full proposals) must be **submitted through the Survey Monkey Apply** platform (<https://apply-uthscsa.smapply.io/>). The funding opportunity at that site is listed as: Parkinson's CoE Pilot Project.

A required letter of intent (LOI) must be submitted by Monday, January 4, 2021. The LOI should include the title of the project, principal investigator (PI), a 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. 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, February 1, 2021**. If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Castilleja (castillejac@uthscsa.edu) at 210-562-4010.

Awards will be made for a one-year project period starting on or about April 1, 2021. 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 \$25,000 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 \$4,000 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 Lisa Fleming – flemingl1@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 in Survey Monkey Apply, including PDF uploads of items listed below. 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 of uploads 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:

- Complete [SurveyMonkey Apply](#) – **Parkinson's CoE Pilot Project 2021**
- Attach Forms:
 - 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)
 - oHypothesis and specific aims
 - oBackground and significance
 - oPreliminary data
 - oWork proposed (including statistical analysis, power calculations, pitfalls, alternatives)
- [Literature citations](#) (maximum 1 page – use continuation page)
- [Additional required information](#) regarding the project (maximum 1 page – use continuation page) to include:
 - oSpecific plans for seeking downstream outside funding based on completion of the pilot project research
 - oPending 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:
 - oDesign
 - oFeasibility
 - oPreliminary data (to the extent available)
 - oIntegration with ongoing research
 - oQuality of the investigative team
- Likelihood of future NIH, VA, 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 approximately **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)