

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
Seed Grants for Collaborative Multi-Investigator Projects between
Cornell University Ithaca, Weill Cornell Medicine, and Cornell Tech

Overall Objective

The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to catalyze collaborative interactions among Cornell faculty based in Ithaca and New York City, with a particular eye towards building multi-investigator programs that will be competitive for external support. Applications are being solicited for:

- groups of at least four faculty aiming to submit Center Grants within 2 years (**Track 1**)
- groups of at least two faculty aiming to submit multi-investigator R01s within one year of receiving pilot grant funding (**Track 2**).

Background

The recently established Academic Integration Initiative aims to advance the research and discovery efforts across the Cornell community by promoting and enhancing collaborations between the Cornell Ithaca campus, and the Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) and Cornell Tech campuses in New York City. By drawing on the outstanding and diverse work of Cornell colleagues based in Ithaca and New York City, the strength and impact of research across Cornell will be elevated to the next level of eminence. For instance, the science ongoing at WCM, with its orientation towards discoveries and translation related to human health and disease, has great potential to bolster investigation by faculty in Ithaca and Cornell Tech through collaborative efforts. Fostering such collaborative interactions between research units will leverage expertise across the three campuses to align the scientific and educational activities of the greater Cornell community, resulting in improved research and training opportunities. Creating synergies among Cornell investigators will also enable laboratories to transform individual projects to larger programs with increased impact and visibility.

Recognition by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as a Center of Excellence is achieved through the award of program grants, designated as P30s, P50s, or P60s. Many NIH institutes have such award programs that generally require applicants to present a combination of basic, translational, and clinical research programs for review. The NIH and other major funders provide resources for other types of designated centers that bring together multiple investigators around a common scientific theme or scientific approach. In addition to the stature that institutions receive from such awards, Centers of Excellence and other similar center awards provide recipients with flexible resources for research cores and administrative costs—critical research components that are difficult to fund through other mechanisms. Center grants also provide an outstanding mechanism to build synergies among investigators, bring scientists together from different disciplines centered around a common theme, and attract the best trainees. When these programs work optimally, the result is truly a sum that is greater than the component parts.

Securing additional program grants in the Life and Biomedical Sciences would not only provide our faculty with important sources of funding and opportunities to build synergies, but also add stature to our institution. This is especially important for the nascent translational centers at WCM, as each focuses on a domain important to the NIH and the mission of each would fit well into a Center of Excellence. In addition, programs that incorporate proposals from innovative investigators from Cornell

Tech and the Ithaca campus in underrepresented or absent areas at WCM will enrich the environment for discovery on all three campuses and provide a competitive edge to proposals submitted to funding agencies.

Based on our positive experience from last year, we are reissuing an RFA for cross-campus multi-investigator awards. This year, applicants are able to choose from one of two tracks:

Track 1: Proposals describing synergistic programs involving at least four PIs, each with individual projects, coalescing for submission of a program project grant or a similar type of center grant within a two-year period.

Or

Track 2: Proposals involving at least two PIs aiming to submit a multi-PI R01 within a year of receiving pilot grant support.

We believe that success on the multi-PI track will position investigators to develop the interactions and collaborations to make a future full-scale program grant submission more competitive in years to come.

Important Dates for both **Track 1** and **Track 2**

- RFA release: September 4, 2018
- Letter of Intent (LOI)* due: December 14, 2018
- LOI decision: January 2, 2019
- Full application due: April 30, 2019
- Application decision: May 31, 2019
- Start date: June 15, 2019

*Submission and approval of an LOI is required in order to submit a full application.

Funding

This mechanism will provide up to three stages of longitudinal support per funded project:

Stage 1- Travel grants

Applies to both **Track 1** and **Track 2**:

Travel grant (\$2,000) for successful LOIs that can be used for transportation (i.e., campus-to-campus bus) and accommodations for PIs to meet as they plan their full submission.

Stage 2- Seed grants

Track 1: \$200,000 for up to two years, plus \$4,000 intercampus travel funds

Track 2: \$75,000 for up to one year, plus \$2000 intercampus travel funds

Stage 3- Supplements to support resubmissions

Track 1: \$100,000 for projects that have submitted—within 24 months of initiating the seed grant—a scored Program/Center grant application to the NIH or other federal agency with addressable comments to satisfy reviewers for a resubmission

Track 2: \$50,000 for projects that have submitted—within 12 months of initiating the seed grant—a scored NIH multi-PI grant application with addressable comments to satisfy reviewers for a resubmission

TRACK 1 — Proposals aimed towards submissions of a Program Project (P01) or other center grant

Track 1: Eligibility Requirements

- All proposals must include at least four co-principal investigators with representation from both WCM and Cornell Ithaca. Participation from Cornell Tech, where appropriate, is encouraged. One individual must be named as the contact PI.
- It is recognized that an investigator from outside of Cornell might bring a unique feature to a program being considered by a Cornell-based team. If the team chooses to include a faculty member from another institution, this should be discussed in advance with Vice Provost Koretzky.
- Each proposal should include at least four projects.
- While potential cores for an eventual proposal that will be submitted to an external funder should be described (see below), this RFA is not designed to provide support for such cores.
- At least three of the Co-PIs must each hold at least one active federal grant award at the time of full application submission and seed grant launch.
- Evidence of collaborative work being done among members of the team will be viewed favorably. This can be demonstrated by co-authored papers and/or jointly funded grants, as well as other scientific interactions (e.g., regular meetings by videoconference, intercampus seminar exchanges, etc.).
- All awardees are expected to submit a Program or Center grant application for competitive review to the NIH or another funding agency within 24 months of initiating the seed grant
- This RFA is designed both to build new collaborative research programs between the campuses that have significant promise for future success and to help propel developing collaborations to reach the level that extramural support can be obtained.

Track 1: Application Guidelines

LOI (due December 14, 2018):

The following items should be submitted, in the order listed, as a single PDF using the following naming convention: PI last name first initial_SG_track1.pdf (Example: SmithJ_SG_track1.pdf):

- 1) Name and contact information for contact PI and Co-PIs. Note that the application is being considered under **Track 1**.
- 2) Briefly, describe the anticipated focus of the seed grant and the ultimate Program/Center grant application (two-page limit) including:
 - The anticipated projects and the lead PI(s) on each
 - The synergies, between the research groups that the team plans to realize, how does the sum add up to more than the parts?
 - Description of past and ongoing collaborations among the team members
 - What novel areas of research does the team plan to explore?
 - What NIH or other Program/Center grant applications could the seed grant culminate in?
- 3) NIH-style biographical sketch for each investigator

- 4) NIH-style other support for each investigator

Submit your LOI [here](#)

LOIs will be assessed by a peer review committee and those receiving travel grants will be notified in January 2019. Recipients will be encouraged to use the travel money for face-to-face meetings to hone their full applications.

Full application (due April 30, 2019):

The following items should be submitted as a single PDF in the following order:

- 1) Cover page: including full contact information of the contact PI and each co-principal investigator, note that the application is for **Track 1**, abstract of up to 250 words, a list of relevant approved or pending IACUC/IRB protocols for both campuses.
- 2) Overall Program Research Strategy (two-page limit, excluding references):
 - brief description of the component projects and how they work synergistically
 - planned cores or other shared resources
 - one paragraph description of how extramural funds will be sought: include funding agency, grant type, and projected date of submission
 - Description of past and ongoing collaborations among team members
- 3) Individual Research Projects: For each component project, provide (one-page maximum, excluding references) a description of the research plan including:
 - Aims
 - Significance and Innovation
 - Preliminary Results
 - Experimental Design
- 4) NIH-style biographical sketch for each investigator
- 5) NIH-style other support for each investigator
- 6) NIH-style budget and budget justification anticipating an allocation of \$200,000 for up to two years. Note, resources cannot be used for faculty salaries or travel.

Submit your full application through the *Inter-campus Seed Grant Submission Tool* (application portal will be provided to those invited to submit a full application following the LOI stage).

Track 1: Selection Criteria

A peer review committee will be convened to evaluate each LOI and then each invited full proposal and make recommendations about funding priority using the following criteria:

- Quality of the collaborative research proposal.
- Potential to lead to cross-campus program/center grant applications.
- Focus on emerging areas of science that constitute high priority funding areas for the NIH and other federal funders.
- Creative bridging of divergent scientific niches that have either not traditionally come together or have not done so effectively.
- Track record of funding by the applicants including assessment of past and current funding.

- Evidence for collaborative research among the team members.
- Potential to create clear synergies and long-term collaborations.
- Maximizes training opportunities for postdoctoral fellows and students across the campuses
- Tech Campus participation, if appropriate, would strengthen an application.
- A well justified Core facility(ies) is an essential component of most center grant applications. The selection committee will review the needs for, and justification of, the proposed core(s) to ensure that it would align with any potential NIH (or other) RFA.

Track 1: Funding Terms

To maximize use of these resources to obtain data for a Program/Center grant application, the \$200,000 seed grant funds may not be used for PI salary support or travel. However, a separate award of up to \$4000 will be provided for intercampus travel for Co-PIs and trainees in addition to the seed grant funds. If a non-Cornell faculty member is named as part of the team, any resources directed towards that individual or his/her institution must be discussed in advance with Vice Provost Koretzky.

All awardees are expected to submit a Program or Center grant application for competitive review to the NIH or another funding agency within 24 months of initiating the seed grant.

Funding will be contingent on obtaining the appropriate IACUC/IRB protocol approvals for the projects.

Awardees must inform the Vice Provost for Academic Integration Office when an application for external grant funding is submitted and the outcome of the review.

Track 1: Evaluation of progress

Awardees must file a progress report one year after funds are dispersed, and a final progress report at the end of the funding period, if more than one year of support was provided.

TRACK 2—Proposals aimed towards submission of a Multi-PI R01

Track 2: Eligibility Requirements

- All proposals must include at least two Co-principal investigators with representation from at least two of our campuses (WCM/Cornell Ithaca, WCM/Cornell Tech, or Cornell Tech/Cornell Ithaca).
- Each principle investigator must bring a unique set of skills and experience to the overall project with the combined efforts of the PIs resulting in a cohesive joint project.
- At least one of the Co-PIs must hold at least one active federal grant award.
- Awardees are expected to submit an NIH multi-PI grant application for competitive review within 12 months of initiating the seed grant.
- This RFA is designed both to build new collaborative research programs between the campuses that have significant promise for future success and to help propel developing collaborations to reach the level that extramural support can be obtained. Hence, investigator teams that have not collaborated before, as well as those already working together are encouraged to submit applications.

- We encourage applications that are comprised of a junior faculty member and at least one senior colleague as a partner.

Track 2: Application Guidelines

LOI (due December 14, 2018):

The following items should be submitted, in the order listed, as a single PDF using the following naming convention: PI last name first initial_SG_track2.pdf (Example: SmithJ_SG_track2.pdf):

- 1) Name and contact information for contact PI and Co-PIs. Note that the application is being submitted for consideration under **Track 2**.
- 2) Briefly, describe the anticipated focus of the seed grant and the ultimate multi-PI application including (two-page limit):
 - An overview of the project and the synergies between the labs that the team plans to realize.
 - What novel areas of research does the team plan to explore.
 - The Leadership plan (instructions and examples for NIH multiple PI R01s and a description of what each PI brings to the project can be found [here](#)).
- 3) NIH-style biographical sketch for each investigator.
- 4) NIH-style other support for each investigator.

Submit your LOI [here](#)

Full application (due April 30, 2019):

The following items should be submitted as a single PDF in the following order:

- 1) Cover page: including full contact information of the contact PI and each Co-principal investigator, note that the application is being considered under **Track 2**, abstract of up to 250 words, a list of relevant approved or pending IACUC/IRB protocols for both campuses.
- 2) Research Strategy: (three-page limit, excluding references):
 - Anticipated specific aims of the multi-PI R01.
 - Significance and Innovation.
 - Preliminary data.
 - Experimental design.
- 3) Leadership plan describing the contributions of the participating PIs.
- 4) NIH-style biographical sketch for each investigator.
- 5) NIH-style other support for each investigator.
- 6) NIH-style budget and budget justification anticipating an allocation of \$75,000 for up to one year. Note, resources cannot be used for faculty salaries or travel.

Submit your full application through the [Intercampus Seed Grant Submission Tool](#) (application portal will be provided to those invited to submit a full application following the LOI stage).

Track 2: Selection Criteria

A peer review committee will be convened to evaluate each LOI and then each invited full proposal and make recommendations about funding priority using the following criteria:

- Quality of the collaborative research proposal.
- Potential to lead to competitive cross-campus multi-PI grant application.
- Focus on emerging areas of science that constitute high priority funding areas for the NIH.
- Creative bridging of divergent scientific niches that have either not traditionally come together or have not done so effectively.
- Track record of funding by the applicants including assessment of past and current funding.
- Evidence that the individual PIs bring unique strengths and skills to the overall project.
- Potential to create clear synergies and long-term collaborations.
- Maximizes training opportunities for postdoctoral fellows and students across the campuses.
- Tech Campus participation, if appropriate, would strengthen an application.
- Thoughtful pairing of junior and senior faculty.

Track 2: Funding Terms

To maximize use of these resources to obtain data for a multi-PI grant application, the \$75,000 seed grant funds may not be used for PI salary support or travel. However, a separate award of up to \$2000 will be provided for intercampus travel for Co-PIs and trainees in addition to the seed grant funds.

All awardees are expected to submit a multi-PI R01 grant application for competitive review within 12 months of initiating the seed grant.

Funding will be contingent on obtaining the appropriate IACUC/IRB protocol approvals for the projects. Awardees must inform the Vice Provost for Academic Integration Office when an application for external grant funding is submitted and the outcome of the review.

Track 2: Evaluation of progress

Awardees must file a progress report one year after funds are dispersed, and a final progress report at the end of the funding period, if more than one year of support was provided.

Inquiries

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