



Innovations in Aging Research Request for Proposals

Introduction:

Since 2006, the Center on Aging (CoA) has sponsored an annual pilot grant program to promote the development of aging research at the University of Utah. Many of the pilot grants it has supported have led to new externally funded aging research grants – information is available at <http://aging.utah.edu/grants/pilot/index.php>.

This “Innovations in Aging Research” Request for Proposals (RFP) first offered last year is different from the traditional CoA Pilot Grant RFP. The CoA leadership recognizes that today there are unprecedented opportunities to advance aging research, and that these advances will most likely be driven by new, interprofessional collaborations in team-based approaches. Moreover, the target of this RFP is to reach beyond a single investigator-initiated award by supporting the development of larger, multi-investigator projects based on a thematic area. The goal of this program is to promote collaborations and provide funding support to enhance preliminary/project data that will allow competitive applications for multi-PI extramural funding by the NIH or other agencies and foundations, such as multi-PI R01s and P01s and center grants (P30, P60 and others).

The recipient of last year’s Innovations award was the team of Drs. Ellington, Scammon and Utz for their project titled, [“One U for Caregiving Science: Strengthening Partnerships and Leveraging Existing Expertise for Excellence”](#). Interested applicants are encouraged to become familiar with their project.

Research Scope:

We invite applications from all areas of collaborative aging research that will lead to competitive extramural multi-PI grant applications. Topical areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- caregiving
- cognitive impairment, resilience and dementia
- impact of mid-life exposures on aging and longevity
- frailty and/or physical frailty
- resilient places: adaptive capacity promotion for healthy aging
- value and/or characteristics of becoming an “age friendly health system”
- vascular aging

Proposal Guidelines:

- Proposals must be a collaborative effort involving *at least two* independent investigators or research groups at the University of Utah with each contributing substantially to the scientific development and execution of the project. Aligning with President Watkins promotion of “One U,” cross campus (Main and Health Sciences) and/or cross-college investigative teams are highly encouraged.
- Principal investigators must have a Career or Tenure line University of Utah faculty appointment. While Center on Aging membership is not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for membership concurrently with their application. Membership information is available at <http://aging.utah.edu/membership/join.php>

Proposal Preferences and review criteria:

Preference will be given to applications that:

- Have significant scientific merit
- Have an aging focus and significance
- Include interdisciplinary collaboration, spanning two or more colleges
- Have a high potential for multi-PI extramural funding, preferably from the NIH
- Build new or strengthen existing interdisciplinary partnerships within the University of Utah aging research community and the CoA

Application Instructions:

Proposals should be electronically submitted as single PDF file with **all** components listed below in the following order. [Note: incomplete submissions may disqualify an application]

1. Cover letter that addresses the following aspects of the proposal:
 - How this proposal specifically relates to aging and the significance of its topical focus area to aging research.
 - How the project results will lead to future independent funding and the specific funding sources that will be targeted (targeted RFPs, agencies and projected submission dates).
 - How will the CoA be utilized/play a role?
 - Relationship that PIs or co-investigators have, if any, with the Center on Aging.
 - If this is a resubmission, comment on the major changes made in the revised application.
2. A letter of support from the department head/dean confirming that the principal investigator will receive protected time required to devote to the proposed project.
3. A brief proposal (2 page limit, plus references on additional pages as needed). Please address Significance, Innovation (include proposed role/contributions for each team member and investigator synergy), and Approach.
4. A plan for extramural funding (1 page limit). This plan must address specific plans including a targeted funding mechanism and/or RFP, leadership plan and collaborative group meeting plan (including evidence of success for currently meeting groups). The plan must also include a timeline for the project’s first year, and the group’s plan for sustaining its activities for the next 5 years.

5. NIH Biographical sketch for each co-investigator including current and pending support (5 pages max).
6. Proposed project budget (not to exceed \$40,000), following the guidelines below. Please describe in the budget justification how funds will be distributed between investigators.

Budget Guidelines:

Funding is available for salaries and fringe benefits of post-doctoral fellows, students, technicians, and other non-faculty project personnel, supplies, miscellaneous expenses, and services.

The following items may not be supported with pilot project funds:

- Faculty salary, with the exception of partial summer salary for faculty with a 9-month appointment if there is explicit justification. Faculty effort devoted to the project needs to be provided in the form of protected or release time from clinical or teaching responsibilities. A letter from the principal investigator's department head or dean must be submitted with the application documenting the time or percent effort that the faculty member will have available to dedicate to the pilot grant project.
- Major equipment (cost greater than \$5,000)
- Travel not directly needed for the research project (e.g. to conference attendance)

Review and Funding of Proposals:

Proposals will be reviewed by members from the Center on Aging Steering Committee and its Board of Directors who will make final funding decisions based on the project's innovation, scientific merit, collaboration, and alignment with the proposal preferences. All applications will be evaluated based on the review criteria (cited above).

Maximum funding per project is \$40,000, with a project term of one year. Budgets may be reduced as the CoA leadership may determine. Unused funds must be returned to the CoA after one year. However, recipients can submit, no later than two months before the one-year deadline, an explanation of why the funds have not been spent and a plan to spend out the grant after the one-year deadline. A no-cost extension is subject to CoA leadership approval. Grant administration is the responsibility of the Principal Investigators.

Expectations of Award Recipients:

Recipients of this award are expected to formally apply for membership in the Center on Aging, actively participate in its programs, and provide the Center on Aging with:

- A final progress report at the conclusion of the funding period. Final payment of the award will be made upon receipt of this report.
- A financial accounting of how project funds were spent. Financial support from the Center on Aging must be acknowledged in all publications.

- Information pertaining to any publications and grant support resulting from the pilot grant project.
- A research presentation and/or poster at the 2021 Center on Aging Research Retreat.

Timeline:

The proposal should be submitted electronically to Heather Podolan, Center on Aging Program Coordinator at heather.podolan@hsc.utah.edu (office phone: 801-213-4156) by the deadline Friday, May 18, 2020 11:59 PM Mountain Standard Time

- We anticipate making funding decisions by mid-June 2020.
- Projects may begin as early as July 1, 2020; the starting date may be negotiated.

Questions may be directed to:

- Heather Podolan, Program Coordinator, heather.podolan@hsc.utah.edu
- Dr. Mark Supiano, Executive Director, mark.supiano@utah.edu
- Any CoA Steering Committee member