



Pilot Research Program Announcement

Pilot Research Program Goal

The goal of this 2012 research program is to facilitate the success of junior investigators currently engaged in aging research or seeking to change or expand their research into aging. Projects must be designed to provide preliminary data for use in subsequent grant applications for NIH or other comparable external funding that advances scientific knowledge in the topical areas of: aging and diversity, healthy aging, and workforce aging, within and across the many populations in the United States. The subsequent grant is expected to be submitted and administered by the Institute on Aging at UNC, which will include access to resources during grant development and implementation.

The UNC Institute on Aging (IOA) includes three programs, which are described below. We strongly encourage that pilot research projects fit into any one of these research programs:

- The Aging and Diversity Program includes research dedicated to improving the lives of older adults and families from diverse populations in North Carolina and beyond. Research efforts that seek to reduce and/or eliminate health disparities including cancer, dementia, and stroke are an integral part of this program. Studies that target individuals and families living in rural and underserved areas as well as those with limited access to health resources are encouraged. In addition, this program seeks to further the science of recruitment and welcomes scientific efforts to develop and implement successful recruitment and retention methods and strategies for inclusion of diverse populations in research studies.
- The Healthy Aging Program includes basic and applied research projects addressing the continuum of health from health promotion and disease prevention to chronic care. Research on determinants of healthy aging and symptom self-management, program and policy intervention design and testing, translation of health interventions into community provider delivery, and enhancement of referral linkages between clinical and community providers would be included in this program of research.
- The Workforce Aging Program includes research projects dealing with the aging of the workforce, older workers and engagement, careers and labor markets, and transitions to retirement. For example, research on age relations in the workplace, educational and workforce preparation and planning, and aging workforce policies and practices would be included in this program of research.

Award Information

The IOA pilot research program is funded by the UNC Institute on Aging with support from the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research. The IOA will fund 4 awards, with at least one award per program emphasis outlined above. Each award will total up to \$20,000.

Application Type	Pilot research to gather preliminary data for use in subsequent grant applications.
Number of Awards	4
Award Budget	Maximum of \$20,000 per award
Award Project Period	2012 calendar year

Key Dates

December 1, 2011	Call for Proposals released
January 31, 2012	Proposals due by midnight
January, 2012	Review panel convenes
February 10, 2012	Award Notification Issued
July 1, 2012	Mid-term progress report due (instructions to be provided)
December 31, 2012	Final progress report due

Eligibility Information

Junior investigators (individuals that do not have a substantial funding record) currently engaged in aging research or seeking to change or expand their research into aging are eligible to apply. Junior investigators must provide evidence of mentoring via a letter that describes the existing mentoring activities between the PI and the mentor, and specific plans for mentoring during the funding period and thereafter, including plans for leadership in the external grant application to follow the pilot work. It is expected that the junior investigator will be the PI for the external grant to follow.

Doctoral and post-doctoral fellows are not eligible to apply. Researchers currently affiliated with the IOA are not eligible to apply to facilitate the growth and development of a new cadre of aging researchers.

Pilot Proposal Format and Length

The standard format of NIH proposals includes Arial 11 font, one-half inch margins, and single spacing using the following length guidelines is required:

Proposal Specific	Page length	Comments
Letter of Mentoring Support	No limit	See Eligibility Information above
Project Summary/Abstract and Relevance	1	
Budget and Justification	No limit	See below for details
Biosketch for Key Personnel	4 pages	Use revised SF424 format
Specific Aims	1	
Research Strategy	6 maximum	Significance (1-2 pages) Innovation (1 page) Approach (3-4 pages)
References	No limit	
Human Subjects	No limit	
Appendices - up to 5 items, excluding Letters of Support	No limit	Do not include published papers or documents that are available on the Internet. Appropriate documents may include intervention materials, protocols, unique data collection forms, etc.
Letters of Support (LOS)	No limit	It is expected that Letters of Support will be provided from clinical and/or community organizations that will be participating in the project.
Acknowledgement	Separate page	Include the following statement in your application package, with date and signature: I acknowledge that any grant application using the research data acquired from this pilot research program will be submitted and administered by the Institute on Aging and accomplished at UNC.

Visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm> for full details on formatting and content.

Budget Documentation and Allowable Expenses

A detailed budget and justification must be provided using the standard NIH expense categories. Visit <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm> for full details on preparing a budget.

Student time (i.e., stipend) is allowed, however tuition is not allowed.

Travel is allowed for conduct of the research.

All elements of the budget will be carefully reviewed; justifications should provide adequate information for this review, particularly for any single item that consumes 10% or more of the total budget.

Applicants may increase the available total funds by bringing matching funds (of any amount) from their home department to add to the funds provided via this pilot program. Such a match is not required, but is desirable as a demonstration of departmental support of the investigator and his/her proposed work.

Review Criteria

The primary review criteria is likelihood of the pilot work leading directly to a fundable proposal for aging research, to be written by the Pilot Project PI and submitted to NIH or other comparable funding agencies within a short time following completion of the Pilot Project. Pilot Projects that are not part of a longer-term vision for a specific research effort will not be funded. The research effort (meaning, the Pilot Project and the external grant to follow) must be designed to generate new knowledge relevant to aging research. Therefore, Pilot Projects are expected to be designed to generate preliminary data to provide proof of concept and /or address issues of feasibility for a planned external grant proposal. Preliminary data are not required for the Pilot Project but some specific evidence that the work has merit scientifically and that the proposed effort is feasible within the time and funding level of the pilot program is required. It is strongly encouraged that the Pilot Project proposal includes specific plans regarding seeking external funding following the pilot research.

Proposals will be reviewed by a Scientific Advisory Board consisting of multidisciplinary senior scientists and IOA program leads using NIH criteria:

Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses

3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses
<p>Minor Weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact</p> <p>Moderate Weakness: A weakness that lessens impact</p> <p>Major Weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact</p>		

Submission Procedure

All materials are to be submitted as “PDF” documents by midnight of the due date to banas@email.unc.edu.

For more information please contact:

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 UNC Institute on Aging
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banas@email.unc.edu

Resources Available Through the IOA

The IOA has contracted with the Sheps Research Center to offer a full complement of services to researchers including budget planning and management, grant development, data management, and library services.

Funded pilot researchers who submit and administer their subsequent grant through the IOA will have access to the resources outlined below. The Business Office will assist researchers in building these services into their grant budgets.

Services:

Business, Finance and Research Administration

The Business Office provides support to researchers with contract and grant applications, financial management, human resources, and payroll. They provide guidance and instruction with research administration activities: pre- and post-award; generating data for completing agency forms and reports; proposal packaging and submission; establishing and managing financial accounts; human resources: job creation, recruitment, retention; and payroll.

The office works in close collaboration with the university's Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) with regard to all facets of pre-award and post-award administration and is a liaison between a number of university departments and other campus offices for the research administration, financial management and human resources processes.

Grant Development

The research coordinator assists researchers with grant development through timeline and deliverable development and monitoring, acts as liaison with other service areas, and coordinates submission activities.

Data Management and Systems Development

Programmers are assigned to specific projects and become integral members of the research teams. They conduct project-related data management, data editing, statistical analyses, and systems development. Programmers work directly with research teams to design and develop database systems for data collection and research project event/participant tracking. Sheps Center programmers are experienced in large-scale dataset management, analytic programming, and file manipulation, including file translation, file conversion, and readying data for transport over multiple-platform computing environments and across diverse operating systems. In addition, programmers are familiar with a wide variety of secondary data, including Census, Vital Records, National Health Survey, Hospital Discharge, and Medicaid and Medicare claims data.

Library Services

The librarian conducts bibliographic searches from electronic sources, and consults with researchers about information retrieval, storage, and dissemination. The librarian provides basic searches to inform planning for projects and papers, and work with staff to build bibliographic databases. The librarian has access to the comprehensive biomedical and public health database repository service offered by the Health Sciences Library, and the electronic database access service offered by Davis Library, as well as business and government databases.