Call for Proposal

Accelerating Excellence in translational Science Pilot Grants

RELEASE DATE: August 16, 2011
APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE: October 7, 2011
PEER REVIEW PERIOD: October 7-17, 2011
EARLIEST ANTICIPATED AWARD DATE: November 20, 2011

Purpose of the RFA:

The Accelerating eXcellence In translational Science (AXIS) of the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) is inviting applications for highly innovative projects from faculty members at CDU and associated local academic institutions that have high potential to contribute research findings on health disparities through translational research. The CDU AXIS Pilot Project Program is designed to facilitate innovative approaches in translational research in basic mechanisms, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases that disproportionately affect minority and underserved communities.

Cross-disciplinary projects that address new approaches to health disparities will be given high priority. Partnerships with CDU’s Community Faculty and local community groups and organizations of relevance to the research are encouraged. For additional information about CDU’s Community Faculty please see: http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/community-engagement/community-engagement.

Funding will be available for up to 7 projects. There must be a clear plan to use the pilot project to secure subsequent independent funding from other non-institutional sources, e.g., NIH. Project support will be available for up to $28,500 per year (direct costs) and we will fund pilot studies for the duration of eight (8) months. The full five-page pilot proposal will be due on October 7, 2011. The anticipated start date is November 20, 2011. An applicant may submit only one application as principal investigator but can be a co-investigator on another proposal.

If the principal applicant is a junior-level investigator at the Assistant Professor rank, s/he must designate a mid-level or senior-level mentor/collaborator, with a brief but clearly described mentoring plan. Additionally, each application must show utilization of AXIS resources whenever applicable. The overall purpose of AXIS is to better position
CDU for conducting clinical and translational research, especially research that is focused on health disparities.

Available resources include:

1. Biomedical Informatics
2. Clinical and Translational Research Center
3. Community Engagement
4. Epidemiology and Biostatistics
5. Research Education and Training
6. Technology Core Laboratory

For detailed information and a description of the AXIS Cores and Resources please see the AXIS Website at: http://axis.cdrewu.edu/.

Criteria for selection of the pilot project include:

1) The project must be translational or cross-disciplinary in nature (including 2 of the 4 disciplines – basic, clinical, social/behavioral and/or community).
2) Viability of the pilot study and commitment of the team to develop an independent research proposal based upon the pilot project within six months after completion;
3) Research questions of relevance to the reduction of health disparities in basic mechanisms, clinical, health services, epidemiological, policy or behavioral topics;
4) Feasibility of conducting the study in the time period proposed with funds allocated;
5) The scientific strength of the design, methods and analytic plans; and
6) Successful research track records of the research team.

Projects that utilize inter-institutional collaborations through the RCMI Translational Research Network (RTRN) will receive priority. Partnerships with CDU’s Community Faculty and local community groups and organizations of relevance to the research will also receive priority.

Format Specifications

The full research proposal will take the form of an abbreviated NIH application, using PHS398 form pages. The Specific Aims are limited to one (1) page and the Research Strategy component may not exceed four (4) pages (typed single-spaced using 11-pt Arial on one side of the page). All tables, graphs, figures, diagrams, charts and other displays must be included within the five-page limit. Also, the five-page application must include a communications plan and a time-line for seeking subsequent or supplemental extramural support. For all applications, an additional requirement will be the
designation of a mentor and a brief mentoring plan. Preliminary data are not required. Not counted in the five-page limit are biosketches and other support information of the principal investigator(s) and all key personnel, an itemized budget with justification, and, if applicable, full descriptions of Protection of Human Subjects from Research Risk; Inclusion of Women, Minorities and Children in Research; Care and Use of Vertebrate Animals in Research; and Biohazards and Select Agents. For applications involving the use of human subjects, a Targeted/Planned Enrollment Table Format Page must be included.

In addition, the application should include a cover page (one page maximum) describing: 1) Collaborative and translational aspects of the project; 2) How the project will lead to proposal submission for future funding; 3) a description of collaborations with RTRN, IDeA or CTSI institutions; and 4) how AXIS resources will be used. The cover page is not counted in the five page limit.

**Review Process and Criteria**

Pilot Project applications will be reviewed and prioritized by internal and external experts selected from RTRN institutions, UCLA, and other research intensive institutions. An NIH-type reviewing and 9-point scoring system will be used. Briefly, the initial merit review of applications for support through the AXIS Small Grants Program will be based on the six following criteria: collaborations and partnerships; significance; approach; innovation; investigators; environment.

Collaborations and Partnerships: Has the applicant included collaborations with Community Faculty and local community groups and organizations, or investigators from RTRN institutions? Has the applicant described how they will use the AXIS and RTRN resources to facilitate collaborations focused on health disparities research? Is there a commitment to and plans for participating in the development, adoption, and implementation of best practices through the RTRN and other national consortia and networks, where appropriate?

Significance: Does this study address an important health problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced? What will be the effect of the study on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventive interventions that drive this field? Will this study lead to a new funding? An objective of the Pilot Project Program is to stimulate new science. Hence, applications that are likely to lead to new R21/RO1 applications (or similar national grant requests) are of higher priority.

Approach: Are the conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned and appropriate to the aims of the
project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problems and consider alternative strategies?

Innovation: Is the project original and innovative? For example: Does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice or address an innovative hypothesis or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies? How will this application provide results that are novel and likely to open new avenues of investigation at CDU or beyond?

Investigators: Are the investigators appropriately trained and well suited to conduct the proposed study? Is the proposed research appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other researchers? Does the investigative team bring complementary expertise to the project? Environment: Does the scientific environment in which the study will be performed contribute to the probability of success? Does the proposed study benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements? Is there evidence of institutional support?

Please upload your proposal to the AXIS ftp site on or before October 7, 2011: [http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/pilot-program/upload.aspx](http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/pilot-program/upload.aspx). To log in use the user name: pilot-proposal and the password: Upload. You can also access this site by going to the AXIS Pilot Program main page: [http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/pilot-program/pilot-program](http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/pilot-program/pilot-program) and choosing the Upload a File tab. If you are having trouble with the website, use the “Request a Service” form on the AXIS website to request help: [http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/concierge/make_appointments.aspx?id=request](http://axis.cdrewu.edu/functions/concierge/make_appointments.aspx?id=request)

We encourage inquiries concerning this RFA and welcome the opportunity to answer questions from prospective applicants.

_Mohsen Bazargan, PhD._

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