HPC Call for Pilot Project Proposals 2021-2022

(updated 6/8/2021)

The Hopkins Population Center (HPC) invites Faculty Associates to submit pilot proposals for the 2021-2022 project year. HPC will fund up to two proposals this year, with one to start in August 2021, and one to start February 2022. The purpose of the HPC pilot research program is to assist Associates to prepare for an external grant proposal. Projects may include activities such as preliminary data collection, development of critical measures, feasibility testing of instruments, or other activities that will strengthen the application for funding for a larger project.

**Proposal Due Dates**
June 30, 2021
December 30, 2021

**Project Starting Dates**
August 1, 2021
February 1, 2022

**Award Amount**
Each award request can be up to $20,000 for a one-year period.

**Pilot Grant Priority**
The proposed research must represent a primary research area (PRA) leading to an NICHD-PDB application or other NICHD branches relevant to population dynamics. Pilot funds are limited by NICHD such that foreign components, as defined in the [NIH Grants Policy Statement](#), are not allowed. Associates can receive only one Pilot Award every two years. The Development Core carries out targeted recruitment among early-career Associates (ECAs) and under-represented minority (URM) Associates, and identifies senior collaborators for promising ECAs.

Pilot awards will prioritize the following features:
- Innovative projects carried out by a multidisciplinary team
- Junior-senior team
- Projects leading to an application to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), especially in [priority areas](#) under the purview of the Population Dynamics Branch of NICHD

**Response to this RFA**
Please email HPC Director Dr. Lingxin Hao (hao@jhu.edu), and cc Associate Director Dr. Emily Agree (Emily.Agree@jhu.edu) and Acting Associate Director Dr. Alison Gemmill
(agemmill@jhu.edu) for a discussion on how to prepare for an application.

**Review Procedures**

Pilot applications are first vetted by the HPC leadership to ensure priorities are given to senior-junior and interdisciplinary collaborations and the scope is within the PRAs. Once confirmed, applications are sent to three reviewers drawn from members of the Faculty Coordinating Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee, and relevant experts among HPC Associates. They are asked to score the application according to the following criteria: relevance to HPC’s PRAs, likelihood of leading to an application to PDB, ECA and URM status of the Principal and Co-Principal Investigators, whether the work is interdisciplinary, study significance, and scientific rigor. The three reviewers may also suggest revisions for and resubmission of an application. Successful applicants are assigned methodological mentors through the Scientific Core. After the award is approved by HPC, projects must receive Johns Hopkins IRB approval/exemption and human subjects approval by NICHD before funds will be released.

**Pilot Grant Legitimate Spending Categories**

Legitimate spending categories are determined by the purpose of the proposed pilot study completed within a one-year period and could be used for the following activities:

- To cover partial time effort of principal or co-principal investigator for the specific pilot project research
- To hire research assistants
- To pay for partial service of a data scientist
- To conduct interviews and transcribe or code collected data
- To assay biological samples
- To develop and field test questionnaires
- To purchase access to a proprietary dataset
- To purchase statistical software needed for the proposed study but not covered by JHU

*Pilot grant funds cannot be used for computer hardware or travel to professional meetings.

**Mid-Term/Final Reports and Pilot-to-NICHD Process**

A mid-term report is due six months into the project and a final report is due within 30 days of the project’s end. The report should include how the pilot project provides opportunities to prove a concept, conduct preliminary analysis, and accumulate lessons to learn.

**Application Guidelines**

All proposals should include the following sections:

1. Title and proposal narrative (3 pages; minimum 11-point font and half-inch margins)
   (a) Brief description of the goals and/or aims of the anticipated external proposal for which the pilot is needed.
   (b) Specific aims for the current pilot project that lay foundation or perform preliminary study for the anticipated external proposal
   (c) Brief background and significance
   (d) Research design and methods for the pilot research to be completed within a one-year period
   (e) Key personnel for the pilot research
   (f) Timeline
2. References (not included in 3 page-limit)
3. Budget and budget justification (not included in 3-page limit)
4. Appendix: current NIH biosketch for key personnel
**Human Subjects**

After an applicant is selected for a pilot award, the PI will need to submit an IRB approval of the project to HPC and then NICHD approval before the pilot starts.