Tennessee Center for AIDS Research (TN-CFAR)

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)

Developmental Core Awards

Letter of Intent Deadline: July 7, 2015
Application Deadline: September 7, 2015

These awards are intended to support pilot projects in HIV research. Up to $50,000 in awards available.

See website for details

https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/tncfar/funding

Contact: Gina Perez, PhD (gina.perez@vanderbilt.edu)
The Tennessee Center For AIDS Research (CFAR) is requesting applications for CFAR Developmental Core Awards. These awards are intended to support studies for short periods of time (~1 year) to develop preliminary data for highly competitive extramural research applications.

**The highest priority of this program is to support:**
- New investigators who do not have existing independent (e.g., R01) HIV research funding from the NIH. Recipients of mentored training grants (e.g. K awards) are welcome to apply. For the NIH definition of New Investigator see http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/#definition.

**This program may also support:**
- Established investigators who are new to HIV research and have not previously received independent research awards such as an R01 in HIV/AIDS.
- Feasibility studies.
- Emerging research opportunities.
- HIV research activities of newly recruited faculty.

Applications are encouraged from any research discipline (clinical, translational, community, basic science, epidemiology, etc.). The CFAR will assure that early-stage investigators establish and maintain mentoring with established investigators so that they may acquire skills necessary for a career in HIV research.

**RESPONSIVENESS:**
Applications that are most responsive to this FOA will meet at least one of the following three criteria, as appropriate for the science being proposed:

1. **Have a high likelihood of leading to a strong extramural peer-reviewed grant application;**
   - This criterion is required for CFAR Research Project Awards, and is encouraged for CFAR Mission Awards (award types are defined below).

2. **Involve cross-institutional collaboration between investigators and/or trainees at Vanderbilt and Meharry Medical College.**

3. **Be relevant to “continuum of HIV care” and/or “personalized HIV care”.**

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**
Applications are also encouraged to include at least one of the following:

1. Engage the Tennessee Department of Health (a partner institution of this CFAR).
2. Meaningfully engage community partners (i.e. Community Engaged Research).
3. Leverage cost sharing with the VICTR Pilot Award Program.
4. Utilize services of CFAR Cores (Clinical, Laboratory, and/or Biostatistics and Biomedical Informatics).

Before submitting an application, all applicants are required to meet with a CFAR Biostatistics and Biomedical Informatics Core (BBIC) member to discuss study design, analysis plans, and feasibility. Before submitting an application, all applicants are encouraged to discuss their project with
a Community Engaged Research investigator and/or relevant community stakeholder group to identify opportunities for community engagement.

**WHO MAY APPLY:**

An applicant may be junior faculty member (Instructor or Assistant Professor), a post-doctoral fellow about to join the faculty (with letter from Dept. chair or Div. chief stating that), or an established investigator (i.e., Associate or Full Professor) at Vanderbilt or Meharry Medical College who is new to HIV research. We encourage applications from women, minority, and LGBTQI individuals. Recipients of mentored training grants (e.g. K awards) are eligible to apply. Employees of the Tennessee Department of Health may also apply, preferably in partnership with one or more Vanderbilt or Meharry faculty members.

**CONTACT:**

All potential applicants should contact the Tennessee CFAR early in the proposal planning process, for guidance on making the application most responsive to this FOA. This will include how to best leverage cost sharing with VICTR Pilot Awards, available CFAR Core services, and how to connect with the BBIC, Community Engaged Research investigator, and/or community stakeholders. For further information and questions, please contact:

Gina Perez, PhD (gina.perez@vanderbilt.edu)

**I. CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT**

- **CFAR Research Project Award (2 awards per year)**

  Up to $50,000 per award, each for a duration of 12 months. Funding will begin as early as October 7, 2015. No cost extensions will be considered contingent on available funds to CFAR. **Likelihood of leading to a new funded NIH research grant application will be weighed heavily when evaluating CFAR Research Project applications.**

  The proposal must be for a new project or idea that is distinct from any currently funded project. Salary support can only be requested for faculty who are not tenured, and as is allowed based on other support the applicant may be receiving. Equipment requests are not allowed under this category.

- **CFAR Mission Award (1 award per year)**

  Up to $20,000 per award, each for a duration of 12 months. Funding will begin as early as October 7, 2015. No cost extensions will be considered contingent on available funds to CFAR. **Likelihood of leading to a new funded NIH research grant application is encouraged but will not be weighed as heavily when evaluating CFAR Mission applications.**

  This award is intended to support applications that align with specific aims of the Tennessee CFAR. These include creating new opportunities for HIV clinical/translational research at Meharry, and between Meharry and Vanderbilt, supporting junior investigator career development, and work toward developing a new emphasis on HIV-focused community engaged research (CEnR). This also includes collaborative work with the Tennessee Department of Health.
II. LETTER OF INTENT (LOI) (due July 7, 2015)

The letter should include a brief description of your anticipated project, how you fit eligibility criteria (see below), the award program for which you are applying (see below), and your contact information (include email address). Also include names of project co-investigator(s), collaborator(s), and/or mentor(s), as appropriate. The purpose of this brief letter is to allow CFAR to contact you with advice about preparing a competitive application. Therefore, expect to be contacted soon after submission of your letter of intent. Full applications will be due September 7, 2015 and require prior LOI submission.

III. GENERAL POLICIES

The following guidelines apply to each of the two funding categories:

A. Eligibility

Principal investigator must be a Faculty member of Meharry Medical College or Vanderbilt University. This includes any faculty level investigator including Research Associates and Instructors, as well as more senior faculty. A post-doctoral fellow about to become junior faculty may apply with an accompanying letter stating that from their Department chair or Division chief. Applicants can re-apply for CFAR support for a different project as long as support would not be for more than two continuous years.

B. Funding Dates

The start date for all funded applications will be October 1, 2015 (at earliest, pending compliance with necessary approvals). Funding will have a duration of one year.

C. Review Process

Applications will be reviewed internally by a panel of faculty chosen by Developmental Core leadership. Written critiques will be provided to the applicant upon completion of review and ranking of the application. This will be useful for subsequent applications for external funding. All funding decisions are final.

D. Change of Institution/Transfers

Recipients may not transfer these awards to another institution or to another individual. Reallocations in the approved budget (beyond 10% of the total budget) require prior written approval before expenditure. Awardees are required to give 90 days notice of any change in Institution. Funds will be pro rated when an applicant leaves the Institution within any funding year.

E. Publications

A copy of any manuscripts or abstracts accepted for publication/presentation, which contains any results found using funds from a CFAR Developmental Core Award should be sent to the Tennessee Center For AIDS Research upon notification of acceptance.
Support from the Vanderbilt-Meharry Center For AIDS Research MUST be acknowledged when findings are reported, published or publicity is given to the work. Acknowledgement such as “This work was funded in part [or entirely] by a 201[X] Developmental Core award from the NIH-funded Tennessee Center for AIDS Research (P30 AI110527)” is required.

E. Extensions

No-cost extensions beyond the approved funding period must be requested in writing, must be approved by the CFAR Developmental Core Director, and may not exceed 12 months.

F. Grants

The Tennessee Center For AIDS Research should be notified of any intentions to submit grants containing any results found using funds from the Development Award, so that CFAR personnel can document this contribution, and assist and provide support as needed.

G. Patents

Awards are made with the understanding that the Tennessee Center For AIDS Research will receive written notification of the filing of a patent application for any discovery made based on work funded by these grants.

H. Cancellation/Termination

If a grant recipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of an award, funding will be terminated. In the event of cancellation/termination, unexpended funds must be returned to Tennessee CFAR Developmental Core.

If support for the proposed project is obtained from other sources, the recipient must notify the CFAR Developmental Core Director. Any funds awarded by this program will be withdrawn when funding is received for the same project from other sources, thus permitting Tennessee CFAR to invest in other research projects and investigators.

I. Human Subjects

All human subjects must give their prior, legally acceptable consent (if a minor, legally acceptable consent of a parent or legal guardian) to take part in any research project funded in whole or in part by this program. Institutional policy for human subjects must be followed and the procedures involved will be as stringent as those imposed by the NIH. Budgets will not be approved prior to receipt of the IRB approval letter, if needed.

J. Laboratory Animals

The Principal Investigator must follow standards for care of laboratory animals as prescribed in the DHHS Publication 85-23 (NIH). Budgets will not be approved prior to receipt of the IACUC approval letter, if needed.

K. Data Sharing
In accord with NIH policy, all primary research data generated with Tennessee CFAR support will be available for sharing no later than the acceptance for publication of the main findings from the final data set. Even if primary research data are stripped of all personal identifiers, it is possible for deductive disclosure of subjects with unusual characteristics. Therefore, in order to maintain privacy (per HIPAA), data and associated documentation will be available only under a data-sharing agreement that provides for: (1) a commitment to using the data only for research purposes and to NOT identifying any individual participant; (2) a commitment to securing the data using appropriate computer technology; and (3) a commitment to destroying or returning all data after analyses are complete. The data sharing agreement will also require acknowledgement of the Tennessee CFAR as the source of data and will request pre-release review of any presentations or publications by the Tennessee CFAR PI (or the PI who generated the primary data). Agreement to provide financial support for itemized specific expenses of data sharing may also be required in the data sharing agreement.
IV. ADMINISTRATION OF TENNESSEE CENTER FOR AIDS RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTAL AWARDS

A. Application Forms:

Please use a standard PHS 398 Grant Application packet, completing only pages 1-5 (omit page 3-Table of Contents). NOTE THAT THIS INCLUDES BIOSKETCHES OF ALL KEY PERSONNEL. The format should broadly follow NIH current guidelines (e.g., abstract, introduction, experimental plan, etc.), following the page limitations for the specific category of application as indicated below. Please note that page 1 (front page) does not need to be signed by a University official, only the Principal Investigator. On line 2 of the PHS 398 face page, please indicate the application category (i.e., Interdisciplinary HIV/AIDS Research Project or New HIV/AIDS Pilot Projects). The standard continuation page should be used for the scientific portion of the application (Research Plan). Applications that exceed the page limitation for each category will be returned to the applicant. References may be listed on additional pages. Appended materials will not be accepted or considered as part of the application.

Maximum Length of Research Plan Section is 6 pages.
Research Plan must include the following sections:

A. Specific aims
B. Background
C. Preliminary studies

Preliminary data are not required for an application from a new investigator for a Pilot HIV/AIDS research project. However, inclusion of preliminary data, when possible, will be considered a plus in scoring of a new investigator’s application. A new investigator is defined as per the NIH definition (above and http://grants.nih.gov/grants/new_investigators/#definition).

Preliminary data are required from an applicant who is not an NIH-defined new investigator.

D. Research design and methods
E. Human subjects--as needed
F. Vertebrate animals--as needed
G. Literature cited--as needed

PHS 398 application forms may be found on the web at:
http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html#forms
A Conflict of Interest Statement is not required.

In addition to the PHS 398 Forms, please include:
- A paragraph describing how application is relevant to HIV/AIDS.
- Letters of support from collaborators essential to the success of the proposed project must accompany the application.
- For Vanderbilt PI’s, an internal Proposal Transmittal Form, signed by the Principal Investigator and Department Chair(s) of all participating departments should accompany the application packet. This can be found at: http://medschool.mc.vanderbilt.edu/oor/gm/index.php?GM=5
- Senior post-doctoral fellow or junior faculty applicants must provide a letter of departmental support outlining the commitment of the department to the applicant’s career.

Please deliver the original, and 1 hard copy of the completed application to A-2200 Medical Center North, Vanderbilt, as well as an electronic copy to Gina Perez (Gina.Perez@Vanderbilt.edu) no later than 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date.

B. Budget:

All applications must include an itemized budget. Funds provided by this program may be expended only for purpose and in the amounts set forth in the budget, unless written consent from the CFAR Developmental Core Director is obtained prior to the expenditure. The grantee may reallocate funds from one expense category to another without the prior approval of the CFAR Developmental Core Director provided that the reallocation does not exceed 10% of the amount of the total direct costs.

If the amount of a grant award is less than the amount requested in the grant application, the grantee shall submit to the CFAR Developmental Core Director a revised itemized budget not exceeding the amount of the grant award. All funding requests must be made in U.S. dollars.

1. Allowable Costs:
   - Supplies
   - Animals
   - Salaries of postdoctoral associates, graduate student assistants, and research assistants
   - Patient costs
   - Travel – A maximum of up to $1,000 (U.S.) is permitted to attend a professional meeting in which research funded by this application is presented.
   - Investigator salaries should be requested to reflect their % effort on the proposed project and the budget must be adequate to perform the project (eg, include supply costs or indicate what other sources of support will be used),
• CFAR or other Core facility charges

2. **Tennessee CFAR Developmental Awards may not be used for any of the following:**

• Renovation of physical facilities
• Telephone services
• Laboratory or office furniture
• Dues and membership in scientific societies or journal subscriptions
• Recruiting fees and relocation expenses
• Maintenance contracts
• Computer equipment that is not essential for the research project at hand

**C. Review Criteria:**

Impact and originality of idea, ability of PI to carry out award, the prospect of successfully applying for further funding, and scientific merit of research design, approach, and methodology. Proposals from junior investigators and faculty new to HIV research will be given special consideration in the review process. Proposals not judged as relevant to HIV/AIDS will not be reviewed.

**D. Reporting and Presenting Requirements:**

After each 3 months of funding, awardees will be required to submit a brief written progress report to Tennessee CFAR. After 12 months of funding, awardees will be required to present study results at a Tennessee CFAR seminar.

**E. Final Progress Report**

A final written report is due 90 days after termination of the grant. This report should detail major accomplishments and publications obtained as a result of the funding, and a list of new grants submitted as a result of this funding.