

The Center for Integrative Neuroscience Center of Biomedical Research Excellence

Request for Pilot Project Proposals

The University of Nevada, Reno Center for Integrative Neuroscience (an NIH COBRE Award) invites applications for one-year pilot project grants to support the development of new research projects in neuroscience. We anticipate supporting 2 projects for up to \$40,000 each in direct costs with a projected start date of June 1st, 2024. Applicants are required to submit a brief (2-page max) **Pre-Proposal** that describes the proposed research. Pre-proposals will be reviewed by the Program Directors and a small number of applications will be selected to submit full **Pilot Project Proposals**. While advancement to full proposal is not a guarantee of funding, chances of award will be increased due to the smaller pool of applicants. Priority will be given to applications that leverage one or more of the COBRE Core Facilities (<https://www.unr.edu/neuroscience/research/center/core-facilities>), although this is not a requirement.

Important Dates

Pre-proposal submission deadline:	Friday Nov 10, 2023 (5.00 pm PST)
Notification of advancement to full project proposal:	Monday Dec 4, 2023
Full proposal submission deadline:	Friday Feb 2, 2024 (5.00 pm PST)
Notification of successful full proposals*:	Fri March 1, 2024
Grant period begins:	June 1 st 2024

*selected proposals will be forwarded to NIH for review. Awards are contingent on NIH approval.

Eligibility

We welcome applications for proposals that will advance the University's research imprint within the broadly defined discipline of neuroscience. Applications from **junior faculty are encouraged**, but **submissions from mid-career or established faculty will also be considered**. Proposals from established faculty must not be an extension of the PI's previous work, and must document how the proposed work reflects a new direction for the PI. **Co-PIs are allowable**. **Interdisciplinary projects that include teams that span different academic departments are encouraged**. **Use of COBRE CORE facilities** is strongly encouraged but not required. Applications will not be considered from individuals with current major grant or contract funding, and investigators cannot receive simultaneous support from two different sources of IDEA (e.g. COBRE, INBRE or CTR-IN) funding. All applicants must include plans for a project mentor (see **Just In Time Information**, below).

To apply

Phase I: Pre-Proposals

The pre-proposal document should follow NIH formatting and include:

1. **Title page**, including the following information:
 - Name and academic rank of PI(s) and year you plan to apply for or received tenure
 - Contact information (Dept., email address)
 - Title of pilot project
 - List of current grants (include title, abstract, and indicate if there is any overlap)
2. **Biographical sketch** (use current NIH format) with other support page (5 page max.)
3. **Pilot Project Proposal** (2 page max.)
 - Describe specific aims and background and significance
 - Outline of the proposed research, including planned experiments, methods used (i.e., computational modeling, behavioral studies, fMRI...), approach to data analysis where relevant.
 - Can include diagrams/figures that explain the rationale or available pilot data
 - Describe use (if any) of COBRE Core Facilities

- Demonstrate feasibility of the proposed research
- Brief closing paragraph on how the project will lead to a future grant submission and target agency

Please submit all preproposal materials merged as a single pdf file (with the file name LastName_Pilot.pdf) to Leann Kumataka at kumataka@unr.edu.

Phase II: Full Pilot Project Proposals (*by invitation only*)

Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full Pilot Project Proposal.

Applications should be submitted as a single PDF to Leann Kumataka at kumataka@unr.edu, and follow NIH SF-424 and PHS 398 guidelines and formatting to include the following:

1. **Cover letter** indicating year you plan to apply for, or date received, tenure.
2. **NIH Form Page 1** (items 1-8 excluding 4b, 5a)
3. **Biosketch** for PI or co-PIs
4. **Detailed Budget** of up to \$40,000 in direct costs across standard budget categories
 - a) Pilot Projects Leaders must commit at least two-months of effort to the project; the budget may request a maximum of one month of salary support as overload.
 - b) Applications that utilize the Neuroscience COBRE core facilities are encouraged but not required. Budgets should include service fees for core use where appropriate. Information on the cores is provided in 8.c below.
 - c) Requests for funds for major equipment are discouraged, and must include justification as well as a plan for maintaining the equipment within one of the COBRE research cores.
5. **Budget Justification**
6. **Other Support** (active and pending)
7. **Specific Aims** (1 page)
8. **Research Strategy*** (6 pages max)

*applicants are encouraged to consult with the COBRE Data Analytics Manager Dr. Michael Rudd (mrudd@unr.edu) to ensure appropriately powered experimental designs. There is no charge for these consultations.

- a) The pilot project program is designed to position researchers to be competitive for extramural funding, by providing support for research that can lead to preliminary data for grant applications. The Research Strategy should include a timeline, both for the research as well as the plan to submit a research grant within 1 year after the end of the COBRE pilot project support. Preliminary data is not required for pilot proposals, but the strategy should demonstrate the feasibility of the proposed work.
 - b) Pilot proposals that are based on applications that have previously been submitted to agencies but were not funded should provide review panel summary statements in addition to the pilot project proposal, and a section discussing how the project will address the review critiques.
 - c) The Neuroscience COBRE provides access to a wide array of tools for neuroscience research. The strategy should include a section briefly describing how the project will make use of one or more of the COBRE research cores for 1) Neuroimaging (Director Lars Strother); 2) Cellular and Molecular Imaging and Microscopy (Director Alexander Van der Linden); 3) Virtual and Augmented Reality (Director Eelke Folmer); and 4) Computational Modeling and Analysis (Director Alireza Tavakkoli). Information about the core facilities is available on the Neuroscience COBRE web site. Applicants are encouraged to work with the core directors to develop the plan for core use. Applications that will not utilize the cores should clearly note this in the strategy.
9. **Literature Cited**

“Just in Time” information required for proposals recommended for funding

Selected proposals must submit the following additional materials before they can be forwarded to NIH for review:

- a. **NIH form pages:** to include Completed Form Page 1; Research and Related Other Project Information; Senior/Key Personnel; Cover Page Supplement.
- b. Proposals involving human or animal research must receive **IRB or IACUC approval** prior to award by NIH.
- c. **Letter of support from a project mentor.** COBRE pilot projects include formal mentoring by scientific experts. Mentor support is required also for mid- or late-career applicants because the proposal should reflect a significant change of direction for the PI, for which mentoring would be helpful. The mentor can be internal or external to the University and is chosen by the applicant to help guide both the scientific aims of the project and the professional development of the investigator. Up to \$2000 for external mentors, or 2.5-days overload for internal mentors, is provided to compensate mentors for their time. These funds are in addition to the pilot project award and do not need to be included in the budget. They include travel funds to allow investigators and mentors to hold in-person meetings. Applications that are selected for submission will require a letter from the mentor verifying that they are willing to serve as a mentor for the project.

Timeline

See **Important Dates** for deadlines. Earliest projected state date: June 1st 2024.

Applications will be reviewed by the Director of the Pilot Project Program (Jacqueline Walsh-Snow) and/or by Internal and External Advisory Committees of the COBRE. Applications recommended for funding will be notified by March 1st, 2024 after which JIT information will be requested. The recommended proposals will be forwarded to NIH for their review. All awards are contingent on NIH approval. Awarded budgets cannot be extended across funding years of the parent grant.

Further information

General information on the COBRE program is available through the following link:

<https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Research/DRCB/IDeA/pages/COBRE.aspx>.

For questions regarding the scope and aims of the Neuroscience COBRE and the pilot project program or potential eligibility please contact the Pilot Project Program Director, Jacqueline Walsh-Snow (snow@unr.edu), or the COBRE Director, Michael Webster (mwebster@unr.edu).

For questions regarding the budget and format for applying for project support please contact the Center Program Manager, Leann Kumataka (kumataka@unr.edu).