Community Collaborative Awards for HIV Research

RFA issued: June 9, 2021
LOI survey due: September 22, 2021
Pre-submission meeting: TBD
Applications due: October 25, 2021
Earliest start date: January 2022

Funding Opportunity Description

Third Coast Center for AIDS Research (CFAR) Community Collaborative Awards are intended to support the development of new partnerships between community organizations and CFAR faculty members. Proposals must focus on the development of academic-community partnerships that can lead to high priority HIV research projects in the future. The types of activities that will build collaboration and can be supported by this award include the examples below.

- Developing strategic plans to address gaps in public health programs
- Seeking funding opportunities and writing grants to extend the partnership
- Enhancing research infrastructure at community organizations and universities
- Convening and facilitating community research forums or focus groups
- Monthly meetings between the community and academic co-principal investigators

Conducting research with these funds is allowable, but is not the purpose of this opportunity. The CFAR is committed to making these awards accessible to community partners and will work closely with applicants to streamline administrative and financial processes.

Funds Available and Project Period

- Up to $10,000 in direct costs are allowed and smaller budgets may be awarded. Indirect costs will be determined at the time of award.
- The project period is limited to one year, with the earliest possible start in January 2022. All regulatory approvals must be in place before work may begin.

Eligibility

Projects will be led by a Co-Principal Investigator team that includes a CFAR faculty member and a CFAR affiliate member from a community organization engaged in HIV-related work. Established and early stage investigators are eligible. Refer to the center's website for additional information on membership categories or contact Justin Schmandt to determine eligibility.

Project Relevance to HIV Research

The partners' interest in future HIV research must be related to the NIH Office of AIDS Research priorities for 2021-25:

1. reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS, including the development of safe and effective HIV/AIDS vaccines and microbicides
2. develop the next generation of HIV therapies with improved safety and ease of use
3. discover a cure for HIV/AIDS
4. reduce HIV-associated comorbidities and coinfections
5. Basic research, health disparities, behavioral and social sciences research, epidemiology, information dissemination, implementation sciences, and training that cut across the four priority areas above are also supported.

See NOT-OD-20-018 for examples of research projects that are aligned with these priorities.

For the upcoming cycle, the Third Coast CFAR will give special (but not exclusive) priority to research focused on comorbidities that occur with higher incidence in people living with HIV, including but not limited to: COVID-19, cardiovascular diseases, sleep disorders, and non-AIDS defining cancers.

A project that involves human subjects research or an international component may require additional NIH review prior to initiating the study.

Review criteria

The primary criteria for evaluation of the application are the development of a partnership between the community and academic investigators and the likelihood that the project will lead to a new submission to the NIH for HIV research.

Reviewers will use a standardized scoring system and a modified set of criteria listed below.

- **Significance and Alignment NIH HIV Research Priorities**: Does this partnership address an important problem in HIV/AIDS? Does the work align with priority topics designated by NIH in NOT-OD-20-018?
- **Investigative team**: Is an appropriate plan in place to build partnership between the community and academic investigators and their organizations?
- **Approach**: Do the aims of the project require contribution from both partners? Is the partnership a central and necessary component of the project development?
- **Future plans for applications to NIH**: Is the project targeted at development of an NIH grant proposal? Will completion of the pilot project increase the probability of developing a competitive application?

Application and Submission Information

Letter of Intent due September 22, 2021

Email a succinct letter of intent to justin.schmandt@northwestern.edu that includes the following:

- Community and academic Co-PIs (names, positions, institutions, and email addresses)
- Brief description of the project, including NIH research priority that it addresses
- Other key personnel expected to be involved (names, positions, institutions, and email addresses)

The Developmental Core will contact you to schedule a required pre-submission consultation to streamline the proposal development process. If no human subjects research is proposed, the core will work with you to draft service agreements, rather than subcontracts. This will reduce the number of budget and commitment forms needed in the application.

Applications due October 25, 2021

The application is an abbreviated NIH R01-style format and NIH forms are used as indicated in the table below. Forms can be downloaded from http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html . Applications are expected to use NIH formatting standards (single-spaced, 0.5 inch margin minimum, Arial, Helvetica, Palatino Linotype, or Georgia typeface in black in at least 11 point size).

Submit the following components as Word documents by email to justin.schmandt@northwestern.edu by 11:59 p.m. on October 25, 2021.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS FOR APPLICATION	FORMAT AND NOTES
Cover Page • Project title • Names, Titles, and Institutions for Co-PIs • Names, Titles, Roles and Institutions • Identify the OAR research priority addressed by the project	1 page limit No form
Project Summary (Abstract) The **Project Summary** is meant to serve as a succinct and accurate description of the proposed work when separated from the application.	Limited to 30 lines No form
Description of Community-Academic Partnership Describe the expertise of each member of the team and their organization. Provide an outline of the activities and communication strategies that will be used to build the partnership and position the investigators to pursue NIH funding. Identify the specific responsibilities each team member will have for project work.	1 page limit No form
Research Strategy (organized in the four sections below) 1. Goals: State concisely the goals of the proposed collaboration 2. Partnership and setting: Describe the Co-PIs' expertise and the partnering organizations' resources, roles and constituents as related to the project. 3. Approach: Describe project activities in sufficient detail to allow reviewers to understand the team's strategy to accomplish its stated goal(s). 4. Communication: Describe how the Co-PIs will communicate and share decision-making authority.	2 page limit No form

Scope of Human Subjects Work (if applicable) ▫ Is this study exempt from federal regulations for Human Subjects Research? List exemption. ▫ Does this study solely utilize the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects? For studies involving human data or biological specimens, include a description of the source of the data/biospecimens; whether they will be collected specifically for this study or were collected for another purpose; what identifiers will be associated with the human specimens and data and who has access to subject identities; and the role(s) of providers of the data/biological specimens in the proposed research. ▫ Describe the characteristics of the subject population, including their anticipated number, age range, and health status, if relevant. State if children, pregnant women, prisoners, or transgender or gender non-conforming study participants will be enrolled. ▫ Provide a description of the recruitment plan and interaction with participants. ▫ List any collaborating sites where human subjects research will be performed, and describe the role of those sites and collaborating investigators in performing the proposed research. ▫ Outline the status/plan for IRB review and the institution that will provide primary oversight. Identify all sites that will conduct HSR.	1 page limit No form
Bibliography Include title and names of all authors. Follow same formatting and type size rules as for the research strategy.	No limit No form
Plans for future NIH proposal submission Briefly explain how this Community Collaborative Award will add value to plans for future NIH proposals. If specific NIH funding opportunities are of interest, please list the PA or RFA.	½ page limit No form

Detailed Budget for Direct Costs ▫ Allowable expenses include salary and fringe benefits for the research team, supplies, participant incentives, stipends for community advisory board members, consultants for SWOT analysis of the collaboration and its research goals, technical assistance to develop MOUs and support compliance with applicable regulations, , and core services. Identify all services to be purchased from core facilities and provide the name of the facility. ▫ Applicants are encouraged to utilize CFAR core services. Contact core directors or Justin Schmandt to confirm available services and generate an estimate of costs. ▫ Salary for the mentor should generally not be included, unless they are doing work on the project. ▫ Investigators on K-awards may be restricted from accepting salary.	Provide a separate budget for each organization

☐ Training and tuition cannot be supported. Salary may be requested for a graduate student or postdoctoral scientist with a clear justification of the work they will do on the project and who do not have salary supported on a training grant. ☐ Domestic travel is allowed if it is essential for the project. ☐ Publication costs are not permitted. If needed, these can be requested as a Core Subsidy Award at the time of acceptance by the journal. ☐ Sites other than NU should list F&A costs. These costs do not count against the $10,000 limit. ☐ Do not include NU indirect or F&A costs for the overall project. These will be calculated at the time of funding. ☐ When feasible, use a service agreement to support partners that are not conducting human subjects research for the project. Contact Justin Schmandt to discuss this option.	Form Page 4
Budget Justification ☐ Describe and justify each line item on the budget. ☐ Identify any core facilities that will be used and how costs were calculated. ☐ Provide a separate budget justification for each institution that will receive funds.	No limit Use CFAR form
Biosketch or CV Provide a biosketch or CV for each Co-PI, as well as a named mentor or other key personnel.	Use NIH template (3/2020) Or use CV (no form)
Letter of Intent The community partner organization must provide a signed letter from an authorized official, committing to the proposed work (if selected)	No form
Mentor Letter of Support (if applicable) New investigators must have a mentor with HIV research experience. The letter from the mentor should describe the relationship between the mentor-mentee and the mentoring plan. Investigators may contact the CFAR for assistance in identifying a mentor.	No form
Sub-recipient Commitment Form This form is likely only needed for a community organization that will conduct human subjects research as part of the project. This will be determined during the proposal development process. The CFAR will make every effort to streamline administrative processes.	Use NU form*

Work with the investigator at the sub-recipient site to complete this form. This form with the signature of an authorized official at the sub-recipient site is required for all institutions, other than Northwestern University, participating in this research project.

* A note regarding Office of Sponsored Research: This funding mechanism uses internal funding and does not require review or approval by an Office of Sponsored Research. Applications are submitted directly to the CFAR by investigators.

Obligations of the Award Co-PIs

1. Investigators awarded funding will be required to provide an interim report on the progress of their study and a final report detailing the outcome of their project. Specific due dates for reports will be provided in the Notice of Award and are chosen to support preparation of Third Coast CFAR reports to NIH and advisory boards.

2. In order to evaluate the long-term outcomes of the program, and in accordance with NIH reporting requirements for the Third Coast CFAR, brief, non-narrative annual reports will be solicited from the PI for five years following the completion of their project indicating:

    a. The number of subsequent grant applications

    b. The funding outcome of these applications

    c. Any publications or presentations that may have been based on the pilot grant

3. Awardees are expected to present their work at CFAR events, upon invitation.

4. Awardees must agree to credit the Third Coast Center for AIDS Research in any publication or applications that result from awards. For example: "This *[insert: abstract /publication/ presentation/ grant proposal]* was (partially) supported by a pilot award from the Third Coast Center for AIDS Research (CFAR), an NIH-funded center (P30AI117943), with co-funding from the following Institutes and Centers: NICHD, NIA, NIDCR, NINR, NHLBI, NICHD, NIDA, NIDDK, NIMHD, NIMH, NCI, NIAID, FIC, and OAR. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health."

5. All publications that benefit from support provided by the Third Coast CFAR must comply with the NIH Public Access Policy.

6. Awardees must provide, and agree to allow, information about research awarded under this program, subsequent awards, and publications to be posted on the Third Coast CFAR website.

7. Management of the award will be the responsibility of the PI's department or unit.

Additional Information and Questions

It is our mission to provide strong support for new research collaborations, including partnerships between Third Coast CFAR academic and community partners. Please contact us with questions or requests for assistance at any point in the application process. Requests for additional information and questions may be directed to:

Justin Schmandt, MPH
Associate Director, Third Coast CFAR
justin.schmandt@northwestern.edu