

## **Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) for Skeletal Health and Repair- Pilot Project Grant Program**

The purpose of the COBRE for Skeletal Health and Repair Pilot Project Grant Program is to support new multidisciplinary research focusing on musculoskeletal tissues, joint health and disease mechanisms, and repair strategies.

This Pilot Project Grant Program is to stimulate research activities necessary to advance multidisciplinary research projects in skeletal tissues for the purpose of attracting external funding from both federal and foundation sources. The proposal must have a realistic potential for future success in attracting external support. Funds should be applied to pilot research necessary to advance such proposals. These funds are not intended to supplement ongoing NIH funded projects (RO1 or PO1). They are to support new research conducted by investigators who have not been the PI of RO1 type funds or by established investigators who are making a significant change to his/her career. The applicants should identify the external sponsor they intend to approach along with a description of the project for which external support will be sought, a budget estimate, and a timeline for submission. In consultation with the external advisory committee of COBRE, awards of up to \$50,000/year will be made by the COBRE. The guidelines for submitting proposals and for selecting recipients are outlined below.

### **Eligibility**

- All proposals should be relevant to the musculoskeletal research, which includes but is not restricted to the cells and tissues in cartilage, bone, muscle, tendon, and synovium.
- All junior investigators with faculty appointment in Rhode Island Hospital, Brown University, or any high education institution in Rhode Island are eligible to apply. The principal investigator must have an active faculty appointment (fellows, residents and students are not eligible to be the principal investigator). For the purpose of eligibility, a junior investigator is defined either as (1) an individual who does not have or has not previously had an external, peer-reviewed Research Project Grant (RPG) or Program Project Grant (PPG) from either a Federal or non-Federal source that names that investigator as the PI or (2) an established investigator who is making a significant change to his/her career.
- With respect to item (1), grants that name an individual as a co-investigator, collaborator, consultant, or to a position other than Principal Investigator do not disqualify that investigator. Starter grants (such as NIH's FIRST award mechanism, R29), Academic Research Enhancement Award grants (AREA, R15), exploratory/pilot project grants (such as NIH R03 and R21 awards), career development awards (such as NIH K01 and K08 awards), or other Federal or non-Federal funding whose purpose is to provide preliminary support in anticipation of a RPG or PPG also do not disqualify the investigator.
- Investigators who have managed to obtain significant support in the form of a RPG or PPG (e.g., NIH R01 or P01, or other Federal or non-Federal agency awards) are not eligible. Investigators who propose to develop a new or alternate

line of research, but whose intention is to maintain support through an active RPG or PPG in a different area of research are also not eligible.

- Investigators should indicate in the Biographical Sketch their current and previous history of peer-reviewed research support.
- Previous recipients of COBRE pilot project funding are not eligible.

### **Amount and Duration of Awards**

- Awards can be up to \$50,000/year (direct cost) for one year.
- The award starts from August 1, 2010 through July 31, 2011. Budgets should be planned for one year of funding. A progress report is due by April, 2011. Unused funds will be transferred back to the COBRE.
- The Awards are NOT transferable to institutions outside of Rhode Island. If the principal investigator transfers to a non-eligible institution, the remaining pilot project grant funds will be transferred back to the COBRE for Skeletal Health and Repair.

### **Criteria for Selection**

The overall merit of the research project will be considered and evaluated by the Director of the COBRE and external advisory committee. All applications will be peer reviewed and scored. The final selection will be made based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the focus area of musculoskeletal tissues and cells.
- The potential for advancing knowledge in skeletal and joint health.
- Innovation and creativity.
- The plan and potential for research support from external sponsors.
- The likelihood that the proposed project will be completed during the award period.
- Appropriateness of proposed budget.

### **Award Conditions**

Award funds may be used to support reasonable and necessary costs for the collection of pilot research data. Expenditures for equipment are not permitted.

- All reports and notifications should be addressed to the Director of the COBRE for Skeletal Health and Repair, Dr. Qian Chen.
- A progress report is due to the COBRE Director on April 30, 2009. This report should include progress made on the project and use of the allocated funds. The report should outline the work that was accomplished and describe the plan to submit a proposal to an external sponsor based on this award. The report should also describe any significant deviations from or extensions to the project described in the original proposal.
- Any significant changes in the proposal or allocation of funds must be approved by the COBRE Director in writing.

- The grant recipient is expected to attend COBRE seminar series and to present the results of their research from this award in the seminar series and/or at a COBRE Research Forum.

### **Procedure for Submitting Proposals**

The proposals and supporting documents should be submitted via email no later than December 25, 2009. Selections will be announced by February 28, 2010 and award periods will begin by August 1, 2010.

#### Email submission:

Qian\_Chen@Brown.edu

Please put COBRE PILOT GRANT APPLICATION in the subject line of your email.

Any questions or inquiries should be directed to Dr. Qian Chen, Director of COBRE for Skeletal Health and Repair.

### **The proposal should include the following items presented in the following order:**

1. **Abstract** (300 word limit) describing the proposed research project.
2. **Body of the proposal** (should not exceed 2,500 words (or 5 single-spaced pages) excluding supporting documents listed below)
  1. Specific Aims
  2. Background and Significance. A summary of the relevant background literature in the field of research that puts the proposed project into the appropriate context and explains how it will significantly extend or contribute to the field. (500 words maximum)
  3. Research methods and rationale. A description of the proposed research project and analytic plan, in terms that do not require reviewers to be experts in the sub area of the proposed research, a timetable for completing these activities, and an assessment of the potential for subsequent external funding.
3. **Supporting documents for the proposal** (bibliography/references, figures)
4. **Budget with justification.** The budget should have general itemized categories of expenses for which award funds will be used and a brief justification for these expenses. Funds cannot be used for indirect costs. Expenditures for equipment are not permitted.
5. **Strategy for seeking subsequent external support.** The description should include a statement of intent to submit a proposal as one of the outcomes of the project.
6. **Current NIH biosketch for each personnel named in the project.** Each person's contribution to the project should be clearly outlined.
7. **Endorsements** from the proposer's department chair(s) discussing the proposal's importance in terms of the selection criteria. This letter of support should include a commitment from the chair for adequate time and resources to complete the project.

8. **Acknowledgement**

The COBRE for Skeletal Health and Repair is supported by Grant Number P20RR024484 from the National Center for Research Resources of the National Institutes of Health.