

ALRI Pilot Project Program

The ALRI Pilot Project Program (PPP) aims to increase the rate of strong, fundable external grant submissions from UA Faculty who are affiliated with the ALRI. The PPP will encourage research being conducted by transdisciplinary investigative teams, and which will (a) provide critically necessary pilot data necessary for a federal grant submission, and (b) include clear timelines and procedures for a grant submission. Proposals will all be expected to include a grant submission as an outcome. The focus of the PPP should have a clear connection to human health outcomes. Funding will be considered for anything (salary for staff or GRAs, travel, equipment, supplies) that will meet the goal of rigorous, innovative, highly significant research (the PI can also determine whether a course release opportunity is available)

Review Process

A PPP review committee will rate an application using NIH-related criteria for the *Significance* (focusing on scientific premise), *Investigator*, *Innovation*, and *Approach* (focusing on scientific rigor) of the pilot research project, addressing the recently articulated NIH-review emphasis on enhancing reproducibility of research through rigor and transparency.

The review of the *Approach* will take into account the pilot nature of the study, and will focus primarily on whether the pilot project can establish the feasibility of the project for larger external funding. The clarity of the conceptual framework (including a focus on relevant mechanisms of action), the hypotheses to be examined, and the rigor of the project's methodology will be primary considerations in the review of the Approach section.

The review of the *Investigator* will focus heavily on the expertise of the individual investigators, appropriate coverage of all of the expertise needed for the project, concrete descriptions of how the investigative team will work together, and evidence of prior collaboration of the investigative team. The investigative team either should have already published and/or presented together or provide explicit plans of how they will do so. It is expected that each PPP project will include investigators from at least two different departments/colleges.

The PPP review committee will consist of 4-6 ALRI Advisory Board members and additional ad hoc reviewers as needed (including at least 1-2 experts in the content area of the application).

Application

Applications for funding should be prepared and submitted as an electronic document. One of the investigative team should be the designated Principal Investigator. The application should include the following sections:

- I) Title of the proposed project, along with name(s), academic rank(s), and departmental affiliation(s) of the applicants, and the signatures of both the applicant PI and co-PIs, and the chairs of

the applicant PIs departments, signifying that the work has been approved by them. (page 1 of the proposal).

2) Abstract of the proposed work – This should not exceed 250 words and should be suitable for general publication or dissemination to the general public. This should be single-spaced in not less than 12-pitch type. (also on p. 1)

3) Proposal – The proposed work should be described (single-spaced; not less than 12-pitch type with 1-inch margins; not to exceed 4 pages). Keep in mind that the proposal will be evaluated by peers who may not have detailed knowledge of the area; therefore, the proposed work should be described in sufficient detail for faculty colleagues to evaluate its impact, but still at a level general enough for the non-specialist to appreciate. The proposal should address the following areas (pp. 2-5) for projects meant to lead to NIH and external funders with related grant application formats (for NSF and other external funding, use headings and sections that are geared toward that funding source) :

- a. The Specific Aims of the project
- b. The Significance of the project for the human condition or outcomes that are the focus of the project.
- c. The expertise of the PI and the investigative team in addressing the research question.
- d. The innovation of the planned research.
- e. The Approach of the project (conceptualization; hypotheses; sample, methods and procedures; planned analyses)

4) Detailed timeline of the grant submission process – this will be an additional 1-2 single-spaced pages describing how the pilot project will fit into the larger timeline of submitting a grant. The funding source will be identified (e.g. a specific NIH Institute, NSF, CDC, IES, DOD, DOE, etc), along with relevant *Program Announcements (PA)*, *Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA)*, or *Requests for Applications (RFA)*. The timeline will include the date of a planned grant submission, along with when the tasks related to the larger federal grant application will be completed. In addition to the writing of elements of the application (specify when sections of the application are expected to be completed), the timeline will include when the investigative team will contact Program Officials from the relevant Institute, and when peer review of the application will be expected to occur (ALRI, in conjunction with the VPR Office of Proposal Development, will assist in organizing the peer review of the application; this will need to be done early enough so that feedback can be incorporated in the application)

Budget and Budget Justification

ALRI will accept proposals with budgets of any amount, but not to exceed \$25,000.00. Include a well-specified budget, clear budget justification, and brief timeline for the pilot project work (in addition to the larger timeline just described for the subsequent grant submission). The total period of the proposal, covering the pilot project completion and the completion of all elements of the grant submission timeline, should be specified and will be up to 24 months. The section can be 1-2 pages single-spaced.

Submission Dates

Submissions can be submitted three times yearly, typically on the last day of May, September and December. Up to 3 total awards of pilot projects will be made each year, with one award for each submission period (May, September, December). **The first due date will be 5pm on Friday May 18, 2018.** Application materials will be emailed to the ALRI Program Assistant, Kim Skelton (knskelton1@ua.edu). All questions can be directed to the Interim Director of ALRI, John Lochman (jlochman@ua.edu)

Reference List

A reference list (1 page), including key references that help to provide a framework for the question being addressed, is expected.

Biosketch

A NIH Biosketch is needed for each investigator. If the application will not be submitted to NIH, then the biosketch format used by the other government funding source can be used.

Final Report

At the end of the project, applicants must submit a written report (not to exceed three pages) describing the results of the pilot project, and the details and completion of the grant submission process. A copy of the submitted grant application should be made available, and subsequent grant review feedback should be provided.