



DATE: November 8, 2019

TO: Faculty at **Morehouse School of Medicine, Tuskegee University, University of Alabama, and University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)**

FROM: **RCMAR Director/ Co-Director:** Kathryn Burgio, PhD, and Mona Fouad, MD, MPH
RCMAR Research Education Core Leaders: Rebecca Allen, PhD, Karlene Ball, PhD, Vincent C. Bond, PhD, Kathryn Burgio, PhD, Michael Crowe, PhD, Alexander Quarshie, MD, MS, and Patricia Sawyer, PhD

RE: **Request for Applications (RFA) and Letters of Intent (LOI) to apply for Deep South RCMAR Health Disparities Research Pilot Grant (2020)**

The Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) invites Letters of Intent to apply for one-year pilot grants focusing on **minority aging and health disparities in the African American population**.

The Letter of Intent (LOI) is due by Monday, December 9, 2019. Letters responsive to this call for proposals and potentially competitive for funding will be invited to submit full applications that will be **due on Tuesday, January 21, 2020.** (See Key Dates next page.)

The Deep South RCMAR focuses on health issues for which disparities between older African Americans and whites have been established, giving special emphasis to issues related to rural elders; intervention research addressing exercise, diet, or preventive health strategies; and studies addressing socio-economic, discrimination, trust, or bioethical issues impacting physical or mental health. Proposals must demonstrate relevance to **minority aging and health disparities in the African American population**, and should focus on specific **social, cultural, or behavioral mechanisms** to improve physical and mental health or cognitive function, including research designed to:

- (1) Develop and/or examine the efficacy of theory-based, culturally-relevant strategies to reduce disease, prevent disability, and promote health in older African Americans
- (2) Implement effective evidence-based community, group, or individual-based interventions to optimize health outcomes, or
- (3) Improve the measurement of social, psychological, economic, demographic, or other constructs germane to the health of older minority populations.

Basic science proposals that show a clear link to the potential for improving health and/or reducing health disparities are also invited.

Three pilot projects of up to **\$25,000** may be funded in the 2020-2021 cycle.

Eligible Applicants: Faculty members at **Morehouse School of Medicine, Tuskegee University, The University of Alabama, or UAB, at the rank of Instructor to Associate Professor are eligible.** Minority faculty members are encouraged to apply.

- PI may be a minority or majority faculty investigator.
- PI may have previously received R21, R03 or R01 funding, if he/she can document a substantial change in research area.

- It is expected that these pilot research projects will lead to publications related to the project and ultimately an R01 or similar application for extramural funding.
- Applications will be evaluated on the scientific quality of the proposal, the focus of the proposal on health disparities related to older African Americans, as well as the applicant's potential for publications related to the proposal and future funding.
- If the applicant is at the Assistant Professor level or below, a senior level co-investigator should serve as a mentor for the investigator submitting the proposal. If needed, inquire for mentor recommendations.

Previous RCMAR pilot grant awardees are:

- Not eligible to apply for another RCMAR pilot grant as the principal investigator (PI).
- Are encouraged to recruit other eligible junior faculty members to apply for a pilot grant.
- Are eligible to serve as a co-investigator or as a mentor for a new applicant as appropriate.

(Previous recipients of RCMAR HDREP small pilot grants (\$10,000) are eligible for this pilot grant mechanism).

Key Dates

- Release Date: November 8, 2019
- **Letters of Intent: Due December 9, 2019.**
Notification of Approval to Submit Application: by December 16, 2019
- **Applications Due: Tuesday, January 21, 2020**
Notification of Awards: March 6, 2020
- **Response to Critique: March 27, 2020** (If selected, submit response to review critique. In addition, a copy of submitted IRB protocol and clinicaltrials.gov Identifier Number must be submitted. This information is required by the NIA at the time the pilot grant is submitted for approval.)
- **Project Start Date:** July 1, 2020
Anticipated funding cycle: July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

Technical assistance is available for Letters of Intent and for those selected for submission of full proposals. If interested, contact Ann Smith via email.

Letters of Intent and applications may not be submitted in paper format. **Please submit electronically (in a SINGLE Word or PDF file) through the UAB MHRC website** (see link below).

The **Letter of Intent (LOI) package must include:**

- Principal Investigator (PI)'s name, faculty rank, and institution
- Co-investigator(s)' name(s) and faculty rank(s)
- Senior mentor(s) and faculty rank(s)
- Project title and purpose of study
- A one-two page description of how your project will address a research question relevant to the Deep South RCMAR. Address if you propose to study an issue for which health disparities have been documented between older African Americans and whites. Does the project focus on social, cultural or behavioral mechanisms that impact physical or mental health among older African Americans? Is the proposed project relevant to rural aging, intervention or community-based participatory research, or to measurement?
- Include: 1) Problem to be addressed, 2) Objectives, 3) Approach, 4) Measureable Outcome(s)
- PI's NIH new format Biosketch

Please upload your LOI file (one Word or PDF file) **on or before Monday, December 9, 2019 at 11:59pm.**
Please [click here to submit an LOI and application](#).

If you have questions concerning the submission of these LOIs or proposals, please contact: **Ann Smith, MPH, at 205-934-9903 or annsmith@uab.edu.**

For more information, please see the following pages and/or visit the website: www.uab.edu/mhrc > Research > Funding Opportunities.

Application Guidelines (next page)

Application Format and Content

Investigators should submit an NIH-format application on **combined PHS 398 forms**

(<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>) as **ONE PDF file**. Investigators should use Arial 11 or 12 point font, with one-half-inch margins. Investigators should include the following:

- **A sentence or paragraph in lay language describing how this project will be translated to help improve health disparities in the aging minority population.**
- **A brief description of the mentor's role and the mentorship plan. Describe plans for preparing papers for peer-reviewed publication and how the proposed pilot project will lead to a competitive proposal to the National Institute on Aging.**

The format of the grant application is as follows:

- Face Page
- Project Summary/Abstract
- Relevance (**Describe how the project will be translated to help improve health disparities in the aging minority population**)
- Project/Performance Sites
- Senior/Key Personnel
- Other Significant Contributors (**Include description of the mentor's role and the mentorship plan, if applicable**)
- Table of Contents
- Detailed Budget for One Year (not modular)
- Budget Justification
- Biographical Sketches (newest 5-page format, including Personal Statement and Contributions to Science)
- Resources (List those currently available for the applicant's use in the proposed project)
- Resource Sharing Plan, and Data and Safety Monitoring Plan (<https://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dqcg/clinical-research-study-investigators-toolbox/data-and-safety-monitoring>), (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/Resource_sharing_plans.pdf)
- Research Plan (**Limit to 5 pages**)
- Specific Aims
- Research Strategy (**See Appendix 1 for specific instructions regarding this section**)
 - Significance (emphasizing health disparities relevance)
 - Innovation
 - Approach
 - Preliminary Studies (if applicable)
- Human Subjects Research (See new NIH requirements: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/clinical-trials/new-human-subject-clinical-trial-info-form.htm>) [Note: If your application is selected you'll need to upload info to clinicaltrials.gov.]
- Literature Cited
- Letters of Recommendation are **not** required.

Funding Restrictions

The following types of expenditures are allowable:

- Research supplies and animal maintenance
- Technical assistance
- Domestic travel when necessary to carry out the proposed research
- Publication costs, including reprints
- Cost of computer time
- Special fees (pathology, photography, etc.)
- Stipends for graduate students and postdoctoral assistants if their role is to promote and sustain the project presented by the junior faculty member
- Equipment costing less than \$2,000
- Registration fees for scientific meetings
- Investigator salary

The following types of expenditures are **NOT** allowed: - **No Indirect Costs (F&A)**

- Secretarial/administrative personnel
- Tuition
- Foreign travel
- Honoraria and travel expenses for visiting lecturers
- Per diem charges for hospital beds
- Non-medical services to patients
- Construction or building maintenance
- Major alterations
- Purchasing and binding of periodicals and books
- Office and laboratory furniture
- Office equipment and supplies
- Rental of office or laboratory space
- Recruiting and relocation expenses
- Dues and membership fees in scientific societies

Indirect costs are not applicable to these awards.

Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research



The research of the Deep South Resource Center for Minority Aging Research (RCMAR) focuses on health problems that are particularly prevalent among older African Americans and for which disparities in health between older African Americans and whites have been established. The Deep South RCMAR gives special emphasis to issues related to rural elders; intervention research addressing exercise, diet, or preventive health strategies; and studies addressing socio-economic, discrimination, trust, and bioethical issues impacting physical and/or mental health.

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is the funding agency for Deep South RCMAR pilot projects. The NIA Division of [Behavioral and Social Research \(BSR\)](#) supports social, behavioral, and economic research and research training on the processes of aging at both the individual and societal level. BSR fosters cross-disciplinary research, at multiple levels from genetics to cross-national comparative research, and at stages from basic through translational. The NIA emphasizes that RCMAR pilot studies can be used for research on a wide range of research topics. Topics and ideas that are highly relevant to the interests of the Behavioral and Social Research Program (BSR) at NIA can be found on their website: <https://www.nia.nih.gov/research/dbsr> .

NIH Grants How To:

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm#Your%20Research>

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm#Your Research Plan>

Appendix 1 – NIH Instructions for Specific Aims and Research Strategy Sections

Extract from NIH Application Guide SF424 (R&R) – See Research Plan section (pp 81-93) for more info:
<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/forms-e/research-forms-e.pdf>

2. Specific Aims	<p>State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved.</p> <p>List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.</p> <p>Specific Aims are limited to one page for NIH R01 grants.</p>
3. Research Strategy	<p>Organize the Research Strategy in the specified order and using the instructions provided below. Start each section with the appropriate section heading – Significance, Innovation, Approach. Cite published experimental details in the Research Strategy section and provide the full reference in the Bibliography and References Cited section.</p> <p><i>Significance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress that the proposed project addresses.• Describe the strengths and weaknesses in the rigor of the prior research (both published and unpublished) that serves as the key support for the proposed project.• Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice in one or more broad fields. <p><i>Innovation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms.• Describe any novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions to be developed or used, and any advantage over existing methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.• Explain any refinements, improvements, or new applications of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions. <p><i>Approach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Describe the experimental design and methods proposed and how they will achieve robust and unbiased results. Unless addressed separately in the Resource Sharing Plan, include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted, as well as any resource sharing plans as appropriate. Resources and tools for rigorous experimental design can be found at the Enhancing Reproducibility through Rigor and Transparency website.

- For trials that randomize groups or deliver interventions to groups, describe how your methods for analysis and sample size are appropriate for your plans for participant assignment and intervention delivery. These methods can include a group- or cluster-randomized trial or an individually randomized group-treatment trial. Additional information is available at the [Research Methods Resources](#) webpage.
- Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success anticipated to achieve the aims.
- If the project is in the early stages of development, describe any strategy to establish feasibility, and address the management of any high risk aspects of the proposed work.
- Explain how relevant biological variables, such as sex, are factored into research designs and analyses for studies in vertebrate animals and humans. For example, strong justification from the scientific literature, preliminary data, or other relevant considerations, must be provided for applications proposing to study only one sex. Refer to the NIH Guide Notice on Sex as a Biological Variable in NIH-funded Research for additional information.
- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and the precautions to be exercised. A full discussion on the use of select agents should appear in the **Select Agent Research** attachment below (in PDF online).

As applicable, also include the following information as part of the Research Strategy, keeping within the three sections listed above: Significance, Innovation, and Approach.

Preliminary Studies for New Applications: For new applications, include information on Preliminary Studies. Discuss the PD/PI's preliminary studies, data, and or experience pertinent to this application. Except for Exploratory/Developmental Grants (R21/R33), Small Research Grants (R03), and Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA) Grants (R15), preliminary data can be an essential part of a research grant application and help to establish the likelihood of success of the proposed project. Early Stage Investigators should include preliminary data.