****

***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** that will (a) provide critically necessary **empirical pilot data** (quantitative and/or qualitative) necessary for a federal grant submission, and (b) include **clear timelines and procedures for a federal/foundation research grant submission** (separate from the timeline for the pilot project study itself). All proposals are expected to include description of how the federal/foundation grant submission will occur. The focus of the PPP should have a clear connection to human health and behavioral outcomes and be based in the life sciences, behavioral sciences, and/or social sciences

**Submission Dates**

Proposals will be solicited two times yearly. It is anticipated that 2-4 total awards of pilot projects will be made each year (1-2 *awards for each submission period*).

**A non-binding letter of intent** is required and will be due two weeks ahead of the application deadline. This letter should include the names and department affiliations of the PI and Co-PIs, a tentative title, and a very brief (maximum 500 words) description of the scope of the proposed project. This letter will assist in our ability to constitute an appropriate panel of reviewers.

For Fall 2021, the letter of intent is due by ***11:59 p.m. on*** ***Monday, October 18, 2021.***  Letters of intent and questions about the application process should be emailed to the Chair of the ALRI PPP committee, Debra McCallum ([dmccallu@ua.edu](mailto:dmccallu@ua.edu)).

**Fall 2021 applications are due *11:59 p.m. on Monday, November 1, 2021*.**

**Eligible applicants**

* Principal investigators must be members of the faculty or research staff at the University of Alabama. Co-PIs may be UA faculty, UA research staff, or UA post docs.
* The primary PI and Co-PIs must be an interdisciplinary team from UA (from at least 2 departments), but there may be additional investigators from other institutions.
* An individual who is currently PI, Co-PI, or Co-Investigator on a project funded under this ALRI PPP cannot apply again until that project is completed and a final report has been submitted.
* An individual may be included on only one proposal per round of reviews.

**Review Process**

A PPP review committee will rate an application’s pilot project using NIH-related criteria for the *Significance* (focusing on scientific premise), *Investigators*, *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 *Investigators* 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 should have already published and/or presented together or provide explicit plans of how they will do so. ***Each PPP project will include investigators from at least two different departments.***

**Application**

Applications for funding should be prepared and submitted as an electronic document. One member 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 names, academic ranks, and departmental affiliations of the applicants, and the signatures of both the applicant PI and co-PIs, and the chairs of the applicant PI and Co-PIs’ departments, signifying that the work has been approved by them. (page 1 of the proposal).

2) An abstract of no more than 150 words that is suitable for general publication or dissemination to the general public. It should include a brief description of the purpose and method of the project. This abstract may be used when awards are announced publically or in ALRI publications. (p. 2 of the proposal)

2) Specific Aims of the proposed work – The Specific Aims page should include a brief rationale for the proposal, description of the method, and the Specific Aims to be tested. The format for this page should follow a typical Specific Aims page for an NIH or NSF application and should not exceed 1 page. If you wish to see an example of a Specific Aims page, contact [dmccallu@ua.edu](mailto:jlochman@ua.edu)). This page should be single-spaced in not less than 12-pitch type, with 1-inch margins. (p. 3 of the proposal)

3) Proposed project – The proposed work should be described (single-spaced; not less than 12-pitch type with 1-inch margins; not to exceed 4 pages; this page limit does not include the Specific Aims page). 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 be at a level general enough for the non-specialist to appreciate. The proposal should address the following areas (pages 4-7 of the proposal) for projects meant to lead to NIH, NSF, and external funders with related grant application formats.

1. The **significance** of the project for the human condition or outcomes that are the focus of the project.
2. The expertise of the PI and the **investigative team** in addressing the research question.
3. The **innovation** of the planned research.
4. The a**pproach** of the project (conceptualization; hypotheses; sample, methods and procedures; planned analyses)

The feedback form that will be provided to the applicants after the review will be based on the usual NIH grant reviewer form, and will cover these four main categories.

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 federal/foundation research grant. The funding source will be identified (e.g. a specific NIH Institute, NSF, CDC, IES, DOD, DOE, specific foundation, 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 target dates for completion of the tasks related to the larger federal grant application. 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). Pilot project applications that provide greater specificity about the subsequent federal/foundation grant submission steps will receive greater priority.

5) If the application is a revision of a previously submitted application, the application should have a one-page single-spaced Introduction page (consistent with NIH revision applications) indicating how the prior reviewers’ concerns have been addressed. The Introduction page should be placed prior to the Specific Aims page.

**Additional Materials**

***Budget and Budget Justification***

ALRI will accept proposals with budgets of any amount, but not to exceed $25,000. 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. Funding will be considered for any needs that will meet the goal of rigorous, innovative, and highly significant pilot project research (equipment, supplies, travel, salary for staff or GRAs; the PI can also determine whether a course release opportunity is available). Do not include indirect costs for UA, and indirect costs to another institution are not allowed.

The section can be 1-2 pages single-spaced.

***Reference List***

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

***Prior ALRI funding***

If any of the investigators on the proposal have been previously funded through the ALRI PPP, this should be indicated, including the outcome of the funded project, final report, and listing of any federal or foundation grants submitted and publications based on previous funding.

***Biosketch***

A NIH Biosketch is required for each investigator. If the application will be submitted to another government funding source (such as NSF), then the biosketch format used by that source can be used. It is important to use a federal grant-based biosketch framework; do not send a typical CV.

**Reporting Requirements**

At the end of the first year of the award, PIs must submit a written progress report (not to exceed two pages). At the end of the project period, 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.