Environmental Health Research Pilot Project Grants

Grants up to $50,000 available

The Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center (SCEHSC) is pleased to announce the 2017 Pilot Projects Program, supporting one-year research projects that aim to promote the understanding of environmental exposures and human disease. The goal of the program is to provide investigators with an opportunity to collect preliminary data and/or validate the utility of specific methods or techniques to establish the feasibility of larger-scale research projects and ultimately seek external (especially NIEHS) funding.

The SCEHSC is seeking investigator-initiated applications from all environmental health research areas. Topics of special interest include:

- New Approaches for Exposure Assessment
- Environmental Immunology
- Air Pollution, Neurodevelopment, and Neurological Diseases
- Environmental Contributions to Obesity and Metabolic Dysfunction
- Application of Metabolomics to Environmental Health Research
- Human Microbiome and the Environment

Individuals with a faculty appointment in any department or school/division at USC, CHLA, UCLA, or Caltech are eligible to apply.

DUE DATES:

LETTER OF INTENT:
By Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 5:00 PM, applicants must submit a one-page Letter of Intent that includes a descriptive title identifying the proposed project, a brief summary of project objectives, design, and goal and identification of the key participating investigators. All proposed projects should have a clear and identifiable environmental health emphasis. Please e-mail Letters of Intent to Lisa Wolff at lisa.wolff@usc.edu.

APPLICATION:
By Wednesday, October 5, 2016 at 5:00 PM (no exceptions), applicants should submit one PDF file BY E-MAIL ONLY to Lisa Wolff at lisa.wolff@usc.edu.
Applications should include the following, in this order:

1. **Cover Sheet** – including the full title of the project; name, contact information, institution, and department of the Principal Investigator; and the name, institution, and department of any co-investigators or faculty sponsors

2. **Project Abstract (300 words or less)** – a brief summary of the project

3. **Specific Aims (1 page)** – concise goals of the proposed research and a summary of expected outcomes, including specific objectives

4. **Research Strategy (6 pages MAXIMUM, not including references)**
   i. **Significance** – describe the importance of the problem or critical barrier that the project addresses, and explain how the project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, or clinical practice if the proposed aims are achieved
   ii. **Innovation** – describe how the proposed research seeks to shift research practice paradigms and how any methodologies or theoretical concepts that are being developed or used in the project may have an advantage over existing practices
   iii. **Approach** – describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish specific aims, including how data will be collected. Discuss potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks of success.

5. **Grant Potential (1 page)** – clear description of how a successful pilot project and/or expansion of the project will lead to an R01 (or equivalent) submission

6. **Project Timeline (1 page)** – a proposed timeline of study performance should be included, identifying specific tasks and milestones in project progress for the 12-month period of performance

7. **Budget** – an NIH-style budget table of personnel, equipment, supplies, travel, and other estimated costs to perform the proposed project: [Applicants may budget up to $50,000 for direct costs. Indirect (F&A) costs should be listed separately from direct costs.]

8. **Budget Justification** – a detailed explanation and justification of the funding request. Salaries for Associate and Full Professors are not allowable. Tuition for graduate students is not allowable.

9. **NIH-Format Biosketches** – for the PI and co-investigators (5 page limit per investigator)

10. **Facility Core Usage and Correspondence** – The Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center (SCEHSC) offers technical support to Center investigators and Pilot Project awardees. A wide range of capabilities, from biostatistical support, to analytical sample preparation and processing, to biological sample measurements are available. For more information on the Center's facility cores, please read the core descriptions on our website, scehsc.usc.edu. Early discussion with Core Directors is encouraged. SCEHSC facility Core Directors can provide electronic confirmation of proposed Core participation upon project selection. **If facility cores are NOT proposed to support Pilot Project performance, written justification must be provided in the project application.**

Core Directors may be contacted as follows:

A. Integrative Health Sciences Facility Core (Director: Carrie Breton, ScD, breton@usc.edu)

B. Biostatistics Facility Core (Director: Jim Gauderman, PhD, jimg@usc.edu)
C. Spatial and Exposure Analytics Core (Director: Ed Avol, MS, avol@usc.edu)

Note: Appendices are not allowed, but grantees will need to add NIH grant human subjects sections and enrollment tables to their proposals if they are funded.

REPORTING REQUIREMENT:
The anticipated period of funded project performance will be April 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018. All pilot project grantees are required to submit an Annual Progress Report. The progress report will contain updates on the project, publications directly related to findings from the project, and grants directly associated with project results. In addition, pilot project grantees will be expected to present research results at a Center seminar.

All publications resulting from pilot funding must include the following acknowledgement: “This work was supported by the Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center, grant # P30ES007048.”

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA:
Applications will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel of scientists. Awardees will be selected following the review, and funding will begin April 1, 2017. The major review criteria are:

1. Relevance to environmental health and potential to identify solutions to environmental health problems
2. Scientific quality
3. Stimulation of interdisciplinary activity
4. Likelihood that the project will lead to R01 or other external funding
5. Novelty of ideas

For questions or more information, contact Lisa Wolff: (323) 442-2750 or lisa.wolff@usc.edu.