



## **Boston Nutrition Obesity Research Center Pilot and Feasibility Program**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **1. How do I apply for Pilot and Feasibility funding?**

The first step is the successful submission of a complete Letter of Intent including NIH biosketch. Please refer to the most-recent RFA for submission details. LOI submissions are reviewed for completeness by the Administrative Core and distributed to 2-3 reviewers, which may include BNORC Executive Committee members. After review, eligible applicants are invited to submit a full application for funding consideration.

#### **2. What are the review criteria for evaluating letters of intent and full applications for Pilot and Feasibility funding?**

Factors taken into consideration during the review process are:

- Whether the project is important (vital, essential) to demonstrate key feasibility aspects needed for planned proposal submissions to NIH.
- Likelihood that successful completion of the project will lead to the preparation and submission of a research proposal for external funding.
- Importance and relevance of the research question.
- Applicant's productivity to-date and potential for an independent research career.
- New Scientists are prioritized over established investigators, and new scientists at the Assistant Professor, Instructor and similar faculty ranks are prioritized over more junior ones. Nevertheless, high quality applications from promising senior postdoctoral fellows and MD fellows are sometimes funded.
- Feasibility given the allotted time and budget.
- Alignment of the proposed project with one of the Center's three themes.
- Whether the project is a clear change in direction from ongoing research. Bridge fund requests will not be considered.
- Proposed use of BNORC Cores:
  - Adipose Biology and Nutrient Metabolism (at Boston Medical Center/BUSM and Tufts)
  - Epidemiology and Genetics (at Harvard School of Public Health)
  - Functional Genomics and Bioinformatics (at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center)
  - Transgenic (at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center)

#### **3. What parts of the full application are most important?**

Each component of the application is critical to the review committee in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed project. It is imperative that the application clearly states how the funds will be used to establish the feasibility of a planned larger grant application, and advance the applicant's career development or will serve to redirect the established investigator's ongoing research program to a new research area.

#### **4. I am a postdoctoral fellow or senior trainee. Do I need letters of support with my full proposal?**

During the LOI stage, MD Fellows and senior postdoctoral trainees in their latter year(s) of training must include a letter from their mentor that states that the proposed research represents an independent line of investigation that the applicant can build upon, and that a clear plan exists for the applicant's transition to independence. Additionally, if invited to submit a full proposal, these applicants will also need to submit a letter from the Division Chief or Department Chair stating that institutional support exists for the applicant's

existing or proposed faculty appointment and that adequate space and resources will be provided to the applicant so that he/she can complete the proposed project aims.

**5. How many Pilot and Feasibility grants will be funded?**

The total number of Pilot and Feasibility grants awarded during any individual cycle is determined by (1) the availability of Pilot and Feasibility Program funds and (2) the quality of the applications received. In general, BNORC aims to fund at least three new Pilot and Feasibility projects each year.

**6. How much money is available for each Pilot and Feasibility grant?**

Pilot and Feasibility awards are for up to \$25,000 per year, for up to two years. Awards are made annually and a second year of funding is contingent on adequate progress by the investigator in Year 1. These amounts are for direct costs only (i.e., funds available to be spent by the principal investigator).

**7. What happens once I submit my application?**

All applications will be reviewed by 2-3 reviewers and then, as with an NIH Study Section, about half are discussed at a study section meeting of the BNORC Executive Committee. If your proposal is deemed eligible for funding, you will then be asked to provide Just-In-Time Information.

**8. What JIT (Just-in-time) information will I need to provide if requested?**

Current Other Support including active support information for all individuals designated in an application as senior/key personnel—those devoting measurable effort to a project. Other support includes all financial resources, whether Federal, non-Federal, commercial or institutional, available in direct support of an individual's research endeavors, including but not limited to research grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and/or institutional awards. Training awards, prizes or gifts are not included.

Certifications:

IACUC Approval: If the proposed project involves research using live vertebrate animals, the verification date of IACUC approval along with any IACUC-imposed changes must be submitted. Pending or out-of-date approvals are not acceptable.

IRB Approval: If the proposed project involves human subjects research, the documentation of IRB review and approval must be submitted. Pending or out-of-date approvals are not acceptable.

Human Subjects Education: If the proposed project involves human subjects research, certification that any person identified as senior/key personnel involved in human subjects research has completed an education program in the protection of human subjects must be submitted.

**9. I am an established investigator. Does the P&F program support “bridge funding”?**

No, funding for ongoing projects is not supported. A clear change in direction from ongoing research must be evident.

**10. Where can I get more information about the BNORC Pilot and Feasibility Program?**

Detailed information about the Pilot and Feasibility Program, application forms and instructions are available on the BNORC website (<http://bnorc.org/pnf/>). Please review the information on the website carefully before preparing a Pilot and Feasibility Letter of Intent or Full Application (by invitation only). For additional questions or further guidance about the program or application process, please contact the Center Administrator or Andrew S. Greenberg, M.D., BNORC Associate Director and Chair of the P&F Committee.