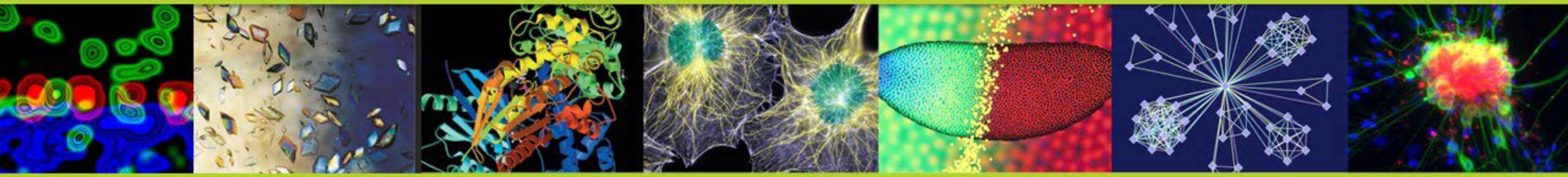
National Institute of General Medical Sciences

COBRE Phase 2 Pre-application Webinar

January 12, 2023
2:30 – 4:00 PM



NIGMS Staff Participation

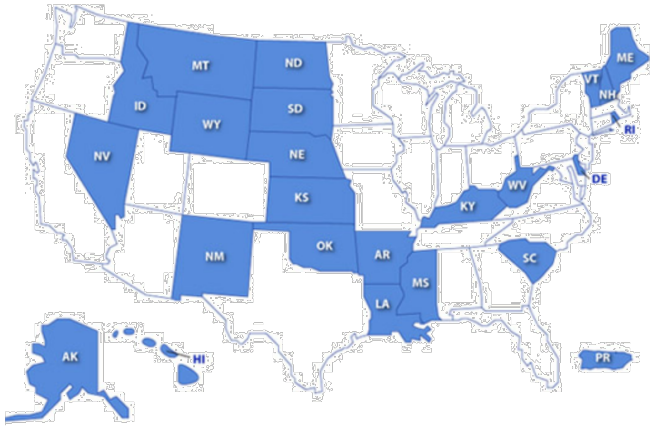
- **Michele McGuirl**, Chief, Research Advancement Programs Branch
- **Fed Bernal**, Program Officer and COBRE Phase 2 Lead
- **Lisa Dunbar**, Section Chief, Scientific Review Branch
- **Samantha Farrell**, Grants Management Specialist

Q&A via Chat Window, moderated by Michele McGuirl

Overview of IDeA COBRE Program

IDeA Program

Build research capacity in states and territories with lower levels of NIH funding



Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE)

- Support the development of innovative biomedical research centers
- 3 sequential phases, 5 years each
- **132** distinct COBRE awards
- IDeA Dashboard tracks all funded awards

Phase 1: Developmental → Phase 2: Strengthening and Enhancement → Phase 3: Sustaining and Transitional

https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Research/DRCB/Pages/DRCB-IDeA-Interactive-Portfolio-Dashboard.aspx

Renewal of Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) - Phase 2 (P20 Clinical Trial Optional)

PAR-23-063

due date: May 29, 2023*

FY	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3	
	Due Date	Council	Due Date	Council	Due Date	Council
2024	January 30, 2023	October 2023	May 29, 2023	January 2024	September 26, 2023	May 2024
2025	January 30, 2024	October 2024	May 29, 2024	January 2025	September 24, 2024	May 2025
2026	January 30, 2025	October 2025	May 28, 2025	January 2026	September 30, 2024	May 2026

PAR-22-250	***CURRENT FOA: PAR-23-063***	***FOA in preparation***

COBRE Phase 2: Program Objectives

<u>Continue</u> the development of a critical mass of investigators with expertise in the Center's scientific interest areas

- Support Research Projects within in the COBRE's scientific area
- Develop Pilot Projects to expand the Center's research area
- Get RPLs and PPLs ready to compete for peer-reviewed external funding

<u>Strengthen</u> the Center through further improvement in research infrastructure

- Support existing or establish new core facilities that are essential to support the research of the Center
- No Alterations and Renovations are allowed for Phase 2

General Considerations Before Applying

- **Read the FOA – "NEW" APPLICATIONS NOT ALLOWED *—NEW IN PHASE 2—***
- **COBREs are NOT P01s**
- **COBREs are NOT training grants**
- **Communicate with institutional leaders**
  - Success of the COBRE is dependent on institutional commitments
  - The PI receives salary support (minimum LOE of 3 months) but not research support from the COBRE– a service to the institution that deserves recognition and support
- **Leverage other NIH-supported resources, especially current COBRE, INBRE, and IDeA-CTR programs at your institution/state**
  - Cores should not be duplicative of existing resources

PD/PI Eligibility (applies to all PD/PIs if MPI COBRE)

Established biomedical or behavioral research scientist

- Must have mentoring and administrative experience to lead the COBRE
- Primary faculty appointment must be at the applicant institution at the time of submission
- PD/PI may be the current Phase 1 PD/PI or a different one may be appointed

PD/PI of an active, peer-reviewed research grant awarded to the applicant institution and related to the COBRE scientific area at the time of submission

- Grants in no-cost-extension (NCE) are considered active
- Qualifying research grant can be from a federal or non-federal source
- Current and Pending Support Attachment required –used to determine PD/PI eligibility

Research Project Leader (RPL) Eligibility –at time of submission

Must be an NIH Early Stage Investigator (ESI) or as a New Investigator (NI)

- ESI: completed terminal research degree or post-graduate clinical training within the past 10 years and has not previously competed successfully for a substantial NIH independent research award (R01-like).
- NI: never been PI of a substantial NIH independent research award (R01-like)
- Smaller grants are allowed: *all Ks, R00, R03, R15, R16, R21, SCORE*

Must hold an independent, multi-year faculty appointment (or equivalent)

- Includes tenure-track and other types of multi-year appointments
- Must be leading an independent research program
- Postdocs and others without independent, multi-year appointments are not eligible

Eligibility of RPLs from a Different Institution

An RPL with a primary appointment from another IDeA institution *may* be proposed only if their institution holds **4 or fewer COBRE Research Projects or Cores from active Phase 1 and Phase 2 COBREs awarded to other institutions**.

- "Active" COBREs include those in NCE

More than half of all proposed RPLs must have a primary faculty appointment at the applicant institution

- 3 of 4 RPLs is acceptable, but 2 of 4 RPLs is not

Application Requirements - Overall

Overall Plan for the Center

- **Program Accomplishments** during COBRE Phase 1 support
- **Center Organization and Management Plan**
- **Plan for an Advisory Committee (AC)** ***—NEW IN PHASE 2—***

  Three external members, one senior institutional official, and one senior faculty member appointed by the senior institutional official
- **Mentoring Plan** for RPLs
- **Letter** that outlines how the COBRE aligns with the institution's strategic plan, describes the existing biomedical research infrastructure, and outlines the commitment to support the Center beyond the period of support
- **Data Management Sharing Plan (DMSP)** ***—NEW IN PHASE 2—***
- **Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP)** ***—NEW IN PHASE 2—*** ***(required)***

Overall: Data Management Sharing Plan (NOT-OD-22-189)

- Purpose is to emphasize good data management practices and set the expectation for maximizing the sharing of scientific data generated by NIH-funded research awards (NOT-OD-21-013).
- New requirement for competing (type 1 or type 2) applications submitted for receipt dates after January 25, 2023 –*reviewed by Program staff*
- The description of the elements to be included in the DMSP and a template can be found in the NIH Scientific Data Sharing webpage.
- DMSP incorporates Data Management and Genomic Data Sharing (removed from the Resource Sharing Plan, which is still required)
- DMSP (1-2 pages recommended) should be included in the Overall component in the "Other Plans" attachment. *Only one DMSP is required per application*.
- If a budget is requested for DMSP implementation (expected to be rare), it must be included in the Administrative Core; the total COBRE budget remains $1.5M DC/year.

Overall: Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP)

- NIH recognizes the strength that arises from a diverse scientific workforce: foster innovation, enhance competitiveness, improve research quality, advancing participation of underserved populations, etc.
- All applications must include a PEDP (1-page maximum) as an “Other Attachment” in the Overall component.
- PEDP should describe how expanded inclusivity advances the scientific and technical merit of the proposal and their alignment with the Research Strategy
- The examples provided in the FOA are standardized language developed for all funding mechanisms. Your PEDP should align with the overall goals of the COBRE program.
- If funds are requested for the implementation of the PEDP, the request must be included in the Administrative Core.
- PEDP will be evaluated by reviewers as part of the scorable criteria.

Administrative Core Requirements

- **Management Plan**: administrative, fiscal, and scientific activities
- **RPL Development Plan**: develop and transition RPLs to independent research funding
- **Plans for identifying replacement RPLs**
- **Evaluation Plan**: monitor performance of all Center components and RPL progress
- **Pilot Projects Program** (required —***NEW IN PHASE 2***): *describe the program, but do not include research plans for individual pilot projects; up to $400K/year*
  - Should encourage the exploration of novel ideas, build on the Center's scientific strengths, and extend to research fields that are beyond the Center's research area
  - Each PP: up to $100K for a 1-year project, maximum of 2 PPs per investigator during Phase 2
- **Faculty recruitment** (optional, open to all ranks): up to $400K/year DC
- **No Letters of Support Allowed**

Application Requirements for Research Projects

Research Projects –not an R01

- **Must include 2-5 Research Projects**
- **Describe a research question appropriate for 2-3 years**
  - Can address a small, but significant part of a larger question
  - Assess existing knowledge and describe approaches to address the key goals
  - Describe how COBRE support will advance the long-term goals of the RPL's research program
- **Preliminary data are helpful but not required** – reviewers gauge this by career stage
- **Milestones**
  - RPLs are required to submit a research grant application by the end of their second year on the award.
  - RPLs are expected to publish, secure independent research grant support, and graduate from COBRE funding by the end of the third year of COBRE support.

Advice for Research Projects

- **Projects should make good use of the Research Cores** – Both RPs and Cores should describe their expected interactions
- **Identify any new areas for scientific growth**
- **If an RPL is continuing from Phase 1, describe progress made thus far**
- **Ensure that appropriate mentorship is provided** –external mentors are allowed, if needed
- **If the RP involves Human Subjects and/or a Clinical Trial**, include a mentor with extensive experience in clinical research
- **Personal Statement of the RPL Biosketch** should describe the RPL's current and prior peer-reviewed research grant funding and note the role (PI, project leader, collaborator, etc.)
- Avoid naming RPLs who are proposed/supported as RPLs on other COBREs

Important Details for Research Projects

Individualized Letter of Support from home institution for each RPL is required

- Written by Dean, Provost, or another Senior Official
- Must demonstrate multi-year commitment to the RPL whether or not the COBRE is funded
- Examples of strong institutional commitment: start-up package, independent research space

Mentor's Letter of Support: describe mentor qualifications, frequency of interactions

Request 5 years of support for each RPL slot so that the replacement RPL can be funded after the initial one graduates

- An RPL's research plan, timeline, and budget is for 3 years total RPL support (Phases 1+2)
- Remaining budget years are designated as placeholders for replacement RPLs
- Make it clear that the RPL intends to continue project after Year 3 with independent grant support; also address this in the Budget Justification

Requirements for Research Cores (optional)

- **A Core should support the RPL projects and the scientific area of the Center**
- **Core Director** must have appropriate expertise and experience to manage the Core
- **Using/modifying/expanding existing resources is encouraged** but duplication is not
- **Funds for equipment and instrumentation** are allowed.
- **Business plan** to manage use of the Core should be provided

The COBRE Review Process: STEP 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

- Review of all COBRE applications is organized by the NIGMS Scientific Review Branch (SRB)
- All applications go through Administrative Review by the Program Officers and Scientific Review Officers
- All applications deemed non-compliant/not eligible are withdrawn

To avoid your application from being withdrawn:

- **Read and follow the instructions in the current FOA carefully!**
- Try to apply a few days prior to the deadline, check your application, and make corrections if needed
- Common issues: ineligible PI, ineligible RPL, RP with a co-investigator or clinical trial site in a non-IDeA state

STEP 2 – SCIENTIFIC REVIEW

Applications are divided among Special Emphasis Panels (SEPs)

- Number of panels depends on the number of applications
- Reviewer Orientation Meetings: same material is given to all reviewers

Reviewer Assignments

- At least three reviewers are assigned to each application
  - Overall: three primary reviewers
  - At least two reviewers are assigned to each of the components
    - Administrative Core, Research Cores, Individual Research Projects

Process

Assigned reviewers comment on each component, then the panel discusses the Overall

Voting: All panel members vote on the Overall Center only (not individual components)

Preparation Advice to Applicants

- **Read the FOA's review criteria** – the critique templates contain these criteria/questions
- **DO NOT duplicate** letters of support. Avoid including letters of support that do not add substance – it can limit the pool of reviewers
- **List the names of people submitting letters** for each of the components
- **Include the Core or Project Title at** the beginning of each component summary. Reviewers have access to full applications **but not during the Recruitment Phase** when only summaries are available.
- **Use the PHS Assignment form** to indicate expertise needed but **DO NOT** suggest reviewer names. You may provide names of those who **SHOULD NOT** review your application.

Additional Information about the Review

- Reviewers will evaluate the progress and outcomes of Phase 1 and will have access to the Phase 1 Summary Statement to cross-reference the original goals
- The outcomes for Phase 1 RPLs should be detailed and include grant applications submitted/awarded, presentations at meetings, publications, tenure/promotion, currently held positions
- Projects from RPLs continuing from Phase 1 and from new RPLs should fit within the scientific area of the COBRE and make effective use of the Research Cores
- Cores should continue to develop strong user bases that include RPLs, PPLs, COBRE personnel, and others at the institution and beyond

IDeA Funding Restrictions

The PD(s)/PI(s) may not use COBRE funds to support research activities in his/her laboratory. This includes supplements unless allowed by the NOSI or FOA.

- PI is not eligible for research support from this COBRE or any other COBRE (including all three phases), INBRE, or IDeA-CTR award

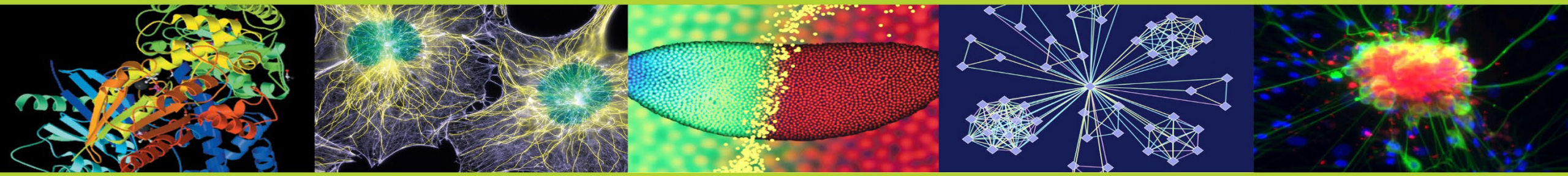
COBRE RPLs cannot receive simultaneous support from the same COBRE award as a PPL, nor can COBRE PPLs receive simultaneous support from the same COBRE as an RPL

COBRE RPLs and PPLs cannot simultaneously lead projects supported by other parent IDeA awards, but may be eligible to lead IDeA projects funded by supplements **if allowed by the NOSI or FOA**

- Includes INBRE, IDeA-CTR, and COBRE

Thank you!

Please enter your questions into the chat box.



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