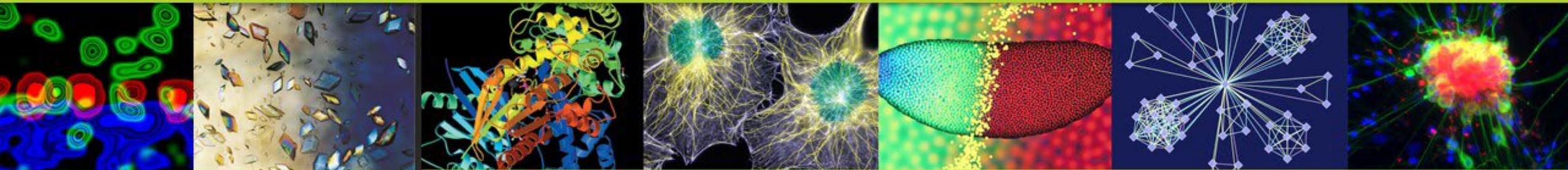


COBRE Pre-application Webinar

November 18, 2020
3:00 – 4:30 PM



Meeting Agenda

Overview of the COBRE Program

Ming Lei, Director, Division for Research Capacity Building

COBRE 1 Applications to [PAR-19-313](#)

Michele McGuirl, Chief, Research Advancement Programs & COBRE 1 Lead

COBRE 2 Applications to [PAR-19-312](#)

Behrous Davani, PO & COBRE 2 Lead

COBRE 3 Applications to [PAR-20-115](#)

Behrous Davani for Zuzana Justinova, PO & COBRE 3 Lead

The COBRE Review Process

Nina Sidorova, SRO, NIGMS Scientific Review Branch

Financial Management of COBREs

Christy Leake, NIGMS Grants Management Lead

Q&A via Chat Window, moderated by Michele McGuirl

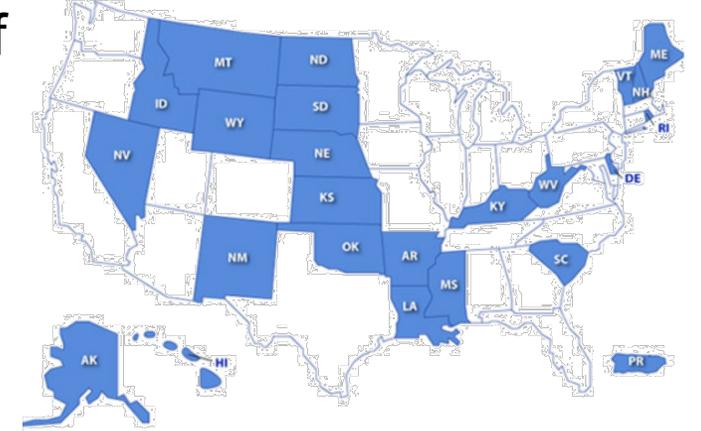
Overview of IDeA COBRE Program

IDeA Program

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

Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE)

- Support a thematic, multidisciplinary research center
- 3 sequential phases, 5 years each
- **127** distinct COBRE awards totaling **\$247,748,073**
- [IDeA Dashboard](#) tracks all funded awards



Phase 1:
Developmental

Phase 2: Strengthening
and Enhancement

Phase 3: Sustaining and
Transitional

Read the FOA - it is NOT a P01

Communicate with institutional leaders BEFORE completing your application

- The COBRE program develops principal investigators and builds research infrastructure – you want your COBRE to be part of the institution’s strategic plan
- You/the COBRE NEED institutional commitments, especially in replenishing the pipeline of quality Research Project Leaders, to be successful
- You get salary 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 in your institution/state

COBRE Phase 1

Michele McGuirl, PhD

COBRE Phase 1: Program Objectives

Develop a critical mass of investigators (RPL - Research Project Leader)

- Develop a pool of investigators with expertise in a thematic scientific area
- Get RPLs ready to compete for peer-reviewed external funding
- Pilot Projects are optional for Phase 1 (see [NOT-GM-20-042](#))
- Funding for new hires is available (see [NOT-GM-20-042](#))

Develop research infrastructure in a thematic scientific area

- Scientific Cores that support the theme
- Career Development Guidance/Mentoring Plans

See [NOT-GM-20-004](#) (Eligibility) & [NOT-GM-20-042](#) (COVID-19 Flexibility)

Institutional Eligibility

Hold ≤ 2 active COBRE 1 and/or COBRE 2 awards at the time of submission

- COBRE 3s do not count toward the cap
- Grants in no-cost extension are active grants
- No more than 3 active COBRE 1/2s are allowed at any time

Lead ≤ 5 research projects and/or cores from COBRE 1/2s through subcontracts

Signed letter from VP for Research is *required* and must address these specifics

Established biomedical or behavioral research scientist

- Must be a faculty member at the applicant institution at the time of submission

PD/PI of an active peer-reviewed *research* grant related to the COBRE theme

- Grant must be awarded to the applicant institution
- Can be from federal or non-federal sources
- Grants in no-cost extension are active grants
- If MPI and the other PD/PI is at a different institution, grant can be to either institution

Required Program Components

Overall Plan for the Center

- Organizational Plan
- Plan for Advisory Committees
 - External Advisory Committee (EAC) required (nationally recognized scientists)
 - Describe the expertise you seek but don't provide any names!
 - Optional Internal Advisory Committee – to help the PI with administration
- Mentoring Plan – what to do if progress of a research project is sub-optimal
- Evaluation Plan – milestones & plans if an RPL

2 – 5 Research Projects (see [NOT-GM-20-042](#))

Administrative Core

- Management plan that covers administrative, fiscal, and scientific aspects
- Optional – Pilot Project Program (open to faculty at all ranks)

*Optional Program Components

Research Core(s) for resources/facilities – typically included but *optional

- *If scientific focus is rural health, a Community Engagement and Outreach (CEO) Core is *required*
- Core Directors must have correct expertise
- Using/modifying/expanding existing resources is encouraged but duplication is not
- Cores should support the RPL projects and the scientific theme

Alteration and Renovation

- Must be relevant to the scope of the proposed research

Recruitment Costs – **they are available** (see [NOT-GM-20-042](#))

- Must be relevant to the scope of the proposed research
- Can be for faculty at any level

These are *not* a condensed R01

- Six pages to describe research question, approach, and connection to COBRE theme
- Preliminary data helpful but not required – depends on career stage
- Milestones: RPL is to submit a research grant application in Year 2, get a grant, and graduate off COBRE funding by Year 3

Must include 2 - 5 Research Projects

- Avoid naming RPLs who are proposed/supported as RPLs on other COBREs
- Projects should make good use of the Research Cores
- Identify any new areas for scientific growth with appropriate mentorship

Research Project Leader (RPL) Eligibility

RPL must hold independent faculty appointment (or equivalent) at time of submission

- Includes tenure-track & other types of *multi-year* appointments
- Postdocs & others without independent appointments are not eligible
- Majority (2 of 2, 2 of 3, 3 of 4, or 3 of 5) **MUST** be Junior Investigators

Junior Investigators

- Cannot be PD/PI of *any* prior/current external peer-reviewed research grant; other roles are OK
- NIH R03, R15, R21, & mentored NIH Ks are OK but not K99/R00 & non-mentored Ks
- Non-NIH seed and career development grants are OK if described in the program announcement

Established Investigators

- **ONLY** eligible if new line of research is *significantly different* from current investigative program
- Cannot intend to maintain grants in a different area

Tips for Preparing Research Projects

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

- Must demonstrate commitment to the RPL *independent* of the COBRE outcome
- Examples of strong institutional commitment: start-up package, independent research space

Request 5 years of support for each COBRE 1 RPL slot so that the replacement RPL can be funded after the initial one graduates from COBRE within 3 years

Recruitment Concerns

- COVID-19 has caused hiring freezes as institutions tighten budgets
- Recruitment of COBRE junior faculty keeps the pipeline flowing
- Less competition can benefit COBRE institutions during searches
- Budgetary flexibility can provide additional funding for new faculty

NOT-GM-20-042 & NOT-GM-20-043

- **Only 2 Research Project Leaders required**
 - Majority (more than 50%) must be JIs
- Doubled recruitment funding (\$400K/year)
 - Can recruit at senior level, too
- Doubled Pilot Project funding (\$400K/year)
- Applies to applications & current awards
- No change to annual budget - \$1.5 M DC

COBRE Phase 2

Behrouz Davani, PhD

***Strengthen* 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

***Continue* the development and support of a critical mass of investigators with expertise in the Center's scientific interest areas**

- Develop a pool of investigators with expertise in a thematic scientific area
- Get RPLs ready to compete for peer-reviewed external funding

Program Components

Overall Plan for the Center

- **Program Accomplishments** during COBRE Phase 1 support
 - Research productivity, # of publications from RPLs and PPLs, transition of JIs to independent funding, recruitment of faculty, improvement of research infrastructure, use of core facilities
- **Center Organization and Management Plan**
 - How components interact with each other and with other programs and resources at the institution
- **Letter** that outlines the institutional commitment of resources to support the COBRE throughout Phase 2 and to maintain these resources beyond the period of grant support

Administrative Core

- Management plan that covers administrative, fiscal, and scientific aspects
- Optional – Pilot Projects Program (open to faculty at all ranks)

Research Cores (Optional)

Research Projects

- Minimum of 2 Research Projects (see [NOT-GM-20-043](#))

Specific Instructions

Applicants must have an active COBRE Phase 1 award

PD/PI eligibility is same as Phase 1

- Must be the PD/PI of an active *research project grant* to the applicant institution
- COBRE 1 is not a *research project grant* – it is a research resource grant

Majority of RPLs must be JIs, although established investigators can be included

- EIs must demonstrate a record of research productivity that contributes to the Center's theme

Funds may be requested to support existing or establish new core facilities

- Must be essential to support the COBRE theme
- Consolidation/elimination of cores is allowed if well justified

Alteration and Renovation costs are not allowed

COBRE Phase 3

Behrouz Davani, PhD

presenting for

Zuzana Justinova, MD, PhD - COBRE 3 Lead

COBRE Phase 3: Program Objectives

***Facilitate* transition of research core resources into sustainable core facilities**

- Provide support for the cores to become independent service research facilities

***Sustain* the research environment by providing support for pilot projects program and career guidance and enhancement activities**

- Centers and their investigators are expected to compete for other sources of funding from Federal and non-Federal entities

New Application - Not a Renewal of Phase 2 (P20)

- P30 activity code (Center Core Grants)

Phase 3 Budget is ½ that of COBRE Phase 1 and 2

- No Research Projects or Alteration/Renovation are allowed

Required Program Components

Overall Plan for the Center

- **Program Accomplishments** in the last 10 years of COBRE support
 - Highlight research productivity, submission of grant applications, improvement in research infrastructure, and increased critical mass of investigators.
- **Center Organization and Management plan**
 - Provide summary of the projected center participants, their respective projects and anticipated scientific and core facility needs
- **Letters** describing institutional commitment to maintain these resources beyond the period of grant support

Administrative Core

- Leadership and Governance: COBRE PI may be assisted by Program Coordinator (PC)

Scientific/Technical Core(s)

- Core(s) should be unique and not duplicate services or facilities that already exist
- **Sustainability plans** for beyond Phase 3 must be included

Pilot Projects Program is Required

- Governance, oversight, and evaluation procedures that include the EAC
- Career and research guidance activities for Pilot Project Leaders must be included
- Effectiveness of dissemination and review process of previous program must be described
- Include number of applicants and awardees per cycle, how many grant applications were submitted by Pilot Project Leaders and how many were funded; resulting publications
- Do not include specific projects in the application

Pilot Project Lead Eligibility

- Faculty investigators of any rank are eligible
- New and early-stage investigators should be given priority
- Individuals holding postdoctoral training positions are not eligible

The COBRE Review Process

Nina Sidorova, PhD
Scientific Review Branch

STEP 1 - ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

- Review of all COBREs 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 being withdrawn:

- **Read *current* FOA (including Notices) carefully!**
- Try to apply a few days prior to a deadline then check your application and edit it if needed

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 – usually more
 - Overall: two primary reviewers and at least one discussant
 - At least two reviewers are assigned to each of the components
 - Cores, Individual Research Projects
 - If A&R is requested, an architect is assigned

Process

Assigned reviewers comment for each component, then panel discusses

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

HOW TO MAKE LIFE EASIER for REVIEWERS (and SROs) 😊

- **Pay close attention to the FOA Section V (Application Review Information)** when crafting your application.
- **DO NOT duplicate** letters of support. It makes already long applications **MUCH** longer.
- **Avoid “cheerleading”** letters of support that do not add substance – you might eliminate good reviewers!
- **List the names of people submitting letters** for each of the components.
- **Indicate the Core or Project Title at** the beginning of each component summary.
- **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.

COBRE GRANTEES AND APPLICANTS ARE POTENTIAL REVIEWERS

PLEASE **REPLY** when SROs contact you! **Silence IS *NOT* GOLDEN**

While **YES** is our favorite answer, **quick NO** is also helpful.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Financial Management of COBREs

Christy Leake, Grants Management Lead

The PD(s)/PI(s) may not use COBRE funds to support research activities in his/her laboratory. This includes supplements.

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

COBRE Research Project Leaders cannot receive simultaneous support from the same COBRE award as Pilot Project Leaders, nor can COBRE Pilot Project Leaders receive simultaneous support from the same COBRE award as Research Project Leaders.

COBRE Research Project Leaders and Pilot Project Leaders cannot receive simultaneous support from other IDeA awards

- Includes INBRE, IDeA-CTR, or a different COBRE

IDeA Funding Restrictions

Funds cannot be used by or for collaborators at institutions in non-IDeA states or foreign sites

- However, funds may be used in other IDeA and non-IDeA states or foreign sites for fee-for-service activities

Consortium: A formalized agreement whereby a research project is carried out by the recipient and one or more other organizations that are separate legal entities

Fee For Service: Providing a routine service to the grantee such as data processing, routine analytical testing services or management services

Questionable Costs

Honorarium – not allowable when it is used to confer distinction on a speaker

General Supplies – only costs directly related to the grant and/or project are allowable as direct costs

Meals/Food – only allowable as part of meeting necessary for disseminating information

All costs must be allowable, reasonable, allocable, necessary and be accorded consistent treatment

Unallowable Costs

- **Incentive costs** – only allowable for research subjects
- **Proposal Costs** – not allowable as a direct cost on a grant
- **Stipends** – only allowable on NIH NRSA training and fellowship grants; “Compensation of Students” is an allowable cost on the grant
- **Scholarships** – not allowable on NIH grants
- **Cost of living (COLA) Increases** – requests for inflationary increases will be eliminated from the awarded budgets for competing awards. However, requests associated with special needs (e.g., equipment, added personnel or increased effort) will continue to be considered.

Thank you!

Please enter your questions into the chat box.

