Request for Pilot Project Proposals, 2016

Hopkins Population Center (HPC) invites proposals from its Faculty Associates for pilot project funds focusing on the development of collaborative population research projects that are likely to lead to grant proposals to the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Award requests of up to $10,000 may be submitted, and we are aiming to fund four pilot projects in 2016. We will start to review and fund applications on a rolling schedule from February 16, 2016 until we meet this year’s target. The awards will be given for a one-year period, and awarded projects can begin as soon as human subjects approval is obtained from NICHD.

Population-Related Research
The Population Dynamics Branch of NICHD, which funds the HPC, has stated that it supports “behavioral and social science research to understand the consequences of changes in population size, composition and distribution; factors that affect family formation, functioning, stability, and influence on child well-being; and the antecedents and consequences of migration and immigration.” These studies are typically centered on a population-level sample, often of large size, that is observed one or more times. These are not typically intervention studies. The study of “family functioning” and “child well-being” can include health issues. Social and behavioral scientists are almost always involved, and increasingly biomedical researchers and clinicians are collaborators.

Application Priority
- Interdisciplinary projects have priority, with even higher priority given to those applications that cross School boundaries (Public Health, Medicine, Arts & Sciences, and Nursing), as one of HPC’s main goals is to bridge disciplines and schools at Hopkins.
- Projects for which Principal Investigators can make the case that pilot project funds would be effective in leveraging the development of a larger research project
- Projects leading to an NICHD application, specifically in substantive areas under the purview of the Population Dynamics Branch
- Priority is also given to PIs who are Assistant and Associate Professors

Pilot project funds cannot be used for faculty salary support or for travel to professional meetings. Funds can, however, be used to support the salaries of graduate student research assistants and other necessary staff. Pilot project funds must also be spent in the United States.

Some examples of what funds could be used for:
- To hire a graduate student research assistant
- To conduct interviews or to assay biological samples
- To develop and field test a questionnaire
- To purchase access to a proprietary dataset

Pilot-to-NICHD Workshop Requirement
As a condition of the acceptance of a pilot project award, recipients may be required to participate in the following set of activities after the research project is completed. These steps are designed to help the investigator develop a strong grant proposal through the format of an ongoing workshop.
1. Present and discuss the ways in which the pilot project results justify further research
2. Present and discuss the specific aims of a potential NICHD grant application
3. Present and discuss a detailed outline of this potential NICHD application
4. Experience a mock NICHD review performed by select HPC associates
5. Present and discuss the revised detailed outline of this application and submit it
6. If resubmission is needed, present and discuss the Introduction to Revision
7. Experience another mock NICHD review and resubmit the revised application

* If in special circumstances a grantee could not participate in the above steps, a final report is due within 30 days after the project period has ended. This report should describe how the pilot funds have aided in the development of research proposals.

**Contact Us**
We encourage Associates who are interested in applying to contact Lingxin Hao, Director (hao@jhu.edu), Emily Agree, Associate Director (Emily.Agree@jhu.edu), or Andy Cherlin, Development Core Director (Cherlin@jhu.edu) to discuss their ideas for projects.

**Application Details**

*Guidelines for submission:* All proposals should include the following sections: (NOTE: Sections 4-8 should be no more than 4 pages in length. Brevity is encouraged.)

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Key personnel
4. Specific Aims
5. Background and significance
6. Proposed activities
7. Project timeline
8. Plans for application for NIH funding

*Applications should also include:*
- Curriculum Vitae or NIH biosketch for all key investigators
- Budget and budget justification

*Eligibility:* The principal investigator must be a Faculty Associate of the Hopkins Population Center.

*Review Criteria:* All proposals will be evaluated on their scientific merit. Members of the Coordinating Committee of the HPC will constitute the review panel. In addition to general concerns related to the significance and importance of the research question, as well as the feasibility of the proposed research as a short-term project, reviewers will consider:
- Interdisciplinary strengths of the project and research team
- Innovation of research question and approach
- Relevance to population research
- Potential for external funding especially by the NICHD Population Dynamics branch

*Human Subjects:* Any successful applicant will be required to submit a human subjects plan similar to the human subjects section of an NIH application and to receive approval or exemption from a JHU IRB. It will then be submitted to NICHD for human subjects approval. **It is not necessary to start this process in order to apply to HPC for pilot funds.**