UCGNI-Neurobiology Research Center Pilot Research Program
Application Instructions (2025-2026)

DEADLINES

Full Applications Due: November 3, 2025 (before 8 am)
Notification of Awards Made: February 2026 (date TBD)
Award Dates: March 1, 2026 – February 28, 2027

For questions regarding these instructions, please contact Jennifer Bedel (bedelj@ucmail.uc.edu)

1. **Deadlines:** All deadlines are final.

2. **Funding Pools:** Funding for this program is derived from UCGNI and the UC Neurobiology Research Center (NRC). We expect to be in a position to make several awards, a maximum of $25,000/ea. in FY25. To be eligible for these funds, the Principal Investigator on the application must either hold a **full-time faculty appointment at UC College of Medicine or be employed as a resident, clinical fellow, or post-doctoral fellow at UC** (or by permission of the UCGNI director) **and the project must be conducted in a UC CoM laboratory**. Any resulting application for funding to an outside agency must be made through UC. Co-investigators can be from other UC Colleges or affiliated entities, such as Cincinnati Children's or the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

3. **Background:** This program seeks to support the development of studies with potential for future extramural funding and is designed to enhance new or current faculty research programs. A research study is responsive to the RFA if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria:

   • Uses new approaches or discoveries to address relevant problems in the field of neuroscience;
   • Contributes critical experiments or data gathering to an existing research program that will enhance external funding success;
   • Brings interdisciplinary expertise to initiate a new neuroscience research direction for the PI;
   • Generates preliminary feasibility data in support of mentored award applications (e.g., K01, K23, K99/R00 mechanisms) or a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) application;
   • Includes a clear plan for the recruitment of human subjects (clinical proposals)

   Other proposed initiatives will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

4. **Project priorities:** To be considered, proposals need to focus on important problems in the field of neuroscience. A wide spectrum of projects can be considered relevant. Priority will be given to those projects that carry the highest potential for a major discovery and are most likely to lead to successful application for extramural funding, as well as projects with well-developed concepts where additional data are required for proposal submission and/or where innovative ideas require additional testing. The strategy for advancement of the research project for submission as an extramural research grant or mentored training award should be clearly indicated.

5. **Collaborations:** The UCGNI-NRC pilot program encourages applications that include interactions between basic scientists and clinicians to foster the development of translational investigations for patients with serious diseases. In addition, interdisciplinary studies and studies that include participation of basic scientists or clinical researchers from other UC colleges and affiliates are encouraged.

6. **Eligibility**: Applications will be accepted from any full-time faculty member, resident, clinical fellow, or post-doctoral scholar whose appointment is at the University of Cincinnati **College of Medicine**. Any resulting application for funding to an outside agency must be submitted from UC. **Investigators at CCHMC are not eligible for submission as PIs but can be Co-Is on proposals**. Collaborations among investigators spanning disciplines and programs are encouraged. Applications from residents, fellows or post-doctoral scholars should include the trainee's prospective K-award mentor as a co-I. Faculty with substantial start-up packages should consult with the program directors to confirm eligibility for the program. **Current UCGNI-NRC awardees are not eligible.**

7. **Letters of support:** For residents, clinical fellows or post-doctoral fellows, a letter from the supervisor/Chair should be included as part of the application. This letter should clearly state that in the event of an award, the applicant will have appropriate release time dedicated to the project (25% is suggested for most projects). In addition, a letter of support from the applicant's mentor should be included, outlining the applicant's qualifications, the mentor's commitment to the applicant and resources available for completion of the project (e.g., equipment, lab space, infrastructure).

8. **Overview of Review Process**: The review of applications is performed in two phases: (1) Application/Scientific Review, and (2) Administrative Review. During the first phase, the 5-page applications will be reviewed by 2-3 independent scientific reviewers. Applicant rankings will be reviewed by the UCGNI-NRC Research Committee, and the cut-off for awards will be determined. Critiques from the first phase of the review will be provided to the applicants after awards are announced.

9. **Composition of Applications:** Those wishing to submit an application please email Jennifer Bedel at Jennifer.bedel@uc.edu for an application packet which will include standard PHS 398 forms for budget, biosketch and other support, along with instructions on how to upload applications to the submission and review portal (CCAPS). **Applications should follow NIH formatting guidelines for font size and margins and be submitted as 1 PDF file and include**:

   1. Face page (check all appropriate IBC, IACUC, IRB, or Radiation Safety approvals or indicate pending if submitted)
   2. Budget (use form provided) – **See funding restrictions below**
   3. Budget justification
   4. Biosketch(es) (include PI and co-investigators; use current PHS format)
   5. Other support (use current PHS format)
   6. Hypothesis and Specific Aims
   7. Background and Significance
   8. Research Design and Methods
   9. Statements regarding human subjects and/or animals
   10. Literature cited
   11. Letters of support (for residents, research fellows and post-doctoral fellows)
   12. Prior UCGNI-NRC Pilot Awardees must provide a 1-page progress summary
       * **NOTE: SECTIONS 6-8 (Hypothesis and Specific Aims, Background & Significance, Research Design and Methods) MUST NOT EXCEED 5 PAGES.**

10. **Funding Restrictions:**

    - Funds may not be used to support faculty salaries, travel, meetings, food expenses, capital purchases, or publication costs. UC College of Medicine trainee and staff salaries are permitted.
    - Funds may be used to cover core services at CCHMC, if these services are not available at UC. One must outline the specific need for service and provide documentation that the services do not exist at UC in the budget justification.
    - Subcontracts to outside universities are not permitted nor are fees for services. Money allocated for this internal funding mechanism cannot support outside institutions.
    - Funds are not permittable to faculty and staff outside of UC College of Medicine.

11. **Post Award:** All UCGNI-NRC Awardees are required to:

    - Routinely monitor their account spending to ensure spending aligns with budget justification.
    - Correct any overspending within 30 days of the end of the project.
    - Submit a 1-page progress summary within 30 days of the end of their project.