OAIC National Coordinating Center
Claude D Pepper Older Americans Independence Centers

Claude D Pepper Older Americans Independence Centers (OAIC) Coordinating Center Program

Research Program Funding Announcement (RFA)

With a focus on collaborative, multi-center, pilot studies

Background and Purpose

The purpose of the RFA is to encourage cross-center collaborations within the OAIC network by funding for Pilot and Exploratory studies that by their nature require meaningful contributions - of expertise, capabilities, specimens and participants - from two or more OAICs. The desired outcomes, in addition to building collaborations, are to produce data and results that have strong potential to lead to subsequent proposals for extramural funding of larger, definitive studies and to produce impactful publications.

Pilot studies can be observational, translational, and / or interventional (pilot trial). Pilot and Exploratory studies can use data, images, and/or stored bio-specimens from completed or ongoing studies for rapid and efficient testing of OAIC-relevant hypotheses.

In accord with the OAIC mission, the focus of the proposals should address factors that impact maintenance of physical function and prevent or reverse physical disability in older people. As a Coordinating Center pilot/exploratory study, the application should resent a strong plan for collaborative / complementary research that involves 2 or more sites. Applicants should be faculty with a rank of instructor or higher from Pepper-affiliated institutions. See below for assistance offered for helping identify collaborators at other Centers.

Pilot / Exploratory Studies Review Criteria

- Inherent need for and use of multiple OAICs
- Well-aligned with OAIC theme and priorities
- Scientific merit and long-term impact
- Potential to progress to a larger, definitive trial that could be developed within the OAIC network, or to lead an ancillary study to a larger study
- Meaningful early career faculty involvement or leadership strongly encouraged
- Evidence of leveraging or contribution of resources from the participating OAIC

Letter of Intent details and deadline

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is strongly encouranged in order to alert the OAIC Coordinating Center to your plans and allow the CC to provide helpful feedback. LOIs can be submitted as early as possible, but no later than 3 weeks prior to the deadline, though the earlier the better. The LOI is informal and will not be included in the review materials.

We encourage you to consult with Pepper Center leaders at your institution and / or at the CC during preparation of your LOI and application. All LOIs are to be sent via email to the OAIC CC at peppercenter@wfusm.edu.

LOI suggested elements

- Descriptive title of proposed research
- Submitting Investigator: Name, institution, academic rank, e-mail address
- Co-Investigators: Name, institutions, roles
- Hypothesis, rationale, significance and aims of the study
- Description of study/plans
- How the study fulfills requirement for multicenter, collaborative projects
- Brief description of proposed allocation of funds
- Letter of Support from Directors of all Pepper Centers involved in the multi-site pilot

OAIC Coordinating Center Guidance and Assistance

The OAIC Coordinating Center leaders encourage applicants to reach out to them directly to obtain guidance on applications and assist with dentifying potential collaborators from other Pepper Centers.

Resources to help find collaborators at other institutions for your project:

- OAIC Collaborator's database (accessible at the OAIC National website). Link: https://www.peppercenter.org/secure/dspCollaborators.cfm)
- Annual Directory Query engine (accessible at the OAIC National website). Link: https://www.peppercenter.org/public/ar/
- Research COMPASS (accessible at direct link - https://rccn.wakehealth.edu/)
- Ask your OAIC Director
- Ask your OAIC REC leader
- Contact the OAIC CC – we're here to help.

Application submission details and deadline

If selected, you will be invited to submit a complete pilot application to the Pepper OAIC CC via email. The Pepper OAIC CC is requesting each application provide a letter of support from their Pepper Center Director. Applications will follow the 6-page format for NIH R03 applications.

Application Process Timeline

RFA release date	Monday, June 15, 2026
Letter of Intent Receipt Date	Monday, August 24, 2026 as early as possible but no later than 3 weeks before deadline
Full Application deadline	Monday, September 14, 2026 by 11:59 pm EST
Announcement of Awards	Monday, November 2, 2026

Submission Procedure

Inquiries are strongly encouraged so that we can provide specific guidance in developing relevant, responsive, successful proposals. For additional information, administrative inquiries or clarification please contact Abby Archer, OAIC Coordinating Center Project Manager (abby.archer@advocatehealth.org).
All LOIs and full applications should be sent via email containing a single pdf document to the OAIC Coordinating Center email (peppercenter@wakehealth.edu).

Award Information

There is funding to support up to one pilot study up to $100,000 direct costs (direct costs should include direct costs for the awardee and direct and indirect costs for any subawards issued by the awardee). **Please note**

that, with NIA endorsement, the indirect costs rate to be used for this award is 8% which is the same as early career awards throughout the OAIC program.
Because of these award requirements, it is recommended that the submitting OAIC provide their institutional "Letter of Intent to Establish a Consortium Agreement" with necessary budget details included. Any applicable IRB/ACUC approvals and data and safety monitoring plans as requested by the NIA, etc. will be done at the responsibility of the submitting OAIC and the CC will require proof of these approvals prior to issuing the award. If awarded as a full pilot study, additional documentation will be necessary to start the sub-contracting process.

Budget Preparation
Full pilot studies may request support for technical staff salaries, testing, animals, supplies, and reagents. The bulk of requested support should be for items such as these (material support of the proposed study), however modest effort support for investigators can be considered, if needed.

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee. Once funded, the project will be facilitated and monitored by the Coordinating Center. The CC will assist as needed in providing advice on study coordination and data management based on its prior experience in multi-center study management. Twice yearly brief progress reports will be required.

Contact:

Questions regarding the application process should be directed to Abby Archer (abby.archer@advocatehealth.org) and/or Dalane Kitzman (Dalane.Kitzman@advocatehealth.org).