

Request for Inter-NIA Center Pilot Proposals on Life Course Perspectives on Aging and Resilience and Reserve in Aging

Abstract

The Research Centers Collaborative Network (RCCN) is seeking to fund three or more pilot or developmental projects of up to \$75,000 each, that involve multiple NIA-sponsored research centers to foster new research in the area of Life Course Perspectives on Aging and/or Resilience and Reserve in Aging. Applications are due **February 18, 2021** with awards announced by **March 31, 2021**.

Background

This award program is sponsored by the NIA's Research Centers Collaborative Network (RCCN). The RCCN's goal is to bring together researchers from the 6 NIA Centers programs to foster the development of cross-center collaborations around issues important to the health and well-being of older adults.

The RCCN sponsors a series of workshops addressing specific problems of high salience to multiple NIA Center programs. These workshops feature the sharing of paradigms, conceptual models, and key insights from perspectives of the participating centers programs.

Workshop participants identify research priorities which then serve as the focus of workshop-based RFAs. The third workshop, *Resilience and Reserve in Aging*, was held November 12-13, 2019 in Austin, Texas. The fourth workshop, *Life Course Perspectives on Aging*, was held virtually November 3-4, 2020. Workshop agendas and slides can be found at <https://www.rccn-aging.org/resilience-rccn-workshop> and <http://rccn-aging.org/life-course-rccn-workshop>.

Priority areas/questions identified at the workshops included:

Life Course Perspectives on Aging:

- Harmonization of measures across studies
- Identification of Biomarkers that can be used across the life course.
- Cross-species studies to connect early life variables to later life outcomes
- How social determinants of health affect biology
- The impact of early life events on late life health trajectories

- Identification of processes and mechanisms whereby those at risk for poor outcomes defy the odds and show resilience and plasticity.
- Physiologic impacts of chronic stress across the life course

Resilience and Reserve Workshop:

- Can routine clinical assessments be used to predict resilience?
- How measures of resilience in one dimension are related to resilience in other dimensions (e.g. does emotional resilience predict physical resilience?)
- Understanding the relationship between the reaction to acute stressors in a controlled setting, to resilience to stressors experienced during the life course?
- What are the dynamics of resilience over repeated stress exposures?
- Can resilience be exhausted (e.g., is there a limit to the number of times one can bounce back)?
- Are there aspects of social and physical environments associated with better resilience?

Proposals that address topics outside of these priority areas will also be considered for this RFA.

Purpose

This mechanism provides funding for at least three *collaborative* pilot, planning or meeting grants supporting interdisciplinary research collaborations in the theme area. Each award will provide up to \$75,000 in direct costs. The proposals **must** include investigators representing at least two different NIA Centers Programs (Shock, Roybal, Older American Independence (Pepper), Resource Centers for Minority Aging Research, Centers for Demography and Economics of Aging, and Alzheimer’s Disease Research Centers). Investigators not affiliated with NIA programs may also be included. Applications may seek support to collect or analyze data, convene experts to explore aspects of the theme area in detail, or develop multi- or interdisciplinary conceptual models to motivate further cross-center work. There must be clear evidence that all investigators will contribute importantly to the intellectual design and conduct of the research.

Applicants may propose to use the award over the course of one or two years as justified by the proposed activity. The RCCN will also include support for indirect costs at the recipient institution’s NIH negotiated rate. Funding will begin **June 1, 2021**.

Eligibility

Principal investigators must be faculty who are affiliated with any of the 6 NIA Center programs as confirmed by letters from the directors of the relevant Center programs. Investigators who are not (yet) faculty can be Co-Investigators on the grant. Proposals must include investigators from at **least 2 different** NIA Center programs. Proposals can be submitted by two or more Center Program investigators at the same institution or Center Program investigators at different institutions. Applications must be relevant to the Workshop topics generally, and ideally address questions and priorities addressed at the workshop as outlined above. Small clinical trials are eligible under this mechanism.

Application Guidelines

The following criteria are used to determine the merit of an application:

- Relevance of the proposed aims to the topics of the workshops;
- The significance and innovation of the proposed research or planning project and likelihood that it will develop into new on-going inter-center research collaborations;
- The feasibility of the proposed activities;
- Productivity of the investigators;
- Involvement of early career investigators;
- Participation of women and minorities.

Application Procedures

The deadline for receipt of all Applications is **February 18, 2021** at 5:00 p.m. EST. Please submit your application here: <https://amfedaging.wufoo.com/forms/rccn-pilot-award-application-form/>. Incomplete applications cannot be considered. The applications will be reviewed by the RCCN Steering committee and independent reviewers selected by the American Federation for Aging Research. Applicants will be notified by **March 31, 2021**. The anticipated award start date is **June 1, 2021**. RCCN will not provide reviewer critiques to any applicants at any review level.

Questions regarding this RFA can be sent to: Elizabeth Pritchett-Montavon elizabeth@afar.org. Click [here](#) for our Frequently Asked Questions page. Please check the [RCCN website](#) for details.

Requests for Support **should be submitted as a single PDF document**, using 12 point font and single-spaced. The application must include the following and in this order:

- Page 1: Abstract
- Page 2 – 6: Narrative describing the proposed activity or activities. The narrative should include the hypotheses/rationale, specific aims, brief preliminary data (if any), an implementation plan/research strategy and proposed methods, timeline and expected outcomes and next steps.
- Page 7: References
- Page 8-9: A budget and budget justification
- NIH-style bios-sketches for the key investigators
- Additional supporting materials up to two documents, and only if directly relevant to the proposed project and not to exceed 5 pages.

Award and Reporting Requirements

Funding will be awarded via a subcontract from Wake Forest School of Medicine. Joint pilot projects should be led by investigators from 2 or more Centers programs. One of the investigators should be identified as the primary (i.e., contact) investigator. NIA approval of pilot projects involving human subjects or animals will occur according to the procedures used at the primary investigator's Center. All questions regarding the award should be directed to the contact listed on the notice of award.

Applicants should note that IRB certification (for human subjects) and/or Animal Use Committee approval (for animal subjects) must be provided before a grant award can be made.

Awardees are required to submit annual progress report with a final narrative and financial reports.

Timeline

- Application Deadline: February 18, 2021
- Review: February – March, 2021
- Selection and announcement: by March 31, 2021
- Start Date: June 1, 2021

About the RCCN

Managed by [Wake Forest School of Medicine](#) and the [American Federation for Aging Research \(AFAR\)](#), the RCCN promotes multi-disciplinary efforts in aging research across the centers



through: conferences, pilot programs, early career faculty education, web-based resource identification tools, and fundraising/proposal development. To find out more go to: rccn-aging.org

The RCCN is funded by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number U24AG058556. The content of this RFA is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.