



Pilot / Feasibility Application Process
Letters of Intent due April 14, 2017
Applications due June 15, 2017

The Pittsburgh Liver Research Center is pleased to announce the 2017 Request for Applications for Pilot/Feasibility Grants. The grants will fund new initiatives and/or support new investigators who are pursuing liver-related research that should lead to R01-type funding or other extramural support at a later date.

Pilot/Feasibility grants:

1. Are one-year awards for liver research. Funds can be used for reagents, animals, and core services, but not for equipment or travel. Under special circumstances and with proper justification, salary support may be considered. No indirects will be given. All funds must be used for the conduct of research. Funding will run from September 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018.
2. Are awarded to individual applicants in amounts of up to \$25,000.
3. Are for one year; in rare cases, awardees may apply for a second year of funding. Applicants applying for a second year of funding must provide a report of their progress to date and will be considered on a competitive basis with the entire pool of applicants.
4. Provide support for investigators to collect preliminary data sufficient to support a future extramural grant application for independent research and/or to test a novel hypothesis.
5. Encourage and support dissemination of research via peer-reviewed publication.
6. Are NOT intended for:
 - a. Bridge funding
 - b. Large projects by established investigators
 - c. Supporting or supplementing ongoing funded research of an investigator.

Eligibility:

All academic full-time faculty, including Instructors, Research Assistant Professors, and Assistant Professors, who are eligible to apply as PI for extramural NIH R01 funding and who are affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh and/or UPMC are eligible to apply. Projects will be considered on any aspect of fundamental or applied research relating to basic liver function, liver pathophysiology, or clinically relevant areas. Projects that will utilize the PLRC Scientific Cores will be given preference. Applicants must fall into one of the following categories of eligibility:

1. Junior investigators without independent grant support (excluding career development awards) seeking to establish independence in the field of liver research. ***This category of applicant will be given preference.*
2. Established investigators with independent grant support—past or present—who have not been involved in liver research and who wish to develop new research directions related to the liver.

3. Established investigators working in liver-related research who wish to begin a new project representing a major departure from their previous research.

Expected outcomes:

1. The funds will be distributed in two disbursements. The first will be September 1, 2017. At the midpoint of the funding period, the PI will submit a brief mid-year report; once the report has been approved, the second half of the funds will be disbursed.
2. At around the mid-point of the award, the PI will be the presenter at a regularly scheduled PLRC seminar, and it will be expected that the PI will discuss her/his work on the P/F project.
3. At the end of the funding period, it would be ideal for the PI to have generated sufficient high-quality data to publish in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.
4. At the end of the funding period, it would be optimal for the PI to have sufficient high-quality preliminary data to apply for extramural R01 (or similar) funding for the continuation of the project.
5. At the end of the funding period and using the data generated during the Pilot / Feasibility award period, the awardee will submit to the PLRC one of the following: (1) a project completion report, or (2) a publication, or (3) a copy of the R01.
6. PLRC support shall be acknowledged in all relevant publications and presentations. A statement related to the acknowledgment can be obtained from the PLRC Coordinator (Ann Vinski vinskiam@upmc.edu).
7. The PLRC Director is available to discuss the progress of the project and offer other relevant scientific advice. The PLRC Director will be able to provide any supporting documents or letters necessary for the preparation of a successful R01 (or similar) application.
8. Investigators who successfully obtain extramural funding for the continuation of their P/F project will contribute 10% of their indirects to the PLRC, once per year for each year the PLRC funded the P/F project. (That is, if the P/F project received one year of PLRC funding, the PLRC will receive 10% of the indirects for the first year only of extramural funding. If the P/F project received two years of PLRC funding, the PLRC will receive 10% of the indirects each year for the first two years only of extramural funding.) These funds will allow the PLRC to continue to fund more investigators. Acknowledgment of this arrangement is addressed in section 5 of the Review and Decision Process (below).
9. PIs will attend and participate in the monthly PLRC seminars and relevant Special Interest Group roundtables.

Application Process:

1. Applicants should indicate their interest in applying for a Pilot / Feasibility grant by sending an email to the PLRC Coordinator (Ann Vinski, vinskiam@upmc.edu). The applicant's NIH biosketch and Other Support page must be attached to the email.
 - a. Email NIH Biosketch and Other Support **by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 14, 2017.**
 - b. Applicant eligibility will be confirmed via email by Friday, April 20, 2017.

2. Questions concerning eligibility and/or the relevance of potential applications should be discussed with the PLRC Coordinator (Ann Vinski, vinskiam@upmc.edu).
3. Applications should follow the format of a new NIH R01 Grant, using NIH application forms (PHS 398) but should not exceed 6 pages, including Specific Aims page. Applications should include a title and abstract. Bibliography is not included in the 6-page limit.
4. All institutional regulatory approvals for human, tissue, and animal use should be submitted with the application. If the relevant approvals have not yet been received, the applicant should indicate the date on which the approvals were requested.
5. Applications do not require institutional internal review or Dean's signature.
6. **Due date for complete applications: June 15, 2017.**
7. Completed applications must be submitted by email to the PLRC Coordinator (Ann Vinski vinskiam@upmc.edu).

Review and Decision Process:

1. Each application will be peer reviewed by at least two reviewers who are part of the leadership of the PLRC. Reviewers may include members of the External Advisory Board, the Executive Committee, and others.
2. Following initial review, a group of semi-finalists will be invited to present their proposals, in person, at the annual External Advisory Board meeting. The PI is required to present in person to be considered for possible funding. The annual EAB meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 25, 2017. The PIs' presentations will be between 10:00 a.m. and noon on August 25, 2017.
3. The applications will be scored based on scientific merit and NIH fundability as deemed by the PLRC review panel.
4. Applicants will be notified following the August 25, 2017, meeting. The Notice of Grant Award (NGA) will outline the expected outcomes (see above).
5. The arrangement of sharing 10% of indirects from extramural funding (see above) will be recorded in the NGA. The NGA will be signed by the awardee and the awardee's department chair before the award can be made.
6. Grants begin September 1, 2017.