



**District of Columbia Center for AIDS Research (DC CFAR)  
Academic-Community Partnership Pilot Awards  
Request for Applications – Spring 2022**

### **Background**

The District of Columbia Center for AIDS Research (DC CFAR) is pleased to announce the spring 2022 cycle of soliciting research proposals for the Academic-Community Partnership Awards through its Pilot Awards Program. This award was developed in response to and in collaboration with the DC CFAR Community Partnership Council. The goal of this award is to provide pilot research funds to Co-Principal Investigator teams consisting of one early stage or new HIV/AIDS academic investigator and one community investigator to collect preliminary data that will lead to NIH funding in HIV/AIDS. The award funds will be shared between an academic institution and a community-based organization.

### **Scope**

- Projects with a focus on HIV/AIDS and related opportunistic illnesses, including basic, clinical, epidemiologic, social, behavioral, and HIV/AIDS prevention science.
- Applications should focus on the NIH priorities for HIV and HIV-related research (<https://www.oar.nih.gov/hiv-policy-and-research/research-priorities>) which broadly include: HIV cure research; reducing HIV/AIDS incidence; the next generation of HIV therapies; HIV-associated comorbidities, coinfections, and complications; and cross cutting areas of basic research and health inequities.
- Applications are also strongly encouraged that focus on the following DC CFAR priorities: a) HIV Cure research; b) Ending the HIV Epidemic; c) Drug User Health; d) Women and HIV; and e) Aging and Comorbidities; f) Latina/x/o; g) Global; and h) Sexual and Gender Minorities.
- Academic and community investigators should function as Co-Principal Investigators, sharing the responsibility for conducting the research and meeting regulatory and reporting requirements.
- Proposals should directly address the Washington, DC population.
- [Clinical trials](#) and studies involving new drugs, treatments, or devices cannot be funded by the DC CFAR.
- Applicants should describe how they will use DC CFAR Core services in their proposed research.

### **Academic Investigator Eligibility Information**

- Faculty investigators at the eight participating DC CFAR institutions (American University, Children's National, DC Health, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and Whitman-Walker) who are full members of the DC CFAR are eligible to apply. Applications for new membership will be accepted just prior to or at time of submission if the PI meets the eligibility criteria. For membership information, please visit the DC CFAR website at: <http://dccfar.gwu.edu/>.
- Academic Principal Investigators (PI) must: 1) have a terminal degree; 2) hold a current academic faculty appointment; and 3) be eligible to submit NIH grant applications through their home institution's office of research.
- Academic PIs can either be [Early Stage Investigators](#) or [New Investigators](#).
- Academic PIs must be at the rank of Instructor, Research Scientist, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Full Professor. Clinical fellows are not eligible to apply as PIs.
- Applications are especially solicited from the following groups: newly hired faculty at one of the eight DC CFAR institutions who began their academic appointments after July 1, 2020 and meet the above criteria; underrepresented racial and ethnic minority groups; and women.

## **Community Investigator Eligibility Information**

- Community investigators who are community members of the DC CFAR are eligible to apply. Applications for new membership will be accepted just prior to or at time of submission if the PI meets the eligibility criteria. For community membership information, please visit the DC CFAR website at: <http://dccfar.gwu.edu/>.
- Community investigators must be affiliated with a community-based organization (CBO) that is eligible to serve as a recipient of federal funding.
- CBOs must be located in the Washington, D.C. area.
- Whitman-Walker is both a DC CFAR partner institution and a CBO, and can apply as either, but not both.
- Community PIs must have demonstrable experience and expertise relevant to the HIV epidemic in DC.
- Individual community members may serve as consultants to the academic and/or community investigators on the award.

## **Award Details**

- Proposals up to a maximum total of \$50,000 will be considered. One ACP pilot award will be funded.
- The CBO should receive a minimum of 50% of the requested funding.
- Academic institutions and CBOs may be asked to provide financial and/or other pertinent information about their organizations prior to funding, such as audit reports and financial status documentation.
- Awards will be made for a one-year period, with no-cost extensions considered for a maximum of one additional year.
- Award funds can be used for research-related activities such as partial salary support for investigators, research staff or students; supplies and reagents; and travel expenses to attend national scientific meetings to present research related to the DC CFAR award. Travel expenses for meetings must be pre-approved. Capital equipment purchases over \$5,000 are not allowable.
- The Co-PIs may each include up to \$5,000 (not including fringe benefits) for their own salary support as part of their budget request.
- Investigators at American, Children's, DC Health, Georgetown, Howard, VAMC, and Whitman-Walker must route their grant applications through their Office of Sponsored Research Projects, or parallel office, for signature. Investigators at GW do not need to route their applications.
- As agreed to by each of the DC CFAR collaborating institutions, indirect costs will not be covered. Investigators at American, Children's, DC Health, Georgetown, Howard, VAMC and Whitman-Walker may want to let their Office of Sponsored Research Projects (OSRP) know this in advance, as OSRP may want a copy of the RFA indicating this stipulation prior to or at the time of institutional routing of your grant application.
- CBOs may choose to either 1) cover indirect costs with their portion of the award or 2) forgo indirect costs. This decision should be reflected in the proposal budget.
- Academic and community partners are encouraged to consult with Ms. Brandi Robinson with questions regarding required financial and subrecipient documentation.
- Co-PIs should both be involved in all calls and meetings related to the application and in all documents required in the application and award, if funded.

## **Application Process Procedures**

Potential applicants should note that the DC CFAR Pilot Awards Program is a highly competitive program with a rigorous review process. Recent successful applications have typically been those that involved substantial advance preparation, including the initial review of the research aims and ongoing mentoring by senior DC CFAR investigators and/or service providers to determine the feasibility of the study and the likelihood of future NIH funding. To enhance each applicant's likelihood of funding, we have instituted the following procedures to assist investigators with the development of their applications. Please note that the Letter of Intent is not required and may be submitted at any time before the pre-submission form is due. All other application processes have anticipated deadlines. Applicants will be notified of final deadlines in the coming months.

1. Letter of Intent – Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent via the [DC CFAR website](#). This step is not required but is helpful because it notifies the DC CFAR that investigators are interested in applying and allows us to assist with identifying an academic or community investigator, refining research ideas, and providing other services and resources, as needed.

2. Pre-submission Form – All applicants are required to submit a [Pre-submission Form](#) and NIH biosketch. The anticipated deadline is early September 2022. The pre-submission step notifies DC CFAR that an applicant intends to apply and allows us to begin setting up the Specific Aims Reviews and Consultation Calls and identifying mentors, if requested (see below). Applicants should continue preparation on their full applications after submitting the Pre-submission Form and awaiting the next step.
3. Application Consultation – Applicants will be invited to a one-hour conference call with select members of senior DC CFAR leadership based on the proposed scope of work outlined in their pre-submission forms. The purpose of this consultation is to receive scientific and administrative feedback alongside possible recommendations to consult with other DC CFAR Core Directors and service providers as appropriate. Primary Mentors should participate in this consultation as well. The individuals on the call will be provided with the pre-submission form. **Applicants should continue preparation of their application while waiting for the scheduling of the consultation call.** Please note: The consultation call will not impact the final score/review of the full application, as none of the participants on the calls will be asked to review and score the full applications they consulted on.
4. Specific Aims Review – Applicants will be invited to participate in a specific aims review with appropriate DC CFAR Service Providers. The purpose of this review is to present and receive feedback on one of the most important and often most difficult parts of the application to articulate. In previous pilot award cycles, applicants with clear and reasonable specific aims received better scores.
5. Mentorship – Early stage and community investigators are expected to identify a Primary Mentor (or request one through the DC CFAR Developmental Core) who agrees to provide scientific and grant writing guidance through the application development process, including review of a draft version of the application, and for the duration of the study, if successfully funded. A Mentor should be identified as soon as possible and should participate in the application consultation. The Mentor will ideally be a senior faculty member with expertise in Community-based Participatory Research and the scientific focus area of the proposal who has been successful in securing grant funding from the NIH. Mentors may be selected either from a DC CFAR institution or from another research institution. Continued support by the Mentor will be expected for the publication of study results and the writing of a subsequent NIH grant application. A description of the assistance provided by the Mentor along with a letter of support should be included in Appendix A of the application. The letter should acknowledge continuing support if the project is successfully funded.
6. Biostatistical Consultation – Following the above consultation, applicants with projects involving statistical analyses (or sample size considerations) will be invited to schedule a phone or Zoom meeting with a DC CFAR Biostatistician to review their study design and methodology. The anticipated deadline to request this consultation is early November 2022 and can be arranged by contacting Dr. Sam Simmens at [simmens@email.gwu.edu](mailto:simmens@email.gwu.edu).
7. Core Service Requests – Applicants are strongly encouraged to utilize DC CFAR Core services in their proposed research projects. A description of Core service utilization is requested in the application. DC CFAR services are offered through three scientific cores. Consultation is always available through the Developmental Core. Study design support and social or behavioral research consultations are available through the Social and Behavioral Sciences Core (SBS) Core. Support for epidemiologic study design, biostatistics, writing clinical research protocols and access to clinical populations and specimens are available through the Clinical and Population Sciences Core (CPS). Laboratory services and assays are available through the Basic Sciences Core (BSC). For additional information or to request services, please contact the DC CFAR Senior Research Program Manager at [bnrobin@email.gwu.edu](mailto:bnrobin@email.gwu.edu) by Early November 2022.

Other training and mentoring activities, such as workshops, mixers and research brown bags, may be scheduled during the cycle to further support investigators with the development of their applications. Both Co-PIs, will be invited to participate in these events should they become available.

## Key Dates

<b>Procedure/Activity</b>	<b>Actual or Anticipated Due Date</b>
Letter of Intent	Rolling
Pre-submission Form	Early September 2022
Specific Aims Review	TBD
Consultation Call Completion	Early October
Core Service Request	Early November
Full Application	Early November
Application Review	Nov/Dec 2022
Anticipated Project Start	January 1, 2023

## Application Instructions

Letter of intent - Potential applicants are encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent via the [DC CFAR website](#).

DC CFAR Pre-submission Form – All potential applicants are required to submit the [Pre-submission Form](#) and NIH biosketches. The anticipated deadline is early September 2022.

**Download the application form [here](#).** Please use Arial 11 font for the application.

*NIH Guidance and Forms - Unless specified otherwise, please use the appropriate NIH PHS 398 guidance and forms for the sections required below:*

- *Guidance:* <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf>
- *Forms:* <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>

## Application Form Section Instructions

**1. Face Page** – The Academic PI should complete this form as if submitting to NIH. Non-GW applicants are required to include the signature of an official from their respective institution.

**2. Project Summary, Relevance, Project/Performance Sites** – Provide the project's scientific abstract in the Project Summary space. If funded, the scientific abstract will be posted on the DC CFAR website.

**3. Lay Summary** - A lay language summary of the project must be submitted to be considered for funding. This summary follows the scientific abstract and describes the abstract in terms understandable to the general public. The lay summary should also include a brief dissemination strategy detailing how findings will be communicated to the public. All scientific terms need to be clearly defined in this summary and written at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Please also include a concluding statement describing the potential for community impact locally, as well as nationally and internationally, if appropriate.

4. **Research Grant Table of Contents** – Include a Table of Contents for the proposal.
5. **Detailed Budgets** – Review the allowable expenses and then complete a detailed budget for the academic investigator and one for the community investigator.
6. **Budget Justifications** - provide the additional information requested in each budget category.
7. **Biosketches** – Include biosketches for the PIs along with biosketches for all key personnel/collaborating investigators.
8. **Resources** – Identify the facilities to be used and the scientific environment in which the research will be conducted.
9. **Research Plan** – The research plan should be no more than six pages total. It should include both the specific aims (up to 1 page) and the research strategy with appropriately labeled section headings for Significance, Innovation, and Approach. We encourage applicants to review examples of successful applications to NIH prior to writing your research plan: <https://www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/sample-applications>.
10. **References**
11. **Applicant Statement** - Applicants are required to include the following for peer review:
  - a. A statement of how the findings of this proposal may lead to a future NIH grant application.
  - b. A description of the steps taken to satisfy the “Application Process Procedures”, which are outlined in a previous section of this RFA. This should describe the role that the Primary Mentor played in supporting the application and will play if the project is funded. Applicants are required to verify that the Mentor was given the opportunity to review the draft application in advance of the submission date and provide feedback. Applicants should describe the extent to which the feedback was incorporated into the application.
  - c. A description of DC CFAR Core service(s) that will be utilized for the proposed project. If after consultation with the DC CFAR Senior Research Program Manager it is determined that the appropriate services are not available through the DC CFAR, then a statement must be included that explains why services will not be not utilized.
12. **DC CFAR Developmental Award Checklist**
13. **Academic and Community Investigator Scope of Work** - Submit a 1-page scope of work detailing the academic and community investigators’ responsibilities by specific aim. This document is required for administrative purposes only. If your award is funded, the document will be attached to the sub-award agreement (investigators at the CBO, American, Children’s National, DC Health, Georgetown, Howard, VAMC and Whitman-Walker) or used for the PTA setup (investigators at GW).

In addition to the application form above, include the following in the final proposal for community partners:

A. **Subrecipient Commitment Form**

**Additional proposal requirements:**

- **Letters of support** – Letters of support are required from the mentor(s), CBO executive director and the academic PI’s Department Chair or Division Director. In addition, include appropriate letters of support from co-investigators, collaborators and consultants. Letters are not required from DC CFAR service providers.
- **Human Subjects Information** – **If your study involves human participants, specimens and/or data, the PHS Human Subjects information must be submitted or your application will be incomplete.** Please follow the [PHS 398 instructions](#) for the completion of the following sections using the applicable fillable forms that you must download onto your computer to enter the information: [PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information](#) and the [Human Subject Study Record Attachment](#). Within the Study Record Attachment, **Sections 1, 2 and 3.1 are required**, including the attachments for Inclusion of Individuals Across the Lifespan, Inclusion of Women and Minorities, Recruitment and Retention Plan and Protection of Human Subjects.



- **Vertebrate Animals Information** – If your study involves live vertebrate animals, information on how you will use and care for the animals must be submitted or your application will be incomplete. Please follow the [PHS 398 instructions](#) for the completion of this section.

Applicants may also include additional documents as needed; however, they should *not* be used to circumvent the page limits of the Research Plan. Pertinent graphs, tables, and charts necessary for the understanding of the research project should be included within the body of the Research Plan. Examples of appropriate documentation for the Appendix may include: study timeline, staffing, research instruments, and informed consent or confidentiality forms.

### **Application Submission Details**

- Potential applicants are encouraged to submit a Letter of Intent via the [DC CFAR website](#).
- To be eligible to submit a full application, the [Pre-submission Form](#) must be submitted. The anticipated deadline is early September 2022.
- The final application should be emailed to the DC CFAR Senior Research Program Manager at [bnrobin@email.gwu.edu](mailto:bnrobin@email.gwu.edu). **The anticipated deadline is early November 2022. Late applications will not be accepted.**
- The final proposal should be submitted as a single, combined [PDF document](#) and include the following: 1) completed application form; 2) community investigator subrecipient form 3) letters of support; and 4) appropriate PHS Human Subject, Vertebrate Animals and/or Select Reagent forms, if applicable.
- DC CFAR staff cannot make changes to or alter applications in any way once submitted. If an application is submitted before the deadline and changes need to be made, the applicant must make those changes themselves and resubmit the entire application packet.
- The funding period is January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

### **Review of Applications**

- Applications will be reviewed by a DC CFAR Scientific Review Committee composed of both academic and community reviewers. DC CFAR CPC members cannot be reviewers of these applications. However, other community reviewers will be included. Non-conflicted reviewers will be selected for each proposal by the Developmental Core. Reviewers will assess the scientific merit of the applications using the following NIH criteria: overall impact, significance, investigators, innovation, approach, and environment. Community impact is an added criterion. For a detailed explanation of these criteria, please see [http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbirsttr\\_ReviewCriteria.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbirsttr_ReviewCriteria.htm). Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.
- The DC CFAR Developmental Core will make funding recommendations to the DC CFAR Executive Committee based largely on the scientific merit review while also considering important programmatic factors such as research focus area, strength of plan for future NIH funding, priority group status of PIs, proposed use of Core services, and potential for community impact.
- Each applicant should expect to receive a Summary Statement (aka “pink sheets”) summarizing the Review Committees’ feedback.

### **Funding Requirements**

- Ongoing consultation with a Primary Mentor is required throughout the project and thereafter, as appropriate, to support publishing results and submitting a subsequent NIH grant application. The Mentor must sign off on the submitted application, and if funded, the notice of award.
- Academic and community investigators are required to notify the Developmental Core in writing and receive approval if significant changes to the research plan or budget will be made.
- Academic and community investigators are required to notify the Developmental Core in writing if external funding becomes available for the same scope of work as is proposed for this pilot project, if funded. It is possible that pilot award funds may be rescinded.
- Funds may be rescinded if the project has not progressed substantially at the time of review of progress by the DC CFAR.
- If applicable, a copy of all IRB and/or IACUC approvals should be submitted to us as soon as possible upon receipt. As required by the NIH, the DC CFAR must have a current IRB and/or IACUC approval copy at all times. Renewal approvals and study closure forms should also be submitted to us in a timely manner.

- Projects may require additional NIH review before commencing if it: a) involves new ways of using known drugs, treatments, or devices; b) is deemed above minimal risk by the Institutional IRB; c) involves vulnerable populations (children, pregnant women, transgender, sex workers, prisoners, refugees, individual who are unable to provide informed consent, etc.); or d) involves behavioral interventions above minimal risk.
- A progress report (1-2 pages including figures) will be expected at six months from the award start date. This report should include: scientific progress to date, summary of DC CFAR Core services and mentoring consultations, a listing of any resulting publications, funding applications or collaborations, and, if applicable, a copy of your IRB and/or IACUC approval if not previously submitted. If the project extends beyond its original end date, additional interim progress reports may be required.
- A final report (three pages including figures) will be expected two months after the end of the funding period. This report should provide a summary of DC CFAR Core services and mentoring consultations since last progress report, and preliminary scientific findings and plans for follow-up, including publications, funding applications and/or future research.
- The award recipients will be asked to give a presentation of the proposed and completed research at seminars organized by the Developmental Core. The recipients may also be asked on other occasions to speak at or participate in other DC CFAR meetings and/or seminars.
- The award recipients will be responsible for completing brief outcome reports for the DC CFAR detailing any subsequent publications, funding awards, or collaborations resulting from this grant award for the next five years. The DC CFAR should be acknowledged in all above listed project outcomes whenever appropriate. Please note that any publications resulting from this award must cite the DC CFAR's NIH award number (P30AI117970) and must be compliant with NIH's [public access policy](#). Please visit our website for more information about how to acknowledge the DC CFAR.

### **Contact Information**

#### *Application and Content Questions*

Brandi Robinson  
 DC CFAR Senior Research Program Manager  
 Voicemail: 202-994-4730  
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#### *Budget and Institutional Routing Questions*

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