

Rollins School of Public Health Dean's Rapid COVID-19 Pilot Awards

Dear RSPH Colleagues:

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak and the potential for researchers at the Rollins School of Public Health to begin to make a significant impact on various aspects of the understanding, treatment, response, and education around this pandemic, the Associate Dean for Research has created a special opportunity rapid pilot grant program. These pilots will be open to all faculty of all ranks and tracks at RSPH.

We are soliciting innovative research proposals with short- or long-range objectives built on creative, potentially high-risk, and potentially transformative ideas. Proposals must demonstrate immediacy and feasibility to execute in less than **one year**. Potential areas for proposals include (but are not limited to) novel examinations or application of technologies to disease dynamics and transmission, novel approaches to prevention or intervention, opportunities for improvement to healthcare delivery, innovative approaches around communication or education aimed at addressing transmission, and novel studies of the impact of the pandemic on populations beyond the infection (i.e. mental health, psychosocial impacts). Studies can be observational, interventional, basic research, quantitative, or qualitative in nature. Preliminary data are not essential.

In recognition of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on populations beyond the infection, Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory (IPRCE) and Spark—The Rollins Program on Substance Use Disorders, have committed up to \$30k in additional funding for a pilot grant application that studies the intersection of COVID-19 and injury and violence prevention. Studies considering the effects of COVID-19 on overdose and overdose prevention efforts are eligible for this funding and highly encouraged. A project addressing how COVID-19 is influencing injury and injury prevention efforts and providing salary support to a graduate student or post-doc will be eligible for up to \$20k in additional funds. An additional \$10k is available from Spark if this project addresses overdose or overdose prevention.

These awards are not intended to support already established projects or minimal extensions of ongoing research programs. The project itself must be new, highly innovative, and as yet unfunded and unpublished, and should be designed in a way that it has the potential to soon lead to larger extramural grants.



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Pilot Awards can be awarded at the \$25,000 or \$50,000 level with an award term of one year. Additional funds for injury prevention can raise the level of one award by up to \$30,000. Applicants must present a credible plan describing how they will make substantial progress with one year of funding. Carryover of funds will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

The application deadline is 5 PM EST April 15, 2020, and funding is anticipated to begin May 15, 2020.

Eligibility

A principal investigator should be a full-time faculty (any track) at RSPH at the time of application submission and may only participate in one Pilot Award application, but collaborative, multi-disciplinary projects are encouraged. The proposal cannot be duplicative with other funding at the time of the award.

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Application

Applications will consist of:

1. **A cover sheet:** indicating the title of the project, faculty and departments involved and contact information.
2. **Letters of support:** from department chair committing time for the PI to work on this project.
3. **A research proposal:** containing four sections that succinctly describe the following:
 - o **Innovative study hypothesis and Significance** to be tested or goal to be achieved; why is the problem important; how are the proposed studies novel and not merely an extension of previously funded or published work; how is this project likely to be transformative to the pandemic?
 - o The **nature of the pilot data** that will be enabled by the proposed work; is this a new collaboration (encouraged); if not, applicants must clearly describe how the project represents a *new direction* and is not simply an extension of previously funded work.
 - o **Approach** to be pursued during the year of funding.
 - o **Expected impact** of the proposed studies beyond the initial funded phase, including what future work would be enabled. Applicants should specifically comment on types and timelines of future substantial grant proposals as well as expectations on other deliverables (manuscripts, tools, databases, etc) enabled by the pilot.

The research proposal section can be no more than three pages (minimum 11 pt Arial font, 1" margins, single spaced). References are not included in the three-page limit. Shorter applications are encouraged. Since these Pilot Awards are intended for new innovative projects, no preliminary data are required

4. **Budget and justification:** a minimal budget and justification that describes how the funding will be apportioned for any personnel, supplies and equipment. Salary support for investigators is discouraged, as the goal is to maximize research, and departments are requested to show commitment by supporting the time of faculty to do this research.
5. **Biosketches:** National Institutes of Health-style bio sketch of the PI and co-investigators that includes all current and pending support from all sponsored and non-sponsored sources. Each bio sketch is limited to five pages.
6. **IRB Approval:** If appropriate please include an IRB approval letter or comments on the status of the IRB review.

Each proposal must be submitted with the above four items compiled into a single PDF. The PDF file name format must be: Last name of Corresponding PI dot First Name of Corresponding PI dot pdf. For example: Sullivan.Mark.pdf

Rollins School of Public Health Dean’s Pilot and Innovation Grants- Second Round

Progress Reports & Return on Investment: The progress of the pilot and its return on investment (publications, patents, presentations, grant awards, etc.) will be tracked. Awardees are required to submit quarterly scientific reports demonstrating progress against aims on their submitted timeline -due at 3,6, 9,and 12 months (and 15, 18, 21,and 24 months in an NCE). Awardees are required to submit brief annual progress reports for 5 years following completion of the funded award to state progress on the following metrics: publications, external grant funding, and/or further projects stemming from the award, and replication of project at Emory or elsewhere.

Opportunities for Extramural Support: Your interest in this research area will be shared with the Rollins Foundations and Corporate Relations group to assist you in identifying potential sponsors for extramural support.

The proposals will be reviewed using an NIH scoring system.

Scoring will address weakness/strengths in each of the following four dimensions (see above):

1. Innovation
2. Investigator and mentorship
3. Approach
4. Expected impact, especially immediate potential for extramural grants

Criterion Strength	Score	Descriptor
High	1	Exceptional
	2	Outstanding
	3	Excellent
Medium	4	Very Good
	5	Good
	6	Satisfactory
Low	7	Fair
	8	Marginal
	9	Poor

Please send your proposals to Tina Dawson at tina.r.dawson@emory.edu not later than 5pm EST APRIL 15, 2020.