

NCSU Center for Human Health and the Environment 2015 Pilot Award Guidelines

I. Purpose

The overarching objective of the Center for Human Health and the Environment's Pilot Project Program (PPP) is to expand environmental health science research at NC State. Pilot project funding to Center members and other NC State investigators is awarded to collect preliminary data that will *support applications for external funding from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)* and other environmental health agencies. Consequently, the major emphasis of the PPP is on research into the effects, potential consequences and prevention of environmental exposures on human health. The PPP will support high quality basic, applied, clinical and public health research. The PPP will provide funding for individual, collaborative and multidisciplinary research aimed at understanding the adverse impacts of environmental factors on human health and disease. Multidisciplinary collaborations are encouraged but not required.

II. Funding

Individual awards will range upwards to \$25,000 for one year. The CHHE expects to fund up to 8 proposals. The final number and amount of awards will depend upon the quality of the proposals received, their relevance to the CHHE mission, and the available funding.

A budget appropriate for the ideas and work proposed will be part of the review criterion. Proposed budgets may be funded at levels lower than those requested. Expenditures will begin at specified start times but all appropriate animal and human subject approvals must be in place before spending can begin. Funds must be expended within the time limits set by the award notice. Final reporting on progress, significance, and impact is required (details to be provided upon award notification).

III. Eligibility

All CHHE members are eligible to apply. All NC State faculty and research scientists eligible to be principal investigators on NIH grants are also eligible to apply. This includes individuals with tenure-track and fixed term appointments whose primary affiliation for grant management is NCSU.

An investigator (acting as principal investigator) may submit only one proposal per round. Investigators can be co-investigators on multiple projects or principal investigator on one project and co-investigator on one or more other projects.

For review and reporting purposes, each award will have only one PI of record. Functionally, projects may have co-PIs.

IV. Application

Applications for the 2015 submission are due at 5 pm EDT on June 15, 2015. Grant information must be entered in PINS for NC State investigators and complete applications should be submitted electronically as a single pdf file to Dr. Jamie Bonner (jcbonner@ncsu.edu). To be eligible for review, each application must consist of:

- 1) Cover page with project title, investigator(s), degrees and academic ranks, department and college affiliations, and email addresses.
- 2) Project abstract of 250 words or less.
- 3) Research plan limited to three pages and including a) specific aims, b) significance, c) innovation, and d) approach.
- 4) Description of 250 words or less detailing how results from the pilot project will support an NIEHS grant application or an application to another environmental health agency.
- 5) References cited limited to one page.
- 6) Human and/or vertebrate animal sections following NIH guidelines (not required for submission but will be required if project is funded).
- 7) Budget using NIH Form Page 4: Detailed Budget for Initial Period
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>
- 8) NIH biosketches for all key personnel (can use old or new format)
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>
- 9) Letters of support if applicable.

Applications missing one or more of the required components will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Extensions of the deadline will not be granted.

Supplementary or additional materials will not be accepted after the submission deadline.

Use at least 0.5 inch margins, single or line spacing; and no smaller than 11 pt Times Roman or Arial font or its equivalent. Use of NIH forms is not required (except for the budget and biosketches). For example, you don't need to submit an NIH face page.

V. Review

Peer reviewers selected by CHHE leadership will evaluate and rank proposals. Depending on the number of applications received, the committee may triage applications to allow a thorough review of the most competitive proposals. Following peer review, the CHHE Pilot Project Program Advisory Committee will consider peer review rankings and the purpose of the CHHE pilot grant program to determine awards. Final decisions will be announced no later than August 15, 2015. Evaluation criteria are weighted to reward high quality, top-notch science that has potential for extramural funding, particularly from NIEHS. CHHE will use the NIH scoring system with some modifications. The five primary criteria are

described below as is the NIH scoring system that will be used.

Overall Score. Reviewers will provide an overall impact/priority score to reflect their assessment of the likelihood for the project to lead to an extramurally funded grant that will exert a sustained, powerful influence on the research field(s) involved, in consideration of the following review criteria, and additional review criteria (as applicable for the project proposed).

Scored Review Criteria. Reviewers will consider each of the review criteria below in the determination of scientific and technical merit, and give a separate score for each. An application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged likely to have major scientific impact. For example, a project that by its nature is not innovative may be essential to advance a field.

Significance Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in the field? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

Innovation Does the application challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense? Is a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions proposed?

Approach Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented?

Impact Impact includes the potential for future grants, particularly at the R01 level, as well as the potential to increase collaborations and to bring new and junior investigators into environmental health research.

Feasibility Given the facilities, budget, time, investigative team expertise and other resources, can the project's aims be accomplished in the time allotted?

Score	Descriptor	Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses
1	Exceptional	Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses
2	Outstanding	Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses
3	Excellent	Very strong with only some minor weaknesses
4	Very Good	Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses
5	Good	Strong but with at least one moderate weakness
6	Satisfactory	Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses
7	Fair	Some strengths but with at least one major weakness
8	Marginal	A few strengths and a few major weaknesses
9	Poor	Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses
<p>Minor Weakness: An easily addressable weakness that does not substantially lessen impact</p> <p>Moderate Weakness: A weakness that lessens impact</p> <p>Major Weakness: A weakness that severely limits impact</p>		

Impact	Score	Descriptor	Strengths/Weaknesses
High Impact	1	Exceptional	
	2	Outstanding	
	3	Excellent	
Moderate Impact	4	Very Good	
	5	Good	
	6	Satisfactory	
Low Impact	7	Fair	
	8	Marginal	
	9	Poor	

Non-numeric score options: NR = Not Recommended for Further Consideration, DF = Deferred, AB = Abstention, CF = Conflict, NP = Not Present, ND=Not Discussed

The intent of the review process is to fund the best applications as identified by the above criteria, but other factors may also affect final award decisions. Other review factors may include but are not limited to: the interdisciplinary nature of the research project; the applicant PI's overall past productivity; potential balance across colleges; and new/junior investigators in EHS.

Applicants (with exception of triaged applications) will receive a final score/ranking and a brief critique.

VI. Requirements

Funding must be used for a project that can be completed in the designated period of award. The earliest start date will be August 15, 2014 with 12 months to expend awarded dollars. No-cost extensions across fiscal years will be rare exceptions.

Funds may be budgeted for any of the standard categories and for purposes deemed necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project. However, there are several cases where restrictions and additional scrutiny apply.

- 1) Faculty salary. Tenure-track or fixed-term faculty investigator salaries will not be supported.
- 2) Travel. Requests for travel support should be limited to funds directly related to project performance.
- 3) Equipment. Requests for equipment should also be limited to funds directly related to project performance and will be scrutinized for need.

Unused funds will revert to the CHHE. All proposed expenses must conform to the general policies of NC State.

Prior to actual funding, all awarded projects that involve animals or human subjects must be reviewed and approved in accordance with the NCSU's general assurances and HIPAA. Reviews and approvals may be “Just in Time” and are not required for application. Projects involving human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Projects involving animals must be approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

A summary progress report shall be submitted within three months after the end date of support. The summary progress report should assess the project's initial statement of innovation and impact.

To assess the longer-term impact, principal investigators may be asked to provide a summary progress report update for up to two years after the end of the funding.

Awardees will to be expected to present their results at the CHHE annual retreat.

All manuscripts, abstracts, posters, and presentations should acknowledge support from the CHHE.

For more information contact Pilot Project Program Leader;
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