

COBRE Proposal Criteria

NIH Submission Deadline: January 24, 2018

<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-16-415.html>

Objectives of the COBRE Program

- strengthen an institution's biomedical research infrastructure through the establishment of a thematic multi-disciplinary center (specify how the proposed COBRE aligns with UNMC's strategic research plan)
- enhance the ability of investigators to compete independently for complementary NIH individual research grant or other external peer-reviewed support.

The COBRE program seeks to promote the initiation and development or expansion of unique, innovative state-of-the-art biomedical and behavioral research centers at institutions in IDeA-eligible states. The application must have a thematic scientific focus in a specific research area and may use basic, clinical, and/or translational research approaches, including community engagement and outreach research, to attain the goals of the proposed center. The center is intended to support investigators from several complementary disciplines.

Application Components

- Overall (required)
 - Administrative Core (required)
 - Research Cores (optional)
- Research Projects (required) – minimum of 3, maximum of 5
- Alteration and Renovation (optional)

Qualifications and Responsibilities of the PI/PD (submit NIH Biosketch)

- Established biomedical or behavioral research scientist with an active research laboratory (R01, P01 funding preferred)
- Theme-relevant peer-reviewed funding (either NIH, NSF or other Federal or non-Federal investigator-initiated support)
- Administrative leadership and mentoring experience to effectively carry out program objectives and meet goals
- A minimum time commitment of 3 person months is required; up to 6 person months be supported for mentoring and administrative oversight of the COBRE.
- Not eligible for research project support from the COBRE

Qualifications and Responsibilities of Junior Investigators (submit NIH Biosketch)

- Must hold a faculty appointment and commit to 6 person months annually
- Must not have and not previously had an external, peer-reviewed RPG or PPG from either a Federal or non-Federal source that names that investigator as the PD/PI; **or** may be an established investigator who is making a significant change to his/her career.
- Each junior investigator should have at least one mentor
- Each must submit an RPG application by the end of year two.

Characteristics of Overall Research Plan

- Justifies support of a thematic multi-disciplinary COBRE program for five years.
- Describes the unique research opportunities available to junior investigators. (demonstrate institutional commitment)
- Include descriptions of 3 to 5 individual research projects that stand alone but share a common thematic scientific focus; each to be led by a single junior investigator.
- Describes a strategy for coordination cooperation among research project investigators and collaborating institutions to maintain a significant and productive research program.
- Describes how existing instrumentation will be used to develop a nationally competitive biomedical research program.

- Describes plans for using equipment/instruments supported by existing COBRE or INBRE awards.
- Describes and justifies the proposed individual research projects and core service facilities that will contribute to the center.
- Describes how each junior investigator will contribute to establishment of a multi-disciplinary research center.

Application Review and Selection Criteria

Significance:

- Does this study address an important problem or a critical barrier?
- If the aims of the application are achieved, how will scientific knowledge or clinical practice be advanced?
- What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field?

Investigators:

- Are the investigators appropriately trained and well suited to carry out this work?
- Is the work proposed appropriate to the experience level of the principal investigator and other researchers?
- Does the investigative team bring complementary and integrated expertise to the project?
- Does the PI/PD possess the qualifications and skills to provide scientific and administrative leadership as well as implement and manage an effective mentoring plan?

Innovation:

- Does the project challenge existing research or clinical practice paradigms by using novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation or interventions?
- Are the concepts, approaches or methods, 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, conceptual or clinical framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, well reasoned, and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the center?
- Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Are benchmarks for success presented?
- For studies with human subjects, is there a plan for protection of human subjects from risks; are inclusion and exclusion criteria justified with respect to scientific goals and proposed research strategy?

Environment:

- Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success?
- Are the institutional support, equipment and other available physical resources adequate for the project?
- Will the project benefit from unique environmental features (core facilities, subject populations, collaborations?)
- Do the proposed studies benefit from unique features of the scientific environment, or subject populations, or employ useful collaborative arrangements?
- Is there evidence of institutional support to resources and infrastructure?
- Does the application describe how the COBRE will improve facilities or make available new and collaborative resources?

Effectiveness in Training and Promoting Junior Investigators:

- Are plans to direct and manage the research training, career development and mentoring of junior investigators well-described and will these plans be effective in transitioning these investigators toward independent status?
- What is the evidence for institutional commitment to junior investigators?
- If the PI plans to recruit new faculty to the center, are these plans suitable and consistent with the effective growth and development of the center?

Scientific and Technical Merit of the Individual Research Projects:

- Each project will receive an overall impact score based on ‘significance, investigator, innovation, approach, and environment.
- Are the projects related to and consistent with the overall goals of the center?

Research Core Facilities:

- Is there adequate oversight and resources to maintain the facilities to carry out the program objectives?
- Do the core resources and facilities serve the scientific needs of the individual research projects?
- Are the personnel who staff the facilities well qualified?