**Cognitive Neuroscience of Development and Aging (CONDA) Center**

**REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PROJECT GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Cognitive Neuroscience of Development and Aging (CONDA) Center is pleased to announce an opportunity for Research Project funding through an NIH/NIGMS grant. The CONDA Center is a Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (CoBRE) that focuses on cognitive neuroscience and strives to support neuroscience research in the Omaha region.

The goal of the Research Projects Program is to provide support to junior investigators to develop independent research program and acquire the preliminary data necessary to apply for and obtain external federal funding. Successful applicants will receive up to $200,000 in direct costs per year for 2-3 years, as well as access to the resources and equipment of the Center for professional development and project support. Applicants must be able to devote 0.5 FTE to the project. We anticipate funding one Research Projects through this RFA in 2021.

**Eligibility and Eligible Institutions:** This current RFA is limited to full-time faculty at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Individuals must be eligible to apply for NIH funds. Individuals currently receiving research project funds from other IDeA mechanisms (INBRE, COBRE, CTR) are *not* eligible to apply. Applicants need to be in a tenure-leading position at rank of Assistant Professor or higher and not have or previously had an external, peer-reviewed RPG or Program Project Grant (PPG) from either a Federal or non-Federal source that names that investigator as the PD/PI (e.g. an R01 or the equivalent).

**Relevant Areas of Research:** This mechanism aims to support innovative research that focuses on cognitive neuroscience which leads to the development of the recipient into an independent, NIH-funded scientist. For this RFA we are specifically interested in research projects that use translational animal models and will perform neuroimaging and behavioral assessment. Examples of such Research Projects that would be of high interest to the CONDA Center include, but are not limited, to the below:

* Novel neuroimaging studies of models of Alzheimer’s disease or neurodegenerative diseases
* Studies of effects of altered brain activity (i.e. seizures) on the development of neurocognitive impairments
* Studies examining the impact of stress on brain structure and/or function in development and aging.
* Neural mechanisms of psychiatric disease and/or psychiatric symptoms in other diseases
* Neuroimaging studies of neurodevelopmental disorders including Down Syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders.
* Impact of neuroinflammation on brain structure and function across the lifespan.

Priority will be given to those projects that are most likely to lead to successful extramural funding. Applications not relevant to the Center’s themes (i.e., cognitive neuroscience, neuroimaging, neurocognitive disorders, development, and/or aging), will be returned without review.

For questions pertaining to whether your research would qualify for Center support, please contact Jenny Brady, jenny.brady@unmc.edu

**Application Deadline**: 5pm CST on February 15, 2021

**Notification of Selection:** March 15, 2021

**Application Submission Process**

Applications should use standard NIH formatting requirements (½ inch margins, Arial size 11 font). The application should be submitted in a PDF format and sent by email to jenny.brady@unmc.edu, with “CONDA Center Research Project Application” in the subject line. **Applications must be received by 5pm CST on February 15th, 2021**. Late applications will not be accepted. Funding for subsequent years (if applicable) is contingent on favorable review by the CONDA Center Leadership Team. Renewal decisions will be based on project progress, scientific integrity and rigor, potential for Center synergy, and potential for successful external funding.

***The Application must include the following components:***

1. NIH format Biosketch for applicant and any other key personnel (if applicable).
2. NIH Face Page (https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html). This needs to be signed by your institutional official and all fields on the NIH Face Page must be complete and correct. Please leave dates of proposed period of support blank.
3. Project summary (limited to 30 lines or less of text, ½ inch margins, Arial size 11)
4. Research Plan: limited to **seven pages in total** (sections included in italics)
   1. *Specific Aim(s) (one page maximum, but can be shorter)*
   2. *Research Strategy*
      1. *Significance: a) the rigor of prior research -- the strengths and weaknesses of the research that is used to form the basis for the proposed research question.*
      2. *Innovation*
      3. *Approach: Can include preliminary data, although not required. Experimental design, including steps taken to ensure scientific rigor (robust and unbiased experimental design, sample, measures, procedures, analysis, interpretation and reporting of results, explained as appropriate for a pilot project) and consideration of key biological variables if applicable (please see* [*http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-011.html).*](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-011.html))
      4. *Plans for extramural funding applications (e.g. to NIH or other agencies, please specify) upon successful completion of this project.*
   3. References (excluded from 5 page limit)
5. Budget (use attached budget template; if this is a 2 year project, please complete a budget for each year)

6. Budget Justification

Application Review**:** All applications will be sent to external experts in the field for review. Reviewers will use the NIH review criteria (Significance, Investigator(s), Innovation, Approach, and Environment) and scoring system. Up to three reviewers will provide critiques on each application. In addition to the Overall Score, Reviewers will be asked to comment on the application topic’s relevance to the CONDA Center mission and the potential for advancing cognitive neuroscience. The CONDA Center Leadership team will review rankings and make recommendations for funding based on rank and fit with the Center’s themes. These rankings will be forwarded to the External Advisory Committee and NIGMS for Final Approval. Projects selected for funding will be notified the March 15th, 2021 and required to obtain all regulatory approvals before April 15th, 2021.

**Special Considerations, Institutional Approvals, and Reporting**

Budget Restrictions: A minimum of 50% FTE is required for the Research Project Leader. Student/post-doctoral salary/wages are permissible. Wages for technical personnel are permissible. Any equipment (>$5,000 per item) and/or computer purchases must be well-justified. Renovation and/or Honorariums are not allowed. Travel to locations outside of the US & Canada is not allowed.

Indirect Costs (F&A): Indirect costs associated with Research Project grant will be awarded to the investigator’s institution for NIH-funded pilots. *Please work with your Sponsored Programs office to ensure that your proposal budget includes your institution’s correct F&A rate.*

Clinical Trials: Not allowed

Regulatory Approvals: If your project includes vertebrate animals, final IACUC approval from your home institution is required before the project can be sent for NIGMS approval and before funds can be released. If your project includes human subjects, final IRB approval from your home institution is required before the project can be sent for NIGMS approval and before funds can be released. Protocols must be submitted to IACUC for approval within 10 days of notification of funding and **final** approval must be sent to us within 30 days (before April 15, 2020).

Additional Requirements: Research Project Leaders (RPLs) must select an academic mentor (internal) and a technical mentor, which can be external, based on their specific career guidance and research needs. The CONDA Center will compensate each at the rate of 0.5 months FTE from separate funds. RPLs must participate in a monthly Research Development Forum with the center Director and mentors to discuss progress. RPL must also submit a mini “progress report,” on a quarterly basis which will list the status of manuscripts and grants and indicate their current uncommitted project budget. A presentation of progress will also be required at the yearly External Advisory Committee meeting. RPL will be expected to submit an investigator-initiated RPG application by the end of two years of COBRE support. Research Project grant recipient must participate in Center Enhancement and Programmatic Activities (e.g., CONDA Seminar series, retreats).