ANNOUNCEMENT

Environmental Health Research Pilot Project Grants

The Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center (SCEHSC) was established in 1996 to further the understanding of how environmental factors contribute to health and disease, as well as how host factors (genetic and other) influence adverse effects. The SCEHSC awards one-year pilot projects to support investigators with the opportunity of collecting preliminary data to establish the feasibility of a research project and/or to validate the utility of specific procedures or techniques. The goal of this program is to advance environmental health research and to enable investigators to seek external (especially NIEHS) funding to pursue larger scale projects.

The program anticipates having approximately $125,000 to support up to five one-year projects. Budgets of up to $35,000 are appropriate, but under exceptional circumstances projects with larger budgets will be considered. Graduate students supported by a mentor are eligible to apply for smaller amounts of funding for their research projects, in the range of $5,000-10,000. Projects are required to have clear aims and a scope that could reasonably be accomplished within the proposed budget and timeline. Please note that applicants whose projects are selected for funding will have one year to spend their award. There will be no carry-over of funds.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:
1. Applicant must be one of the following:
   a. USC or UCLA faculty
   b. USC or UCLA graduate student/post-doctoral researcher with a faculty sponsor.
2. Applicants and faculty sponsors need not be SCEHSC members. Young investigators are particularly encouraged to apply, and with all other factors equal, will receive funding priority.
3. No sign-off sheet required but all investigators must read and approve of the project submission.

LETTER OF INTENT:
By Monday, November 17, 2008, applicants should submit a one-page Letter of Intent with an official title describing their proposed project; projects should have a clear environmental-health emphasis. This will allow enough time to select appropriate reviewers for the forthcoming applications. Please e-mail the Letter of Intent to Ashley Nielsen at anielsen@usc.edu.

APPLICATION:
By Wednesday, December 3, 2008 (no exceptions), applicants should submit their PDF applications electronically on CD to Ashley Nielsen, University of Southern California, 1540 Alcazar Street, CHP 236, Los Angeles, CA 90033, or email to anielsen@usc.edu. Please no paper copies. Applications should include the following, in this order:

1. Brief abstract of the proposal
2. A list of clear and reasonable specific aims with regard to the proposed budget
3. Description of project including background, study design, and methods (3-5 pages, single-spaced, not including references, budget or biosketches)
4. Clear description of how an expansion of the project (and all of the possible specific aims) will lead to an R01 (or equivalent) submission
5. Electronic correspondence from participating SCEHSC facility cores. If facility cores are not used, justification must be provided:
   a. Exposure Assessment and GIS Facility Core (Director: William Hinds, ScD, whinds@ucla.edu)
   b. Biostatistics Facility Core (Director: Jim Gauderman, PhD, jimg@usc.edu)
   c. Molecular Biology Facility Core (Director: Louis Dubeau, MD, PhD, ldubeau@usc.edu)
6. Budget (Proposals submitted from non-USC institutions: Applicants may budget up to $35,000 for direct costs. Indirect (F&A) costs should be listed separately from direct costs.)
7. Budget justification
8. NIH-Format Biosketches for the PI and co-investigators

Note: Appendices are not allowed
**REPORTING REQUIREMENT:**

All pilot project grantees are required to submit an **Annual Progress Report by October 15th each year.** This is crucial to maintain environmental health research funding in Southern California. Please include the following information:

- Progress (A short narrative of progress, findings, etc. will suffice);
- Positive outcomes, if any;
- Publications directly related to findings from project;
- Grants directly associated with project results, including funding period and grant amount.

In addition, pilot project grantees will be expected to present research results at a Center seminar.

**HUMAN SUBJECTS/ANIMAL SUBJECTS:**

Upon funding all projects involving human/animal subject research will be required to obtain IRB/IACUC approval from their respective university.

**SCEHSC FACILITY CORES:**

One of the Center’s goals is to encourage interaction between new investigators and Center cores and members. The collaboration between the applicant and the facility cores will increase and strengthen productivity, generate new ideas or approaches, and promote creative, innovative and high-quality research. Therefore, usage of facility cores is strongly recommended. Please contact the directors of each facility core to determine how the core could benefit your project if applicable.

**The Exposure Assessment and GIS Facility Core** consists of two units: The Field Operations/GIS Unit and the Laboratory Analysis/Aerosols Science Unit. Together, these units provide comprehensive chemical analysis of environmental and tissue samples; analytical services for air pollution and environmental studies; assistance for exposure assessment, sampling and field studies; expertise in the area of aerosol properties and measurement; and expertise in geographical information sciences (GIS).

**The Molecular Biology Facility Core** provides an environment and the expertise needed to apply molecular biological methods to new and existing studies. It also has the capacity to process and store samples collected and to perform molecular biological tests within or outside the MBSPSC.

**The Biostatistics Facility Core** provides statistical support for planned and ongoing research projects.

**REVIEW CRITERIA:**

A. Applications will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary panel of scientists. Awardees will be selected following the review, and **funding will begin April 1, 2009.** The major review criteria are:

1. Relevance to environmental health and potential to identify solutions to environmental-health problems.
2. Scientific quality.
4. Likelihood that the project will lead to R01 or other external funding. (It should be stated explicitly in the proposal how the pilot work might lead to more extensive research and to external funding).
5. Novelty of ideas.

B. Priority will be given to projects that are thematically consistent with SCEHSC research initiatives:

- Pathway Approaches Linking Environment, Genetics and Health Outcomes
- Environmental Epigenomics and Transcriptional Regulation
- Obesity and the Built Environment
- Air Pollution and Cardiovascular Outcomes
- Environmental Contribution to Neurological Diseases
- Environmental Contributions to Reproductive Dysfunction and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes
- New Approaches to Characterize Air Pollution and Traffic Exposure
- UVR in Health and Disease
- Fetal Origins of Health and Disease
- Global Environmental Health

For more information, contact at (323) 442-1096 or visit the Center’s Website at: [http://hydra.usc.edu/scehsc/default.asp](http://hydra.usc.edu/scehsc/default.asp)

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