

UC/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC) Pilot Research Program

Application Instructions (2026-2027)

DEADLINES

Full Applications Due: November 2, 2026 (before 8 am)

Notification of Awards Made: February 2027 (date TBD)

Award Dates: March 1, 2027 – February 29, 2028

For questions regarding these instructions, please contact Jennifer Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)

1. **Deadlines:** All deadlines are final.
2. **Funding Pools:** Funding for this program is derived from the UCAC. We expect to fund up to two awards, with a maximum of \$25,000/ea. in FY27. To be eligible for these funds, the Principal Investigator on the application must either hold a **full-time faculty appointment at UC College of Medicine or be employed as a resident, clinical fellow, or post-doctoral fellow at UC** (or by permission of the UCAC director) **and the project must be conducted in a UC CoM laboratory**. Any resulting application for funding to an outside agency must be made through UC. Co-investigators can be from other UC Colleges or affiliated entities, such as Cincinnati Children's or the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center.
3. **Background:** This program seeks to support the development of studies with potential for future extramural funding and is designed to enhance new or current faculty research programs. A research study is responsive to the RFA if it satisfies one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. Uses new approaches or discoveries to address relevant problems in the field of addiction;
 - ii. Contributes critical experiments or data to an existing research program that will enhance external funding success;
 - iii. Brings interdisciplinary expertise to initiate a new addiction research direction for the PI;
 - iv. Generates preliminary feasibility data in support of mentored award applications (e.g., K01, K23, K99/R00 mechanisms) or a Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) application;
 - v. Includes a clear plan for recruitment of human subjects (clinical proposals)

Other proposed initiatives will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

4. **Project priorities:** To be considered, proposals need to focus on important problems in the field of addiction. A wide spectrum of projects can be considered relevant. Priority will be given to those projects that carry the highest potential for scientific contributions and are most likely to lead to successful application for extramural funding. Projects with well-developed concepts and innovative ideas requiring additional data for an extramural proposal submission, particularly if an NIH study section requested such data, will be given high priority. The strategy for advancing the research project as an extramural research grant or mentored training award submission should be clearly indicated.
5. **Collaborations:** The UCAC pilot program encourages applications that include interactions between basic scientists and clinicians to foster the development of translational investigations for addiction. In addition, interdisciplinary studies and studies that include participation of basic scientists or clinical researchers from other UC colleges and affiliates are encouraged.
6. **Eligibility:** Applications will be accepted from any full-time faculty member, resident, clinical fellow, or post-doctoral scholar whose appointment is at the University of Cincinnati **College of Medicine**. Any resulting application for funding to an outside agency must be submitted from UC. **Investigators at CCHMC are not eligible for submission as PIs but can be Co-Is on proposals**. Collaborations among investigators spanning disciplines and programs are encouraged.

Applications from residents, fellows or post-doctoral scholars should include the trainee's prospective K-award mentor as a co-I. Faculty with substantial start-up packages should consult with the UCAC director to confirm eligibility for the program. **Current UCAC awardees are not eligible.**

7. **Letters of support:** For residents, clinical fellows or post-doctoral fellows, a letter from the supervisor/Chair should be included as part of the application. This letter should clearly state that in the event of an award, the applicant will have appropriate release time dedicated to the project (25% is suggested for most projects). In addition, a letter of support from the applicant's mentor should be included, outlining the applicant's qualifications, the mentor's commitment to the applicant and resources available for completion of the project (e.g., equipment, lab space, infrastructure). For full-time clinical faculty, a letter from the supervisor/Chair should be included in the application. This letter should clearly state that in the event of an award, the applicant will receive department-supported dedicated time to complete the project (25% is suggested for most projects).
8. **Overview of Review Process:** The review of applications is performed in two phases: (1) Application/Scientific Review, and (2) Administrative Review. During the first phase, the 5-page applications will be reviewed by 2-3 independent scientific reviewers. Applicant rankings will be reviewed by the UCGNI-NRC-UCAC Research Committee, and the cut-off for awards will be determined. Critiques from the first phase of the review will be provided to the applicants after awards are announced.
9. **IRB and IACUC:** If applicable, applicants must have already submitted or have received IRB or IACUC approval. Applicants who have not yet submitted for IRB or IACUC approval are not eligible. These awards are intended to provide funding for a year and the lack of such approval can significantly delay the start of the proposed studies.
10. **Composition of Applications:** Those wishing to submit an application please email Jennifer Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) for an application packet which will include standard PHS 398 forms for budget, biosketch and other support, along with instructions on how to upload applications to the submission and review portal (CCAPS). **Applications should follow NIH formatting guidelines for font size, margins, and use of AI and be submitted as 1 PDF file and include:**

1. Face page (check all appropriate IBC, IACUC, IRB, or Radiation Safety approvals or indicate pending if submitted)
2. Budget (use form provided) – **See funding restrictions below**
3. Budget justification
4. Biosketch(es) (include PI and co-investigators; use current PHS format)
5. Other support (use current PHS format)
6. Hypothesis and Specific Aims*
7. Background and Significance*
8. Research Design and Methods*
9. Statements regarding human subjects and/or animals
10. Literature cited
11. Letters of support (for residents, research fellows and post-doctoral fellows)
12. Prior UCAC Pilot Awardees must provide a 1-page progress summary
13. The funding opportunities for which the PI plans to apply and a brief description of how the research is responsive to the funding opportunity (maximum 1 page)

*** NOTE: SECTIONS 6-8 (Hypothesis and Specific Aims, Background & Significance, Research Design and Methods) MUST NOT EXCEED 5 PAGES.**

11. Funding Restrictions:

- Funds may not be used to support PI/faculty salaries, travel, meetings, food expenses, capital purchases, or publication costs. UC College of Medicine trainee and staff salaries are permitted.
- Funds may be used to cover core services at CCHMC, if these services are not available at UC. One must outline the specific need for service and provide documentation that the services do not exist at UC in the budget justification.
- Subcontracts to outside universities are not permitted nor are fees for services. Money allocated for this internal funding mechanism cannot support outside institutions.

- Funds are not permissible to faculty and staff outside of UC College of Medicine.

Post Award: All UCAC Awardees are required to:

1. Routinely monitor their account spending to ensure spending aligns with budget justification.
2. Correct any overspending within 30 days of the end of the project.
3. Submit a UCAC progress report within 30 days of the end of the project period (form available from Jennifer Rowe -roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) and other updates as requested during the project
4. Provide a brief listing of outcomes (e.g., funded grants, publications, etc.) one year after the end of the project (form available from Jennifer Rowe -roweji@ucmail.uc.edu).

FAQ on Funding Restrictions:

Are core services at CCHMC an allowable expense?

- Yes, if the core services are not available at UC. Applicants should outline the specific need for service and provide documentation that this does not exist at UC in the budget justification.

As part of my project, I would like to pay my collaborator's graduate student for services. My collaborator does not work at UC. Is this allowed?

- No, funds are not permissible to faculty and staff outside of UC College of Medicine.

Is the purchase of new instrumentation allowed?

- No, capital purchases are not permitted.

Can I pay part of a UC faculty's salary?

- No, faculty salaries are not permitted. If this person is affiliated with a Core, one should work through the Core to receive services.

I would like to work with an outside institution. Is this permitted?

- Subcontracts to outside universities are not permitted nor are fees for services. Money allocated for this internal funding mechanism cannot support outside institutions.

Can an exception be made to cover my travel expenses?

- No.

Applicants should be sure that their budget contains only allowable expenses. Applications that include non-allowable expenses will not be considered or scored. Contact Jennifer Rowe at roweji@ucmail.uc.edu if you have questions.