Center of Biomedical Research Excellence Pilot Projects
Discovery of Chemical Probes and Therapeutic Leads, NIH NIGMS P30GM159572

Pilot project funding is available through the NIH NIGMS Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) on Discovery of Chemical Probes and Therapeutic Leads.

Applications are invited for research projects that advance the development and application of chemical tools and approaches to investigate biological systems and address unmet medical needs. Areas of focus include:
• Fundamental studies using chemical biology or probe development approaches to illuminate pathways or study cellular behavior and processes.
• Development and application of chemical and pharmacological methods to identify and manipulate biological targets or cellular processes relevant to human disease.
• Fundamental methods for synthesis or biosynthesis of molecules that may contribute to advances in biology, medicine, and biotechnology.
• Approaches to diagnostics and imaging that integrate the use of chemical probes or chemical reactivity.
• Approaches, materials, and technologies for enabling the discovery of new drugs or drug targets.

Further details on the center and core facilities can be found at: http://sites.udel.edu/cobrediscovery/

Pilot projects are encouraged to utilize COBRE-supported core facilities. The COBRE supports major campus core facilities, including proteomics, mass spectrometry, NMR spectroscopy, and the synthetic chemistry core. Proposals that will utilize the synthetic chemistry core are encouraged to contact the Core Director Dr. Yinzhi Fang (yinzhif@udel.edu) to discuss synthetic feasibility and timeline.

Pilot projects are for one year and may be proposed by a single PI or by multiple PIs. Pilot proposals will be evaluated based on their scientific merit, fit to the scientific and human health theme of the Discovery of Chemical Probes and Therapeutic Leads grant and the potential of the pilot project to lead to major, independent NIH funding.

Timeline
• Letter of intent: An email should be sent electronically to Dawn Yasik (dyasik@udel.edu) by noon on September 19, 2025. The letter of intent should contain (1) Title, (2) abstract and (3) the names, affiliations and email addresses of at least 4 potential **external** reviewers, as well as names and affiliations of anyone you wish to exclude as reviewers. Additionally, indicate the name of the NIH institute and study section(s) most closely aligned with your proposal. It is recommended to use NIH's Assistance Reference Tool to help match proposal topics to study sections: https://art.csr.nih.gov/ART/selection.jsp
• Proposals should be submitted electronically to Dawn Yasik (dyasik@udel.edu) as a *single PDF document* by noon on Monday October 6, 2025. The file name should include last and first name of the PI in the format: "Pilot_Project_LASTNAME_FIRSTNAME.pdf".
• Funding decisions are expected to be made in December 2025, with funding anticipated to commence on February 1, 2026.

Budget
Budgetary materials are *NOT* required at the time of submission. Awards will be $70,000 per year (direct costs). A typical pilot grant will support postdocs or graduate students, as well as provide appropriate amounts for supplies, travel, and other related expenses. Pilot proposals may request an additional $5,000 (direct costs) for COBRE-supported core facility usage, bringing the total possible request to $75,000 in direct costs. The pilot project leader is required to devote at least one person-month of effort to the pilot project.

Eligibility

Independent investigators of all ranks are eligible. Applications from Early-Stage Investigators and New Investigators are encouraged. Investigators who have active research project or pilot project support from other IDeA mechanisms (e.g., Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence [COBRE], Delaware INBRE, Center for Translational Research [CTR]) are not eligible for simultaneous COBRE Pilot Project funding. Investigators with MIRA awards are also not eligible for simultaneous COBRE Pilot Project funding.

Any questions about eligibility should be directed to Joseph Fox (jmfox@udel.edu) with copy to Dawn Yasik (dyasik@udel.edu).

Review

Applications will be evaluated according to NIH review criteria for significance, innovation, approach, investigator expertise, and potential to advance the goals of this NIH-funded center.

Format

Submit **a single PDF** that includes the following sections and follows general guidance of NIH SF424 (R&R):
Each proposal should include the following sections:

- NIH Face Page, Page 1 continued, and Form Page 2.
- Specific Aims (1 page) should include a statement outlining the relevance of the proposed research to the center, and a description of how the pilot funding will facilitate future submission of NIH applications (e.g. R01, R35). Indicate the name of the NIH institute and study section(s) most closely aligned with your proposal.
- Research Plan (6 pages maximum, excluding references) in NIH format.
- References (no page limit)
- Biographical Sketch(es) (NIH format) for Pilot Project PI, and key investigators (if any). It is not necessary to include biographical sketches for students or postdoctoral researchers. The PI should indicate in the Biosketch personal statement if they qualify as an NIH Early-Stage Investigator (ESI) or New Investigator (NI).
- Other Support document (NIH Format) listing active grants and pending grant applications
- If the proposed research involves Human Subjects, include:
  - Current PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form
  - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval
  - Human Subjects Education Certification (required even when research is exempt)
- If the proposed research involves Clinical Trials, include:
  - Current PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information Form
  - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval
  - Documentation of Investigational New Drug (IND)/Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) status for studies that are subject to FDA regulation Human Subjects Education Certification and Good Clinical Practice (GCP) Training Certification
  - For all clinical trials, in addition to the information requested in Section 3.3 of the PHS Human Subjects and Clinical Trials Information form: The awardee institution will provide NIGMS with a statement detailing the risks to study participants, the frequency of monitoring of clinical trial data and participant safety, and the name(s) of the responsible party/parties for regulatory and legal compliance, adverse event reporting, and clinicaltrials.gov registration and results reporting.
- If the proposed project involves Vertebrate Animals, include:
  - IACUC approval
  - Vertebrate Animal Section

Questions: Applicants are encouraged contact the Program Director, Joe Fox (jmfox@udel.edu) with cc to Dawn Yasik (dyasik@udel.edu), with any questions regarding alignment or appropriateness of proposal ideas or budgets.