

KU NIH COBRE-PSF — Request for Applications



Letter of Intent required by: Feb. 19, 2018

Applications due: April 2, 2018

Anticipated Decision Date: June 1, 2018

Anticipated Start Date: July 1, 2018*

*see Note 2, page 5

KU NIH Center of Biomedical Research Excellence in Protein Structure and Function

(<http://psf.cobre.ku.edu>)

SUMMARY: The KU NIH COBRE Center in Protein Structure and Function provides participating investigators with research support, mentoring and access to Core Lab Services in a collegial, collaborative atmosphere. We anticipate being able to support up to **five (5) new one-year Pilot Projects** at up to \$50,000 direct costs starting July 1, 2018. Applications must describe a pilot-type research project that fits well with the scientific theme of our Center and that will make good use of one or more Core Labs at KU. This competition is open to all full time, tenure-track, or tenured faculty at KU-L, KSU, WSU or KUMC whose research embraces Protein Structure and Function. We hope to support other meritorious proposals to the maximum extent possible by making additional smaller awards that emphasize the core lab aspects of the project. Consideration for this type of funding will be automatic with the submission of a full pilot project application.

1. Introduction.

1.1. **The COBRE program** is an initiative of NIH-NIGMS. COBRE Centers are intended to:

- Focus on a single research area (e.g., Protein Structure and Function);
- Augment and strengthen biomedical faculty research capability;
- Provide flexible support to build research capacity;
- Enhance research infrastructure through Core Labs;
- Encourage collaborative research and research grant applications;
- Foster health-related research.

The RFA for Phase III COBRE centers may be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-13-238.html>. This RFA states that "The Pilot Grants Program must be open to investigators from a variety of disciplines and specialties with research interests in the scientific theme of the COBRE" and "The COBRE must have a mechanism for soliciting and awarding pilot research projects that allows junior or senior investigators to generate preliminary data for submission of grant applications, develop new technologies, and/or achieve other goals as defined by the PD/PI that will better position the institution to conduct biomedical research." To this end, any qualified investigator is eligible to participate as a pilot project PI.

1.2. **COBRE Pilot Project Leaders** must be full time, tenure-track, or tenured faculty who are developing a promising new line of research that incorporates a significant emphasis on protein structure and function, and that will take advantage of both the Center's Core Labs and the interactivity among Center participants. Pilot Project Leaders may be junior faculty, former COBRE awardees, or more established faculty researchers whose active participation will strengthen the Center overall. Pilot Project Leaders will receive project support of up to \$50,000 per year (direct costs). **Pilot projects are intended to be completed within one year. Since NIH funding for the Center ends July 1, 2019, there will be no renewals or extensions of funded projects.**

Research areas eligible for support. Successful proposals will incorporate one or more of the following approaches in significant depth:

- Protein structure (physical methods, X-ray, NMR, etc.);
- Binding interactions (small ligands, other proteins, RNA, DNA, etc.);
- Catalysis (mechanistic studies, inhibition);
- Post-translational modifications (including turnover), proteomics, protein mass spectrometry (<https://msg.ku.edu/analytics-proteomics-lab>);
- Protein-based High-throughput Screening (<http://hts.ku.edu>) or Fragment Library Screening (<http://psf.cobre.ku.edu/cores/fragment>);
- Computational studies of protein structure and function (when combined with experimental studies).

1.3. Criteria for evaluation of COBRE applications. The basic criteria for NIH grant review may be found at <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/peer.htm>.

Additional COBRE-specific review criteria include:

- Strength of the science, and the quality and clarity of its presentation;
- Likelihood of the project becoming competitive for independent R01 funding;
- Likelihood of getting a publishable result within the one-year time frame;
- Relevance to the COBRE theme of protein structure and function (see above);
- A clear, detailed plan for utilization of one or more COBRE-PSF Core Labs (or, when justified, another relevant Core Lab at KU);
- Background, experience and career status of the applicant;
- Track record of past research, research grant applications, and research funding.

1.4. General Terms and Conditions of COBRE-PSF Pilot Project Awards.

1. Projects must make significant use of at least one Core Lab. **Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with the appropriate Core Lab Director(s) before applying.**
2. For Pilot Projects, PI or Co-I summer salary is limited to a **maximum of one person-month**. Funds may be used for consumable supplies, services or small laboratory hardware, but not for equipment (i.e. items costing > \$5000). Personnel costs are allowable but preference will be given to applications that name specific individuals who are assured to be present on-site, eligible to work and ready to begin no later than July 1, 2018. Personnel costs may not be used to support first-year graduate students. Travel costs are limited to essential research-related travel and travel to COBRE meetings when necessary. Tuition costs are allowable as per standard institutional policies.
3. Investigators who receive COBRE pilot project support are **REQUIRED to participate as fully as possible** in the regular monthly research meetings of the Center, as well as in the seminars, workshops and other special activities organized or sponsored by the Center.
4. A standard NIH-type progress report (ca. 2 pages in length) is required from each COBRE Pilot Project Leader by March 15th of each year for inclusion in the COBRE annual report to NIH.
5. Junior faculty recipients are expected to have a COBRE-approved senior faculty Mentor and to participate in the COBRE Writing Program. All pilot project grant recipients are expected to submit a new R01 (or similar) proposal near or shortly after the end of their pilot project funding period. For junior faculty, a grant application will be developed as part of their participation in the COBRE Writing Program (<http://psf.cobre.ku.edu/overall>). For details about the Mentoring Program please visit <http://psf.cobre.ku.edu/mentoring>.
6. Term and budget adjustments. The COBRE Director reserves the right to make term and budget adjustments in accordance with the intent of the COBRE-PSF program and NIH policies concerning

scientific overlap of projects. For example, if a COBRE investigator receives his/her own R01 grant the COBRE grant may be reduced to adjust for overlap, up to and including 100% reduction if the scientific overlap is extensive.

7. Unanticipated new requirements. By accepting COBRE funds, awardees agree to comply with any and all requirements not already mentioned that may be imposed on COBRE-PSF by NIH or other institutional authorities.

NOTE: Prospective applicants with questions about eligibility, program details, or the “fit” of their project to the COBRE theme are strongly encouraged to contact Dr. Robert Hanzlik (785-864-3750; rhanzlik@ku.edu) before applying.

2. The Application Process

Step 1 - Required Letter of Intent and supporting information. We request this early information to help us in planning, and to ascertain that the subject matter is appropriate for COBRE-PSF. Your letter should explain 1) the nature of the research you plan to propose; 2) the value in its potential outcome, and 3) the specific way(s) and extent to which your project will make use of KU core labs. Please restrict the amount of background and review material to the minimum needed to place your protein(s) in a health-related but scientific context. This letter will be used in soliciting external reviewers for your application. In addition, your letter:

- a) Must be *received* by **5:00 PM February 19, 2018** (see below).
- b) Must be *styled like a business letter* (11 point Arial), on letterhead, over the applicant's signature, and not longer than one single page (Please do not submit this letter through your grants office. This is only a notification to us of your intent to apply.).

Supporting Material required with the letter of intent:

- a) The applicant's up-to-date NIH Biosketch in the most recent format (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>).
- b) The applicant's NIH Other Support information. Use the NIH PHS-398 format at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>. In this section provide a listing of all current research support from all sources. For each source listed **provide the following information in list format:** Name of funding source, title of project, project start and end dates, and amount of direct costs available (if a multi-investigator grant give the amount available to you), and your effort level (person months) on that project. **For pending applications include the expected decision date.**
- c) A separate listing of the complete contact information (including website URL) for five (5) potential reviewers of your application. For convenience and familiarity with NIH grant systems, these individuals must be located inside the U.S. **Do not nominate former mentors, former students, collaborators, etc. as potential reviewers.** Do not nominate individuals currently serving on NIH study sections (<http://public.csr.nih.gov/RosterAndMeetings/MeetingRosters/Pages/default.aspx>). For further information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-14-069.html>.
- d) **NOTE:** Junior faculty applicants should also include a separate list of the names and the website URLs for at least two potential senior faculty Mentors who are familiar with the applicant's campus, department and scientific field. Please be sure to read about the COBRE mentoring program (<http://psf.cobre.ku.edu/mentoring>) before making your selections. For each nominee include a brief statement of the rationale for considering them as a potential mentor, but do not contact them yet.

Submission of Letter of Intent. Compile the Letter of Intent, Biosketch, Other Support and lists of potential reviewers and mentors, in that order, into a single PDF document with your name in the top-right header and pages numbered consecutively in the bottom center margin, and send the PDF as an email attachment to <rhanzlik@ku.edu> and to <beall@ku.edu>. **Based on this information, you will be notified whether or not to submit a full application.**

Step 2 - Upon Invitation, Prepare and Submit a Complete Application.

- a) Please work with your pre-award office for this step. Applications should be prepared in general accord with the NIH PHS 398 application guidelines, (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>). Note particularly Part I, Sections 2.6, 5.5.2, 5.5.3 and 5.5.4(a). Include sections 5.5.5 through 5.5.15 ONLY if applicable to your proposal.
- b) Please type the applicant's name in the upper right hand corner of every page and number all pages consecutively starting with the face page as page 1.
- c) **Include in the following order**
 - Face Page with institutional signature. Budget dates are 7/1/18-6/30/19.
 - Project Summary and Relevance section (form page 2)
 - Budget page (one year, one page). Use a continuation page to provide budget explanation and justification information. Be sure to itemize core lab costs separate from other costs. Do not include any funds for the Mentor; this will be handled separately by COBRE-PSF.
 - NIH Biosketch for applicant (and Mentor if applicable, but NOT for Core Lab Directors)
 - Other Support (applicant only, not mentor or core directors)
 - Specific Aims and Research Plan (see below)
 - As appropriate, include letters of support from Directors of Core Labs that you will use. Ideally, these letters will reflect their specific understanding of the needs of your project and the ability of the Core to fulfill them. Omit cost and budget details here.
 - Checklist. Budget dates are 7/1/18-6/30/19. Per a special agreement with KUOR, the F & A rate applied should be no more than 50%.
 - Omit the Table of Contents page and the Resources page(s). Appendices are not allowed.

In addition, please observe the following COBRE-specific requirements for Step 2:

1. On NIH PHS 398 form pages, follow NIH formatting instructions. On other pages, *and especially for the Specific Aims and Research Plan*, please use 11-point Arial font with one-inch (1") margins on all four sides (NOT the usual NIH 0.5" margins). Write concisely and limit the amount of general background to the essentials that reviewers will need to know to understand and appreciate the proposed research.) Cite references judiciously rather than comprehensively.
2. The **Specific Aims** section should list no more than two specific aims and must fit entirely on one page.
3. The **Research Plan** may not exceed five (5) pages in length including all figures and tables (but excluding the Specific Aims page and the references cited page). All figures and lettering **MUST** be large enough to be clearly legible.
4. The **Reference List** must provide complete citations in the NIH style. Cite judiciously and limit the reference list to a single page at most.
5. At the end of the **Other Support** section, also provide a chronological listing of all un-funded grant applications submitted during the past two (2) calendar years (i.e., 2016 and 2017). *For each application submitted, please provide the following information:*
 - Date of submission
 - Name of granting agency
 - Title of project
 - Direct costs requested for the entire project
6. If you are a junior faculty member, please include on your Other Support page the following details of your startup package:
 - Date and amount initially provided;

- Current unspent balance, and
 - Expiration date or other restrictions if any.
7. If applicable, please include a letter of support from your COBRE Mentor (see <http://psf.cobre.ku.edu/mentoring>).

Step 3. Please submit the complete application as a single PDF document, prepared as described above, via email. If selected for funding, applicants will be required to furnish copies of all relevant compliance approvals (radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, vertebrate animals, etc.) to the COBRE office prior to release of award funds, but DO NOT submit these items at this time.

- ALL materials must be **received** no later than 5:00 pm Monday, **April 2, 2018**.
- Send the materials by email (or address any questions) to:
Dr. Robert P. Hanzlik (785-864-3750, rhanzlik@ku.edu)
- Also send a copy of the PDF application to:
Cynthia Beall (785-864-3674, beall@ku.edu)

Review of Applications. COBRE Pilot Project applications will be reviewed according to the usual NIH criteria and the COBRE-specific criteria mentioned above. Applicants will be notified of decisions as soon as possible. Anticipated award start date is July 1, 2018.

NOTE:

1. While the number of *full* pilot project awards is limited to a maximum of five, it is our intent to support meritorious proposals to the maximum extent possible by making additional smaller awards that emphasize the core lab aspects of the project. Consideration for this type of funding will be automatic with the submission of a full pilot project application.
2. Although our grant year runs July 1st through June 30th, it can take three to four weeks from our award date for us to receive our notice of award from NIH and process sub-awards for pilot project recipients. Hence, an August 1st or later starting date for spending is more realistic than the formal July 1st starting date. However, despite these unavoidable start-up delays, **the June 30, 2019 ending date is very firm**. Thus, you should 1) use 7/1/18-6/30/19 as the project period, and 2) expect to receive funding around August 1st at the earliest, and maybe later.
3. Awardees will be required to participate in an introductory orientation meeting at KU in Lawrence in early June (date to be determined).
4. Please note that an individual PI can apply to more than one COBRE or K-INBRE program at a time, but an individual PI can only receive support from one COBRE or K-INBRE at a time.