DartCF Pilot Project Program RFA

The NIDDK-funded Dartmouth Cystic Fibrosis Research Center (DartCF) Pilot Project Program (P³) seeks innovative pilot projects that address important issues in CF disease progression and treatment. Areas of interest include CF-related topics involving intestinal disease or whole-body disease, e.g., infection, immunity/inflammation, immune cell biology, gut microbiota, kidney, pancreas, CF-related diabetes, cell biology and protein trafficking, gene therapy, computation, therapeutics, or any other topics related to CF. Respiratory projects may be appropriate, if they focus on whole-body issues, e.g., immunity or inflammation, or cross-talk with other organ system(s). Approaches may include wet bench and/or computational work. Clinical trials cannot be supported by this mechanism. Preference will be given to pilots that make use of the DartCF cores (https://sites.dartmouth.edu/dartcf), which will continue to offer most services free of charge.

The goal of these awards is to attract Dartmouth researchers to CF-related research and to open new research directions for current DartCF faculty. Faculty at all levels are eligible, including those with current extramural funding. Successful applications will propose high-impact basic, translational, or clinical research with the ultimate goal to leverage extramural funding opportunities. This year pilot project funding will be available for projects up to $50K/yr for up to two years. Funding for year 2 is contingent upon EAC review of a year 1 progress report.

Successful applicants must attend the weekly DartCF seminar (Wednesdays 8:30 AM to 9:30 AM), present a talk in the DartCF seminar series each year, and provide a yearly written progress report.

Deadline for proposals: **March 22, 2024.**

**IMPORTANT:** Interested applicants are expected to first contact P³ Director Dr. Robert Cramer ASAP to discuss the research before they submit an application.

Mechanisms: The following mechanisms of support are available:

1. Mentored Pilot Awards Eligibility: PIs must be Dartmouth junior faculty members (tenure-track assistant or associate professors who have not yet received tenure) with PhD and/or MD degrees. The project must identify at least one experienced DartCF researcher as a mentor.
2. Collaborative Pilot Awards Eligibility: PIs must be tenured or tenure-track Dartmouth faculty members (assistant, associate or full professor) with PhD and/or MD degrees. The proposal must involve faculty from at least two distinct disciplines.
3. Innovative Pilot Awards Eligibility: PIs must be tenured or tenure-track Dartmouth faculty members (assistant, associate or full professor) with PhD and/or MD degrees. The proposal must represent a highly innovative, new area of CF research for PIs with a track record in CF research.

Note: The target mechanism should be specified at the time of submission.

Proposals should contain all of the following elements:

- A two-page document with:
  - Name(s) and department(s) of applicants.
  - Proposal Title (200-character limit).
  - Proposal Type (Mentored, Collaborative, Innovative)
  - Abstract (30 lines). This section should describe the central hypothesis of the application, research overview, specific aims and potential positive impact on the CF knowledge base or patient impact.
  - Research Description following general NIH format (significance and approach). References do not count towards the page limit.
  - Present a funding strategy for extramural funding (not included in two-page limit, but limited to 30 lines of text).
  - NIH biosketch(es) for the PI and mentor(s) (if a mentored award) (not included in two page limit).
  - Submit as a single PDF [named “lastname_DartCFPilot”] by email to Shaniqua Jones (Shaniqua.A.Jones@Dartmouth.edu) by **March 22, 2024**
Review: Proposals will be reviewed by the DartCF Leadership Committee and the External Advisory Committee, who will rank applications relative to the criteria described below. Proposals are in support of the NIDDK P30 renewal application to be submitted summer 2024. The expected funding date for successful proposals is July 2025, contingent upon NIDDK renewal of the P30 application.

Review criteria:
P3 projects should support our mission as a nationally recognized center of excellence in CF. The most competitive proposals will:
• Address a research problem relevant to understanding or treating CF patho/physiology focused on the NIDDK mission (GI, endocrine, or whole-body systems, which may include interactions with the respiratory system);
• Present high-quality, high-impact science. Scientific excellence is a prerequisite for funding;
• Incorporate interdisciplinary, cross-programmatic, collaborative, or innovative approaches. Demonstrate a strong potential to carry out the proposed research (NIH Investigator criterion);
• Develop strong interactions with DartCF faculty and/or scientific cores:
  https://sites.dartmouth.edu/dartcf/