

**West Virginia University Health Sciences Center  
Tumor Microenvironment (TME) Center of Biomedical Research  
Excellence  
Pilot Project Program**

2019 TME Pilot Grant Award Competition FOA

Overview Information

Participating Organization(s): National Institutes of Health (NIH), West Virginia University Health Sciences Center

Components of Participating Organizations: National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), Tumor Microenvironment Center of Biomedical Research Excellence

Funding Opportunity Title: Pilot Projects focused on the Tumor Microenvironment  
Activity Code P20 Pilot Research Project

Announcement Type: Pilot grants for COBRE 1P20GM121322-01A1

Amount of Award: Up to \$50,000 and awardee may apply for a competitive renewal for an additional year of funding.

Funding Opportunity Purpose: The purpose of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) is to support basic and translational pilot projects focused on the tumor microenvironment which utilize our research cores, enable acquisition of preliminary data for a federal grant application, and cultivate a team of new investigators as project PL's for our Center of Biomedical Research Excellence.

**KEY DATES**

Posted Date(s): August 05, 2019

Open Date (Earliest Submission Date): September 1, 2019

Application Due Date(s): September 13, 2019, by 5 p.m.

Scientific Merit Review: September – October 2019

NIH Advisory Council Review: October – November 2019

Earliest Start Date: December 1, 2019

Expiration Date: November 30, 2019

#### Summary:

The Tumor Microenvironment Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (TME CoBRE) expects to support two or more Pilot Projects in the range of \$25,000 to \$50,000 in direct costs for one year during the funding period December 1, 2019 – November 30, 2020. Applications will be reviewed for feasibility based on the \$50,000 maximum and the scope of work specifically covered by that support. Applications chosen for CoBRE pilot support, for which there is compelling additional support needs beyond the scope of the work reviewed, will be forwarded to the Office of Research and Graduate Education for consideration of additional institutional investment to increase the subsequent competitiveness of the project. However, projects and associated budgets should be limited to the \$50,000 maximum noted for this mechanism.

Applications must describe a pilot-type research project that fits well with the scientific theme of the TME CoBRE and will provide preliminary data for a substantial extramural research project grant application. Preference will be given to projects that benefit from one or more TME CoBRE Core Facilities. This competition is open to all full time research track, tenure-track or tenured faculty at West Virginia University, with some restrictions (see Eligibility).

Eligibility: All tenured, tenure-track or research-track full-time faculty members who have not had R01 equivalent funding are eligible. New or Early-Stage (Junior) investigators are strongly encouraged to apply.

Individuals currently receiving support from the TME CoBRE as research project investigators, Mentoring faculty, or as Core facility directors or managers may not serve as Pilot Project PIs. Investigators receiving significant support from Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) are also not eligible to apply for this award, nor may investigators receive research support from multiple CoBREs simultaneously.

Project areas that fall within the scientific focus of the TME CoBRE include the tissue, cells, and stroma that are adjacent to tumor cells that play a significant role in tumor dormancy, tumor progression, therapeutic response or dissemination. In addition extracellular tumor signaling that is bi-directional and dynamic is of significant interest.

Criteria for evaluation of COBRE applications: The basic criteria for NIH grant review may be found at:

[https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines\\_general/Review\\_Criteria\\_at\\_a\\_glance.pdf](https://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer/guidelines_general/Review_Criteria_at_a_glance.pdf)

Additional COBRE-specific review criteria include:

- Likelihood of the project becoming competitive for R01 level or NSF funding;
- Likelihood of producing a publishable result within the one-year time frame;
- Relevance to the TME CoBRE theme;
- A clear, detailed plan for utilization of one or more of the TME CoBRE Core Facilities
- Background, experience and career status of the applicant;
- Track record of past research, research grant applications and research funding;
- Identification of an appropriate research team to nurture success.

General Terms and Conditions of TME CoBRE Research Project Awards:

1. PI or Co-I salary will not be supported. Funds may be used for consumable supplies, core facility user fees, services or small laboratory hardware, but not for equipment (i.e. items costing > \$5000).
2. Personnel costs are allowable but preference will be given to applications that name specific individuals who are assured to be present on-site and eligible to work at the beginning of the funding period.
3. Travel costs are limited to essential research-related travel.
4. Tuition costs are allowable as per standard institutional policies.
5. Investigators who receive CoBRE pilot project support are REQUIRED, when possible to participate in the regular TME CoBRE meetings, and are encouraged to participate in seminars, workshops and other special activities organized or sponsored by the TME CoBRE.
6. A semi-annual progress report (~1 page in length including publications, presentations, grant applications submitted or awarded) is required from each CoBRE Pilot Project Leader by March 1<sup>st</sup> and September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year for inclusion in the COBRE annual report to NIH.
7. PI agrees to submit grant applications that are based on data or results obtained from the Pilot Project research supported though the TME CoBRE.
8. Term and budget adjustments: The CoBRE Director reserves the right to make term and budget adjustments in accordance with the intent of the TME CoBRE 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.
9. Unanticipated new requirements. By accepting CoBRE funds, awardees agree to comply with any and all requirements not already mentioned that may be imposed on the TME CoBRE by NIH or other institutional authorities.

To Apply:

Step 1 – Submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) by 5 p.m., September 1, 2019 to [prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu).

Within the letter explain in 300 words or fewer, the proposed research and how specifically it relates to the scientific theme of the TME CoBRE. If applicable, explain specifically how the project will utilize one or more of the TME COBRE Core Research Facilities: see (<http://hs.umd.edu/cbsd/facilities/default.php>).

Include an up-to-date NIH Biosketch in the most recent format: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>. For the purposes of this LOI, an NSF-style biosketch may be used. However, the former will be required in a full application.

Include Other Support information. Use format shown in sample page from <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/2590/2590.htm> (see “other support format page: example”)

List all current research support from all sources. For each source listed, provide the name of funding source, title of project, if applicable, project start and end dates, and amount of direct costs available (give the amount available to you if a multi-investigator grant), and your effort in person months.

For pending applications, please include the expected decision date. If you are a recently hired faculty member and are still being supported by a startup package, please report amount initially provided, current unspent balance, and expiration date.

Compile the Letter of Intent, NIH formatted Biosketch, and Other Support information into a single PDF document and send as an email attachment to [prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu).

NOTE: Potential applicants with questions about eligibility, program details, or the “fit” of their project to the TME CoBRE are encouraged to contact Dr. Paul Lockman (304-293-0844); [prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu)

Step 2 - Prepare and submit a complete application by September 13, 2019, by 5 p.m.

The Application should include the following components:

- Project Summary (30 line abstract)
- A list key/senior personnel and their role on the project
- Facilities and Resources: include major equipment available to project, and a paragraph on planned use of TME CoBRE supported cores
- Updated Biosketch in NIH format. Include Biosketches of key personnel and other significant contributors
- Detailed budget and budget justification (use NIH budget form)
- Research Plan (Use Continuation Format Page) should have the following components
  - Specific aims: limit to 2 specific aims. (1 page)
  - Research Strategy (6 pages maximum)
    - Background and Significance
    - Innovation
    - Preliminary data (if any; not required)
    - Approach
    - Experimental design
    - Anticipated Results, data analysis,
    - Alternative approaches
    - Please note NIH's emphasis on "scientific rigor and reproducibility" <https://grants.nih.gov/reproducibility/index.htm>.
    - Research plan should explain how the proposed aims will support a future application for an NIH, NSF (or equivalent) research project grant.
  - Bibliography (short, less than 35 references)

Follow formatting guidance for NIH grants (generally, Arial 11 point font, 0.5" page margins). Smaller font acceptable for figure legends, if legible at 100% scale. All figures and lettering must be large enough to be clearly legible at 100% scale.

If your research involves vertebrate animals, you must have an appropriate animal protocol and obtain IACUC approval. Complete the Vertebrate Animal Section.

Please compile application into a single PDF document

Send all application materials by email (or address any questions) to Paul Lockman ([prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu](mailto:prlockman@hsc.wvu.edu) 304-293-0844); no later than 5 p.m., September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

## Review Process

- All applications will be sent to two to three referees, who will evaluate proposals for scientific merit and for the potential that the work will lead to a competitive NIH proposal. Consideration of the scope of work proposed within the allowable budget will be rigorously considered.
- Reviewers will be asked to assign priority scores and provide NIH style reviews.
- After receipt of written reviews, Dr. Lockman and the CoBRE administration will identify the most meritorious projects that also align with the thematic work in the TME CoBRE and use of the CoBRE supported cores.
- The identified projects will then be sent to the External Advisory Council (EAC) where scientific merit will be reviewed.
- Once complete, all reviews and EAC recommendations will be submitted to NIGMS for programmatic and administrative review for approval of the final project selection.

If selected for funding, applicants will be required to furnish copies of all relevant compliance approvals (radioisotopes, recombinant DNA, vertebrate animals, etc.)