Pilot Grants Available in the Environmental Health Sciences

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)-funded HERCULES Center (Emory Health and Exposome Research Center: Understanding Lifetime Exposures) and the C-CHEM² (Center for Children’s Health, the Environment, the Microbiome and Metabolomics) has funds available for six to seven pilot project grants in the Environmental Health Sciences at up to $40,000.

Pilot projects must focus on the role of the environment in human disease, and may include basic (cellular and animal), biomedical, translational, clinical, epidemiological, or behavioral projects, e.g. studies on specific environmental toxicants or gene-environment interactions. Through partnership with C-CHEM², two awards will be dedicated to projects focused on children’s environmental health. Any proposal that focuses on children’s environmental health will automatically be considered for the C-CHEM² pilot awards.

A major focus of HERCULES is to advance the science of the exposome (an analysis of the complex exposures we face as humans that complements the human genome), but the HERCULES Pilot Project Program also accepts applications in the general area of Environmental Health Sciences that are in line with the mission of NIEHS. Additionally, through partnership with C-CHEM², two awards will be dedicated to projects focused on children’s environmental health.

These awards are open to all investigators at Emory and Georgia Tech who are eligible to serve as Principal Investigators on NIH grant applications (Instructor and above, tenure-, research- or clinical-track). Applications that propose to utilize one or more of the HERCULES Cores are especially encouraged and awardees will receive subsidized core services.

Projects with translational relevance (clinical or population-based), applications from early-career investigators, and collaborative and interdisciplinary projects are particularly encouraged. Additionally, HERCULES encourages applications for community-based participatory research (CBPR) projects (see below for more details).

Note: Applications that are not focused on the role of the environment in human health and disease will not be reviewed. Applications deemed ready for R01 applications will not receive funding. Also, no PI may submit more than one application.

Recommended Guidelines for HERCULES CBPR projects

- HERCULES places a particular focus on the community and through this, strongly encourages applications for community-engaged research projects designed to address the potential health risks of environmental exposures of concern to a local community.
- It is strongly encouraged that community members/partners participate in the development of the research questions and research design, as well as study implementation (e.g., study collection).
- Meaningful involvement and clear roles for community partners is highly encouraged, with resources shared (e.g., compensating partner’s time.)
- The research team and community partner should plan to disseminate study results directly to community.
- The HERCULES Community Outreach and Engagement Core can facilitate community-academic
partnerships for these applications.

- All pilot application documents must be submitted through the Emory faculty member and are subject to the standard requirements of the pilot project program.

Recommended Guidelines for C-CHEM² Children’s Environmental Health projects

- Priority will be given to junior investigators, and those that are seeking to expand their programs of research into the field of children’s environmental health. The aim of the program is to allow investigators to gather pilot and/or feasibility data to support applications for independent R-level research funding from NIEHS or EPA.

- The C-CHEM² awards are open to all investigators at Emory and Georgia Tech and faculty members with the Department of Biomedical Engineering, a joint enterprise across Georgia Tech, Emory and Morehouse School of Medicine.

- Grants must focus on the role of the environment in children’s health and disease.

- Applicants are encouraged to
  - submit proposals including the use of banked samples from the ongoing C-CHEM² cohort study.
  - provide opportunities for community engagement and science translation.
  - align proposals with the aims of the three primary research projects (see below).

- Applications in alignment with the focus of C-CHEM² will be prioritized.
  - The focus of C-CHEM² is to investigate the interrelationships of components of the prenatal and postnatal environment of the fetus and child and their impacts upon birth outcome, the infant microbiome and neurodevelopment.

- Three primary research projects of C-CHEM²
  - Project 1: Characterize the environmental exposures of pregnant African American women living in the metro Atlanta community and their infants.
  - Project 2: Characterize the associations between environmental exposures, the infant microbiome and infant neurodevelopment.
  - Project 3: Characterize the metabolic pathways through which environmental exposures and the microbiome contribute to preterm birth and infant neurodevelopment.

- Basic science proposals are acceptable however, pilot proposals that align with the aims of the three research projects are encouraged.

General Application Submission Guidelines:

- Applicant must hold a faculty position and be eligible to be a PI on an NIH R01 grant.

- 4 page maximum length for science portion (11 point Arial, 1-inch margins) including plans for future NIEHS grant submission.

- NIH Biosketch and full NIH budget & justification on PHS 398 form (pages fp4 and fp5)
  - Indirect costs should not be included in budget.
  - Funds may be used for faculty salary support if requested in the application or with approval of the HERCULES/C-CHEM² director, up to a maximum of 5% effort.
  - All federal and university rules and regulations regarding the administration of grants apply to these funds. Costs subject to CAS approval, such as computers, general purpose equipment, office supplies, etc., may not be budgeted. Any travel must follow University travel policies and procedures.
  - Requests for equipment or for a portion of PI salary greater than 5% must be justified in the budget.

- Due by Monday, Feb 1, 2016 at 5:00PM. Decisions made by March 16, 2016. Funding starts April 1, 2016.

Application Submission

- A compiled electronic version (PDF) of the application should be submitted to: Kristine Dennis, email: kkdenni@emory.edu
Questions?
  o Visit our FAQ page at http://emoryhercules.com:center-research/pilot-program-frequently-asked-questions/
  o For C-CHEM² questions, contact Dr. Barry Ryan, email: bryan@emory.edu
  o For HERCULES questions, contact Dr. Edward Morgan, email: etmorga@emory.edu
    ▪ Currently funded HERCULES pilot awardees should contact Dr. Morgan before submitting an application.

Award Requirements

- Awardees must agree to participate in C-CHEM²/HERCULES activities (Seminar, Data Club, Workshops) and provide a brief written report at the end of the funding period.
- Any resultant publications must cite funding from C-CHEM² (NIH grant 1 P50 ES026071) and/or HERCULES (NIH grant 1 P30 ES019776) and copies of the publications should be provided to the HERCULES/C-CHEM² center administrator.
- A midpoint project report is due December 1, 2016 and a final project update by April 30, 2017.