2015 Call for Seed Grant Proposals

Introduction

The purpose of the RoBUST seed grant program is to provide research funds to foster transdisciplinary urban biobehavioral health pilot projects that involve collaboration between at least two RoBUST faculty members. In particular, the program's goal is to stimulate early-career urban biobehavioral health research. This call is open to any project that meets the program criteria stated below. Details regarding proposal submissions are included below.

Eligibility Criteria & Preferences

Eligibility of investigators and projects: Any RoBUST member will be eligible to apply for seed grant funding. In addition, any non-RoBUST member with faculty status at WSU who declares his/her willingness to join the RoBUST group and participate in group activities will be eligible to apply for seed grant funding. There will be only three absolute requirements for a project to be eligible to receive support from the RoBUST Seed Grant Program:

1. the project must address one of the core research themes of RoBUST (see: http://research.wayne.edu/robust/research.php);
2. the project must be of outstanding merit; and
3. the project must be collaborative and transdisciplinary—involving Co-PIs from at least two different academic departments.

Preferences will be given to proposals that include the following:

- Projects featuring new working relationships among faculty who have not previously collaborated on a research project
- Projects driven by novel/innovative questions
- Research projects (i.e., this funding mechanism is not designed to fund seminars, courses, or conferences.)
- Projects that involve WSU graduate students over projects that hire outside personnel

Important Dates

Application deadline: Dec. 1, 2015

Anticipated Project Start Date: Apr. 1, 2016

Final Report Due Date: 19 months after funding start date

Available Funds

We expect to fund 4 projects of up to $22,500 per project.

Period of Funding

Funds are anticipated to be available for the selected projects approximately 6 weeks following the announcement of the award recipients, and all funds should be expended within approximately 18 months of the fund transfer. PIs/Project Directors will be permitted to apply for a no-cost extension for an additional 12 months to complete the project as may be required.

Funding Restrictions

Funds must be used for direct costs such as materials, supplies, personnel (other than PI/collaborator salaries) and travel to the extent that such expenses are directly related to the proposed project. The intent is that the seed funds enable new research, therefore there are few restrictions regarding the proposed use of the funds other than compliance with university policies and procedures. Research support funds may not be used for buy-out from teaching or for the salaries of the PI or faculty collaborators. If proposals involve compensating personnel from outside of WSU, please explain why this expertise or service could not be obtained as effectively within WSU.

Projects that may be soliciting funds from more than one source, the review committee prefers to see explanations of how the projects would be modified and improved by both funding sources. These awards are not intended to extend or bridge currently funded research projects.

Resources for Proposed Projects

RoBUST is housed in the new iBio Building on the north edge of campus and has close relationships with other centers located there, such as the Clinical Research Service Center and the Center for Urban Responses to Environmental Stressors. Utilizing those or other resources at iBio in proposed projects are encouraged.

Proposal Elements
All elements must be submitted as a single PDF. Project descriptions should be written in plain English, understandable by academics from a variety of disciplines. All applications should follow the formatting and content guidelines of the NIH R03 program (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/r03.htm). Proposals should use NIH forms (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/424/index.htm) and include the following:

I. NIH-style Cover Sheet (separate page not included in the page count)

II. Biosketches of Key Personnel (new NIH format; max. 5 pages each)

III. Project Description
   - Specific Aims (1 page max.)
   - Research Strategy, including Significance, Innovation, and Approach sections (6 pages max.)
   - Literature Cited

III. Budget
   - Separate page consisting of a table listing projected expenses
   - Accompanying text should provide an explanation and justification of estimated/projected expenses

IV. Animal Activities/Human Subject Protection
   - Projects that involve animals or human subjects will need to receive approvals from the WSU IRB and the IRB of any other institution involved in the study prior to the release of funds
   - Approvals or waivers will need to reference the RoBUST grant mechanism

Submission Process

All submissions are due by midnight on December 1, 2015 to wsurobust.grants@gmail.com. Each proposal and all corresponding information must be submitted as a single file in PDF format. The file should be named with the lead PI's name followed by a dash with the next collaborator's name. Example: Smithers-Jones.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed according to standard procedures used by the NIH in the first level review process (see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/peer_review_process.htm). Each proposal will be reviewed by at least two committee members in advance of a review committee meeting. At the review committee meeting, each proposal is discussed and judged based on the following criteria:
   - The extent to which the project addresses one of the core research themes of RoBUST (see: http://research.wayne.edu/robust/research.php);
• The extent to which the project is collaborative and transdisciplinary—including Co-PIs from at least two different academic departments;
• The extent to which the working relationship is deemed to be new;
• Innovativeness of the line of inquiry/research question;
• Significance of the project regarding eventual probably impact on public health in urban settings;
• Persuasiveness of the argument that the collaboration contributes to the pursuit of external funding or further scholarship in the new area of inquiry;
• Investigators’ suitability to the project and its success;
• How well-reasoned and appropriate the approach (strategy, methodology, analyses) of the project is and how well potential problems and solutions are considered; and
• Budget appropriateness. The review panel may elect to disallow certain proposed expenditures.

Obligations of Recipients of RoBUST Seed Grants

Approximately 19 months following the transfer of funds, PIs must submit a report detailing how the money was spent and the outcomes from the project including planned future collaborations. We encourage you to be creative in your collaborations, and we wish you the best of luck in your application. Should you have any questions or concerns, please send an email inquiry to wsurobst.grants@gmail.com or contact RoBUST Co-Chair Malcolm Cutchin at 313-577-9956.