

UT College of Medicine Chattanooga, Erlanger and UT Chattanooga

Biomedical Research Initiation Collaborative Grants

Deadline: November 4, 2022

The UT College of Medicine Chattanooga (UTCOM-C), Erlanger Health System and The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga are partnering to support an inter-institutional grant program designed to increase collaborative biomedical research activity. The Biomedical Research Initiation Collaborative (BRIC Grants) seek to foster health research collaborations and to strengthen the research relationship between the University of Tennessee Chattanooga and the Erlanger/UTCOM investigators by providing seed funding to collaborative teams embarking on new lines of biomedical research inquiry.

We are issuing this request for proposals to solicit collaborative projects that (1) result in high-impact peer reviewed publications and (2) “seed” pilot collaborations that will result in larger, longer-term extramural funding. This initiative is supported by the UT Health Science Center Office of Research, the UT Chattanooga Vice Chancellor for Research, the Erlanger Health System and the UT College of Medicine.

PURPOSE

This funding opportunity will support collaborative projects that bring together teams of investigators, at least one from each institution, focused on all phases of biomedical research along the continuum from bench to bedside to community. BRIC grants will support collaborative scientific studies for one year to enable the development of preliminary data that will serve as the foundation for submission of competitive, extramural research grant applications.

These grants are not intended to provide the investigator with additional or extended support for an existing study already supported through intramural or extramural funds but to develop new projects that hold promise for subsequent funding of the investigators. The investigators from each of the participating sites must have a significant, defined role in the research project. Although the participating investigators may have collaborated in the past, the research project proposed must be novel and not part of ongoing research.

Proposals must include a description of a pilot research study that can be completed in one year. The proposed research is expected to provide preliminary data to demonstrate the feasibility and promise of a large-scale study. Interdisciplinary collaborations are encouraged.

All applicants are expected, within their proposal, to outline a plan for preparing and submitting **at least one and preferably multiple** proposals to external funding agencies within a maximum timeframe of 24 months after the project’s start date. The 24 month window is designed to allow time (if needed) for teams to translate preliminary results and other activities initiated during the project period into competitive external proposals. The investigators will also have to include in a one-page Extramural Funding Plan as part of the application package the type of grant they will apply for and when they will apply should they receive this award. Faculty members who do not apply for external funding may be excluded from applying for future BRIC funding opportunities.

KEY DATES

- RFP released: August 22, 2022
- Workshop & Research Networking: September 14, 5-6pm, POB Dining Room of the Erlanger Medical Mall
- Application Submission Deadline: November 4, 2022
- Notification to Applicants: December 9, 2022
- Project Start Date: January 1, 2023
- Interim Report Deadline: June 30, 2023
- Project End Date: December 31, 2023
- Final Report Deadline: January 31, 2024
- Deadline for Extramural Funding Applications: January 1, 2025

PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) DATA USE

Given the rapid timeframe for implementation of funded projects, applicants are strongly encouraged to propose projects where data sharing would only be required for de-identified clinical data. Due to the lead time required to negotiate data use agreements for PHI, projects requiring such data are discouraged for this competition cycle.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for consideration, all proposals must include Co-PIs – one representing UTCOM/Erlanger and one representing UTC.

- For UTC, eligible Co-PIs include tenured or tenure-track faculty; faculty in non-tenure roles, staff, and post-doctoral research fellows may participate as a research team member.
- For UTCOM/Erlanger, eligible Co-PIs include all faculty members, residents, and clinical fellows.

CONTACT INFORMATION

UT College of Medicine / Erlanger

- Dr. Giuseppe Pizzorno, Associate Dean for Research: Giuseppe.Pizzorno@erlangers.org; 423.778.6956
- Crystal Maddox, Assistant Dean for Finance: Crystal.Maddox@erlangers.org; 423.778.3895

UT Chattanooga

- Dr. Joanne Romagni, Vice Chancellor for Research & Dean of the Graduate School: Joanne-Romagni@utc.edu; 423.425.1752
- Meredith Perry, Executive Director of Research & Sponsored Programs: Meredith-Perry@utc.edu; 423.425.2232

FUNDING & BUDGET GUIDELINES

Erlanger/UTCOM and UTC will fund up to \$25,000 per award total. Funds should be budgeted based on what makes sense for the project. In the budget justification, provide a rationale for how the funds will be utilized.

The budget period is for 12 months beginning January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2023.

Awarded funds must be used to conduct the work proposed and spent in accordance with the approved budget. Grant funds may be budgeted for the following:

- Research support personnel including student research assistants, medical residents, etc.
- Travel necessary to perform the research
- Research participant support or incentives (Please note that the [UT system-wide policy on gift cards](#) must be followed for UT budget allocations.)
- Small equipment, research supplies and core lab costs, or
- Other purposes deemed necessary for the successful execution of the proposed project

The following are unallowable costs:

- Salary support for Co-PIs
- Additional service pay during the academic year for any type of personnel
- Indirect or F&A costs
- Budget items that would supplant funds or resources that are available from other sources

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

An electronic copy of the entire proposal, signed by each Co-PI's Department Head, should be submitted via email to Giuseppe.Pizzorno@erlang.org by 5:00pm on November 4, 2022. **Proposals received after 5:00pm on the deadline can NOT be accepted under any circumstances and will be returned without review.** The submitted proposal should include scanned copies of the signed cover page, letters of support, and all required application components.

Each application must contain the following sections:

- A. **Cover Page:** The Cover Page includes key details about your proposal and requires an ink or certified PDF signature of each Co-PI's Department Head / Chair.
- B. **Scientific Abstract:** The abstract summary of the proposal for use by review committee members (250 words maximum).
- C. **Project Narrative:** The Research Plan should follow the standard NIH format: Specific Aims, Significance, Innovation, and Approach. Include where applicable clear evidence of how the proposal meets the review criteria. The following formatting restrictions apply: 4-page limit, including tables and figures, single line spacing, font no smaller than Arial 11, 1-inch margins. References may be included outside the 4-page limit.
- D. **Statistical Analysis Plan:** A statistical plan should be included to ensure that the specific aims, study design, and statistical analysis plan are well aligned with the study objectives.
- E. **Extramural Funding Plan:** The Extramural Funding Plan is limited to one page using the same formatting as the project narrative and should include the following:
 - What is your precise plan to obtain extramural funding? Include the time-line, benchmarks to be attained, and whether any current or recent RFAs or PAs exist that focus on this area of research.
 - How does this proposed project compare with your current and previous research efforts?
 - What are the specific roles of each Co-PI in the proposed project?
- F. **Budget with Budget Justification:** Use the attached budget form (click [here](#) for a fillable Excel version). Please provide a separate narrative budget justification describing each expense line.
- G. **Human Subjects / Research Compliance:** Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is not required prior to submission but IRB approval will be required prior to funding. Given the time constraints, investigators are strongly encouraged to submit IRB and/or IACUC applications when they submit their proposals to minimize delays in initiating funded projects. If human or animal subjects are involved, provide a description of their involvement and characteristics, specific risks to subjects who participate, and protection against those risks. Describe the sources of materials that will be obtained from human subjects as part of their study participation. Provide assurance that the project will be reviewed and approved by the Erlanger/UTCOM and UTC IRB and comply with HIPAA.
- H. **NIH Biosketches:** Include biosketches for the Co-PIs and key members of the research team using the NIH format (see below; a fillable version as well as an NIH Biosketch sample can be found [here](#)).
- I. **Current & Pending Support:** Include a Current & Pending Support form (see below) for each participating Co-PI.

REVIEW PROCESS & SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed by a Selection Committee comprised of representatives from Erlanger/UTCOM-C and UTC. The Selection Committee will assign a merit score to each submitted grant proposal and rank order the proposals. Dr. Giuseppe Pizzorno, representing UTCOM/Erlanger and Dr. Joanne Romagni, representing UTC, will consider the merit scores and other factors (such as compatibility with institutional initiatives and areas of focus; likely success of a given project; potential importance to a field of study, alignment with organizational priorities, diversity of topics, community impact, and PI past performance, etc.) in making final funding selections.

The merit review will take into account the following criteria:

- 1) Scientific Merit (Specific Aims, Significance, Innovation, & Approach)
- 2) Feasibility of plan to achieve aims within the 12-month timeframe and budget parameters
- 3) Potential to directly transform anticipated results into NEW extramural funding initiatives
- 4) Strength of the Investigative Team and effective complementarity and articulation between UTCOM-C and UTC researchers.

POST AWARD REPORTING

Awardees are expected to provide a progress report within 6 months from the initiation of the project and a final report within 30 days from the end of the project. Awardees are also expected to participate as presenters at UTC's Research Dialogues conference and UTCOM's Research Day. All awardees will be expected to provide updates of publications and other results that originated from the award including:

- Abstracts/presentations, manuscripts, published guidelines
- Follow-on submission or funding (e.g., grants, contracts, etc.)
- Initiation of appropriate clinical studies
- Improved diagnosis or treatment of disease
- Implementation in clinical practice and community
- Clinical outcomes in practice and communities
- Commercialization (e.g. new intellectual property, patent applications, license, commercial partnerships, start-up company)

REVIEW CRITERIA

1. Scientific Merit. *Does the proposed project represent a strong, well-considered scientific approach to addressing a well-articulated question or challenge that is appropriate to the discipline(s) involved in the study?*

Does the project address an important problem or a critical barrier to progress in a given field? Are the specific aims well-reasoned and appropriate? Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the project? Are potential problems, alternative strategies, and benchmarks for success presented? If the aims of the project are achieved, how will scientific knowledge, or educational or clinical practices be improved? How will successful completion of the aims change the concepts, methods, technologies, diagnoses, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field? Does the proposal indicate the investigative team is mindful of research compliance issues and prepared to assess and manage risks associated with the research activity? If the project involves animal or clinical research, are the plans for protection of animals or human subjects from research risks, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

2. Feasibility. *Is there a realistic timeline for completion? Is the budget reasonable?*

What is the project's level of "shovel-readiness"? Is the scientific environment of the individual laboratories, core facilities, and clinical settings in which the work will be done adequate for success of the project proposed? Are the institutional support, equipment and other resources available to the investigators adequate or possible to procure quickly enough to support the proposed research?

3. Future Fundability. *Can the application, if successful, build capacity to secure extramural funding?*

Does the area challenge and seek to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Does the Extramural Funding Plan identify reasonable yet ambitious funding plans for future activity? **Is the precise plan to obtain extramural funding clearly delineated and feasible?** Are the time-line, benchmarks, and recent RFAs or PAs that exist in this area of research included and reasonable? **How does the proposed project compare with current and previous research efforts?**

4. Investigative Team: *Do the Co-PIs have well-suited experiences to complete the project?*

Are specific, appropriate, and complementary roles described for each PI in the proposed project? Does the investigative team have a history of successful collaborative research activity (e.g., prior grants, publications, unfunded research, etc.)? Are the PI's vested with enough time commitment/effort? Do the investigators have complementary and integrated expertise? Is there a clear delineation of responsibilities for project completion?

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Application Cover Page

Project Information		
DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF PROJECT:		
LEAD CO-PIs		
<i>The Lead Co-PI from each organization is the designated project and fiscal lead for activities and budget expenditures for their respective organization's budgeted items. The Lead Co-PIs will be the point of contact for the project. The lead Co-PIs' department will administer the project funds allocated to their institution as outlined in the proposal budget.</i>		
Erlanger/UTCOM Lead Co-Principal Investigator: <small>Please list name, title, organization, and department</small> Name: Title: Department: Email:	UT-Chattanooga Lead Co-Principal Investigator: <small>Please list name, title, organization, and department</small> Name: Title: Department: Email:	
ADDITIONAL COLLABORATING INVESTIGATOR(S)		
Name: Title: Organization: Department:	Name: Title: Organization: Department:	
FUNDS REQUESTED		
Erlanger/UTCOM: \$		Total: \$
Compliance / Pre-Approval Requirements (if applicable): <input type="checkbox"/> Human Subjects (IRB review needed) <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Subjects (IACUC review needed) <input type="checkbox"/> Export Control <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Space or IT Resources Needed* <input type="checkbox"/> Biohazards / Hazardous Materials <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict of Interest* <input type="checkbox"/> Radioactive Materials		
<small>*Conflict of Interest and Space issues must be resolved prior to submitting the proposal.</small>		
Approval Signatures – Lead Co-PIs' Departments <i>By signing here, the Lead Co-PIs' Department / Unit Head agrees to provide general oversight and administrative support for project implementation if the project is selected for funding.</i>		
Erlanger/UTCOM Co-PI Department Head: _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-right: 100px;"><small>Signature</small></div> <div style="text-align: right;"><small>Date</small></div>		
UT-Chattanooga Co-PI Department Head: _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-right: 100px;"><small>Signature</small></div> <div style="text-align: right;"><small>Date</small></div>		

UTCOM/Erlanger and UT-Chattanooga

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	UTCOM/Erlanger	UT-Chattanooga	<u>Total</u>
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PERSONNEL

Funds for Co-PIs and Collaborating Investigators are not allowable. However, you may budget for research support personnel including student research assistants, medical residents, etc. In the description indicate the type of support personnel, their role on the project, the percentage of effort or cost per unit of effort, and the amount of effort budgeted.

CONSULTANT COSTS

The purpose of the competition is to build collaborative capacity among UTCOM/Erlanger and UT-Chattanooga, so funds for any non UT/Erlanger personnel are expected to be modest and should be carefully considered & extensively justified. Include costs for core lab facilities here also.

EQUIPMENT COSTS

Equipment costs include items that meet the federal definition of equipment purchases - tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more.

SUPPLIES

Include the costs of research supplies necessary to perform the proposed research. Itemize supplies to be purchase and include, to the extent reasonable, a per-unit cost and the number of units needed.

TRAVEL

Include travel costs directly related to performing the proposed research. Include a separate line item for each trip or type of travel (e.g., mileage) providing the purpose and destination, specifying the relation to the project, and itemizing the costs of each trip, to the extent reasonable (e.g., airfare, lodging, per diem, anticipated mileage, etc.)

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT COSTS

Include the costs of patient or participant services or support costs directly associated with the project. This may include gift cards or other types of participant incentives. UT's System-wide policy on gift cards must be followed.

TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Provide the following information for the Senior/key personnel and other significant contributors.
 Follow this format for each person. **DO NOT EXCEED FIVE PAGES.**

NAME:

eRA COMMONS USER NAME (credential, e.g., agency login):

POSITION TITLE:

EDUCATION/TRAINING (*Begin with baccalaureate or other initial professional education, such as nursing, include postdoctoral training and residency training if applicable. Add/delete rows as necessary.*)

INSTITUTION AND LOCATION	DEGREE (if applicable)	Completion Date MM/YYYY	FIELD OF STUDY

A. Personal Statement

B. Positions and Honors

C. Contributions to Science

D. Additional Information: Research Support and/or Scholastic Performance

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Current & Pending Support Form

Investigator Name: _____

List all current (active) or pending internal and external awards. Submit a form for each investigator involved in the project. Duplicate the chart as many times as needed to list all current and pending support for each investigator.

Proposal/Project Title	
Support	<i>Identify if it is Current or Pending</i>
Funding Agency/Source	<i>e.g., NSF CAREER, NIH R15, UTC CEACSE Award, UT CORNET Award, etc.</i>
Total Award Amount	<i>\$ _____</i>
Project Start & End Dates	<i>For current projects enter the actual start & end dates. For pending projects enter the proposed start & end dates.</i>
Your Effort on Project	<i>Describe your effort on the proposal/project. E.g., 2 summer months, 25% academic year release time, etc.</i>
Relation to Proposed Collaborative Grant Project	<i>If there is any relationship between a current or pending project/proposal and your BRIC Grant proposal, please provide a brief description here. If not, put N/A in this field</i>