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2021 Call for Development Projects Proposals

The Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (MADRC) is pleased to announce a Call for development research project proposals on Alzheimer's disease (AD) and related dementias. These are brief proposals that are **due on November 13**, with funding, contingent on NIA approval, expected to begin on April 1, 2021. The Call is open to researchers from within the Harvard community – including the Harvard-affiliated hospitals and institutions -- with priority given first to junior faculty, with consideration also given for senior researchers new to AD and related dementias research and finally, to established researchers with a new hypothesis, method or approach that is not an extension of ongoing AD research and which lacks funding. Applications from underrepresented groups are encouraged.

The purpose of the Call for Development Projects is to allow an investigator the opportunity to develop preliminary data sufficient to provide the basis for an application for independent research support. Projects may range from basic or clinical biomedical to translational, epidemiological, caregiving, educational or behavioral research. Clinical trials are excluded, but development work in anticipation of a clinical trial will be accepted. Development Projects should align with the aims of the National Alzheimer's Project Act (NAPA) (<https://aspe.hhs.gov/national-alzheimers-project-act>). The MADRC anticipates that 1-3 awards in the amount of up to \$100,000 direct costs per project will be awarded for projects with a duration of 1 year. Facilities & administrative costs will be provided. Any one investigator is eligible only once for Development Projects support, unless the additional proposed Development Project constitutes a real departure from the investigator's ongoing research. A senior member of the MADRC will be assigned to each project awardee as a mentor and resource "navigator".

Several criteria will be applied – none mandatory, but the following considerations will be weighed by the review committee:

There is a preference for junior investigators (instructor or assistant professor), or senior investigators changing the focus of their research to include AD and related diseases.

There is a preference for projects that utilize the MADRC's Core components (see www.madrc.org/cores) and to develop applications that make use of these resources. The traditional cores include Clinical core (with a longitudinal clinical cohort), neuropathology core with tissue bank and an iPS cell bank, outreach and recruiting core, biostatistics and data core,



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and neuroimaging core. Note that in 2019, we established a Biomarker Core as a resource for investigators that is collecting plasma and CSF samples from patients. Likewise, researchers may also submit applications that utilize data available from the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center (NACC) (www.alz.washington.edu) and the National Centralized Repository for Alzheimer's Disease (NCRAD) (<https://ncrad.iu.edu>).

Responsiveness to the federal research focus areas of research as identified in the ADRD Summit 2019 Prioritize Recommendations Report is encouraged.
(https://www.ninds.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2019_adrd_summit_recommendations_508c.pdf).

Applications will be judged on the basis of scientific merit, novelty and the value of the project in obtaining results that could lead to independent research awards (e.g., investigator-initiated R01 research grants, career development awards, industry or foundation support). Availability of appropriate Core resources and the technical ability to carry out the project in the defined time frame are fundamental.

Preliminary data are not required, but familiarity with techniques and an approach to data analysis are important.

Applicants are urged to review the **Selection Criteria** and **Rules and Requirements** sections that are attached to this Call, and to contact Dr. Brad Hyman (bhyman@mgh.harvard.edu) for any pre-submission inquiries or Rachael Williams (rwilliams25@partners.org) for administrative issues.

All applications will be treated as confidential documents.



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Anticipated Schedule of Deadlines and Reviews

Call for Pilot Projects Announced: **Monday, September 21, 2020**

Application Due Date: **Friday, November 13, 2020 (5pm EST)**

Awards Announced: **Early January 2021**

Awards Start Date: **April 2021 (pending NIH approval)**



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Guidelines

1. Applicants should have a doctoral degree (MD, PhD, ScD, PharmD, DO, etc...), have undertaken or completed formal research training and where appropriate, have documentation of training in the protection of human research participants and/or ethical care in the use of animals for research.
2. An applicant who either has a Harvard Instructor level or Assistant Professor appointment are eligible. Senior fellows who are transitioning to Instructor positions (*anticipated time frame prior to April 2021*) are also eligible. We anticipate that some applicants will have a Harvard sponsor who is recognized as an independent investigator and who has been actively involved in AD and related dementias research, has a successful record of providing research training and guidance and is committed to continued project involvement throughout the total award period. This is welcome but not necessary.
3. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all relevant clearances from IACUC, IRB etc. Please initiate IRB/IACUC approvals at the time of application to avoid possible delays in initiating projects, as carry-forwards at the end of the 1-year award period are generally not allowed.
4. Funding is intended to be flexible. That is, it is to be used in a manner most useful to the applicant's project, including the applicant's and/or other personnel's salary and fringe benefits, supplies or other uses. Funding can be used for work that is supplemental to an ongoing funded research project.
5. This Call does not seek to support fellows or others in need of bridging salary support. This is not a fellowship program. Instead, it aims to support Development Projects that will test novel ideas and approaches and that have the potential for scientific advances and further funding support.



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Selection Criteria

All proposals will be reviewed by a Development Project Review Committee chaired by the Chair of the MADRC's External Advisory Committee and at least three members of the local research community who are familiar with the Center's goals and activities. At least one member of the review committee will consist of a biostatistician and a junior investigator who is a former Development Project awardee. These criteria will be used to prioritize funding decisions among projects deemed scientifically meritorious.

1. **Significance.** Does the study address an important problem relevant to our understanding, diagnosis or treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias? Please note that it is up to the applicant to **clearly demonstrate the clinical significance** of the proposed project. The theme of the current center is "heterogeneity".
2. **Prospects.** If the aims of the proposed work are achieved, is it likely that a proposal for additional extramural support (federal, industry, or foundation) will be successfully submitted and awarded?
3. **Approach.** Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative approaches?
4. **Innovation.** Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches, or methods? Are the aims original and innovative?
5. **Investigator.** Is the researcher appropriately trained to carry out this work? In the case of a proposal submitted by an Instructor, might the proposed project lead to a career development award?
6. **Environment.** Does the scientific environment in which the work will be conducted contribute to the probability of success? Do the proposed experiments take advantage of unique features of the MADRC's scientific environment and resources? Is there evidence of institutional support?
7. **Collaborative Potential.** Does the study involve the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center's Cores, clinical databases or data from National AD resources?



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Rules and Requirements

1. The deadline for the receipt of all applications is **5pm EST on Friday November 13, 2020**. Applications must be submitted electronically to rwilliams25@partners.org. Applicants will receive notification of the receipt of their proposals within 1 business day. To preserve the line spacing, figure location and the overall appearance of your application, we encourage you to submit your entire package as a **single PDF document**.
2. Applications must include the following:
 - a. Title page that includes applicant's name, institution, email address and proposal title.
 - b. Research plans (Maximum of 3 pages, not including the bibliography, in a mini-NIH style format; see <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.pdf> for guidance that include:
 - Specific Aims (½ page)
 - Background and Significance, & statement of how the project fits into the NAPA or ADRD Summits' research focus areas (approx ½ page)
 - Preliminary Studies & future directions (approx 1 page)
 - Research Design and Methods (Study design, description of subjects, data to be collected, analyses plans (1 page)
 - Bibliography
 - c. Ancillary documents must include the following (see the above NIH link for guidance):
 - Detailed Budget and separate Budget Justification page

NOTE: A draft budget that includes only a direct cost of up to \$100,000 is allowed. If application is awarded, a final budget page with indirect cost will be negotiated. Salary and fringe benefits of the recipient are to be actual costs.

A separate financial report must be maintained by the sponsoring institution for each recipient, and this account must be available for audit at any time.

- NIH Biographical Sketch (for all Senior/Key Personnel)
- Letters of support (if applicable) from MADRC Core directors and/or collaborators



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confirming the availability of the necessary resources for the support of the proposal

--PHS Planned/Targeted Enrollment Table (for proposals that involve human subjects)

- d. Application text should be in Arial or Times New Roman font and can be no smaller than 11-point font type. Figures, charts, tables, figure legends, and footnotes must be readily legible.
 - e. Single-spacing on the application is allowed. Margins, in all directions, must be at least 0.5 inches.
3. Decisions of the peer-review committee will be final and will be announced in **early January 2021**.
 4. Awardees must include an interim or final copy of their project's progress report in the MADRC's annual NIA grant renewal by mid-January in the year(s) following the award period.
 5. All publications, abstracts, posters and other forms of publications resulting from a project supported by this award must indicate the following acknowledgement: "This research was in part supported by a Development Project grant from the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (5 P30 AG062421)".
 6. Should a recipient discontinue the funded project or leave his/her primary institution of research during the award period, he/she must notify the MADRC in writing within 2 weeks prior to his/her intended departure, with reasons for the discontinuation of the project.

For questions of a scientific nature, please contact the Director of the MADRC - Dr. Brad Hyman – at bhyman@mg.harvard.edu (email subject line should read "2021 Development Project Proposal Questions"). For questions regarding an MADRC Core function or resources, please contact the relevant Core directors listed at www.madrc.org/leadership.

For questions of an administrative nature, please contact MADRC administrator – Rachael Williams - at rwilliams25@partners.org (telephone: 617-726-3987).