

University of Maryland, Baltimore
**Cooperative Center for Translational Research on
Human Immunology and Biodefense (UMB-CCHI)**

Request for Proposals (RFP)

**Solicitation for Pilot Research Projects in the area
of Human Mucosal Immunology**

Solicitation Release Date:	October 20, 2011
Electronic Submission Deadline:	December 1, 2011 <i>(Thursday by 12:00 midnight)</i>
Approximate Award Date:	March 1, 2012

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Cooperative Center for Translational Research on Human Immunology and Biodefense (UMB-CCHI) fosters research on human immunology as it applies to potential agents of bioterrorism or emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases. Our immediate objectives are to support translational research on human mucosal immunological responses to NIAID Category A, B, or C Priority Pathogens, their toxins, or other emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases.

This RFP is issued to solicit Pilot Research Projects to enhance ongoing CCHI research in the area of translational human mucosal immunology of the gastrointestinal tract and biodefense; see “Eligibility” and “Research Objectives” for more information.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Principal Investigator (PI) must commit at least 10 percent effort to the goals of this award. Previous experience specifically in the field of biodefense or emerging infectious diseases is not required. Pilot projects are welcomed from investigators outside of the University of Maryland network, as well as current UMB-CCHI investigators. Pilot projects that directly support and extend research within the UMB-CCHI Center are encouraged. Previous Pilot project award recipients submitting a new application in the same field as an ongoing Pilot project must propose to examine a new set of

questions or hypotheses. Applications proposing to complete work on previously awarded ongoing pilot projects will not be considered. Minorities, women and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

MECHANISM OF SUPPORT

This mechanism will provide support for up to 2 years of research that focuses on translational research on human mucosal immunology and biodefense in the amount of \$50,000 direct costs each year for a two year period. Up to three Pilot Project Awards will be made in response to this solicitation depending on the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The **key objective** of the CCHI Pilot Project Program is to enrich the CCHI research portfolio and incorporate new investigators and institutions into the field of human mucosal immunology. It is expected that the proposed studies will result in the generation of preliminary data for the development and submission of future research applications in the area of human mucosal immunology. Previous preliminary data are not required.

Applicants must propose work in the area of mucosal immunity relating to the gastrointestinal tract in order to synergize with the goals of this Center. Please visit the UMB-CCHI website at <http://medschool.umaryland.edu/CCHI/default.asp> to view currently funded projects under this theme of mucosal/gastrointestinal tract immunity.

The proposed project must be translational in nature; studies involving human samples from closed/ongoing clinical trials are preferred. Animal models, including monkeys, may be used if the study is directly relevant to human mucosal immunity.

Applications must be relevant to the NIAID Category A-C Priority Pathogens (<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/BiodefenseRelated/Biodefense/default.htm>) and emerging infectious diseases (EID) agents (<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/research/topics/emerging/list.htm>) as defined by the NIAID.

Funds for support of equipment or clinical trials will not be allowed under this RFP.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Please use PHS398 forms and formatting only for the NIH Biosketch and where specifically noted below (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/phs398/phs398.html>); For the other components listed below, pages should have a 1" margin on all sides and the text should be typed using an Arial 11 or larger font size. The description of proposed work (Section [d] below) should be no longer than 4 pages. The application does NOT need to be signed by your institutional official. If your application is selected for the award, we will request additional information prior to award of the funds. Please provide the following information in the order given below.

- a. Cover page:
 - i. Please state the grant number: U19 AI082655
 - ii. Please state the Center PI: Marcelo Szein, M.D.;
 - iii. Pilot Project Title;

- iv. Pilot Project Leader's Name & Institution;
- v. Pilot Project Abstract.
- b. Detailed budget & justification (PHS398 form pgs 4-5). Budget \$50,000 maximum direct costs; also include indirect costs at the currently approved rate for your institution. Please include personnel details for the Project Leader and any other key personnel (salary, effort, fringe benefits) and totals for other expenses (supplies, equipment, travel, other expenses, etc.)
- c. Current NIH-type Biosketches for proposed Project Leader and any other key personnel; in the "Research Support" section, include % effort/months effort for active funding.
- d. Description of proposed work (strict **4-page limit**) to include:
 - i. Rationale (how the project will advance human immunology; Project Leader's prior work in human immunology; how the Project Leader will obtain independent funds using the pilot data to continue project in future; how the CCHI program will benefit from this project – is there value added? why use of any animals is a good thing, e.g., hu-mice, NHPs);
 - ii. Preliminary data;
 - iii. Description of proposed work;
 - iv. References.
- e. Human Subjects section (follow PHS398 instructions).
- f. Vertebrate animals section (follow PHS398 instructions).
- g. Foreign site information.
- h. NIH Checklist form itemizing indirect cost calculations (follow PHS398 instructions).

Submission of Application:

Completed applications are to be submitted electronically in a single document (Microsoft Word preferred but pdf is acceptable) and emailed to CCHIgrants@medicine.umaryland.edu by 11:59 PM EST on December 1, 2011. If you are unsure whether your proposed research would fit into the aims of this Request for Proposals, please contact Dr. Snyder as below.

MARCE contact for information on scientific scope/research:

Jennifer A. Snyder, Ph.D.
CCHI Assistant Director for Research
University of Maryland School of Medicine
jsnyder@medicine.umaryland.edu

MARCE contact for information on budgets/forms:

Gloria Smedley, MBA
CCHI Research Administrator
University of Maryland School of Medicine
gsmmedley@medicine.umaryland.edu

REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS

The submitted Pilot Project proposals will be scored by a panel of reviewers with significant experience and stature related to the overall objectives of the program. Each proposal will be assigned to 2-4 reviewers for scoring and comments on each review parameter (listed below). To avoid conflicts of interest, reviewers will not be assigned any proposals from his/her home institution. Based on subject

areas and number of applications, an external Ad Hoc Review Committee will be convened. Members of the UMB-CCHI Oversight Committee might also be assigned pilot project applications for review if the subject matches their individual areas of expertise. Scores from all reviews will be tallied and ranked. A second level of review and prioritization will then be performed by members of the UMB-CCHI Oversight Committee to ensure uniformity and consistency with CCHI priority goals. Top-scoring proposals will be sent to the NIH CCHI Steering Committee for final review and approval. Up to three awards will be made in response to this solicitation depending on the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.

The following review criteria will be applied:

Significance (15 points)

Approach and scientific merit (35 points)

Innovation (20 points)

Investigator (10 points)

Potential for continued funding of this project beyond CCHI support (10 points)

Consistency with the CCHI research priorities and goals (10 points)

Significance (15 points)

Does the study address an important problem within the overall area of Translational Research on Human mucosal immunology of the gastrointestinal tract and Biodefense? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will they advance scientific knowledge? How will the results of these studies advance the goals of the CCHI? If the research is successful, are there opportunities for collaboration with other CCHI investigators at a later point? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts or methods that drive this field?

Approach and scientific merit (35 points)

Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the aims of the project? Does the investigator acknowledge potential problems and consider alternative tactics? **(Note - the nature of these awards allows for applications with little or even the absence of preliminary data.)**

Innovation (20 points)

Does the project employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Are the aims original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or develop new methodologies or technologies?

Investigator (10 points)

Is the investigator appropriately trained and well qualified to carry out the proposed work? Is the proposed research commensurate with his/her experience level? **(Note: previous experience in the field of biodefense or emerging infections is not required.)**

Potential for continued funding of this project beyond the CCHI (10 points)

If the goals of the project are met, is there potential for continued funding of this proposed project, for example as a R01, R21 award?

Consistency with the CCHI research priorities and goals (10 points)

Is the proposal consistent with CCHI research priorities in the area of Human Mucosal Immunity of the gastrointestinal tract and Biodefense?