

Oklahoma IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence RESEARCH PROJECT INVESTIGATOR AWARDS CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2025

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) substantially revised the INBRE developmental research project program effective with the five-year award cycle beginning in 2025. Please review these changes below.

- The NIH has changed the maximum funding period for INBRE research projects. Research Project Investigator (RPI) awards may be funded for up to two years (previously 2.5 years).
- RPI awards are no longer able to be renewed. The project will conclude at the end of two years.
- Awarded Research Project Leaders (RPL) are expected to “graduate” from INBRE funding and apply for support from other sponsors. The maximum RPI funding is up to two years.

KEY DATES

Application Due Date:	October 31, 2024, 5:00pm
Review Date:	November/December 2024
Earliest Start Date:	March 1, 2025

BACKGROUND

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) established the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program to build biomedical research capacity in the 23 U.S. states and Puerto Rico that had historically low NIH grant funding success rates. IDeA funding programs collectively support biomedical research in basic, clinical, behavioral, and translational science. The IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) program is a key IDeA component that funds one statewide network of higher education and research institutions in each IDeA-eligible state and Puerto Rico to build biomedical research capacity through supporting faculty research and research mentoring, student participation in research, and research infrastructure enhancement at network institutions. These networks aim to catalyze, develop, and strengthen the research culture at network institutions, support faculty for research excellence, and provide students with research opportunities to help develop a strong biomedical research workforce.

PURPOSE

The Oklahoma IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (OK-INBRE) is requesting applications for Research Project Investigator (RPI) awards. A primary goal of the RPI program is to foster and develop the most innovative research that will lead to nationally funded programs through resource sharing, faculty collaboration and mentoring. The program seeks to support proposals designed to generate preliminary data that enhances the competitiveness of the Research Project Leaders (RPL) for future extramural funding.

RESEARCH PROJECT LEADER ELIGIBILITY

- For OUHSC and OMRP applicants, the RPL must qualify as an Early-Stage Investigator (ESI) as defined by the NIH. For all other applicants, the RPL must qualify as either an ESI or New Investigator (NI). Information regarding ESI and NI policies can be found here: <https://grants.nih.gov/policy/early-investigators/index.htm>.

- The applying Research Project Leader (RPL) must hold an institutional equivalent of a full-time faculty appointment at an OK-INBRE network institution (the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences, the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, the University of Central Oklahoma, Northeastern State University, Southeastern State University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Cameron University, or Langston University).
- Individuals with modified titles (e.g., Research Assistant Professor) are eligible to apply if a justification/letter of support from the Departmental Chair is provided, indicating that the institution is/has provided substantial startup package resources (i.e., startup funding, independent lab space, tenure track eligibility) for the faculty member to successfully carry out the proposed project and that the institution is committed to support the faculty member in their position for the foreseeable future. **The reviewers for the proposals must be confident that the applicant is supported by the institution financially and not by the grant funds of a more senior faculty member/mentor.**
- Investigators who have been funded for five years as either an OK-INBRE Research Project Investigator and/or an early-stage investigator by a COBRE program are not eligible to apply. Investigators who have been previously funded by an OK-INBRE RPI award for 2.5 years or less are eligible to apply. Investigators who have received prior OK-INBRE Mini or Collaborative Grants are eligible to apply.
- COBRE, INBRE and IDeA-CTR Research and Pilot Project leaders are not eligible for simultaneous research funding from two IDeA programs.

EFFORT OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT LEADER

It is required that the RPL devotes at least six person months (50%) to the proposed research activities. The effort can be distributed over the year to achieve a total of six person months (e.g., three person months during the academic year and three person months in the summer).

MENTORING RESEARCH PROJECT LEADERS

The mentoring and career development of OK-INBRE-funded RPLs is one of the most important aspects of the RPI program. Senior investigators will serve as RPL mentors to assist with project focus, experimental design, data interpretation and analysis, and timely publication of research findings. Mentors will provide guidance on their mentee's scientific progress and focus, examine how the data obtained impacts the field, and discuss methodological and technical problems that may arise. The mentors will be required to have established expertise related to strategic, technical, or implementation problems in a specific research area that is aligned with the scientific focus of each RPL.

BUDGET AND PROJECT PERIOD

The RPI awards will be funded for two years in the amount of \$100,000 in direct costs per year plus F&A (indirect costs). The project period is anticipated to be March 1, 2025 – February 28, 2027.

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

Applicants may submit more than one application, provided each application is scientifically distinct. Only one application can be funded per applicant.

APPLICATION FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

The application should be submitted as a single PDF file to the OK-INBRE Program at OKINBRE@OUHSC.EDU by March 1, 2024, at 5:00pm. Late proposals will not be reviewed. Please be sure to route your applications through the appropriate administrative office at your institution prior to submission.

A complete OK-INBRE Research Project Investigator application includes the sections outlined below. All forms and sections must be completed according to the [NIH Application Guide](#). The three form pages to be included in the application package can be found on the OK-INBRE website at [Research Project Investigator Awards](#). Applications should be prepared using Arial (11 point, 10 pitch font), single spaced, with minimum 0.5-inch margins.

- **FORM PAGE 1: FACE PAGE**
This form is required for NIH project approval and must be filled out in its entirety and signed by an authorized institutional official. Be sure to indicate whether the project proposes to use vertebrate animals, human subjects, biohazardous organisms, or reagents.
- **FORM PAGE 2: PROJECT SUMMARY, RELEVANCE, SITE, KEY PERSONNEL**
This form provides the project summary/abstract, relevance, performance site, and key personnel. Be sure to indicate whether the project proposes use of human embryonic stem cells.
- **FORM PAGE 3: BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION**
The budget period is 3/1/2025 – 2/28/2027. Maximum direct cost for the project is \$100,000 per year. Grant funds may not be used to pay the salary of another individual for course release time. Travel to one professional meeting for the PI and students may be requested, not to exceed \$2,000 per year.
- **NIH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**
Provide a biosketch using the current NIH format: [Biosketch Format Pages](#). Include a list of grant applications for the last three years and funding outcomes.
- **SPECIFIC AIMS**
Limited to ONE PAGE. Describe the goals of the proposed research and expected outcomes, including the impact that the results of the proposed research will have on the research field(s) involved.
- **RESEARCH STRATEGY**
Limited to FOUR PAGES. Illustrations or figures may be included but will be counted against the page limitation. The Research Strategy should address the Background and Significance, Innovation, and the Approach/Experimental Plan.
- **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES CITED**
- **SCIENTIFIC AND CAREER IMPACT STATEMENT**
Limited to ONE PAGE. Explain the significance of your research and the impact on the current knowledge in the field. Describe the impact the award will have on your research program, career, and students.
- **FUTURE RESEARCH PLANS**
Limited to ONE PAGE. Describe how you plan to pursue the results to expand the study. Include your planned publications, proposal submissions of new collaborations that will lead to future independent funding.
- **PROGRESS RESULTING FROM PRIOR OK-INBRE FUNDING**
Limited to ONE PAGE. Applicants who have been previously funded by OK-INBRE Mini, Collaborative, or Research Project Investigator Awards should briefly describe the progress and outcomes achieved from data generated through OK-INBRE support.
- **PLAN FOR REASSIGNMENT TIME FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT LEADER**
It is required that the Research Project Leader devotes at least six person months (50% effort) to the proposed research activities. An institutionally endorsed plan briefly outlining how the reassignment time will be provided must be included with the application.
- **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**
Letters from research collaborators, department Chairs, consultants and others are allowed. For non-tenure track or consecutive-term faculty, a letter of support or justification from the Departmental Chair is required. The letter must indicate that the institution has provided resources (e.g., startup funding, independent lab space, protected time for research) for the faculty member to successfully carry out the OK-INBRE project, and that the institution

is committed to support the faculty member in their position for the foreseeable future so that the faculty member may continue to develop their research program and apply for external grant funding.

- **FACILITIES AND OTHER RESOURCES**

Limited to TWO PAGES. Describe how the scientific environment in which the research will be done contributes to the probability of success (e.g., institutional support, physical resources). Include resources for both the investigator and collaborator.

- **CAREER ADVISOR** (Optional)

Limited to ONE PAGE. Applicants may identify a career advisor from the applicant institution. A brief written plan describing the contribution of the advisor to the career advancement of the applicant, along with any planned activities the applicant will take part in to foster his/her career development.

- **DATA SHARING PLAN**

NIH policy requires that the results and accomplishments of the activities that it funds should be made available to the public. NIH researchers are required to prospectively submit a plan outlining how scientific data from their research will be managed and shared. An optional form is available at: [Writing a Data Management and Sharing Plan](#).

- **HUMAN SUBJECT AND VERTEBRATE ANIMAL USE APPROVALS** (if applicable)

Human and Animal Use Approvals are not required at the time of submission, but the approval and all information required by NIH must be in place before the project can be submitted to the NIH for approval and work on the project can begin.

If the project involves vertebrate animals, provide the following in your proposal: 1) a description of procedures; 2) justification for model used; 3) address minimization of pain and distress; and 4) method of euthanasia. See the [NIH guidance on the Vertebrate Animals Section](#) for more information.

For research involving human subjects, provide a description of the protection of human subjects for each of the following sections: 1) Risks to Human Subjects; 2) Adequacy of Protection against Risks; 3) Potential Benefits of the Proposed Research to Research Participants and Others; 4) Importance of the Knowledge to be Gained.

- **SELECT AGENT RESEARCH** (if applicable)

Select agents are hazardous biological agents and toxins that HHS or USDA have identified as having the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety, to animal and plant health, or to animal and plant products. Information can be found at: [NIH Select Agent Information](#)

- **REGULATORY ITEMS** (if applicable)

Regulatory items include IBC, conflict of interest, radioisotope usage, etc.

- **KEY BIOLOGICAL AND/OR CHEMICAL RESOURCES** (if applicable)

Describe the methods/procedures for validating the identity of significant biological/chemical agents used. Key biological and/or chemical resources refers to established reagents or resources that will be used in the proposed research. For help, visit the [Authentication of Key Biological and/or Chemical Resources Notice](#) on this topic.

- **APPENDIX**

An appendix containing other materials, data or other information is NOT ALLOWED.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The review will consist of a panel of expert biomedical research scientists who will provide input on each proposal and recommend whether an application should be considered for funding. The application will be ranked according to its scientific merit using the NIH scale of 10 to 90 with 10 being the theoretical perfect score. Upon completion of the peer review process, each applicant will be provided with a critique of the project. The scientific merit review will be based on the following criteria:

1. Feasibility and scientific merit
2. Soundness of the approach and research design
3. Quality and appropriateness of data analyses
4. Qualifications and experience of the investigator
5. The role played by undergraduate/graduate students/postdocs/fellows in the proposed research
6. Potential of the research to leverage into a national, state, or foundation application
7. Previous publication and grant submission productivity of the applicant

TERMS OF AWARD

- For selected projects involving human subjects or vertebrate animals, all Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approvals must be secured before the project can be submitted to NIH for approval and work on the project can begin.
- A brief progress report will be required at six-month intervals as well as a final progress report to disclose scientific progress, utilization of OK-INBRE-funded equipment, manuscripts published, submitted, and in preparation, grant submissions, students/postdoctoral fellows mentored, conference participation, resulting intellectual property, new jobs created, and any press releases or newsworthy articles. The Investigator will be required to present their project and progress to the External Advisory Committee once per year.
- Publications and abstracts must acknowledge funding from the Oklahoma IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence and cite grant number P20GM103447.

PRIORITY FOR FUNDING

Key priorities that will be considered during the review of RPI applications will be the likelihood that funding can be leveraged into a national, state, or foundation application, previous publication and grant submission productivity of the applicant, and the role played by undergraduate and/or graduate students in the proposed research. Applications including OK-INBRE network faculty collaborations, team-based science approaches, and/or data science research approaches will also be given priority. The utilization of statewide core facilities or the OK-INBRE Data Science or Proteomics Core resources will be considered funding priorities.

QUESTIONS

For questions about this Funding Opportunity Announcement or the application submission process, please contact the OK-INBRE program at OKINBRE@OUHSC.EDU.