2018 Pilot Study Funding Announcement

**Letter of Intent Submission Deadline: 5:00 pm on Monday, December 4, 2017**

The Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention (CCOP) is pleased to announce the following Pilot Study funding opportunity. Letters of Intent (LOI) will be accepted from Wednesday, October 25 – Monday, December 4, 2017. Before submitting a Letter of Intent, please carefully review all information and instructions contained in this announcement. **The Letter of Intent is a mandatory step in the application process for Pilot Study Funding. Full applications will not be accepted without an approved LOI.**

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention was established in 2016 with a $9.4 million NIH Centers for Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) grant award. The grant is part of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR) Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program aimed at building research capacity in states that have historically low levels of NIH funding. COBRE programs focus on the professional development of the nation's most promising junior investigators through targeted senior mentoring and investment in critical infrastructure improvements.

The mission of the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention is to address the problem of childhood obesity through the funding and support of investigational studies along the full translational continuum, including basic, developmental inquiry to clinical studies and direct translation into the community. The immediate goal is to prevent the rise in Arkansas childhood obesity rates, with an ultimate goal of reducing obesity rates significantly over the next ten years.

Examples of topics that fit with the mission of the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention include, **but are not limited to:**

- Behavioral and physiological phenotypes, such as individual differences in appetite, food preference, temperament, self-regulation and other factors related to excessive weight gain that may predict obesity development and/or treatment response.
- Infant and early childhood feeding practices, sleep, physical activity or sedentary behaviors that may influence weight gain and risk for obesity.
- Family and caregiver aspects that may influence weight gain, such as parenting style, teaching style, responsiveness to infant/child/teen needs, stress, and other psychosocial characteristics.
- Emerging obesity risk factors, including the hormonal milieu, microbiome, and epigenetic modifications.
- Development and/or validation of methods to assess body composition, dietary intake/composition, and physical activity/sedentary behaviors as well as sleep duration and quality in infants, children or adolescents.
- Identification of components of the maternal diet, caloric levels of nutrient supply, timing of nutritional restriction/ excess during gestation and lactation, or combinations thereof, which predispose towards development of obesity in the mother postpartum and the offspring during development.
- Assess interventions that target modifiable factors in the maternal pre- and post-natal environment which may modulate genetic susceptibility to obesity. These factors may include psychosocial...
stressors, maternal behaviors such as smoking, alcohol or substance abuse, exposure to infectious and pharmacological agents, management of co-morbidities, sleep habits, timing and patterns of infant feeding, and child rearing practices.

- Preventive health practices that may override obesity-predisposing non-modifiable factors such as birth order, ethnicity, age and parity.
- Studies of novel interventions for prevention and treatment of obesity in children and/or adults, including: modification of dietary practices or eating environments; strength training, aerobic conditioning, or other modifications of physical activity and sedentary behavior; modification of relevant associated behaviors, neurocognitive functions, and psychosocial influences that affect eating and physical activity patterns or environmental conditions that may have an impact upon energy balance.
- Studies to identify behavioral, neuro-cognitive, psychosocial, and/or environmental factors that motivate or promote adherence to dietary or physical activity behaviors for obesity prevention or treatment.
- Studies to explore social marketing approaches for promoting eating behaviors and increased physical activity aimed at weight control.
- Intervention studies that employ community-based participatory research strategies for obesity prevention.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicant eligibility to apply is based on the following:

Only individuals who have not had an external, peer-reviewed NIH Research Project Grant (RPG) or Program Project Grant (PPG) or equivalent from either a federal or non-federal source as the named principal investigator (PI) are eligible.

- If named as co-Investigator, collaborator, consultant or other non-PI role, an individual is qualified.
- If PI on training/mentored grants, an individual is qualified (e.g. AREA, R15, R03, R21, K01, K08)
- If PI on an NIH R01, P01, or NSF or equivalent award as PI an individual does not qualify.
- Applicant must hold a faculty appointment (i.e. postdocs, other non-independent faculty do not qualify).
- For eligibility questions, please contact Dr. Judy Weber at WeberJudithL@uams.edu.

In addition, applicants are also chosen based on the following selection criteria:

- Demonstrates evidence of a fundable, independent area of research interest that fits with the theme of the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention.
- Demonstrates evidence of grant writing experience.
- Demonstrates an emerging peer-reviewed publications record.

PILOT STUDY FUNDING AVAILABILITY

- Project periods are for 12 months; a second 12-month period can be applied for if needed and sufficient progress was made during the first project period.
- Maximum direct cost budget per 12-month period is $40K. Budgets may include up to 10% of direct costs for PI salary support.
- Other allowable costs include staff support, materials and supplies, travel, publications costs, and subject incentives. Questions regarding allowable costs on budgets can be directed to Joy Moix, Budget Manager, at MoixJoy@uams.edu.
THE LETTER OF INTENT

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The Letter of Intent (LOI) must be submitted to the Center for Childhood Obesity Prevention no later than 5:00pm (Central Time) on Monday, December 4, 2017. LOIs received after the deadline will not be considered.

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

- No more than 2 pages in length
- Single-spaced
- 0.5” margins
- 11 pt. Arial font
- Left justification

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Letters of Intent (LOIs) must be uploaded (in Microsoft Word format, NOT PDF format) at the following link, https://base.uams.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=88K8DLMJXD In addition to your LOI, please upload your most current NIH biosketch or academic curriculum vitae.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please use the “CCOP 2018 Letter of Intent (LOI) Template and Instructions” to draft your LOI. The template is located on pages 4 and 5 of this document. It will also be available for download on the CCOP website located at www.archildrens.org/ObesityPreventionRFAProgram. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Jami Jones at JLJones@uams.edu or 501-364-5113 or Lori Delfos at LLDelfos@uams.edu or 501-364-3340.
Instructions for using this template.
This template is to be used to provide your letter of intent narrative.

You should:

- Feel free to contact the Center PI/Director, Dr. Judy Weber at WeberJudithL@uams.edu or 501-364-3382 before you begin working on your LOI to determine if your idea fits with the Center theme.
- Complete the Identifying Information shown after this block of instructions. This must be included at the top of the first page of your application and counts toward the two-page limit.
- Describe your project in the Letter of Intent section located below this box (maximum of two pages), single spaced, 0.5” margins, 11 pt. Arial font, left justified
- Delete this block of instructions and the document header before uploading your proposal narrative.
- Upload your final Letter of Intent as a word document at the following link: https://base.uams.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=88K8DLMJXD

Your proposal should address three major questions:

- **Rationale (~3/4 page) - What will be gained from this work?** This should include a statement of the **key gaps in knowledge** that will be addressed through the findings of your proposed study. Focus on why the research (as opposed to the issue) is important, and how the results will inform the literature gaps and the development of your next steps (i.e. **how will the proposed study provide the preliminary data necessary for developing the next level study?** The “next level” could be either a full R01 equivalent application or a Center-funded primary research project.).

- **Research approach and activities (~1 page) - What are the specific research question(s) and hypotheses that will be examined and how will this be accomplished?** This should include the specific aims and a summary of the research design and methods that will be used, the study setting and population, and plans for data collection and analysis.

- **Fit with the Center (1 paragraph or ¼ page) – How will the proposed study fit with the scientific and health impact goals of the Center?** It is highly recommended that you contact the Center PI/Director, Dr. Judy Weber at WeberJudithL@uams.edu or 501-364-3382 before you begin working on your LOI to determine if your idea fits with the Center theme. Please refer to the Program Summary section of the funding announcement for examples of topics that could be funded by the Center.

**NOTES:**

- Your letter should be typed in **11-point Arial font and black type.** The entire letter, including section headings, should be no more than two pages with single spacing and half-inch margins on the top, bottom and sides of the page.
Letter of Intent

[Insert 2 page LOI proposal here.]
INVITATIONS TO SUBMIT A FULL PROPOSAL

Applicants will be notified no later than Tuesday, January 16, 2018 if they have been invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposal instructions will be distributed with the invitations.

TIMELINE

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Please direct any additional questions to Jami Jones at JLIJones@uams.edu or 501-364-5113 or Lori Delfos at LLDelSos@uams.edu or 501-364-3382.