



Application Submission Deadlines
2025 Cycle 1

Letter of Intent: September 12, 2025

Formal Proposal: November 21, 2025

Earliest Start Date: February 9, 2026

PILOT PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES: HIV Research

The UCLA-CDU CFAR and the UCLA AIDS Institute are accepting applications for pilot projects to fund HIV-related research with an emphasis on supporting new/early-stage investigators, established investigators who are new to HIV research, and investigators working on HIV research who are being required to pivot due to loss of funding opportunities.

Projects **must align with the current NIH HIV/AIDS Research Priorities** (NOT-OD-20-018 and subsequent updates). Proposals clearly outside these priorities will not be reviewed.

Maximum request per applicant: \$60,000 Direct Costs

Deadline for receipt of Letters of Intent: September 12, 2025

Applicants whose letters of intent are favorably reviewed will be invited to submit a formal proposal.

→ Formal proposals will then be due by November 21, 2025.

→ Applicants will be notified of a decision by February 2026.

The project period is for two years, with the earliest starting date of February 9, 2026.

Please note: Despite the project period noted, **no funds may be spent, and no research activities may begin until all required IRB approvals (and, if applicable, NIH international clearances) are on file with the CFAR.** If pre-award spending is necessary, you **must** obtain written approval from the CFAR prior to incurring costs.

Investigator Eligibility

Investigator Category	Definition	Additional Requirements
Early-Stage Investigator (ESI)	Within 10 years of terminal research degree or postgraduate clinical training and has not yet competed successfully for an R01-equivalent award.	<i>Highest priority for funding.</i> Must describe in LOI- commitment to a career in research and plans to become independently funded, especially if an applicant seeking funding for basic science does not have lab space assigned in their name.
Investigator New to HIV Research	Established in another field but has not previously received significant HIV research funding.	<i>High priority for funding.</i>
Established HIV Investigator	Previously received substantial HIV research support.	Allowed to apply; however, the LOI must justify specifically how this pilot project grant is critical to maintain or pivot their research program (e.g., bridge funding, strategic redirection).

- Multiple PIs are permitted. Collaborations across CFAR cores and disciplines are encouraged.
- All applicants must have a Co-Investigator (without salary) with a track record of peer-reviewed HIV funding; a list of some (but not all) qualifying Co-Investigators and their areas of expertise can be found [here](#). If you need assistance in being connected with potential collaborators with HIV research experience, we would be happy to facilitate networking. Please contact us with this request at least three weeks before the LOI deadline at UCLA-CDU.CFAR@mednet.ucla.edu.
- Projects that plan to enroll participants in Los Angeles must identify a community-based organization with a demonstrated background in HIV/AIDS with which they will partner, or that will serve in a consulting role.
- Qualifying applicants in all series levels are eligible to apply for this funding mechanism as long as the individual has UCLA or CDU Principal Investigator Status or is eligible for an exemption per [UCLA Policy 900: Principal Investigator Eligibility](#) or CDU Policy 602.17: Eligibility to Submit Proposals for Extramural Support. If qualifying via an exemption, you will need to submit a letter from your Division Chief or Department Chair verifying eligibility (UCLA) or from the VP for Research (CDU).

Funding Criteria/Guidelines

- Global Research Policy
 - Foreign subawards, subcontracts, or other foreign subcomponents are **not allowed** in this funding cycle.
 - Projects that involve global populations without a foreign subcomponent (e.g., use of existing specimens or data housed in the U.S.) are acceptable.
 - Prior to LOI submission, applicants proposing global work should consult the CFAR Co-Directors (via Jina Lee) to confirm compliance.
- Consultation Before LOI
 - Investigators unsure whether their concept is responsive—or needing guidance on NIH priority alignment—should contact Jina Lee (jinallee@mednet.ucla.edu) to schedule a brief meeting with the Core B Co-Directors.
 - We strongly recommend any project with a focus outside the US to schedule a meeting to ensure the application will be responsive and the project feasible within the required budgetary restrictions.
- Projects focused on any aspect of HIV research from all research disciplines will be considered (basic, clinical, behavioral, policy, implementation science, social science etc.) including, but not limited to, work at the intersection of HIV and infectious complications, HIV and non-communicable diseases, HIV and substance use disorders, and HIV and aging.
- Proposals will be scored based on innovation and potential for growth into a competitive program for future outside funding; as well the potential of the award to contribute to career development for New or Early-Stage Investigators or those established investigators who are new to HIV research; or to career sustainment for those with established careers in HIV research who face funding challenges.
- Proposals should outline clearly how research funded by the pilot project could be translated into a larger project, particularly an NIH R01 level grant, an R34, an R21, or equivalent funding by a non-governmental source (e.g., amfAR, pharmaceutical company, or private foundation).

- Contributions of the HIV research-experienced Co-Investigator must be delineated in the application, such as conceptual guidance, technical/methodologic guidance, assistance with other collaborations, career development mentorship, etc.
- Evidence of investigator productivity will be considered during the review. This includes, but is not limited to, evidence of ongoing applications for outside funding by PI, funding received as a result of any previous CFAR pilot project(s), and PI publication record, especially if the applicant is a previous CFAR pilot project recipient.
- Competitive applications with collaborations between multiple sites within the UCLA-CDU CFAR network (Harbor-UCLA, VAGLAHS, UCLA Vine Street Clinic, UCLA CARE Center, MLK OASIS Clinic, Drew CARES, etc.) will be prioritized for funding.
- The award amount will be Total Costs = Direct Costs + 26% F&A costs.
**exclusive of tuition and related fees, direct expenditures for equipment, and subawards in excess of \$25,000.*
- Applications will be evaluated by a peer-review committee comprised of UCLA / CDU faculty and community advisory board members.
- Annual progress reports and end of project reports will be required from all awarded PIs.
- All awarded projects must have at least one consultation with the UCLA-CDU community advisory board.
- The UCLA-CDU CFAR and the UCLA AIDS Institute must be acknowledged in all publications and presentations regarding the successfully funded project.
- Funds will be transferred to successful applicants after all appropriate approvals (IRB, ARC, human subjects' certification, etc.) have been provided. Although IRB approval is not required prior to application, release of funding will be contingent on receipt of IRB approval for proposed project.

UCLA-CDU CFAR Core facilities are available on a recharge basis.

More information can be found on the [UCLA-CDU CFAR website](#).

- **Core C: Centralized Laboratory Support** (Surya Venugopal, lab manager uclavirologycore@gmail.com)
Provides laboratory expertise or lab space and instrumentation to conduct virologic, immunologic, and microbiome/genomics studies.
- **Core D: Humanized Mouse and Gene Therapy** (Scott Kitchen, skitchen@ucla.edu)
Provides humanized mice, access to BSL2+ vivarium facilities, expertise in humanized mouse models, and further development of improved humanized mouse models.
- **Core E: Community Engagement and Clinical Informatics** (Dilara Uskup, dilarauskup@cdrewu.edu or Aziza Lucas-Wright annalucaswright@cdrewu.edu)
Provides advanced clinical informatics analytic support to public health and community providers and clinics in Los Angeles who are on the frontline of the epidemic.
- **Core F: Clinical Science** (Kara Chew, kchew@mednet.ucla.edu)
Provides a single portal of collated services to support investigators and promote rapid study implementation, foster scientific collaboration, and expand training opportunities for new investigators, while efficiently leveraging existing NIH-funded resources at UCLA.

Instructions for Letters of Intent

Letters of intent must be no longer than **two pages**, and must include the following:

- Name, degrees, and full contact information (email, phone, mailing address) of PI and all Co-Investigator(s). Please clearly identify the status of any/all individuals who qualify as a new investigator or early-stage investigator and/or who are new to HIV research.
- Justification of eligibility including discussion of the applicant's commitment to a career in research and plans to become independently funded if New or Early-Stage Investigator; or if established investigator, how this pilot project is essential to maintain research trajectory (e.g., pivot due to funding loss, entry into a new high-priority area).
- Letter from Division Chief or Department Chair if required per Investigator Eligibility (i.e., if PI exception is needed)
- Proposed Specific Aims and brief methods associated with each aim.
- Brief summary of PI/Co-Investigator experience conducting research including, but not limited to, HIV-related research.
- Total amount of funding requested.
- Foreign Component Statement: "This project **does not** include a foreign subaward or subcontract."
- NIH biosketches of PI and Co-Investigator(s) (does not count towards the 2-page limit)

Letters of intent must be received via email to UCLA-CDU.CFAR@mednet.ucla.edu.

→ Letters of intent must be received **by September 12, 2025**.

Instructions for formal proposals will then be forwarded to applicants whose letters of intent are approved.

→ Formal proposals will then be due **by November 21, 2025**.

Successful applicant PIs must provide their NIH Commons ID number. During the award period and for up to ten years post-award, awardees must provide the following information to the UCLA-CDU CFAR by November 30th of each year: (1) all publications that resulted from CFAR-supported research with PubMed ID, and (2) all PHS and non-PHS federal support that contributed to or resulted from the CFAR-supported research.

Questions about eligibility, letters of intent, or formal proposals can be directed to
UCLA-CDU.CFAR@mednet.ucla.edu.